

Global Programme Report

2021



Previous page: In Myanmar, awareness raising activities are arranged for children as well as duty bearers on children's rights and the importance of protecting children from abuse and violence.

Photo: World Concern Myanmar (WCM)

1. Introduction

ERIKS' Global Programme Report 2021 summarizes and highlights the most important results from the organisation's international programmes and presents challenges in terms of program implementation. The report is produced for ERIKS' Board of Directors but is also meant to present an opportunity for ERIKS' staff to reflect on lessons learnt, risk management and strategic developments.

In 2021, ERIKS worked through 60 partner organisations in 15 countries. Kenya hosts the largest partner portfolio (nine partners), followed by Uganda (seven partners), and India and Cambodia (six partners each).

More than 200 000 children were reached in 2021 through ERIKS' partner organisations' interventions related to education and leisure, health, protection and humanitarian assistance. Every one of these children have a unique story to be told. Some will have seen their life completely transformed through the support they have received. Such as the young girl whose parents have decided to let her continue to pursue an education instead of getting married at a young age. Others will have become inspired to raise their voices when they witness injustice, to be an active part of their communities and to stand up for children's rights. All these changes that are called outcomes in development lingo, mean something for the individual child, parent, or community member. This report includes figures and statistics of the results ERIKS have achieved for children through our partner organisations (section 3). It also includes children's own stories (section 9) that help illustrate what these figures are all about, and what a difference it has made.

The table below lists the regions and programme countries that the global programme report 2021 includes.

| Region | Country Programme |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Eastern Europe | Romania |
| | Moldova |
| | Belarus |
| South Asia | India |
| | Bangladesh |
| | Afghanistan ¹ |
| South East Asia | Myanmar |
| | Cambodia |
| | Laos |
| East Africa | Ethiopia |
| | South Sudan |
| | Uganda |
| | Kenya |
| West Africa | Benin |
| | Burkina Faso |
| | Mali |

¹ Afghanistan is not one of ERIKS' ordinary programme countries but is added to this list as ERIKS implemented a humanitarian intervention in Afghanistan through Medair in 2021.

2. Reporting process

ERIKS Global Programme Report 2021 has been compiled at ERIKS' head office in Huskvarna and is based on ERIKS' annual country reports compiled by Regional Offices, which in turn are based on annual reports from each partner organisation. The country reports include data and input from field visits, evaluations and risk assessments and are prepared at the regional offices by regional managers, programme monitoring officers and financial monitoring officers.

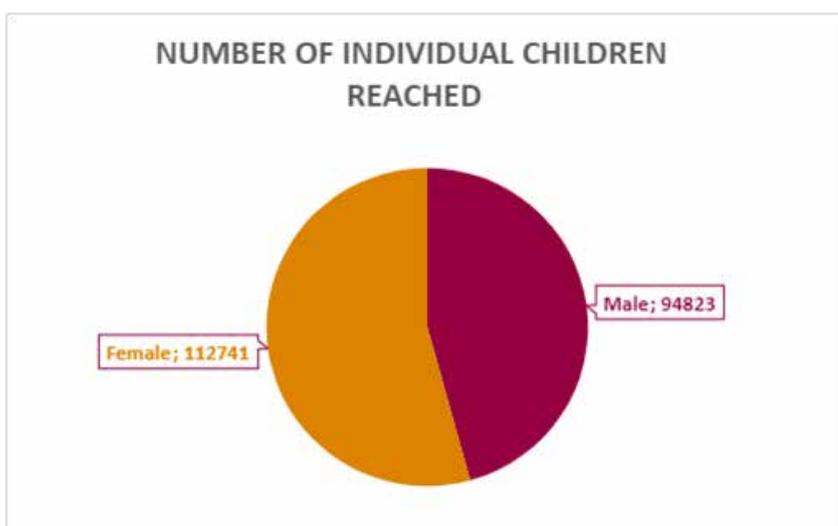
Strategic development is something that takes place over time. As highlighted in earlier annual reports, the Quality Assurance and Programme Advice team (QAPA) at head office in Huskvarna has since the first of January 2021 been supporting the regional office teams to ensure quality in programme operations. The QAPA team has therefore supported the regional offices in drafting their country reports for 2021. The financial reports are consolidated and reviewed by the organisation's financial controller. The compilation of the country reports into results presented in the Global Programme Report is performed by the Donor Relations (DR) team² at head office, together with the programme director and deputy programme director.

As requested by the Board of Directors, in 2020 ERIKS introduced a requirement for regional offices to collect disaggregated data from interventions as a complement to the ordinary country reports. The disaggregated data is, among others, a fundamental step to enhance the gender perspective in all interventions. A shortened presentation of statistics, referred to as Global Reach Indicators (hereafter GRI), is included in this report when relevant and applicable. Collecting and analysing GRI has been developed and strengthened in 2021 but is still an ongoing process. This as collecting statistics is always challenging and it is therefore important to see the presented data of GRI as an indicator of the correct figures and as a complement to the qualitative results presented in this report.

Although ERIKS has one ongoing intervention in Laos and a few in both Ethiopia and India, there are no country strategies for these specific countries and hence no country reports for 2021. The narrative report is therefore based on the country reports for Burkina Faso, Benin, South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Cambodia, Myanmar, Mali, Bangladesh, Romania, Belarus and Moldova. In addition, information and examples of results from the annual project reports from on-going interventions in Laos, Ethiopia and India have been considered and some included.

3. Results

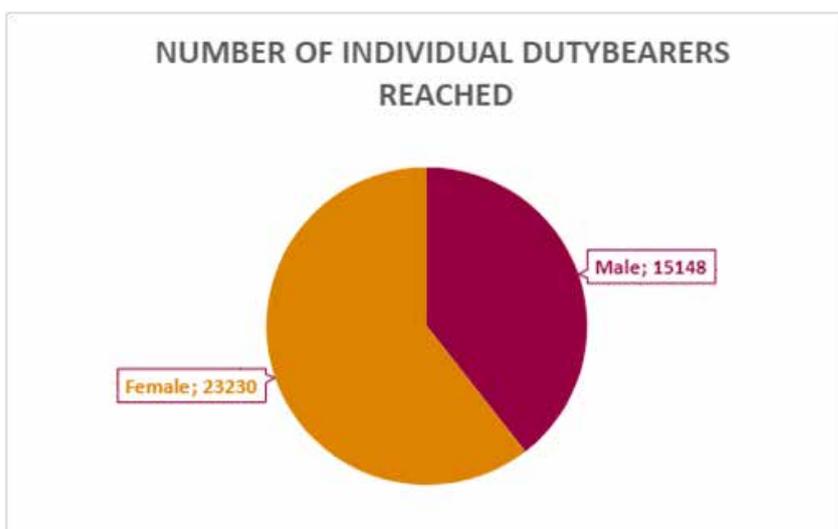
Under this section, the results found in the country reports are presented. To facilitate the reading, the results are divided as per ERIKS' ambition to increase partnership and ERIKS' four global goals: education, health, protection and humanitarian assistance. In addition, the results for 2021 are further analysed using GRI as presented below.



² Since the first of January 2021, the Donor Relations team is working with institutional funding for both the global programmes as well as the national programmes.

In total, ERIKS directly reached 207 564 (girls 54% and boys 46%) children and youth³ during 2021 (see diagram above). A majority of the children and youth reached in 2021 were in the ages between 6-18 years and a minority, around 30 000, were above 18 years. Moreover, almost 90 000 parents/guardians have been directly reached through the interventions funded by ERIKS during 2021.

A prerequisite to reach sustainable results in ERIKS' work is to **address legal and moral duty-bearers on all levels**. ERIKS' partner organisations are hence working to meet, gather and raise awareness for duty bearers in all thematic areas. Connecting this to collected data for GRI in 2021, one can see that despite the problems to meet and gather in larger groups because of Covid-19 restrictions, 5122 meetings were held in 2021 with various duty bearers⁴. However, since the number of meetings is reported per thematic area, it could be that less meetings were held if one meeting concerned more than one thematic area, thus having been reported twice or even thrice.



As can be illustrated in the above diagram a total number of 38 378 duty bearers have also been directly involved in ERIKS' interventions in 2021. About 60 % of them are female. There is not a big difference in the distribution of duty bearers by sex between the thematic areas, except for the humanitarian aspect where there is a higher number of women involved.

A. Partnership

The country reports for 2020 highlighted a decrease in partnership initiatives such as physical meetings, networking and collective advocacy efforts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The country reports for 2021 unfortunately continue to highlight that there have been less partnership initiatives due to consequences of COVID-19, such as travel restrictions. At regional office level, the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to cause disruptions on many levels, particularly in relation to partner visits, monitoring of interventions, networking opportunities and training events. However, both staff at head office, regional office and implementing partners have, as already stated in the global programme report 2020, shown great ability in being flexible during the COVID-19 pandemic and have adapted interventions and programmes to the challenges to continue the important work of ERIKS. An example of this flexibility is that the monitoring support in 2021 was carried out online. This limited the negative impacts since online communication enabled the work to continue and gave the regional offices the possibility to, with more flexibility, support implementing partners based on their challenges and needs.

In each country, workshops and trainings on relevant subjects related to partnership have been organised and the following are a few examples highlighted in the country reports. In **Burkina Faso, Benin, and Mali**, several training events were held with staff members from various partner organisations. Trainings in Mali and Benin focused on disaster risk management and in Burkina Faso and Mali on security in hostile environments. Training with project managers on 'shared costs in a multi-donor-context' was undertaken in all three countries. In **Myanmar**, ERIKS continued to develop the capacity for the partner organisations to apply a Child Rights-Based Approach and Gender Transformation in their interventions and to integrate environmental aspects not only

³Youth refers to someone over 18 years old, namely the age range when a human is young, or before the person reaches adulthood

⁴ Duty bearers in this report includes both legal and moral duty bearers. If parents/guardians were seen as moral duty bearers by the one collecting data on partner and/or regional office level, they were also included.

within the project design stage but for a whole project cycle and reporting. In **Moldova**, training and coaching aimed at increasing the understanding of a child rights-based approach was arranged for partner organisations. As a result, positive steps are being seen in interventions in regard to an increase in the participation of children making choices and/or proposing activities.

Networking and advocacy are important tools for sustainable and structural change. Almost all of ERIKS' interventions include some advocacy work and most of the organisations work with advocacy on a local level, but according to data collected through GRI, 21 of ERIKS' implementing organisations work with advocacy on both a local and a national level and one at national level only. ERIKS is hence continuously promoting and facilitating participation of our partners in relevant child right networks. In some countries in 2021, networking and advocacy have been difficult to arrange and/or participate in due to shrinking space for the civil society and/or conflict causing a severe security situation in the country. However, some great achievements can be seen in regards to networking and advocacy and the following are examples from the country reports. In **Cambodia**, ERIKS' regional office signed a three-year agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MoFA) in February 2021, in order to obtain full legal identity. In addition, ERIKS' regional offices have also managed to sign a five-year agreement with the National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT). The full legal identity makes it possible for ERIKS to be more active in advocacy activities through the collaboration between NCCT and ERIKS' partner organisations. In the **East Africa region**, ERIKS together with member organisations of EU-CORD, have in 2021 mobilised to form an EU-CORD Nairobi Chapter. This is one of the networks that ERIKS can meaningfully contribute to and network with other like-minded international and national organisations. Currently, this consortium is exploring the possibility of collaborating for fundraising.

B. Education and leisure

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools all over the world have continued to be closed in 2021 and children have therefore missed out on important learning opportunities. However, the country reports for 2021 provide numerous examples of successful transitions to online learning platforms and other learning methods to ensure children's access to quality education. Below are some examples of this:

Center Levanina in **Belarus** launched a series of online formats in 2021 (lectures, streams and talks) on the organisation's YouTube channel, where experts provide advice to families on rights and the educational system, reaching 5 100 subscribers. In **Bangladesh**, ERIKS' partner organisation Friendship works to improve the access to equitable quality education in remote and inaccessible areas, so called chars. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all schools in Bangladesh were closed in March 2020 until September 2021. Friendship hence organised alternative ways of teaching – in small groups outside, contacts via telephone and children meeting with the teachers individually. 2 657 children hence completed the full school year in 2021 within the program. Moreover, ERIKS partner organisation Hagar in **Cambodia** in 2021 provided education for children in small groups through Community Mobile Learning Centres (CMLC). 25 CMLCs were established with the goal to encourage children to have good reading habits while integrating messages on children's rights, child protection, human trafficking, domestic violence and Covid-19 prevention. In 2021, 526 children regularly attended the CMLCs.

Besides working with access to education, in 2021 other interventions contributed to creating awareness on children's rights, social inclusion, and negative social norms that hinder children from accessing education. This can be seen in, for example **Moldova**, where ERIKS works through the organisation CRIC to strengthen the capacity of the educational system and duty bearers to integrate principles from the Convention on the Rights of the Child and therethrough empower children's inclusive participation. In 2021, CRIC worked with children through a series of online workshops to increase their capacities to monitor and advocate for their own rights and take part in decision-making processes. As a result, children took practical steps to tackle their own needs and one school collectively petitioned the local Police Inspectorate and successfully advocated for the instalment of new road signs near the school.

One of the biggest and most common challenges globally is the dropout of children from school. The dropouts are mostly caused by early and undesired pregnancies, child labour in domestic activities, child marriage, the low value of education for girls and the lack of healthy leisure time for vulnerable children. In 2021, ERIKS and its partner organisations continued to develop initiatives aimed to combat the root causes of this situation. Among others, access to information regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) has been provided, as part of interventions relating to education. This has, in **Burkina Faso** among others, contributed to a reduction in cases of early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, as students now have frameworks to access quality information on SRHR. In **Ethiopia**, ERIKS' partner organisation Remember the Poorest Community (RPC) work to improve children's right to access school by organizing mothers into saving groups where they receive training on how to develop the family's economy. This in turn enables more children to get access to school as

the family develops financial resources where the children do not need to be involved. A third example focusing on the challenges to combat the root cause of the right to access qualitative and inclusive education, can be found in **Romania**, where ERIKS through implementing organisations, works for Roma children from some of the most disadvantaged communities. As many Roma children are in a high risk of dropping out of school because of the difficult conditions in which they live, some traditions encourage early marriage of girls and migration due to this. The right to education has in 2021 hence been approached by partner organisations in Romania in an integrated manner, with actions directed towards both children's living conditions, their family's access to jobs and regular income, as well as access to basic social services.

A prerequisite to reach sustainable results regarding access to education is to address legal and moral duty-bearers on all levels, including teachers, school management and parents. An example of such sustainable results can be found in **South Sudan** where ERIKS supports Strömme Foundation. In 2021, the results from the intervention focusing on education contributed to an improvement of the attendance, retention and performance rate of girls in particular. Much of the improvements are related to the provision of learning materials, sanitary towels and the sensitization in the community for girls' education. In addition, functional adult literacy sessions were held in 2021 to address the high level of illiteracy among parents and to increase parental engagement in their children's education. As a result, one primary school reported that more parents were attending school meetings because they now understood their roles in education in regards to parental involvement and the importance of education.

C. Health

In order to ensure children's right to quality health care and good health conditions, ERIKS has throughout 2021 continued to focus on preventative measures, including access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health education, nutrition, maternal care, pre- and postnatal care, psychosocial support for children, support to children with mental and or physical disabilities and information regarding SRHR. Below examples are to be seen as illustrative examples of results reported during 2021.

During 2021, the thematic work on health has mainly focused on direct actions to improve children's health and provide information on how to prevent oneself from COVID-19. As result, partners in **Uganda** report that children and their families targeted through interventions now have locally made handwashing facilities with cans and water, in order to regularly wash their hands. In **Bangladesh**, one of ERIKS' partner organisations CODEC have educated 500 children in practicing hand washing and observing precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, among others. In addition, hand washing stations have been installed at the children's centres.

Parallel to interventions focusing on COVID-19 prevention, implementing partners continue to work with other direct actions to improve children's health. For example, in **Belarus**, one of ERIKS partner organisations (WWB) continued to implement an intervention focusing on children with disabilities in residential institutions and for these children to get access to quality health care. In 2021, 40 non-verbal children from one residential institution were supported to develop their communicative behavior skills and their abilities to express themselves with the help of alternative and additional communication. These children have developed self-regulation skills, and some have also begun to develop verbal speech. In **Myanmar**, 295 students joined different activities regarding Mental Health and Psychosocial Supports (MHPSS) carried out by ERIKS' implementing organisation Wunpawng Ningthoi (WPN). The activities in 2021 included stress relief exercises, games, drawing and painting, singing and social engagement activities. Out of these, 260 students also received personal hygiene kits including toothpaste, toothbrush, bathing soap, shampoo, soap, glycerine, and sanitary pads for the girls.

In 2021, ERIKS' implementing partners have continued to contribute to the improvement of children's health through training and awareness raising activities. In **Kenya**, ERIKS' partner organisations AICHM and Nalala Community Initiatives integrated a training of girls on menstrual health and hygiene and the provision of sanitary towels as a component in all interventions that involved children. In **Benin**, one of ERIKS' partner organisations report results in improved knowledge on SRHR among children and young people. The intervention has implemented training for children and youths on SRHR and how to protect themselves from abuse. The results on improved knowledge on SRHR can be seen from a study conducted in 2021 where approximately 68 % of adolescents and young people have a satisfactory knowledge of sexually transmitted diseases/infections as well as the ways of transmission and preventive measures for HIV/AIDS (compared to 4 % at the start of the intervention).

In addition, parents inevitably play a key role in ensuring the wellbeing of their children. To highlight one example; awareness-raising sessions were organized in **Burkina Faso** for parents of children under five on good nutritional practices for infants and children, followed by a demonstration of the preparation of enriched porridge. The various sensitizations administered in the field have hence enabled parents to adopt better hygiene practices and the ability to properly feed infants and young children under five. They now use local products to

improve the nutritional status of their children and they are aware that good nutritional and hygienic practices are essential for the development of children. As a result, health workers have now been able to identify malnourished children and support parents in their understanding on how they could enrich the food for their children.

D. Protection

Due to the consequences of the global pandemic, children across all regions have been, and still are, more vulnerable to becoming victims of trafficking, exploitation, and abuse, as many parents have lost their income and children their educational opportunities. For instance, country reports from both 2020 and 2021 note an increase in child marriages because of reduced incomes. To ensure children's right to protection, rehabilitation and reintegration, ERIKS has throughout 2021 continued to focus on children living in conflict with the law, subjected to trafficking or abuse, living on the streets, as well as children encountering negative cultural and religious norms that are harmful for an individual. Examples below are to be seen as illustrative cases of results reported during 2021.

Regarding preventative work and awareness-raising, one of ERIKS' partner organisations in **Kenya** states that 'Child Rights Clubs' was an important avenue for enhancing child participation in 2021. One of the initiatives included child rights training in ten targeted schools and reached a total of 585 boys and 622 girls. As a result, these trainings enabled children to engage in discussions with their peers and their teachers on child rights issues, including the protection against harmful cultural practices like female genital mutilation. Following these trainings, one of the target schools became the first school to record zero incidences of female genital mutilation in 2021 in that area. In **Myanmar**, children have directly benefited from the child protection work implemented by one of ERIKS partner organisations World Concern Myanmar (WCM) and have been provided with life skills training, child protection and psycho-social support that enable the children to be confident, resilient and not only able to protect themselves but to also protect other children. In addition, duty bearers have received training and awareness raising on children's rights and the importance of protecting children from harm, abuse and violence. Most of the interventions ERIKS supports in **Cambodia** focuses on both efforts to rescue children from harmful circumstances and practices as well as the process of reintegration and rehabilitation. In 2021, ERIKS' partner organisations have continued to work in collaboration with United Nations agencies and other local non-governmental organisations, supporting returning immigrant workers, especially children. For example, ERIKS' partner organisations collaborated with the Cambodian Embassy in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou to safely repatriate 23 young Cambodian trafficking survivors (girls under 18 years) back to Cambodia.

Besides working in different stages of protection, another prerequisite to reach sustainable results is to address legal and moral duty-bearers on all levels to ensure adequate child protection structures and mechanisms are in place. During 2021, various capacity building activities have therefore been carried out to contribute to this outcome and the following are examples of this. In **Mali**, one of ERIKS' partner organisations in the country has worked for the abandonment of child marriage among others. Thus, many actions have been implemented in relation to children, legal and moral guarantors in the different communities of the intervention. These activities (community mobilization, capacity building of stakeholders, support for the establishment and implementation of communal plans to combat harmful practices) have contributed to a situation where 29 out of 35 villages have abandoned the practice of early marriage. In **Benin**, the implementation of interventions relating to protection and capacity building within the theme, have contributed to a considerable reduction of various forms of violence and abuse of children, in particular early marriage. According to the latest data collection in 2021, no household reported early marriage. The same observation is shared at the level of leaders where none of the 185 religious leaders surveyed, celebrated marriages of minors during the last six months of the intervention compared to 58% in 2019.

E. Humanitarian assistance

ERIKS has, in 2021, continued to support humanitarian interventions based on needs-assessments and in close collaboration with partners that have the necessary experience and meet standard requirements for humanitarian interventions. In 2021, ERIKS strengthened its work concerning humanitarian assistance as an important complement to the main work of long-term development cooperation, which will have an even larger impact in 2022 and onwards. A new position at the head office, focused on humanitarian assistance, was therefore created and filled during the year. In addition, ERIKS has decided to begin the process of applying for membership in the CHS Alliance to strengthen its humanitarian profile. The initial plan was to apply for membership during 2021 but a change in priorities and limited resources meant that the application process was postponed to 2023. In the end of 2021, ERIKS also signed a new cooperation agreement with Medair for an intervention in Afghanistan, to enable humanitarian initiatives beyond ERIKS' program countries.

During 2020, ERIKS introduced a requirement to report GRI and disaggregated data in all humanitarian interventions. As of 2021, the total number of reached individuals in ERIKS humanitarian interventions is 53 889 compared to 53 040 in 2020. This rather small increase of individuals reached in relation to a higher budget for 2021 compared to 2020, can be explained through challenges in how one collects and reports GRI. Another aspect is further that the intervention for Afghanistan, although part of the budget for 2021, will be implemented in 2022 and no individuals are therefore reported as reached even though the funds were, to a large extent, paid in 2021. Besides the 53 889 individuals reached, another 9 728 children and youth, as well as 15 984 adults, have been reached through various humanitarian components in the development interventions. Moreover, 75 institutions and 1223 duty bearers have also been reached through the humanitarian interventions.

| HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Country (# of interventions) | # of children reached | | # of adults reached | | Total number reached | # of households reached |
| | Boys | Girls | Men | Women | | |
| Bangladesh (1) | 3 818 | 3 649 | 3 346 | 3 217 | 14 030 | 7 400 |
| Burkina Faso (2) | 1 920 | 2 133 | 293 | 1 543 | 5 889 | 2 114 |
| Cambodia (4) | 4 073 | 4 174 | 3 115 | 4 144 | 15 506 | 1 281 |
| India (3) | 3 606 | 3 790 | 2 718 | 3 637 | 13 751 | 4 453 |
| Kenya (2) | 1 516 | 1 924 | 190 | 372 | 4 002 | 1 671 |
| Uganda (1) | 231 | 214 | 146 | 120 | 711 | 70 |
| TOTAL | 15 164 | 15 884 | 9 808 | 13 033 | 53 889 | 16 989 |

Below is more specific information regarding the humanitarian interventions funded by ERIKS in 2021 divided per country.

Kenya – In 2021, there was a widespread drought in Kenya and consequently, the chances of survival and development of young children in these areas were severely threatened. ERIKS therefore supported an implementation of two humanitarian interventions which provided food and non-food items, rehabilitation of critical water infrastructure, building the resilience of primary actors to respond to disasters, as well as enhancing the coordination of humanitarian actors during disasters. The interventions reached 1671 households and has hence improved access to food for vulnerable households.

Burkina Faso – ERIKS has intervened in an appeal launched by UNICEF, aiming at improving the nutritional status of children under five years in targeted communities. The result of this response, among others, is that the nutritional status of 2 865 children is improved through the distribution of 31.5 tons of flour, covering the children's needs for six months.

Bangladesh – ERIKS has, through the partner organisation Friendship, organized emergency support to families who became especially vulnerable due to flooding during the monsoon season, as well as affected by the COVID19-situation. Through this response, 2 600 vulnerable households received emergency food packets, hygiene articles, seeds, as well as vaccination of cattle. Furthermore, latrines and tube wells were repaired, and boats were made available to transport people to safe areas.

Cambodia – In 2021, ERIKS' partner organisations have had humanitarian interventions focusing on disaster response because of the flooding and the consequences of COVID-19. As a result, children now understand the risks of disasters and know where to find help during one.

Uganda – In 2021, ERIKS participated in emergency response efforts of vulnerable communities through partner organisations targeting children with shelter and nutritional support during the lockdowns. In addition, ERIKS

also responded through the flood response intervention in Buliisa District. Through ERIKS' partner organisation LACWADO, 70 households were supported with food, mosquito nets and blankets and 50 internally displaced families were supported with temporary shelter, among others.

India – In 2021, ERIKS and the partner organisation EFICOR, supported 2 000 households with unconditional cash-transfers to reduce suffering of people affected by the high-intensity floods and therethrough landslides.

Afghanistan – Following the humanitarian emergency in Afghanistan, ERIKS decided to fund emergency support through Medair to continue life-saving services through primary health care facilities in Kandahar Province. The intervention will be implemented in 2022 and is estimated to reach 65 000 individuals.

4. Strategic Development

In January 2021, ERIKS took the last steps in the reorganisation of the international programme department. A larger operational mandate has therefore been given to the Regional Managers and their teams and a recruitment plan is in place to gradually strengthen the regional offices' capacity. In 2021, additional positions (Programme Monitoring Officers) based at the regional offices were created and filled.

At head office, the Programme Coordinator roles have as of first of January 2021 been exchanged for two teams called Quality Assurance and Programme Advice (QAPA)⁵ and Donor Relations (DR)⁶. The idea behind this is to avoid duplication of regional responsibility at head office and regional offices, increase capacity for organisational learning and capacity development of partners, and be better equipped for sustaining and developing relations to institutional donors. Internal learning and capacity development is one goal for QAPA, and during 2021, a thorough effort was therefore initiated to put forward an overall framework for internal learning, see further information under section 8 'Learnings'. Additionally, QAPA has in 2021 formed an internal project group focusing on developing harmonised tools for Monitoring and Evaluation. The period is stretching to mid-2023 with the aim of finding common tools as well as routines to ensure a strengthened system for monitoring and evaluation on a global level. In 2021, the DR team has, among others, started to develop educational content for the regional offices on ERIKS' institutional donors and their different requirements and templates for applications and reports. These educational resources will be distributed to colleagues at regional offices throughout 2022.

In 2021, a process to work on a global international strategy was initiated. The strategy will function as an overarching guiding document for individual country strategies. In this process, consultations have been made with all regional offices as well as head office staff. The consultations have included questions in relation to thematic areas, country programmes, partnership, interventions, as well as networking, advocacy and fundraising. The idea is that the global international strategy will be presented to ERIKS' board for approval in June 2022.

Moreover, ERIKS developed a new child safeguarding policy in 2021, to ensure the safety of the children ERIKS works with and for. This has been a complex, yet fundamental effort and many colleagues have hence been involved in the development of this policy by participating in groups discussions, meetings and reviewing of drafts. The policy is now adopted, and internal training sessions will be conducted throughout 2022.

An important aspect of strategic development is the choosing of new partner organisations. In 2021, ERIKS initiated partnership with CIPCRE in Benin. In Moldova, ERIKS has consolidated an expanded portfolio of partners and the two new partner organizations are National Center for Child Abuse Prevention (NCCAP) and Health for Youth Association (HFY). In Kenya, ERIKS initiated partnerships with the organisation Investing in Children and their Societies (ICS) for the East Africa Portfolio. Additionally, an assessment for another new partner in Kenya, Kenya's Dream, was also completed in 2021 with the aim to start a intervention in 2022. In Myanmar, ERIKS has also explored different possibilities of expanding new partnerships with other potential partners. In 2021, ERIKS was also able to sign a specific strategic partnership's agreement with Fida International, concerning office space for ERIKS' personnel resources at Fida's office in Dhaka. These personnel resources will be recruited in 2022 and will be responsible for the portfolio of interventions in Bangladesh and India. Even though stationed at Fida's office, the soon recruited staff will be part of ERIKS' region office in Southeast Asia. Moreover, ERIKS is now exploring the possibilities of a similar partnership regarding office space with Fida in Myanmar.

⁵ The QAPA team has the mandate to ensure quality in programme operations according to our development policy and other applicable steering documents. This also includes formal approval of interventions and organisations. The team will furthermore work on developing and ensuring the implementation of relevant guidelines, templates and instructions, as well as relevant steering documents.

⁶ The DR team manages established as well as new relations to institutional donors and other donors such as foundations and funds, and has the mandate to submit applications and reports to back-donors, foundations and funds.

5. Risk management

This section includes an overview of the major risks and trends that have been identified in the country reports.

Effects of the global pandemic

One of the main challenges and risks that is highlighted in the country reports for 2021 refer to the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic. However, as the number of cases reported for COVID-19 decreased in 2021, many of the countries where ERIKS operate lifted restrictions and curfews introduced by the government. Schools therefore re-opened and different restrictions for domestic and international travel made field visits possible again. The impacts and effects from the global COVID-19 pandemic regarding implementation of activities and interventions for 2021 differs from country to country, intervention to intervention and activity to activity. In most of the countries where ERIKS has operated during 2021, the restrictions continued to affect the implementation and target groups significantly. Partner organisations have therefore integrated COVID-19 awareness and prevention strategies for every intervention activity, to ensure compliance with national policies and recommendations related to the pandemic. As a result, intervention implementation has thus continued, even if organisations have been forced to apply preventive measures. Moreover, it is ERIKS' assessment that the pandemic did not cause as much disruption to intervention implementation in 2021 as it did in 2020. Despite this, some partner organisations requested for budget realignments to adapt to the new reality after COVID-19. These requests were carefully reviewed in relation to the interventions' objectives and approved when relevant and possible. Even though ERIKS is truly thankful and proud of the successful implementation of intervention activities during 2021 given the global pandemic, it is nevertheless nothing in regards to the long-term effects and impacts COVID-19 have had and will have onwards for the most vulnerable people around the world.

Mismanagement of resources and weak internal control systems

ERIKS believes that mismanagement of resources is a risk that needs continuous attention and is therefore working proactively by providing training to partner organisations, to strengthen systems of internal control and ensure compliance with ERIKS' standards as described in ERIKS' anti-corruption policy, as well as with national legislation. ERIKS' staff at the regional offices regularly monitor and visit partner organisations to provide support and detect any mismanagement at an early stage. In addition, ERIKS' regional offices endeavour to make partner organisations aware of the whistleblowing avenues on ERIKS' website and make themselves available to support and discuss any pertinent issues with partners. In December 2020, ERIKS adopted a new anti-corruption policy, and the revised policy was shared in 2021 with ERIKS' partner organisations. Moreover, follow-up meetings with staff at implementing partner organisations were conducted in 2021 to ensure that they have understood the policy and will apply it in cases of suspected fraud.

Increased security concerns due to conflicts or political instability

Violence and conflicts continue to be of serious concern in many countries where ERIKS is involved. These developments mean that ERIKS and its partner organisations will have to plan and prepare to meet the changing needs of children and families and continue to adapt programmes and interventions accordingly. Throughout 2021, the following countries encountered increased levels of conflict and political instability.

Burkina Faso – The past two years have seen a sharp deterioration in the security situation across Burkina Faso's northern and eastern regions, due to the presence of non-state armed groups. In 2021, the security situation deteriorated further, which led to a military takeover on 24 January 2022. As of 31 December 2021, nearly 1,6 million persons were on the run in their own country and almost three million persons were living with food insecurity. The situation in Burkina Faso is hence very uncertain, especially as the country was already in a deep humanitarian crisis. However, the attacks and the security situation did not directly call into question the security of ERIKS' interventions that are implemented in nearby areas. Nevertheless, a humanitarian intervention implemented by ERIKS partner organisation CREDO experienced difficulties with implementation due to insecurity, which led to an extension of the intervention period.

Mali – A political crisis in 2020 resulted in an overthrowing of the government through a military coup. Controversial parliamentary elections, among others, that were marred by violence and irregularities, provoked massive demonstrations in the country. As a result of the violence, over 40,000 civilians fled their homes. The political crisis resulted in a second overthrowing of the government on 24 May 2021. This overthrowing led in turn to a political crisis between the country and the organisations of the sub-region. The security situation has hence deteriorated significantly, especially in the northern parts of the country, with several terrorist attacks, which have led to school closures, and delays in the resumption of classes. In order to strengthen the capacity of partners in dealing with the escalating security situation in the country, the staff of ERIKS' implementing organisations

have, throughout 2021, benefited from capacity development on security and safety in hostile environments, to enable the staff to deal with possible crises. The situation in Mali is closely monitored by ERIKS and its partners, in order to mitigate the impact on the implementation of the activities.

Myanmar – In February 2021, the military seized control of the government in a military coup and declared a year-long state of emergency. Since then, Myanmar has seen outbreaks of civil disobedience all over the country, and demonstrators have been shot dead. The military has imposed restrictions, including curfews and limits to gatherings. Close monitoring of the situation will therefore be undertaken by the field teams of ERIKS' partner organisations in the country – whom are part of the UN/INGO network within the country to inform the situation update, direction/action for NGOs. Findings will be provided to the senior management to make appropriate decisions. ERIKS continues to support and remain in close communication with all its partner organisations in the country. Regular situation analyses have been conducted among all ERIKS' partner organisations on a weekly and monthly basis, to inform both ERIKS at the regional offices and head office of the current situation in the country. See further information under 'Political interference and shrinking space' below.

Uganda – Uganda went through campaigns for positions of political office in 2020, amid the Corona-pandemic. This continued in 2021 due to presidential campaigns, with open campaign rallies, particularly among the members of the opposition. During campaigns there were cases of brutality recorded in various parts of the country. The deteriorated security situation in Uganda has not overall affected the implementation of planned activities for ERIKS' partner organisations. Nevertheless, in Kaabong District, where ERIKS partner organisation Manna Development Agency (MADA) is based, insecurity resulting from cattle raiding in the region has influenced community engagement and intervention activities. The insecurity caused delays in the implementation of planned activities. The security risk level in this area remains high.

Kenya – In 2021, the counties of Marsabit and Laikipia in Kenya were affected by tribal and politically instigated conflicts. For instance, in Laikipia, where ERIKS' partner organisation VSO operates, there were intercultural bandit attacks that affected implementation in the area, left families homeless after their houses were torched and schools closed. ERIKS, through an emergency response intervention, responded to the needs of the affected communities and supported and facilitated both intra- and inter-ethnic peacebuilding and reconciliation dialogues as organized by the various county government departments. This situation in Kenya is closely monitored by ERIKS and its partners, in order to mitigate the impact on the implementation of the activities.

Benin – The northern region of Benin experienced terrorist attacks during 2021. These attacks did, however, not directly affect the implementation of interventions by ERIKS' two partner organisations DEDRAS and BUPDOS in the country. ERIKS continued to pay close attention to the development of the situation in these areas. In addition, the staff in Benin have been trained in security and safety in hostile environments, so that they have the capacity to prevent possible crises and situations from affecting them and their programmes.

South Sudan – During 2020, a transnational government was implemented, which gave some hope that the situation would become normalised in the country. However, there are still no major improvements to be seen in 2021, as South Sudan continues to struggle with widespread conflict, insecurity and increasing humanitarian needs. Political instability and tribal conflicts are still prevalent in South Sudan, which continues to pose a risk to the partner organisations and beneficiaries. This also affects the frequency of ERIKS' staff visits to the field sites. While the staff related to the interventions were not directly affected by these incidences, the intervention activities sometimes had to be rescheduled as a strategy to avoid taking unnecessary risks.

Ethiopia – The internal conflict in Ethiopia escalated to a civil war leading to loss of human lives, displacement of people, material damage and serious effects on the economy in the country. The areas where the ERIKS supported interventions are implemented were not directly within the war zone. However, the influx of refugees to the central parts of Ethiopia has partly affected the target groups and one of ERIKS partners in Addis Ababa initiated relief actions to mitigate the situation for the refugees. The inflation has affected the interventions and ERIKS has taken measures to compensate for the reduced strength of the currency within the intervention budgets.

Political interference and shrinking space

Civil society independence continues to be challenged in countries where ERIKS operate.

Uganda – ERIKS continued to closely monitor the government crackdown on some civil society activities. In 2021, the Democratic Governance Facility had its activities suspended because of allegations that financing went into activities and organisations meant to subvert the government in the name of improving governance. However, ERIKS has renewed its membership in the Uganda Child Rights Non-Governmental Network (UCRNN), although civil society organisations are still divided and have yet to come together fully to advocate for common

goals. ERIKS and its partner organisations also re-registered with the National Non-governmental Organisations Bureau, a body under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, that is responsible for granting operating licenses to non-governmental organisations. This was a great achievement given that over 50 non-governmental organisations were deregistered.

Belarus – The political instability that followed the presidential elections held in August 2020 have had implications on human rights and democracy situation in Belarus. The possibilities of accessing foreign aid have been limited and the organisations using foreign funds have been under increased control, while almost 300 different organisations were closed by the decision of the authorities during 2021. ERIKS continued to support the interventions in Belarus with more focus on direct action and there is a risk that some of the interventions will become limited in their actions during 2022.

Natural disasters

Natural disasters and climate change affected several of ERIKS' country programmes during 2021. These developments mean that ERIKS and its partner organisations will have to plan and prepare to meet the changing needs of children and families and continue to adapt programmes and interventions accordingly. The most affected countries in 2021 were the following.

Bangladesh – There were severe flooding during July – September in the north-west of Bangladesh, where ERIKS' partner Friendship operates. Normal intervention activities were interrupted, and buildings and crops suffered damage. The preparedness developed through Friendship's disaster risk reduction interventions helped in 2021 to mitigate the effects of the natural disasters.

Kenya – In September, the president of Kenya declared a drought affecting parts of the country a national disaster due to failed rains. In response, two Humanitarian Emergency Response interventions were funded by ERIKS, to address the needs of the targeted communities.

Cambodia – The flash flooding in 2021 affected thousands of families, requiring evacuation and damaging rice fields and roads, among others. ERIKS hence supported Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia (EFC) and Hagar to build the capacity of networks and community-based groups in the target areas, to conduct a rapid assessment and incorporate work with legal duty-bearers and others.

Uganda – In 2021, regions were affected by flooding and in turn food insecurity. The same year, ERIKS funded a humanitarian intervention to affected people. The intervention provided shelter, WASH rehabilitation, food rations and support to health clinics and community training on disaster preparedness.

India – Maharashtra, south of India, suffered from heavy rains in July 2021 that caused floods that intensified further because of high tides and discharge from dams. ERIKS, through EFICOR, has hence supported 2000 flood affected households.

South Sudan – In 2021, South Sudan had extreme weather conditions and drought. Following the failure of the long rains between April and June, the food security situation worsened. At the end of 2021, ERIKS funded a humanitarian response through the partner organisation MADA.

6. Learnings

2021 was a year full of opportunities for organisational learning at all levels – at field level, country and regional level, and at head office level. Organisational learning is a process of creating and transferring knowledge within an organisation. To fully reap the benefits of organisational learning, organisations should continually adapt their practices to reflect the new knowledge gained from this process. That is why ERIKS aim to gather key learnings and reflect upon what they mean for us, going forward, as an organisation. This section aims to provide a glimpse of the key learnings ERIKS has gained as an organisation during 2021 and focuses on learnings related to adapting to change and planning for learning and capacity development.

Adapting to change

The Covid-19 pandemic has thrown the world into great uncertainty and the effects thereof are felt at all levels of the organisation. Most affected are however our partner organisations and the children they serve. Many children in ERIKS' programmes have experienced first-hand how their lives have become more challenging, even more dangerous, following the global pandemic. During school closures and lock-down, children's world has

shrunk and abusive family situations, child labour, forced marriage and other forms of abuse have increased. In response to this situation, several of ERIKS programmes and interventions have adjusted their activities to reach children with the support and help they need. For instance, ERIKS' partner organisation Friendship reports how they have incorporated stipends in their programmes. By granting vulnerable families financial support in the form of stipends, parents are given an extra incentive to keep their children in school, rather than having them married off to alleviate the family's financial burden.

Another example of how ERIKS and its partners have adjusted their practices following the outbreak of the pandemic is how new routines have been developed that allow staff to conduct monitoring and follow-up meetings virtually. This has in many cases proven to be an efficient and relevant alternative to physical field visits. Despite this, staff at regional and country office level, report that they have come to learn that online meetings are not as efficient as physical meetings in terms of getting to know and understand the context, challenges and people that are important to the success of our interventions.

Planning for learning and capacity development

During 2021, ERIKS' QAPA team at the head office, in cooperation with the regional offices, worked to develop 'ERIKS' Plan for Learning and Capacity Development for 2022-2024'. It is ERIKS' first global plan for learning and capacity building, and it was developed to improve coordination of global capacity development initiatives – both internal and external. The plan is based on mapping of already planned activities at different levels of the organisation, an inventory of annual plans and country strategies, group discussions and consultations at various levels. The following two themes have been identified as priority learning areas for 2022-2024: a gender transformative approach, and child safeguarding policies and the right to protection. In addition, the plan includes the following learning areas; conflict sensitivity, religious literacy, core humanitarian standards, environment and climate, core support, financial structures and systems (ERIKS' system Lime) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

7. Children's' participation and voices

Despite the global pandemic and periods of lockdowns in many of the countries where ERIKS operates, it is encouraging to see that as many as 1 020 different child groups have been operational during 2021. A total of 43 373 children have participated in the groups. The names, structure and activities of these groups varies; they may be called child clubs, child parliaments and girls' empowerment groups. Nonetheless, children in all these groups are supported to learn about child rights and how to act on relevant issues.

Below are some examples of how children have benefitted in various ways through the different interventions. The stories included are focused on children expressing their own views on implemented intervention activities during 2021.

Felicia, Moldova. Felicia is 12 years old and has been supported through the centre run by Light of the World (LoW) to improve her school performance:

"My mom was away for about three years and my father left us many years ago (I was less than 2 years old back then). My younger brother and I are attending LoW Centre every day. We love it here so much! We get great help with our homework, we have good friends and here we feel like home. Our greatest joy is that after the leaders have talked to my mom, she finally came home! We are so very happy! We hope she will never leave us again!"

Member of the children's club in Koutangou, Benin.

"Following the various trainings received, we are now awake and discuss with our comrades all kinds of questions relating to sexual and reproductive health. These trainings allowed us to set objectives to give priority to our studies. We started by adopting responsible behaviour and regularly educating our peers to follow suit. We also have the courage to present our grievances to the various authorities. We see more forced marriages, child abductions. We also note the decline in sexual violence in the school environment."

Dana, Cambodia. Dana is 10 years old and regularly learns at Community Mobile Learning Centres, part of interventions implemented by Hagar and says, **"I am very happy to read, draw and paint pictures with lots of colouring pencils and books. I also learn about my rights and how we can protect ourselves. Our teacher (Community Facilitator) motivates us to discuss, and I am not as shy as before"**. According to staff of Hagar in Cambodia, what Dana says illustrates that the biggest benefit of this work is that children have access to education even when schools are closed. The children clearly understand that they are given an opportunity to be part of a fun learning environment, that also teaches them important knowledge on child rights.

B.V, Romania. B.V is a child who attended a camp in Chislax organized by Elim Christian Foundation in order to offer children safe and enjoyable alternative ways to spend their free time: indoor and outdoor team games, movie nights, campfires, short excursions, picnics and painting. After attending, B.V said, **"I liked everything. But what I liked most was that I learned to swim."**

Marvin, Uganda. Marvin has been supported by the Child Restoration Outreach (CRO) and has now completed primary seven. He wrote a text message to CRO saying:
"Auntie I thank you so much for believing in me and allowing me to join primary school from the streets when I did not even know how to write my name. I thank God so much that now I also have a certificate of primary seven!!"