

S Y S
P O N S

WORK: NO CHILD'S BUSINESS

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE WNCB PROGRAMME

|

Final Report

17.02.2025

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Abbreviations

ACT	Alliance Coordination Team
ANADER	National Agency for Support to Rural Development of Côte d'Ivoire
BuHaOs	Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HH	Household
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
L&A	Lobby and Advocacy
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MTR	Mid-Term Review
ODA	Official Development Assistance
RVO	Fund Against Child Labour
SCL	Stop Child Labour
SHG	Self-help Groups
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VSLA	Village Loan Savings Association
WG	Working Group
WNCB	Work: No Child's Business

Executive Summary

Context and Objectives

The **Work: No Child's Business (WNCB) programme** was launched in 2019 in six countries – Côte d'Ivoire, India, Jordan, Mali, Uganda and Viet Nam – to address the root causes of child labour and contribute to 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 8.7, which aims to eliminate child labour in all its forms by 2025. While all the WNCB target countries prohibit child labour in line with international conventions, child labour is still prevalent, especially within the areas and supply chains targeted by the WNCB programme. Therefore, the WNCB programme aimed **for all children and youth to be free from child labour and enjoy their rights to quality education and (future) decent work**. It pursued this goal through an integrated approach involving **four pathways**: community-based interventions (area-based approach), child protection systems, private sector engagement (supply chain approach), and international advocacy.

Syspons GmbH was commissioned by the WNCB Alliance to conduct the **final evaluation** of the WNCB Programme between July 2024 and January 2025. Syspons' evaluation of the WNCB programme had thereby three objectives: Firstly, to assess the impact of the WNCB programme through the systematic analysis of all existing programme data. Secondly, to identify scalable good practices at the intersection of the area-based and supply chain approaches, with a special focus on interventions targeted towards mitigating child labour in informal economies. Thirdly, to formulate a list of strategic recommendations and approaches that can be used for future action and collaborations by Alliance partners and other actors engaged in the fight against child labour.

Methodology

Based on the objectives of the evaluation and with the aim of maximizing its added value, the evaluation team specifically tailored the evaluation design to the key aspects of the assignment. The evaluation was based on the **OECD/DAC criteria** of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability and considered cross-cutting issues such as gender. To assess **relevance** the evaluation team firstly explored the extent to which its interventions were aligned with the priorities and needs of its key stakeholders. Secondly, it investigated to what degree its objectives were harmonized with Dutch national policies and priorities. Finally, it examined how successfully the WNCB programme could adapt to major challenges and changes in circumstances that arose in the course of its implementation. In terms of **coherence**, the evaluation team explored the extent to which the WNCB programme aligned its objectives and coordinated its activities with those of other relevant actors addressing child labour. The assessment of **effectiveness** focused on the extent to which the WNCB programme has achieved its intended objectives and **impacts**, as well as the factors that have either facilitated or hindered progress towards these goals. For **efficiency**, the evaluation team assessed the economic use of resources in relation to the outputs and outcomes achieved by the WNCB programme. The criteria of **sustainability** focused on the long-term durability of the WNCB programme's impacts and outcomes. There, the analysis determined the resilience of the programme's achievements and its capacity to foster lasting change by exploring the following four dimensions, namely- 1) Institutional and policy sustainability, 2) Social and cultural sustainability, 3) Stakeholder commitment and ownership, and 4) Financial sustainability. Finally, cross-cutting issues such as gender within the activities of the WNCB were analysed throughout the evaluation criteria. The evaluation covered the timeframe from 2020 to 2024.

The evaluation **methods** included secondary data analysis and interviews. These included four exploratory (group) interviews with key stakeholders, such as representatives from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and WNCB. The team also conducted six (group) interviews with country teams and six interviews with Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) focal points. In addition, there were three (group) interviews with WNCB representatives from pathways and working groups, as well as an additional interview with WNCB management.

Two country-specific field visits were also carried out by national experts: one in India, focusing on the natural stone sector, with six (group) interviews and seven focus group discussions, and one in Côte d'Ivoire, focusing on the cocoa sector, with eight (group) interviews and six focus group discussions. In total, the evaluation team conducted 34 (group) interviews and 13 focus group discussions.

In this evaluation, MEAL data served as a foundation for assessing the programme's ToC and developing a robust contribution story to assess the impacts of the WNCB programme. The available MEAL data encompasses KPI data based on studies including household surveys, tracer, worker or employer surveys, Annual Plans and Annual Reports for 2020 to 2024 including Outcome Harvesting tables, as well as SenseMaker studies. The KPI and SenseMaker studies were conducted at baseline, midline and endline. The evaluation team identified several **limitations to the quality of MEAL data**, such as challenges for the measurement of impact indicators due to inconsistent data collection methods and the lack of standardised operationalization for impact indicators, as well as gaps in the MEAL framework where existing KPIs do not track programme-specific outputs and activities.

Key Findings

The evaluation underscores the WNCB programme's **strong relevance**, evident in its alignment with the needs of key stakeholders, Dutch national and sectoral priorities, and evolving contextual challenges. Through targeted actions such as reducing child labour, improving school attendance, supporting livelihoods, and raising community awareness, the programme effectively addressed stakeholder needs. Its strategies reflected the priorities of children, families, communities, authorities, and private sector actors, ensuring a comprehensive approach to tackling the root causes of child labour. Alignment with Dutch policies—focusing on education, poverty reduction, and supply chain transparency—reinforced its strategic fit within national and international frameworks. Additionally, integration into sectoral covenants enhanced its impact and fostered valuable collaboration with private sector actors. The programme's adaptability to external challenges, including COVID-19, political transitions, and climate crises, further highlighted its relevance in dynamic contexts. While some systemic challenges lay beyond its scope, the WNCB programme prioritized resilience-building and sustainable solutions, delivering long-term benefits for affected communities.

The WNCB programme also demonstrated **strong coherence** by effectively aligning its objectives and coordinating efforts both internally among Alliance partners and externally with key stakeholders addressing child labour. Internally, the programme capitalized on the complementary expertise of the Stop Child Labour Coalition, UNICEF Netherlands, and Save the Children Netherlands, adopting a multi-tiered approach that combined community engagement, national advocacy, and legislative reform. Linking and learning activities, including meetings, exchange visits, and newsletters, further enhanced collaboration and knowledge-sharing. Externally, the programme aligned with international frameworks such as ILO Conventions, SDG 8.7, and OECD Guidelines, ensuring consistency with global standards. Strategic engagement with actors like the ILO, SDG Alliance 8.7, and RVO/FBK fostered synergies, minimized duplication, and amplified impact, particularly in key sectors like textiles, mining, and natural stone.

Under the criteria of **effectiveness** and **impact**, the evaluation finds that **the WNCB programme overall advanced its objective of freeing children and youth from child labour and ensuring their rights to quality education and (future) decent work in most of its partner countries**. This was achieved through four interconnected approaches ("pathways") targeting community members, the public sector, the private sector, and international lobbying and advocacy.

The evaluation shows that the WNCB programme contributed to **reducing child labour rates in most partner countries. The WNCB programme achieved positive results in India, Jordan, Mali and Uganda. In Côte d'Ivoire and Viet Nam, the WNCB programme achieved mixed results** regarding the child labour rate in the programme areas: In Côte d'Ivoire and Viet Nam, child labour rates were reduced for girls but (slightly) increased for boys. Looking at the contributions of the WNCB programme, the evaluation revealed that the programme achieved positive results by addressing key drivers such as poverty and social norms through its four pathways. Under Pathway 1 (community-based approach), the programme effectively reduced child labour through activities

like awareness-raising trainings on the harmful effects of child labour, providing alternative income-generating opportunities to ease household financial pressures, and involving community members in child protection and oversight of local businesses. For Pathway 2 (child protection systems), the programme successfully supported national and local public sector actors by strengthening child labour-related policies, laws, and regulations, for instance, through awareness-raising trainings and assistance in policy development. Pathway 3 (supply chain approach) targeted the private sector – including formal companies, lower-tier supply chains, and the informal sector – through activities such as staff awareness-raising trainings on child labour’s negative impacts and partnerships. Although limited data availability constrained analysis of Pathway 4 (lobby and advocacy), the programme achieved notable results, such as securing Dutch government support for the area-based approach, as well as the inclusion of children’s rights in and the adoption of EUCSDDD, thus contributing to its overall effectiveness.

The evaluation also finds that the WNCB programme achieved **mixed results in improving school enrolment and attendance rates across its partner countries. In Côte d’Ivoire, Uganda and Viet Nam, the WNCB programme was able to slightly increase the school enrolment and attendance rates. In India, Jordan and Mali, the WNCB programme evidenced decrease and/or stagnation.** In India, school enrolment and attendance rates experienced a significant decline for both boys and girls. In contrast, in Jordan and Mali, the decrease primarily affected the enrolment and attendance rates of boys. Still, the evaluation revealed a change in attitude of the stakeholders involved, and an increased value of education across all partner countries. The evaluation showed that the WNCB programme achieved positive results by successfully addressing key barriers to education, such as social norms, poor education quality, and lack of transportation, through its various pathways. Under Pathway 1, the programme contributed to increased school enrolment and attendance through activities such as awareness-raising trainings on the value of education and enhancing education quality through teacher training. Pathway 2 also proved effective, with efforts to support public actors by establishing bridging or transition classes, improving school infrastructure, and providing transportation to schools. Pathway 3 demonstrated its effectiveness by engaging private sector actors, such as local business owners, through activities like awareness-raising about the importance of education. The WNCB programme then also supported private sector actors in their efforts to facilitate education for children, for instance, through motivation centres on their grounds.

Several **key success factors** significantly contributed to the effectiveness of the WNCB programme. In this regard, the programme strategically adopted a multi-stakeholder approach, demonstrated by the four complementary pathways, and further tailored this approach by targeting different stakeholders within each pathway. Additionally, it employed a multi-level strategy, engaging entire supply chains (including production and resource areas) and collaborating with public sector actors at both national and local levels. Another crucial factor in the programme’s success was its integration with the **area-based approach**. Combining the area-based approach with child protection systems proved particularly effective, as it actively involved communities in safeguarding children—such as monitoring local businesses—thereby strengthening the system and fostering a more community-driven approach through increased local engagement. Additionally, integrating the area-based approach with the supply chain approach encouraged a stronger sense of communal responsibility among local businesses, prompting some private sector actors to take action in eliminating child labour and supporting children’s access to education.

A **limiting factor** in facilitating changes in the private sector was the WNCB programme’s initial comparatively weaker focus on Pathway 3. In the Mid-Term Review of the WNCB programme, the third pathway of making the private sector act was considered less effective as the other pathways, due to several factors, such as the limited scope and resources designated towards Pathway 3. During the second part of the WNCB programme duration, the WNCB programme, among others, designed community-based initiatives targeting the private sector and was then able to successfully influence in the attitudes of private sector actors.

In addition, the WNCB programme is considered **efficient**. The available data on its plans, activities, finances, and results show that the programme not only adapted to external challenges but did so efficiently. It effectively managed resources, reallocating savings to promising opportunities. Although the disbursement of funds was sometimes seen as slow and costly, the allocation of resources appeared appropriate given the programme’s high

level of adaptability, the need to shift resources across countries and time, and the complexity of the multi-country context. Initially, the WNCB programme strategically directed most of its resources towards Pathway 1 rather than Pathway 3. Over time, this approach evolved, with a shift in Pathway 3 towards community-based activities that enhanced effectiveness without the need for additional resources. With no significant signs of inefficiency and considering its adaptability and ability to leverage learning to improve effectiveness, the evaluation deems the programme efficient despite the challenges it faced.

Finally, while the WNCB programme's achievements are regarded as **sustainable**, they also encounter certain challenges to their long-term viability. **Institutional and policy sustainability** was supported by aligning the programme with local and national priorities, strengthening child protection frameworks, and integrating its objectives into government systems. By reinforcing formal institutions and embedding interventions within existing structures, the programme established a foundation for long-term continuity. However, its future sustainability will depend on sustained political will and adequate resource allocation: A significant challenge to the institutional and policy sustainability of child protection efforts, particularly in enforcing child protection legislation, is the potential for inconsistent or diminishing commitment from state authorities over time. Furthermore, **social and cultural sustainability** was demonstrated by shifts in community norms and attitudes, which rejected child labour and prioritized education. The programme's multi-stakeholder approach engaged families, schools, businesses, and local authorities, creating a resilient ecosystem where child protection can endure even in the face of external pressures. However, a potential challenge to the social and cultural sustainability of norm change is the risk of complacency among stakeholders, such as private sector actors viewing the issue of child labour as stemming from workers' lack of awareness. Moreover, **stakeholder commitment and ownership** were strengthened through active involvement from governments, communities, and the private sector. Capacity-building initiatives and partnerships also fostered shared responsibility, ensuring child protection efforts are integrated into local structures. However, a significant challenge to stakeholder ownership and commitment can arise from strained relationships between communities and government actors. A lack of trust between these stakeholders can impede collaboration in child protection, especially in areas where government services are perceived as inadequate or inconsistent. Finally, **financial sustainability** was addressed by reducing donor dependency, transitioning activities to locally supported initiatives, and incorporating child protection objectives into government plans. However, the durability of financial mechanisms remains vulnerable to shifting governmental priorities, budget constraints, and external challenges like climate events or pandemics.

Recommendations for Action

Based on the findings and analysis, the following seven recommendations are proposed for future programmes.

- 1. Adopt a Multidimensional, Multilevel and Multi-Stakeholder Approach:** Similar to the WNCB programme, future programmes addressing child labour should adopt a comprehensive approach that is, similar to the WNCB programme's approach, multidimensional, multilevel, and multistakeholder, ensuring that interventions tackle the complexity of the issue effectively. The evaluation of the WNCB programme demonstrated that engaging key stakeholders (communities, public sector actors, and private sector actors) across local, national, and international levels was a critical success factor of the programme in reducing child labour and improving school enrolment and attendance rates.
- 2. Integrate Public and Private Sector Strategies with an Area-Based Approach:** Similar to the WNCB programme, future programmes on child labour should integrate public and private sector strategies with an area-based approach as in the WNCB programme to effectively leverage community structures and enhance local engagement. The evaluation of the WNCB programme identified this integration as a key success factor of the programme in reducing child labour and increasing school enrolment and attendance rates.
- 3. Prioritise Early and Adequate Engagement with the Private Sector:** Private sector involvement is critical in addressing child labour within business operations and supply chains, particularly at the local level.

Future programmes should engage the private sector from the outset, ensuring that adequate financial and human resources are allocated to build trust and foster effective collaboration.

- 4. Institutionalise Child Protection Objectives into Local and National Policies:** Institutionalizing child protection objectives creates a stable policy foundation, fosters accountability among public institutions, and ensures that child labour prevention efforts remain a priority even after programme funding ends. Future programmes should actively engage governments to embed child protection objectives into local and national development frameworks, ensuring their alignment with existing priorities and systems.
- 5. Enhance Data Quality through MEAL Alignment, Standardised KPI Operationalisation and Consistent Data Management:** Future programmes should strengthen the alignment between MEAL systems and the ToC, standardise KPI operationalisation across partners and countries and ensure consistency in data collection through long-term engagement of external consultants. A structured approach to defining and linking KPIs will enhance tracking of programme contributions and facilitate learning, particularly in areas such as education and child labour. Standardizing KPI methodologies and data collection tools will improve comparability and reduce inconsistencies while maintaining some flexibility for contextual adaptations. Additionally, securing long-term data management partners will enhance data reliability and strengthen impact assessment as in the case of the SenseMaker studies or the mid- and endline surveys in some of the countries.

1 Introduction

The Work: No Child's Business (WNCB) programme was initiated in 2019 in the seven countries of Côte d'Ivoire, India, Jordan, Mali, Uganda, Viet Nam and the Netherlands. Through concerted efforts, the WNCB programme addressed the root causes of child labour through an integrated approach across four pathways to contribute towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8.7 and the elimination of child labour. As part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nation Member States in 2015 set the target SDG 8.7 to eliminate child labour in all its forms by 2025. However, the global progress against child labour illustrated by a reduction of the prevalence in child labour and hazardous work of over 5 percentage points between 2000 and 2012 has stalled at around 10 percent globally until 2020 just after the Work: No Child's Business (WNCB) Alliance commenced its work (ILO and UNICEF, 2021). While progress stalled globally, this was primarily driven by an increasing prevalence in Sub-Saharan Africa which is the region with the highest child labour prevalence, while progress was steadier in other regions (ILO and UNICEF, 2021).

While all the WNCB target countries prohibit child labour in line with international conventions, child labour is still prevalent, especially within the areas and supply chains targeted by the WNCB programme. Child labour and related legislation is guided by three main international conventions: the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 138 concerning minimum age for admission to employment and Recommendation No. 146 (1973); ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour and Recommendation No. 190 (1999); and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to these conventions, work done by children that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling; as well as excessively long and heavy work is considered child labour and hazardous work unsuitable for persons under the age of 18.

Syspons GmbH was commissioned by the WNCB Alliance to conduct the final evaluation of the WNCB Programme between July and December 2024. The **overarching aim of this evaluation was to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the WNCB Theory of Change (ToC)**, which in turn enabled a deeper understanding of the programme's contribution to the elimination of child labour in its partner countries.

Syspons' **evaluation of the WNCB programme had three objectives**: Firstly, to **assess the impact of the WNCB programme through the systematic analysis of all existing programme data**. Secondly, to **identify scalable good practices at the intersection of the area-based and supply chain approaches**, with a special focus on interventions targeted towards mitigating child labour in informal economies. Thirdly, to **formulate a list of strategic recommendations and approaches** that can be used for future action and collaborations by Alliance partners and other actors engaged in the fight against child labour.

This evaluation report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** outlines the evaluation framework, methodology, and data quality.
- **Chapter 3** offers an initial analysis of the WNCB programme, including its key target groups and Theory of Change.
- **Chapter 4** presents the evaluation results based on the criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, efficiency, and sustainability.
- **Chapter 5** provides the conclusion and a set of strategic recommendations for similar programmes.

In the **Annex** you will find:

- The **list of references, hypotheses, analysis grid and stakeholders interviewed**.

2 Overview of Evaluation Framework, Methodology and Data Quality

This chapter addresses the key questions of **why** this evaluation is being conducted, **what** it seeks to achieve, **and how** it will be carried out, while also providing **insights into the quality of the MEAL data**. It begins by outlining the **objectives (the "why")**, which establish the purpose of the evaluation and the specific goals it seeks to achieve. The **evaluation design (the "what")** is then described, with a focus on the contribution analysis framework that guides the assessment. Next, the **methodological approach (the "how")** is discussed, detailing the specific methods and tools used across the three main evaluation phases: the inception phase, the data collection phase, and the synthesis and reporting phase. Lastly, the chapter examines the **quality of programme data** and its impact on the evaluation results. Together, these elements offer a comprehensive overview of the evaluation's purpose, structure, and methodology.

2.1 Objectives of the Evaluation

The evaluation of the WNCB programme serves a variety of purposes. Firstly, it aims to **promote accountability** of the programme to stakeholders, including funders, participants and the general public. It does so **by measuring and documenting results** in a manner that makes manifest how resources have been used in the course of its implementation and which of its stated objectives have been achieved. Secondly, it **fosters transparency** by **building trust** amongst stakeholders and demonstrating a **commitment to openness and scrutiny**. Lastly, the capturing and documentation of insights **enhances learning** by enabling the **sharing of lessons and recommendations** as inspiration for both current and forthcoming interventions in the area of child labour mitigation.

The overarching assignment of the Syspons evaluation team was to capture and document the results that have been achieved by the WNCB programme in eliminating the root causes of child labour in its seven target countries. In doing so, particular attention was paid to **the integration of area-based and supply chain approaches**; a unique method through which the programme addressed a wide range of stakeholders who play crucial roles in the mitigation of child labour. In other words, this analysis highlights the ways in which community-based interventions supported and mutually reinforced policies designed to target child labour in supply chains. The evaluation had three specific objectives:

- 1) **Analysing the impact of the WNCB programme:** Assessing the success of programme interventions through a systematic analysis of all available data including Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and country-specific indicators, Outcome Harvesting reports, SenseMaker reviews, annual country reports, plans and related publications.
- 2) **Identifying scalable good practice examples, especially at the intersection of area-based and supply chain approaches:** Zeroing in on interventions that have shown particular promise in combatting child labour, particularly forms of child labour present in informal economies, through the implementation of two country-specific field visits in India and Côte d'Ivoire. The case studies involved a detailed stakeholder mapping in the natural stone and cocoa sectors and a reflection of good practices that can be further developed and scaled.
- 3) **Formulating strategic recommendations for future use by programme partners and key stakeholders:** Developing realistic and feasible suggestions based on evaluation results that can be utilised by Alliance partners and other stakeholders in the future to mobilize resources and collaborate towards the goal of mitigating child labour.

2.2 Evaluation Design

Instead of treating the analysis of Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) data and the implementation of the country field visits as separate processes, the team adopted an **integrated and holistic evaluation design**. To this end, these two components were streamlined and treated as intrinsically connected. **Contribution analysis** was performed to assess the impacts of the programme. Drawing from the evaluation of

the programme's ToC and the analysis of available MEAL data, a contribution story was developed, and gaps were identified. These gaps were addressed, wherever possible, through data collected during the country field visits. Finally, a set of **strategic recommendations** was formulated for future use by partners and other stakeholders.

Contribution analysis is a methodology developed to identify the contribution that an intervention has made to a change, or a set of changes.¹ It was developed by John Mayne in the early 2000s and is founded on the belief that it is often difficult to prove attribution when it comes to development programmes and interventions. This is due to factors like- 1) The many different steps that typically exist between programme activities and eventual changes, 2) Extraneous factors that influence the impact pathways of development interventions, and 3) A desired change often being brought about as an outcome of several different interventions.²

As a result, contribution analysis is designed to be used in conjunction with ToCs. While ToCs lay out specific pathways demonstrating how activities lead to outputs, outcomes and impact, contribution analysis is used to analyse change at all these different levels, thereby **comparing reality with theoretical propositions**. Notably, the aim of contribution analysis is not to conclusively establish whether a specific intervention has brought about a change or a set of changes. Rather, it seeks to **reduce uncertainty by offering a plausible and evidence-based narrative** of why certain changes have occurred. In the following paragraphs, each step of the contribution analysis is described and its application in the context of this assignment is explained.

The first step of a contribution analysis involves identifying a specific cause-effect issue to be addressed. Some of the questions that contribution analysis can help answer are- 1) Did a given intervention influence an observed change? 2) How and why did a change come about? 3) What are the conditions required to make a certain kind of intervention successfully work in the future? **The first step of the contribution analysis implemented for the WNCB final evaluation coincided with the inception phase and involved identifying and refining the evaluation objectives.** At the start of the inception phase, the Syspons evaluation team conducted a preliminary review of programme documents and a set of exploratory interviews with key WNCB staff and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) representatives. The insights gathered from this desk research and the interviews were subsequently used to- 1) Develop an inception report, and 2) Refine the evaluation framework. The validation of the inception report and evaluation framework concluded the inception phase and laid the groundwork for the second phase of the assignment, namely the data analysis and collection phase.

The second step of contribution analysis typically involves formulating a ToC. A ToC used for a contribution analysis must describe the logic of the programme (i.e. how activities lead to outcomes and impact) and list risks, assumptions and other factors that might influence change. **For the WNCB programme, a well-defined theory of change already existed** (see Figure 1), with clear strategic pathways that indicate the logical relationships between programme inputs, intermediate outputs and outcomes. Due to the detailed and coherent structure of the programme ToC, the evaluation team saw no need to make substantive changes to it. Instead, the second step of the contribution analysis was used to further refine the focus of the evaluation. This was done by streamlining the list of results hypotheses derived from an initial examination of the ToC (see Annex) and reducing the total number to be considered in the secondary data analysis stage. In other words, **a priority list of hypotheses based on the epistemological priorities of the evaluation have been identified and analysed in the secondary data analysis phase.** These epistemological priorities were determined based on the preliminary analysis of programme documents, findings from the exploratory interviews as well as detailed consultations with the WNCB team. Since no significant modifications to the programme ToC have been made, **step one and step two of the contribution analysis have been consolidated.**

The third step of contribution analysis involves the gathering of existing data. This phase entailed- 1) Utilising programme data and stakeholder inputs to test the priority set of hypotheses, and 2) Examining the

¹ <https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Contribution-analysis.pdf>

² Mayne, J (2012a). Making Causal Claims. Brief 26, Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative

quality of evidence available. **In the WNCB evaluation, the third step of the contribution analysis involved conducting a comprehensive review of all available MEAL data in order to assess whether sufficient knowledge is available to validate the priority set of hypotheses identified in the inception phase.** This enabled the evaluation team to gain an initial understanding of the programme's impact. The findings from the secondary data analysis moreover helped shape the plans with regards to additional phases of data collection and analysis required for the evaluation.

The fourth step of contribution analysis involves the formulation of a preliminary contribution story (also referred to as contribution narrative). The contribution story elaborates how a given intervention was implemented and how its various activities contributed to change. It additionally lists any external factors that might have had an influence. The next task involves assessing how credible this contribution story is i.e. how much of it can be backed up by evidence, and alternately, which components of the contribution story cannot be stated with confidence given the evidence examined. Three possible conclusions can be derived from studying the preliminary contribution story- 1) The contribution story is valid and can be used to demonstrate the contribution of the intervention to a change or set of changes, 2) The contribution story is unsupported in some areas, but it is impossible to collect further evidence. In this case, the areas that are underdetermined by evidence will remain, and 3) The contribution story is unsupported in some areas, but more evidence can be gathered to strengthen its propositions. **In the WNCB evaluation, we formulated a preliminary contribution story, which served as an initial narrative detailing how the WNCB's interventions brought about the observed outcomes.** This narrative was constructed using the findings of the secondary data analysis conducted in step three. The secondary data analysis provided some initial insights into the programme's impact and helped identify the key causal pathways in the ToC that are supported by existing evidence. However, it also revealed **gaps or areas where the evidence was insufficient to fully validate the contribution story.** For instance, step three of the contribution analysis revealed that some of the selected hypotheses do not have enough data to back them up, or that the available data does not meet the desired threshold of quality to ensure robustness of results. Put differently, the secondary data analysis conducted in step three helped determine which of the hypotheses identified in the inception phase could not be sufficiently validated through the available programme data, thereby setting the course for further data collection in the country-specific field visits. These **field visits served to gather primary data** that specifically aimed to test and refine these underdetermined hypotheses. The hypotheses used to set the research objectives for the field visits were selected according to the following criteria: 1) There is insufficient data to validate the hypotheses, 2) There is not enough good quality data to validate the hypotheses, 3) There is good quality data available, but there are still aspects of the results that remain unexplained, and 4) Epistemological priorities of the evaluation. Therefore, **the field visits were not merely additional data collection exercises; they were strategically designed to fill in the missing pieces of the contribution story, thereby strengthening its overall validity.**

Step five of the contribution analysis involved gathering further evidence in order to strengthen the preliminary contribution story in the areas where it is weak. For the WNCB evaluation, additional data to validate underdetermined hypotheses was gathered through **two country-specific field visits in India and Côte d'Ivoire.** It must be noted, however, that data gathered through these field visits **can only be partially extrapolated** to the larger programmatic context. Given the fact that the WNCB programme operated in seven countries and multiple regional contexts, the findings from the field visits might only be transferable with significant qualifications.

In the sixth and final step of contribution analysis, the preliminary contribution story was revised and strengthened in the light of new evidence. The ultimate aim of the analysis was to arrive at a more plausible version of the contribution story than the one developed in step four. **Step six of the contribution analysis for the WNCB programme involved adjusting the preliminary contribution story** so that it accounts for new information gathered through data collection in the country-specific field visits, while still acknowledging the areas that remain insufficiently explicable.

2.3 Methodological Approach

This subchapter outlines the methodological approach employed in the evaluation, detailing the specific methods and tools used across the three evaluation phases: the inception phase, the data analysis and collection phase, and the synthesis and reporting phase.

Inception phase

In the **inception phase**, the evaluation team collectively refined the focus and methodological approach of the evaluation in order to be able to plan and implement the subsequent steps in a systematic manner. At the start of the inception phase, a remote **kick-off workshop** was organised between the Syspons evaluation team, the National Experts from India and Côte d'Ivoire and the WNCB team. This workshop provided an opportunity for the evaluation team and the WNCB team to get to know each other and jointly determine the **evaluation objectives, methodology, work packages, timeline and deliverables**. Furthermore, it was used to clarify **the specific roles and responsibilities of each team member** on both the Syspons and WNCB side. One of the key objectives of the kick-off was to **clarify the involvement of various stakeholders** throughout the evaluation. It was jointly agreed that the National Experts would be closely involved in the design and implementation of the evaluation, with their expertise particularly sought on the topic of child rights and country-specific information and adaptations. Following the kick-off workshop, the **WNCB team provided access to programme data and documents** to the evaluation team through a dedicated MS Teams channel and in a meeting with the evaluation team, provided a short overview on how to access and use the different databases. Moreover, **specific communication pathways between the two teams were established** in order to ensure coordinated and efficient information sharing.

As a central component of the inception phase, **four virtual exploratory interviews** were scheduled to gain an **initial overview of the programme context and to gather insights regarding the achievement of objectives**. The interviews were additionally aimed at **refining the focus of the evaluation** to ensure that the final report and strategic recommendations are designed to be optimally relevant and useful for the involved stakeholders. The interview partners for the exploratory interviews included members of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and members of the WNCB team, including the WNCB Programme Manager.

The evaluation team furthermore conducted **a preliminary assessment of relevant programme data**, including general programme documents and MEAL data from all seven programme countries. The available MEAL data encompassed KPI data with country specific indicators, annual country reports and annual plans for 2020 to 2024, as well as SenseMaker studies and Outcome Harvesting reports. In line with the findings from the exploratory interviews, it was observed that the availability of base-, mid-, and endline studies of the KPI and SenseMaker data varied across countries. A thorough **initial data review** was conducted during the inception phase with a focus on key indicators, whose findings were subsequently discussed in a **meeting with the WNCB team to discuss data quality**. Additionally, **meetings were scheduled with the country teams of both India and Côte d'Ivoire** to collect preliminary findings, facilitate introductions and collectively discuss the evaluation design and timeline.

The methodological steps listed above formed the basis for the development of the inception report. As a key component of the report, a **list of hypotheses** (see Annex) was compiled based on a close examination of the WNCB ToC. In addition, the **analysis grid** was developed and adjusted based on the ToRs, the reviewed programme documents and data, as well as the insights gathered from the exploratory interviews. The conclusion of the inception phase laid the groundwork for the next two phases of the WNCB evaluation: data analysis and collection phase, and the synthesis and reporting phase.

Data Analysis and Collection Phase

The **data analysis and collection phase began with a selection of two priority hypotheses** from the extensive list of results hypotheses derived from the ToC in the inception phase. The identification of the Priority Set was based on the epistemological priorities of the WNCB team and the final selection for analysis was validated by the Alliance Coordination Team (ACT). These hypotheses went on to shape the objectives and key evaluation priorities of the two country-specific field visits at a later stage of the evaluation. The selection of the priority hypotheses was followed by **four (group) interviews with the country teams, two (group) interviews with the L&A and Communications Working Groups and a group interview with representatives of Pathway 3** to gather supplementary insights on country-specific programme implementation, challenges and lessons. Additionally, **six semi-structured interviews with MEAL focal points** enabled a better understanding of the existing data structure. The objective of these interviews was to capture in-depth insights into how WNCB MEAL systems were set up and functioning, and to identify areas of weaknesses in the data structure that the evaluation team was required to account for in the subsequent steps of the assignment. The information gathered from the interviews with the MEAL focal points was used to **map the data structure**, which helped the evaluation team determine all the data elements of the system, understand their internal relationships and linkages and identify potential data gaps. Additionally, the evaluation team lead participated in an **online SenseMaker webinar**, with the aim to gain a better understanding of the methodology and of how to contextualise and incorporate available SenseMaker data into the final evaluation. These activities provided the team with the knowledge necessary for the next steps of the data analysis, starting with a **comprehensive secondary data analysis of existing MEAL data** to examine the extent to which it supported or validated the hypotheses contained within the Priority Set. Notably, **the qualitative and quantitative data were treated with equal importance** and the results of the analysis were triangulated to ensure their robustness.

Next, the evaluation team conducted an **internal synthesis workshop** to formulate the preliminary contribution story (fourth step of the contribution analysis). Additionally, it drafted a **pilot chapter** based on interim findings that was sent to the WNCB team for feedback and comments. The chapter served to provide the WNCB team with a short overview of how the evaluation team proposed to present results in the final report.

To collect primary data (fifth step of the contribution analysis), **National Experts conducted interviews and focus group discussions with identified key stakeholders** in the natural stone sector in the Budhpura district in Rajasthan, India (six (group) interviews and seven focus group discussions) and in the cocoa sector in the Soubré department, Côte d'Ivoire (eight (group) interviews and six focus group discussions). As mentioned above, a **kick-off meeting** was scheduled between the evaluators and the respective country teams in August/September where the scope, specific objectives and key priorities of the evaluation were discussed. As a second preparatory step for the field visits, annual country reports, country-specific reports of KPIs and outcome harvesting reports, as well as other country-specific programme data like the gender analysis were reviewed by the National Experts for each country context. These **in-depth document reviews**, in addition to **consultations with the country team representatives**, informed the development of **two detailed stakeholder maps** for the field visit sectors in India and Côte d'Ivoire. These maps served to visualise all the key players linked to the programme at the district-level. Next, the **field visit approach** and **data collection instruments** were planned and refined, based on the findings of the interim results workshop and the selected priority hypotheses. Taking a broad and multi-perspectival view of the stakeholder context was crucial to this evaluation. Accordingly, the selection of the right interview sample and a context-sensitive realisation of the interviews were central to the quality of the data. At all stages of the fieldwork, the evaluation team remained committed to upholding children's rights, ensuring that the dignity and rights of every child were at the forefront of our efforts.

After completion of the field visits in India and Côte d'Ivoire, the evaluation team carried out another internal synthesis of data. The findings from this synthesis were presented to the WNCB and country teams in an **in-person results validation workshop** in the Hague. The workshop was followed by **an additional interview with WNCB programme management** to address key findings.

Synthesis and Reporting Phase

The final phase of the evaluation, namely the **synthesis and reporting phase** (step six of the contribution analysis), involved consolidating all available data in order to- 1) Assess the impact of the hypotheses based on the ToC, and 2) Adjust the contribution story and its constituent claims in light of new information. As mentioned above, key findings were finalised and validated in a results validation workshop.

The findings of this evaluation are presented in this **final report**, which addresses the key evaluation questions identified at the outset. The report also includes a set of **strategic recommendations** for programme partners and key stakeholders, offering guidance and inspiration for future programmes and initiatives. This draft was shared with the WNCB team to collect their feedback and insights for further refinement.

2.4 MEAL Data Quality

The quality of MEAL data played an important role in this evaluation, due to the holistic design employed, which integrated various components such as the use of contribution analysis and country field visits. In this evaluation, **MEAL data served as a foundation for assessing the programme's ToC and developing a robust contribution story** to assess the impacts of the WNCB programme. Therefore, high-quality data was needed to ensure that the theoretical pathways outlined in the ToC are aligned with **real-world observations**, enabling a credible analysis of the relationships between activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. The reliability and relevance of MEAL data thus directly influenced the ability of the evaluation to construct a plausible, evidence-based narrative of the programme's contributions to observed changes, reducing uncertainty and enhancing the utility of strategic recommendations for future stakeholders.

The available MEAL data encompasses a rich collection of various types of information. There is **KPI data** based on studies including **household surveys, tracer, worker or employer surveys, annual plans and annual country reports** for 2020 to 2024 including Outcome Harvesting tables, as well as **SenseMaker studies**. In principle, the KPI and SenseMaker studies were conducted at baseline, midline and endline, however the availability and types of data collection methods varied across countries and points in time. Additionally, **Mid-Term Reviews, gender analysis reports** and other knowledge products have also been made available. Based on the exploratory interviews and additional conversations with the WNCB team, the Syspons team was made aware of certain aspects of the data collected from the programme countries, which may have impacted the evaluation process and findings. Three major points were flagged by interviewees namely- 1) The **decentralization of data collection** in programme countries, 2) The **challenges of data collection posed by the COVID-19 pandemic**, and 3) general **limitations in access to and quality of the survey data** to measure the KPIs. Further observations are outlined below:

Table 1 Overview MEAL data

Country	Reports	KPI studies	SenseMaker studies
India	Annual Reports with outcome harvesting tables for 2020 to 2023 Annual plans for 2020 to 2024 Mid-Term Reviews	Baseline (Household (HH) survey), midline and endline (HH survey, employer interviews and workplace observation, KIIs) reports	SenseMaker surveys (children and adults) at baseline (except Viet Nam), midline and endline. In addition, KIIs and outcomes harvested with various types of stakeholders.
Côte d'Ivoire		Baseline (HH survey), midline (HH and tracer survey, KIIs, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)), endline (HH and tracer survey) reports	
Jordan		Baseline (HH survey), midline and endline (HH survey, workers tracer surveys) reports	
Mali		Baseline (HH survey, KIIs, FGDs), midline and endline (HH survey, KIIs) reports	
Uganda		Baseline (HH survey, KIIs, FGDs), midline report (former child labourers, workers and employer tracer surveys) and endline report (HH survey, former child labourers, workers and employer tracer surveys)	
Viet Nam		Baseline (HH survey, KIIs, FGDs), midline and endline (HH survey, children, women and private sector tracer surveys) reports	

Outputs and Efficiency

Due to the programme's complexity and various activities, **general output indicators are not defined or collected over the course of the programme.** Typically, annual plans define planned outputs which often include quantified targets. We observe an **increasing systematization and precision in how these are reported in the annual plans** over the programme's duration. The achievement of annual plans is then self-assessed in the Annual Reports and deviations are qualitatively described. Selected outputs and outcomes are further reported in the narrative reports and Outcome Harvesting tables. The programme categorized the diverse set of **outputs** and matched them with the programme's (intermediate) outcomes. This is appropriate considering the programme's complexity and we built on this categorization. However, this reduction in specificity necessarily **limits the interpretability and aggregation of outputs.** Further, we observe a change in this reporting practice and while we can attest an improvement, it makes it **challenging to consistently assess over time.** For instance, we see more subcategories for the assessment of the achievement of planned work packages under pathways 2 and 3 comparing the Annual Reports from 2021 to those from 2023.

One limitation with respect to the outputs is that the **achievement of planned activities is self-assessed, and outputs cannot comprehensively be independently verified for the whole programme.** Furthermore, the **level of abstraction and aggregation limits interpretability.** Therefore, the **analysis will primarily qualitatively assess the output delivery,** especially in terms of planned activities, and efficiency of the programme. It needs to be noted that these limitations are not specific to the WNCB programme and expected for complex programmes with multiple countries which cannot be covered to the same extent by an evaluation. Regarding the efficiency, it is helpful that the programme shared an allocation of country-budgets to the various pathways. Based on this, it is not possible to provide quantified indicators hence the distribution across outcomes is discussed qualitatively. Overall, **this limits our assessment and discussion of the evaluation criteria of**

effectiveness and efficiency. To mitigate these limitations, field visits were conducted in two of the countries in order to collect additional primary data and validate results with stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The key strengths of the MEAL data with respect to outputs is the rich and detailed record of activities and outputs. While there is a lack of harmonisation and aggregation of outputs across countries or time due to the complexity of the programme, there is a rich and detailed documentation of the programme's activities and outputs. In addition, the programme took care to clearly and readily report and explain deviations from the workplan which typically allowed us to understand what deviations there were and why. Overall, this provided a rich source of information for the qualitative assessment of output delivery.

Awareness and Social Norm Changes

For the purpose of identifying social norm changes, the programme conducted SenseMaker studies at base-, mid- and endline. These provide a source to identify changes in social norms and children's daily activities. Social norm change was a key component of the programme's ToC and therefore these studies were a source of valuable information on key outcomes, especially at the household level, and therefore provided evidence to support the programme's effectiveness and impact for Pathway 1. Further, it also helped to inform the programme's activities and implementation.

However, the **SenseMaker studies are explicitly not designed to provide representative statistics which could support the measurement of the impact indicators (KPIs).** Further, while the SenseMaker studies cover some qualitative interviews with private sector actors and governmental stakeholders, the **focus is on the children and their adult caretakers.** Since there already was ample evidence for Pathway 1, the focus of our contribution analysis lies on the intersections between pathways 2 and 3 with the area-based approach and social norm changes.³ Therefore, the **limited data in particular of norms in the private sector limits our assessment and discussion of the evaluation criteria of effectiveness and impact.**

Governmental Enforcement of Child Rights-Based Laws and Policy Implementation

To assess the programme's process in Pathway 2, the main source of information are the outcome harvesting tables in which achievements are reported on a yearly basis. It needs to be noted that **only a selection of harvested outcomes is available to the evaluation teams,** such that some achievements might be missed. However, it is expected that the most outstanding outcomes and major achievements in terms of changes in policies were included in the reports available to the evaluation team. In terms of strengthening child protection systems, the number of children reached is typically reported in the outcome harvested tables of the Annual Reports too. There is however a **challenge to identify duplications of children taken out of child labour, in particular across years.** We deem this to be a minor concern, as the programme took care to only report changes that occurred in a specific year to minimise potential duplications. These **limitations come into play both in our assessment of effectiveness but also the contribution analysis focusing on Pathway 2.** However, overall, the outcome harvesting tables were a good source to assess the programme's achievements with respect to Pathway 2. This approach to monitoring results is also highly appropriate for many of the achievements regarding policy change under Pathway 2 as it provides a better understanding of important details and the extent of policy change which could not be transmitted by mere quantitative indicators.

Private Sector

There is **scant data on Pathway 3.** There are some surveys conducted with workers, employers or workplace observations. However, there generally were **challenges to cover employers and the selection of surveyed employers is unclear.** Thus, it is difficult to put this information, when available, into context. Similarly, while some private sector actors were included in the SenseMaker studies, it is difficult to arrive at a comprehensive

³ Description of ToC pathways will follow in the next section.

picture. Finally, the outcome harvesting tables typically report on work conducted with the private sector directly. There is information on the number of private sector actors committing to child rights, however there is **little information available about how this translates into changes in how the businesses operate**. Due to the relatively little data especially for private sector actors, **our assessment and discussion of the evaluation criteria of effectiveness and impact and the contribution analysis focusing on Pathway 3 are therefore potentially limited** as MEAL data might be incomplete. To mitigate this limitation and fill data gaps, field visits were conducted in two of the six countries. While this is expected to support the contribution analysis by bridging data gaps, the information remains limited for the programme as a whole.

Children and Youth Key Outcomes and Impacts:

The **measurement of impact indicators (KPIs) presents several methodological and operational challenges** that hinder the reliability and comparability of results. The measurement of the impact indicators is however key to quantify changes in child labour or education. An attribution of changes to the programme would further require a more extensive research design and could not cover all of the programme's pathways. Considering the programme's complexity, the aim of the evaluation is therefore to assess the programme's contribution. For this purpose, in addition to the household surveys, data sources such as the SenseMaker studies can further inform the assessment of the impact indicators as they collect information on the children's activities even though they are not designed to measure the KPIs. While these sources of data can provide insights with respect to the changes in key impact indicators, the limitations outlined below should be kept in mind whenever changes in an impact indicator are discussed.

A primary issue with the measurement of (changes in) the impact indicators is the **lack of standardised operationalization, particularly for child labour and youth decent employment**. Data collection instruments and tools varied between baseline and midline/endline studies, and the methods used to calculate indicators differed across countries and potentially over time. Furthermore, calculations were occasionally performed manually and lacked transparency, introducing additional uncertainty. Consequently, **reported figures are often not directly comparable over time, with secondary data, or across contexts**. Further, there are **considerable contextual differences between programme countries**, in other words, each country operates within its own unique socio-political, economic and cultural context, and these differences can influence how data is interpreted and what it signifies. For example, a particular indicator may measure something different in one country compared to another. This problematises the ability to draw generalisable conclusions across all programme countries. The **contextualization by country teams**, while valuable, further contributes to variability and **limits comparability**. Furthermore, the **COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected and problematised data collection efforts** by disrupting baseline data collection activities. The **lack of reliable baseline data** in countries causes the evaluation team to rely largely⁴ on midline and endline data as they exhibit greater consistency, but which limits the extent to which changes in outcomes over the total programme timeline are measured. Further, **we focus on temporal trends rather than cross-country comparisons** to address the decentralised data collection. It further should be noted that the **quality of the data and the limitations discussed below differ greatly across countries**.

Challenges are also evident in the sampling of survey participants. **Deviations from random sampling** are prevalent and often insufficiently documented. **High attrition rates** and **diverse sample selection methods** across countries and time periods further complicate the robustness of the data. Additionally, **shifts in sample composition over time**, both in observed demographics and unobserved characteristics, introduce potential bias, complicating longitudinal comparisons. While these issues cannot be entirely resolved, they are mitigated by disaggregating findings by sex and age groups. **We rely on reported figures in original studies as these are best positioned to properly account for the sampling procedure, only in few cases, we calculate weighted means across organisations or geographies to report more comparable statistics between midline and endline**.

⁴ For Uganda baseline data is used as the midline only consisted of tracer survey and therefore did not collect information on the key impact indicators.

The reliability of the indicators is further constrained by **small sample sizes** in several of the countries, **particularly for indicator I3 and disaggregated data by age and sex groups**. In some instances, a single observation can substantially influence percentage-based conclusions, highlighting the fragility of the data. This uncertainty, compounded by the aforementioned methodological issues, renders both point estimates and observed differences subject to considerable variance in some of the countries. To address this, **our analysis focuses on qualitatively interpreting only substantial changes, avoiding over-interpretation of marginal differences that could be attributed to random variation**. Note that the available studies do not include statistical inference to determine statistical significance of differences. While sample size requirements were determined by power calculations, this was done for the aggregate level and without considering the commonly applied two stage sampling procedure. In addition, non-response challenged the achievement of planned sample sizes. Sample sizes differ greatly across countries and between midline and endline with a total of 5000 children covered in Côte d'Ivoire and fewer than 400 in Jordan, mostly the data collections covered 1000 households at endline and generally fewer at midline.

The next limitation is with respect to **extrapolating the findings to broader populations**. Population-level statistics to estimate population totals are typically outdated and/or lack adequate disaggregation. These constraints, combined with selection biases inherent in the sample, severely undermine the validity of estimates of the total number of children in child labour or school. Consequently, midline and endline reports, as well as KPI sheets, rarely report such figures. Recalculating or estimating changes in terms of the total population affected under these conditions would lack credibility. Therefore, **we refrain from reporting aggregate figures on the reductions or increases of the number of children in child labour**. Instead, **our analysis emphasises the programme's contributions to observed changes based on the survey samples and their implications for the programme's achievements**.

Finally, **interpreting and attributing observed changes to the programme is inherently complex**. Temporal changes are influenced not only by the programme's activities but also by external factors coinciding with the intervention period. To ensure a balanced perspective, observed trends are contextualized and the programme's contributions are assessed through hypothesis-driven contribution analysis. The available data does not allow us to measure the programme's attribution to a reduction of child labour or similar indicators. The number of children out of child labour due to the programme cannot be measured nor reported. Note that **contribution analysis focuses on selected hypotheses and cannot capture the full extent of the programme's contribution**.

Overall, the afore-mentioned **data quality issues limit our evaluation of the programme's impact** in particular with respect to quantitative assessments of its full scope and impact, i.e. to what extent the prevalence of child labour has decreased, and school enrolment and attendance rates increased. Relatedly, the programme's contribution cannot be quantified either but instead is qualitatively assessed. However, the qualitative assessment is not only necessitated due to data limitations, but also due to the programme's complexity. The programme's contribution can only be assessed through careful consideration of the plausibility of causal chains linking activities to impacts.

3 The WNCB Programme

This chapter provides a **short overview of the WNCB programme**, focusing on its objectives and different levels of engagement. Next, it introduces the **main target groups** of its interventions. Finally, the **WNCB ToC** is reviewed and the **four strategic pathways** through which the programme aimed to affect change are elaborated upon.

3.1 Objectives of the WNCB Programme

The **overarching objective of the WNCB programme was to free children and youth from child labour and to facilitate their access to quality education and (future) decent work.** It aimed to achieve this impact by 1) Systematically and collaboratively **addressing the root causes** of child labour through engaging with a wide spectrum of stakeholders, 2) **Removing key barriers** that stand in the way of eliminating child labour and protecting child rights, and 3) Promoting and **providing alternatives to child labour** in the form of improved access and quality of education for children and income generating opportunities for parents and adults.

A secondary analysis of programme documents revealed that the WNCB Alliance sought to engage with stakeholders at four levels, namely **community, government, private sector and international bodies**, with the set of strategies employed at each level differing from country to country to adapt to their unique contexts (Programme Proposal 2019; Annual Report 2020; Annual Report 2021; Annual Report 2022; Annual Report 2023). At the community level, the programme aimed to empower children, improve their access to formal education and facilitate youth employment within a supportive environment. At the government level, it promoted the implementation and enforcement of laws regulating child labour, social security and youth economic empowerment. At the private sector level, it encouraged businesses to comply with child labour laws, while promoting fair wages for adult and youth employees. Finally, at the level of international organisations, it lobbied and advocated for governments in the European Union (EU) and multilateral organisations to do their part in fighting child labour by prioritizing its elimination as part of their agenda and instituting and enforcing due diligence policies.

Owing to its economic power, supply chain influence, resources and ability to collaborate with different stakeholders, the **private sector is an integral partner in global efforts to eliminate child labour**, and a distinct focus of WNCB interventions. Many children are currently employed in supply chains and production lines of companies, especially in the agriculture, mining and manufacturing sectors. Notably, **the majority of child labour worldwide occurs outside of international supply chains**, e.g. within households and on family farms (Programme Proposal 2019). Informal and invisible forms of child labour are particularly difficult to identify and mitigate, and their existence highlights the importance of looking beyond international supply chains. The WNCB programme sought to target child labour in informal economies by employing a broad area-based approach and interventions aimed at sensitising and strengthening the capacities of private sector actors with respect to child protection.

International standards like the **United Nations (UN) Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises** establish minimum standards for responsible business conduct worldwide. They advocate for all businesses to mitigate negative impacts that arise out of their operations, products, dealings and services. Existing initiatives in the Netherlands such as the **International Responsible Business Conduct (IRBC) Agreements** and the **Fund Against Child Labour RVO/FBK** are likewise commendable in their efforts to encourage private sector cooperation with the Dutch government to combat child labour. However, **formal agreement and guidelines like the IRBC have often fallen short of addressing all aspects of the problem.** They are especially unsuccessful in targeting child labour that exists in the unregulated, lower levels of global supply chains. **Children are often engaged in labour in the deeper, more informal segments of supply chains** e.g., home-based work, where it is very difficult to identify or reach them through traditional supply chain approaches. In these lower tiers, it is impossible for businesses alone to eliminate child labour without collaborating with other relevant stakeholders and the **active involvement of communities.** The aforementioned blind spots are further exacerbated by a political climate in which many European countries increasingly focus on a supply chain approach. This narrow focus often leads to concern only for certain parts of the supply chain, allowing them to sidestep responsibilities related to child labour, which is frequently pushed into more informal sectors to avoid detection.

To address these needs, **the WNCB Alliance has identified complementary and synergistic strategies, combining an area-based approach with a supply chain approach.** Through the area-based approach, the programme addressed root causes of child labour like poverty, barriers to education and social norms that encourage child labour. This complemented the supply chain approach by preventing or discouraging situations where children simply shift from one sector to another and partake in more invisible forms of child labour.⁵ At the same time, through its supply chain approach, the programme encouraged companies to improve working conditions for their employees and exercise their due diligence obligations vis-à-vis responsible business conduct. The WNCB programme engaged with businesses, conducted trainings on Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) and Child Rights and Business Principles (CRBP), and encouraged businesses to implement action plans designed to integrate CRBP into their existing workplace policies.

Furthermore, the Alliance recognised that community-based mobilisation and organisation can only be effective and sustainable if local and national governmental authorities support area-based interventions. Correspondingly, a significant portion of the WNCB programme's interventions were focused on **lobbying and advocacy**, aimed towards ensuring that governments- 1) Implement education policies, 2) Set up child protections services, and 3) Enforce child labour and due diligence laws.

3.2 Target Groups of the WNCB Programme

The WNCB programme was designed to address the complex and multi-faceted issue of child labour through targeting a **broad spectrum of target groups**. In line with the **ILO Convention 138 on the minimum working age** and the **ILO convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour**, the main groups include:

- 1) **Children (under 15 years old):** One of the primary target groups of the WNCB programme were children under 15 years old. The Alliance worked with the overarching aim to mitigate child labour and facilitate access to formal quality education. Notably, child labour rates increase sharply with age, with 20.9% of children aged 5-13 being employed in economic activities as compared to 48.1% aged 14-17. (Programme Proposal 2019).
- 2) **Youth (aged 15-18 years):** Recognising the vulnerability of youth aged 15-18 to the worst forms of child labour, the WNCB programme allocated significant resources to protect them. This involved promoting continued education, vocational training, and opportunities for decent work, with the goal of supporting a successful transition from education to employment and ensuring their future economic independence and wellbeing.
- 3) **Families and Communities:** The programme worked closely with families and community stakeholders to build a supportive environment that prioritises children's education and rights. This involved empowering parents and community leaders to advocate for and uphold the norms against child labour, while also providing alternative livelihoods to reduce economic pressures that may lead to child labour.
- 4) **Local, National and Transnational Authorities:** The programme supported international organisations, government bodies and relevant state authorities in strengthening and enforcing child-rights-based laws and policies. This included building capacity for effective implementation of child protection measures and ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to sustain these efforts.
- 5) **Private Sector:** Companies and supply chain actors within the focus sectors of the programme are additionally considered as key stakeholders and target group. By promoting responsible business conduct, the programme sought to eliminate child labour within supply chains and ensure that companies are active participants in protecting children's rights.

⁵ WNCB Working Paper: NGO Perspectives on Private Sector Engagement to End Child Labour, p.2

3.3 Theory of Change

The WNCB programme's ToC lays out a structured approach to tackling child labour and increasing access to education by defining specific pathways of change at multiple levels and detailing the interconnections between various interventions and their anticipated results.

The **impacts** to which the WNCB programme aimed to contribute are that **children and youth are free from child labour (I1) and enjoy their rights to quality education (I2) and decent work (I3)**. These impacts were intended to arise out of the **four pathways of change at four interacting levels**: the community, government, private sector, and international level. To achieve the targeted impacts, the theory of change laid out a set of corresponding **outcomes**, which can be found in **Error! Reference source not found.**

The **first pathway**, or the **community-based approach**, aimed at the outcomes of **empowering children to pursue an education** within a supportive family and community environment (O1a) and **improving access to (quality) formal education**, bridge or transitional schooling and **youth employment** (O1b). For the purpose of empowering children, families and communities should demonstrate support for children's right to education and decent youth employment (IO1.1). Further families should develop alternative livelihoods (IO1.2) to provide a supportive family environment for their children to pursue an education. Moreover, child protection mechanisms should ensure targeted outreach to out of school and working children withdraw children from child labour and link children and their families to services (IO1.3), families and children have improved access to child sensitive social protection schemes (IO1.5), and schools use improved child-friendly teaching methods (IO1.6) such that children are empowered to pursue an education and access to education is improved. In addition, adolescents and youth should have improved literacy, life skills, and vocational/entrepreneurial skills for transition to decent work (IO1.4), such that access to youth employment is improved.

To achieve these intended outcomes, the following **outputs** were supported under **Pathway 1**: Families and communities have increased knowledge on and attitudes towards child rights, child labour, and youth employment opportunities (OP1.1), communities have the capacity to organize and advocate in support of child rights (OP1.2), and families/parents and children are aware of available social protection schemes (OP1.4) such that child sensitive social protection schemes are more accessible (IO1.5). Relatedly, if child protection committees have the capacity to protect child rights (OP1.5) this should help ensure targeted outreach of child protection mechanisms (IO1.3) and improve access to child sensitive social protection schemes (IO1.5). Another output is that teachers have been trained on child friendly methods and child rights (OP1.3), such that schools use improved child-friendly teaching methods (IO1.6). If improved non-formal and vocational/entrepreneurial skills training opportunities are available to youth (OP1.6), then this should lead to improved skills of youth (IO1.4). Finally, if families/parents have technical, employability and or entrepreneurial skills (OP1.7), then they are enabled to develop alternative livelihoods (IO1.2). Under Pathway 1, the WNCB's cross-cutting strategy on gender and inclusion should be noted. Social norms stemming from a patriarchal value system push girls into child marriage. Therefore, WNCB's work to change social norms also aimed to address issues related to child marriage and sensitize communities towards the importance of girls' education to enhance opportunities for girls and empower women.

The **second pathway, lobby, advocacy and system strengthening** in partner countries, aimed at the **outcome of governments enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implementing policies** on child labour, education, youth economic empowerment and social security (O2). For this purpose, legal and policy frameworks to prevent and address child labour should be improved (IO2.1) and administrative structures and necessary resources should be in place to implement relevant services, systems and policies (IO2.2).

To achieve these intended outcomes, the following **outputs** were supported under **Pathway 2**: On the community level, effective mechanisms to enable child and community leadership and participation in advocating for their rights are in place (OP2.1). On the governmental level, policy makers, parliamentarians, politicians, ministers, and duty bearers have improved knowledge of child sensitive social security services, child friendly teaching

methods and youth economic empowerment (OP2.2). Further, advocacy networks for supportive laws, policies, administrative structures and budgets are strengthened (OP2.3), and intersectoral and public-private collaborations to prevent and address child labour are improved (OP2.4).

The **third pathway**, the supply chain approach, aimed at the **outcome of the private sector** taking full responsibility for **preventing and addressing child labour**. For this purpose, the private sector should realize decent work conditions incl. remediation measures for former child labourers, fair wages for adults and youth and fair prices for goods (IO3.1), should implement measures to address child labour in their supply chain (IO3.3), and private sector actors should have integrated child protection policies and mechanisms to prevent, mitigate, and remediate cases of child labour in their business activities and throughout their supply chain (IO3.4). In addition, the private sector should provide skills training and apprenticeship opportunities for adolescents and youth (IO3.2),

To achieve these intended outcomes, the following **outputs** were supported under **Pathway 3**: Agreements between partners, Responsible Business Conduct initiative and companies regarding cooperation in selected areas and/or programmes aimed at improving policies and practices of private sector actors with regard to combatting child labour are strengthened (OP3.1) should lead to respective child protection measures (IO3.1, IO3.3, IO3.4). Similarly, if influence and support to private sector actors on how to integrate child protection policies and mechanisms to prevent, mitigate and remediate cases of child labour are improved (OP3.2), then this should lead to similar outcomes. Finally, if the knowledge of workers, company management, and worker representatives/unions on how to address child labour cases in selected sectors/businesses is improved (OP3.3) the outcomes can be achieved.

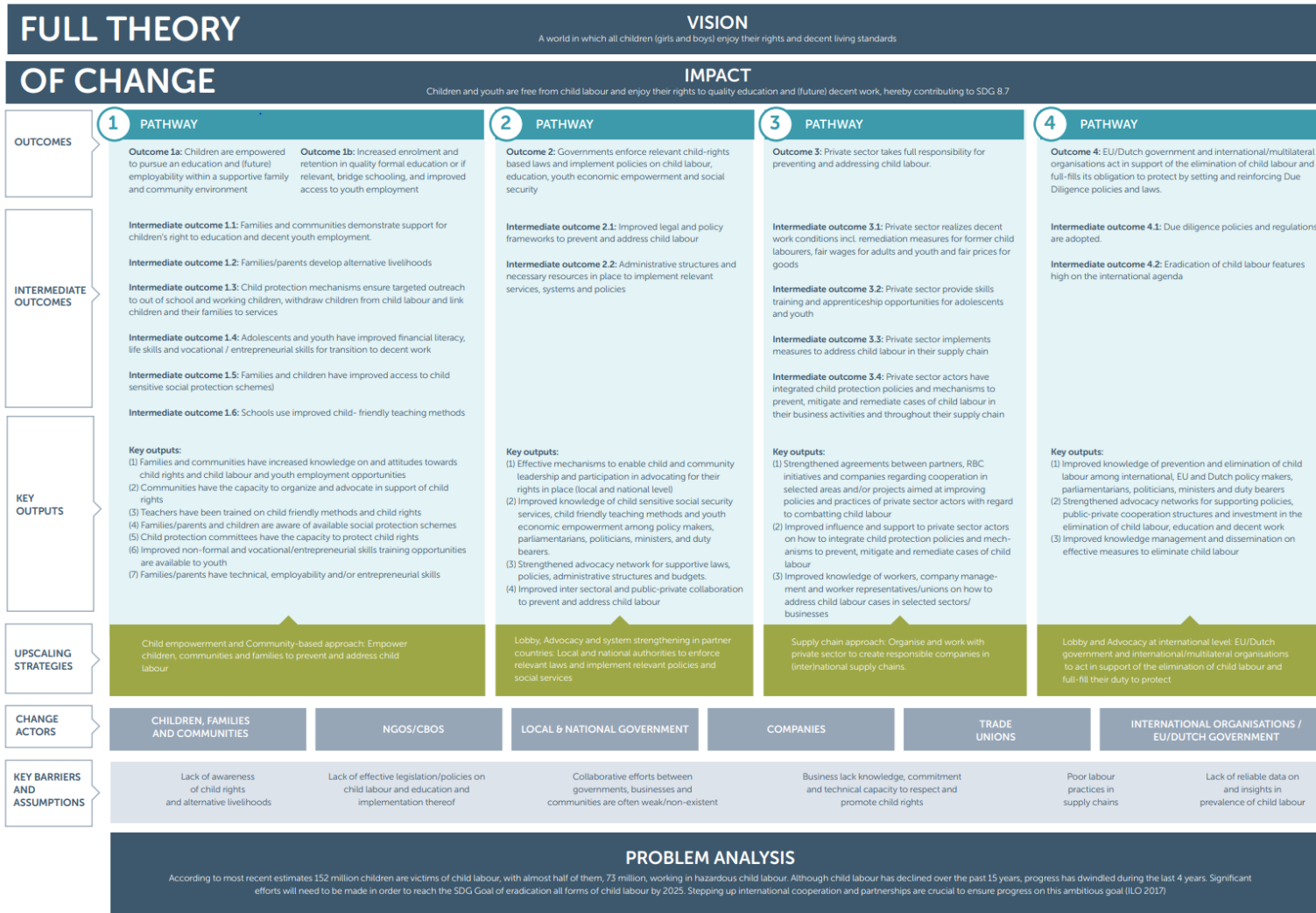
The **fourth pathway**, lobby and advocacy at the international level, aimed at the **outcome of the EU/Dutch government and international/multilateral organisations acting** in support of the elimination of child labour and fulfilling its obligation to protect by setting and reinforcing Due Diligence policies and laws (O4). For this purpose, due diligence policies and regulations should be adopted (IO4.1) and the eradication of child labour should feature high on the international agenda (IO4.2).

To achieve these intended outcomes, the following **outputs** were supported under **Pathway 4**: The output of improved knowledge management and dissemination on effective measures to eliminate child labour (OP4.3) facilitates the improvement of knowledge of prevention and elimination of child labour among international, EU, and Dutch policy makers, parliamentarians, politicians, ministers and duty bearers (OP4.1) which should affect the international agenda (IO4.2) and the adoption of due diligence policies (IO4.1). In addition to directly working towards the intermediate outcomes, the WNCB programme further aimed to strengthen existing and new advocacy networks since when advocacy networks for supporting policies, public-private cooperation structures and investment in the elimination of child labour and improvement of education and decent work are strengthened (OP4.2), then the outcomes are intended to be reached.

Within the programme, the four pathways were interlinked and designed to work together. For instance, the lobbying and advocacy on the national and international level (pathways 2 and 4) aims to affect the outcome of Pathway 3, i.e., the private sector taking responsibility in preventing and addressing child labour. In addition to the broad overview structured along the programme's pathways, the ToC and **causal chains linking outputs, outcomes and impacts**, including their interconnectedness across pathways, are illustrated by the hypotheses in the Annex. As part of the contribution analysis (see Chapter 4.3.2) this evaluation investigates two interlinkages between pathways in more detail. Firstly, the contribution analysis assesses the WNCB's contribution through **including the lower tiers and informal sector of supply chains in the area-based approach**. The promise of this interlinkage is that private sector actors are expected consider the issue of child labour beyond their own production and supply chain such that through changed norms private sector actors as important members of their communities take steps against child labour including supporting children's education. Secondly, the contribution analysis focuses on how the **child protection system strengthening** under Pathway 2 **interacts with**

the area-based approach. Including and working with communities is expected to improve targeted outreach and facilitate scaling-up the scope of interventions such that more children can be reached.

Figure 1 Theory of Change of the WNCB programme



4 Evaluation Results

This chapter presents the **findings of the evaluation**, organised in accordance with the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, namely **relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, efficiency, and sustainability**. Each evaluation criterion includes both a detailed analysis of the results and a summary in which the evaluation team highlights and the key outcomes.

4.1 Relevance

This sub-chapter appraises the relevance of the WNCB programme by examining several key aspects. Firstly, it analyses the extent to which its interventions were **aligned with the priorities and needs of its key stakeholders**. Secondly, it investigates to what degree its objectives were **harmonized with Dutch national policies and priorities**. Finally, it examines how successfully the WNCB programme could **adapt to major challenges and changes in circumstances** that arose in the course of its implementation.

Alignment with Stakeholder Needs

A secondary data analysis of programme documents, key informant interviews and field visits revealed **that the WNCB programme was well-aligned with the priorities and needs of its key stakeholders, including children and youth, families and communities, local and national authorities, and private sector actors**. Regarding **children and youth**, the Programme Proposal 2019 indicated that the WNCB programme targeted regions and sectors with high levels of child labour and low school attendance rates. This alignment was further corroborated by key informant interviews (interviews with WNCB programme staff). Additionally, field visits in India and Côte d'Ivoire confirmed the programme's relevance, with all interviewed stakeholders consistently reporting high incidence of child labour and low school attendance rates in the project areas (as per interviews and focus groups conducted in the Budhpura and Nawa regions with families, community members, teachers, private sector actors, and state authorities). The SenseMaker Endline Report from 2024, Annual Reports (Annual Report 2021 (incl. Outcome Harvesting Report); Annual Report 2022 (incl. Outcome Harvesting Report) Annual Report 2023 (incl. Outcome Harvesting Report); Final Reports 2024) and field visits show that to address the needs of the children and youth with respect to child labour and education, the WNCB programme implemented a series of interventions across project countries. Activities of the WNCB programme targeted towards children and youth included, among others, organising awareness raising sessions on the importance of education (SenseMaker Endline Report 2024), facilitating access to necessary documentation for school registration (interview with staff member of ANADER in Côte d'Ivoire), organising modes of transportation to help children in remote areas get to schools (interview with mine owner in Budhpura) and setting up bridge schools and motivational centres in regions with inadequate school infrastructure (interviews with country team in Côte d'Ivoire and staff member at the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in the Soubré department).

Regarding **families and communities**, the Programme Proposal 2019 identified poverty, lack of awareness, and traditional customs and norms as key risk factors for child labour. These challenges were further substantiated by the field visits which included interviews with a diverse range of stakeholders in the Budhpura and Nawa regions such as families, community members, teachers, private sector actors, and state authorities, highlighting the prevalence of these issues in the project areas. A secondary data analysis of programme documents indicates that the WNCB programme addressed these needs of families and communities through two main approaches: (1) Facilitating access to alternative livelihood opportunities and income-generating activities, and (2) Raising awareness about

the dangers of child labour and the importance of education (Programme Proposal 2019; Annual Report 2021). Economic support interventions included rural entrepreneurship programmes (Annual Report 2022) and targeted vocational training and skill development in areas such as vegetable rearing and animal husbandry (Annual Report 2021). The field visit in India corroborates this while highlighting the role of Manjari Sansthan, the programme partner in Rajasthan, in organizing women into self-help groups (SHGs) and educating them about alternative livelihoods outside the natural stone industry (focus group of women SHGs in Budhpura). These SHGs also benefited from financial literacy and inclusion initiatives designed to reduce household reliance on private lenders; a key contributor to financial vulnerability and child labour (focus group of women SHGs in Budhpura). Additionally, the SenseMaker Endline Report 2024 reports indicate that awareness-raising activities and community sensitisation campaigns were conducted to disseminate information about child labour and promote norm changes. These efforts resulted in a documented shift in attitudes toward child labour across project countries (SenseMaker Endline Report 2024). All stakeholders interviewed for field visits in India and Côte d'Ivoire confirmed these changes in community-wide attitudes. The WNCB programme also addressed country- and context-specific factors contributing to child labour. For instance, in Budhpura, where silicosis-related illness and deaths among family breadwinners often push children into child labour, the programme implemented awareness campaigns about the disease, supported affected individuals in accessing diagnoses and medications and facilitated their access to government benefits and compensation (focus group with silicosis patients in Budhpura).

With regard to **local and national authorities**, to eliminate child labour, governments must establish robust legal and regulatory frameworks that uphold children's rights and ensure their access to free, high-quality education. This access must also be integrated into broader, well-functioning social service delivery systems (*Position Paper Call for Urgent Action to Get Children out of Work and into School*, 2022). Programme documents highlight that **the WNCB programme supported local and national authorities in implementing child protection measures and enforcing child rights-based laws and policies in all project countries in all its project countries**. (Annual Report 2022; Annual Plan 2024). For instance, in Jordan, the programme partnered with the government to update the national framework on child labour (Annual Plan 2024).⁶ Similarly, the field visit in Côte d'Ivoire indicates that the programme strengthened the enforcement of pre-existing laws mandating compulsory education through its local-level activities (interview with ILO staff). Furthermore, the WNCB programme assisted local governments in ensuring the provision of free, high-quality education in safe and inclusive environments. This was achieved through teacher training, the development of quality school infrastructure, the continuation of bridge schools, and support for creating standardised and quality curricula (Annual Report 2022). Importantly, **these initiatives were closely aligned with the priorities and needs identified by local government authorities**, as evidenced by field visits in Côte d'Ivoire and India (interview with an official from the Regional Office of the Ministry for Women, the Family and Children in the Soubré department; focus group with Panchayat members in Budhpura).

Finally, looking at **the private sector**, international buyers and businesses operating in low- and middle-income countries often lack awareness of their role in preventing and eliminating child labour. Even in countries with due diligence legislation, private sector actors may have insufficient knowledge about compliance requirements. The SenseMaker Endline Report 2024 highlights that the WNCB programme addressed these gaps by conducting awareness-raising and sensitization activities across all programme countries. In addition to advocating for stronger due diligence legislation within the EU, the field visits show that the programme fostered a sense of responsibility and facilitated norm changes among private sector actors, encouraging them to exceed regulatory requirements, ensure supply chain transparency, and actively address child labour (interviews with members of the WNCB L&A Working Group and Communications Working Group). In Budhpura, where initial resistance to programme activities was observed among yard owners, sustained engagement by Manjari Sansthan resulted in a significant shift in attitudes (focus group with Panchayat members in Budhpura). This change is reflected in various child protection

⁶ Please note that throughout Chapter 4, specific evaluation results are accompanied by country examples. For brevity, we limit the number of examples to 1-2 per activity or impact. This does not imply that other countries did not implement similar activities or achieve similar results.

efforts initiated by private sector actors, such as the construction of a motivational centre by a local yard owner and a transportation initiative by a mine owner to help children access schools (interviews with a local yard owner and a mine owner in Budhpura). Similar changes were observed in Côte d'Ivoire, where several cocoa cooperatives established social protection initiatives and platforms to combat child labour (interview with a UNICEF country team member in Côte d'Ivoire).

Hence, in conclusion, the **WNCB programme demonstrated strong relevance by effectively aligned its interventions with the diverse needs of its key stakeholders, ensuring that its strategies addressed the root causes and consequences of child labour while empowering communities, supporting governments, and engaging the private sector to promote sustainable change.**

Alignment with Dutch National and Sectoral Priorities

A systematic secondary data analysis of programme documents and key informant interviews revealed that **the WNCB programme's objectives were closely aligned with Dutch national and sectoral priorities**. WNCB followed the NL pledge made at the 2017 Global Conference on Child Labour and related 2018 parliamentary motion (Programme Proposal 2019). According to key informant interviews, the programme reflected the Dutch government's sustained and multi-faceted commitment to eliminating child labour (interview with a representative of the Dutch MoFA). Over the past six years, the Dutch government has supported community-based, multi-stakeholder initiatives to adopt the area-based approach and promote education and fair production chains. Key initiatives included co-hosting the 2020 International Meeting on taking steps to end Child Labour in Global Supply Chains and developing a Roadmap following the 2022 Durban Call to Action. Child labour also remained a high priority in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation strategy (Annual Report 2022).

Notably, interviews indicate that **the Dutch government's priorities with regards to child labour evolved over time**. Initially, the government's (and the MoFA's) focus was on improving access to education as a means to combat child labour. Over time, this focus expanded to address root causes such as poverty and to engage the business community in identifying and mitigating child labour (interview with an official from MoFA). **The WNCB programme's combined area-based and supply chain approach demonstrated a high degree of complementarity with these interests**, encompassing a broad range of interventions aimed at improving access to quality education, addressing root causes and collaborating with the private sector to address child labour.

The programme also contributed actively to discussions within various sectoral covenants, such as the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garment and Textile, the Dutch Responsible Gold Agreement and the Dutch Agreement on Responsible Natural Stone. The Programme Proposal 2019 highlights that Alliance partners involved in these covenants leveraged their networks and accomplishments, creating synergies with the WNCB programme's approach. For instance, UNICEF Netherlands, Save the Children, Stop Child Labour partner Arisa and Hivos connected WNCB to advocacy efforts within the mining, garment, and cocoa sectors. These connections facilitated engagement with brands, factories, and other programmes while providing access to valuable networks for knowledge exchange (Annual Report 2020). Stop Child Labour also provided sectoral covenants with practical examples of how an Area-Based Approach could effectively complement supply chain strategies in these industries. By showcasing good practices from local partners within covenants, the programme inspired and guided private sector actors on compliance with due diligence obligations. Moreover, lessons learned from the covenants informed the implementation of the programme in other countries (Annual Report 2022).

However, **the programme also faced challenges adapting to shifting political dynamics**. Key informant interviews highlighted that as Dutch government priorities evolved during the programme, there was a growing emphasis on EU-wide due diligence legislation over setting a domestic agenda (as per interview with a representative from the WNCB L&A Working Group). While the WNCB programme made efforts to adjust to these changes, its

achievements in influencing EU-level policy were judged to be relatively modest (as per interview with a representative of the Dutch MoFA). However, it is important to note that in spite of challenges related to changing political priorities, the programme was successful in lobbying for the inclusion of child rights in the EUCSDD.

Adaptation to Challenges

Over the course of its implementation, the WNCB programme successfully adapted to several major challenges and changes in context. On a global level, the biggest obstacle to programme implementation came in the form of the **COVID-19 pandemic**. Similarly, on a country level, a range of contextual changes (e.g., political instability, security crises, climate events) complicated the programme's efforts to mitigate child labour. A secondary data analysis of programme documents and the field visits **shows that in all cases, the Alliance partners showed great flexibility in adjusting priorities and adapting programme activities to their specific circumstances.** The remainder of this section outlines the influence of these external factors on programme activities and analyses how the programme responded to them through its **adaptive management system**.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic presented numerous challenges to programme activities, including **the worsening of root causes, restricted access to quality education, setbacks in gender equality, reduced private sector efforts to address child labour in supply chains and disruptions to programme systems and operations.** However, programme documents and field visits confirm that the programme demonstrated considerable **resilience and flexibility**, adapting its strategies through a **context-sensitive, bottom-up approach** to address the most urgent needs of its stakeholders.

According to Annual Reports and the Annual Plan of 2024, the pandemic had **significant negative effects on child labour**, leading to an increase in the number of children working both in the private sector and within households and other informal settings (Annual Report 2020; Annual Report 2021; Annual Report 2022; Annual Report 2023; Annual Plan 2024). The Annual Report 2020 noted that all programme countries observed a notable **exacerbation of root causes**, impacting the ability of families to continue sending children to school and keeping them out of child labour. Widespread illness and job losses **eroded household income and savings**, rendering families destitute and causing them to rely on child labour as a means to survive the pandemic (Annual Report 2020). Field visit data from India confirms this, as mine workers reported having had to work through the second wave of lockdowns and receiving minimal financial and material assistance from their employers (as per focus group with mine workers in Budhpura). Moreover, due to restrictions on mobility and public gatherings, **the WNCB programme was unable to access communities** for sensitisation activities and skills trainings (Annual Report 2020).

Moreover, according to the Annual Report from 2021, **access to quality education** was furthermore severely compromised by lengthy lockdowns and school closures. Children across WNCB programme countries were forced to switch to online modes of learning, which was particularly disadvantageous for those from economically marginalised communities with poor access to digital learning devices and the internet. As per a large-scale study, the lockdown measures had **particularly bad effects on gender equality**, with girls less likely to return to school post-lockdown compared to boys in many communities.⁷ What's more, partners also reported an **increase in child marriage, teen pregnancies and violence against girls and women**⁸, a fact that was corroborated by country teams in both Uganda and India (Annual Report 2020).

⁷ https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/vr59-01_protect_a_generation_report_en_0.pdf/

⁸ Ibid.

The pandemic additionally saw **weakened efforts on the part of private sector actors** to identify and eliminate child labour in their supply chains. The Annual Plan of 2024 highlights that in multiple programme countries, businesses employed children in order to stay afloat and to compensate for revenues lost during government-mandated lockdowns. The pandemic years also witnessed a rise in hard-to-detect forms of child labour in informal settings (Annual Plan 2024). At the same time, lockdowns were often accompanied by a **reduced focus of governments on safeguarding child rights**. With a large number of resources diverted to pandemic responses, development of child protection policies and by-laws was either delayed or stalled and enforcement of existing regulations was weakened due to reduced capacities of relevant agencies (WNCB Annual Plan and Exit Strategy 2024).

The Annual Plan of 2024 reports that the pandemic also compromised **lobby and advocacy and Responsible Business Conduct-related activities** of the programme. Restrictions on in-person meetings with public and private stakeholders complicated lobbying efforts in the Netherlands. Moreover, planned meetings and conferences on Responsible Business Conduct with private sector actors were either delayed or called off, severely impacting opportunities for engagement and influencing.

The programme furthermore observed **sector-specific impacts of the pandemic**, with demand for goods and materials dropping steeply across countries. For example, the Annual Report from 2020 highlights that in the gold sector, pandemic-related restrictions contributed to a precipitous drop in buying prices at Artisanal and Small Gold-Mining (ASGM) sites. This in turn led to numerous mining activities being suspended and workers going without pay, reinforcing pre-existing economic vulnerabilities of ASGM communities. The natural stone sector similarly witnessed a significant decline in growth as an outcome of pandemic-related measures (Annual Report 2020). Field visit data from India highlights a similar situation in Budhpura, where the sandstone industry experienced a sharp decline. This downturn led to a substantial migration of workers back to their villages and significant financial losses for yard owners, who struggled with issues such as waste management and storage (as per stakeholder interview with a yard owner in Budhpura).

According to the Annual Plan and Exit Strategy 2024, the pandemic also had notable impacts on the **monitoring and learning components of the programme**. It caused **delays in the collection of crucial baseline KPI and SenseMaker data** in some countries and generally delayed the guidance and capacity-building of country MEAL teams, especially with regards to MEAL instruments like Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Outcome Harvesting Reports. The timeline for other deliverables like the Mid-Term Review and Gender Analyses was correspondingly impacted from delays in data collection in the earlier stages of programme implementation (Annual Plan 2024).

A secondary data analysis of programme documents and field visits show that in spite of the unanticipated nature of these challenges, the WNCB programme displayed great flexibility in adapting to them, adjusting its activities to meet the most immediate and urgent needs of affected communities and responding to factors exacerbating child labour in programme regions. In communities impacted by income and livelihood losses, partners **facilitated people's access to employment opportunities**. In India, for example, the Annual Report from 2020 highlights that Manjari Sansthan collaborated with Panchayats to ensure access to daily wage opportunities. The field visit further attests that Manjari assisted migrant workers and members from the Bhil community in acquiring ration cards (focus group with local Panchayat members in Budhpura). It also helped workers in the community bypass red tape and localised corruption to secure e-shram cards (interview with a local supplier and exporter in Budhpura). Moreover, it supported communities by conducting awareness-raising drives, distributing essential commodities and providing food and rations to impacted families for more than 60 days with the help of local businesses and Panchayats (focus groups with women's SHGs, Panchayat members and the WNCB country team in Budhpura). Manjari along with local Panchayat workers also helped to organise transportation for migrant workers seeking to return to their villages (focus group with the WNCB country team in Budhpura).

Meanwhile, the [Annual Report](#) from 2020 reports that in Uganda and Côte d'Ivoire, WNCB partners set up **Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLAs)**, while in Jordan and Côte d'Ivoire, it implemented **direct cash transfers** to ease the financial burdens of the most impacted households. In Jordan, families cut off from social protection services were moreover supported in acquiring ration cards and basic relief goods (interviews with country team Jordan). In Mali, the WNCB programme dispersed **pandemic-related health kits** to impacted communities (Annual Report 2020). In Budhpura, it set up a local first aid centre equipped with medical equipment, medicines and a trained health worker (focus group with the WNCB country team in Budhpura).

To facilitate the return of children to schools and to address the learning loss following school closures, the programme further supported the establishment of **bridge schools and remedial centres**. In India, community members were tasked with running a majority of these remedial centres (WNCB Annual Plan and Exit Strategy 2024). Based on the [field visit](#) in India, Manjari Sansthan not only streamed online classes but also opened up children's reading rooms in its offices. In the second wave, when the schools remained closed, Manjari continued to invest in keeping children engaged in educational activities in motivational centres and implementing innovative methods like having children teach other children (as per stakeholder interview with government primary school teacher and focus group with families in Budhpura). In Uganda, **home learning centres** were set up to keep children busy with educational activities, while in Viet Nam, the programme provided **tablets and internet connections** to ensure that children could continue their education (Annual Plan 2024). Key informant [interviews](#) with the Viet Nam country team indicated that, despite the challenges of the pandemic, project areas in the country sustained high school enrolment rates, with thousands of children benefiting from support provided by programme partners.

With regards to engagements with the private sector, **planned in-person workshops and trainings for businesses were adapted to online and hybrid modes** according to [Annual Reports](#). Modules used for training and capacity-building were adjusted to reflect new flexible working trends and modalities (Annual Report 2021) For example, in India, where sensitisation programmes targeting three businesses could not take place, online stakeholder dialogues with TruStone members, their suppliers and WNCB partners were organised instead (Annual Report 2021).

The [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 attests that the programme also **assisted governments with reduced child protection capacities by supplying informational material to support home learning**. Partners offered **additional case management services** and ramped up collaborations with local governance structures and formal child protection boards to jointly identify and respond to incidences of child labour within communities.

Finally, to make up for some of the pandemic's impacts on communications with the private sector and other stakeholders, **the programme successfully adapted its methods, especially in terms of market engagement**. It utilized **virtual meeting formats** and engaged various channels (e.g., newsletters, online platform) to keep WNCB partners and staff across countries informed of programme activities, events and results (Annual Plan 2024). As per key informant [interviews](#) with the L&A and Communications Working Groups, **online knowledge centre** and a Stories of Change platform were created to enable programme countries to share inspiration and lessons among each other. To overcome delays, the programme partners set up meetings and regular channels of communication with authorities in programme countries to strengthen coordination (Annual Plan 2024).

Other Contextual Challenges

The implementation of the WNCB programme was additionally impacted by other, at times interrelated, challenges. In each of these cases, a [secondary data analysis](#) of [programme documents](#) revealed that the **partners adopted a flexible and adaptive approach, devising creative and contextually determined solutions to attend to the most essential needs of impacted stakeholders**.

Programme documents show that several countries witnessed **significant political changes and transitions** during the programme duration, causing delays in planned activities and shifts in strategic priorities (Annual Report 2020; Annual Report 2021; Annual Report 2022; Annual Report 2023; Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024). For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, unrest surrounding presidential elections and the establishment of a new government caused some interventions to be postponed (Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024). In the Netherlands, successive elections brought about considerable political changes, most notably in Dutch strategic priorities and a shift in focus towards corporate responsibility towards child protection (Annual Plan 2024).

Changes in **framework conditions and agreements** between key stakeholders similarly complicated or even hindered the implementation of planned activities. For example, in Viet Nam, changes in the Official Developmental Assistance (ODA) management framework in 2022 and 2023 made programme appraisal and implementation more complex and delayed the execution of scheduled activities (Annual Report 2023; key informant interviews with country team Viet Nam). In India, the cessation of the FCRA registration of two of the WNCB partners led to programme activities being suspended from August 2023 (Annual Plan 2024).

Annual Reports and the Annual Plan from 2024 furthermore showed that **political instability and security crises** posed challenges to the timely fulfilment of activities in several programme countries (Annual Report 2023; Annual Plan 2024). In Uganda, the Karamoja region witnessed inter-community conflicts and tribal raids, resulting in widespread insecurity and the forced displacement of populations (Annual Report 2023). Socio-political crises in Mali encumbered the scheduled implementation of some activities (Annual Plan 2024). Several unrelated incidents across programme countries also led to **temporary erosions of trust in communities vis-à-vis stakeholder engagement**. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, the use of repressive methods by state authorities to quell child labour served to alienate some communities, while in Mali, a series of strikes in the school system led to community members reporting losing trust in the education system (Annual Plan 2024).

In addition, **the macroeconomic effects of the war in Ukraine** were felt more severely in some programme countries as compared to others. In Uganda, the war contributed to currency fluctuations, making the procurement of resources to support communities more expensive (Annual Plan 2024). In India, the war affected exports, exacerbating pre-existing economic vulnerabilities in the natural stone sector (as per focus group with country team in India).

Furthermore, several programme countries experienced **severe climate events**, which served to further endanger the lives and livelihoods of communities. Severe floods, drought and saltwater intrusion in Viet Nam exacerbated the vulnerability of marginalised families, while in Uganda, prolonged droughts had severe effects on agricultural outputs, leading to poverty, widespread hunger, malnutrition and children dropping out of school (Annual Plan 2024).

In spite of the complications wrought by these changes, a secondary data analysis of programme documents and key informant interviews with country teams and working groups reveals that **the WNCB programme responded to these evolving scenarios with agility and a high level of perseverance and commitment**. To adapt to changes in framework conditions and to ensure continued implementation of planned activities, the programme **engaged closely with state authorities** across programme countries. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, the programme conducted regular meetings with state representatives to **strengthen coordination** of activities across different levels of governance as well as to foster greater alignment with WNCB interventions and priorities (Annual Plan 2024) In the Netherlands, to adapt to the shift in government priorities towards Corporate Social Responsibility, the programme streamlined its Responsible Business Conduct, Child Rights and Business Principles and L&A functions within the larger WNCB framework. Furthermore, it **adjusted its resource allocation and planning** to reflect these new priorities (interviews with L&A and Communication Working Groups). In Viet Nam, where programme approvals were delayed significantly due to changes in the ODA framework, the partners signed contracts with local service

providers to access resources that would have otherwise been acquired from the government (interviews with country team Viet Nam). Although not all delayed programme activities got approved, the programme was able to manage to implement a number of planned activities by being creative and flexible.

A review of Annual Reports over the years also show that the programme **addressed the heightened socioeconomic vulnerability of families** (as an outcome of political instability, climate events etc.) by continuing its livelihood support activities through various means like setting up VSLAs, trainings on entrepreneurship and financial management and skills programmes to participate in income generating activities (Annual Report 2021; Annual Report 2022; Annual Report 2023).

In conclusion, the WNCB programme's ability to adapt to contextual changes on both global and country levels was informed by its holistic approach, prioritizing the development of responsive and locally informed strategies to achieve programmatic goals. However, it is important to note that there **were many challenges that were beyond the scope of the programme's interventions** e.g., security concerns and socioeconomic impacts of global warfare. These do not however take away from the programme's achievements in adapting to rapidly evolving changes in implementation conditions. In all programme countries, the programme worked towards solutions that were focused on resilience of communities and that would continue to yield positive results beyond the programme horizon (see also: Sustainability).

Assessment of the Relevance Criterion

To conclude, **the evaluation finds that the WNCB programme demonstrated strong relevance by aligning its interventions with the needs of key stakeholders, Dutch national and sectoral priorities, and evolving contextual challenges.** Furthermore, the programme **effectively addressed stakeholder needs** through targeted actions such as reducing child labour, enhancing school attendance, supporting livelihoods, and fostering community awareness. Its strategies reflected the priorities of children, families, communities, authorities, and private sector actors, ensuring a holistic approach to tackling root causes of child labour. The programme's **alignment with Dutch policies**, including its focus on education, poverty reduction, and supply chain transparency, underscored its strategic fit within national and international frameworks. Moreover, its **integration into sectoral covenants** amplified its impact and facilitated valuable synergies with private sector actors. Finally, the programme's **adaptability to external challenges**, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, political transitions, and climate crises, highlights its relevance in addressing dynamic contexts. While **certain systemic challenges extended beyond its scope**, the WNCB programme effectively prioritized resilience-building and sustainable solutions, ensuring long-term benefits for impacted communities.

4.2 Coherence

This chapter examines the evaluation criterion of coherence, focusing on **the extent to which the WNCB programme aligned its objectives and coordinated its activities with those of other relevant actors addressing child labour.** Specifically, it assesses how effectively the programme collaborated with these actors to ensure complementary efforts, minimize duplication and enhance overall impact. The evaluation of coherence is structured around the dimensions of **internal and external coherence.**

Internal Coherence

The criterion of internal coherence assessed the **synergies and interconnections among the WNCB Alliance partners**, as well as the **alignment of the programme's Theory of Change (ToC) with relevant international norms and standards.** Following a comprehensive secondary data analysis of programme documents, key informant

interviews and field visits, it can be concluded that **the WNCB programme demonstrated strong internal coherence by effectively leveraging the strengths and expertise of its Alliance partners and maintaining alignment with international norms**, ensuring a unified and coordinated approach to addressing child labour.

The WNCB Alliance consists of **Save the Children Netherlands, UNICEF Netherlands and the Stop Child Labour Coalition**. Findings from a secondary data analysis of programme documents and key informant interviews with programme staff highlighted that between them, **the three partners have extensive experience** in working to advance the cause of child rights and to improve access to education and/or decent future employment. Each partner furthermore has **widespread and well-established networks internationally with the ability to reach and collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders** ranging from local and national governments in programme countries to global multilateral institutions.

Moreover, programme documents and interviews confirmed that by joining forces, the three Alliance partners leveraged their combined strengths, networks and experience to collaboratively and holistically address the root causes of child labour and to remove key barriers to its elimination. Each organisation brought distinct expertise and experience to the table, creating a colla

borative approach that was greater than the sum of its parts. The **Stop Child Labour Coalition**, with its extensive track record in creating Child Labour Free Zones and improving access to education, excelled in mobilizing community-level stakeholders and working directly with the private sector to foster responsible business conduct and safeguard children's rights (Programme Proposal 2019). This grassroots and private sector engagement expertise laid the foundation for the partnership's local impact. Furthermore, the coalition's alignment with the Dutch government's Area-Based Approach at the time of the WNCB programme's inception underscored its strategic positioning to drive systemic change (key informant interview with WNCB staff member). **UNICEF's** strengths complemented these efforts by focusing on national-level advocacy, capacity building, and systemic reform. Its ability to engage governments in enforcing child protection laws, delivering social protection services, and raising awareness about child rights at the community level enhanced the coalition's grassroots work. UNICEF's experience in engaging private sector actors and co-developing the Children's Rights and Business Principles created a vital link between community action and broader institutional accountability, amplifying the reach and impact of the partnership (Programme Proposal 2019). Finally, **Save the Children** added a unique dimension to the partnership with its deep experience in advancing child rights legislation, strengthening child protection systems, and embedding Child Rights and Business Principles within global value chains (Programme Proposal 2019). Its expertise in facilitating decent employment opportunities for youth through skills development and vocational training brought a forward-looking approach that addressed not only the prevention of child labour but also the creation of sustainable alternatives for affected communities. This partnership leveraged the Stop Child Labour Coalition's local engagement, UNICEF's national advocacy and policy influence, and Save the Children's focus on legislative reform and youth development to create a multi-tiered and holistic approach to combating child labour. The seamless integration of these strengths ensured that each partner's contributions complemented and enhanced the others, enabling the programme to tackle child labour more effectively at every level—from community action to systemic change. Together, the three organisations formed a cohesive and synergistic force that was uniquely equipped to address the complex and interconnected challenges of child labour. Programme documents further show that WNCB programme was **strategically aligned with international frameworks** on the elimination of (or related to the elimination of) child labour. According to the Programme Proposal from 2019, WNCB operationalised a definition of child labour based on the combined mandates of the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)**, the **ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age for Employment (1973)** and the **ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999)**. Its objectives were also in harmony with the stated target of **SDG 8.7** to eradicate all forms of child labour by 2025. Notably, the programme acknowledged the interconnection of SDG 8.7 with a range of other SDGs related to education, gender equality, decent work etc. This is also reflected in the WNCB ToC, which lays out interventions along four strategic pathways targeting a wide and disparate array of factors that feed into the problem of child labour (Programme Proposal 2019). Lastly, the Annual Report from 2022 emphasises that the **OECD's guidelines**

on Responsible Business Conduct played a crucial role in the WNCB's Supply Chain Approach (Annual Report 2022). For this purpose, the L&A/ Responsible Business Conduct Working Group engaged closely with stakeholders on both Dutch and EU levels to encourage the use of OECD guidelines as a minimum standard for the development of due diligence legislation (Annual Report 2022).

External Coherence

The criterion of external coherence assessed the extent to which the WNCB programme coordinated its activities with those of other actors engaged in addressing child labour. Based on a comprehensive secondary data analysis of programme documents, the evaluation found that **the WNCB programme demonstrated strong external coherence through strategic coordination with international actors.**

Annual Reports and the programme proposal highlight that the WNCB programme **strategically engaged with international actors and multilateral organisations** like the **ILO and the SDG Alliance 8.7** (Programme Proposal 2019; Annual Report 2021; Annual Report 2023). At the start of the programme, cooperation with these actors mainly consisted of discussing and coordinating national strategies to ensure complementarity and prevent redundancy of efforts. It also coordinated its activities with **RVO/FBK** to leverage synergies and prevent duplication of efforts (Programme Proposal 2019).

The **ILO is a key actor in the global fight against child labour**, and the programme collaborated closely with it to implement joint interventions in several project countries. For example, the field visit in Côte d'Ivoire highlights the collaboration of the UNICEF and the ILO on various activities like advocacy and knowledge generation (as per interview with country team Côte d'Ivoire). Programme documents further detail the collaboration between UNICEF and ILO in Jordan to reform and update the National Framework for Combating Child Labour. Amongst other activities, they joined forces to draft bylaws and implement capacity building initiatives for staff working on child labour issues (Programme Proposal 2019). In Viet Nam, partners collaborated with the ILO to organize meetings and a workshop to shape National Programme on Prevention and Reduction of Child Labour 2021-2025 (Annual Plan 2024).

Additionally, programme documents show that **the programme leveraged the SDG Alliance 8.7 platforms to integrate global child labour priorities** into country-level programs (Annual Report 2021; Annual Report 2023; Annual Plan 2024). In Côte d'Ivoire, the programme contributed to identifying key priorities and results within the framework of Task Force 8.7 for the goal of eliminating child labour in the country by 2025 (Annual Plan 2024). In the Dutch context, it facilitated discussions regarding the role of the Netherlands as a pathfinder country in Alliance 8.7 (Annual Report 2023). It has furthermore leveraged strategic partnerships within existing networks of Alliance 8.7 in its policy advocacy. The L&A and Communications Working Groups participated in a worldwide campaign spearheaded by Alliance 8.7 to raise awareness about child labour (Annual Report 2021). The Annual Report from 2021 detail that they furthermore co-organised events with the alliance to raise awareness among private sector actors about how they can contribute to the elimination of child labour.

A secondary data analysis of programme documents also found that the WNCB programme displayed **high complementarity with existing RVO/FBK programmes in areas and sectors with high incidence of child labour.** An analysis of programme data reveals that some Alliance members have a long history of working on RVO-funded programmes. According to the programme proposal, in India, the Stop Child Labour Coalition has previously worked on an RVO-funded programme in the textile industry in Tirupur (Programme Proposal 2019). Moreover, it has experience working on an RVO programme on natural stone in Budhpura. Documents show that In Uganda, the coalition, along with UNICEF NL, has been active in an RVO programme on gold mining (Programme Proposal 2019). Over the years, the Alliance has thus successfully collaborated with RVO/FBK on various activities. For instance, according to the Annual Report from 2021, the Alliance drew upon the work of an RVO/FBK pilot in natural stone procurement in India to create an informational video for Responsible Business Conduct (Annual Report 2021).

Moreover, the [Annual Report](#) from 2022 details the UNICEF's efforts with the government of Côte d'Ivoire to promote public-private collaboration on birth registration were supported by RVO/FBK through the mobilisation of funds for setting up a public private partnership in 2023.

Assessment of the Coherence Criterion

To conclude, **the evaluation finds that the WNCB programme demonstrated a high degree of coherence** by effectively aligning its objectives with international norms and standards, fostering strong collaboration among Alliance partners, and coordinating strategically with external actors. Internally, the programme leveraged the complementary strengths, networks, and expertise of its Alliance members, ensuring a unified approach to addressing child labour by harnessing synergies and combined experience. Externally, it actively engaged with international organisations, such as the ILO and the SDG Alliance 8.7, and aligned with existing programmes like those funded by RVO/FBK, to avoid duplication and amplify its impact.

4.3 Effectiveness and Impact

The following analysis of effectiveness focuses on the extent to which the WNCB programme has achieved its intended objectives and impacts, as well as the factors that have either facilitated or hindered progress towards these goals. The effectiveness and impact are examined based on the theory of change of the WNCB programme (see Chapter 3), applying a contribution analysis (see Chapter 2). The evaluation team, in collaboration with the WNCB Programme team, selected two general hypotheses focusing on the involvement of private sector actors as well as governments in the area-based approach.

4.3.1 Achievement of Objectives of the WNCB Programme

This subchapter aims to assess the extent of the WNCB programme's progress towards its objective of freeing children and youth from child labour such that they enjoy their rights to quality education and future decent work.

4.3.1.1 Achievements of Objectives at Impact level

Within the criteria of effectiveness, the evaluation first analysed **which** objectives at outcome and impact level were achieved by the WNCB programme. For this purpose, the evaluation used the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) of the WNCB programme. Tables 2 to 6 contain the levels of the WNCB programme's indicators. To assess progress across the indicators, the evaluation used the programme's monitoring data including its [KPI reports](#), [Mid-Term Review](#) as well as [SenseMaker](#) reports.

Overall, the WNCB programme, according to the [secondary data analysis](#), **contributed to the decrease of child labour rates in most of its partner countries**. The WNCB programme achieved positive results in India, Jordan, Mali and Uganda. In Côte d'Ivoire and Viet Nam, the WNCB programme achieved mixed results regarding the child labour rate in the programme areas. When looking at the [Final Reports](#), [SenseMaker studies](#) and the [Mid-Term Review](#), it did so by changing awareness of relevant community actors, public sector and private sector actors on child labour. Moreover, the WNCB programme **achieved mixed results regarding the school enrolment and attendance rates** of children in the programme areas in its partner countries. In Côte d'Ivoire, Uganda and Viet Nam, the WNCB programme was able to slightly increase the school enrolment and attendance rates. In India, Jordan and Mali, the WNCB programme evidenced decrease and/or stagnation, due to external influences such as the pandemic of COVID-19. Still, the [SenseMaker](#) studies and [Mid-Term Review](#) reveal a change in attitude of the stakeholders involved, and an increased value of education. Finally, the WNCB programme also **achieved mixed**

results regarding the percentage of young adults in decent employment in the programme areas in its partner countries. Finally, the WNCB programme was able to increase the percentage of young adults in decent employment in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Uganda, while in India, the percentage of young adults in decent employment stayed unchanged. However, in Jordan and Viet Nam, the WNCB programme evidenced decrease. The secondary data analysis revealed that activities aimed at promoting decent employment received limited attention as a minor component of the overall WNCB programme.

Table 2 Achievement of Impact Indicators

Indicator	Country	Midline (Baseline for Uganda)	Endline	Change
Impact: Children and youth are free from child labour and enjoy their rights to quality education and (future) decent work, hereby contributing to SDG 8.7				
Impact Indicator 1 (I.1): Percentage of children aged 5-17 (included) engaged in child labour (*Mali: children aged 7-17)	India	9 % boys 10 % girls	8 % boys 3 % girls	o +
	Côte d'Ivoire	10 % boys 17 % girls	11 % boys 13 % girls	o +
	Jordan	68% boys 62% girls	56% boys 53% girls	++ ++
	Mali*	19 % boys 13 % girls	10 % boys 11 % girls	+ o
	Uganda	56 % boys 55 % girls	49 % boys 52 % girls	+ o
	Viet Nam	11 % boys 13 % girls	16 % boys 12 % girls	- o
Impact Indicator 2 (I.2): Percentage of children aged 5 -17 (included) in target areas enrolled and attending school (primary/secondary)	India	97 % boys 99 % girls	50 % boys 57 % girls	-- --
	Côte d'Ivoire	89 % boys 81 % girls	89 % boys 87 % girls	o +
	Jordan	78% boys 80% girls	70% boys 86% girls	- +
	Mali	63 % boys 46 % girls	55 % boys 46 % girls	- O
	Uganda	74 % boys 70 % girls	81 % boys 77 % girls	+ +
	Viet Nam	96 % boys 95 % girls	96 % boys 98 % girls	o O
Impact Indicator (I.3): Percentage of young adults aged 18-24 (included) who are in decent employment, including internships or apprenticeships	India	23 % total	22 % total	O
	Côte d'Ivoire	14 % total	18 % total	O
	Jordan	69 % total	50 % total	--
	Mali	17 % total	18 % total	O
	Uganda	30 % total	45 % total	++
	Viet Nam	67 % total	51 % total	--
Legend: ++/--: > 10 % change +/-: 5-10 % change o: between -5 and +5 % change				

Children Engaged in Child Labour

According to the Theory of Change, the WNCB programme aimed to achieve that children and youth are free from child labour and enjoy their rights to quality education and (future) decent work, hereby contributing to SDG 8.7. This objective was represented by **three indicators at impact level** (see Table 2). The first indicator at impact level (I.1) focused on **children engaged in child labour within the geographical unit** (factory, community and/or

region) of the WNCB programme. To measure this indicator, the WNCB programme implemented KPI baseline (2020), midline (2022) and endline studies (2024).⁹ The survey data collected at country level revealed the following findings:

In India, the WNCB programme was able to decrease the child labour rates in its intervention zones. The secondary data analysis revealed that initially, child labour rates in the geographical units of the WNCB programme were higher than average. While the 2018-2019 Periodic Labour Force Survey revealed that 2 % of all children in India (close to 5 million children) aged 5-17 were engaged in child labour (Santhya et al., 2024), the KPI midline studies of the WNCB programme showcased that the child labour rates in the intervention zones were 9 % for boys and 10 % for girls (KPI Midline Study India 2022). At the end of the WNCB programme, in the intervention zones, numbers slightly decreased to 8 % for boys and 3 % for girls (see Table 2) (KPI Endline Study India 2024). According to the Outcome Harvested Tables, the Annual Reports, the Annual Plan of 2024 and the Final Report of the WNCB programme in India, this was due to several achievements in the intervention zones, such as the empowerment of the younger generation ('community mobilisers') to take a public stand in favour of children's rights in their communities as well as the commitment of other stakeholders like the private sector (see Chapter 4.3.2) (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report India 2024). The increased commitment of the private sector was also confirmed within the SenseMaker studies and the KPI endline study, as the employers interviewed in the studies confirmed that they were not employing children. The decrease in child labour rates was especially significant when looking at girls, as their rate dropped by 7 percentage points (SenseMaker Endline Report Bihar India 2024, SenseMaker Endline Report Rajasthan India 2024, KPI Endline Study India 2024). According to findings from the field visit in India, this is also due to the support of the WNCB partners provided to girls interested in education, for example, by motivating raising awareness among and motivating their families.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the WNCB programme achieved mixed results. The secondary data analysis revealed that initially, child labour rates in Côte d'Ivoire were high. According to a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey conducted in 2016, 22 % of children aged 5-17 were engaged in child labour (Bureau of International Labour Affairs), especially within the agriculture sector (UNICEF, 2018). Those numbers sparked efforts to fight child labour and child trafficking in Côte d'Ivoire. The KPI studies show that the WNCB programme was able to improve the child labour rates for girls: At midline, child labour rates were 10 % for boys and 17 % for girls (KPI Midline Study Côte d'Ivoire 2022). By endline, rates for boys slightly increased to 11 %, while those for girls improved to 13 % (see Table 2) (KPI Endline Study Côte d'Ivoire 2024). As depicted within the Outcome Harvested Tables, the Annual Reports, Annual Plan of 2024, the Final Report of the WNCB Programme in Côte d'Ivoire and the field visit, the WNCB programme transformed the lives of children in the intervention zones by offering opportunities for education and protection, community mobilisation (such as early warning committees), and by increasing the commitment of companies in the cocoa sector (which had gradually integrated children's rights into their practices). The specific improvement for girls can be attributed to several activities to improve equality, such as training for "Gender Champions" to raise community awareness of equality issues, and awareness campaigns to encourage girls' education and their access to the same opportunities as boys (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024).

In Jordan, the WNCB programme was able to decrease the child labour rates in its intervention zones. The secondary data analysis revealed that in 2016, before the WNCB programme, 19 % of all children aged 5-17 in Jordan were engaged in child labour (Ministry of Labour of Jordan, 2016). According to the KPI Endline study, the WNCB programme in Jordan addressed areas with higher child labour rates, such as industrial areas and camps for refugees and displaced persons. In this regard, the economic structure of the industrial area of Sahab relies heavily on agriculture and manufacturing which creates a high demand for low-cost labour, often met by children (KPI Endline study Jordan 2024). At the end of the WNCB programme, a decrease in child labour rates in the programme areas can be observed: At midline, child labour rates were 68 % for boys and 62 % for girls (KPI Midline Study Jordan

⁹ Note that the timing of the various data collection was delayed and not implemented in each country at the same time.

2022). By endline, boys' and girls' rates dropped to 56 % and 53 % respectively (see Table 2) (KPI Endline Study Jordan 2024). According to the [Outcome Harvested Tables](#), the [Annual Reports](#), the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 and the [Final Report](#) of the WNCB programme in Jordan, the WNCB programme contributed to the decrease of child labour mainly by establishing talent hubs and child protection committees, influencing the national agenda in Jordan e.g. through the support of the National Child Labour Task Force, and strengthening cooperation between public sector, private sector and civil society (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report Jordan 2024). The changed awareness regarding child labour among community members, public sector and private sector is also showcased in the [SenseMaker](#) studies and the [Mid-Term Review](#) (SenseMaker Endline Report Jordan 2024, Mid-Term Review 2022).

In Mali, the WNCB programme was able to decrease the child labour rates in its intervention zones. The [secondary data analysis](#) showcased that in 2017, before the WNCB programme, 25% of all children aged 5-17 in Mali were engaged in the worst forms of child labour (US Embassy in Mali, 2019). Those included hereditary slavery, armed conflict, as well as children performing dangerous tasks in agriculture, such as in the production of cotton and rice, and artisanal gold mining. The [KPI Endline study](#) revealed that in Mali, the WNCB programme addressed 20 communities where child labour rates were higher than in the rest of the country, such as regions with gold mining and agriculture. At the end of the WNCB programme, the child labour rate improved: At midline, child labour rates stood at 19 % for boys and 13 % for girls (KPI Midline Study Mali 2022). By endline, the rate for boys almost halved to 10 % while it only slightly reduced to 11 % for girls (see Table 2) (KPI Endline Study Mali 2024). The KPI Endline study confirmed that the WNCB programme managed to slow down the increase in the rate of children engaged in child labour and children at risk of child labour. According to the [Outcome Harvested Tables](#), [Annual Reports](#), the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 and the [Final Report](#) of the WNCB programme in Mali, the WNCB programme did so mainly by heightening community awareness of the negative effects of child labour, establishing protective mechanisms such as anti-child-labour clubs, and cultivating collaborative ties with mining and cotton companies in the intervention zones. Local Child Protection Committees and networks to eliminate child labour involved a wide arrange of stakeholders, including foster families. To address them, the WNCB programme also used broach-reaching tools such as theatre forums and community radio broadcasts within its area-based approach (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report Mali 2024). The changed awareness of community members, public sector and private sector actors regarding child labour is also revealed in the [SenseMaker](#) studies and the [Mid-Term Review](#) (SenseMaker Endline Report Mali 2024, Mid-Term Review 2022).

In Uganda, the WNCB programme was able to decrease the child labour rates in its programme areas, as opposed to the increasement at national level. The [secondary data analysis](#) revealed that before the WNCB programme, child labour has increased substantially in Uganda. While in 2017, 14 % of all children aged 5-17 (2 million children) were engaged in child labour, in 2022, the child labour rate in Uganda had increased to 40 % (6.2 million children). The [KPI studies](#) show that in the WNCB programme areas, however, the WNCB programme managed to reduce child labour. While at KPI baseline, child labour rates in the programme areas were 56 % for boys and 55 % for girls, by KPI endline, these rates declined to 49 % for boys and 52 % for girls (see Table 2) (KPI Baseline Study Uganda 2021, KPI Endline Study Uganda 2024). The Final Report highlights that the WNCB programme was able to foster a strong sense of community ownership, collaboration and norm change in their intervention zones, for children to be in school instead of child labour. Looking at mining companies, within the WNCB programme, they developed and adapted policies and Codes of Conduct on how to eliminate child labour. The changed awareness of community members, public sector and private sector actors regarding child labour is also confirmed in the [SenseMaker](#) studies and the [Mid-Term Review](#) of the WNCB programme in Uganda (SenseMaker Endline Report Uganda 2024, Mid-Term Review 2022).

In Viet Nam, the WNCB programme achieved mixed results. The [secondary data analysis](#) showcased that in 2018, before the WNCB programme, 42 % of all children aged 5-17 were involved in domestic chores and 9 % were involved in economic activities. Of all children aged 5-17, 5 % were considered 'children in child labour' (ILO and

the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs of Viet Nam, 2020). According to the KPI studies, Within the WNCB programme areas, at the end of the programme duration, mixed results were observed: At midline, child labour rates in programme areas were 11 % for boys and 13 % for girls (KPI Midline Study Viet Nam 2022). By endline, child labour rates in programme areas increased to 16 % for boys, while they slowly decreased to 12 % for girls (see Table 2) (KPI Endline Study Viet Nam 2024). The endline study emphasises the decrease in child labour rates for children aged 5-12. However, it also highlights the increase in child labour rates for children aged 13-14, especially boys, which have been increasingly involved in families' economic activities such as rice production, livestock, and fishing. The Outcome Harvested Tables, Annual Reports, Annual Plan of 2024 and Final Report of the WNCB programme in Viet Nam revealed that due to their involvement in the WNCB programme, companies have made significant changes to their practices, including improving child labour policies and procedures, robust monitoring systems and training programmes (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report Viet Nam 2024). The change of awareness among stakeholders of the WNCB programme was also confirmed within the SenseMaker studies and the Mid-Term Review (SenseMaker Endline Report Viet Nam 2024, Mid-Term Review 2022). The secondary data analysis also revealed factors that limited the elimination of child labour. When looking at the children participating, the ILO study showcased that one out of three children participating in economic activities did so to be involved in their family production and business process, while one out of four children participated in economic activities for income generation purposes (ILO et al., 2020). Another limiting factor was the pandemic of COVID-19 as the economic downturn led to disruptions of the WNCB programme implementation and to increased child labour (Final Report Viet Nam 2024).

Overall, the secondary data analysis revealed that the WNCB programme contributed to the decrease of child labour rates in its partner countries. The WNCB programme can therefore be considered successful.

Enrolment and Attendance Rate at School

As children were to enjoy their rights to quality education, the second indicator at impact level (**I.2**) centred on the extent to which **children in target areas were enrolled and attending school**. The survey data collected at country level revealed the following findings:

In India, the school enrolment and attendance rates of children in the WNCB programme's intervention zone significantly decreased. The secondary data analysis revealed that initially, before the pandemic of COVID-19, in India, school enrolment was 89% for primary education and 69% for upper primary enrolment (Statista, 2024a), and secondary school enrolment was 75% (Trading Economics, 2024). The KPI studies showed that in the WNCB programme intervention zones, school enrolment and attendance were high at midline in 2022, with 97 % of boys and 99 % of girls attending school (primary school and/or secondary school) (KPI Midline Study India 2022). However, by the endline, these rates dropped significantly to 50 % for boys and 57 % for girls across all age groups (see Table 2) (KPI Endline Study India 2024). The Outcome Harvested Tables, Annual Reports, Annual Plan of 2024 and Final Report showed that the WNCB programme addressed school enrolment in their programme areas in India through awareness-raising activities for community members and other stakeholders on the value of education and promoting regular school attendance. To support these efforts, the WNCB programme organised special sessions at motivational and remedial centres, organised bridge classes and established school and community libraries. At the same time, the WNCB programme also supported the workshops of the WNCB partner, the All Indian Teachers' Federation (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report India 2024). The SenseMaker studies and field visit confirmed that the awareness regarding the importance of education changed and that stakeholders valued education highly at the end of the WNCB programme (SenseMaker Endline Report Bihar India 2024, SenseMaker Endline Report Rajasthan India 2024, Mid-Term Review 2022). Nonetheless, the KPI endline study and the field visit showed that several factors had negative influence on the attendance rate of children at school. A key hindering factor was the distance from their home to school and the lack of transportation. Another factor identified

in the KPI endline study was that post-COVID, migrant families began moving back to Delhi (KPI Endline Study India 2024).

In Côte d'Ivoire, the WNCB programme was able to slightly increase the school enrolment rate in the intervention zones. The secondary data analysis revealed that in 2019, before the WNCB programme and before the pandemic of COVID-19, school enrolment was 94% for primary school enrolment and 52% for secondary school enrolment (The Global Economy, 2024). When looking at the KPI studies, they showcase that the enrolment rates in the intervention zones slightly increased from 89% for boys and 81 % for girls (primary school and/or secondary school) at midline in 2022 to 89% for boys (remained stable) and 87 % for girls (see Table 2) to endline (KPI Midline Study Côte d'Ivoire 2022, KPI Endline Study Côte d'Ivoire 2024). Further analysis of the KPI studies shows that the overall improvement seems to stem from girls above the age of 13 which appeared to drop out of school with a lesser frequency. According to the Outcome Harvested Tables, Annual Reports, the Annual Plan of 2024, the Final Report of Côte d'Ivoire and the field visit, the establishment of bridging classes was particularly important to increase school enrolment. Due to numerous awareness-raising sessions, many parents enrolled their children in the bridging classes. The original plan of the WNCB programme was to transfer children from bridging classes to nearby formal schools, but the lack of accessible or adequately equipped schools in some areas prompted education authorities to convert six bridging classes into formal schools with community support. Additionally, the WNCB programme expanded the capacity of around thirty schools by rehabilitating or constructing classrooms to accommodate more learners. The WNCB programme also gave special attention to girls, ensuring their equal access to education and opportunities. For instance, according to the Final Report, the bridging classes offered an opportunity particularly for young girls in domestic chores (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024).

In Jordan, the WNCB programme achieved mixed results regarding the school enrolment and attendance rates of children in the intervention zones. The secondary data analysis showcased that before the COVID-19 pandemic, the general enrolment rate in primary education in Jordan was reported as almost 100%. The enrolment rate in upper secondary education, however, was reported as 46% (male) and 54% (female). Still, those figures made Jordan rank high among countries of the Middle East and North Africa (World Bank, 2018). The WNCB programme targeted particularly vulnerable population groups in Jordan, such as refugee camps, for example, through community-based child interventions and psychosocial support (Annual Plan 2024). According to the KPI studies, in the programme areas, at midline in 2022, 78% of boys and 80% of girls were enrolled in school (primary school and/or secondary school) (KPI Midline Study Jordan 2022). By endline, enrolment fell to 70 % for boys and increased to 86% for girls (see Table 2) (KPI Endline Study Jordan 2024). In this regard, school enrolment and attendance rather declined, apart from girls 15-17 whose enrolment increased and attendance remained the same. As depicted in the SenseMaker studies and KPI Endline study, the overall awareness of the relevance of education increased (SenseMaker Endline Report Jordan 2024). However, the KPI Endline study identified parental attitudes as a significant limiting factor. In some locations, parents were more open to allowing their children to prioritize other responsibilities over school. At the same time, the authors of the KPI Endline study highlighted that results on enrolment rates could have been negatively influenced by the timing of the data collection: The data collection coincided with the summer break, which may have affected attendance figures negatively (KPI Endline Study Jordan 2024). Also, the Annual Plan of 2024 revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic repercussions were identified as factors that forced families to turn to child labour as a negative coping mechanism (Annual Plan 2024).

In Mali, the WNCB programme achieved mixed results regarding the school enrolment and attendance rates of children in the intervention zones. The secondary data analysis revealed that in 2018, before the WNCB programme and before the pandemic of COVID-19, school enrolment was reported 72% for primary school enrolment and 39 % for secondary school enrolment (World Bank, 2024a). The KPI Endline study showcased a decreased school enrolment rate for boys and a constant school enrolment rate for girls in the WNCB programme's intervention zones: At midline in 2022, 63% of boys and 46% of girls attended school (primary school and/or secondary school)

(KPI Midline Study Mali 2022). By endline, these rates shifted to 55% for boys and 46% for girls (see Table 2) (KPI Endline Study Mali 2024). As depicted in the [SenseMaker](#) studies and KPI Endline study, the overall awareness of the relevance of education increased (SenseMaker Endline Report Mali 2024). However, the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 identified the closure of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic as an important limiting factor for school enrolment and attendance rates as it led to an increase in child labour and migration to gold-panning sites as well as agricultural fields. In addition, the persistent issue of high illiteracy and inadequate alternative income in the programme communities are an important limiting factor to ensure school enrolment and attendance rate of children (Annual Plan 2024).

In Uganda, the WNCB programme was able to increase the school enrolment rate in the intervention zones.

The [secondary data analysis](#) showcased that in 2017, before the WNCB programme and before the pandemic of COVID-19, school enrolment in Uganda was reported around 100% for primary school enrolment and 24% for secondary school enrolment (World Bank, 2024b). The [KPI studies](#) revealed that the school enrolment in the WNCB programme areas increased until the end of the WNCB programme duration: At baseline, 74% and 70% of girls of boys aged 5-17 were enrolled in school (primary school and/or secondary school) (KPI Baseline Study Uganda 2021). By endline, these figures rose to 81% for boys and 77% for girls (see Table 2). This positive trend was particularly present among girls below the age of 14 (KPI Endline Study Uganda 2024). According to the [Outcome Harvested Tables](#), [Annual Reports](#), the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 and the [Final Report](#) of the WNCB programme in Uganda, this increase was due to several achievements in the intervention zones, such as the norm change on the value of education, the use of child-friendly methods in project schools, and the successful lobbying for additional classrooms and latrine stances for community schools (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report Uganda 2024). This change of norms within the different stakeholders of the WNCB programme was also confirmed in the [Mid-Term Review](#) and the [SenseMaker](#) studies (SenseMaker Endline Report Uganda 2024, Mid-Term Review 2022).

In Viet Nam, the WNCB programme was able to slightly increase the school enrolment rate in the intervention zones.

The [secondary data analysis](#) revealed that in 2018, before the WNCB programme and before the pandemic of COVID-19, school enrolment in Viet Nam was reported 94% for pre-school, general education or vocational schools (ILO and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs of Viet Nam, 2020). The [KPI studies](#) revealed that the school enrolment in the WNCB programme areas increased until the end of the WNCB programme duration: At midline in 2022, 96% of boys and 95% of girls were enrolled in school (KPI Midline Study Viet Nam 2022). At endline, 96% of boys and 98% of girls across all age groups were enrolled at school (see Table 2) (KPI Endline Study Viet Nam 2024). According to the [Outcome Harvested Tables](#), [Annual Reports](#), the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 and the [Final Report](#) of the WNCB programme in Viet Nam, the WNCB programme activities such as the support for case management, policy advocacy, trainings for teachers and the collaboration with the local business community were particularly important. The Final Report described how girls were more likely than boys to be engaged in domestic work that interferes with their education. The WNCB programme therefore also focused on supporting schools to encourage girls' participation in education and reduce dropout rates, as well as raise awareness on the impacts of child labour and the importance of education in general (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report Viet Nam 2024). The change of norms and attitudes within the different stakeholders of the WNCB programme towards education was also confirmed in the [Mid-Term Review](#) and the [SenseMaker](#) studies (SenseMaker Endline Report Viet Nam 2024, Mid-Term Review 2022).

Overall, the WNCB programme achieved mixed results regarding the school enrolment and attendance rates of children in the programme areas in its partner countries. However, in spite of the COVID-19 challenges, in some countries, children's school attendance still remained the same or even increased, which is a major achievement. Additionally, the SenseMaker studies and Mid-Term Review reveal a change in the attitude of the communities, public sector, and private sector actors involved, and an increased value of education. In this regard, the WNCB programme can be considered partially successful.

Young Adults in Decent Employment

Finally, the third impact at indicator level (I.3) measured the percentage of **young adults who were in decent employment**, including **apprenticeships or internships**. The [KPI survey data collected](#) at the country level (see Table 2) revealed the following findings which need to be interpreted with some care due to often small sample sizes.

In India, the WNCB programme maintained the percentage of young adults in decent employment. The [secondary data analysis](#) revealed that in India, youth unemployment is reported 16 % for those in the workforce aged 15-24 in 2023 (Statista, 2024b). Underemployment is also considered an important limitation. The KPI studies showcased that in the intervention zones, the percentage of young adults in decent employment remained slightly stable at low levels: At midline, 23 % of young adults were in decent employment, compared to 22 % at endline (KPI Midline Study India 2022, KPI Endline Study India 2024). According to the [Outcome Harvested Tables](#), [Annual Reports](#), the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 and the [Final Report](#), the WNCB programme contributed to young adults in decent employment by reintegrating former child labourers into the formal education system, by supporting job placements for youth (older children allowed to do light work or young adults) and vocational training. In addition, the WNCB programme cooperated with the private sector to ensure that they improve workers' labour conditions. Still, the overall national context of youth unemployment and underemployment acted as important limiting factor (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report India 2024).

In Côte d'Ivoire, the WNCB programme was able to increase the percentage of young adults in decent employment. The [secondary data analysis](#) showcased that in Côte d'Ivoire, youth unemployment is reported 4 % for those in the workforce aged 15-24 in 2023 (Statista, 2024c). The [KPI studies](#) revealed that the percentage of young adults in decent employment increased in the intervention zones: At midline, 14 % of young adults were in decent employment, compared to 18 % at endline (KPI Midline Study Côte d'Ivoire 2022, KPI Endline Study Côte d'Ivoire 2024). According to the [Outcome Harvested Tables](#), [Annual Reports](#), the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 and the [Final Report](#), the WNCB programme contributed to young adults obtaining decent employment through apprenticeships. For instance, the WNCB programme was able to motivate community members in the programme areas to engage youth in vocational training through such apprenticeships (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024).

In Jordan, the WNCB programme experienced a significant decline in the percentage of young adults in decent employment. The [secondary data analysis](#) showcased that in Jordan, youth unemployment is reported 41 % for those in the workforce aged 15-24 in 2023 (Statista, 2024d). The KPI studies revealed a significant decrease in the intervention zones: At midline, 69 % of young adults were in decent employment, compared to 50 % at endline (KPI Midline Study Jordan 2022, KPI Endline Study Jordan 2024). In the [Outcome Harvested Tables](#), [Annual Reports](#), the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 and the [Final Report](#), the WNCB programme provided minimal information regarding activities aimed at promoting decent employment for young adults, with the primary exception being vocational training opportunities offered to households. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, these initiatives were largely supplanted by financial incentives designed to discourage households from engaging children in child labour (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report Jordan 2024).

In Mali, the WNCB programme was able to slightly increase the percentage of young adults in decent employment. The [secondary data analysis](#) revealed that in Mali, the workforce aged 15-24 faced low youth unemployment rates in 2023, of 4 % (Statista, 2024e), highlighting their employment in non-decent working conditions. The KPI studies showcased that the percentage of young adults in decent employment slightly increased in the programme areas: At midline, 17 % of young adults were in decent employment, compared to 18 % at endline (KPI Midline Study Mali 2022, KPI Endline Study Mali 2024). According to the [Outcome Harvested Tables](#), the [Annual](#)

Reports, the Annual Plan of 2024 and the Final Report, the WNCB programme contributed to young adults in decent employment by expanding vocational training opportunities for youth. This was especially important as inadequate incomes in the WNCB programme areas are a persistent issue for the communities, including young adults. The Annual Plan of 2024 showcases that through apprenticeships and vocational training, youths were able to develop vital skills that will later allow to increase their opportunities for decent employment (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report Mali 2024).

In Uganda, the WNCB programme was able to notably increase the percentage of young adults in decent employment. There, the percentage of young adults in decent employment increased notably, from 30 % at baseline to 45 % at endline (KPI Baseline Study Uganda 2021, KPI Endline Study Uganda 2024). This increase in decent employment was accompanied by a low youth unemployment rate of 5 % for the total workforce aged 15-24 in Uganda (Statista, 2024f). According to the Annual Reports, the Annual Plan of 2024 and the Final Report, the WNCB programme contributed to young adults in decent employment by focusing on enhancing community-based vocational skills training. The Annual Plan of 2024 reveals that these vocational skills and entrepreneurship trainings of youths have equipped them with practical skills and knowledge, and viable alternatives to child labour. In addition, youth business education and ongoing collaborations with local governments, artisans and community facilitators have equipped youths with sustainable business skills and digital marketing competencies, which fostered their economic independence (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report Uganda 2024).

In Viet Nam, the percentages of young adults in decent employment were high but dropped significantly. The percentage of young adults in decent employment fell markedly, from 67 % at midline to 51 % at endline (KPI Midline Study Viet Nam 2022, KPI Endline Study Viet Nam 2024). The secondary data analysis showed that the workforce aged 15-24 in Viet Nam faced low youth unemployment of only 6 % (Statista, 2024g), therefore highlighting their **employment in non-decent working conditions**. According to the Annual Reports, the Annual Plan of 2024 and the Final Report, the WNCB programme contributed to young adults in decent employment by providing vocational orientation. For instance, the WNCB programme offered trainings in employability skills as well as mentoring sessions to help vulnerable youth to access decent working conditions. In addition, the programme assisted child labourers and at-risk children to access vocational training. Nonetheless, the WNCB programme in Viet Nam faced significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in government regulations which resulted in significant delays (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report Viet Nam 2024).

Overall, the WNCB programme achieved mixed results regarding the percentage of young adults in decent employment in the programme areas in its partner countries. The WNCB programme was able to increase the percentage of young adults with decent work in three partner countries and can therefore be considered partially successful. However, it was evident that the WNCB programme primarily focused on the elimination of child labour, with activities aimed at promoting decent employment receiving limited attention as a minor component of the overall initiative.

4.3.1.2 Achievements of Objectives at Outcome and Output level

To achieve those improvements for children and young adults, the WNCB programme followed four pathways.

Overall, under Pathway 1 (Community-Based Approach), the WNCB programme, **contributed to the empowerment of children to pursue an education, to the improvement of access to (quality) education, and/or to an increased youth employment in most partner countries**. When looking at the secondary data analysis, the WNCB programme did so by implementing a wide array of activities aiming at community members, such as case management, social protection services, awareness-raising trainings, training teachers in adequate teaching. Under Pathway 2 (child protection systems), the WNCB programme **was able to achieve significant changes in child labour-**

related policies, laws and regulation in all partner countries. According to the [secondary data analysis](#), the WNCB programme did so by influencing policy and regulatory changes within the partner countries through activities such as awareness-raising activities on child labour and the importance of education, as well as through directly supporting public actors at national and local level. Under Pathway 3 (supply chain approach), the WNCB programme **was able to achieve significant progress regarding improved labour conditions for land and factory workers in two partner countries.** The [secondary data analysis](#) revealed that the WNCB programme did so by improving the knowledge and attitudes of private sector actors through activities such as awareness-raising trainings, dialogue events as well as partnerships. Finally, under Pathway 4, the WNCB programme aimed at the outcome of the **EU/Dutch government and international/multilateral organisations acting in support of the elimination of child labour** and fulfilling its obligation to protect by setting and reinforcing Due Diligence policies and laws. Limited data availability restricted the analysis of Pathway 4. Still, the secondary data analysis revealed results such as securing the Dutch government's expression of support for the area-based approach of the WNCB programme.

Pathway 1: Community-Based Approach

The first pathway (Pathway 1), or the community-based approach, aimed at the outcomes of empowering children to pursue an education within a supportive family and community environment and improving access to (quality) formal education, bridge or transitional schooling and youth employment. It was represented by four outcome indicators.

The first outcome indicator (**O.1.1**) of Pathway 1 focussed on the number and percentage of children that face a high risk of child labour within the geographical unit (factory, community and/or region) of the programme. **The WNCB programme achieved mixed results across the partner countries, with notable improvements in Viet Nam, Uganda, Jordan and Côte d'Ivoire. However, India saw increases in the percentage of children facing high risk** (see Table 3). The [secondary data analysis](#) revealed that children can face high risk of child labour due to reasons such like going without food at home, lacking adult presence, having friends in the community who work, taking care of siblings while parents are at work, and/or joining parents at the workplace. According to the [Outcome Harvested Tables](#), [Annual Reports](#), the [Annual Plan of 2024](#) and the [Final Reports](#), the WNCB programme addressed children facing high risk of child labour through case management and relevant support such as referrals and access to education, provision of learning aid, psychosocial support, social protection services, and livelihood support for the families of children (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report India 2024, Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024, Final Report Jordan 2024, Final Report Mali 2024, Final Report Uganda 2024, Final Report Viet Nam 2024). The [Final Report](#), [SenseMaker](#) studies and [Mid-Term Review](#) showcased that through these activities, the WNCB programme achieved improvements in most of its partner countries (SenseMaker Endline Report Overall Review 2024, Mid-Term Review Final Global Report 2022). The relevance of activities that involved the communities of those children was also revealed in the [field visits](#), for example, in the interviews with community members in Côte d'Ivoire. However, in India, several factors limited the influence of the WNCB programme. For instance, in India, the [KPI studies](#) suggest that the risk of children facing child labour increased following the outbreak of COVID-19 (KPI Midline Study India 2022, KPI Endline Study India 2024). Interviewees of the report 'Child Labour and Schooling in India' (Santhya et al., 2024) published by the Population Council India and UNICEF highlighted schools closing, economic vulnerabilities, and that they spent more time in household chores or unpaid economic activities because of the pandemic, therefore facing an increased risk of child labour (Santhya et al., 2024).

The second indicator of Pathway 2 (**O.1.2**) centred on the number and percentage of former working children attending school (bridge/transition/government/private schools) in target areas. **The WNCB programme was able to increase the percentage of former working children attending school in Mali. However, the percentage of former working children attending school decreased in India and Viet Nam. The lack of KPI data for Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan and Uganda limited a comprehensive assessment of the achievements in these partner**

countries (see Table 3). According to the [Outcome Harvested Tables](#), [Annual Reports](#), the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 and the [Final Reports](#), the WNCB programme addressed former working children attending school through activities such as awareness-raising on the importance of education among different stakeholders in the programme areas, by supporting communities and public actors in the establishment of bridge schools and similar, by training teachers in adequate teaching methods, and by promoting children's rights to education among private sector actors (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report India 2024, Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024, Final Report Jordan 2024, Final Report Mali 2024, Final Report Uganda 2024, Final Report Viet Nam 2024). The [KPI studies](#) revealed that the WNCB programme was able to achieve progress in Mali, especially regarding former working children attending school, by adopting such a comprehensive strategy (KPI Endline Study Mali 2024). However, in all partner countries, the COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges, as school closures and disruptions to education systems severely affected children's access to schooling. This impact contributed to the decline in school attendance rates, as seen in India and Viet Nam. In India and Viet Nam, the KPI studies showcased that school attendance rates decreased. However, according to the KPI endline study in India, the decrease in former working children attending school in programme areas was also due to the overall reduction of child labour across the sampled villages (KPI Endline Study India 2024, KPI Endline Study Viet Nam 2024).

The third indicator (**O.1.3**) of Pathway 1 registered the drop-out rates in the final year of primary school. **The WNCB programme was able to decrease the drop-out rates in its programme areas in India, Jordan and Uganda. In Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, it was able to maintain the already very low drop-out rates. However, no data was available for Viet Nam** (see Table 3). According to the [Outcome Harvested Tables](#), [Annual Reports](#), the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 and the [Final Reports](#), the WNCB programme addressed the attendance of enrolled children through activities such as awareness-raising activities on the importance of education, coordination with public authorities to improve teacher's knowledge and capacities, and the facilitation of transportation to schools. In addition, when faced with schools closing during COVID-19, the WNCB programme organised alternative education spaces together with community members of the programme areas, to provide children with the opportunities for education (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report India 2024, Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024, Final Report Jordan 2024, Final Report Mali 2024, Final Report Uganda 2024, Final Report Viet Nam 2024). The [SenseMaker studies](#) and [Mid-Term Review](#) confirmed that the WNCB programme was able to raise awareness on the importance of education among communities, public and private sector actors. This also led to stakeholders actively supporting children enrolling in school and attending school (see Chapter 4.3.2) (SenseMaker Endline Report Overall Review 2024, Mid-Term Review Final Global Report 2022). This change of norms was also revealed in the [field visits](#) in India and Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, in the interviews with community members, teachers and private sector actors. Still, KPI data for Uganda shows that although there was substantial improvement, the drop-out rate remains comparatively high when comparing with other WNCB partner countries (KPI Baseline Study Uganda 2021, KPI Endline Study Uganda 2024).

Finally, the fourth indicator (**O.1.4**) of Pathway 1 analysed the number of families that developed new self-consumption and/or alternative income generating activities that do not include child labour. The WNCB programme achieved mixed results **across the partner countries, with improvements in Mali and Uganda. However, in Viet Nam and Jordan, the number of families that developed alternative income generating activities decreased. In India and Côte d'Ivoire, the WNCB programme saw a slight decrease and/or stable levels of engagement** (see Table 3). Families in intervention zones face severe limitations of finding alternative livelihood options. For instance, in areas like Budhpura, Rajasthan, most of the population depends on mining or mining-related industries with no other feasible alternatives. According to the [Outcome Harvested Tables](#), [Annual Reports](#), the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 and the [Final Reports](#), the WNCB programme strengthened families in its intervention zones through activities such as Village Savings and Loans Associations, self-help groups, vocational training and start-up kits. In addition, when faced with restrictions during the pandemic of COVID-19, it introduced financial incentives (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report India 2024, Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024, Final Report Jordan 2024, Final Report Mali 2024, Final Report Uganda 2024, Final Report Viet Nam 2024). The [SenseMaker](#)

studies revealed that the WNCB programme was able to support families, in particular women, in accessing and establishing income generating activities that do not include child labour (SenseMaker Endline Report Overall Review 2024). Within the [field visits](#) of India and Côte d'Ivoire, community members confirmed the relevance and effectiveness of the alternative income generating activities. In the [KPI endline](#) data from Viet Nam and Jordan, no reasons were identified behind the decrease of families participating. Instead, the KPI endline study in Viet Nam further confirmed that participating groups rated these activities as (very) appropriate and helpful in improving their households' income, for example, to ensure tuition for children (KPI Endline Study Viet Nam 2024, KPI Endline Study Jordan 2024).

The WNCB programme also monitored activities and results at output level. The Annual Reports revealed that results at output level under Pathway 1 were largely achieved as planned. According to the [Annual Reports](#), this was especially the case for activities related to empowering children to pursue education within supportive communities. The WNCB programme was able to implement most of the activities as planned. Activities related to the improvement of access to education as well as youth employment, however, required more adaptation. An important limiting contextual factor was the pandemic of COVID-19, but implementation in the partner countries was also restricted due to political reasons and, to a lesser extent, the cancellation of funding for specific activities (Annual Report 2021, Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023).

Overall, the WNCB programme achieved mixed results for the outcome indicators of Pathway 1, the community-based approach, in the programme areas in its partner countries. The WNCB programme was able to decrease the percentage of children that face high risk of child labour in three partner countries, increase the percentage of former working children attending school in one partner country, able to decrease the drop-out rates in three partner countries, and increase the number of families with alternative income generating activities that do not include child labour in two partner countries. The lack of available KPI data for several partner countries restricted the analysis of Pathway 1. Still, the WNCB programme can be considered partially successful.

Table 3 Achievement of Outcome Indicators (Pathway 1)

Indicator	Country	Midline (Baseline for Uganda)		Endline	
Outcome 1: Children are empowered and have improved access to (quality) education, bridge schooling, and youth employment within a supportive family and community environment					
Outcome Indicator (O.1.1): Number of children that face a high risk of child labour within the geographical unit of the programme, by sex and age	India	79 % boys	77 % girls	93 % boys	91 % girls
	Côte d'Ivoire	80 % boys	80 % girls	75 % boys	76 % girls
	Jordan	21 % boys	22 % girls	12 % boys	13 % girls
	Mali	24 % boys	25 % girls	21 % boys	22 % girls
	Uganda	62 % boys	58 % girls	56 % boys	55 % girls
	Viet Nam	87 % boys	80 % girls	61 % boys	63 % girls
	O.1.2: Percentage of former working children attending school (bridge/transition/government/private schools) in target areas	India	85 % boys	92 % girls	14 % boys
Côte d'Ivoire		Not available			
Jordan		29 % boys	24 % girls	Not available	
Mali		40 % boys	29 % girls	44 % boys	27 % girls
Uganda		Not available		89 % boys	84 % girls
Viet Nam		95 % boys	100 % girls	91 % boys	91 % girls
India		26 % boys	18 % girls	1 % boys	1 % girls

O.1.3: Drop-out rate in the final year of primary school	Côte d'Ivoire	1 % boys	2 % girls	1 % boys	1 % girls
	Jordan	19 %		16 %	
	Mali	5 % boys	3 % girls	4 % boys	4 % girls
	Uganda	42 % boys	58 % girls	18 % boys	30 % girls
	Viet Nam	Not available			
O.1.4: Number of families that developed new self-consumption and/or income generating activities that do not include child labour	India	12 %		10 %	
	Côte d'Ivoire	13 %		13 %	
	Jordan	356 families		117 families	
	Mali	14 %		16 %	
	Uganda	158 families		241 families	
	Viet Nam	81 %		59 %	

Pathway 2: Public Sector (Child Protection Systems)

The second pathway of the WNCB programme (**Pathway 2**), lobby, advocacy and system strengthening in partner countries, aims at the outcome of **governments enforcing relevant child-rights** based laws and implementing policies on child labour, education, youth economic empowerment and social security.

This objective was represented with one outcome indicator (**O.2.1**) that was focusing on the descriptions of changes in child labour related policies, laws and regulations. **The WNCB programme was able to achieve significant changes in child labour-related policies, laws and regulation in all partner countries** (see Table 4). According to the Outcome Harvested Tables, Annual Reports, the Annual Plan of 2024 and the Final Reports, the WNCB programme influenced policy and regulatory changes within the partner countries through activities such as awareness-raising activities on child labour and the importance of education, as well as through directly supporting public actors at national and local level. This way, the WNCB programme achieved significant changes. For instance, in India, among others, the Indian government developed guidelines specific to the ready-made garment sector as part of the National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct which aimed to ensure responsible practices and prevent child labour in the garment sector. A significant policy change in Côte d'Ivoire involved the revision of the mining code, specifically targeting child labour in the Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining sector in the Nawa, Poro, and Bagoué regions. In Jordan, a key policy achievement was the formulation and implementation of the National Framework and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for child labour, which provides a national standard for addressing child labour across various sectors. In Mali, the programme contributed to the inclusion of the WNCB programme objectives in the National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour (PANETEM 2023-2027) which ensures that child labour elimination strategies are integrated into Mali's long-term national development plans, emphasizing sustainable efforts to reduce child labour in various sectors. Uganda, among others, made progress in drafting byelaws for child labour reduction and education promotion, laying the groundwork for legal measures aimed at curbing child labour. Finally, Viet Nam introduced and implemented a dedicated chapter on child labour in the amended Labour Code, marking a significant step in legally addressing child labour across various industries (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report India 2024, Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024, Final Report Jordan 2024, Final Report Mali 2024, Final Report Uganda 2024, Final Report Viet Nam 2024). The contribution of the WNCB programme was also confirmed by the SenseMaker studies and the Mid-Term Reviews, as well as the field visits in India and Côte d'Ivoire (SenseMaker Endline Report Overall Review 2024, Mid-Term Review Final Global Report 2022).

At output level of Pathway 2, the WNCB programme monitored the planned activities and results aimed at supporting the government's enforcement of child rights-based laws and the implementation of related policies. The Annual Reports revealed that results at output level under Pathway 2 were largely achieved as planned in most of the WNCB partner countries. However, in Viet Nam, significant challenges arose due to changes in Official Development Assistance (ODA) regulations, which created substantial obstacles for programme appraisal and implementation. As a result, some planned activities to support the enforcement of child rights-based policies could not be fully implemented as expected. These activities were either postponed or executed only in part, and required adaptation (Annual Report 2020, Annual Report 2021, Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023).

Overall, under Pathway 2, the WNCB programme was able to achieve significant changes in child labour-related policies, laws and regulation in all partner countries. The WNCB programme can therefore be considered successful.

Table 4 Achievement of Outcome indicators (Pathway 2)

Indicator	Country	End of the WNCB Programme
O.2.1: Descriptions of changes in child labour related policies, laws and regulations	India	E.g.: (1) Guidelines specific to the ready-made garment sector developed as part of the National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct. (2) "Child labour free" clause included by Rajasthan government in procurement legislation. (3) Agreement by Rajasthan government to adopt the Child Friendly Gram Panchayat framework, aiming to localize Sustainable Development Goals across multiple panchayats.
	Côte d'Ivoire	E.g.: (1) Revised mining code to combat child labour in the Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining (ASGM) sector in the Nawa, Poro, and Bagoué regions.
	Jordan	E.g. (1) Formulation and implementation of the National Framework and Standard Operating Procedures for child labour. (2) Drafted byelaw on child labour aligning with the Juvenile Justice Law.
	Mali	E.g.: (1) Inclusion of WNCB programme objectives in the National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour (PANETEM 2023 -2027)
	Uganda	E.g.: (1) Drafted byelaws for child labour reduction and education promotion. (2) inclusion of child protection measures in the Mining and Minerals Act 2021.
	Viet Nam	E.g.: (1) Introduction of a dedicated chapter on child labour in the amended Labour Code and implementation of said Code. (2) Reshaped the National Programme on Prevention and Reduction of Child Labour 2021-2025.

Pathway 3: Private Sector (Supply Chain Approach)

The third pathway (**Pathway 3**), the **supply chain approach**, aims at the outcome of the private sector taking full responsibility for preventing and addressing child labour. It was represented by two outcome indicators.

The first outcome indicator (**O.3.1**) of Pathway 3 centred on the number of **(inter)national market players that have improved their practices** by implementing activities and strategies towards the elimination of child labour and improving worker's rights and/or labour conditions. **However, no figures were reported for this outcome indicator** (see Table 5). Although this information could theoretically be collected through Outcome Harvesting, the Outcome Harvested Tables provide only limited data on improvements in practices¹⁰.

The second outcome indicator (**O.3.2**) registered the number of land and factory workers with improved labour conditions in accordance with international agreements. These can include conditions such as their right to unionize, wage enhancements, health and safety measures, as well as adequate working hours. **The WNCB programme achieved mixed results across the partner countries, with significant progress in Uganda and Mali regarding improved labour conditions for land and factory workers. In India, the WNCB programme experienced a slight decrease. However, in Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan and Viet Nam, only limited data was available** (see Table 5). According to the Outcome Harvested Tables, Annual Reports, the Annual Plan of 2024 and the Final Reports, the WNCB programme addressed private sector actors and workers by improving their knowledge and attitudes through activities such as awareness-raising trainings, dialogue events as well as partnerships with other civil society organisations, public and/or private sector actors (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report India 2024, Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024, Final Report Jordan 2024, Final Report Mali 2024, Final Report Uganda 2024, Final Report Viet Nam 2024). For instance, in Uganda, KPI endline data showcased significant progress for land and factory workers. Participants confirmed compliance with labour laws regarding the employment of minors and refers to positive indicators such as the right to unionize, wage enhancements, and health and safety measures. In this regard, the enhancement in wages for a significant proportion of workers imply a commitment to fair compensation practices and potentially improving living standards. Still, participants also indicated limitations such as instances of forced labour, for example, as punishment for errors (KPI Endline study Uganda 2024). The KPI endline study in Mali, too, has shown notable improvement regarding the labour conditions in Mali's gold sector. However, although improvement was evident, the **gender disparity** persists, with less women accessing improved labour conditions (see Table 5) (KPI Endline Study Mali 2024). The SenseMaker studies and Mid-Term Review confirmed the effectiveness of the activities of the WNCB programme (SenseMaker Endline Report Overall Review 2024, Mid-Term Review Final Global Report 2022). The change of knowledge and awareness was also revealed in the field visits in India and Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, in the interviews with private sector actors.

The WNCB programme also monitored activities and results at output level. The Annual Reports revealed that results at output level under Pathway 3 were only partially achieved as planned. According to the Annual Reports, the Annual Plan of 2024 and Mid-Term Review, activities under Pathway 3 were less successfully implemented as planned compared to those under other Pathways. The secondary data analysis highlights a reduced emphasis on Pathway 3 during the WNCB programme's initial years, as evidenced by the relatively lower allocation of resources to this Pathway (see Chapter 4.4). This reduced focus is also identified as a contributing factor to the comparatively lower success of Pathway 3 during the early stages of the WNCB programme (Annual Report 2020, Annual Report 2021, Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Mid-Term Review Final Global Report 2022).

Overall, the WNCB programme achieved mixed results for the available outcome indicator of Pathway 3, the supply chain approach, in the programme areas in its partner countries. The WNCB programme was able to achieve significant progress regarding improved labour conditions for land and factory workers in two partner countries. However, limited KPI data availability restricted the analysis. Still, the WNCB programme can be considered partially successful.

¹⁰ Similarly, it was observed that the KPI protocol does not specify an approach for assessing and documenting these practices. As a result, from a data quality perspective, the harvested outcomes predominantly reflect commitments, with fewer reports on tangible changes in practices.

Table 5 Achievement of Outcome indicators (Pathway 3)

Indicator	Country	Midline (Baseline for Uganda)	Endline		
Outcome 3: Private sector takes full responsibility for preventing and addressing child labour					
O.3.1: Number of (inter)national market players that have improved their practices by implementing activities and strategies towards the elimination of child labour and improving worker’s rights and/or labour conditions	India	Not available			
	Côte d’Ivoire				
	Jordan				
	Mali				
	Uganda				
	Viet Nam				
O.3.2: Number of land- and factory workers with improved labour conditions in accordance with international agreements	India	117 workers	103 workers		
	Côte d’Ivoire	Not available			
	Jordan	Not available	6 of 28 workers		
	Mali	23 % men	11 % women	25 % men	10 % women
	Uganda	24 % men	24 % women	66 % men	47 % women
	Viet Nam	Not available			

Pathway 4: EU/Dutch Government and International/Multilateral Organisations

The fourth and last pathway (**Pathway 4**), lobby and advocacy at the international level, aims at the outcome of the **EU/Dutch government and international/multilateral organisations acting in support** of the elimination of child labour and fulfilling its obligation to protect by setting and reinforcing Due Diligence policies and laws.

This objective was represented with one outcome indicator (**O.4.1**), which focused on the number of **adequate due diligence policies and regulations adopted by EU governments** following lobby and advocacy interventions of the Alliance, possibly in cooperation with advocacy networks. **However, no figures were reported for this outcome indicator** (see Table 6). The Annual Reports, the Annual Plan of 2024 and the Final Reports highlighted that the WNCB programme achieved notable outcomes in Pathway 4, including the integration of children’s rights into the EU Sustainable Corporate Due Diligence Directive (EUSCDDD) and its subsequent adoption. These accomplishments were driven by extensive stakeholder engagement and partnership-building, both through coalitions and individual organisations, to influence policies from a child-focused perspective. Key activities included networking with European institutions, co-hosting webinars and events with the European Commission on Child Labour and the EUSCDDD, organizing a side event at the Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour in Durban in 2022, and participating in roundtable discussions with the Dutch government (Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024, Final Report The Netherlands 2024).

At output level of Pathway 4, the WNCB programme monitored the planned activities and results designed to support the European Union and/or the Dutch government in establishing and enforcing due diligence regulations. The Annual Reports revealed that results at output level under Pathway 4 were only partially implemented as planned. According to the Annual Reports and the Annual Plan of 2024, the implementation of

activities as planned under Pathway 4 faced significant challenges due to the delayed formation of a Dutch government and a shift in policy direction within the Netherlands. These factors impeded progress, as discussed under the criterion of relevance (see Chapter 4.1). In response to the shifting political landscape, the WNCB programme adapted its approach, achieving alternative outputs that differed from those initially planned. Notably, this adaptability led to a key achievement: securing the Dutch government's expression of support for the area-based approach (Annual Report 2020, Annual Report 2021, Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024) as well as the inclusion of children's rights in, and the adoption of, the EUCSDDD (interview with L&A WG, Final Report The Netherlands 2024).

Overall, limited data availability restricted the analysis of Pathway 4. However, the secondary data analysis revealed significant results, including securing the Dutch government's expression of support for the area-based approach (ABA) of the WNCB programme. Furthermore, significant achievements have been realized at the EU level, such as the inclusion of children's rights in the EUCSDDD, as well as adoption of the EUCSDDD. Importantly, by including the full UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in its Annex, the Directive requires companies to take specific children's rights into account in their environmental and human rights due diligence assessments. WNCB played a crucial role in this through a plethora of influencing strategies including 'private advocacy' and building on the complementary strengths of particularly Save the Children (Netherlands and European members) and UNICEF. Therefore, the WNCB programme can be considered partially successful.

Table 6 Achievement of Outcome indicators (Pathway 4)

Indicator	Country	Midline	Endline
Outcome 4: EU, the Dutch government and multilateral organisations act in support of the elimination of child labour and fulfil their obligation to protect by setting and reinforcing due diligence policies and law			
O.4.1: Number of adequate due diligence policies and regulations adopted by EU governments following lobby and advocacy interventions of the Alliance, possibly in cooperation with advocacy networks	India		Not applicable
	Côte d'Ivoire		
	Jordan		
	Mali		
	Uganda		
	Viet Nam		

4.3.2 Contribution of the WNCB Programme

Within the criteria of effectiveness, the evaluation also analyses **how** activities and results of the WNCB programme contributed to the attainment of their objectives at outcome and impact level. For this purpose, two general hypotheses were selected to assess the plausibility of the contribution of the WNCB programme. In addition to analysing main pathways, the selected hypotheses also show how within the WNCB programme, the four pathways are **interlinked** and designed to work together to be more effective. In this regard, the selected hypotheses concern the involvement of the **private sector in combination with the area-based approach** (see Chapter 1.1.2.1) and the involvement of the **public sector in combination with the area-based approach** (see Chapter 1.1.2.2).

4.3.2.1 Private Sector Efforts to Eliminate Child Labour

Table 7 General hypothesis 1 (Pathway 1 and Pathway 3)

<p>General hypothesis 1: If private sector actors in sourcing and production areas (lower tiers and informal sector, such as home-based work) are directly involved in the area-based approach (social norms, decent work for adults, support transition to quality formal education), they will be more effective in contributing to elimination of child labour as they will look beyond their own supply chain.</p>	
<p>Performance story (sub-hypotheses) at Output-Outcome level:</p>	<p>[H1b] If private sector actors in sourcing and production areas (lower tiers and informal sector, such as home-based work) have increased knowledge on and attitudes towards child rights and child labour, then they address child labour in their supply chain and take the necessary mitigating measures, thereby empowering children to pursue an education. [H57] If private sector actors in sourcing and production areas increase their knowledge on gender equality and develop more positive attitudes towards girls' education, they make sure to empower girls to pursue an education. [H28/30/32] If (1) activities related to agreements between partners, Responsible Business Conduct initiative and companies regarding cooperation aimed at improving policies and practices of private sector actors, (2) influence on and support to private sector actors on how to integrate child protection policies and mechanisms and (3) knowledge of workers, company management, and worker representatives/unions on how to address child labour also include private sector actors in sourcing and production areas (lower tiers and informal sector, such as home-based work), then those private sector actors in sourcing and production areas should implement measures to address child labour and have integrated child protection policies and mechanisms to prevent, mitigate, and remediate cases of child labour in their business activities. [H26/29/31] Then those private sector actors in sourcing and production areas should also realize decent work conditions incl. remediation measures for former child labourers. [H56] If the agreements, influence and support to private sector actors include a special emphasis on gender-sensitive approaches to decent work conditions and gender-sensitive child protection policies and mechanisms, then companies realize gender-sensitive decent work conditions¹¹, as well as measures that address child labour with a focus on both boys and girls, ensuring gender-responsive practices.</p>
<p>Performance story (sub-hypotheses) at Outcome-Impact level:</p>	<p>[IH1b] If private sector actors in sourcing and production areas empower children to pursue an education and access to education is improved, then school enrolment and attendance rates are increased and drop-out rates decreased (including formal, bridge and transitional schooling). [IH9, especially important] If private sector actors in sourcing and production areas implement measures to address child labour in their supply chain and private sector actors in sourcing and production areas have integrated child protection policies and mechanisms to prevent, mitigate, and remediate cases of child labour in their business activities and throughout their supply chain, thereby taking full responsibility for preventing and addressing child labour, then this contributes to the elimination of child labour. [IH8, especially important] If private sector actors in sourcing and production areas realize decent work conditions incl. remediation measures for former child labourers, fair wages for adults and youth and fair prices for goods, thereby taking full responsibility for</p>

¹¹ Gender-sensitive decent work conditions encompass issues such as wages, opportunities, sexual harassment, maternity leave, unlawful termination and child-care facilities.

preventing and addressing child labour, then this contributes to the **elimination of child labour**.

According to the Theory of Change, the WNCB programme aims to achieve that children and youth are free from child labour and enjoy their rights to quality education and (future) decent work, hereby contributing to SDG 8.7. As one of its four main pathways of change, the WNCB programme aimed to strengthen private sector engagement. The performance story (sub-hypotheses) was based on three 'starting points' which were (1) private sector actors improving their knowledge on child rights and child labour, (2) strengthened agreements between partners, Child Rights in Business Practices initiatives and companies, and (3) the WNCB programme influencing the private sector actors. Those **starting points** mark the beginning of the process through which the WNCB programme's interventions are expected to lead to the desired outcomes and impacts. For the private sector engagement to be more effective, the WNCB programme combined the **supply chain approach** with their **area-based approach**.

Starting Point 1: Improved Knowledge and Attitudes Towards Child Rights and Child Labour

One of the programme's main approaches to increase school enrolment and attendance rates as well as to reduce child labour (objective of Pathway 3), is to improve the knowledge and change attitudes towards child rights and child labour among private sector actors. In this regard, the secondary data analysis as well as field visits show that **the programme was able to improve the knowledge and change the attitudes of private sector actors in its countries of intervention**. Here, the Outcomes Harvested Tables of the WNCB programme showcase that for example, in Uganda, staff of two companies was trained on child safeguarding and protection, while in Côte d'Ivoire, the WNCB programme in collaboration with the Conseil du Café-Cacao, has trained co-operatives on the challenges of sustainable cocoa and Child Rights and Business Principles (Annual Report 2023). The strengthened knowledge of private sector actors has been further confirmed in the Mid-Term Review in 2022, where private sector actors indicated that due to the WNCB programme, their enhanced knowledge and understanding of key issues on child labour and their role in eradicating child labour was now very high (over 50 %), high (about 30 %) or moderate (about 20 %) (Mid-Term Review 2022). The change of attitudes of private sector actors was also confirmed by most participants of the SenseMaker endline assessment. For most private sector actors, the WNCB programme's activities that raised awareness on Child Rights and Business Principles were well-received and considered effective. Participants from Jordan, for example, confirmed that due to the WNCB programme, they changed their attitude and altered their operational practices significantly to ensure the welfare of children (SenseMaker Endline Report Jordan 2024). However, in export-oriented industries that needed to strongly comply with international regulations and donor requirements such as the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire, the focus was not so much on Child Rights and Business Principles awareness-raising activities but directly on law and policy (SenseMaker Endline Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024). Still, across the partner countries, most private sector actors attributed high relevance and effectiveness to the Child Rights and Business Principles awareness activities in particular. In this regard, the SenseMaker study in Bihar, India, highlighted those **awareness activities as best practice that potentially served as model for other efforts** (SenseMaker Endline Report Bihar India 2024).

In addition, the field visits further illustrated the WNCB programme's contribution, with interview partners of the private sector confirming that, due to the programme, they had improved their knowledge and changed their attitude towards child rights and child labour. Through their involvement in the WNCB programme, private sector actors, such as yard owners and mine owners in India, understood the importance of education of children.

A major success factor in facilitating these changes in the private sector was the WNCB programme's strategic application of a multi-level approach, to address the entire supply chain including production and resource areas. The WNCB programme recognised the connections between formal supply chains and informal economies and raised awareness among companies to take responsibility for eliminating child labour throughout their entire supply chains. At the same time, the WNCB programme also aimed directly at the lower tiers of the supply

chains, including the informal sector and/or home-based work. This multi-level approach was showcased in the [Outcomes Harvested Tables](#) and the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 (Annual Report 2021, Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024). For instance, in Mali, the WNCB programme organised regional workshops to strengthen the commitment made by business leaders and umbrella organisations in the fight against child labour in the gold-panning and cotton-growing industries (Annual Report 2023). At the lower tiers of the supply chain, the programme's approach was exemplified by the awareness sessions organised in Jordan, to inform employers, parents and business owners in the local community about child rights law and labour laws. Those business owners included employers from sectors such as recycling, transportation, fruit and vegetable vendors, small market shops, and agriculture (Annual Report 2023, Save the Children updates). As for another example, in Uganda, the country team trained 80 small-scale artisanal miners in Child Rights and Business Principles and assisted them in drafting codes of conduct (Annual Report 2021). The relevance of a complex, multilayered approach was also confirmed within the [SenseMaker](#) endline assessments as they emphasised the need for a multi-stakeholder approach (SenseMaker Endline Report Bihar 2024; SenseMaker Endline Report Jordan 2024; SenseMaker Endline Report Uganda 2024).

A second critical success factor was the reinforcement of community structures through the area-based approach. This approach emphasised mobilising all stakeholders and changing social norms in favour of education. According to the [secondary data analysis](#), the combination of these approaches supported the effectiveness of Starting Point 1 in several ways. First, private sector actors were addressed as members within their communities. The WNCB programme raised awareness of the effect that child labour, that could potentially be occurring in their companies, had on their communities. That way, local business owners were motivated to support children's education. Several examples were depicted in the [Outcomes Harvested Tables](#), the [Annual Reports](#) and the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024. In addition, they showcased that in several cases, the private sector has actively collaborated and supported the access to education. They did so, for example, through the provision of transportation to school, the improvement of school infrastructure in communities and/or the provision of child friendly spaces in their establishments, such as lifelong learning centres (Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024). This observation was also confirmed by the [SenseMaker](#) studies. They highlighted that local business owners, due to their new awareness obtained through the WNCB programme, understood the importance of education as a foundation for future opportunities and societal advancement. Due to their communal sense of responsibility, some local business owners also encouraged and assisted in enrolling children in school (SenseMaker Endline Report Bihar India 2024, SenseMaker Endline Report Rajasthan India 2024, SenseMaker Endline Report Uganda 2024). The [field visits](#) to India and Côte d'Ivoire corroborated these observations. For example, in India, interview partners from the private sector confirmed that a local yard owner in Rajasthan had provided space for a motivation centre to avoid child labour. Second, the combination of the supply chain approach and the area-based approach also supported the effectiveness of the WNCB programme by engaging community actors. That way, the WNCB programme empowered them to advocate for child rights more effectively and control their local private sector actors. As confirmed within [Annual Reports](#) and [field visits](#), in some communities, community members began notifying local authorities when observing child labour within their local private sector actors (see Chapter 4.3.2.2 for further details).

A limiting factor in facilitating these changes in the private sector was the WNCB programme's initial comparatively weaker focus on Pathway 3. As depicted within the [Mid-Term Review](#), in 2022, the third pathway of making the private sector act was considered less effective as the other pathways (Mid-Term Review 2022, Annual Report 2023). The authors of the Mid-Term Review attributed the lack of progress to several factors, such as the limited scope and resources designated towards Pathway 3 (in 2021, 12 % of the funds had been designated to Pathway 3) and challenges in engaging with the private sector (see also chapter 4.4). Consequently, the Mid-Term Review highlighted the need for more engagement with the private sector, such as in the form of more capacity development of the private sector for combatting child labour. As showcased by the [Annual Report](#) 2023, the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 and the [SenseMaker](#) studies, the WNCB programme followed the recommendation of the Mid-Term Review and, among others, designed community-based initiatives targeting the private sector. This way, the WNCB programme successfully influenced in the attitudes of private sector actors (see above).

Starting Point 2: Agreements Between Partners, Responsible Business Conduct Initiative and Companies

Another approach of the WNCB programme to increase school enrolment and attendance rates as well as to reduce child labour (objective of Pathway 3), is the strengthening of agreements between partners, Responsible Business Conduct initiative and companies. As indicated by the [secondary data analysis](#), the WNCB programme has **successfully assisted in initiating and strengthening those agreements**. The [Outcome Harvested Tables](#), [Annual Reports](#) and the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 of the WNCB programme showcase several examples. For instance, in Côte d'Ivoire, the WNCB programme partnered with the Regional Management of the Coffee and Cocoa Council to promote and safeguard children's rights within their supply chain. Through this partnership, a collaborative work plan was designed and implemented to involve all stakeholders in the supply chain, which included awareness training for co-operatives to enhance their understanding on child rights. According to the Annual Plan of 2024, this led to the co-operatives to update their policy and procedure manuals, and to further support child protection platforms (Annual Plan 2024, Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024). In India, the WNCB programme sensitised local business owners on the TruStone Initiative. As a result, those local businesses gained a better understanding of the operational elements of the TruStone Initiative and improved their knowledge on Child Rights and Business Principles, which prepared them to participate within the initiative (Annual Report 2023, Annual Plan 2024). At the same time, the TruStone Initiative also addressed the international level, as it included visits of five Belgian companies and the Dutch government to show them the reality of the informal workers and their families. The [Mid-Term Review](#), [SenseMaker](#) studies and [KPI studies](#) did not further specify the agreements but focused on the effect of the capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, some of which were implemented within the framework of these partnerships. This was also the case for the [field visits](#) in India and Côte d'Ivoire. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, interview partners from private sector highlighted the effect of the training that had been implemented for co-operatives in the Nawa region in collaboration with the Coffee and Cocoa Council.

A major success factor for the effectiveness of the agreements was that the WNCB programme partnered directly with private sector actors and acted as facilitator and enabler for agreements among private sector actors and other stakeholders. The WNCB programme also **applied a multi-level approach, addressing local, national and international stakeholders.** Several examples are depicted in the [secondary data analysis](#), such as [Annual Reports](#) and the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024. An important example where the WNCB programme partnered directly with private sector actors at the local level are the partnerships with the Coffee and Cocoa Council (see above) as well as several co-operatives in Côte d'Ivoire (Annual Plan 2024). At the same time, the WNCB programme also supported partnerships between private sector actors and other stakeholders, such as national governments and/or international initiatives. In this regard, in Jordan, the WNCB programme supported Memorandums of Understanding with the Jordan Ministry of Labour (MoL), which included provisions for joint activities with private sector actors (Annual Report 2023). An important example for a partnership with an international initiative facilitated by the WNCB programme is the TruStone Initiative (see above). The relevance of partnerships with the private sector and other stakeholders such as related ministries was also highlighted in the [Mid-Term Review](#) of 2022 and their recommendation to further invest in those partnerships (Mid-Term Review 2022). The relevance of a complex, multilayered approach was also confirmed within the [SenseMaker](#) endline assessments as they emphasised the need for a multi-stakeholder approach (SenseMaker Endline Report Bihar 2024; SenseMaker Endline Report Jordan 2024; SenseMaker Endline Report Uganda 2024).

A second major success factor for the effectiveness of those agreements was their focus on awareness-raising activities. As depicted in the [Outcome Harvested Tables](#), [Annual Reports](#) and the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024, several of the partnerships of and/or facilitated by the WNCB programme included activities that targeted the knowledge, capacities as well as the awareness of private sector actors. As seen in the case of the partnership with the Coffee and Cocoa Council in Côte d'Ivoire, those agreements could act as a platform to train the stakeholders involved as

well as other stakeholders of the same supply chain and/or industry (Annual Report 2023). The high relevance and effectiveness that private sector actors attributed to those activities has been showcased by the [Mid-Term Review](#), [SenseMaker](#) studies as well as [field visits](#) (see above).

A third **major success factor to establish direct partnerships with the lower end of the supply chains was the implementation of the area-based approach**. This approach emphasised local private sector actors as members within their communities and aimed at their sense of communal responsibility (see above). As depicted within the [secondary data analysis](#), some project partners traditionally have fewer partnerships with private sector actors, which is also due to a lack of trust from the private sector actors. In this regard, as highlighted within the [Mid-Term Review](#), the application of the area-based approach, which brought together different community members, appealed to local business owners as part of their community, and therefore increased their awareness and generated trust, contributed to the establishment of direct partnerships between partners and local businesses at the lower end of the supply chains (Mid-Term Review 2022).

Starting point 3: Influence and Support to Private Sector Actors

The third approach of the WNCB programme to increase school enrolment and attendance rates as well as to reduce child labour (objective of Pathway 3), is to influence and support private sector actors on how to integrate child protection policies and mechanisms. As indicated by the [secondary data analysis](#), the WNCB programme has **successfully influenced and supported private sector actors across the partner countries**. The [Outcome Harvested Tables](#), [Annual Reports](#) and the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 of the WNCB programme showcase several examples of the meetings, workshops and knowledge products such as studies that were conducted within the programme, with the objective of private sector actors integrating child protection policies and mechanisms. It was evident that several of those activities reported in the documents listed above finally led to the implementation of awareness-raising activities (see Starting Point 1), and/or to the establishment of agreements (see Starting Point 2). The [SenseMaker](#) studies further highlighted the different activities that the WNCB programme implemented to support the private sector actors in the partner countries. It assessed the overall effectiveness of activities such as research and mapping, awareness raising, assistance in developing and rolling out tools, and similar. From these sources it became evident that all support activities to the private sector were generally well-received. At the same time, awareness-raising activities and training were seen as most impactful (SenseMaker Endline Report – Overall Review 2024). The [field visits](#) in India and Côte d'Ivoire further illustrated the support activities of the WNCB programme and their contribution, with interview partners from private sector confirming that WNCB activities supported them in integrating child protection policies and mechanisms. In the same vein as the secondary data analysis, the interview partners also highlighted the relevance of awareness-raising activities among the support measures.

A **significant limiting factor affecting the overall influence and support for the private sector in some partner countries was the initial lack of trust and awareness among private sector actors regarding the WNCB programme**. This issue was highlighted in the [secondary data analysis](#), such as the [Annual Reports](#) and [Final Reports](#). Similarly, the [Mid-Term Review](#) of 2022 identified that the programme's effectiveness in engaging private sector actors in some partner countries, such as in India, was hindered by their limited awareness of WNCB messaging. According to the review, this lack of awareness could be partially attributed to the programme's deliberate decision to forgo branding and visibility efforts and prioritize a low-profile approach instead (Mid-Term Review 2022). This choice was also made in consideration of the sensitive political context in some partner countries, where such efforts could have led to significant challenges. At the same time, the [field visits](#) indicated that WNCB partners, such as Manjari in India, positively influenced local business owners' trust. An interviewee from Rajasthan emphasised that the non-profit nature of the WNCB partner organisation was a crucial factor in his decision to engage with the programme.

Objectives: Increased school enrolment and attendance rate as well as elimination of child labour

Another objective of the WNCB programme was to decrease child labour and increase school enrolment and attendance rate. The [monitoring data](#) depicted in chapter 4.3.1 showcased that those objectives were, to some extent, achieved. According to the [secondary data analysis](#) and the [field visits](#), the above described and analysed **approaches contributed to the reduction of child labour and an increase in school enrolment and attendance rate in the targeted regions of the intervention countries of the WNCB programme.**

It is evident from the analysed sources that **Pathway 3 proved more difficult to implement than the other pathways**, due to the lack of trust of private sector actors (see above). Still, it can be demonstrated that the WNCB programme's activities in Pathway 3 contributed to the **decrease in child labour in several partner countries**. As indicated by the [secondary data analysis](#), due to the WNCB programme, there was a positive shift in attitudes of private sector actors which included a decreased acceptance of child labour, an increased prioritisation of education and an increased sense of communal responsibility of the private sector. In the [Mid-Term Review](#), the large majority of the private sector actors involved confirmed that their involvement in the WNCB programme led to behaviour change on addressing child labour within businesses (Mid-Term Review 2022). This was also confirmed in the [SenseMaker](#) endline assessments, where private sector actors corroborated that due to the support of the WNCB programme, such as in the form of Child Rights and Business Principles awareness-raising activities, they changed their attitudes and combatted child labour. The SenseMaker studies thereby identified a growing consensus among private sector actors on the "unacceptable nature of child labour and the critical role of education in breaking cycles of poverty and enabling better futures for children" (SenseMaker Endline Report Bihar India 2024, p. 67). In this regard, due to the WNCB programme, private sector actors employed adults instead of children, and send their own children to school, which led to a decrease in child labour practices ([SenseMaker](#) Endline Report Jordan 2024, [SenseMaker](#) Endline Report Bihar India 2024, [SenseMaker](#) Endline Report Rajasthan India 2024). The contribution of the WNCB programme to the decrease of child labour was also showcased in the [Annual Reports](#), the [Annual Plan](#) of 2024 and the [Final Reports](#); for example, due to the partnerships which led to the private sector actors adopting Child Rights and Business Principles (Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024). Finally, the [field visits](#) to India and Côte d'Ivoire complemented these observations. In India, interview partners such as yard owners and mine owners highlighted their change in awareness of the importance of education due to their involvement in the WNCB programme.

Through Pathway 3, the WNCB programme also contributed to the **increase in school enrolment and attendance rate** in several partner countries. As indicated by the [secondary data analysis](#), there was a positive shift in community norms which included an increased prioritisation of education. This was also reflected among private sector actors: In the [Mid-Term Review](#) and the [SenseMaker](#) endline assessments, private sector actors confirmed that due to their involvement in the WNCB programme, within their attitude change on child labour (see above), they now also understood the importance of education. In addition, the [field visits](#) in India and Côte d'Ivoire illustrated the WNCB programme's contribution, with interview partners from the private sector confirming that, due to the programme, they had a strengthened understanding of the relevance of education. The secondary data analysis and field visits therefore confirmed that the strengthened awareness of the private sector actors and their behavioural changes contributed to an increase in school enrolment and attendance rate in their community.

4.3.2.2 Public Sector Efforts to Eliminate Child Labour

Table 8 General hypothesis 2 (Pathway 2 and Pathway 3)

General hypothesis 2: If child protection system strengthening strategies are combined with area-based approach [child protection committees, case management support], the scope of interventions is scaled up and therefore the number of children reached in contributing to eliminating child labour.

Performance story (sub-hypotheses) at Output-Outcome level:	<p>[H41] If local authorities (as well as village elders and chiefs) and national governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on child labour, education, youth economic empowerment and social security, then child protection mechanisms should ensure targeted outreach to out of school and working children, withdraw children from child labour, and link children and their families to services. [H55b] If local authorities (as well as village elders and chiefs) and national governments have improved knowledge of gender-sensitive approaches, they will ensure that both boys and girls benefit from education, youth economic opportunities and social security. [H2/8] If communities (incl. local authorities, local governments, village elders and chiefs) have increased knowledge on child rights and child labour and develop more positive attitudes towards children’s right to education, and have the capacity to organize and advocate in support of child rights, then families and children have improved access to child sensitive social protection schemes and child protection mechanisms should ensure targeted outreach to out of school and working children, withdraw children from child labour and link children and their families to services, thereby empowering children to pursue an education and improving access to education. [H53] If families and communities increase their knowledge on gender equality and develop more positive attitudes towards girls’ education, they make sure to empower girls to pursue an education. [H13] If child protection committees have the capacity to protect child rights, then families and children have improved access to child sensitive social protection schemes, thereby empowering children to pursue an education.</p>
Performance story (sub-hypotheses) at Outcome-Impact level:	<p>[IH5] If child protection mechanisms ensure targeted outreach to out of school and working children withdraw children from child labour and link children and their families to services, then this contributes to the elimination of child labour. [IH4] If families and children have improved access to child sensitive social protection schemes, then this contributes to the elimination of child labour.</p>

As another one of its four main pathways of change, the WNCB programme aimed to strengthen public sector engagement, especially in the form of child protection systems. The performance story (sub-hypotheses) was based on two ‘starting points’ which were (1) local authorities improving their knowledge on child rights and child labour, and (2) local authorities and national governments enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and policies. For the public sector engagement to be more effective, the WNCB programme combined **child protection system strengthening strategies** with their **area-based approach**.

Starting Point 1: Improved Knowledge and Attitudes towards Child Rights and Child Labour

One of the programme’s approaches to increase school enrolment and attendance rates as well as to reduce child labour (objective of Pathway 2), is to improve the knowledge and change attitudes towards child rights and child labour among local authorities. In this regard, the [secondary data analysis](#) as well as [field visits](#) show that **the programme was able to improve the knowledge and change the attitudes of local authorities in most of its countries of intervention**. Here, the [Outcome Harvested Tables](#) and [Annual Reports](#) of the WNCB programme showcase that for example child protection officers in Viet Nam could improve their knowledge regarding the prevention of child labour through trainings provided by the WNCB programme (Annual Report 2022; Final Report Viet Nam 2024), while in Mali trained local elected representatives in intervention zones also improved their knowledge concerning the fight against child labour and the benefits of improved quality in education (Annual Report 2023). In contrast hereto, the Annual Reports did not provide systematic evidence regarding attitude changes among local authority representatives based on their newly acquired knowledge through the WNCB programme. The same also holds true for the WNCB programme’s [KPI studies](#) and [SenseMaker studies](#) and [Mid-Term Review](#). Although they

included representatives of local authorities as a target group, the focus of these studies is not on the knowledge or attitudes of those local authorities. For instance, in the Mid-Term Reviews, although local stakeholders overall confirm that the WNCB programme has enhanced their knowledge and understanding, as those participants also include community members, it is not clear to what extent local authorities are involved (Mid-Term Review Jordan; Mid-Term Review Uganda). In these reports and studies only a few examples could be found for local authorities such as the attitude change of the state governments of Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh that included the implementation of training sessions on child-friendly panchayats as part of their Gram Panchayat Development Plan (Annual Report 2023; Annual Plan 2024) or the aforementioned local authority representatives in Mali that based on their newly acquired knowledge incorporated activities relating to the fight against child labour and improving the quality of education into their Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plans (Annual Report 2023).

As a result, representatives of local authorities were addressed as a primary target group in the two field visits in India and Côte d'Ivoire to obtain further information on possible attitude changes based upon the newly acquired knowledge through the WNCB programme's activities. In both field visits, interview partners confirmed that local authorities positively changed their attitudes toward child labour. A good example for this attitude change are the interviewed local representatives of local authorities of the Nawa region in Côte d'Ivoire who confirmed that their newly gained knowledge through the activities of the WNCB programme made them aware of the importance of mandatory school enrolment. This led to a change of attitudes among them which resulted into a more concentrated effort in implementing mandatory school enrolment through activities that raised the awareness in communities with regard to the importance of education vis-à-vis child labour.

A major **success factor in facilitating these changes in local authorities was the WNCB programme's tailor-made approach in involving local authorities in the different countries of intervention** according to the conducted secondary data analysis and interviews with different stakeholders from the intervention areas. Here, the different country teams targeted varying stakeholder groups at local level depending on the country context and analysed needs to gain the best leverage to achieve the WNCB programme's objectives. This was also confirmed by the Outcome Harvested Tables and the Annual Reports that showed that in partner countries such as Mali (Annual Report 2023) and India (Annual Report 2022) the WNCB programme supported (soon to be) elected local authorities, while in partner countries such as Viet Nam (Annual Report 2021; Annual Report 2022) it focused on technical officers such as social workers. This demonstrates a highly flexible approach that adapts to specific contexts needs such as in Viet Nam where direct cooperation with national government was delayed due to government framework changes (Annual Report 2022; Final Report Viet Nam 2024). Moreover, in some partner countries the WNCB programme also influenced local authorities indirectly by cooperating with national authorities (Annual Report 2022; Annual Report 2023) – again highlighting its tailor-made approach. There, a successful measure was the development of frameworks and tools that also addressed the local level, such as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for child labour (Annual Plan 2024). In this regard, the personal narratives shared by participants within the SenseMaker endline assessments also confirmed the effectiveness and necessity of applying diverse strategies to eliminate child labour.

A further **success factor was the support provided by the WNCB programme regarding the development of monitoring tools**. This was, among others, highlighted in the Annual Plan of 2024, when reflecting upon the key results within Pathway 2 (Annual Plan 2024). The WNCB programme developed tools for monitoring child labour remediation and/or school enrolment in several partner countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, India, Jordan, and Viet Nam. This helped the respective local and national authorities to gather needed data, gain knowledge, adopt new attitudes and implement measures fighting child labour accordingly (Annual Report 2021; Annual Plan 2024; Save the Children, 2023). This was also confirmed in the SenseMaker endline assessments and in the field visits in Côte d'Ivoire and India, for example, with local authorities. Furthermore, in cases such as Jordan, these monitoring tools also allowed for a cooperation between national government entities and Community-Based Organisations (Annual

Report 2021; Annual Plan 2024; Final Report 2024; Save the Children, 2023), thus further supporting the combination of Pathway 1 and Pathway 2 (see below).

A third success factor was the combination of activities targeting the public sector with the area-based approach. The WNCB programme concentrated on making the child protection system in the intervention areas more community-based, which involved engaging communities in child protection efforts. According to the Outcome Harvested Tables, Annual Reports, the Annual Plan of 2024, the SenseMaker endline assessments and interviews conducted within the field visits in India and Côte d'Ivoire, the combination of these approaches supported the effectiveness of Starting Point 1 in the following ways. First, it allowed the country teams to prioritise collaboration with local authorities and community actors (Annual Plan 2024). Through these collaborations, it was possible to strengthen participation of community leaders and population groups such as women and children's groups, so that they could share their perspective and suggestions (Annual Report 2022; Annual Report 2023; SenseMaker Endline Report – Overall Review 2024). Second, involving and capacitating community members together with local authorities strengthened awareness raising of laws and conventions related to children's rights in the intervention areas (Annual Report 2023; SenseMaker Endline Report Bihar 2024). Third, it strengthened the trust of community members in their public authorities, as community members began notifying local authorities when observing child labour within their local private sector actors (Annual Report 2023). In this regard, within the field visit in Côte d'Ivoire, interview partners, for example from the public sector, described how community members intervened when noticing the presence of children at the cocoa plantations. The area-based approach also ensured that local actors were empowered to sustain child protection efforts after the WNCB programme conclusion (see Chapter 4.5).

Starting Point 2: Child-Rights Based Laws and Policies

The other approach of the WNCB programme to increase school enrolment and attendance rates as well as to reduce child labour (objective of Pathway 2), is the support to local and national authorities to enforce child-rights-based laws and implement policies addressing child labour, education, youth economic empowerment, and social security. As indicated by the secondary data analysis and field visits, the WNCB programme has **successfully assisted local and national authorities in enforcing these laws and policies that align with child rights**. The Outcome Harvested Tables, the Annual Reports and the Annual Plan of 2024 showcase several examples. For instance, at the national level in India, the WNCB programme contributed to the development of specific guidelines for the ready-made garment sector (Annual Plan 2024). At the state level, the Rajasthan government incorporated a 'child labour free' clause into the Rajasthan Transparency and Public Procurement Act of 2013 (Annual Report 2021). In Uganda, in collaboration with local governments, the WNCB programme supported the creation of byelaws aimed at reducing child labour and enhancing education (Annual Report 2021; Annual Plan 2024; Final Report Uganda 2024). The successful enforcement of laws and policies was further confirmed by the participants of the SenseMaker endline assessment. There, stakeholders from governments in India, Jordan, Uganda and Viet Nam indicated that the national governments in the partner countries have improved legal and policy frameworks due to the support from the WNCB programme (SenseMaker Endline Report Jordan 2024).

In addition, the field visits in Côte d'Ivoire further illustrated the WNCB programme's contribution, with interview partners from public sector confirming that, due to the programme, they were better equipped to implement national regulations on mandatory school enrolment at the local level. For instance, through their involvement in the programme, local authorities gained insights into addressing challenges such as the absence of school lunch programs, which had previously hindered children's school attendance.

A major success factor in enforcing child-rights based legislation and implementing relevant policies was the strategic application of a multi-level approach. The Outcome Harvested Tables and the Annual Reports highlighted how the WNCB programme, through active engagement with governments at both national and local levels, successfully influenced political agendas and drove significant policy changes (Annual Report 2021; Annual Report

2023). For instance, the WNCB programme contributed to the National Action Plan to provide measures against child labour in Viet Nam (Annual Report 2021) and supported the development of byelaws on child labour in Uganda and Jordan (Annual Report 2021; Annual Plan 2024; Final Report Uganda 2024). A critical component enabling these achievements was the WNCB programme's participation in influential bodies such as national steering committees, which provided a platform for advocacy and collaboration (Annual Plan 2024). At the state and local levels, the programme's impact was exemplified by its support to the government of Rajasthan in embedding the 'child labour free' clause into policy frameworks, as well as assisting local authorities in Mali to make formal commitments towards eradicating child labour (Annual Report 2021; Final Report Mali 2024). The relevance of a complex, multi-layered approach was also confirmed within the SenseMaker endline assessments, although there, the emphasis was less on a multi-level approach but on a multi-stakeholder approach and community engagement (see below) (SenseMaker Endline Report Bihar 2024; SenseMaker Endline Report Jordan 2024; SenseMaker Endline Report Uganda 2024).

A second critical success factor was the engagement of community actors through the area-based approach.

As outlined earlier in the analysis of Starting Point 1, this approach emphasised involving communities in child protection efforts. According to the Annual Reports, the Annual Plan of 2024, the SenseMaker endline assessments and interviews conducted within the field visits in India and Côte d'Ivoire, the combination of these approaches supported the effectiveness of Starting Point 2 in several ways. First, it enabled community members and Community-Based Organisations to voice their perspectives and provide recommendations to both local and national authorities (Annual Report 2023; Annual Plan 2024). This process allowed for the development of laws and policies that were better tailored to the specific needs and contexts of child workers and their communities. Second, engaging and building the capacity of community members in intervention areas enhanced their understanding and awareness of laws and conventions related to children's rights (Annual Report 2022). This increased awareness empowered them to advocate for these rights more effectively within their communities, thereby facilitating the implementation of the laws and conventions (Annual Report 2023; SenseMaker Endline Reports 2024). The field visits to India and Côte d'Ivoire corroborated these observations. In India, interviewees, such as with private sector actors, highlighted the importance of community involvement, particularly given the hidden nature of child labour occurring within households. Meanwhile, in Côte d'Ivoire, interview partners, such as from public sector, emphasised the critical role of community actors, such as members of child protection committees, who monitored cocoa plantations to identify and address child labour (see above).

Objectives: Increased School Enrolment and Attendance Rate and Elimination of Child Labour

The objectives of the WNCB programme were to decrease child labour and increase school enrolment and attendance rate. The monitoring data depicted in chapter 4.3.1 showcased that those objectives were, to some extent, achieved. According to the secondary data analysis and the field visits, the above described and analysed **approaches contributed to the reduction of child labour and an increase in school enrolment and attendance rate in the targeted regions of the intervention countries of the WNCB programme.**

In this regard, the WNCB programme contributed to the **decrease in child labour in several partner countries.** As indicated by the secondary data analysis, due to the WNCB programme, there was a positive shift in community norms which included a decreased acceptance of child labour. In the SenseMaker endline assessments, government stakeholders corroborated that due to the support of the WNCB programme, they were able to better implement regulations to combat child labour. For instance, due to the WNCB programme, they were able to identify children who had been at mining sites and enrol them at nearby schools (SenseMaker Endline Report Uganda 2024). The contribution of the WNCB programme to the decrease of child labour was also showcased in the Outcome Harvested Tables, Annual Reports and the Annual Plan of 2024; for example, due to the increased government surveillance to combat child trafficking (Annual Plan 2024). Finally, the field visits to India and Côte d'Ivoire complemented these observations. In Côte d'Ivoire, interviews with public sector and community members highlighted the clear change

in awareness of the importance of education within communities as well as the role of community members supporting the local authorities by intervening when observing child labour. The contribution of an increased awareness within communities for eliminating child labour was also confirmed in the SenseMaker studies (SenseMaker Endline Report – Overall Review 2024).

The WNCB programme also contributed to the **increase in school enrolment and attendance rate** in several partner countries. As indicated by the secondary data analysis, there was a positive shift in community norms which included an increased prioritisation of education. This was also reflected among government stakeholders: In the SenseMaker endline assessments, when asked about the most relevant change observed, government stakeholders across all partner countries referred to an improved access to quality education. Government stakeholders also corroborated societal shifts valuing education over child labour and increased educational opportunities in their intervention areas (SenseMaker Endline Report – Overall Review 2024). In addition, the field visits in India and Côte d'Ivoire further illustrated the WNCB programme's contribution, with interview partners from public sector and civil society confirming that, due to the programme, they were able to better address challenges that had previously limited the attendance rate such as lack of transportation and lack of funding of school lunch. This led to an increase in school enrolment and attendance rate in their community. The interview partners in Côte d'Ivoire also highlighted that the clear change in awareness of the importance of education within communities also lead to families demanding the construction of more classrooms so that their children could go to school. In this regard, the final reports of the WNCB programme at country level confirm that the WNCB programme has transformed the lives of children within the intervention areas by offering opportunities for education and protection (Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024).

4.3.3 Assessment of the Effectiveness Criterion

To conclude, **the evaluation finds that the WNCB programme contributed towards its objective** of freeing children and youth from child labour such that they enjoy their rights to quality education and future decent work by **combining four approaches (“pathways”)** that focussed on community members, public sector, private sector and international lobbying and advocacy.

The evaluation shows that the WNCB programme contributed to the decrease of child labour rates in most of its partner countries. As demonstrated, the WNCB programme succeeded in addressing key drivers of child labour, such as poverty and social norms within the intervention zones in the partner countries by implementing four pathways. The evaluation showed that within **Pathway 1 (community-based approach)**, the WNCB programme successfully contributed to the decrease of child labour rates through activities such as awareness-raising trainings for community members to highlight the negative consequences of child labour, providing alternative income-generating opportunities for households to release financial pressure, and by involving community members in the protection of children and control of local business owners. Within **Pathway 2 (child protection systems)**, the WNCB programme successfully contributed to the decrease of child labour rates by supporting public sector actors at national and local level regarding their child-labour related policies, laws and regulations. The evaluation also showed that the WNCB programme provided effective support through activities such as awareness-raising trainings for public sector actors, support of the elaboration of policies and concepts, and dialogue events. **Pathway 3 (supply chain approach)** was especially important as it aimed directly at the private sector (formal companies as well as lower tiers of the supply chains and the informal sector). There, the evaluation showed that the WNCB programme was especially effective through activities such as awareness-raising trainings for staff to highlight the negative consequences of child labour, and the establishment of partnerships where the WNCB programme was able to support private sector actors with their company policies. Within **Pathway 4 (lobby and advocacy)**, limited data availability restricted the analysis. Still, results such as securing the Dutch government's

expression of support for the area-based approach of the WNCB programme supported the overall effectiveness of the WNCB programme.

The evaluation also finds that the WNCB programme demonstrated mixed results in improving school enrolment and attendance rates in its partner countries. As shown by the evaluation results, the WNCB programme succeeded in addressing key factors that influenced school enrolment negatively, such as social norms, quality of education and transportation by implementing several pathways. The evaluation showed that within **Pathway 1 (community-based approach)**, the WNCB programme successfully contributed to the increase of school enrolment and attendance rates through activities such as awareness-raising trainings for community members to highlight the importance of education and by improving the quality of education, training teachers to implement appropriate teaching methods. Within **Pathway 2 (child protection systems)**, the WNCB programme successfully contributed to the increase of school enrolment and attendance rates by supporting public actors through the establishment of bridging and/or transition classes, improving school infrastructure and providing transportation to school. The evaluation also showed the effectiveness of **Pathway 3 (supply chain approach)** for the increase of school enrolment and attendance rates in the intervention zones. There, the WNCB programme addressed private sector actors (for example, local business owners) through activities such as awareness-raising on the importance of education. The WNCB programme then also supported private sector actors in their efforts to facilitate education for children, for instance, through motivation centres on their grounds.

Several key success factors significantly contributed to the effectiveness of the WNCB programme. The WNCB programme strategically employed a **multi-stakeholder approach**, exemplified by the four complementary pathways, and further refined this approach within each pathway by targeting different stakeholders. Moreover, the WNCB programme implemented a **multi-level strategy** within these pathways, for instance, engaging entire supply chains (including production and resource areas) and working with public sector actors at both the national and local levels. A critical element of the programme's success was the **integration with the area-based approach**. The combination of the area-based approach and child protection systems proved particularly effective, as it involved communities directly in child protection efforts, thereby strengthening the system and making it more community-driven. Additionally, the fusion of the area-based approach with the supply chain approach encouraged a stronger sense of communal responsibility among local business actors, resulting in local private sector engagement to eliminate child labour and empowering children to access education.

4.4 Efficiency

This chapter explores the evaluation criterion of efficiency, assessing the economic use of resources in relation to the outputs and outcomes achieved by the WNCB programme. The analysis of efficiency focuses on two main aspects: the extent to which financial, human, and material resources have been utilised in a cost-effective manner to deliver programme **outputs**, and the potential for enhancing positive **outcomes** with the resources available. By examining these dimensions, the evaluation provides insights into how efficiently the programme has managed its resources and whether existing inputs could have been leveraged further to maximize impact.

Adaptive Management to Efficiently React to Changing Circumstances.

The WNCB programme followed an **adaptive management approach** with a flexible budget which **allowed the programme to successfully reallocate resources across time and countries based on the changing context** according to a secondary data analysis of Annual Plans and Annual Reports as well as interviews with the WNCB programme and country teams. The programme and country teams needed to adapt their activities to contextual changes and external challenges for their implementation which they were able to successfully achieve as discussed under the assessment of the programme's relevance (see Chapter 4.1). To understand the extent of adaptability

required and understand the WNCB programme’s general underspending, the achievement of outputs reported and deviation of plans in the Annual Reports is contrasted with Annual Plans. Table 9 displays the achievement of planned outputs per country and year and contrasts it with the share of the planned budget that was spent. Since the annual budget is based on the annual plans, the achievement relative to the annual plans provides insights into the underspending documented in the annual reports. The Annual Reports apply a stringent assessment and indicate that plans were not achieved even in cases of smaller deviations (Annual Report 2021, Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023). Therefore, basing the analysis on the WNCB programme’s reported achievements seems rather conservative lending both credibility but also limiting the following assessment. The programme’s adaptive management approach becomes particularly apparent when contrasting achievement of plans and budget spent. Table 9 highlights that when there was an underachievement in terms of planned outputs, this was for the most part also accompanied by fewer resources needed as indicated by the budget spent as reported in the Annual Reports.¹² For instance, in 2022, only about 80 %, 70 % and 83 % of planned aggregated outputs were fully achieved in India, Côte d’Ivoire and Mali, and at the same time only 85 %, 73 % and 80 % of the budget was spent respectively. The saved resources were then transferred into the next year as documented in the annual plans and according to an interview with WNCB programme staff all funds are expected to be eventually spent (Annual Plan 2021, Annual Plan 2022, Annual Plan 2023, Annual Plan 2024, proposal for 6-month extension, interview with WNCB programme staff).

Table 9 Achievement of plans compared to budget spent

Country	Year ¹³					
	2021		2022		2023	
India	4/12	90 %	16/20	85 %	17/21	88 %
Côte d’Ivoire	4/4	103 %	9/13	73 %	10/16	97 %
Jordan	14/17	82 %	8/8	103 %	10/10	94 %
Mali	11/15	89 %	10/12	80 %	11/11	100 %
Uganda	21/23	70 %	17/20	97 %	20/20	89 %
Viet Nam	10/20	75 %	4/12	52 %	8/11	81 %
Netherlands (L&A Working Group)	0/2	NA ¹⁴	3/3	49 %	0/7	79 %

¹² Note that sometimes even if there are no specific outputs set in the annual plan for an outcome, there were expenditures allocated to that outcome

¹³ Note that the data used to derive the information presented in the table is only consistently available for 2021-2023. For 2020, the achievement of plans was not yet consistently reported and for 2024, only first drafts of country specific final reports with a different focus compared to earlier years are available.

¹⁴ The ratio of spending to budget is not available to the evaluation team for the Netherlands in 2021.

Legend:

First column per year: Achieved vs. planned number of outputs per country and year:

Achievement of planned outputs	100 %	85-99 %	75-85 %	60-75 %	40-60 %	<40 %
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Second column per year: % of budget spent

Difference in % budget spent to achievement of planned outputs	>10 % below	+/-5 %	5-10 % above	10-20 % above	>20 % above
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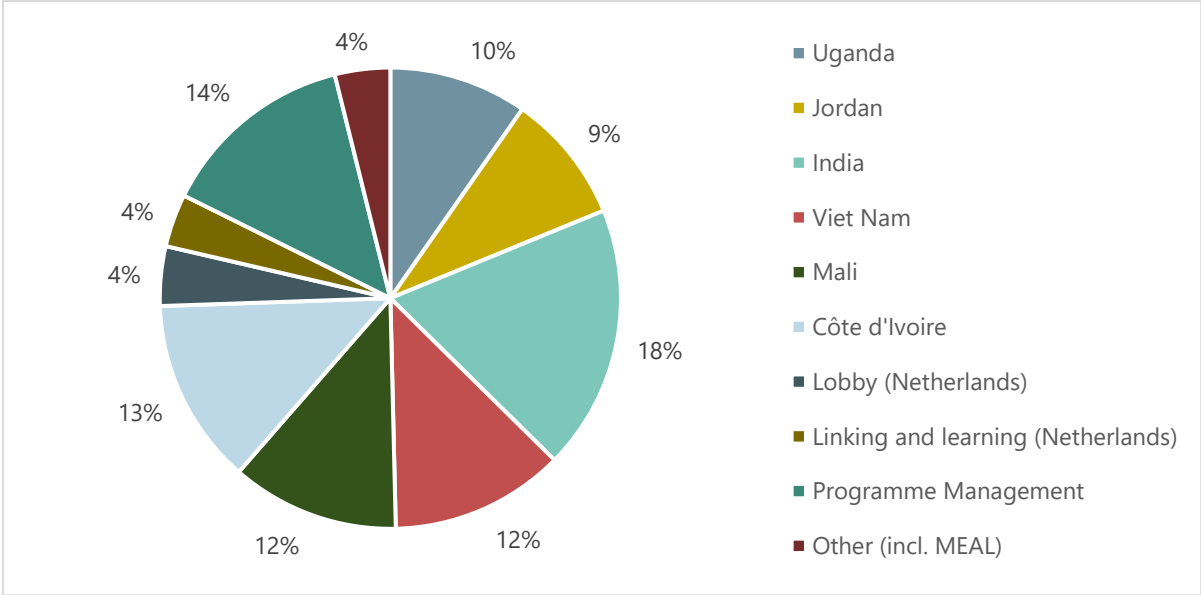
The cases in which the achievement of plans and budget spent are not aligned, illustrate the programmes adaptability to external challenges rather than pointing to inefficiencies based on the [Annual Reports](#). There were some notable exceptions in which the share of allocated budget and achievement of plans is less aligned: Such as India in 2021, Côte d'Ivoire in 2023, Uganda, Viet Nam and the Lobby and Advocacy Working Group in the Netherlands. This misalignment can be explained based on a closer look at how the deviations of plans came about as documented in the narrative of the [Annual Reports](#). Due to COVID-19 and related school closures in 2021, the WNCB programme in **India** could not implement its activities as planned. However, the WNCB programme reallocated its resources to additional activities instead of transferring them to the future. In this context, the WNCB programme's adaptiveness came to fruition, and it allocated some resources to address the consequences of the pandemic by setting up remedial education centres such that students can continue their education (Annual Report 2021). Thus, while the planned activities according to the [Annual Reports](#) could not be achieved due to external factors, the WNCB programme in India made good use of its planned resources with substitute activities. In **Côte d'Ivoire** there were challenges related to the implementation of cash transfers and strengthening of the social protection systems in 2023 documented in the [Annual Report](#) such that the activities could not be achieved as planned (Annual Report 2023). For consistency purposes, this resulted in a relatively high underachievement of planned outputs based on the coarse assessment of achievements provided in Table 9 since outputs were counted as non-achieved, despite being achieved for the most part. This means, that in this case, the underachievement strongly reflects the limitations of the measurement of achievement of plans reported in Table 9. Therefore, this underachievement of plans is also not reflected in the share of the budget spent. For **Viet Nam** COVID-19 was a challenge in 2021 and the change in ODA requirements was a challenge in 2022 such that activities with UNICEF-MOLISA could not be implemented as planned according to the [Annual Reports](#) leading to an underachievement relative to the annual plan (Annual Report 2021, 2022). Similarly, as previously discussed for the **Netherlands**, deviations to the intended work plan were necessary and there were alternative achievements in response to the shifting political context on which the budget was spent (see Chapter 4.3.1.2). The WNCB programme in **Uganda** in comparison, also spent a smaller share of their budget compared to their achievement of their plans (see Table 9). While this could indicate efficient execution or generous planning, measurement based on self-reports might play a role too. Overall, this indicates that even in cases in which the WNCB programme's achievement of plans is less aligned with the allocated budget, it does not imply a failure of the adaptive approach, nor does it point towards inefficiency.

The WNCB's adaptive management furthermore followed a bottom-up approach with a final assessment from the programme management unit (PMU) as reflected in the Mid-Term Review, Annual Reports and based on an interview with WNCB programme staff. Already the [Mid-Term Review](#) found that the programme was well coordinated within countries and interventions were based on accurate and up-to-date analyses (Mid-Term Review). Therefore, the programme partners in the countries were well positioned to identify opportunities to increase the programme's effectiveness. According to an [interview](#) with WNCB programme staff, each partner aimed to identify opportunities to best adapt to the situation within their country and could send proposals to the PMU which then decided what can be funded. For this purpose, the PMU organised stocktaking meetings and analysed appropriate actions. The adaptive management is further illustrated by regular discussion of the programme's budget and

allocation of resources to maximise results in the countries in a steering meeting every four months (Interview with WNCB programme staff). While this approach was perceived to limit the programme’s efficiency by some alliance and partner staff (Mid-Term Review), it allowed the programme to react to new and ad-hoc opportunities as they arose identified through a bottom-up approach (Interview with WNCB programme staff).

The **resources allocated to adaptive management and the PMU, while significant** based on a secondary data analysis of the reported budget and perceptions reported in the Mid-Term Review, **they were proportional to the scale and complexity of managing a multi-country programme**. The Mid-Term Review reported on the perceived heavy organisational structure and the high costs of working groups and programme based in the Netherlands as causes for inefficiency. The programme was perceived as expensive by alliance and partner staff (Mid-Term Review). For programme management, a total of 14% of the total **budget** was spent, most of which towards the PMU as stated in the budget plan (see Figure 2, Annual Plan 2024). For each country, there was an additional coordination budget line which was typically below 5 % of the total country programme budget (Annual Plan 2024). Further, delays in disbursing budget were perceived as one of the main reasons for perceived inefficiency (Mid-Term Review). While the share for the PMU is large, it **seems appropriate** considering the number of countries involved and the comparatively low within country coordination budget.

Figure 2 Budget distribution across countries and units



Allocation of Resources to Outcomes.

In addition to the productive use of resources discussed above, the following assesses the WNCB programme’s allocation efficiency based on a secondary data analysis of distribution of the budget across outcomes. Table 10 provides an overview of the budget allocation per outcome over most of the WNCB programme duration (from 2021 until the first quarter of 2024) for each country (Expenses 2021-2024). The WNCB programme’s focus was on pathway and outcome 1, which also received the largest share of the budget in each of the countries (except the Netherlands where the focus lied on outcome 4).¹⁵ While it is not meaningful to put this allocation in relation to a quantification of achieved outcomes in order to compare the distribution, as the different outcomes are

¹⁵ Note that a breakdown of the budget allocated to the Netherlands towards outcomes is unavailable and therefore not included in the table.

fundamentally not comparable and there are no indicators for target achievement¹⁶, some pattern emerged in the discussion of the programme’s effectiveness (see Chapter 4.2).

The WNCB programme allocated most of its resources towards its most successful outcome 1 rather than to the less successful outcome 3 according to a secondary data analysis of the budget allocation across outcomes and the effectiveness analysis, **which is in line with an allocation of budget to maximise results**. Overall, based on an assessment of the programme’s effectiveness, the programme seemed to be more successful in terms of outcome 1, while there is a relative lack of tangible results for outcome 3 (see Chapter 4.2). The Annual Reports often indicate difficulties with organizing activities with private sector actors and Outcome Harvested Tables mostly record commitments of a small number of actors which were involved (Annual Report 2020, Annual Report 2021, Annual Report 2022, Annual Report 2023). The extent to which these commitments are then translated into tangible changes in business practices is however unclear (see Chapter 4.3.2.1). At the same time, the relative lack of results is also reflected in the relatively low share of the budget allocated to outcome 3. The share for outcome 3 is the smallest across countries except for Viet Nam and for Jordan where it is on par with the budget allocated to outcome 2 (see **Error! Reference source not found.**, Expenses 2021-2024).

Although the budget allocation may have contributed to the limited results for outcome 3 by constraining resources for private sector activities to reach their full potential, the effectiveness analysis provides no strong indication that reallocating resources from outcome 1 to outcome 3 would have improved the programme’s overall effectiveness. At least some challenges faced by activities with the private sector do seem to stem from a lack of resources as one limiting factors, e.g. in Jordan or Uganda which could indicate that allocating more resources towards this outcome would have led to more tangible results (see Chapter 4.3.2.1). Considering this, the budget distribution across outcomes with a focus on outcome 1 and less on outcome 3 might have limited the programme’s potential as there are indications that more resources towards outcome 3 could have improved the programme’s effectiveness (see Chapter 4.3.2.1). However, in addition to resources and time availability, there were also other challenges for the activities with the private sector. For example, changes in the programme’s approach focusing on community-based activities not necessarily more resources successfully increased the effectiveness towards outcome 3 (see Chapter 4.3.2.1). More importantly, shifting substantial resources would have limited the outcome 1 such that there is no strong indication that shifting resources from outcome 1 towards outcome 3 would have improved the programme’s allocation efficiency.

Table 10 Allocation of budget across outcomes

Outcome	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3
India	53 %	36 %	12 %
Côte d’Ivoire	75 %	15 %	9 %
Jordan	62 %	20 %	18 %
Mali	59 %	30 %	11 %
Uganda	43 %	35 %	22 %
Viet Nam	47 %	26 %	27 %

Assessment of the Efficiency Criterion

¹⁶ While outcome indicators were defined, they were defined to measure progress. Initially, there were efforts to define targets for most of these indicators, but by 2022, targets were only available for some indicators for Côte d’Ivoire and Viet Nam (see presentation “Understanding our quantitative data” used in the ACT and Country LEAD meeting) and not consistently defined in the indicator performance tracking tables (IPTT). Setting targets and using these tables was reportedly challenging and mostly abandoned by the country teams (interviews with MEAL focal points and country teams) but it was also not intended to measure the KPIs against targets (MEAL Protocol WNCB and Indicator Protocols KPIs WNCB).

To conclude, **the WNCB programme is assessed as efficient**. The available information on the WNCB programme's plans, activities, financials and results indicate that the WNCB programme was not only **able to adapt** its activities to external challenges but also to do so **in an efficient way**. The programme carefully managed its resources such that savings could be reallocated to promising opportunities. To some extent the disbursement of funds was perceived as slow and costly, but the required resources do appear appropriate considering the high level of adaptability, shifting resources across countries and time, and complexity of the multi-country programme. Since there are **no strong indications of inefficiency** and considering the WNCB programme's adaptability to challenges and leverage learning to improve effectiveness, the evaluation considers it efficient considering the difficult contexts and challenges it faced.

4.5 Sustainability

This chapter addresses the evaluation criterion of sustainability, focusing on the **long-term durability of the WNCB programme's impacts and outcomes**. The analysis determines the **resilience of the programme's achievements** and its **capacity to foster lasting change** by exploring the following four dimensions, namely- **1) Institutional and policy sustainability, 2) Social and cultural sustainability, 3) Stakeholder commitment and ownership, and 4) Financial sustainability**.

The criteria of **institutional and policy sustainability** assesses whether the programme's outcomes are embedded in institutional structures or policies that ensure continuity after external funding ends. It depends on factors such as the presence of laws or regulations that support programme objectives and the ability and willingness of local institutions to independently implement, monitor, and sustain relevant activities without external support. **Social and cultural sustainability** examines whether community norms and attitudes in the programme areas are capable and supportive of sustaining programme impacts. In other words, it analyses to what extent stakeholders uphold norms and behaviours that are conducive to child protection in the long run. **Stakeholder commitment and ownership** assesses to what extent relevant stakeholders have a sense of ownership over programme achievements and are committed to sustaining them beyond the programme horizon. It depends on factors such as whether communities, governments, and private sector actors actively participate in programme implementation and the strength and continuity of alliances between public, private, and civil society stakeholders even after the programme ceases to operate. Finally, **financial sustainability** evaluates the likelihood of financial mechanisms ensuring the continuity of the programme's impacts. It depends on whether there are clear strategies in place for reducing dependency on donor funding and transitioning to locally supported initiatives, and the extent to which programme activities are included in local or national government budgets.

Institutional and Policy Sustainability

A comprehensive secondary data analysis of programme documents and the field visits indicate that **the WNCB programme has played a significant role in fostering supportive institutional and policy environments in its project countries, enhancing the long-term sustainability of its impacts**. Supportive institutional and policy environments are essential for ensuring the sustainability of the programme because they provide the **structural foundation for long-term impact**. Policies that enforce child protection laws, ensure access to quality education and promote social protection create a framework that is conducive to addressing the root causes of child labour. Institutional support moreover enables effective implementation, monitoring and enforcement of these policies, ensuring that relevant interventions are sustained beyond the programme's lifespan. Moreover, a robust policy environment fosters stakeholder collaboration, encourages private sector accountability, and ensures that government and community resources are aligned toward shared goals, making progress against child labour resilient to changing circumstances.

Programme documents show that the programme contributed to **policy development and reforms** in child protection in various project regions (Annual Report 2021; Annual Plan 2024; Final Report Netherlands 2024; Final Report Uganda 2024; Final Report Viet Nam 2024; Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024). In India, for example, the programme contributed to the development of the National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct for the ready-made garment industry (Annual Plan 2024). Similarly in Uganda, programme partners played an active role in the development of the National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour (NAP) and participated in its launch (Annual Report 2021). At an EU level, the programme was successful in lobbying for the incorporation of child protection concerns in the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (EUCSDDD) (Final Report Netherlands 2024). On the implementation side, the programme supported governments, communities and other stakeholders in enforcing child protection measures through widespread **system strengthening efforts**. For example, in Uganda, partners implemented multiple capacity building initiatives to improve formal child protection systems in project areas (Final Report Uganda 2024). In Viet Nam, it bolstered the capacities of local child protection systems through trainings focused on improving case management and the inter-agency referral mechanism (Final Report Viet Nam 2024; interview with Viet Nam country team). Lastly, the programme ensured the continuity of its achievements through the **linking of households and community structures to formal government systems**. For example, in Uganda, the partners lobbied for the coding and formalisation of motivational centres into recognised government schools staffed by trained teachers (Final Report Uganda 2024). In Côte d'Ivoire, the programme facilitated the linking of CPCs to formal child protection systems. (Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024). Furthermore, it provided VSLAs and AVECs with brokering services to help facilitate their connection to formal institutions like microfinance services (Annual Plan 2024). This sort of linking ensures that community-based structures are recognised and supported by institutional resources, creating a long-term framework for addressing child labour in the project areas.

A major **success factor contributing to the cultivation of institutional and policy sustainability** was the programme's **coordination and alignment with pre-existing local and national commitments** in the project countries. A secondary data analysis of programme documents confirms that the WNCB programme aligned its interventions on child protection with local and national priorities in its target areas. For example, in Mali, partners coordinated with local authorities to integrate child protection measures into local development plans (Annual Plan 2024). In India, the programme worked within the pre-existing framework of the Rajasthan government of SDG localization to establish child-friendly Gram Panchayats. It moreover developed a guidebook for child-friendly panchayats that was accepted by the state government (Final Report India 2024). In this regard, alignment with local and national interests is important in two crucial ways- 1) It ensured that the **programme's objectives were relevant and tailored to the actual needs of the target communities**; a fact that was confirmed through field visit data in the form of interviews with multiple stakeholders (see also: Relevance), and 2) It **helped integrate the programme into broader development frameworks** in its project countries related to education, social protection, and economic development policies. This not only promoted synergies of interventions in these areas but also helped secure buy-in from multiple stakeholders on the ground (see also: Stakeholder Ownership and Commitment), ensuring their impacts are sustained beyond the programme's lifespan.

A **significant challenge to the institutional and policy sustainability** of child protection efforts, particularly in enforcing child protection legislation, is **the potential for inconsistent or diminishing commitment from state authorities over time**. The field visit in India attests to this concern, with interviewees complaining about lack of political will towards child protection issues (focus group of women's SHGs in Budhpura). Programme partners have addressed this risk through regular consultations and capacity building of relevant organisations and actors. However, the role of institutions and policies vis-à-vis child protection will continue to hinge upon long-term political will. Additionally, it is important to note that merely linking households with formal social protection services is not sufficient in and of itself; the **quality of government services provided will likewise shape sustainability of programme impacts**.

Social and Cultural Sustainability

In terms of social and cultural sustainability, a secondary data analysis of programme documents and the field visits confirm that **the WNCB programme contributed significantly to changing community norms**. Effective social norm and behaviour change within communities is crucial for the sustainability of child labour programmes because it fosters **a shared understanding and commitment to ending child labour**. When communities internalize the importance of education and reject child labour as a socially acceptable practice, these attitudes are more likely to persist, even in the face of external challenges like economic crises or policy shifts. **Widespread and multi-stakeholder norm change amplifies this impact** by engaging families, schools, businesses, and local authorities, creating a unified front against child labour in a community. This collective commitment contributes to the resilience of impacts as diverse stakeholders can collaboratively address challenges, adapt to changing circumstances, and sustain efforts towards child protection. Moreover, when businesses adopt ethical practices and communities prioritize education, they together create an ecosystem that supports child rights and minimizes the likelihood of reverting to harmful practices. By embedding these changes into the social fabric, the programme promotes the long-term durability of its impacts by helping stakeholders become less reliant on external interventions.

SenseMaker studies from all project countries reveals a **substantial shift in community attitudes toward child labour and the importance of education** (SenseMaker Endline Report 2024). Programme partners engaged stakeholders through a wide range of activities like awareness programmes, children's committees, cultural activities, parent's meetings, school meetings etc. (SenseMaker Endline Report 2024). Evidence of norm change from SenseMaker reports was validated by field visits in both India and Côte d'Ivoire, where community stakeholders reported **widespread attitudes opposing child labour and supporting children's education** as a result of WNCB interventions (as per focus groups with families in Budhpura and an interview with the director of a social centre in Gueyo). Programme documents further indicate a **substantive shift in social norms and attitudes regarding gender and child marriage** as a result of programme activities (SenseMaker Endline Report 2024). Furthermore, partners raised awareness regarding gender issues and affected norm change in communities through activities like gender and general committee meetings and adolescent girls' meetings (SenseMaker Endline Report 2024). Field visit data from India and Côte d'Ivoire likewise provides strong evidence of shifting attitudes toward gender in the project regions. In India, community members reported a significant change, noting that while girls previously seldom attended school and were often married off at a young age, parents are now increasingly motivated to send their daughters to school (according to focus group with community members in Budhpura and focus group with public school teachers in Budhpura). The **downward trend in child marriage** was also corroborated by local elected representatives in Budhpura (highlighted in a focus group with Panchayat members in Budhpura). Shifts in attitudes toward gender were also noted among women and girls, with women becoming more independent and confident in expressing their interests (according to an interview with a Non-Governmental Organisation officer in Budhpura). Furthermore, girls who have developed stronger awareness of gender and child protection issues are now educating their parents and family members, effectively acting as multipliers for the programme's awareness-raising efforts (as highlighted in a focus group with women's self-help groups in Budhpura). Evidence of norm change in state officials and private sector actors, although not as robust, still points towards trends in a similar direction, with both public and private stakeholders being engaged by programme partners in awareness raising efforts. (SenseMaker Endline Report 2024). For example, field visit data from India attests to an increase in awareness of gender issues among public sector actors (like Gram Panchayats, teachers, health workers and other frontline workers) as a result of programme activities (as per focus group with country team in India).

A **key success factor contributing to the social and cultural sustainability** of the WNCB programme's achievements was its partners' **strategic focus on fostering norm change across a broad range of stakeholders** within target communities. Awareness-raising initiatives were carefully designed to engage diverse groups (including children, parents, teachers, frontline workers, elected officials, and business owners) through tailored activities and events, ensuring extensive outreach (SenseMaker Endline Report 2024). This approach not only reinforced shifts in attitudes toward child labour and education but also created a social environment where sending

children to work became socially unacceptable. Field visit data from India highlights that both parents and business owners in Budhpura now fear being reported or ostracized by their communities if they engage in child labour (according to focus group with families in Budhpura). This widespread norm change serves as a critical safeguard: even if some stakeholders lose motivation due to socioeconomic pressures, the broader community acts as a protective guardrail and barrier for child protection.

A **potential challenge to the social and cultural sustainability** of norm change is the **risk of complacency among stakeholders**. The field visits reveal that some private sector actors perceive themselves as less relevant to addressing child labour, viewing the issue instead as stemming from workers' lack of awareness about government schemes, social issues, and financial literacy (interview with supplier in Budhpura). If these attitudes go unchallenged, they could undermine stakeholders' motivation to see themselves as key contributors to combating child labour, leading to a tendency to shift responsibility onto others. To mitigate this risk, sustained engagement and ongoing dialogue among diverse stakeholder groups are crucial for maintaining the momentum of norm change and ensuring its long-term sustainability.

Stakeholder Commitment and Ownership

A secondary data analysis of programme documents and the field visits underscore the **WNCB programme's consistent efforts to foster stakeholder ownership of activities and achievements**, ensuring their commitment to continuing child protection efforts beyond the programme's conclusion. As part of their exit strategies, partners in all project countries worked to **strengthen local ownership** of the programme's impacts and outcomes. For instance, in Uganda, teachers, Parent-Teacher Associations, and School Management Committees were empowered to monitor child labour in project areas and to develop and implement school plans that promote child-friendly environments (Final Report Uganda 2024). Similarly, in Jordan, partners transitioned various project components to other child protection interventions in the region. These components included case management packages, studies, lessons learned, and recommendations, ensuring the continuity of the programme's impacts (Final Report Jordan 2024).

Programme documents show that through sustained consultations and engagement with a broad range of local stakeholders, programme partners **successfully secured commitments from various actors to continue advancing child protection efforts** initiated by the programme (Final Report Mali 2024; Final Report Uganda 2024; Final Report India 2024; Final Report Viet Nam 2024; Final Report Jordan 2024; Final Report Côte d'Ivoire 2024). For example, in Mali, the Ministry of Labour committed to aligning the WNCB programme's achievements with the implementation of the new National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour (PANTEM II), ensuring that programme efforts and results are integrated into ongoing efforts to address and reduce child labour (Final Report Mali 2024). In Uganda, multiple ministries pledged to strengthen and enforce legal frameworks to protect children and vulnerable families while also developing infrastructure to support education in schools (Final Report Uganda 2024). Furthermore, several civil society organisations (CSOs) committed to continuing their advocacy efforts with the government on child protection issues and to incorporating the area-based approach into their ongoing activities. They also pledged to build on the achievements of the WNCB programme through the development of new projects. (Final Report Uganda 2024).

A **key success factor** in this regard was **the programme's ability to secure commitments from public sector actors** across the project countries. Interviews emphasised the importance of establishing partnerships with governments to ensure the long-term sustainability of impacts (as highlighted in a key informant interview with the country team in Viet Nam). Large-scale child protection efforts require government buy-in not only to align with national policies but also to facilitate the scaling and replication of achievements in the future. Field visit data from Côte d'Ivoire confirms that gaining the support of local elected officials was critical to the sustainability of programme outcomes (as noted in an interview with the country team in Côte d'Ivoire). Similarly, programme data from

India highlights consistent efforts by partners to engage state authorities through capacity-building programmes, awareness-raising initiatives, and regular consultations (Final Report India 2024). By involving the state as a key player and aligning with local and national priorities (see also: Institutional and Policy Sustainability), the programme significantly contributed to securing government engagement in long-term child protection efforts.

A **significant challenge to stakeholder ownership and commitment** can arise from **strained relationships between communities and government actors**. A **lack of trust** between these stakeholders can impede collaboration in child protection, especially in areas where government services are perceived as inadequate or inconsistent. The [field visit](#) in India highlights ongoing mistrust toward state officials, with community members expressing frustration over perceived indifference or negligence by the government and scepticism regarding its commitment to improving the lives of workers and children (as per focus group discussion with women SHGs in Budhpura). Similarly, [field visit](#) and [programme documents](#) from Côte d'Ivoire underscore the critical importance of building and maintaining trust between communities and government actors, and rebuilding it where it has eroded, to sustain efforts aimed at eradicating child labour (according to interview with country team Côte d'Ivoire and Annual Report 2021).

Financial Sustainability

A [secondary data analysis](#) of [programme documents](#) reveals that **the programme ensured the financial sustainability of its outcomes by reducing donor dependency and transferring activities to locally supported initiatives**. It achieved this in two major ways. Firstly, it **facilitated the maintenance of livelihood support and vocational training programmes through local resources**. For example, in Uganda, as part of its multi-pronged exit strategy, the programme leveraged multi-stakeholder partnerships to ensure that after its closure, community-based skilling centres are run by skilled youth with the support of local government, the private sector and other community members (Final Report Uganda 2024). In Viet Nam, local partners were transferred the responsibility to maintain livelihood support programmes and vocational training programmes through local resources (Final Report Viet Nam 2024). Secondly, partners made **sustained efforts to lobby for the incorporation of child protection objectives into local and national government agendas and plans** in project countries. For example, programme documents show that in Uganda, partners were successful in securing commitment from state actors to continue investing in the improvement of school infrastructure and implementation of meal plans even after the programme's closure (Final Report Uganda 2024; see also: Stakeholder Ownership and Commitment). Moreover, key informant [interview](#) data highlights that child labour issues have been successfully incorporated into other programmes in the country dedicated to issues like health and education (according to interview with Country Team Uganda), thus ensuring their sustainability independent of the programme horizon.

A **potential challenge to financial sustainability lies in the fluctuating budgets and resources of local and national governments** for child protection. While the WNCB programme has successfully integrated its objectives into policy frameworks and local development plans in its project countries, the future allocation of budgetary resources to child protection will inevitably depend on shifting local and national priorities. For example, the [Final Report Netherlands 2024](#) highlights that in the Netherlands, significant budget cuts have already been planned for development aid in general and child labour issues in particular (Final Report Netherlands 2024). In Viet Nam, unprecedented climate events like floods and droughts resulted in a diversion of governmental resources and a resultant gap in child protection (Annual Report 2020). Shifts in government resource allocations, driven by changing political priorities or external pressures such as pandemics and climate events, will remain a potential risk to the financial sustainability of outcomes in the future. These factors may lie beyond the programme's control once its operations conclude.

Assessment of the Sustainability Criterion

To conclude, **the achievements of the WNCB programme are assessed as sustainable. Institutional and policy sustainability** was supported through the programme's alignment with local and national priorities, fostering robust child protection frameworks and integrating its objectives into government systems. By strengthening formal institutions and embedding interventions within existing structures, the programme created a foundation for long-term continuity, although future sustainability will depend on consistent political will and adequate resource allocation.

Social and cultural sustainability was evident in the widespread shifts in community norms and attitudes, which rejected child labour and prioritized education. The programme's multi-stakeholder approach engaged families, schools, businesses, and local authorities, fostering a resilient ecosystem where community-wide commitment to child protection can endure, even under external pressures.

Stakeholder commitment and ownership were reinforced through active involvement of governments, communities, and private sector actors in programme activities. Capacity-building initiatives and partnerships instilled a sense of shared responsibility, ensuring child protection efforts are integrated into local structures and carried forward by those most impacted.

Financial sustainability was addressed through efforts to reduce donor dependency by transferring activities to locally supported initiatives and integrating child protection objectives into government plans. However, the future durability of financial mechanisms remains vulnerable to shifting governmental priorities, budget constraints, and external stressors such as climate events or pandemics.

In conclusion, **the WNCB programme's holistic approach has laid a solid foundation for the durability of its outcomes.** By embedding its objectives within institutional, social, and financial frameworks while fostering local ownership, the programme has significantly enhanced the likelihood of long-term impact.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The evaluation concluded that **the WNCB programme was highly relevant as it aligned well with the needs of key stakeholders and with Dutch national and sectoral priorities.** Additionally, it demonstrated strong relevance by **effectively responding and adapting to evolving circumstances and contextual challenges.** By addressing critical issues such as child labour reduction, improved school attendance, livelihood support and community awareness, **the programme directly responded to stakeholder needs.** Its approach considered the interests and perspectives of children, families, local communities, authorities, and private sector actors, ensuring a comprehensive and sustainable response to the root causes of child labour. Furthermore, **the programme's alignment with Dutch policy priorities,** particularly in education, poverty alleviation and supply chain transparency, **reinforced its strategic relevance at both national and international levels.** Its **integration with sectoral covenants** further strengthened its impact and by fostering collaboration with private sector partners. Finally, **the programme demonstrated considerable adaptability** in the face of external disruptions, including the COVID-19 pandemic, political changes and climate-related challenges. While **some broader systemic disruptions (e.g., the impacts of the Ukraine-Russia war on international market dynamics) remained beyond its direct influence,** the WNCB programme **effectively focused on building resilience and promoting sustainable solutions,** ensuring lasting benefits for affected communities.

The evaluation furthermore confirmed that **the WNCB programme demonstrated strong coherence by effectively aligning its objectives and coordinating efforts both within the Alliance and with external stakeholders**

addressing child labour. Internally, the programme **capitalized on the complementary strengths of the Stop Child Labour Coalition, UNICEF Netherlands, and Save the Children Netherlands**, adopting a multi-tiered strategy that combined community engagement, national advocacy, and legislative reform. **Linking and learning initiatives**, like meetings, exchange visits, and newsletters further reinforced collaboration and synergies between partners. The programme also maintained **alignment with key international frameworks**, such as **ILO Conventions, SDG 8.7, and OECD Guidelines**, ensuring consistency with global standards. Externally, WNCB actively collaborated with the **ILO, SDG Alliance 8.7, and RVO/FBK**, strengthening synergies, avoiding duplication, and enhancing impact, particularly in high-risk sectors such as textiles, mining, and natural stone.

With respect to the evaluation criteria of **effectiveness and impact**, the evaluation found that the **WNCB programme played a significant role in reducing child labour and enhancing access to quality education by employing a multi-faceted, stakeholder-driven approach**. Through the integration of the **four complementary pathways** (community engagement, child protection systems, supply-chain interventions, and policy advocacy) the programme addressed **key drivers of child labour**, including economic hardship, social norms and gaps in legal enforcement of relevant policies. Across partner countries, it successfully contributed to lowering child labour rates by mobilizing communities, strengthening policy frameworks and encouraging responsible business practices. Key interventions such as awareness-raising, alternative income opportunities and engagement with public and private sector actors reinforced these efforts and promoted sustainable solutions.

While the programme demonstrated notable progress in reducing child labour, its impact on school enrolment and attendance was more varied. Structural challenges such as transportation barriers, social attitudes, and education quality continued to affect outcomes, though interventions within child protection systems and supply-chain engagement helped improve access to education. Actions such as teacher training, infrastructure improvements, and partnerships with private sector actors contributed to progress in this area. The **programme's success** was underpinned by several critical factors. Its **multi-level engagement strategy** ensured interventions were implemented **at the community, national, and international levels**, fostering a **coordinated and systemic response**. Additionally, **the integration of the area-based and supply chain approaches was a key success factor** in reducing child labour and increasing school enrolment and attendance rates. Under this combined approach, the programme strengthened child protection mechanisms by making them more community-driven, ensuring that local stakeholders were actively involved in advocating for child rights and monitoring private sector practices. Similarly, embedding the area-based approach in its private sector strategy helped it address child labour in local businesses by raising awareness among business owners about the impact of child labour on their communities. This approach encouraged them to support children's education and adopt responsible business practices. However, with respect to the latter, it is important to note that **engagement with the private sector was relatively delayed in the early stages of the programme**, thus limiting to a certain extent the scope of supply chain interventions and initial programme effectiveness along Pathway 3.

The evaluation also found that **the WNCB programme operated efficiently, effectively managing its resources while maintaining adaptability in response to external challenges**. Available data on the programme's planning, activities, financial management, and results indicate that it was able to adjust its interventions as needed while ensuring optimal resource utilization. Savings were strategically reallocated to promising opportunities, demonstrating a flexible and responsive approach. **While fund disbursement was often slow and administratively demanding, the complexity of a multi-country programme requiring cross-country resource adjustments over time, necessitated careful financial oversight**. Based on the programme's ability to reallocate resources dynamically and integrate learning to enhance effectiveness, there were no strong indications of inefficiency. Considering the challenging operational contexts and the need for adaptability, the evaluation concludes that the WNCB programme managed its resources effectively and maintained efficiency throughout its implementation.

Furthermore, the evaluation finds that the **WNCB programme has established a strong foundation for sustainability, ensuring that its outcomes can endure beyond the programme's duration. Institutional and policy sustainability** was reinforced through alignment with local and national priorities, contributing to stronger child protection frameworks and integrating key objectives into government systems. By embedding interventions within existing structures and formal institutions, the programme supported long-term continuity, though future sustainability will depend on political commitment and sustained resource allocation. **Social and cultural sustainability** was demonstrated through shifts in community attitudes, wherein child labour was increasingly rejected and education prioritized at a community level. The programme's multi-stakeholder approach engaged families, schools, businesses, and local authorities, creating a resilient network that can sustain child protection efforts even amid external challenges. The programme also strengthened **stakeholder commitment and ownership** by actively involving governments, communities, and private sector actors in its initiatives. Through capacity-building efforts and strategic partnerships, it fostered a sense of shared responsibility, ensuring that child protection measures are institutionalized and carried forward at the local level. Finally, **financial sustainability** was addressed by reducing reliance on external donors, transferring activities to locally supported initiatives, and integrating child protection into government planning. However, **the durability of financial mechanisms remains contingent on government priorities, budget availability, and external factors such as climate-related events or economic shocks**. Overall, the **WNCB programme's holistic approach significantly enhanced the prospects for long-term impact** by embedding its objectives within institutional, social, and financial frameworks and fostering local ownership and commitment.

Notably, the **evaluation of the programme was somewhat complicated by several features of the MEAL database. Inconsistencies and gaps in MEAL systems** across project countries, particularly with respect to the **operationalization of KPIs** and **lack of standardised data collection**, made it somewhat challenging to track progress effectively and ensure comparability. **Data collection instruments and tools differed between the baseline and midline/endline studies**, and the methods for calculating indicators varied across countries and potentially over time. Additionally, some calculations were performed manually and lacked transparency, further increasing uncertainty. As a result, the reported figures were often not directly comparable over time or across different contexts.

Recommendations

Based on the evaluation findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed for similar programmes in the future:

1. Adopt a Multidimensional, Multilevel and Multi-Stakeholder Approach

Similar to the WNCB programme, future programmes addressing child labour should adopt a comprehensive approach that is multidimensional, multilevel, and multistakeholder, ensuring that interventions tackle the complexity of the issue effectively. The evaluation of the WNCB programme demonstrated that engaging key stakeholders (communities, public sector actors, and private sector actors) across local, national, and international levels was a critical success factor of the programme in reducing child labour and improving school enrolment and attendance rates. The programme's four-pathway approach allowed for targeted interventions addressing both systemic barriers and immediate drivers of child labour.

The findings highlighted that child labour is shaped by interconnected factors, including poverty, lack of access to education, weak enforcement of child protection laws, and entrenched social norms. Similar to the WNCB's strategy, a multidimensional strategy enables future programmes to address these root causes holistically by combining efforts in community engagement, legal and policy frameworks, responsible business practices, and direct support

for children and families. Additionally, a multistakeholder approach, involving governments, private sector actors, civil society, and local communities, strengthens collaboration by leveraging resources, expertise, and influence to implement sustainable solutions. Finally, a multilevel approach is essential for aligning grassroots interventions with national policies and international frameworks, ensuring that local initiatives are reinforced by systemic change. By integrating efforts across these levels, future programmes can learn from the WNCB programme's successful approaches and create coordinated and impactful interventions that effectively combat child labour and contribute to long-term child protection and education outcomes.

2. Integrate Public and Private Sector Strategies with an Area-based Approach

Future programmes should integrate public and private sector strategies with an area-based approach to effectively leverage community structures and enhance local engagement, as done by the WNCB programme. The evaluation identified this integration as a key success factor of the programme in reducing child labour and increasing school enrolment and attendance rates. Within Pathway 2 (child protection systems), the WNCB programme strengthened child protection mechanisms by making them more community-driven, ensuring that local stakeholders were actively involved in advocating for child rights and monitoring private sector practices. Similarly, under Pathway 3 (supply chain approach), embedding the area-based approach helped address child labour in local businesses by raising awareness among business owners about the impact of child labour on their communities. This approach encouraged them to support children's education and adopt responsible business practices. The findings highlight that combining child protection and supply chain efforts within community structures enhances local ownership and accountability. By aligning public and private sector interventions with grassroots initiatives as done by the WNCB programme, future programmes can strengthen community-driven solutions, foster long-term commitment, and maximize overall effectiveness. Therefore, adopting an area-based approach should be a core component of future programme strategies to ensure sustained impact in addressing child labour and promoting education.

3. Prioritise Early and Adequate Engagement with the Private Sector

Future programmes should engage the private sector from the outset, ensuring that adequate financial and human resources are allocated to build trust and foster effective collaboration. The evaluation found that the WNCB programme's initial limited focus on private sector engagement, combined with resource constraints, reduced its overall effectiveness during the early phases of implementation. Additionally, the programme's deliberate low-profile approach in certain politically sensitive partner countries restricted its visibility and engagement with private sector actors in those regions. However, private sector involvement is critical in addressing child labour within business operations and supply chains, particularly at the local level. While the programme adjusted its focus and resources over time, the challenges encountered highlight the need to prioritize private sector engagement from the start to avoid delays in building partnerships and ensuring meaningful collaboration. Given the significant role of businesses, especially those embedded within communities, in eliminating child labour, future programmes should integrate private sector engagement as a core component from the beginning, ensuring sufficient resources and strategic planning to maximize impact and effectiveness.

4. Institutionalise Child Protection Objectives into Local and National Policies

Future programmes should actively engage governments to embed child protection objectives into local and national development frameworks, ensuring their alignment with existing priorities and systems. By integrating these objectives into legislative frameworks, national action plans, and policy guidelines, programmes can enhance institutional sustainability and long-term impact. The WNCB programme demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach, for instance, by successfully embedding its objectives into India's National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct and Uganda's National Action Plan, thereby strengthening policy commitments to child protection.

in both countries. Such alignment with national priorities not only enhances relevance to local contexts but also secures stakeholder buy-in, facilitating scalability and replication. Engaging government agencies, policymakers, and regulatory bodies from the outset can help bridge gaps in enforcement, improve accountability, and ensure adequate resource allocation for child protection initiatives. Furthermore, integrating child protection into broader development policies encourages cross-sector collaboration, linking efforts in education, labour, social protection, and economic development.

Institutionalizing child protection objectives creates a stable policy foundation, fosters accountability among public institutions, and ensures that child labour prevention efforts remain a priority even after programme funding ends. **Future programmes should proactively advocate for legislative reforms, promote policy coherence, and strengthen institutional capacities to sustain child protection commitments at both national and local levels.**

5. Enhance Data Quality through MEAL Alignment, Standardised KPI Operationalisation and Consistent Data Management

To strengthen data quality and improve programme effectiveness, **future programmes should enhance the integration of MEAL systems with the ToC, standardise KPI operationalisation across partners and countries, and ensure consistency in data collection through long-term external consultants.**

A more structured and consistent approach to defining and linking KPIs to the ToC will allow for better tracking of programme contributions and facilitate learning without necessarily requiring additional resources. This includes addressing gaps in monitoring intermediate outcomes and outputs, particularly in areas such as education and child labour, where current KPIs may not fully capture programme-specific activities and outputs. By ensuring KPIs cover all levels of the ToC, programmes can more effectively identify weak links and make timely adjustments to interventions.

At the same time, **a standardised approach to KPI operationalisation will enhance comparability across countries and partners.** While flexibility in KPI operationalization allows for contextual adaptations, excessive variation in methodological approaches has led to data inconsistencies and inefficiencies. Future programmes should adopt more specific KPI protocols that define acceptable methodologies, data collection tools and calculation methods while maintaining some adaptability. Clear guidance on KPI derivation and standardised tools will improve data reliability, enhance efficiency and support implementing partners in generating comparable and accurate data.

To enhance data quality and consistency, **future programmes should prioritize the long-term engagement of external consultants for data collection and management.** Maintaining the same consultants throughout baseline, midline, and endline studies will help minimise methodological variations, improve data comparability and increase overall efficiency. Securing a long-term data management partner early in the programme cycle will contribute to a more structured and coherent evaluation process, ultimately strengthening the programme's capacity to assess its impact. This was successfully achieved by the programme's efforts to maintain consistency in collecting SenseMaker data, as well as between the mid- and endline surveys conducted by the same consultants in some of the countries.

Annex:

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2 Results and Impact Hypotheses

To achieve its **outcomes based on the outputs within each pathway**, we identified the following 36 hypotheses:

Pathway 1:

- H1 (OP1.1→ IO1.1→ O1a & O1b): If families and communities have increased knowledge on and attitudes towards child rights and child labour, then they demonstrate support for children's right to education, thereby empowering children to pursue an education.
- H2 (OP1.1→ IO1.5→ (O1a → O1b)): If families and communities have increased knowledge on and attitudes towards child rights and child labour, then families and children have improved access to child sensitive social protection schemes, thereby empowering children to pursue an education and improving access to education.
- H3 (OP1.1→ IO1.6→ O1b): If families and communities have increased knowledge on and attitudes towards child rights and child labour, then schools use improved child-friendly teaching methods, thereby improving access to education.
- H4 (OP1.1→ IO1.1 → O1b): If families and communities have increased knowledge on and attitudes towards youth employment opportunities, then they demonstrate support for decent youth employment, thereby improving access to decent youth employment, including apprenticeships and internships.
- H5 (OP1.2→ IO1.1→ O1a & O1b): If communities have the capacity to organize and advocate in support of child rights, then communities should demonstrate support for children's right to education, thereby empowering children to pursue an education and improving access to schooling.
- H6 (OP1.2→ IO1.1 → O1b): If communities have the capacity to organize and advocate in support of child rights, then communities should demonstrate support for decent youth employment, thereby improving access to decent youth employment, including apprenticeships and internships.
- H7 (OP1.2→ IO1.3→ O1a & O1b): If communities have the capacity to organize and advocate in support of child rights, then child protection mechanisms should ensure targeted outreach to out of school and working children withdraw children from child labour and link children and their families to services, thereby empowering children to pursue an education and improving access to education.
- H8 (OP1.2→ IO1.5→ O1a): If communities have the capacity to organize and advocate in support of child rights, then families and children have improved access to child sensitive social protection schemes, thereby empowering children to pursue an education.
- H9 (OP1.3→ IO1.6→ O1b): If teachers have been trained on child friendly methods and child rights, then school, then schools use improved child-friendly teaching methods, thereby improving access to education.
- H10 (OP1.3→ IO1.1→ O1a): If teachers have been trained on child friendly methods and child rights, then families and communities should demonstrate support for children's right to education, thereby empowering children to pursue an education.
- H11 (OP1.4→ IO1.5→ O1a): If families/parents and children are aware of available social protection schemes, then families and children have improved access to child sensitive social protection schemes, thereby empowering children to pursue an education.
- H12 (OP1.5→ IO1.3 → O1a & O1b): If child protection committees have the capacity to protect child rights, then child protection mechanisms should ensure targeted outreach to out of school and working children withdraw children from child labour and link children and their families to services, thereby empowering children to pursue an education and improving access to education.
- H13 (OP1.5→ IO1.5 → O1a): If child protection committees have the capacity to protect child rights, then families and children have improved access to child sensitive social protection schemes, thereby empowering children to pursue an education.
- H14 (OP1.6→ IO1.1 → O1b): If improved non-formal and vocational/entrepreneurial skills training opportunities are available to youth, then families and communities should demonstrate support for decent youth employment, thereby improving access to decent youth employment, including apprenticeships and internships.

- H15 (OP1.6→ IO1.4 → O1b): If improved non-formal and vocational/entrepreneurial skills training opportunities are available to youth, then adolescents and youth have improved literacy, life skills, and vocational/entrepreneurial skills for transition to decent work, thereby improving access decent youth employment, including apprenticeships and internships.
- H16 (OP1.7→ IO1.2 →O1a & O1b): If families/parents have technical, employability and or entrepreneurial skills, then families should develop alternative livelihoods, thereby empowering children to pursue an education and improving access to education.
- H17 (OP1.7→ IO1.2 → O1b): If families/parents have technical, employability and or entrepreneurial skills, then families should develop alternative livelihoods, thereby improving access to decent youth employment, including apprenticeships and internships.

Pathway 2:

- H18 (OP2.1→ IO2.1 → O2): If effective mechanisms to enable child and community leadership and participation in advocating for their rights are in place, then legal and policy frameworks to prevent and address child labour should be improved, such that governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on child labour, education, youth economic empowerment and social security.
- H19 (OP2.1→ IO2.2 → O2): If effective mechanisms to enable child and community leadership and participation in advocating for their rights are in place, then administrative structures and necessary resources should be in place to implement relevant services, systems and policies, such that governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on child labour, education, youth economic empowerment and social security.
- H20 (OP2.2→ IO2.1 → O2): If policy makers, parliamentarians, politicians, ministers, and duty bearers have improved knowledge of child sensitive social security services, child friendly teaching methods and youth economic empowerment, then legal and policy frameworks to prevent and address child labour should be improved, such that governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on child labour, education, youth economic empowerment and social security.
- H21 (OP2.2→ IO2.2 → O2): If effective mechanisms to enable child and community leadership and participation in advocating for their rights are in place, then policy makers, parliamentarians, politicians, ministers, and duty bearers have improved knowledge of child sensitive social security services, child friendly teaching methods and youth economic empowerment, such that governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on child labour, education, youth economic empowerment and social security.
- H22 (OP2.3 → IO2.1 → O2): If advocacy networks for supportive laws, policies, administrative structures and budgets are strengthened, then legal and policy frameworks to prevent and address child labour should be improved, such that governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on child labour, education, youth economic empowerment and social security.
- H23 (OP2.3 → IO2.2 → O2): If advocacy networks for supportive laws, policies, administrative structures and budgets are strengthened, then administrative structures and necessary resources should be in place to implement relevant services, systems and policies, such that governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on child labour, education, youth economic empowerment and social security.
- H24 (OP2.4→ IO2.1 → O2): If the inter sectoral and public-private collaboration to prevent and address child labour is improved, then legal and policy frameworks to prevent and address child labour should be improved, such that governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on child labour, education, youth economic empowerment and social security.
- H25 (OP2.4→ IO2.2 → O2): If the inter sectoral and public-private collaboration to prevent and address child labour is improved, then administrative structures and necessary resources should be in place to implement relevant services, systems and policies, such that governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on child labour, education, youth economic empowerment and social security.

Pathway 3:

- H26 (OP3.1 → IO3.1 → O3): If agreements between partners, RBS initiative and companies regarding cooperation aimed at improving policies and practices of private sector actors with regard to combatting child labour are strengthened, then the private sector should realize decent work conditions incl. remediation measures for former child labourers, fair wages for adults and youth and fair prices for goods, thereby taking full responsibility for preventing and addressing child labour.
- H27 (OP3.1 → IO3.2 → O3): If agreements between partners, RBS initiative and companies regarding cooperation aimed at improving policies and practices of private sector actors regarding combatting child labour are strengthened, then the private sector should provide skills training and apprenticeship opportunities for adolescents and youth, thereby taking full responsibility for preventing and addressing child labour.
- H28 (OP3.1 → IO3.3 & IO3.4 → O3): If agreements between partners, RBS initiative and companies regarding cooperation aimed at improving policies and practices of private sector actors regarding combatting child labour are strengthened, then the private sector should implement measures to address child labour in their supply chain and have integrated child protection policies and mechanisms to prevent, mitigate, and remediate cases of child labour in their business activities and throughout their supply chain, thereby taking full responsibility for preventing and addressing child labour.
- H29 (OP3.2 → IO3.1 → O3): If influence and support to private sector actors on how to integrate child protection policies and mechanisms to prevent, mitigate and remediate cases of child labour are improved, then the private sector should realize decent work conditions incl. remediation measures for former child labourers, thereby taking full responsibility for preventing and addressing child labour.
- H30 (OP3.2 → IO3.3 & IO3.4 → O3): If influence and support to private sector actors on how to integrate child protection policies and mechanisms to prevent, mitigate and remediate cases of child labour are improved, then the private sector should implement measures to address child labour in their supply chain and private sector actors should have integrated child protection policies and mechanisms to prevent, mitigate, and remediate cases of child labour in their business activities and throughout their supply chain, thereby taking full responsibility for preventing and addressing child labour.
- H31 (OP3.3 → IO3.1 → O3): If knowledge of workers, company management, and worker representatives/unions on how to address child labour is improved, then the private sector should realize decent work conditions incl. remediation measures for former child labourers, fair wages for adults and youth and fair prices for goods, thereby taking full responsibility for preventing and addressing child labour.
- H32 (OP3.3 → IO3.3 & IO3.4 → O3): If knowledge of workers, company management, and worker representatives/unions on how to address child labour is improved, then then the private sector should implement measures to address child labour in their supply chain and private sector actors should have integrated child protection policies and mechanisms to prevent, mitigate, and remediate cases of child labour in their business activities and throughout their supply chain, thereby taking full responsibility for preventing and addressing child labour.

Pathway 4:

- H33 (OP4.1 → IO4.1 → O4): If knowledge of prevention and elimination of child labour among international, EU, and Dutch policy makers, parliamentarians, politicians, ministers and duty bearers is improved, then due diligence policies and regulations should be adopted, such that the EU/Dutch government and international/multilateral organisations are acting in support of the elimination of child labour and fulfilling its obligation to protect by setting and reinforcing Due Diligence policies and laws.
- H34 (OP4.1 → IO4.2 → O4): If knowledge of prevention and elimination of child labour among international, EU, and Dutch policy makers, parliamentarians, politicians, ministers and duty bearers is improved, then the eradication of child labour should feature high on the international agenda, such that the EU/Dutch government and international/multilateral organisations are acting in support of the elimination of child labour and fulfilling its obligation to protect by setting and reinforcing Due Diligence policies and laws.

- H35 (OP4.2→ IO4.1 → O4): If advocacy networks for supporting policies, public-private cooperation structures and investment in the elimination of child labour and improvement of education and decent work are strengthened, then due diligence policies and regulations should be adopted, such that the EU/Dutch government and international/multilateral organisations are acting in support of the elimination of child labour and fulfilling its obligation to protect by setting and reinforcing Due Diligence policies and laws.
- H36 (OP4.2→ IO4.2 → O4): If advocacy networks for supporting policies, public-private cooperation structures and investment in the elimination of child labour and improvement of education and decent work are strengthened, then the eradication of child labour should feature high on the international agenda, such that the EU/Dutch government and international/multilateral organisations are acting in support of the elimination of child labour and fulfilling its obligation to protect by setting and reinforcing Due Diligence policies and laws.

In addition, we identified the following 15 hypotheses **linking different pathways**:

- H37 (OP1.2→ IO2.1): If communities have the capacity to organize and advocate in support of child rights, then legal and policy frameworks to prevent and address child labour should be improved.
- H38 (OP1.2→ IO2.2): If communities have the capacity to organize and advocate in support of child rights, then administrative structures and necessary resources should be in place to implement relevant services, systems and policies.
- H39 (O2 → O1a & O1b): If governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on child labour and education, then children are empowered to pursue an education and access to education is improved.
- H40 (O2 → O1b): If governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on youth economic empowerment, then access to decent youth employment is improved.
- H41 (O2 → IO1.3): If governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on child labour, education, youth economic empowerment and social security, then child protection mechanisms should ensure targeted outreach to out of school and working children withdraw children from child labour and link children and their families to services.
- H42 (O2 → IO1.5): If governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on child labour, education, and social security, then families and children have improved access to child sensitive social protection schemes.
- H43 (O2 → IO3.1): If governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on child labour, education, youth economic empowerment and social security, then the private sector should realize decent work conditions incl. remediation measures for former child labourers, fair wages for adults and youth and fair prices for goods.
- H44 (O2 → IO3.2): If governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on youth economic empowerment, then the private sector should provide skills training and apprenticeship opportunities for adolescents and youth.
- H45 (O2 → IO3.3): If governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on child labour, education, youth economic empowerment and social security, then the private sector should implement measures to address child labour in their supply chain
- H46 (IO3.1 → O3 → O1b): If the private sector realizes decent work conditions incl. fair wages for adults and youth and fair prices for goods, thereby taking full responsibility for preventing and addressing child labour, then access to decent youth employment is improved.
- H47 (IO3.2 → O3 → O1b): If the private sector provides skills training and apprenticeship opportunities for adolescents and youth, thereby taking full responsibility for preventing and addressing child labour, then access to decent youth employment is improved.
- H48 (O4 → IO2.1): If the EU/Dutch government and international/multilateral organisations are acting in support of the elimination of child labour and fulfilling its obligation to protect by setting and reinforcing Due Diligence policies and laws, then national legal and policy frameworks to prevent and address child labour should be improved.

- H49 (IO4.2 → IO2.1): If the eradication of child labour features high on the international agenda, then legal and policy frameworks to prevent and address child labour should be improved.
- H50 (O4 → IO2.2): If the EU/Dutch government and international/multilateral organisations are acting in support of the elimination of child labour and fulfilling its obligation to protect by setting and reinforcing Due Diligence policies and laws, then national administrative structures and necessary resources should be in place to implement relevant services, systems and policies.
- H51 (IO4.1 → O4 → IO3.1): If due diligence policies and regulations are adopted, such that the EU/Dutch government and international/multilateral organisations are acting in support of the elimination of child labour and fulfilling its obligation to protect by setting and reinforcing Due Diligence policies and laws, then the private sector should realize decent work conditions incl. remediation measures for former child labourers, fair wages for adults and youth and fair prices for goods.
- H52 (IO4.1 → O4 → IO3.3 & IO3.4): If due diligence policies and regulations are adopted, such that the EU/Dutch government and international/multilateral organisations are acting in support of the elimination of child labour and fulfilling its obligation to protect by setting and reinforcing Due Diligence policies and laws, then the private sector should implement measures to address child labour in their supply chain and private sector actors should have integrated child protection policies and mechanisms to prevent, mitigate, and remediate cases of child labour in their business activities and throughout their supply chain.

To achieve its **impact** based on the outcomes, we identified the following 10 impact hypotheses:

- IH1 (O1a → I2): If children are empowered to pursue an education, then school enrolment and attendance rates are increased and drop-out rates decreased (including formal, bridge and transitional schooling).
- IH2 (O1b → I2): If access to education is improved, then school enrolment and attendance rates are increased and drop-out rates decreased (including formal, bridge and transitional schooling).
- IH3 (O1b → I3): If access to decent youth employment is improved, then this contributes to an increase in decent youth employment.
- IH4 (IO1.5 → I1): If families and children have improved access to child sensitive social protection schemes, then this contributes to the elimination of child labour.
- IH5 (IO1.3 → I1): If child protection mechanisms ensure targeted outreach to out of school and working children withdraw children from child labour and link children and their families to services, then this contributes to the elimination of child labour.
- IH6 (IO1.2 → I1): If families develop alternative livelihoods, then this contributes to the elimination of child labour.
- IH7 (O2 → I1): If governments are enforcing relevant child-rights based laws and implement policies on child labour, education, youth economic empowerment and social security, then this contributes to the elimination of child labour.
- IH8 (IO3.1 → O3 → I1): If the private sector realizes decent work conditions incl. remediation measures for former child labourers, fair wages for adults and youth and fair prices for goods, thereby taking full responsibility for preventing and addressing child labour, then this contributes to the elimination of child labour.
- IH9 (IO3.3 & IO3.4 → O3 → I1): If the private sector implements measures to address child labour in their supply chain and private sector actors have integrated child protection policies and mechanisms to prevent, mitigate, and remediate cases of child labour in their business activities and throughout their supply chain, thereby taking full responsibility for preventing and addressing child labour, then this contributes to the elimination of child labour.

IH10 (I2 → I1): If school enrolment and attendance rates are increased and drop-out rates decreased (including formal, bridge and transitional schooling), then this contributes to the elimination of child labour.

3 Analysis Grid

Questions					Data sources					
Dimension	Questions	Relates to question from ToR	Indicators/Descriptors	Level of analysis	(1) Document analysis <i>(inc. WNCB programme reports, guidelines and studies)</i>	(2) Sense-Maker studies	(3) KPIs and survey data	(4) Outcome Harvesting data and country specific reports	(5) IDIs and KIs	(5) Case studies
Relevance	To what extent are the programmes objectives aligned with the Dutch policies and priorities?		Qualitative comparison between the programme goals and the strategic goals of MoFA (based on review of strategic documents)	Programme	x				x	
	To what extent is the programme's design and ToC valid in addressing child labour in informal settings?	2.1 To what extent is the programme's ToC valid in addressing child labour in informal settings?	Qualitative assessment of the ToC: adequacy of activities and outputs, plausibility of results hypotheses, clear definition and plausibility of system boundary	Programme	x				x	
	To what extent does the programme successfully address the identified root causes of child labour in each context?	1.3 What insights can be derived from WNCB MEAL data regarding the extent to which we have successfully addressed the identified root causes of child labour in each context? 2.2 Which interventions, in the Nawa region and Rajasthan have been used to address child labour in combating child labour within the complex	Qualitative description of identified root causes and assessment how the programme's activities address these. The identified root causes include: - inadequate provision of education (access incl. costs and bureaucratic barriers, quality) - social norms, attitudes and customs (perceived value of work for child's development	Programme and case study/intervention level	x	x		x		x

		economic systems surrounding the lower tiers of supply chains? In what way are these interventions related to the lower (informal) tiers relevant to the broader supply chain approach?	(incl. learning a craft), discrimination and exclusion (incl. gender) - poverty and crisis (incl. reliance on contributing to family as labourers) - lack of decent work for adults and cheapness of child labour - lack of commitment by companies (incl. lack of knowledge and capacities; pressure to produce cheaply) - lack of law enforcement by governments (incl. lack of effective legislation)							
	To what extent did the programme adapt to the challenge of Covid-19 and other changes in the environment over time (risks and potentials)?	1.2 What can be learned from the reports and other MEAL data about external programme risks in general, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic specifically on communities, and the programme?	Qualitative assessment of how the project reacted to the - Covid-19 pandemic and related measures such as school closures and other restrictions, supply chain disruptions - government change in Ivory Coast and the Netherlands - security crisis in Mali and Uganda - economic downturn and nutrition crisis in Uganda - suspension of access to foreign funds in India, and stringent government ODA procedures in Vietnam	Programme	x	x		x	x	x

Coherence	To what extent does the programme have been coordinated with other actors' activities (e.g. ILO)?	na	<p>Qualitative description of coordination (mechanisms) with other actors (e.g. ILO) in the respective countries or internationally and assessment to the extent to which synergies were exploited and duplication avoided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parallel efforts addressing the same target groups - working complementary in different areas or with different target groups - connecting with other actors to continue or build on their results and vice versa 	Programme	x			x	x	x
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Effectiveness	To what extent were the programme's intended objectives achieved as planned?	1.3 What insights can be derived from WNCB MEAL data regarding the extent to which we have successfully addressed the identified root causes of child labour in each context?	<p>Assessment of the programme's outcomes in terms of its KPIs:</p> <p><i>Empowering children to pursue education (O1a):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of children that face a high risk of child labour within the geographical unit of the project, by sex and age (O1a) - Number of families that developed new self-consumption and/or income generating activities that do not include child labour (O1a) <p><i>Access to education (O1b):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of former working children attending school (bridge/transition/primary/secondary) in target areas - Drop-out rate in the final year of primary school (O1b) <p><i>Governmental enforcement of child-rights based laws and implementation of related policies (O2):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Descriptions of changes in child labour related policies, laws and regulations (O2) <p><i>Private sector actors undertake efforts to prevent and address child labour (O3)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of (inter)national 	Programme		x	x	x	x	x
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			<p>market players that have improved their practices by implementing activities and strategies towards the elimination of child labour and improving worker's rights and/or labour conditions (O3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of land- and factory workers with improved labour conditions in accordance with international agreements (by gender) (O3) <p><i>EU/Dutch government sets and enforces due diligent policies and laws (O4):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of adequate due diligence policies and regulations adopted by EU governments following lobby and advocacy interventions of the Alliance, possibly in cooperation with advocacy networks (O4) 							
	How do the harvested outcomes align with planned outcomes of	1.1 How do the harvested outcomes align with planned outcomes of the WNCB Theory of Change?	Qualitative comparison between programme outcomes in the ToC and the reported harvested outcomes.	Programme	x			x	x	

	the WNCB Theory of Change?									
	To what extent have the programme's outputs been delivered as planned?		<p>Number of (not) achieved outputs across countries and time disaggregated by intended outcome (see below) and qualitative assessment of reasons for deviations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empowering children to pursue education within a supportive community (O1a) - Access to education and youth employment (O1b) - Governmental enforcement of child-rights based laws and implementation of related policies (O2) - Private sector actors undertake efforts to prevent and address child labour (O3) - EU/Dutch government sets and enforces due diligent policies and laws (O4) 	Programme and case study/intervention level	x	x	x	x	x	x
	To what extent has the programme contributed to the achievement of objectives?	2.3 Which of these interventions (Nawa region and Rajasthan) have led to observable outcomes (harvested outcomes) that can be validated by external stakeholders and/or communities?	Contribution analysis of selected hypotheses between the output and outcome levels. This will be specified after the selection of hypotheses.	Programme and case study/intervention level				x		

	To what extent are unintended (both positive and negative) results observed?	1.7 Which unexpected outcomes have been harvested and which of these unexpected outcomes deserve more attention and why?	<p>Qualitative assessment of whether risks were known in the design phase</p> <p>Qualitative assessment of how the assessment of risks in connection with (unintended) negative or (not formally agreed) positive results at the outcome level in the monitoring system has been carried out</p> <p>Qualitative description of measures taken to avoid or counteract risks/negative effects</p> <p>Qualitative description of the extent to which potential positive opportunities and synergies were exploited</p>	Programme	x	x		x	x	x
Impact	To what extent has the prevalence of child labour decreased, and school enrolment and attendance rates increased?	1.4 Has the prevalence of child labour decreased, and school enrolment and attendance rates improved?	<p>Analysis of achievement of impacts in terms of child labour prevalence, and school enrolment and attendance rates, and decent youth employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number and percentage of children aged 5-17 (included) engaged in child labour within geographical unit of the project (factory/community/region), by sex and age - Number and percentage of children aged 5-17 (included) in target areas enrolled and attending school (primary/secondary) in comparison to 	Programme		x	x	x	x	x

			baseline data, by sex and age - Number and percentage of young adults aged 18 - 24 (included) who are in decent employment, including apprenticeships or internships in comparison to baseline data								
	To what extent has the programme contributed to a decrease in the prevalence of child labour, and an increase in school enrolment and attendance rates?		Contribution analysis of selected hypotheses between the outcome and impact level (with focus on Outcomes 1a, 1b, and 3 and impacts 1 and 2). This will be specified after the selection of hypotheses.	Programme	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	To what extent has the (inter)national legislation impacted child labour in sourcing and production areas?	1.5 Has (inter)national legislation and regulation positively impacted child labour in sourcing and production areas? 2.4 How has legislation and regulation affected the prevalence of child labour in the informal economy in the Nawa region and Rajasthan?	Contribution analysis of hypotheses linking Outcome 2 and 4 to Impact 1. This will be specified after the selection of hypotheses.	Programme and case study/intervention level	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

	To what extent are unintended (both positive and negative) higher-level development changes observed?		<p>Qualitative assessment of whether risks were known in the design phase</p> <p>Qualitative assessment of how the assessment of risks in connection with (unintended) negative or (not formally agreed) positive results at the impact level in the monitoring system has been carried out</p> <p>Qualitative description of measures taken to avoid or counteract risks/negative effects</p> <p>Qualitative description of the extent to which potential positive opportunities and synergies were exploited</p>	Programme	x				x	x	x
Efficiency	To what extent have the intervention's inputs (financial, human and material resources) been used economically in relation to the outputs delivered?		<p>Description of costs-per-outputs and deviations between planned and actual costs.</p> <p>Follow-the-money approach with a qualitative reflection of the resources used by project with focus on economical use of resources / cost risks</p> <p>Qualitative assessment of whether overarching costs of the programme are in an appropriate proportion to the costs of outputs.</p>	Programme	x					x	x

	To what extent could the positive outcomes have been increased using the existing resources?		Description of costs-per-outcome with qualitative reflection of the input-outcome relation and alternatives as well as cost risks Qualitative description of the realization of possibilities for scaling-up	Programme	x					x	x
Sustainability	To what extent can the positive (and any negative) results of the intervention be deemed durable?	2.7 What aspects contribute to the long-term sustainability of efforts that are aimed at addressing child labour in informal economic activities?	Qualitative assessment of the extent to which it can be foreseen that the results (outcomes and impacts) will continue and capacities will see continued use by beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Qualitative description to conditions and their influence on the sustainability of effects.	Programme and case study/intervention level	x	x		x		x	x
Cross-cutting learning questions	What programme wide insights have been gained from WNCB's efforts to address child labour within complex economic systems associated with the lower tiers of (inter)national supply chains?	1.6 What programme wide insights have been gained from WNCB's efforts to address child labour within complex economic systems associated with the lower tiers of (inter)national supply chains?	Reflection on the overall evaluation results								
	What insights can be gained from WNCB's efforts to address child labour within complex economic systems associated with the lower tiers of (inter)national supply chains in these two specific contextual settings?	2.6 What insights can be gained from WNCB's efforts to address child labour within complex economic systems associated with the lower tiers of (inter)national supply chains in these two specific contextual settings?	Reflection on the case studies								

How are communities, the private sector, and international actors engaged in interventions?	2.5 How are communities, the private sector, and international actors engaged in interventions?	Qualitative description of the programme's engagement with different stakeholders as part of the case studies
What are the challenges and opportunities in scaling up successful interventions related to the contextual studies to other areas or sectors?	2.8 What are the challenges and opportunities in scaling up successful interventions related to the contextual studies to other areas or sectors?	Reflection on the results with respect to effectiveness and efficiency
How can the identified good practices and lessons be scaled or adapted to enhance the fight against child labour in similar contexts of the selected areas and sectors of the WNCB programme by in-country partners?	3.1 How can the identified good practices and lessons be scaled or adapted to enhance the fight against child labour in similar contexts of the selected areas and sectors of the WNCB programme by in-country partners?	Reflection on the results with respect to effectiveness, impact and sustainability
What aspects of the WNCB programme approach can serve as a model for other initiatives aiming to tackle child labour in complex economic systems?	3.2 What aspects of the WNCB programme approach can serve as a model for other initiatives aiming to tackle child labour in complex economic systems?	Reflection on the results with respect to effectiveness, impact and sustainability
Which elements of the WNCB Alliance strategies could be enhanced to involve communities, the private sector, and international stakeholders more effectively in future initiatives targeting child labour?	3.3 Which elements of the WNCB Alliance strategies could be enhanced to involve communities, the private sector, and international stakeholders more effectively in future initiatives targeting child labour?	Reflection on the results with respect to effectiveness, impact and sustainability

	<p>What recommendations follow from the lessons learned on the impact of national legislation and regulation on child labour in sourcing and production areas?</p>	<p>3.4 What recommendations follow from the lessons learned on the impact of national legislation and regulation on child labour in sourcing and production areas?</p>	<p>Reflection on the results with respect to impact and sustainability of Pathway 2</p>
	<p>Does legislation and regulation support greater involvement of international stakeholders in the supply chain aimed at eliminating child labour?</p>	<p>3.5 Does legislation and regulation support greater involvement of international stakeholders in the supply chain aimed at eliminating child labour?</p>	<p>Reflection on the results with respect to effectiveness, impact and sustainability of Pathway 2</p>
	<p>What recommendations can be made to improve collaboration and coordination between WNCB Alliance partners in the Netherlands, including the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and community stakeholders, the private sector, and international organisations, to foster a unified and grassroots-driven international strategy for eliminating child labour? Which role should be taken by whom?</p>	<p>3.6 What recommendations can be made to improve collaboration and coordination between WNCB Alliance partners in the Netherlands, including the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and community stakeholders, the private sector, and international organisations, to foster a unified and grassroots-driven international strategy for eliminating child labour? Which role should be taken by whom?</p>	<p>Reflection on the results with respect to the programme's coherence and coordination related effectiveness</p>

4 Stakeholders interviewed within field visits

Country	Type of stakeholder	Type of interview
Côte d'Ivoire (field visit conducted by national expert Hyacinthe Digbeugby Bley)	WNCB partner organisations	Interviews
	Public sector actors	Interviews
	Education sector	(Group) interviews
	Private sector actors	Interviews
	Workers and housekeepers	Focus group discussions
	Foreign government representatives	Interviews
India (field visit conducted by national expert Ragini Pant)	WNCB partner organisations	Focus group discussion and interview
	Public sector actors	Focus group discussion and interview
	Education sector	Focus group discussion and interview
	Private sector actors	Interviews
	Workers	Focus group discussions and interviews
	Women in Self-Help Groups	Focus group discussion
	Silicosis patients	Focus group discussion
	Families	Focus group discussion

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