

RISE Learning Project on the Monitoring & Evaluation of Reintegration of Children and Adolescents – Consolidated End-Term Report for Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia

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University of
Bedfordshire

THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
RESEARCHING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION,
VIOLENCE AND TRAFFICKING



List of Learning Partners¹

Sub-Saharan Africa

- African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect – Nigerian Chapter (ANPPCAN Nigeria)
- Awareness Against Human Trafficking (HAART) Kenya
- Challenging Heights, Ghana
- LifeLine/Childline Zambia
- Rescue Dada Centre, Kenya
- The CRADLE - The Children's Foundation, Kenya*
- Trace Kenya
- Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation (TPO) Uganda
- Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL)
- Undugu Society of Kenya

South Asia

- Centre for Excellence in Alternative Care, India*
- Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN) *
- FXB India Suraksha (FXBIS)
- Kolkata Sanved, India
- Sanlaap, India
- Terre des hommes Foundation Lausanne (Tdh) Nepal

Project background

Since 2015, the RISE Learning Network² has been promoting and facilitating learning on recovery and reintegration (R&R) approaches that improve outcomes for children and adolescents affected by sexual exploitation (CSE) in three focus regions – Sub-Saharan Africa, South and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Through corresponding regional hubs, RISE network members participate in various learning activities based on identified priority issues in these regions. A major aspect of RISE's work is the implementation of three Learning Projects aimed at capturing and generating learning at the grassroots level in a practical manner. Consequently, the first Learning Project is focused on strengthening the awareness and capacities of organisations on the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of their reintegration interventions³ in order to more effectively track children's and adolescents' wellbeing and inform relevant programmes and policies.

¹ The asterisked Learning Partners could not submit end-term reports because various staff and organisational changes prevented their continued participation in this project.

² RISE is implemented by Family for Every Child in partnership with Retrak and the International Centre at the University of Bedfordshire, with grants from the Oak Foundation and Terre des Hommes Netherlands.

³ Even though the specific purpose of RISE is to promote learning on R&R of children and young people affected by CSE, the scope of this Learning Project included reintegration from all situations that cause children to become separated from their families and communities, in order to ensure that promising practices and learning from different, but often related, areas of work and contexts could be included and compared.

Organisations/Learning Partners that participated in this project provide a broad range of recovery and reintegration services such as family tracing and reunification, livelihood and micro-grants support, psychosocial support assistance, medical care, life skills training, legal aid, shelter care, formal/non-formal education placement, and community outreach. Their target beneficiaries (7-25 years) are equally diverse, including children and young persons separated from their families and communities as a result of sexual exploitation and trafficking, forced labour, street-associated living conditions, and various other forms of abuse, violence and neglect.

Young beneficiaries of these organisations' services are located in diverse settings including in vulnerable family and street-living contexts, transitional housing/rehabilitation programmes (e.g. shelters, residential centres, and drop-in centers), foster care and other family-based placements, child rights clubs in schools, and community-based structures.

Method of generating learning

At the core of this Learning Project was a Community of Learning (CoL) comprising the Learning Partners (participating NGOs) selected in each region through an Expression of Interest process. Learning Partners committed to sharing learning around M&E through mid- and end-term reports as well as engagement in periodic webinars, virtual meetings and peer mentoring sessions (either as mentor or mentee). Forming an integral part of the project's design, Learning Partners also took a lead in identifying which M&E tools and methods to pilot⁴ or existing practices to improve, based on organisational need, resources, and capacity. To this end, they played active roles in online peer mentoring groups and follow-up meetings in which they shared their knowledge, progress, and experiences using specific M&E approaches, tools and methods.

The objectives of the CoL were to:

- ❖ Generate learning on what effective or innovative tools, approaches and methods to monitor and evaluate reintegration programmes or activities can look like and how they can be implemented;
- ❖ Identify effective means of capturing, documenting, and disseminating good practice and identify how organisations can use this information to inform programme/activity development around reintegration;
- ❖ Identify opportunities for cross-learning and/or coaching between organisations on specific identified issues related to M&E of reintegration to strengthen organisations capacities around M&E of reintegration;
- ❖ Capture and include the voice and participation of children to support the identification of what successful reintegration can look like;
- ❖ Help spearhead the dissemination of project outputs (webinars, reports, toolkit, etc.) to a wide group of interested parties through the CoL and its stakeholder networks, RISE website and membership, and other appropriate channels.

⁴ Majority of learning partners chose to pilot tools and methods from the RISE Monitoring and Evaluation of Reintegration Toolkit, which provides ideas, examples, and suggestions of how organisations could collect monitoring and evaluation data with, from and about the children and young people they work with.

This report is a compilation of end-term reviews⁵ submitted between December 2017 and March 2018 by the Learning Partners in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and South Asia (SA)⁶ and aims to capture key results⁷, learning and innovative practices within the CoL of this RISE learning project.

End-term findings for SSA & SA

Key Results from Piloting Efforts within the SSA CoL

I. Use of Case Studies

Background: A Learning Partner in Uganda used case studies as an evaluation method to conduct a concurrent and comparative assessment of two reintegration projects – one involved the allocation of cash support to low-income households caring for reintegrated children and the other was a family strengthening project that focused on building positive family relationships by strengthening parenting skills in order to improve outcomes for children reunified with their families. The organisation implemented this tool with some assistance from a Kenya-based mentoring partner within the CoL, with substantial experience using case studies to evaluate its programmes.

Results from Learning Partner 1 in Uganda: The use of this qualitative tool provided in-depth data on the outcomes of both reintegration projects on the selected samples, particularly in terms of positive behavioural changes in both children and their families. Overall, the findings of the case studies from the two projects revealed that access to services that address parenting skills and related types of support programmes that nurture family environments, where needed, was a more significant contributing factor for sustaining reintegration of children than solely cash support.

There are plans to integrate this evaluation method into the Learning Partner's broader work. In each of its future project interventions, the organisation therefore aims to identify cases that will be consistently studied and documented throughout the life of the project. This will help the organisation better assess the outcomes of its interventions, especially how they are contributing to the wellbeing of beneficiaries. Also, this evaluation approach provides important descriptive data for the organisation's implementation team to draw lessons and promising practices, which can be adapted where feasible, for the benefit of other beneficiaries engaged in similar projects.

Challenges: There are limitations in scope since case studies allow for the in-depth observation of a small sample of beneficiaries. As such, the outcomes experienced by the selected beneficiaries (both positive and negative) should not be broadly generalised without supporting data from complementary M&E tools. This

⁵ These reviews are responses by Learning Partners to general and case-study questionnaires prepared by the management of the RISE M&E Learning Project.

⁶ Although Learning Partners for this RISE project are drawn from Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America, Latin American learning partners are operating under a different timeline and therefore not included in this report. The Learning Partners from the region selected the child participatory model of using 'self-expression/suggestion boxes' to enable children in institutional care inform caregivers about the quality of recovery and reintegration services they have received in a child-friendly manner. This particular M&E tool is being piloted with the support of a RISE member in India.

⁷ These findings are not research-based but rather offer unique insight on innovative practices and beneficial outcomes as a result of the implementation of various M&E tools and practices under the auspices of the CoL.

method is also time-intensive.

Key Observation(s): *“The tool has influenced how we monitor reintegration interventions. This is because we initially used to mainly focus on the quantitative data like tracking the number of children identified for reintegration, those successfully reintegrated, and those being retained in their families after reintegration. However, the tool introduced us to the qualitative monitoring perspective, which is very vital for any monitoring process for reintegration...The tool [also] showed the significance of closely following up on children reintegrated, more especially understanding their feelings and attitudes towards their families.”*

– Learning Partner 1, Uganda

II. Use of Diaries

Background: Two Learning Partners (based in Kenya and Zambia respectively) piloted the use of diaries to track the emotional wellbeing of children and assess the results of their psychosocial support services and other interventions. The children were provided with personal diaries and asked to regularly record their social and emotional progress, including any incidents of trauma, discrimination, and stigma. Their recorded entries were then periodically shared in confidential settings, during follow-up sessions with a therapist, social worker or counselor.

Results from Learning Partner 1 in Kenya: In the case of this Learning Partner, the use of diaries served as a participatory tool that facilitated the direct engagement of children (girls aged 10-17 years) receiving psychosocial support services, who were also living in a shelter run by the organisation. As a result of implementing this tool, the organisation was able to effectively track the recovery progress of the participating girls and better ascertain their level of preparedness prior to their reintegration into family and community settings. Additionally, the tool was utilised to gain valuable feedback on the girls’ perceptions and experiences concerning the quality of psychosocial support services provided.

The organisation plans to continue the use of this tool in its monitoring process by providing diaries as part of the welcome package when girls initially arrive at the shelter.

Challenges: Post-reunification follow-up of the girls’ use of diaries has been a significant challenge for this Learning Partner since their communities of origin are widely dispersed geographically; however, in addition to placing weekly phone calls, the organisation strives to make home visits every three months. Maintaining confidentiality of the diaries’ contents after the girls’ reintegration is another hurdle, particularly in situations where family members do not fully comprehend the purpose of the use of these diaries.

These post-reunification challenges have led to the realisation of parents or caregivers’ crucial role in supporting the continuance of diary use by the children. On a larger scale, this has also fed into an ongoing change in approach in the organisation’s programming to more integrally engage and support parents/caregivers and families of beneficiaries as well as relevant community stakeholders involved in children’s reintegration journeys, from an early stage. This way, the members of these crucial support systems are better equipped to understand the needs of children (pre- and post-reunification) and are able to facilitate improved outcomes:

“We are investing more in having meetings with family members during rehabilitation and explaining the case management process so that they can clearly understand their role and the importance of us working together. We are also hoping that we can learn from them what they think will work...We have learned that

using the institutions established in a community to protect children after reintegration is crucial. The different institutions also hold the family accountable so that when one person fails, there is another person to remind them of the goal.”

– Learning Partner 1, Kenya

Key Observation(s): A major lesson generated from the use of this tool was the importance of participatory M&E. From the Learning Partner’s perspective, this entails hearing directly from children about how they are benefitting from the organisation’s reintegration programming in the area of psychosocial support⁸ so that new interventions can be designed or existing ones adjusted to better serve their expressed needs, interests and opinions.

It was further evident that, as a starting point, meaningfully engaging children in M&E processes requires an overall conducive environment that allows them to easily voice their thoughts and concerns. The Learning Partner has, therefore, instituted systems and structures⁹ that help create an enabling culture within the shelter so that the girls feel empowered to freely interact with each other and with shelter staff at all times and not just during M&E exercises –

“The important learning for us here has been: 1. Children need to be consistently reminded of their right to expression for them to give feedback. 2. It is important to create a safe space for children to speak up and be very intentional in ensuring that those safe spaces remain safe. Our girls have become very confident the more we have reinforced the idea that speaking up would not get them into trouble.”

– Learning Partner 1, Kenya

Additionally, as an innovative practice, the organisation used storytelling and drawing as a creative and enjoyable means of introducing the diaries to the young beneficiaries in a safe environment geared towards building trust, confidence, and self-expression. The girls were also encouraged to incorporate drawings and pictures in their diary entries whenever they felt the inclination:

“To achieve our objectives we knew that we needed to ensure the diaries were introduced in a way that would interest the children. We chose to introduce it through a storytelling workshop conducted by a poet and author to introduce the diaries in a way that would work...This exercise was fruitful in getting a better understanding of how the girls see themselves, their strengths, and the areas they would like to work on. Those that could not write, drew and some combined both to be understood. All the girls fell in love with the exercise and immediately picked up the diaries.”

– Learning Partner 1, Kenya

Results from Learning Partner in Zambia: The organisation initially piloted the tool with 25 children in three Lusaka-based schools in order to monitor their emotional wellbeing during the post-reunification phase of the reintegration process and also ascertain when to end monitoring or close a case. Due to positive results, the usage of diaries was extended to some of the organisation’s other programming, including a project on children on the move implemented in local districts close to the Zambia-Mozambique border, which is a hub for child trafficking as well as children affected by cross-border and internal displacement. In that context, the diaries were used at both pre- and post-reunification phases.

The Learning Partner noted that using diaries was very effective in monitoring the psychological progress of children, especially since some were more comfortable writing down their thoughts and feelings rather than

⁸ Individual and group counseling and family therapy.

⁹ E.g. institution of anonymous complaints boxes for use by girls living in the shelter, ensuring that the girls participate in regular shelter group meetings to discuss pertinent issues within their current settings, and also actively consulting with them regarding their individual recovery and reintegration case plans.

talking to a professional. Also, through diary usage, participating children were able to play an active role in tracking personal improvements and directing the course of their own healing journey, including the counseling process.

Altogether, as a result of the use of this M&E tool, the Learning Partner was able to better assess the effectiveness of the organisation's various counseling interventions and improve the quality of services by providing more targeted and personalised services (general counseling, trauma counseling, etc.) as highlighted by diary results. Additionally, same as with the Learning Partner counterpart in Kenya, there was an acknowledgement that without children's inclusion or participation in all aspects of programming relevant to them, participatory monitoring and evaluation cannot be conducted successfully as children would not be in a position to give meaningful feedback.

At the time of compilation of this report, 721 children had used the diaries as part of counselling interventions (407 girls and 314 boys).

Challenges: There were some initial compliance issues due to a lack of full understanding by some children regarding the purpose of these diaries and content confidentiality. These challenges were addressed through continuous sensitisation exercises on the appropriate use of the diaries, particularly within the child rights clubs of the selected schools.

Also, It was easier to follow up on the progress of diary users who had been reintegrated in nearby localities than those whose reintegration involved repatriation to their countries of origin. In the latter case, the Learning Partner tended to rely on general feedback from the receiving organisations in the respective home countries, which can be a complicated and bureaucratic process.

Key Observation(s): With the use of this M&E tool, the organisation was able to gather much needed qualitative data to help measure behavioural changes in children supported by their counselling services as opposed to only gathering quantitative data on physical reintegration:

"...It helped [us] to realise that not only the physical success of reintegration is important, but also the emotional and spiritual wellbeing is also important in order to have a fully functioning individual who can take up and participate in community life. Therefore, monitoring these aspects is just as important as the other aspects of the reintegration process."

– Learning Partner, Zambia

Finally, as an innovative practice, the diaries distributed by the organisation to child participants were specially designed 'branded books', which are exercise books containing blank pages for use in writing down reflections as well as covers printed with key child protection information such as where to access assistance in times of need and the organisation's child helpline number:

"The advantage of using these books is that they appear child-friendly/attractive; besides, a child can easily relate to some problems highlighted in the book and know that they can get help for any problem they have."

– Learning Partner, Zambia

III. Use of the Grain Pot Tool

Background: In Uganda and Ghana, two Learning Partners implemented the Grain Pot tool to measure the effectiveness of financial literacy and income generation activities aimed at strengthening the economic capacities of households (55 in Uganda and 15 in Ghana) with reintegrated children. Participants using this tool were provided with or asked to draw a blank diagram of a grain pot, a familiar household item, which they then used to regularly record their income from all sources (each income source indicated by an arrow flowing into the pot) and expenses (each specified by an arrow flowing out) as well as any savings.

Results from Learning Partner 2 in Uganda: The organisation chose the Grain Pot tool to monitor the changes in household savings of families of children/young people affected by commercial sexual exploitation supported under an income generation project aimed at strengthening the economic resilience of these families.

Initially, the tool was piloted with 35 parents in the Kampala district as a way to reinforce their financial literacy and savings skills in order to sustain their income generation activities backed by cash grants. The pilot was then extended to 20 parents in the Mukono district, also participating in the same project. Small-scale businesses initiated by the participating parents included bakeries, grocery shops and charcoal stalls, and the weekly use of the Grain Pot tool helped the parents to capture and keep continuous track of their income, expenditures and savings. This subsequently allowed them to make informed choices about how to increase opportunities for earning more income as well as retaining savings.

Specifically, the Learning Partner noted the following gains by the parents due to their use of the Grain Pot tool:

- Improved understanding of their expenditures and how they can make adjustments, as necessary, in order to focus on priority issues, including within the family.
- Greater understanding of their rate of savings and how this could be increased or reinvested to expand household incomes.
- Better understanding of their sources of income and how to diversify their income in order to maximise opportunities and better support their households.

Also, the two parent savings groups (one in each district)¹⁰ formed as part of the income generation project was a key avenue for assistance and mentorship regarding the use of the Grain Pot since parents regularly reported their progress and challenges using the tool during group meetings.

Challenges: The main challenge encountered was that some parents did not have sufficient reading and/or writing competency to be able to properly document the changes in their incomes and expenditures and keep a record of their savings. To overcome this issue, the organisation encouraged the formation of smaller peer support groups, where such parents were matched with other parents in their locality who were able to assist them in the use of the tool. Similarly, in some instances, the leaders of the parent savings groups assumed this assistance role.

¹⁰ The goal of the parent savings groups is to help increase the savings of members as well as build a capital base that members can access as loans and credit services without having to go to banks and/or financial institutions since traditional financial services have strict requirements, which they cannot currently meet.

Key Observation(s): Before participating in this RISE M&E project, the organisation did not have any M&E tool to assess the effectiveness of its economic strengthening interventions:

“The Grain Pot tool is now supporting us to engage with families and households on improving incomes, closing the valve on [unnecessary] expenditures and supporting the tracking of their savings...[and also] develop clear indicators that can explain successful reintegration from the viewpoint of the beneficiaries of the project.”

– Learning Partner 2, Uganda

Results from Learning Partner in Ghana: The organisation used this tool to better measure or track changes in the household income of beneficiaries of their livelihoods programme, where parents/caregivers of children affected by or at risk of child trafficking are supported with micro-grants to access sustainable livelihoods. It was noted in the past that programme beneficiaries had not experienced maximum gains due to a lack of savings. As such, the implementation of the Grain Pot tool with 15 parents/caregivers (10 females and 5 males) aimed to assist in the improvement of their savings potential and subsequently expand their various local businesses,¹¹ with the paramount goal of supporting successful reintegration outcomes by strengthening the economic security of their households.

Up to this Learning Project’s mid-term review, the organisation reported a discernible interest and increase in savings activity among beneficiaries of the livelihoods programme using the tool, with financial gains being used to bolster their small business operations. However, due to the growing responsibilities of the organisation’s staff member overseeing the tool’s implementation, continued follow-ups on the Grain Pot’s utilisation could not occur beyond the mid-term stage. The organisation does plan to continue the use of this tool as a result of the early positive results achieved.

Challenges: The major challenge faced was insufficient staff within the organisation to fully implement this tool, compounded by the increasing workload of the staff member assigned with implementation. This issue is expected to be addressed with plans to hire an M&E officer as well as the extension of the current responsibilities of some key officers involved in reintegration support services to include M&E tasks such as oversight of the Grain Pot tool’s utilisation.

Key Observation(s): The Learning Partner reported that piloting the Grain Pot tool has influenced efforts to design better monitoring mechanisms to ensure that reintegration support packages (particularly allocation of micro-grants) are put into effective use and benefitting children post-reunification. This includes expansion of staff roles to include more liaising between livelihoods officers that assign the grant packages and reintegration officers responsible for field monitoring so that both are involved in cohesive M&E activities related to the livelihoods programme:

“The tool has influenced the redesign of our monitoring efforts in our micro-grants programme...Reintegration package(s) should not only be given out, but there should be effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure these packages are put into effective use and benefitting the reunified children. When implemented and monitored well, our micro-grants beneficiaries can save money to expand their seed capital to better cater for reintegrated children.”

– Learning Partner, Ghana

¹¹ About 80% are fishmongers and others sell cooked food, food stuffs, soft drinks, soap and detergents, fruits or run other businesses.

IV. Use of the River of Life and Indicators Development Tools

Background: A Learning Partner in Kenya used the River of Life tool to measure behaviour change outcomes. This participatory tool allows children to share, through storytelling and ‘river of life’ drawings, their stories of personal change (achievements and challenges overcome) due to support received from programme/project interventions and other relevant sources. The organisation also developed child-focused indicators using the ‘Indicators Development Tool’.

Results from Learning Partner 2 in Kenya: The organisation piloted the River of Life (RoL) tool in an initial phase in order to monitor the outcomes of two of their peer-led associations for street-connected girls affected by sexual exploitation (9 participants in Nairobi and 5 in Kisumu). These youth associations are supported by the organisation as a means of providing livelihood and life skills training to facilitate members’ reintegration into their communities. The main objective of the RoL exercise was to reinforce the association members’ collective trust as well as their understanding and appreciation of each other’s experiences and personal transformation since the start of their reintegration journeys.

Overall, these objectives were attained since participants were able to identify and acknowledge the changes in their lives, particularly the significant progress made since joining and accessing the services provided by these associations. As a bonding experience, the RoL exercise also helped to assert and further strengthen the cohesiveness of both associations; this is essential since these youth-led groups form a core aspect of the Learning Partner’s service delivery programming. Notably, as a result of the exercise, the Nairobi group decided to work together to advocate for the rights of children and campaign against sexual exploitation of children and youth within their community.

In addition, as a result of the tool’s use within the youth associations, the organisation uncovered certain key factors that either supported or hindered the young girls’ successful reintegration:

- Peer support and mentorship: support from peers who had transformed their lives was inspirational to others with similar backgrounds.
- Access to livelihoods support was a turning point for most girls who found an alternative way of making a living.
- Acquisition of legal documents like possessing a national identity card created a sense of belonging within the community.
- Stigma and discrimination remained a key obstacle as some girls reported their partners and community members still referenced and used their past experiences of exploitation against them, sometimes resulting in violent interactions.

To complement RoL implementation, the Learning Partner also used an ‘Indicators Development Tool’ comprising group discussions and other interactive activities at its Place of Safety, a temporary residential rehabilitation programme, in order to involve child beneficiaries (16 boys aged 9-14 years) in the development of indicators for monitoring successful reintegration.

The boys were able to identify the following outcome indicators as signs of a successfully reintegrated child:

- Children and young people are able to access basic needs like food, clothing and shelter
- Children and young people are able to go to school and perform well
- Children and young people are able to understand other children at home/school
- Children and young people are able to play with other children
- Children and young people have good morals and values

The use of RoL and the development of child-centered indicators broadened the organisation's understanding of how to effectively involve beneficiaries in monitoring reintegration. The new perspectives gathered from children's views on successful reintegration will help inform current interventions, and there are also plans to integrate these tools in the regular monitoring and assessment of the organisation's core programmes.

Challenges: In terms of the RoL's use, some participants did not find it an easy task to produce a drawing; in fact, one girl did not share her story because she felt her drawing was not up to par. Participants were also more forthcoming about the positive outcomes gained as a result of the support received from the organisation than any challenges faced. The organisation, therefore, noted that relevant adjustments would need to be explored to address these issues in future RoL exercises.

Key Observation(s): *“The River of Life (RoL) activity was very instrumental in aiding the young girls to develop pictures of their life journeys that helped them to share their life experiences. It helped them to understand the important changes that had happened to them since they joined the organisation. They noted significant changes in their lives such as being independent to cater for their needs, being responsible parents to their children, improving their self-esteem, and being respected by their community. The activity also broadened their knowledge of experiences that informs different perspectives. The girls appreciated themselves for achieving some of their life goals and decided to work collectively to advocate for the rights of children and campaign against sexual exploitation of children and youths in the community.”*

– Learning Partner 2, Kenya

V. Use of the Most Significant Change Story Technique

Background: Two learning partners in Kenya used Most Significant Change Story (MSC) techniques to directly capture the voices and opinions of beneficiaries regarding various services and programme interventions. The MSC technique is a form of participatory M&E that engages stakeholders in determining project/programme outcomes and impact through the collection and analysis of personal stories of change at the field level.

For one organisation, this was a new tool aimed at gathering qualitative information regarding the results of their interventions on young beneficiaries and their families, whereas the other organisation, already experienced in the use of the tool, continued to implement it within the ambit of this RISE project with the aim of improving and extending its MSC practice.

Results from Learning Partner 3 in Kenya: The Learning Partner used a version of this technique, the Tree of Change tool, as a means of gathering qualitative data in order to determine the most significant positive changes as perceived by child beneficiaries in the final stages of completing its residential rehabilitation programme for street-connected girls. The programme incorporates life skills training, psychosocial support, informal education, and economic empowerment in order to prepare the girls for reunification with their families and communities.

The girls and programme staff developed a Tree of Change by drawing the outline of a tree on one of the walls of a room and using coloured cards to construct leaves and pieces of the tree's trunk. The girls then walked along a timeline fixed to the floor of the room, while reflecting on their personal changes by comparing where they were before they entered the rehabilitation programme to where they are now. Each girl then wrote/drew her most significant change on a leaf of the tree and on a piece of the trunk indicated who or what was most helpful to achieve this change.

The most significant changes described by the girls centered on improvements in behaviour, self-identity, and attitude towards others; increased knowledge and abilities in education and life skills; and being able to access basic needs. Supportive to these changes were especially the counsellors, social workers, teachers, and their own peers at the rehabilitation centre.

As a supplementary exercise, a number of parents supported by the organisation's economic empowerment programme as well as girls who had been reintegrated and sponsored to pursue their education or vocational training were either interviewed or requested to write down their stories of change. The organisation's management then selected the most significant stories, which highlighted increased independence and self-sufficiency of beneficiaries as well as a stronger sense of belonging and connectedness with their communities as a result of accessing education and livelihood skills.

Challenges: The organisation observed deficiencies in its overall M&E system that caused some challenges when integrating new tools.

Key Observation(s): Participation in this RISE project and implementation of the tool served to highlight the gaps in the organisation's current M&E system. This included the need to strengthen data management and establish a more harmonised and coherent monitoring and evaluation system. The organisation has, therefore, sought additional technical support to achieve these objectives.

Results from Learning Partner 4 in Kenya: The organisation used the MSC Story method in monitoring and evaluating several projects: 'Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Violence Against Girls in the Travel and Tourism Sector', 'Supporting Reintegration of Unsafe Migrants in Mombasa', 'Combating Child Trafficking in the Coastal Region of Kenya', and 'Building Resilience against Child Trafficking for School Children'. Beneficiaries of these projects, aged 9 to 17 years, included girls affected by sexual exploitation, street-connected children and youth, and children reintegrated into schools and their families/communities.

Field staff collected stories from beneficiaries on a quarterly basis through a combination of one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions, with the objective of finding out changes in personal development, attitude, and behaviour. Already an integral part of the organisation's M&E practice, during the duration of the RISE project, the use of MSC was expanded to cover more project participants, resulting in an increase from normally 18-24 collected stories to 45. This in turn improved the depth and variety of the stories selected at the end of the process.

The organisation's selected stories of significant change uncovered the role of its project interventions in helping advance the personal development and empowerment of beneficiaries in their reintegration journeys since they were better able to articulate and advocate for their needs and take action to reduce their vulnerability to exploitation, as a result of accessing various project services. Other valuable benefits of MSC for the organisation included helping to:

- Enhance a shared understanding of project goals between beneficiaries and project staff and other stakeholders, including donors.
- Strengthen beneficiaries' sense of ownership in the monitoring and evaluation process.
- Build staff capacity in monitoring and evaluation, particularly in gathering qualitative data through participatory processes.
- Provide materials for trainings, advocacy and communications (with the consent and collaboration of beneficiaries, some selected stories were used as testimonials to raise the voices of survivors at relevant public forums).

Challenges: *“The MSC story is a complementary tool and limited to the personal experience of specific beneficiaries. To this extent, it does not cover all aspects of programming and may be skewed to the opinion of an interviewee. To overcome this limitation, there is a need to interview as many participants as possible and thus get a broader understanding of the project through ‘many voices’ and different perspectives as well.”*

– Learning Partner 4, Kenya

Key Observation(s): *“Storytelling is very basic and easy. Participants in MSC want to have their issues raised in their own words. Through their own experiences told in their own way, we are able to refine programming to meet their needs and use these same stories to deepen impact...Where we have used other tools, we still apply the MSC story as a way of both documenting the voice of the beneficiary and raising their voices. In this way, they too come to understand the project and how far ‘they have journeyed’ in the process of reintegration.”*

– Learning Partner 4, Kenya

Key Results from Piloting Efforts within the SA CoL

A. Organisations that piloted a specific M&E Tool or approach

I. Use of Focus Group Discussions

Background: A Learning Partner in India used focus group discussions (FGDs) to engage children in a participatory manner for feedback on their views on reintegration. FGDs are a good way to gather together people with similar backgrounds and/or experiences to discuss such topics of shared interest.

Results from Learning Partner 1 in India: The organisation selected this method due to an interest in participatory M&E and in engaging children as important stakeholders in its programmes. The FGDs method was not only used by the organisation in tracking outcomes for children in its Protection and Safety Programme for victims of trafficking, but also extended to other programmes in order to continue the involvement of children in assessing other areas of its work including education, health, and livelihood. In particular, the organisation has been able to make changes to two specific programmes with children – the Youth Club and the Children’s Parliament, based on the feedback received from child participants during the FGDs.

Challenges: Since this was the first time the Learning Partner was utilising FGDs, animating the group sessions was initially time consuming as it took a while to establish the level of comfort, confidence and trust needed for the children to be able to participate in discussions and provide their recommendations for after-care services, based on their reintegration experiences. The staff realised that a key aspect of their role as animators was to encourage and respect the full views and opinions of the children.

Key Observation(s): *“The strong message that we got by involving children through this tool is that each child is capable of understanding his or her environment and needs, and, with a little support, can express and contribute effectively to his or her own recovery and reintegration.”*

– Learning Partner 1, India

II. Use of the Grain Pot Tool

Background: A Learning Partner in Nepal used the Grain Pot tool to monitor the financial changes in beneficiaries of their livelihoods programme, which forms part of the organisation’s project interventions to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).

Results from Learning Partner in Nepal: The tool was used by a selected number of young beneficiaries and/or their families (3 individuals and 4 groups of 5 young persons) being supported by the Learning Partner to run small businesses in their homes or rented locations, such as running tailoring shops and street vending. The beneficiaries used the Grain Pot tool to regularly track their income and expenditures, the results of which helped the organisation bridge intervention gaps and address areas requiring further assistance, including provision of more emotional support or additional business skills and linking beneficiaries to wholesalers to help improve their businesses. The organisation has also integrated the Grain Pot as a key M&E tool in its new project on reintegration in Nepal.

Challenges: The organisation reported that the Grain Pot tool was more effective for assessing individual

rather than group finances. In group settings, targeted messaging on the importance of saving earnings and budget management proved to be more beneficial. The Grain Pot tool can also be time intensive due to the need for frequent follow-ups by the organisation.

Key Observation(s): *“The main learning for us is that it [Grain Pot] can be used as a key M&E tool for the reintegrated children doing small business (livelihood). It can be used as a participatory tool to explore the results of the reintegrated cases (mainly those who are engaged in income generating activities/alternative livelihood opportunities).”*

– Learning Partner, Nepal

B. Organisations that developed and piloted M&E Frameworks

I. M&E Framework 1

Background: A Learning Partner in India developed an M&E framework based on the eight domains of reintegration from the RISE M&E Toolkit, with outcome indicators for each domain in order to be able to measure reintegration outcomes in children correlated to the organisation’s work.

Results from Learning Partner 2 in India: The organisation provides recovery services through its shelter home to facilitate family reintegration. The developed indicators, therefore, relate to shelter services and were found to be very useful. Based on the data collected from the children, these indicators clearly showed that when they were provided with appropriate quality services in the shelter home, their recovery and reintegration could be facilitated in a smoother and faster manner. Also, as a result of the feedback from the children, several areas of the shelter’s services were considered for improvement, which would not otherwise have been identified.

An example of indicators identified under a domain is outlined below:

Basic Needs, Shelter and Protection Outcome Indicators

- # of children that feel their basic needs of care are fulfilled
 - Children being able to enjoy the greenery around the shelter premise
 - Children enjoying the freedom to move around the shelter premises without being locked in the respective buildings
 - All children feel engaged and productive in different activities/routines throughout the day
 - All children feel involved and engaged in the shelter home chores/activities
 - Children participate in making their own space friendly and comfortable

- # of children that feel safe (both physically and emotionally) in the shelter
 - Children associate their living space with positive experiences
 - Children feel safe to move around the shelter after dark (no fear of snakes, rodents, etc.)
 - Children feel loved and cared for

Challenges: An envisioned challenge for the organisation is how to continue gathering feedback from children and consolidate this information into meaningful learning as part of a regular, systematic process.

Key Observation(s): *“Reintegration is very case-specific and based on each individual child’s context and needs.”*

– Learning Partner 2, India

II. M&E Framework 2

Background: Another Learning Partner in India also established an M&E framework. The aim was to help the organisation better understand its locus within the reintegration field since its programming efforts are centered on recovery using Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) as a psychosocial support tool.

Results from Learning Partner 3 in India: The developed M&E framework contains outcome indicators covering five important psychosocial dimensions: physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural. Each of the five dimensions address skills deemed necessary by the organisation for successful reintegration. Most of the indicators were developed according to the organisation’s theoretical understanding of the DMT field.

As part of the process of building this M&E framework, a participatory element was incorporated that sought to gain children’s perspectives regarding their experiences with DMT, which helped to greatly improve and refine these indicators. The organisation has found the indicators to be very effective in helping map the progress of the child beneficiary in gaining essential life skills through DMT.

Challenges: The organisation identified the following issues –

- Since the organisation does not directly reintegrate children with families and communities, it was difficult to fully apply the framework within its context of work that focuses on providing DMT services and training.
- Time limitations hindered the development of a more thorough design of the M&E framework.
- There were external challenges; in particular, for a long time, it was difficult to pilot the framework in the field since participants were unavailable.
- It was also difficult to design tools for measuring these indicators that were both child-friendly and scientifically valid.

Most of these problems were mitigated by the adoption of a flexible and exploratory stance, which helped the organisation learn more about the process of monitoring and evaluation and where its interventions could be adjusted in order to better contribute to reintegration efforts.

Key Observation: *“[We do not] directly work on reintegration [issues]; therefore, managing these indicators do not fall within the purview of our work. However, Dance Movement Therapy helps in equipping the child with the skills to adapt to his/her environment. Therapeutic processes aim to ensure psychosocial wellbeing by making sure that children have the skills to move beyond past experiences and adequately address challenges in the future. A way to link this with monitoring reintegration can be by making systematic follow-ups to see if the child faces any challenges in his/her environment and how he/she uses the skills learnt in DMT sessions to handle the problems.”*

– Learning Partner 3, India

Key Learning and Outcomes

I. De-mystification of the M&E of reintegration process, particularly for organisations with limited resources and/or M&E experience

→ With the support of the RISE M&E toolkit and CoL activities, Learning Partners have been able to effectively develop or adapt and utilise a variety of tools, methods, and frameworks to address M&E gaps in practical, simple and efficient ways that are congruent to their particular contexts and available resources:

◆ *“[Our] policy of client-centered care has improved because we are specifically monitoring the needs of the clients that we have in a simple way.”*

– Learning Partner 1, Kenya

◆ *“This is one area where we thought we were inadequate. We have tools to measure our rehabilitation process but fewer to measure the reintegration process. The toolkit has provided us with an array of tools to use as well as possible indicators that we can use in monitoring reintegration...We can speak more authoritatively when donors/partners ask what successful reintegration is, [or] how do you measure success? I am more confident in sharing how we have adapted the tools and learning thanks to RISE.”*

– Learning Partner 2, Kenya

◆ *“I now have the ability and competences to use a simplified tool [Grain Pot] to support households track their savings, incomes and expenditures. At mid-term, we had started piloting the tool with 10 Parents, but now the number of parents has grown to 35 in one group, and we have also scaled it up to another group of 20 parents in another area where [we are] operating, and it is effective in guiding them track their expenditures, incomes and savings both at individual, household and group levels.”*

– Learning Partner 2, Uganda

II. Better documentation and tracking of beneficiaries’ progress as well as improved understanding of the effectiveness of organisations’ reintegration services and programmes

→ This has led to an enhanced knowledge base, strengthened partnerships and advocacy within child protection networks, and sharing of promising practices within the CoL and beyond by key stakeholders:

◆ *“Sharing leads to more learning. Sharing of challenges and successes through webinars helps to design our M&E better.”*

– Learning Partner 1, India

◆ *“The [RISE learning project] has helped us understand the way in which DMT (programming) is contributing to efforts on reintegration. It has also helped us understand ways in which to ensure children have a role in the process of data collection. It also helped us understand ways*

in which to extend our initiatives so that we can work more intensively on the process [of reintegration].”

– Learning Partner 3, India

- ◆ *“The tool [Diaries] has helped our organisation and its implementing partners to understand and appreciate the dynamics of reintegrating children back in the communities/families. This has helped our organisation to get the support it needs from other allied partners.”*

– Learning Partner, Zambia

- ◆ *“We are in the process of engaging the County Government in finding sustainable ways of rehabilitating and reintegrating the rising number of children and youth on the streets. We are transferring learning to other organisations where we are providing technical support. We are not afraid to share our past challenges and gaps and how we have learnt from them and strengthened learning using the CoL and the available toolkit. We have an opportunity to influence other partners who work directly with street-connected children.”*

– Learning Partner 2, Kenya

- ◆ *“[Our organisation] had been using tools introduced without documenting the lessons learned and this has improved greatly...We are now able to understand that there are various cross-cutting elements that should be considered and promoted in order for reintegration to be successful...[We have also] realised that monitoring and evaluation’s purpose is improving (learning and steering), empowerment (participation) and proving (accountability). This project [helped us] realise that we have to enhance our learning culture [on the use of] various M&E tools.”*

– Learning Partner 3, Kenya

- ◆ *“We believe the CoL has assisted us in not only building on our experiences in articulating the issues of our beneficiaries, but also in bringing on board voices of the survivors themselves, and thus impacting in our trainings, awareness, sensitisation, and public communications...We are now appreciated as experts in reintegration and this is seen in our work with partners, donors, government agencies, and other stakeholders. We have been able to persuade partners to let us bring along beneficiaries to voice their testimonials at events, conferences, and conventions.”*

– Learning Partner 4, Kenya

- ◆ *“[Our Organisation] is enhancing its documentation process and sharing results with other partners. For example, we have documented success stories on reintegration using the case study approach, which we believe encourages support from other agencies.”*

– Learning Partner 1, Uganda

III. CoL activities as a catalyst for stocktaking and assessment of overall M&E practices

- Participation in this RISE project has spearheaded subsequent efforts by some Learning Partners to address gaps uncovered in their M&E systems in order to strengthen their capacities for effective M&E:

- ◆ *“This [RISE learning project] helped to redesign our own project because it helped to put in perspective the need to reach children and to enable them to know their rights, where to go and*

how to access such supportive services. We, therefore, conceptualised a web platform to [digitize] data collection on reported cases of child abuse.”

– Learning Partner, Nigeria

- ◆ “[To support piloting of the Diaries tool], we implemented a new case management online-based platform that allows us to look at the progress of each case...The system keeps track of all the services that our beneficiaries receive in the course of their time with us. The best thing about the system is that it is specifically designed for counter-trafficking organisations. It also generates reports, and we can be able to see the progress of each of the beneficiaries. It is also possible to see the person and all the people involved in a particular case.”

– Learning Partner 1, Kenya

- ◆ “The way forward is that in 2018, the role of the livelihoods officer [will be] expanded to include the effective monitoring of our micro-grant beneficiaries at field level. So, there is going to be more collaboration between us [staff] to overcome [M&E] challenges.”

– Learning Partner, Ghana

IV. Managing M&E of reintegration in a coordinated and integrated manner that is results-based rather than output-focused

→ This remains a challenge for organisations; however, Learning Partners have demonstrated some effective and resourceful ways of developing coherent practices of measuring reintegration outcomes in children through the piloting exercises supported by the RISE M&E Toolkit and associated activities of the CoL:

- ◆ “I would say that the most critical lesson is that successful reintegration is not a quasi-process...It does not really end when you identify a child that needs to be reintegrated and you send the child back to his family or community. It requires effective step by step procedures to ensure that the child can be said to have been effectively reintegrated...This means [developing] effective quantitative and qualitative parameters to ensure that a child has been successfully reintegrated. I also learned that to achieve this, there is a need to integrate [M&E] properly into the programme budget.”

– Learning Partner, Nigeria

- ◆ “The [Case Study] tool has been integrated into [our] broader work. For each of our projects, we try to identify cases, which we consistently study and document throughout the life of the project. This has helped the organisation in understanding the details of its interventions and how they are contributing to the wellbeing of the beneficiaries. Also, the approach enables [our] implementation team to draw lessons and best practices, which can be replicated to other beneficiaries of the projects.”

– Learning Partner 1, Uganda

- ◆ “Monitoring and evaluation is a process that needs to be included in programming...The fact is that we need to work with everyone who will be in contact with the children if the process is to be effective; therefore, communication, language, and developing inclusive processes becomes a necessity...‘Everyone’ includes the family, the church that they will be attending and schools that they will go to after reintegration.”

– Learning Partner 1, Kenya

- ◆ “[In terms of key learning], as a community focal person now, I am using both human and capital resources available to make the reintegration program in my community of operation successful in terms of positive impacts and not numbers and also making sure other community focal persons adapt the same way.”
– Learning Partner, Ghana

V. Key importance of adopting participatory M&E approaches that allow the effective engagement of children and young people as direct beneficiaries of reintegration programmes and services

→ A prime observation by several Learning Partners was that fostering enabling environments is critical to eliciting children and young people’s participation in a sustained, meaningful and ethical manner:

- ◆ “One of the most important lessons has been that we need to start thinking of more ways to involve children in the evaluation of the work that we do. We have also learned that to get information from children, we not only have to teach them and reassure them that their voices are important, but also keep them engaged...We have found ways to engage children more in our programming through family meetings, individual case management meetings, teaching the children new ways of expressing themselves, and constantly reassuring them that their opinions matter, and, when given, they can see changes.”
– Learning Partner 1, Kenya

- ◆ “It was surprising to read children’s views/perspectives of what successful reintegration looks like and what reintegration is; additionally, from their discussion, we could sense what their fear was as regards reintegration. The toolkit has opened up our understanding on how we as staff can involve beneficiaries in monitoring reintegration and develop outcome indicators. We had never thought of developing indicators of success with children...Staff members were excited to try a new tool that would generate discussion especially with children on a sensitive topic such as reintegration where children have a lot of fear and anxiety.”
– Learning Partner 2, Kenya

- ◆ “It’s very important to involve the children in any activities that are related to them right from the word go; otherwise, monitoring and evaluation will not be carried out successfully. Children are the custodian of their own activities. From this, we got the slogan ‘nothing for them, without them’, meaning whatever we want to do for them must have their input.”
– Learning Partner, Zambia

- ◆ “[Our organisation] is interested in participatory M&E and involving children as an important stakeholder. Not only for our Protection and Safety programme where children are the most important stakeholder, we are also involving children in our other areas of work like education, health, and livelihood. In our programmes, youth clubs and child parliament-like activities have further strengthened and added value to our work.”
– Learning Partner 1, India

- ◆ “The children were more expressive through the diagrams that were drawn by them on chart papers [when they were asked during group discussions to express their views on successful indicators of reintegration]. As such, we believe when the child puts forth their thoughts without

being pressured, that is the best part. The children had an option of working in groups or as individuals. While some chose to work in groups, some of them chose to work as individuals...

– Learning Partner 2, India

VI. Strengthened recognition that successful reintegration requires multi-stakeholder action and support to ensure the comprehensive wellbeing of children, beyond simply reunifying children with their families/communities

→ This means children, families, community members and all other relevant stakeholders involved in the reintegration process need to be consulted and included in organisations' monitoring and evaluation practices as well as in programming efforts to sustain reintegration. In their end-term reflections, Learning Partners' perceptions of successful reintegration contain these key elements:

◆ *“Successful reintegration is when all the rights of the child are restored in a dignified and sustainable manner. The child is linked to education facilities, health services, livelihood opportunities, and other services to enjoy an exploitation- and violence-free life. Successful reintegration is all about creating mechanisms, which can ensure all the above-mentioned facilities for the child. Reintegration is not charity but the responsibility of the state to reinstate all the rights in the life of a child in a timely and dignified way.”*

– Learning Partner 1, India

◆ *“Successful reintegration could mean differently for different children...However, we do wish to include ‘marriage’ for young people above 18 years as one of the aspects of measuring reintegration as we find more and more girls (over 18 years) preferring to get married. Based on this experience, [our organisation] intends to carry out a study by consulting the children and young people reintegrated in families and communities in order to identify the indicators of family and community reintegration, along with a working definition that will guide [our] reintegration programming. This study will be done in partnership with the community-based organisations and young people affected by child sexual exploitation to understand and include their perspectives in this whole process.”*

– Learning Partner 2, India

◆ *“The [M&E] framework helped us understand that there are many things that go into reintegration. This requires intersectoral engagement. This requires interventions based on health, mental health, legal processes, economic processes, socio-cultural processes, etc. It also helped us understand that reintegration is not limited to reuniting the child with the family. It also includes reintegrating the child into the wider community. This in turn broadens the scope for intervention and intersectoral linkage. Another thing that was of great use in the process was learning how to involve children in the process of reintegration. This is extremely important as all stakeholders must be involved in decision-making that involves them. It also helped us understand that successful reintegration is a long-time investment and must focus on regular follow-ups...An interesting area of focus for further learning could be more extensive work on building community capacities for reintegration.”*

– Learning Partner 3, India

- ◆ *“Successful reintegration is beyond placing the child back with their families. It involves making sure that the child feels safe, protected, and well cared for and that the family also feels happy and is supportive of the child.”*
– Learning Partner 1, Uganda

- ◆ *“Successful reintegration is a process where children are reintegrated back into the communities and restored to their former self (the way they were before being displaced). This means that when a child has been reintegrated, a child should be able to move on with his/her life...The organisation works with other stakeholders to ensure successful reintegration such as community development, social welfare, victim support units, and organisations that provide different services.”*
– Learning Partner, Zambia

- ◆ *“Successful reintegration for [our organisation] is now viewed as a situation where a child is in an environment where he/she can have access to basic rights (Survival, Protection, Development, and Participation) and is in no immediate danger of being denied these basic rights. We also feel that the best environment to protect a child from danger is within a family context where his or her best interest is protected. Also, [measuring successful reintegration] involves a systematic step by step process using indicators in terms of access to health, legal protection from further abuse, access to educational, recreation and healthy development through nutritious food and opportunities to express oneself and participate in issues of concern such as career choices, freedom of association and choice, conscience, thought and religion.”*
– Learning Partner, Nigeria

Conclusion

This Learning Project addressed a discernible gap that was identified through a scoping process in the three RISE focal regions on the issue of monitoring and evaluation of the reintegration of children and young people.

The fact that majority of the tools and frameworks were successfully piloted in relatively low-resource settings, with the support of an innovative Community of Learning model and the RISE M&E toolkit demonstrates that a diverse range of M&E tools, approaches and methods can be used effectively in the M&E of reintegration, particularly to assess outcomes, when suitably adapted to meet the needs of the organisational context. This strategy was embraced by Learning Partners through various adaptable and innovative practices during the year-long piloting phase, notably including the meaningful engagement of young beneficiaries of reintegration services in organisations’ M&E activities.

Also, given the holistic and integrated approach to reintegration programming by majority of the Learning Partners, the Learning Project uncovered a marked interest in multi-pronged M&E tools that are able to measure outcomes across multiple domains of reintegration care and support in order to gain a better understanding of the synergies between different interventions and their additive effect on the young beneficiaries’ wellbeing. This area was not explored in-depth since most Learning Partners in the current project piloted single-domain tools to assess specific areas of intervention (e.g. psychosocial support, economic strengthening, education, etc.), but could be the focus of a subsequent, future project.

Finally, in addition to the RISE M&E Toolkit resource, the Learning Project was able to effectively leverage the RISE network's broad knowledge base in order to highlight and promote practical tools and current promising regional practices on the M&E of reintegration through open-access webinars as well as closed, peer-to-peer exchanges within the CoL. A key output of this Learning Project will, therefore, be the update of the M&E Toolkit to contain more inclusions of organisations' different and effective approaches to the M&E of reintegration.