Global Programme Report

2016-2018

This report is a description of achievements and outcomes based on ERIKS’ Global Objectives and Country Programmes in Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Kenya, Mali, Moldova, Myanmar, Romania, South Sudan and Uganda.
1. Introduction

ERIKS Development Partner (ERIKS) is a children's rights organisation presently active in 17 countries (including Sweden). For 13 prioritised programme countries, ERIKS has elaborated strategies that include an analysis of the most pressing child rights challenges and a strategic orientation for ERIKS' work in the country. For each country strategy, specific objectives are being formulated in line with ERIKS' global objectives in the five areas: partnership, education, health, protection and humanitarian assistance. Guided by these country strategies, ERIKS in partnership with local and national organisations simultaneously implement around 100 projects.

Swedish Mission Council (SMC) is the major financial partner of ERIKS, contributing approximately one third of the funding for its international programmes.

2. Reporting process

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

A second step in the process is to look at the global and general picture of ERIKS' international programmes during the period in areas like implementation, budget, financial control, monitoring and evaluation etc. This analysis is performed by the programme director (PD) and deputy programme director (DPD) and results in the present document, ERIKS Global Programme Report 2016-2018.

3. Results

Partnership

Working in partnership with and strengthening local civil society is a one of four strategies approach of ERIKS. This can also be seen in ERIKS global objectives where partnership has a separate objective divided into four main areas including Collaboration, Governance and Management, Programme and Advocacy. Below is an outline of the main results seen during the reporting period in relation to these areas.

ERIKS and IPOs share common values and agenda and collaboration is characterized by dialogue, accountability and mutual learning. Overall there seems to be a common understanding between ERIKS and partners when it comes to values and agenda. Partners perceive that ERIKS' values are in line with their own (76 % fully agree) and a vast majority of partners (82 % fully agree) also report that they are treated with respect and dignity by ERIKS. The main words used to describe ERIKS' partnership approach is supporting, sharing, open, curious, accompanying, encouraging and transparent. However, words such as controlling, directing and bureaucratic also appeared, though in a limited manner. Unfortunately, no comments were given to illustrate any of these words, but a more detailed analysis showed a geographical limitation where a phase-out of several partners had occurred during the reporting period due to the difficulties in finding a common vision. Furthermore, a positive development seen in several regions was the increase in knowledge among partners on how to raise a complaint. In the partner survey carried out in 2017 42 % did not know where or how to raise a complaint. In the partner survey carried out in 2018 ERIKS launched its official Complaints and Response Mechanism and information has been shared with partners in various forums, including field visits and partner meetings, since then. In the follow-up survey carried out in the beginning of 2019 68 % reported that they know where and how to raise a complaint. Even though this is a significant increase ERIKS will continue to strengthen this further.

ERIKS and IPOs have good governance structures and functional systems for management, administration and internal control. 84 % (fully agree and to some extent) of the partners report that the partnership with ERIKS has improved their capacity in governance and management. ERIKS is mainly applying a mentoring approach using questions for common reflection. The capacity building forums are field visits, organisational assessments, feedback on reporting and annual partner meetings. Areas include organisational sustainability, diversifying of funds, board management training and development of internal policies such as Child Protection Policies. One
ERIKS and IPOs use relevant methods and have functional systems for planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning. In all the regions there are specific budget allocations made concerning capacity building. In the survey carried out in the beginning of 2019 87 % (fully agree and to some extent) report that ERIKS has contributed to the capacity building in relation to programme activities. Recurring areas include child rights-based approach, child protection, child participation, monitoring and evaluation, project design support, training in Core Humanitarian Standards and more specific areas such gender analysis, conflict sensitivity, outcome mapping and outcome harvesting. One example from South Sudan report that all the partners have been able to mainstream conflict resolution in their programmes with very good results where for example young girls and boys have been trained on conflict mitigation. A statement from one of the savings groups “In our group, we also discuss other issues like peace building, which has helped me to associate with different people from different ethnic backgrounds, which has created unity among the group members”.

ERIKS and IPOs are active in relevant networks, have skills and opportunity to advocate for the rights of the child. ERIKS continuously encourages partners to participate in networks and relevant working groups. The partners are well-integrated in the local communities and have collaboration and/or dialogue with local authorities. Partners are also commonly part of national child rights networks. The majority of partners (73 % fully agree and to some extent) report that the collaboration with ERIKS has provided the opportunity to participate in relevant networks and 84 % (fully agree and to some extent) state that the partnership has improved the organisation’s capacity to advocate for the rights of the child. An example from Myanmar where a Deputy Director at the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation state “I am happy to see ERIKS’ partners working here and happy to cooperate with them. It has been a significant change in people mind-set – they have approached the government for support, while in the past, they were waiting for the government and we did not know what to support them.” Nonetheless, the shrinking space in some of the countries has led to challenges for partners to operate and others do not see themselves advocating for children's rights at local or national level. Furthermore, geographical focus in some countries makes participation in national networks challenging. The partner meetings have therefore been very important in order to establish connections and relations between partners and functioned as informal local networks. In relation to partners, ERIKS will continue to advocate for networking and establishing relations with other organisations as means for strengthening the programme activities and increase the possibility for advocacy, though keeping in mind national restrictions put on local civil societies.

ERIKS is also member of several national networks for example Child Right Coalition Cambodia and has also played an important role in introducing partners to for example the Swedish Embassy in Bangladesh.

Education

Children enjoy their right to quality education. In order to ensure children's right to education, ERIKS focus both on access to as well as quality of education. Education is a key factor to combat poverty and vulnerability, but poverty is also one of the main hindering factors when children's rights are not being respected and/or fulfilled. To accomplish change ERIKS, together with our partners, work on different levels in a society; from legislation and policy-level to local school management and teachers. All levels and actors become equally important and preferably several actors are addressed at once. Below are examples to illustrate results seen on a national level in programme countries when it comes to access and quality, but also some challenges seen.

When it comes to accessibility to education positive developments can be seen in several of the programme countries. For example, in Burkina Faso the school enrolment rate developed very well in the eastern region where one partner, Office de Développement des Eglises Evangéliques (ODE), is operating. Only in 2016 it increased by 19 %. In the same way the high level of drop-out among girls, in comparison to boys, are no longer visible in the project area. Another example is in one of the fishing villages in South Western Uganda, as a result of a back-to-school advocacy campaign by one of the partners, Lake Albert Children Women Advocacy and Development Organisation (LACWADO), the enrolment increased from 513 (227 male, 286 female) at the end of 2017 to 1 575 (842 male, 733 female). The spike in enrolment even led to new challenges including limited infrastructure that the partner, together with education officials, were engaged to solve including increased classroom facilities and staff. On the contrary, in 2018 the development in Mali unfortunately drastically changed as a result of intercommunity conflicts. One of the partners, Agence Evangélique de Développement du Mali (AEDM), reports dramatic decline in enrolment in its project area from 70 % in the end of 2017 to 38 % in 2018. In addition, long and repeated
teacher strikes had a negative impact on school results and caused high drop-out rates. On a positive note is that between 92 % and 97 % of speed school students from 2016/17 remain in school.

Concerning the quality of education positive development can also be reported. In Cambodia the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in collaboration with development partners, including ERIKS’ partners and the private sector, developed relevant laws and policies to strengthen the public primary education system and improve the quality by for example passing and implementing an Annual Education Strategy Plan as well as a Policy on Child Protection in Schools. In Moldova one partner (CRIC) together with legal-duty bearer works to ensure a school environment that respects children’s rights including applying the National Quality Standards for Child Friendly Schools already adopted. 2 out of 35 districts are involved.

Children influence their right to education and duty-bearers take action to promote this right. A key strategy of ERIKS is to work with child participation and ensuring that children are aware of their rights and know how and where to report or act in case their rights are not being recognised. Child clubs, child parliaments, student councils or similar are therefore a common setup in programme countries in order to accomplish this. For example, in Mali one child club influenced access to education by visiting homes of children who had dropped out and managed to bring some of them back and another child club contributed to ending corporal punishment in one school after a complaint being made. A student in Bangladesh report the following: “The FCGA (Friendship Community Governance Aides) madam of Friendship has taught us about courage in weekly code of ethics classes. She told us that we should not fear to speak up for our rights and that we must speak against unfairness in any situation.”

Apart from making sure that children are aware of their right to education and equip them to advocate is also the importance of working with the existing structure. In ERIKS’ programme countries teachers, school management, local school authorities, parents and community members are therefore targeted in order to reach the change needed. Livelihood becomes an important component in many of the programmes and aspects such as scholastics materials, school feeding programme or school fees support also needs to be taken into consideration. For example, one partner, New Life Mission (NLM), in Kenya report a steady increase in the number of children going to school in the last three years where meals to pupils have been provided. In Myanmar an increase in budget allocations made by the government has been reported to provide for school uniform once a year to primary school students. They also announced that sending children to school is compulsory as well as encouraging the establishment of Parents-Teacher Association in every school. In Burkina Faso in all five municipalities covered by two of the partners projects (Christian Relief and Development Organisation (CREDO) and ODE) a steady increase can be reported in investments concerning education in the budgets of each municipality (from 18 % in 2016 to 34 % in 2018). This can be linked to trainings organised by partners for local councillors on child sensitive budgeting coupled with continuous advocacy. However, limited financing for education is a recurring challenge in all of ERIKS’ programme countries. Working to ensure the increase in budget allocations made by government is always the priority and as seen by the examples above also possible achieve though in the absence of this, limited direct actions by ERIKS partners are motivated in order to ensure both access and quality.

Working to ensure that parents and other community members are aware of the importance of education is key in order to ensure sustainability. Parents associations, CBOs and village leaders engaged in awareness raising, home visits, advocacy for more teachers and mobilisation of funds are examples where local communities (moral duty bearers) fill gaps left by legal duty bearers. An example from a parent in Cambodia: “I attended parent’s club with other parents, and I learnt about child rights, abuses and other good lessons. I also received home visits and they explained and encouraged me about the importance of child education, then, I felt very sorry for my child. Now, I want him to continue to study till he finishes university and have good job.” Furthermore, religious/customary leaders have also been important in for example adapting the initiation period to the school year thus enabling boys to complete the school year and the increase in birth certificate also ensure that children can be enrolled and continue school. In Romania, as a result from working with segregated Roma communities’ an increased relation between parents and state structures such as school inspectorate and/or school teachers has been reported.
Health

Children enjoy highest attainable standard of health. When it comes to health, ERIKS’ country programmes primarily focus on preventative measures including access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health education, nutrition, maternal care, pre- and postnatal care, psycho-social support for children, support to children with mental and/or physical disabilities and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) education among others. To reach for change ERIKS and partners target different actors in a society. Below are examples to illustrate results seen on a national or regional level in a programme country when it comes to quality health care and good health conditions, but also some challenges seen.

In Belarus, ERIKS together with the local partner World without Borders (WWB) has worked to improve and replace institutional care for children with disabilities living in house-boarding institutions. ERIKS partner was the main actor involved in ensuring that accompanied residing services previously became part of the social service system in Belarus. In addition, during the reporting period the model of a “social hostel” has been introduced to improve the transition from the house-boarding institutions to independent housing for a period of up to six months. This would mean that the youth could leave the institutions quicker while waiting to receive social housing by the authorities. The model has been created together with District Executive Committee in Polotsk where the committee has allocated the apartment and the local authorities pay for all staff. The aim is to ensure that this model is also spread on a national level.

In Benin, the partner Bureau des Projects de Développement et des Oeuvres Sociales’ (BUPDOS) work to reduce malnutrition contributed to a reduction of moderate malnutrition among children aged 0-5 from 35 % in 2015 to 14 % in 2017 in Atacora, the region with the highest malnutrition rates in the country. The reduction can be linked to the community-based mechanism for identifying and taking care of malnourished children developed by the partner. In Kenya, significant results can be reported concerning maternal and child health in Turkana West sub-county where the partner African Inland Church Health Ministries (AICHM) is operating. For example, the number of deliveries in health facilities improved by 105 %, number of under-fives attending child welfare clinics improved by 17 % and the same can be reported concerning immunization. Three partners in Mali also report significant reductions of water borne diseases in their project areas. From the baseline of 679 cases/year registered by the local health authorities in 2015 to 306 cases/year in 2018. This can be linked to the awareness raising on good sanitation practices led by the community-based water management committees established by ERIKS' partners but also to partners’ direct actions to increase access to improved water sources and sanitation facilities. In the same way the services of Satellite Clinics by ERIKS’ partner Friendship in Bangladesh has played a vital role in providing essential health services to the hard to reach communities. The partner is active in advocating for integrating their innovative approach in the national health-care plan and coverage.

Unfortunately, also challenges and negative trends are reported. In Mali, after positive trends in the fight against child mortality in the beginning of the strategy period in the regions where the partners AEDM and ODE is operating the partners report serious setbacks in the second half of the period. In the 34 villages covered by AEDM malnutrition rose from 587 cases/year in 2016 to 3 379 in 2018. This can be linked to the security crisis in the region where damage or loss of crops resulted as due to increased tensions and conflicts in the region.

Children influence their right to health and duty bearers take action to improve this right. Children increased their capacity to influence their own health and the health of their families through awareness raising on hygiene and sanitation. Aspects such as awareness raising on washing hands with soap, brushing their teeth regularly and taking care of their environment are included in several of the country programmes. Not only is this important for the individual child but children also play a significant role as change agents in advocating for change. A father of two living in Shakahati Char, Chilmari in Bangladesh reports with pride of his daughter, Laboni 9 years old: “She spoke up when she was given less food than her brother. She made us understand that she is entitled to get the same amount of food as her brother for her development and growth. When I asked her from where she has learnt all these, she said that she had learnt these from the code of ethics classes and PTS meetings”. In Kenya the partner I Choose Life (ICL) has equipped youth as health champions in Kisii County. As a result, 42 health clubs were established only in 2017. These clubs are an important forum for youth to express themselves, ask questions, receive correct health education and be able to make informed decisions. Peer educators have also proven successful concerning SRHR. For example, in the western regions of Burkina Faso, the
partner CREDO trained peer educators in 2016 and two years later 95 % of children in the project area state that they know how they can influence their own health situation. In eastern Burkina Faso, ODE focused particularly on raising the awareness concerning early pregnancies and in 2018 the percentage of pregnant female pupils in the same area decreased to 2.9 %. The major change being that all school girls that became pregnant in 2018 completed their school year while a pregnancy earlier automatically resulted in the girl being taken out of school.

In addition to raising the awareness among children and youths concerning health is also the importance of working towards duty bearers in fulfilling their responsibilities. In Kenya commitment by the government in supporting Maternal and Child Health (MCH) as well as SRHR can be seen in Kisii county where advocacy efforts by ICL led to the county health committee allocating 7 million KSh for Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) activities in the County in the 2017/2018 budget. A budget line for sanitation in two villages in Karimama, Benin, was also reported in 2017 as a result of advocacy carried out by the partner DEDRAS. In Cambodia reports show that hospital staff has become more active in providing medical check-up to girls and boys victims of trafficking and sexual abuse. This improvement has contributed to the increased numbers of victims going to hospitals. Report also show schools allocating budget for the maintenance of handwashing basin and water consumption. In Romania one of the partners, Networks, is working with one of the main hospitals in the region to improve the health of mothers and new-borns. Over the last two years the project staff has noticed considerable changes in reception, care and support that the Roma women receive when they visit the hospital. Another partner Fundatia Crestina Elim (FCE) in Romania has signed a partnership agreement with the City Hall where the local authorities will provide financial support of utilities in connection to a Sanitary Centre (including toilets, showers and washing machines) built in a Roma community.

ERIKS partners also work to facilitate cooperation between legal and moral duty bearers. For example in Mali, where linking district health centres and community-based health workers led to a more efficient approach in identifying malnourished children. Nutritional trainings and cooking demonstrations have also greatly improved the health outcomes of children in targeted households and communities in for example Uganda. One report: “I feel challenged that there are some mistakes we have been making unknowingly like using unsafe water to wash hands before eating since the moral practice would be using safe water to clean your hands”. In Bangladesh, Community Health Volunteers (CHV) assisted in immunizing 113 pregnant mothers, 50 adolescents and 790 children during the reporting period. In Myanmar it can been seen that almost all families in the target areas now have latrines at home. Significant numbers of parents also improved the way they took care of their children – providing nutritious food and better basic health care. For example, in the past they used to grow vegetable to sell – now they grow for their children. Health Sub-committees established in Myanmar also approached the Department of Health for support on children’s health issues. One member state: “In the past we were afraid to go to the government offices. When we understood that they have the responsibility for people’s health, we went to the Department of Health, and they provided material for 40 latrines and vaccinations for children”. Other examples from Benin are local hygiene committees and mother associations where for example the mother associations have been particularly important to follow-up on sexual education of children in the families and in the social mobilisation of women and girls.

**Protection**

Children are protected from abuse, negligence and exploitation, and victims are rehabilitated and reintegrated.

Children’s right to protection is an important aspect in all ERIKS programmes and projects. As a child rights organisation it is of utmost importance to ensure the protection of children and strive for national and regional changes. Children in conflict with the law, children subjected to trafficking or abuse or children living on the streets are particularly vulnerable groups within this thematic area as well as the focus on countering negative cultural and religious norms that are harmful for an individual. Below are examples to illustrate results seen on a national or regional level in a programme country when it comes to children’s right to protection, but also some challenges seen.

In Kenya the partner Association of Charitable Children’s Institutions of Kenya (ACCIK), in collaboration with the Institute of Curriculum Development and Pwani University, developed a university-level curriculum on childcare and protection where social workers can now be trained. The course is offered at one of the technical training institutes and a way to equip the professional community on child protection. In Myanmar, a Safe and Child-Friendly School Construction guideline was published and announced by the Ministry of Education where ERIKS’ partners provided technical support in the process as a way of ensuring a safe environment for children in schools. Another partner in Kenya, NLM, supported the construction of child friendly witness boxes in court and a Child Protection Unit in Mashuru Police station has advanced the role of the Court Users Committee in the
protection and advancement of children’s rights within the Criminal Justice System. The Child Protection Unit is now in the last phase of completion. Similarly, in Cambodia the adoption of a juvenile justice law was approved and is now implemented to ensure the respect of the child in the justice system. ERIKS’ partners contributed in this process. The strengthening of regional and bilateral collaboration with neighbouring countries and with international communities to counter trafficking has also continued throughout the reporting period.

In addition, all the thematic areas (education, health and protection) are highly interlinked and affects one another. For example, in Bangladesh results have been seen where many parents and families have stopped sending their school-aged children to earn for the family as a result of the primary education programme now being implemented in the chars by ERIKS’ partner Friendship. The number of cases of early marriages have also reduced significantly. In Mali no cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) have been reported or registered by the health services for an increasing number of villages that signed a local ban against this practice during the reporting period (from 14 in 2016 to 21 in 2018). A remaining challenge is to ensure a ban of FGM at municipality level in order to demonstrate the political will to also end this practise. In the same area 32 out of 35 villages have also taken a stand against child labour in local gold mines as compared to 0 villages before the project start in 2016 and 21 in 2017. In Uganda, ERIKS’ partner Save Street Children Uganda (SASCU) together with the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development developed the Street Children Management Information System which is now in its pilot phase. In Benin, ERIKS’ partners have played an important role to improve the coordination between legal duty bearers, community leaders and local civil society which improved their ability to take appropriate action. One example is 10 cases of forced marriages that were stopped in Karimama in 2016 and 2017 through collaboration between the local child protection committees, the social services and local police. One case was even taken to court and became known even outside of Karimama.

The main challenges seen in relation to protection is the direct correlation between poverty and lack of adequate parental care and child abuse. Similarly, institutional weaknesses, such as limited capacity and resources, also affect the implementation of child protection policies and laws in targeted communities. A holistic approach is therefore a prerequisite in order to accomplish change in this area also including aspects of livelihood and vocational training.

Children are able to denounce violations and duty bearers take action to protect children. In the different child clubs, child groups or child parliaments children are taught their right to protection from abuse, negligence and exploitation. One child from Cambodia reports the following: “I have learnt a lot about good and bad touch, child abuse and child violence. I am clear that adults or other people cannot touch the children. If the abuse happened to me or other children in my community, I will report to my parent, neighbour and the police who can help me and my community”. In Romania, where the work is particularly focusing on Roma children as a minority in the integration process to the Romanian society, children also receive tools to handle aggressive behaviour and situation of e.g. bullying. Nonetheless it is a long process and cases can still be seen of children being subjected to physical, psychological abuse/bullying and discrimination, for example in public schools. A positive tendency though is that children have started to express their concerns which provides a better possibility to also address the situation. Reports from Myanmar shows similar results where school aged children contacted Child Protection Committees (CPC) and/or parents when they were in a situation where they did not feel safe.

Furthermore, in Belarus the partner organisation WWB has worked to improve the children’s possibilities to learn about their rights while placed in a closed-type institution. Children’s councils have been established in one of the institutions to allow the children to express their voice on matters affecting them. Another example is from Uganda where one partner African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPCAN) has pioneered the Letter Link Boxes through which children are able to express their views on child protection issues in schools and communities. Both these examples illustrate activities being carried out to strengthen local child protection structures and referral mechanism. However, in the case of Belarus limitation can still be seen and even though the children, through the councils, become aware of their rights they are still within the boundaries of the institutions. For example, letters written by children are opened and read by staff at the institutions before sent or before distributed to the child in question. This severely affects the possibilities for children to be protected and ensure that proper reporting mechanisms are in place.

Another important aspect concerning child protection is rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of abuse. As an example, in Cambodia, in the period of 2016-2018, 209 child victims have been recovered from sexual abuse, labour exploitation, forced marriages and trafficking through case counselling and legal support. Emergency Foster Care families (EFC) have also been set up to provide children a family environment during the rehabilitation in preparing for sending them back to their biological family.

In addition, in order to reach sustainable change, it is important to work within the existing structures and address the duty-bearers in question. Numerous training sessions and seminars have therefore been conducted with various duty-bearers throughout the country programmes including social workers, family and protection
units, police and law enforcement officers and staff at various national departments such as Department of Education and District Information Department. As a result, several partners in Cambodia (Mlup Russey (MRO), Chab Dai Organisation (CDO), KREDIT) report a changed perception and practices towards the care of orphanage and vulnerable children (OVC) where the idea that community and family-based care is the best option is generally accepted and promoted. There is also an increased reporting and filing complaints on child abuses from local authorities after they received training on safe migration, trafficking and child protection. In Myanmar, the Department of Education at the township in Putao issued directives to stop corporal punishment in schools and the Department of Social Affairs provided training to public school teachers on child friendly methods instead. In Bangladesh, the District Information Department of Kurigram, with support from ERIKS’ partner Friendship, arranged awareness meetings in 8 different Chars of Kurigram with the aim of eliminating all kinds of discrimination and violence against women and children from the marginalised communities. The department has never before arranged any awareness activities outside of the mainland.

Furthermore, in several of the countries ERIKS and its partners also work to ensure a better coordination and cooperation between various structures. For example, in Uganda the partners Child Restoration Outreach (CRO), Redeemed of the Lord Evangelistic Church Development Agency (RODA) and Children at Risk Network (CRANE) have been involved in the rescue and resettlement of vulnerable and abandoned children also facilitating referral linkages with communities and duty bearers such as Child and Family Protection Unit and police which has increased the effectiveness of resettlement efforts within communities. In Mali most villages and several of the municipalities covered by ERIKS’ projects have functional child protection committees, initiated by ERIKS’ partners, but now led by local authorities to contribute to better coordination of legal and moral duty-bearers in the protection of children. Similarly, in South Sudan activities have been directed to strengthen formal and informal child protection systems to enhance psychosocial development and protection of children engaged in or affected by conflict. As a result, school workers, traditional community leaders and ambassadors/agents of change have been trained to implement the Ministry of Education’s child protection policies in Kapoeta East County.

Parents as well as community and religious leaders are also important duty-bearers to address. In several of the country programmes parents are trained in parental skills and positive discipline programme in order to hinder the use of corporal punishment. Aspects of livelihood also becomes important aspects where partners also work to ensure employability of parents to secure a better and safer environment for children. A boy of 7 in Myanmar says: "I am happy with my parents because they stopped beating me and talk to me nicely". Church representatives and religious leaders have also been key in advocating for change. For example, in Garissa in Kenya the Islam religious leaders were engaged to prevent child marriages and FGM. In Burkina Faso none of the 236 churches involved in Country Christian Aids Network’s (CCANet) project accept celebrating child marriages with a minor as compared to 80 % in 2017.

**Humanitarian assistance**

In the three-year period 2016-2018, ERIKS invested 23.5 million SEK (8,5+10,0+5,0) in humanitarian assistance. Out of this amount, 8,1 million consisted of financial support from SMC/Sida for interventions within the framework of the Rapid Response Mechanism. The main strategy for ERIKS’ humanitarian assistance is to work through our national and local partner organisations. This is how ERIKS and partners can bring added value; responding quickly, reaching neglected areas, being cost-efficient, linking with rehabilitation, resilience and long-term development projects.

Compared to long-term development work, the level of resources used for humanitarian assistance varies significantly from year to year. This is of course related to the number and degree of humanitarian crises and whether these affect areas where ERIKS’ partner organisations are active. We only occasionally support humanitarian interventions in areas where we have no long-term involvement. Other factors determining the level of resources available are access to funding from SMC/Sida and ability to raise additional funds from the general public.

Within this three-year period, ERIKS has become active in humanitarian interventions in an increasing number of countries and several new partner organisations have become involved. This is a result of a strategy to build the capacity of long-term development partners to respond when a crisis strikes their communities. ERIKS is convinced that it is not possible to make a clear separation between development and humanitarian assistance. Communities are often moving between these different contexts over time due to conflict, climate change and natural hazards. Thus, development actors must be prepared to move between different types of activities and response, sometimes working at several levels at the same time. Within this span, it is also important to work on disaster preparedness and resilience. ERIKS and its partners have therefore been involved in a number of
capacity building initiatives both in the humanitarian field (for example Core Humanitarian Standards) and on resilience (for example Global Platform for DRR).

Major humanitarian interventions during this period have responded to three main types of crises. Prolonged drought has been a huge challenge for many communities in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Kenya and South Sudan, ERIKS have been responding to hunger and child malnutrition over the three years, with a peak in 2017 when five partner organisations assisted over 130,000 people in total. A second type of crisis where ERIKS has intervened is flooding. Together with experienced partners in both India and Bangladesh, ERIKS has been part of providing life-saving assistance to many thousands of families. Several of these interventions have been funded by SMC/Sida within the RRM framework. Thirdly, conflict forces huge numbers of people to run away from their homes to seek for refuge. An example of this are the Rohingya people leaving Myanmar for Bangladesh. Together with a local partner, ERIKS has been able to provide safe drinking water and latrines to over 15,000 refugees. Also in South Sudan, large numbers of internally displaced people have been receiving food and non-food items. Apart from the above-mentioned examples, humanitarian interventions have been implemented in collaboration with local partners in Myanmar, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Mali and Benin. In 2016 and 2017, ERIKS also provided assistance to refugees in Syria and Lebanon in collaboration with two international NGOs.

4. Strategic developments

The most significant strategic development in the period 2016-2018 has been the gradual development and growth of the regional offices. The objective has been for ERIKS to maintain closer collaboration with partner organisations, increase contextual knowledge and strengthen follow-up capacity. Increasingly, ERIKS is also able to take part in networks and forums for child rights focused organisations increasing possibilities to be updated on national issues and take part in advocacy initiatives. At the West Africa office, the number of staff has gone from two to four. NGO-registration in Burkina Faso was obtained in 2017, and from April 2018 the team is no longer under a host organisation but works under ERIKS own registration. At the East Africa office, the number of staff has gone from three to five. NGO-registration in Uganda has been obtained and the team moved to its own facilities in 2017. However, formal employment is still with a host organisation. At the South East Asia office, the number of staff has gone from three to four. The team has moved to its own facilities and the registration process in Cambodia is ongoing. For Eastern Europe, an office in Romania was opened in 2017, initially employing only one staff. In 2019, a second team member was recruited. For the last of ERIKS' regions, South Asia, a regional office has not yet been established. This has been motivated by a fewer number of partner organisations in the region, and to a certain degree financial constraint. How ERIKS can develop the same level of proximity with partners in South Asia as in other regions is a matter of ongoing reflection.

When it comes to geographical focus, ERIKS has prioritised expansion in two countries where the organisation has not been that active before; Myanmar and South Sudan. Both are countries that have experienced and are still troubled by political conflict and where challenges in terms of child rights are huge. In Myanmar, ERIKS initiated work in 2016 and have since then established partnership with four partner organisations. Except from one project, the rest of the work is focused on the Kachin state, a part of the country where ethnic conflict has a very negative impact on the situation for children. ERIKS has also been active in supporting the Rohingya people, not geographically staying in Myanmar but in the refugee camps in Bangladesh. In South Sudan, it has proved a bit harder to find fitting partners for the type of work that ERIKS is supporting. Partnership has been established with two organisations, but sadly one of these partnerships have been put on hold due to investigations of suspected fraud. The remaining partner works in Kapoeta state, being part of a larger programme embracing projects focused on the pastoralist populations around the common borders between Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan.

A third strategic development has been an increased focus on resilience in all ERIKS regions. Although the idea of strengthening communities in different types of crises is not new, the understanding of the importance of this aspect has grown. ERIKS is actively taking part in networks globally and regionally to learn more about resilience. Furthermore, partner organisations are encouraged to participate in platforms for collaboration around DRR and resilience. At least 8 projects in different regions have been initiated under the label resilience (although this perspective is present also in other projects). Some of them have received funding from the SMC resilience fund, some have been funded under the Global programme and others have been funded directly by ERIKS or other back donors. In ERIKS new Development Policy, adopted in 2018, resilience is one of four strategic approaches and a position paper explaining how ERIKS aims to work with resilience has been developed.
5. Risk management

Looking at the risk analyses in ERIKS different country programmes, there are three main risks that are repeated and where we and our partner organisations at several occasions have had to be proactive in the period 2016-2018.

From the start of the programme, political instability and social unrest were identified as prominent risks in several countries such as Mali, South Sudan and Myanmar. These three countries had already been experiencing ethnic tension and extremism leading to open conflict and civil war and the risk for these conflicts to resurge was evident. Unfortunately, in all three countries this risk has also materialised. In Mali, the geographical areas considered insecure have grown and thereby affecting several of ERIKS’ partners work in the central parts of the country. All projects were able to continue running but certain activities had to be adapted. Transportation on motorbikes and vehicles was restricted and large gatherings where people were supposed to move between villages needed to be reprogrammed. In 2018, the conflict based on religious extremism in Mali contaminated a latent ethnic conflict between cattle-breeders and sedentary farmers leading to violent clashes. Both the conflict around religious extremism and the ethnic conflicts have unfortunately spread into the neighbouring country Burkina Faso at an unexpected and worrying rate. The new political leadership in Burkina Faso installed in 2015 after a peaceful popular uprising seems to have lost its strength. In the insecure eastern parts of the country, a number of teachers have been attacked leading to a close-down of several schools. Thus, ERIKS partner organisation has been forced to amend its activities planned in relation to these schools. In South Sudan, the civil war between the two major ethnic groups has resurged at several occasions leading to large waves of refugees, both within and outside the country. One of ERIKS’ partner organisations has been operating in an area where large numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs) settled. ERIKS therefore supported the organisation in several phases of humanitarian interventions, one of these projects being funded by SMC/Sida HUM. Parallel to this, the organisation was able to continue its child rights-oriented work, but of course activities had to be revised in relation to the security situation at hand. In Myanmar, ERIKS partners are mainly active in the Kachin state, where there is an ongoing protracted conflict between Government and the Kachin Independent Army. At several occasions, the conflict has escalated into armed fighting. This has affected the work of the partner organisation in camps receiving new scores of refugees, as well as activities supposed to be carried out in the communities. Peace-building activities and maintaining education opportunities for young people are the most strategic approaches in order to address the roots of the conflict.

In several of ERIKS programme countries, the democratic system and tradition is very weak. Ruling parties and political leaders have been there for a very long time and have an interest in restricting independence and space for civil society. This is evident in countries like Cambodia, Belarus and Moldova. In Cambodia, the application of a new law on registration of NGOs makes it easier for the Government to ban an NGO that does not comply with regulations. Although the possibility to close down an organisation is not used very often, it creates an attitude of self-censorship where organisations prefer to stay on the safe side. To be able to follow political development and take part in advocacy initiatives, ERIKS has chosen to become part of the Civil Society Alliance Forum. So far, neither ERIKS or any of its partner organisations have been directly harassed. In both Moldova and Belarus, opportunities for civil society to be involved in advocacy are very limited. Instead, the approach is to work in close collaboration with authorities in order to be able to influence and build capacity of office bearers in relation to child rights issues. Also in several other countries, there is an ambition from the side of authorities to clean up the civil society sector. To a certain extent, this is understandable as there are many fake civil society organisations pretending to do social work, but who are mainly businesses for private interest. But the other side of the coin is that governments see this as an opportunity to control the influence of political opposition and civil rights defenders. This is an aspect that ERIKS partner organisations need to be aware of and when communicating the objectives of their work. When advocacy on human rights issues is considered, ERIKS and partner organisations prefer to take action as part of larger NGO networks.

ERIKS has chosen to prioritise work in a number of very remote and marginalised areas. These areas are often very exposed to climatic change and natural disasters, such as drought, cyclones and floods. A natural disaster interrupts activity and at times foil the preconditions of a project. In Bangladesh, ERIKS’ partner organisation is working in delta areas that are flooded every year and with climatic change, these floods have become stronger and more difficult for people to handle. ERIKS’ partner is working parallelly with child rights related issues, such as education and protection, and disaster risk reduction activities. They also have the capacity to carry out humanitarian assistance when needed. The risk for natural disasters has forced the partner to develop its flexibility and to move between different types of interventions in line with the present situation. In the same way, partner organisations in northern Kenya and in South Sudan have seen recurrent droughts in the past few years. They have been forced to adapt implementation of long-term development projects in times of severe drought and carry out humanitarian action alongside the development work. The ability to move along the spectrum of development, resilience, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action is a huge asset for local organisations in these
disaster-prone contexts and a strong added value compared to other specialized organisations, development or humanitarian.

A number of other aspects that have been identified as risks of not being able to attain the set objectives for the country programmes. Working according to a rights-based approach requires good and stable relationships with duty-bearers. In some contexts, there is a high turnover of politicians and other office bearers due to elections or other political agendas. In remote locations, there is also a tendency that office bearers move away as soon as they find better options. Project staff need to be aware of this and work hard on establishing relations to new duty-bearers. A similar challenge for some organisations is to maintain staff in projects located in marginalised communities. ERIKS has sometimes needed to have dialogues with partner organisations on improved staff conditions and salaries in order to motivate staff to stay longer. Another risk that partner organisations need to consider is opposition based on cultural values and religion. When child rights perspectives on female genital mutilation, child marriage or sexual and reproductive health and rights challenge cultural values, there is a risk that community leaders will try to stop communication on these issues. Partner organisations need to be culturally sensitive and smart in knowing when to push and when to hold back.

6. Learning

In such a large global programme, spanning over 13 country programmes and almost 100 projects, there is a lot of learning at all levels. ERIKS is a flexible financial partner who will as far as possible give partner organisations room for learning and adaption of strategies in ongoing projects. We believe that in planning a project, it is impossible to understand all the parameters and foresee all possible effects of what you and other actors will be doing. On the other hand, we also think that there is a lot of learning in specific projects that can be valuable for other projects and contexts. Here is some of the learning that is of a more general character and have been identified in several different contexts.

In a number of projects, it has become clear how important it is to involve religious and traditional leaders (Christian, Muslim or other) in social change, especially when it comes to attitudes and behaviour. If the message from the project is contradicted by religious or traditional leaders, people will most likely stick with their leaders. In Mali, a Muslim preacher has been employed by the project to approach local religious leaders and dialogue with them on the customary practice of female genital mutilation. This has led to 21 villages taking a stand to ban the practice. In Benin, Muslim religious leaders speak on subjects like child marriage and birth certificates in connection to Friday prayers. Certain imams even refuse to baptise a child who has no birth certificate, this being a condition for the child later to be able to pursue education. In Cambodia, the Church network has been used for raising awareness and build local structures for disaster risk reduction. As a consequence, churches have collected local funds to be able to help vulnerable people in their communities in the event of a natural disaster. In Burkina Faso, traditional leaders have agreed to change the timing of the rites of initiation so that these no longer interfere with the school calendar.

Parallel to involving traditional leadership, creating forums where local authorities, public services related to education, health and protection, police and community-based organisations and committees sit together is essential in forming viable structures for the fulfilment and protection of children’s rights. Often legislation and policies for child protection issues are relatively well developed, but at local level, knowledge and capacity to work according to the policies are extremely low. Furthermore, the different authorities and services very seldom collaborate with each other or the community structures in defending children’s rights. Therefore, a success concept has been to organise regular meetings where these different stakeholders meet to discuss their respective responsibilities and where they can reinforce each other. In these fora, channels for communication between community-based child protection committees (and/or child rights clubs) and relevant authorities are established. There are numerous examples from countries like Kenya, Uganda, Benin, Bangladesh among others where community-based structures and authorities in collaboration have been able to avert child marriage, abuse, child labour and other types of
exploitation of children. However successful these types of forums have become, the challenge still remains to make them viable long-term. Therefore it is important to involve municipality authorities and politicians at an early stage to convince them about the importance of child protection and for them to make a commitment in their budgets to facilitate the collaboration structures.

The longer we work in the area of child rights, the more we understand the importance of education, not only as an avenue for personal development and career opportunities for the child, but for many other connected child rights. For example, a girl who is pursuing education is less likely to be exploited for household work, exposed to sexual abuse, subject to child marriage or early and unwanted pregnancy. Similar risks for boys are avoided by giving them the opportunity to go to school. In contexts of latent or open conflict, education is also extremely important to prevent young boys from being recruited into extremism and violence. When young people see no hope or opportunities for a better life, frustration will make them join extremist or criminal circles. Another aspect of education is that schools provide an arena where it is possible to make children aware of their rights. Child rights clubs can be formed where children have the opportunity to share their experiences, organise themselves and make their voices heard.

Participation is an important aspect of child rights and at the centre of attention in ERIKS’ work. We can see numerous examples where children are agents of change in promoting and protecting their own rights. In many cases, they are also participating and contributing to change in their families and communities. When children have access to knowledge and have the right to speak, they often come with innovative solutions to current problems. However, when promoting child participation, it is important to consider their safety. It is the responsibility of the partner organisation and other local actors to assess when it is safe for a child to speak or act on behalf of its peers, and when an adult should be representing the children. A child should never be given responsibility for things that are the duty of adults, and participation of children should always be age-appropriate. But as a concluding reflection, it has been surprising to see to what level children are able to participate and contribute to change in the different contexts where ERIKS’ partner organisations are working.

Within the time frame of the programme, ERIKS has been working actively to strengthen its understanding of and ability to promote gender equality. Internal capacity building has been carried out in the form of workshops and participation in trainings. A new policy on diversity and gender equality has been elaborated and adopted. In relation to partner organisations, gender equality has been on the programme of a number of national or regional partner meetings. Instructions for assessment of projects give clearer direction on analysing the gender aspects. However, gender inequality is part of every society and context and will have to be addressed continuously and in many ways. For example, in Cambodia, partners recognised that women in their organisations were not given the same career opportunities as men. Therefore, some organisations have developed new policies to facilitate the promotion of women; for example, providing in-service training for female staff, allowing for breast feeding during office hours and inviting more women as board members. ERIKS has also promoted a Women Forum where female staff from several organisations have regular meetings to develop their self-confidence and discuss concerns and obstacles for women in their organisations.

7. Children’s voices

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

Sériba Doumbia is Assistant Secretary of the Child Club in Tiakadougou Dialakoro a project implemented by the partner organisation AMPDR in Mali: “We, the children of T. Dialakoro have been involved in all the activities that the project [of AMPDR] organises in our municipality. Through this, we have made radio broadcasts on the Radio of Sélingué on the importance of schooling for children, hard domestic work that affects the physical development of the child and also the risks of gold panning activities for children. Thanks to these activities, we have learnt to formulate advocacy messages so that our interests are no longer neglected. Also, we benefited from trainings through this project which reinforced our capacity to take action, to communicate and to have an increased knowledge of our rights to be able to do advocacy. In addition, as members of the steering committee of the child club, we ensure that the interests and rights of all children are respected and defended by each of us, both of children who go to school and those who are not in school.”

Odong Marvin is a member of a child rights club included in a project implemented by the partner organisation SOS Uganda: “I am 15 years old. I am in primary six in Bwobomanam primary school. I am a member of a child rights club. I stay in Pango village in Alokolum parish. This project has been very helpful to me. I had given up
with education because my parents used to insult me that I was too old to be in primary school unless I wanted to grow beads. They even encouraged me to leave school and start "bodaboda job". I approached our school patron who invited my parents for positive parenting training facilitated by SOS Gulu. My father changed to the extent that I thought he was planning something bad for me, but little did I know that he was among the few who attended the training. He called me, informed me of what they had discussed with the teacher, and finally took me the boarding section. My father is a changed person. My siblings and I are part of the decision making in the family something that he had never done in my life. I am very happy with SOS Uganda and I encourage the school to invite such parents for peer discussion to change their minds and support children to stay in school."

Shilpi, a student of Friendship Batikamari Secondary School in Bangladesh expresses the following: "Before my JSC examination in November 2018, I was very worried about my future as there were no scope to study Class IX and beyond around ... Like many girls of my age in the area, I may have to concede to early marriage, which I don't want. I was overjoyed when I heard that Friendship will open Class IX in our school (mobile school in char areas – editor's note) next year." Shilpi did pass the Junior School Certificate (JSC) successfully and got admitted in Class IX and could avoid early marriage as well as got an opportunity to continue her studies because of Friendship's endeavour.

Hamidou Sawadogo is one of the children that participate in meetings organised by the partner organisation Lydie for children living on the streets of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Here are his thoughts: "I find that these moments that we spend together to discuss bring us closer each time to the persons that come to talk to us. They give us advice, and that allows us to openly discuss the problems we face daily. Especially since some people consider us as criminals, thieves and children without a future. Thanks to the discussions with the facilitators we know that we have rights and also obligations. They teach us to adopt a good behaviour among ourselves and also towards society.

December 6, 2019

Report elaborated and signed by:

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ERIKS Development Partner / Erikshjälpen  ERIKS Development Partner / Erikshjälpen
## Appendix 1

### List of abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCIK</td>
<td>Association of Charitable Children's Institutions of Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>AEDM</td>
<td>Agence Evangélique de Développement du Mali</td>
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<td>AICHM</td>
<td>African Inland Church Health Ministries</td>
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<td>ANPPCAN</td>
<td>African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMPDR</td>
<td>Association Malienne Pour le Développement Rural</td>
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<td>CCANet</td>
<td>Country Christian Aids Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDO</td>
<td>Chab Dai Organisation</td>
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<td>CHV</td>
<td>Community Health Volunteers</td>
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<td>CPC</td>
<td>Child Protection Committees</td>
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<td>CRANE</td>
<td>Children at Risk Network</td>
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<td>CREDO</td>
<td>Christian Relief and Development Organisation</td>
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<td>CRIC</td>
<td>Child Rights Information Centre</td>
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<td>CRO</td>
<td>Child Restoration Outreach</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEDRAS</td>
<td>Organisation Non-Gouvernementale pour le Développement durable, le Renforcement et l'Auto promotion des Structures communautaires</td>
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<td>FCE</td>
<td>Fundatia Crestina Elim</td>
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<td>FCGA</td>
<td>Friendship Community Governance Aides</td>
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<td>FGM</td>
<td>Female Genital Mutilation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICL</td>
<td>I Choose Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSC</td>
<td>Junior School Certificate (8th grade)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LACWADO</td>
<td>Lake Albert Children Women Advocacy and Development Organisation</td>
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<td>MCH</td>
<td>Maternal and Child Health</td>
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<td>MRO</td>
<td>M'rup Russey</td>
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<td>NLM</td>
<td>New Life Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODE</td>
<td>Office de Développement des Eglises Evangéliques</td>
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<td>OVC</td>
<td>Orphanage and Vulnerable Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>RODA</td>
<td>Redeemed of the Lord Evangelistic Church Development Agency</td>
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<td>SASCU</td>
<td>Save Street Children Uganda</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRH</td>
<td>Sexual Reproductive Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRHR</td>
<td>Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
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<tr>
<td>WWB</td>
<td>World without Borders</td>
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