Mid Term Review of International Aid Services Denmark (IAS-DK) of the programme:

"Sustainable and Equal Quality Educational Opportunities for All"
2022 – 2025

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Executive summary

The programme subject to the Mid Term Review, is implemented by IAS, funded by CISU and titled *"Sustainable and Equal Quality Education Opportunities for All". It* targets children with special educational needs, CSEN and marginalised girls, working to improve the conditions for children facing such special barriers to learning. The Inclusive Education programme runs from 2022 to 2025 and is a third phase of IE programs implemented by IAS Denmark and partners and supported by CISU under the Civil Society Program. It is implemented in four countries. Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan and Tanzania. Planned from the outset, South Sudan was exited after the first year and due to budget limitations, Sudan will be terminated by the end of 2024, a year ahead of the final completion of the programme.

With respect to **methodology**, the Mid Term Review, the MTR has adopted a multi-facetted approach. It is based on a comprehensive document review, observations and meeting with partners and beneficiaries at field level in Tanzania and staff and key stakeholders participating in the annual IE learning event as well as interviews with key informants in Kenya and Sudan. The backbone of the review is interviews with a wide range of actors, online and face-to-face equally. While triangulating and seeking outward perspectives, interviews also included a few external actors.

The programme is found highly **relevant**. While policy and legal frameworks have improved in both Kenya and Tanzania, the engagement and commitment by civil society is still key to push for implementation of IE, advancing equal access for children considered to those groups most drastically excluded from their rights, from access to education and from enjoying social recognition.

The assessment of **performance and results** concludes that results and the level of progression against targets differ widely. There are outcomes with impressive achievements but also outcomes where performance has been weak. One particular challenging factor is the lack of quality of the Result Framework, the RF. Outcome targets are difficult to measure against and not all indicators are equally relevant and ´smart` which distorts the capture of results which hampers the ability to meet the expected level of performance. A comprehensive RF and the development of Management Information Tool for tracking performance has resulted in focus on activity, overly long reports, where the overall objectives are lost. It is recommended to conduct a revision of the RF which is expected to then better support the IE programme in capturing more results and thus increase performance in the remaining period focusing on quality and impact/change rather than quantitative performance.

Assessing the relevance of the **strategic approaches** applied, the MTR takes the point of departure in the design of the IE programme, involving three outcome areas. Under component 1, outcomes focus on advocacy, lifting local level advocacy to the national level. Under component 2, outcomes consist of a mixture of local advocacy and support to strengthen the implementation of quality education at local level, involving provision of strategic services and capacity building. There is a clear and strategic relation between these two components. The undertaking to lifting advocacy to the national level has been successful in the sense that IAS and the programme have plaid a key role in establishing the infrastructure for civil society engagement via national Education Coalitions, NECs and Inclusive Education sub-committees – also in certain cases taking leadership. Unfortunately, while good cooperation with government institutions is evident, there has not yet been recorded any concrete uptake by politicians, based on specific recommendation from NECs, though indications are that implementing partners are making progress in this regard. Local level advocacy (component 2) with a remarkable mobilisation of civil society actors to enhance implantation of IE is successful. The programnme supports development of strong technical expertise regarding IE, it builds models and best

practices. Also, it promotes a strongly participative and inclusive approach, giving voice to children, parents and allies such as of individuals and organisations of people with disabilities. It is in this realm that the evidence and cases are build, forming the foundation for advocacy at national level. However, to increase the effectiveness, it is recommended to re-strategize both areas in order to maximise focused impact. Component 3 outcomes are to some extent disconnected from the other components although with links to component 2, and the strategic service delivery. South Sudan performed well in this respect during the one year of implementation. Unfortunately, however, experiences and learnings specifically related to fragility and the nexus approach have not been captured.

Concerning **budget performance**, it seems to have been subject to a learning curve. Initially, the were some critic of the budget design, and adaptions of the budget after a 20% reduction was enforced as part of the approval process. During the course of the IE programme, a dedication to improve budget management seems to have paid off. The financial management is increasingly engaged in establishing clear cost categories and monitoring and control has increased. Solidity of financial reporting can be further strengthened, requiring streamlined and quality checked consolidation procedures at local level. Also, procedures to increase **efficiency** has been initiated, including review of standards for meeting facilities and food, hand-outs, per diem etc. to participants and the automaticity in running certain support activities.

The **MEAL system** has been given a special focus during the MTR. There are a range of issues which all together call for some actions to be taken. The most important is a revision of the Result Framework. It is recommended to be revised, involving a simplification merging the different documents: global, national and separate indicator tracker for the remaining period. Also, an analysis of the relevant and adequacy of outcomes and indicators should be undertaken. The consultancy team anticipates this will lead to increase in capture of results. The consultancy team has suggested a revised RF for the remaining period. Yet another issue is the search for evidence-based results for advocacy. IAS sat out to adopt a digital MEAL system which unfortunately has not worked according to expectations and IAS should at this stage consider how best to continue. Learning has also been dealt with as part of MEAL and IAS is encouraged to refocus on this area and ensure to document and collect evidence and learning outcomes.

The **exit processes** from South Sudan and Sumbawanga in Tanzania have been reviewed. The team of consultants finds that South Sudan and the Sumbawanga exit concept has been purposefully designed. These exits present a concept with two main tracks: establishing a leadership groups, based on representativity from the IE networks and the CS groups and also develop income generating activities, IGA. The full effect and sustainability remain to be seen at a later stage, however first indications are promising. Moreover, a precipitated exit from Sudan is recommend, however, allowing IAS Sudan and partners to continue to the end of the year 2024 on a ´survival budget`, for them to function as political observers and potentially run some small-scale awareness raising.

Efforts have been put in place to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, **PSEAH**. However, the consultant finds that implementation and activities related to child protection must be further advanced to ensure leverage. During the field visit, more than one child unasked told about experiencing sexual exploitation of the CWDs. Though these incidents were not directly linked to the IE programme, IAS and partners should pay attention to the issue and systematically take actions to curb the significantly elevated risk for harassment and sexual abuse that children with disabilities face.

Ultimately, concerning **strategic alignment** between the IE programme and IAS' overall strategies, the IE programme is assessed to be well aligned to the IAS mission and strategy. It concurs with the IAS focus on the rights of the marginalized and vulnerable by strengthening IAS partners. The IE program is

aligned to this ambition, focusing on CWDs and marginalized girls contributes to IAS fulfilling its strategic ambitions. The IE program alignment to the IAS 2022-2024 strategy on working with both church-based partners as well as technical is overall observed giving IAS ability to strategize optimal for to reach overall objectives. It is recommended, that during the remaining period partners specific qualities are observed to qualify both the need to scale the successes reach in implementation of outcome 2, as well as better leverage the observed challenges of outcome 1.

Recommendations:

Recommendation: The IE programme should prioritise to develop their messaging and information work related to building links between local and national advocacy – and radically upscale it.

Recommendation: It is recommended to re-strategize Component 2 and to a large extend replace strategic services with a focus on outreach and replication in new schools, here mobilising civil society, parents and children to engage in local advocacy and support of CSEN and marginalized girls.

Recommendation: The RF should be modified, aiming to build a consolidated framework with indicators capturing the strategically most relevant results. Also, monitoring and reporting tools in the IE project should be revised and made significantly more simple.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Sudan continues to the end of the year 2024 on a ´survival budget` to allow IAS Sudan and closest partners to function as political observers and run some adequate small-scale activities[1] with the IDP community.

Recommendation: IAS should give priority to develop and implement a strategic cross-country PSEAH intervention as part of the IE-sub committees with NEC during the remaining two years and thus increase performance and results related to protection across country. Building national coalition on this main-stream policy area, could become a great resource and learning and networking opportunity also for the national advocacy on issues related to CWD.

Recommendation: IAS and partner should give priority to engaging the local church-based partners in scalable and low-cost models for inclusion and support of CWD and marginalized girls. Partnering with church- and faith-based actors ensure strategic compliance, but in the field of national advocacy, partnering with technical capable and positioned organisations such as co-implementing partners should be modelled better.

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[1] Dialogue activities that are small interactions and awareness raising meetings, led by the IDP community that that can be conducted without permission from authorities.

List of abbreviations

CISU	Civil Society in Development
CS	Civil Society
CSEN	Children with Special Education Needs
CWD	Children with disabilities
DPO	Disabled People's Organisation
EiE	Education in Emergencies
FDB	Formal Duty Bearers
FPCT	Free Pentecostal Church of Tanzania
FSG	Family Support Groups
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
HQ	Headquarter
IAS	International Aid Services
ICD	Information Centre on Disabilities
IE	Inclusive Education
IGA	Income Generating Activities
LM	Läkermissionen
LMI	Läkermissionen International
MDB	Moral Duty Bearers
MEAL	Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid Term Review
NCDO	National Christian Development Organisation
NEC	National Education Coalition
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PSEAH	Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PWD	Person with Disability
RF	Results framework
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
SMC	School Management Committee
SNE	Special Needs Education
SSD	South Sudan
ToC	Theory of Change
ToT	Training of Trainers
TZ	Tanzania
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

1. Introduction and project background

This mid-term review, MTR, was conducted in February and March 2024, based on a terms of reference, ToR, developed by International Aid Services Danmark, IAS and Civil Samfund i Udvikling, CISU respectively. Implemented by IAS, funded by CISU, the programme in mentioning is termed *"Sustainable and Equal Quality Education Opportunities for All"* and particularly targets children with special educational needs, CSEN[2] and girls facing barriers to learning. The programme runs from 2022 to 2025 and is a third phase of interventions seeking to improve the conditions for children with Special Education Needs, CSEN and marginalized girls. The programme is implemented in four countries, with the following partners: South Sudan, National Christian Development Organisation, NCDO; in Sudan, LM International Sudan (LMI-S) previously IAS Sudan with Zahara Center for Integrated Development Services, Zahara; in Kenya, IAS Kenya and in Tanzania, Free Penecostal Church of Tanzania, FPCT in collaboration with Information Center on Disability, ICD and LM International Tanzania (LMI-TZ). The approval of the IAS proposal for the third phase was conditional due to low scores, thus requiring a budget reduction of 20%. Obviously, this had significant implications for the countries, which had to modify local budgets and scope of activities. During the implementation, the programme can be said to have a fidget path due to cuts from original planned budget and exits: South Sudan was phased out after one year, in the second year, Sumbawange, one of the three project areas in Tanzania was phased out in 2023. Sudan is planned to be phased out by the end of 2024, one year before the closure of the entire programme, and a number of costs adjusted downward. Nevertheless, despite that such ´disruptions` the IAS programme is moving solidly forward, making the best of the budget cost. This present IE programme stands on the shoulders and as a direct third phase of two previous IE programmes/phases, quite alike in design but with sequenced progression. In phase III its' most significant strategic leap forward is the systematical engagement in national level advocacy.

The overall objective of the IE program is to see children facing barriers to learning, enjoy recognition and inclusion in social structures and gaining educational opportunities that positively affect the quality of their life, and their development as human beings. Children with disabilities and poor and marginalised girls alike are disproportionately ruled out of education for various reasons, facing immense challenges with respect to social inclusion and equally to get access to education.

Both Tanzania and Kenya governments have during the IE phase III adopted new national educational policies which encompass deliberate policies on IE, among other competence based curriculums, accounting for access to education for CSEN children and girls in special difficult circumstances.. Recently, as a example, both Tanzania and Kenya have furthermore approved legal acts stipulating the rights of girls to return to education after giving birth. Also in both countries, the NECs, the national civil society education coalition have become strengthened so all in all, the contextual background seems to become continuously more favorable. Nevertheless, despite favorable policies, the implementation stays a challenge as governments are re-orienting towards these rights-based approaches while budgetary and structural constraints continue to set barriers to full implementation and inclusion of CSEN. Also, cultural and social barriers remain, though significantly reduced. The neglect of the rights of children

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[2] In this MTR, as in all other documents related to the programme, the terms children with disabilities, (CWD) are interchangeably used along with children with special education needs, CSENs as an uncountable noun term, when referring to children challenged with some kind of disability, physically or intellectually.

with disabilities and the social exclusion of families with members with disabilities are still prevalent and a major problem. The ability of CS-groups to fight against stigmatization in the communities, identify CWD and girls for school enrollment and provision of support to the families is evident. Thus, despite progress locally in project areas and in policies, equal access to quality education for CSEN and marginalized girls remains a monstrous challenge to mount implying the *"Sustainable and Equal Quality Education Opportunities for All"* programme is indeed still highly relevant.

The IE programme has in some ways had a disrupted trajectory, with three phase-out processes: by the end of 2022 South Sudan was phased out. In 2023, a project area in Tanzania, Sumbawanga was phased out and by the end of 2024, Sudan is planned to be phased out.[3]

2. Review of the performance and results

This section serves to review the performance and status of results so far of the programme. The review is based on a triangulation of information extracted from quarterly progress reports and results reporting from 2022 and 2023, and from preliminary consolidation of result in 2023, based on presentations during the conference in Arusha, February 2024. This is further substantiated by interviews with staff, civil society actors and government representatives. In some cases, findings are also informed by observations during field visits in Dodoma and Bahi districts in Tanzania.

Aiming to increase the overview, a matrix allowing for a rating and providing a scoring system has been developed. See annex 3 for more details.

2.1 Consolidated findings regarding result during the first two years

A complete scoring of consolidated results at outcome level has been developed. Please see annex 3 for further details. Below is a short resume of performance, also providing a comparative dimension.

<u>Analysis of scores under component 1 and 2.</u> In a comparative perspective encompassing Kenya, Sudan and Tanzania, Kenya and Tanzania are performing satisfactorily. While Kenya is superior related to indicator scores for component 1, in turn, Tanzania is performing better compared to Kenya and scoring higher based on the component 2 indicators. Sudan´s performance is weaker, in comparison to Kenya and Tanzania.[4] There is no reliable results for Sudan in 2023, due to the eruption of the conflict. In general, higher scores have been achieved for component 2 outcomes compared to results under component 1. Moreover, component 2 encompasses interventions and activities, that IAS and partners are basically more familiar with as a result of the focus in the previous phases of the IE programme. Speaking about the results achieved under component 1, it should be noted that there have been some twisting factors. One is the fact that for indicator 1.1.2 and 1.1.3, performance is contingent on the direct uptake of proposed policy changes, adopted and put into motion by politicians. Obviously, this is a fundamental outcome area, however also a difficult goal to achieve and completely outside the decisions sphere of the programme. Yet another area where targets have not met is related to indicators 1.2.1 and 1.2.2. These are seeking to measure the level to which evidence and documentation extracted directly from the new digital MEAL system have been used for advocacy. As the digital MEAL had a difficult start, there is no such evidence and documentation. Evidence and documentation have been captured otherwise but it does not count due to the contingent relation to the digital MEAL system formulated in

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[3]The phase out processes are all addressed in section 5.2.
[4] Scoring is based on 2022 only. The outbreak of conflict in Sudan disrupted nearly all activities in 2023.

the indicator. While the result aggregation presented based on the design of the RF, other perspectives on results achieved may be found in section 3.2.1.

<u>Analysis of scores under component 3:</u> SSD scored well during 2022 under all three outcome areas: 3.1 IE awareness on IE in peace-building initiatives; 3.2. infrastructure to advance IE in emergencies and 3.3 increased access for CSEN and girls which is equivalent to outcome 2.2. Sudan in comparison has generated less significant results. Concerning indicators for 3.1, measurement of IE awareness on IE in peace-building initiatives, it should be noted that the indicator is formulated to measure enhancement of peace-building, not specifically the integration of IE related to peacebuilding. Likewise, there are no instruments established to capture the level of success with respect to innovation and implementation of the nexus approach.

In summary, results and the level of meeting set targets differ. There are outcomes with impressive achievements but also outcomes where performance has been weak. As mentioned, not all indicators are equally relevant and ´smart` which may distort the capture of results. See section 5.4.3 for more on this.[5] It is assumed with a revision of the RF the IE programme will be able to capture more results which for now are not caught. A recommendation for modification of the MEAL framework can be found under section 5.1.

3. Review of the strategic approach

This review of the strategic approach is structured around an assessment of the Theory of Change, (ToC) the assumptions along with an assessment of the objectives and design of the programme, vis a vis the severe challenges facing CSEN and disadvantaged girls in Tanzania, Kenya, South Sudan and Sudan.

3.1 ToC and assumptions

The ToC for the programme in phase III is linked to advocacy and an IE sequenced model for developing capacity to deliver: advocating *for*, advocating *with* and eventually advocating *independently*. According to the model, advocating *independently* is the highest level and expected to be achieved partly in phase III, however standing on the shoulders of advocating *for* and *with, achievement* presented to be in the earlier phases of the IE programmes. According to the ToC model, during phase III of the IE programme, strategic services are envisioned to play a continuously less significant role. Capacity building is not included in the model. The model may not be fully representative, even the narrative explanations of the logic bring more clarity.

Advice: Continuing with IE programming, IAS should work on their change model, better illustrating the interrelated forces and the dynamics in the change triangle.[6] It is the concurrently pursuit of advocacy, capacity building and strategic services which in unique ways prompt development and eventually bring changes.[7]

In the following the assumptions are reviewed, however only those related to the stable contexts in Kenya and Tanzania. Due to the short period of implementation in South Sudan and the erupting of

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[5] As one example: Developing Indicators: A SMART Criteria Checklist - The Compass for SBC
[6] The change/development triangle: https://cisu.dk/en/tools/search-through-tools/the-development-triangle/
[7] The model tends to describe advocacy as linear, one step consequently followed by the next. Advocacy is rather in parallel taking various forms, working *for*, *with* and *independently*.

conflict in Sudan, experiences are very limited, and does not provide the consultant with sufficient background for a justified analysis.

Local level	Assumption: Pressure form CS groups, with support of Local Partners, to address the needs of CSEN and girls results in initiatives for the implementation of IE guidelines by the local government authorities. **Consultant's analysis:** The assumption holds true to some extent. Nevertheless, with government in the meantime becoming accountable to and driven by the new policies on IE, roll out of IE services is less directly linked to the lobby by the CS groups. Assumption: Engagements by CS groups (with support from local partners) has motivated vulnerable children, parents/caregivers and local leaders to speak out on injustice and discrimination of CFBL. **Consultant's analysis:** The assumption holds true, the CS has been found to be committed to speak out freely on discrimination of CSEN. Their style is though less confrontational as may be indicated as all parties are familiar and work closely together at local level.
National level	Assumption: The civil society has ample space to exercise their rights, and the government recognizes its obligations. **Consultant's analysis:** This assumption holds true for both Tanzania and Kenya. Assumption: Increased lobbying by CS groups has made National Coalitions to recognize their obligations towards IE mainstreaming and assert their collective influence on the national governments for the implementation of IE policies and guidelines. **Consultant's analysis:** This assumption is only partly true. NECs have in Tanzania and Kenya established IE sub-committees, and the IE programme has supported and engaged in these. However, the challenges of achieving impact, with the IE sub-committees and NECs respectively as a weighty base for lobby and change have shown more difficult than expected.
International level	Assumption: The SDG framework provides a common platform for international actors to join forces for the realization of SDG 4. **Consultant's analysis:** The consultant did not assess the performance of IAS and partners based on their contribution at international level.

3.2 Strategic review of the design of the programme

The strategy and design of the programme is embedded in the commitment to effectively advance the rights of all children to quality education, committing to leave no one behind and fight for those most systematically excluded, children with disabilities. The strategic approach basically rests upon the development triangle: advocacy, capacity building and strategic services as the main intervention areas. In the current third phase of the IE programme, specific emphasis on advocacy has been accentuated, aiming to achieve that the national level structures lever on systemic and sustainable changes in IE policies and implementation.

The structure of the programme is developed around three components. Component 1 relates to advocacy: "*Local implementing partners follow their country specific Theory of Change in promoting*

advocacy issues for Inclusive Education from the grass-root level to the national level." Component 2 addresses a mixture of local advocacy and support to strengthen the implementation of quality education at local level, involving services and capacity building: *"For sustainability and continuity, local implementing partners empower CS groups to take a central role in promoting inclusion of children with special education needs (CSEN), and girls in social structures and their countries' educational systems."* Component 3 related to fragile contexts: *"Innovative promotion of IE in fragile contexts through a nexus approach (for Sudan and South Sudan only)."*

3.2.1. Strategic review of component 1

In the transition period between phase II and III of the IE programme, pre-conditions for lifting national level advocacy in the IE programme has changed. Both Tanzania and Kenya have now included IE in the legislative, implying IE has become a manifest national priority in both the countries' educational policies.[8] Also, the National Education Coalition, NECs have established IE sub-committees, one of the key goals in the previous phase of the programme.[9] The role of the sub-committees is essentially to organise the variety of civil society and private partners and actors, and to coordinate policy and lobby actions in the field of IE. In the IE programme, hook-ups to national level advocacy have significantly increased, both in scope and in quality. Kenya has been very successful, getting the organisation well positioned as a key liaison in establishing the IE sub-committee and becoming elected to Board Chair of Sub-committee. In 2023 for instance, lAS Kenya has led the process among the many actors with respect to selection of six issues to be transmitted to the national IE sub-committee.[10] IAS Sudan has likewise plaid a key role until the conflict broke out. IAS Sudan was a member of the NEC, and part of establishing the IE sub-committee. IAS Sudan and the partner, Zahara has also been similarly successful in handing over policy issues in collaboration with other actors. FPCT, ICD and LM-TZ in Tanzania have had a slightly less prominent profile. The IE programme in Tanzania has worked with the county level IE network and has identified advocacy issues, however, it is not clear whether the issues have been submitted and adopted at national level. At local level, comprehensive capacity building of CS has taken place with results. Also, a shared plan for promotion of IE between CS and the FDBs was signed, along with shared actions to capture grassroot policy positions.

Despite IE sub-committees now having been established, and advocacy and outreach to the policy level occur from these, uptake of issues and messages by politicians or by government official has not yet occurred as a direct result of initiatives from FPCT. This is obviously very difficult to achieve however, lack of results in this respect may in the end become dis-encouraging for the super active IE networks and partners at local level.

Advice: IAS should consider revising outcome indicators to better capture the interim process achievements, based on a scaled model for measuring policy results.

FPCT's implementing partners ICD and LMI-TZ, whom both are involved with national advocacy and should be strengthened to take on a more significant role in national advocacy.

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[8] Information Center for Disability, ICD is a DPO and partner in the Tanzania programme. Increasing ínformation and media-outreach, ICD can be helpful. However, it is a huge task to upgrade media exposure. LMI-TZ also has its own program on IE in Tanzania as well as in East Africa, and have considered leverage to reach this agenda. It requires human resources with the specific technical skills.

[9] The NEC in Kenya is named Elimu Yetu Coalition (EYC), and in Tanzania it is TEN/MET. SCEFA is the network in Sudan.

[10] Processing of issues from the local to the national level differs however, there is a democratic structure where IE civil society networks and NGOs at district, county and regional level identify, discuss and prioritize issues before a selection is eventually submitted to the sub-committee at national level.

Analysing the local-national connection as an organic, linear and upwards link creates a wrong perspective. Instead, it should be analysed as a circular and loop-oriented relation. Throughout the MTR it became clear that the issues related to linking local with national advocacy levels may be more complex than just local partners obtaining the capacity to connect with the national level. It is as much the capacity of the national level to meaningfully connect to the very local level that is needed. Inputs to advocacy from local level is fundamental for the NECS and IE sub-committees. The local is their source of information and evidence. It is from here NECs obtain legitimacy and access to the direct voice from those affected. IAS and partners are extraordinarily well positioned as a source for evidence and to convey the voice of PWDs, CSEN and their parents, accounting for obstacles to access to education and the social exclusion they all face. So *"promoting advocacy issues from local to national level"* as part of the objective should not be limited to lifting advocacy issues to the national level via the NEC and the sub-committees.

3.2.1.1 Component 1: Need for changes, and adaptation in the remaining period

The IE programme has done very well within the first two years, with respect to achieve a role in national advocacy. Despite increased capacity of local actors that are very active at local level, these are not the ones present in lobby and advocacy at national level. Here IAS or partners act as intermediaries. Local networks are not directly interacting with the national level. In the NEC track, they undertake their designated role within the layered democratic system, designed to cascade from local to national level. They are actively engaged in the IE county level networks, engaging with other organisations analysing and identifying issues to be lifted to the policy level. This work should be continued – and enhanced to also give children a voice into this process.

IAS should furthermore engage in developing events and collaborative structures facilitating direct collaboration, with the NEC and sub-committees coming to local level. IAS should convince the NECs to engage in more direct dialogue, on-the-ground-meetings and feed-back loops to deepen accountability by direct and in-persons engagement with the local level, with the local CS but equally with parents and children. IAS should spearhead that NECs and sub-committees rethink their roles and the hierarchy and understand that they may in the longer run lose their credibility and legitimacy if not increasing authenticity in representing the people. Genuine representativity is eventually also the only way to gain a voice with politicians.

A simplified focus on learning and dissemination of established results should be reflected in the RF for the remaining period. The RF should during the remaining period, focus on the outcome-based indicators, thereby asserting partners to establish new achievable targets, that help focus on their long term contribution to CSEN and marginalized girls and the impact of the IE program.

Recommendation: The IE programme should prioritise to develop their messaging and information work related to building links between local and national advocacy – and radically upscale it.

To advocates as effectively as possible for CWDs, IAS and the IE programme should upgrade their media outreach and monitor their achievements in this respect. Tanzania in particular, needs to increase visibility, by setting up events and develop media coverage, aiming for a wider outreach, also at the national level, and when possible, it should be done with implementing sub-partners (particular relevant for Tanzania). IAS and all participating partners should significantly escalate their dissemination of evidence and change stories, developing materials suitable for the NECs and IE sub-

committees' advocacy but equally, supporting IAS and partners in parallel, in collaboration with their affiliate ODPS and DPOs engage with politicians and government officials.[11]

3.2.2 Strategic review of component 2

Component 2 focuses on the local IE network and the CS groups and their ability to promote IE, including collaboration with FDBs. IE is measured on the degree of assessment of CSEN, access to education and learning outcomes for CSEN and marginalized girls and transition of CSEN and marginalized girls to next level/class. The component also includes activities aiming to advance children's participation and voices. Protection, likewise, PSEAH is founded under component 2.

Strategically, the local IE CS networks and groups form the backbone of IE programme. Their diversity, commitment and dedication is the strongest dynamo with respect to achieve concrete on-the-ground improvements for CWDs. The IE networks at local level consist of a diverse constellation of CS actors, involving CBOs, NGOs, DPOs and religious and village leadership structures. Moreover, the Family Support Groups, FSGs and the children's self-advocacy groups are affiliated to the IE networks and play a prominent role in promoting IE. Collaboration and coordination with the government officials is obviously key, and SNE government officials or assessment teachers are becoming involved with the IE network in a common quest to raise quality.[12] During the MTR field visit in Tanzania, the team could observe a constant flow of communication and interaction among the various actors, with a high level of familiarity with each other. The IE networks and groups also engages with the ordinary school governance structure, involving Parents-Teachers Associations, PTAs and School Management Committees, SMCs. While coming to understand the needs and priorities related to IE, such mainstream structures are able to support and fend for CSEN and marginalized girls. In mobilizing for IE, teachers´ unions[13] were likewise mentioned as strategic allies.

Out-of-school-girls are identified as part of the community outreach work, conducted by teachers and the IE networks. The IE programme provides gender disaggregated data, monitoring girls learning performance and transition from one grade to the next. Also, retention is measured separately. The IE programme provides special support to girls, including segregated toilet facilities and provision of sanitary kits. Protection of girls is addressed as integrated in the implementation of the PSEAH policy and capacity building in this respect. Awareness about the importance of girls' inclusion in education and advocacy for this, is a central part of the IE advocacy conducted by the local IE networks.

Local IE networks thus play a strategic role in the fight for full parity in terms or equal rights to quality educational. All interviewees were cognizant and appreciative of this. Both Tanzania and Kenya have in the recent years adopted a Competence-Based Curriculum, the CBC, increasing the emphasis on learning achievement and transition from one grade to the next. This also has had a positive spill-over effect on inclusive education, affirming the rights of all children. Yet another recent achievement in both countries, first Tanzania and followed by Kenya is the legal acts allowing girls to return to education once having given birth. This is an immensely important step, taking into account the focus of the IE programme on

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[11] Such double or multi-track approach to policy influencing is emphasized in the proposal, p. 21pp.

[12] SNE-officers at district level. The government officers met, (Dodoma and Bahi in Tanzania and Tana River in Kenya) also displayed an extraordinary commitment with personal engagement and very close relations to the various families with CWds. In this sense, all actors are engaging from the same point of departure, a genuine respect and commitment to promote the inclusion of CSEN and girls in education.

[13] As part of the Tanzania Teachers Union, the TTU the teachers.

poor and marginalized girls. These girls will proportionately be facing higher exposure to early pregnancies.

Strategically, emphasis the work with parents has in phase 3 increased. It is often regarded a curse to have a CWD, and often it is socially stigmatizing. As a result of this, families become isolated. There is a widespread tendency that fathers leave the family, letting the mother alone with the psychological, social and practical challenges. The IE programme has organized parents in Family Support Groups, of which some have been trained as ToT, providing psychosocial support helping other parents. Some of these FSGs groups run massive local lobby campaigns and do a lot of outreach and messaging to enable that CWDs are becoming accepted by the communities and loved and supported by the families. At local level, parents are among the most effective advocates so investments in parents gives the high return. Parents are the most trustworthy parts in lobby and advocacy and norm change, bringing lived experiences and insights. To this comes the positive psycho-social effects of parents coming to terms with having a CWD and becoming able to appreciate and love their child.

Strategic services play a huge and multi-facetted role in the IE programme. Services are for good reasons a contested area. Aiming to bring equal opportunities, or at least access to education it often requires special supportive measures, assistive devices. With new laws and policies on IE in both Tanzania and Kenya, there is now a budget for IE, even it seems too limited to cover the needs, and are not yet fully implemented throughout the systems allocation mechanisms. In the previous IE phases, the IAS strategy has been to develop some models that should inspire as a standard for appropriate provision. Such models include (i) assessment centers to diagnose each individual child and facilitate placement and treatment. (ii) Model schools with assistive devices such as ramps and toilets with access and privacy for CWDs. (iii) The consultants were truly impressed with the proficiency demonstrated by teachers and those working on the assessment centers. Governments in both Kenya and Tanzania provide training of teachers.[14] On top if this, IAS has added training, based on a very comprehensive IE manual and a specific IE pedagogy. This has worked as a catalyst for deeper understanding among teachers who have become extraordinary committed and aware of their role as trailblazers. Assessment centers and model schools showcase the needs for infrastructure as an inherent part of IE. In average there are to two assessment centers, and two model schools in each programme area – all developed with the goal of working as models for government and other actors to replicate. The model schools and assessment centers have been visited by politicians and government officials. The assessments centers are the only operating centers in the regions, and are being extensively used, and now financed by government for their future operation.

Children themselves have become active and participate in building an enabling environment, promoting social inclusion and recognition of the rights of CWDs to education. This is an innovation of strategically high importance and has turned out to be very successful, giving a direct voice to the main beneficiary group, the children. The term self-advocates or self-advocacy covers the activities undertaken in the school clubs, girls' clubs or mixed clubs integrating a number of CWDs. It was an amazing experience to observe and talk to the children from these clubs during the field visit in Tanzania. The children have had their presentation and communication skills build and have developed confidence. They explained how they visited other schools in the neighborhood and gave performances and delivered messages and insights regarding CSEN, aiming to change peer pupils' attitudes from potentially discriminatory to understanding the equal rights of CSEN. The integrated clubs and the outreach work and awareness raising activities these children's clubs conduct is of outmost importance

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[14] Authorities training is in its infant stages and is not always sufficient, in particular with regards to the demand for competences needed in order to undertake proper assessment of CWDs.

leading to a higher level of acceptance and appreciation and less discrimination among the next generation. The introduction of children's voices as a component in phase III was in the application presented as a novelty, and this has turned out to be a very success innovation.

3.2.2.1 Component 2: Need for changes and adaptation in the remaining period

The IE networks, the CS groups of various kinds and the collaborative structures should be continued as their impact at the local level is unmatched and significant. However, two aspects should be addressed. The networks tend to become too engaged at the practical and operational level. During interviews, they tend to perceive of their role to maximize the actual enrolment of CSEN and girls. In the same vein, as a result of the operational framework given priority, often it seems that government representatives are permanently sitting in the networks.

Advice: the IE programme should seek to re-vitalize the policy roles and critical mindset of the local networks and relevant local actors. With reference to component 1, IAS should continue to organize for a serious of encounters and attractive events at local level, where the NEC and IE sub-committee are invited and engaged for future scaling.

The IE programme has provided facilities such as assessment centers, renovations to build disability friendly schools and teacher training to increase teachers' proficiency with respect to support to CWD. **Strategic services** have plaid a significant role and been particular strategic as a lever for engagement with government. The MTR consultancy team finds the strategy with model schools and centers has had a significant impact, nevertheless, time has come for a revision.

Recommendation: It is recommended to re-strategize Component 2 and to a large extend replace strategic services with a focus on outreach and replication in new schools, here mobilising civil society, parents and children to engage in local advocacy and support of CSEN and marginalized girls.

This requires building IE support frameworks, mainly the CS infrastructure that can be applied in neighboring schools. Aiming for transfer and integration of some of the IAS special approaches to IE to more schools requires an agreed framework of the content of such. Obviously, it cannot be the full package with renovated school buildings and assessment centers, due to the expenses. Also, with the new legislation on IE, the governments responsibilities regarding basic infrastructure should be counted in. This is a significant opportunity in Kenya and Tanzania. However, the existing assessment centers, models schools with facilities and the CS infrastructures should in the remaining period be taken maximum advantage of and showcased to the level possible. A standard for replication based in civil society interventions will presumably be replication of the advocacy structures, such as establishing FSGs and children's self-advocacy groups and facilitation of knowledge sharing and peer to peer meetings with the existing model schools, inviting teachers, parents and children from the neighbor IE schools to visit and learn from the model schools.[15] Replication should in general avoid new activities that involves brickworks. While interviewing a range of actors, almost all envision future development of IE to be entirely associated with buildings and assistive devices. As an example, one SNE director was however very creative. He found that identification was the most important in order to promote IE and to increase identification he suggested to establish a kind of roadshow. He suggested a bus with IE trained teachers, IE network members from Dodoma and Bahi and information materials. The bus should then travel from place to place, also heading for some of the remote areas, where, according to Mr. Kambi the civil society and parents should be helped to organize themselves to advocate for IE.

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[15] Asking a number of IE actors and staff how many such IE neighboring schools with an IE standard would be possible, they responded that at least 10, maybe 20 per model school area could be established and supported.

Where the majority interviewed about how they envisioned progression of a potential continuation of IE, asked where to move to from here, the vast majority suggesting more accessible buildings and provision of personal device. In supporting CWD, buildings and visible devices is understood as support - physical ramps, lifts etc. wheelchairs. While having a very limited budget for IE, in Tanzania, government has even started building boarding sections. However, asking parents and children, socially oriented care and sustenance contributions as IAS provides are highly valued. Another aspect of focusing entirely on ramps and other access-measures is that CWDs with learning disabilities this way receives less of the resources available compared to CWDs who are struggling with physical impairment.

Children themselves have in this third phase become active in building an enabling environment for CWDs and marginalized girls. This is defined as an innovation – and of strategically high importance.[16] The outreach work and awareness raising undertaken by children's clubs seems to have a high impact, raising acceptance and reducing discrimination among peers. Systematic evidence should be built for this success and the innovation and novelty should be used in media outlets. Also, the sustainability factor for the children's clubs must be included in the exit strategies to ensure the best conditions for them to remain as part of the CS landscape.

3.2.3 Strategic review of component 3

Component 3 is designed to promote IE in fragile contexts. This component exclusively involves South Sudan and Sudan.

The objective of the intervention is *"the innovative promotion of IE in fragile contexts through a nexus approach"*, the innovative element being to advance IE in the difficult circumstances, often not even allowing for mainstream education It is all very open ended and unclear in its definition. It is stated that related to a nexus approach, the IE intervention seeks to support infrastructures around IE, mainly strengthening capacity of teachers and rebuild school equipment. Strategic services aim to improve school infrastructure, explained to play a crucial role marking hope and normalcy and seek to bridge to government representatives. Strategically, it also sets out to involve PWDs and OPDs as a way to sustain the support to IE in general and the recognition of CWDs in particular.

Despite the short implementation period, NCDO in **South Sudan** has managed to present significant results related to outcomes and indicators under component 3. In South Sudan they even managed to operationalize the new theme of children's voice and their self-advocacy, by training a group of CSEN and girls. Also, the exit was well planned for.[17] The IE programme was designed to promote a conducive space for advancing IE in an emergency and conflict prone contexts. Building a conducive space involved a long range of peace building initiatives such as events, gatherings, messaging, information materials in local languages as well as facilitating encounters and meetings, bringing together conflicting groups and also host and IDP communities.[18] To this comes a spectrum of capacity building reaching local authorities, stakeholders, civil society actors, teachers, parents and children themselves.[19] Service delivery was tailored to ensure that the IE support infrastructure was well equipped and upgraded, providing assessment centers with sufficient materials and assistive devices and managing to assess and place as many as 70 CSEN. Moreover, the model schools had their stock of learning materials upgraded. Importantly, in SSD, the IE programme partner, the NCDO undertook a

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[16] This supports a rights-based approach, allowing children influence on areas and issues directly affecting them.
[17] See also section the section on exits.
[18] According to the status report reaching a total of 6,953 people
[19] Evidence to be found in the status report

well strategized lobby effort, throughout the year working closely with and ensuring the backing of the local government.[20] Facilities such as assessment centers and model schools were handed over to the government when closing the programme in SSD by the end of 2022.

With respect to nexus, the status report account for having convened the inclusion of OPDs and government as part of the exit process. However, the issues related to specific aspects of nexus (infrastructure and capacity, mainly) and integration of IE in EIE seems not to have been addressed separately. The outcome indicators are unfortunately not designed to capture this.

With **Sudan**, the issue is the same. Neither have the strategic aspects related to integration of IE in emergencies and the nexus aspects been addressed separately by IAS Sudan, nor have consultants been able to document any potential learnings to be elicited. Where good progress seems to have been made during 2022, unfortunately a lot was lost during the eruption of a civil war since April 2023.

3.2.3.1 Component 3: Need for changes, adaptation in the remaining period

In general, IAS has in South Sudan and Sudan achieved a significant track record in implementation of IE in fragile and conflict prone contexts. It is evident in SSD in particular that the strategic approach has been sound and the performance was high. The ability of IAS and partners to support IE infrastructure improvement with a specific focus on the vital role of civil society actors is clear and evident. IE competence building of teachers and the outstanding capacity in terms of assessment to provide children with the right support also stands out. However, the specific capacity related to applying a triple nexus approach has not been collected and assessed – nor has the special achievement related to promotion of "*promotion of IE in fragile contexts*". Learnings related to what it takes promote IE in fragile contexts would have been helpful, addressing applied approaches, special challenged encountered and promising practices appearing.

4. Review of budget performance so far and need for possible adjustments

4.1 Budget performance

The initial budget submitted with the proposal was reduced with 20% in December 2021, right before start of the programme.[21] Unfortunately, this caused challenges as the original budget had been shared with partners, who expecting a more ample budget and when reduced, partners had to revise their activities and budgets accordingly. Two specific actions served to make up for the 20% reduction: a significant cut in the Sudan budget, and the decision to phase out Sudan a year ahead of the conclusion of the programme.[22] Also, the process involved a reduction of the budget margin. Later in 2022 and 2023, IAS received a cofounding sum of Läkarmissionen, LMI, which partly covered up for the reduction in the budget. This supplementary allocation was however expressed wished from 2024 to be transferred into a direct support for LMI-TZ, rather than channeled through IAS, due to changing organizational

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[21] The reduction is a result of the CISU system, where proposals with lowest ratings are cut with 20%. As mentioned, IAS received some low ratings on some of the products in the proposal package.
[22] Ulrik Jacobsen explains the decision to close Sudan earlier was based on doubt about their ability to effectively undertake advocacy at national level.

procedures and priorities.[23] An example of an adaptive approach, is an allocation of extra funds, from the pool of unallocated funds submitted to support during a severe draught period in Kenya in 2022.

According to the finance officer, the budget margin is below the ideal, however this is sough compensated for by very tight monitoring and technical support. A proficient finance officer based in Nairobi monitors the financial management, encompassing all the three IE programme countries with regular travelling to the offices.[24] The finance officer at HQ level who also, in close collaboration with the Nairobi based officer runs annual monitoring visits, with checks and controls and also conducting customized training of local staff. Spending is in large following the yearly schedules – apart from Sudan where implementation is made impossible due to the conflict.

It comes out clearly throughout the MTR that IAS has set out to systematically improve their financial management. In general, the consultant finds that IAS has solid systems and an appropriate staffing as explained. The budget is developed according to instructions[25], and IAS has a comprehensive and well tested in First and foremost, the monitoring has become significantly tighter compared to earlier it has been explained and justified. This involves for instance monthly spending reports, matched against implementation of planned activities which obviously has provided a more solid and inform basis for timely financial transfers. Also, financial management is increasingly engaged in establishing clear cost categories and lines between activities, management and operation costs, setting a 40/60 balance, aiming to increase this to 35/65 in favor of partners and activities. IAS is thus aligned to state-of-the-art with development aid during recent years has increased the share going to local partners and beneficiaries.

Advice: IAS is commended for committing to strengthen financial management and raise efficiency. With respect to the ambitions of improving the solidity of financial reporting, this is thought to require a clearer chain of command and clearer roles between finance and programme staff at country level. It is advised that IAS at HQ level addresses the issue and support in streamlining stronger consolidation procedures.[26] HQ finance staff and the programme director should consider organize for online meetings to support better consolidation procedures. Likewise, IAS should seek to reach an agreement with LMI on joint implementation of MOU for implementation of advocacy in Tanzania.

4.2 Efficiency

As part of the processes during phase III, aiming to systematically strengthen financial management, also a parallel process aiming to review and increase efficiency at partner level has been initiated. Thorough discussions regarding standards for meeting facilities and food, hand-outs, per diem to participants etc. have been undertaken with implementing partners. Also, the automaticity in running certain support activities has been questioned to ensure that it is need based and that impact is

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[23] Due to unsettle negotiation with respect to conditions and priorities put forward by the LMI, IAS and LMI/LMI-TZ is currently re-negotiation the terms of the funding to be used for the remaining period. It is anticipated that the funds will be transferred directly from LMI to LMI-TZ, and will be allocated toward the accomplishment of Outcome 1 in Tanzania. Accordingly there is a need to re-vise budgets.

[24] Due to the conflict, external controllers or auditors cannot travel into Sudan. It is thus recommended to seek for a local, independent consultant with financial proficiency who can be assigned as a short term consultant to conduct a spot-check review of the programme performance and financial management in Sudan. Further could the consultant be able to document the result in regards to the Nexus Approach this would be favorable for learning of IE in unstable context.

[25] CISU 2023: Guide to programme budget.

[26] Consultations between staff groups as part of the consolidation process seems to be unclear regarding roles. Procedures are often missing due to undefined hierarchies among staff groups (no one having the mandate to lead and decide) and management may not pay attention to such ´details´.

constantly measured. This is all about changing potential automatism to improve reflections and advance adaptive management and maximize the outcomes of the programme.

Advice: IAS has taken it a great leap forward but still, IAS is encouraged to continue systematization and documentation of its efficiency efforts with partners. IAS is encouraged to consider the long-term sustainability as cost allocation is considered to increase likelihood of sustained activities beyond program period. The set-up and management at HQ level seem adequate and moderate, however, IAS could when convenient conduct an efficiency screening of their HQ systems aligning other projects with the IE program.

5. Review of special issues (according to ToR)

5.1 MEAL system: [SPECIAL ISSUE 1]

While MEAL includes the following areas: Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning. It are mainly the issues of Monitoring and Learning that is addressed in this MTR. System-wise, monitoring is supported by MEAL officers assigned to each of the country offices and a lead MEAL advisor at HQ level but based in Kenya. Overall overview and quality assurance lay with the global team, the overall management team, that meets every other week. The consultant considers the described set up a sound organizational and functional frame for quality assurance of the MEAL system.

5.1.1 Monitoring, results aggregation and reporting

The overall result framework, RF encompasses three thematic components. Under each of these one finds two to three outcomes. The stated outcome targets are in many cases difficult to measure up against with targets formulated as overall intentional states of affairs, lacking concrete thresholds and a clear demarcation of completion. The indicators would benefit from a review as to ensure continued relevance and basic clarity. [27]

Outputs can be found in the country disaggregated RFs. Outputs present clear targets and are to the point in most cases. The contributions from the local context specific RFs into the overall RF requires that the lead MEAL advisor manually ´translates` and transfers the local results into the overall RF, to consolidate the achievements for a certain outcome. Asked about the added value of having these local RFs, the lead MEAL advisor explained that the intention was to allow for context-specific individual focus areas.

Advice: Even the country specific aspects is to some extend a legitimate argument, it is advised to include country specific outputs in the overall RF. For now, the overall RF includes a column with outputs targets although it is not clear which outputs these refers to.[28]

Reporting is extensive and can be reduced, allowing MEAL staff time to focus otherwise on learning and impact. Quarterly narrative reporting is extremely comprehensive, some of the reports are of the lengths of around 50 pages, without adding any significant value with regards to learning. The quarterly reporting template is well designed and addresses the key areas, however, the section on reporting of progress is too detailed, too repetitive, requiring detailed explanation on any insignificant achievement

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[27] Some indicators are complex, multi-dimensional and conditional. As an example: Sudan outcome 1.1: *"Decision makers are influenced by advocacy alliances, with support from local partners, ODPs, IE networks and CS groups, towards peace and a conducive environment for IE, and dialogue with government authorities and their responsibilities."*

[28] Moreover, some could better be characterized as activity indicators.

or deviation, also at activity level. A supplement is the indicator tracking template.[29] This seems also not to add specific value as progress related to the indicators is likewise presented in the other narrative reports.

Also, a synthesis report annually is developed, the CISU status report. This report provides an important stock taking, overview of achievements and an update on results at outcome level. This is where the strategic level is clearest addressed. These learnings should be available locally and shared as part of accomplishing outcome 1, raising learnings local to a national level.

Recommendation: The RF should be reviewed and modified, building a consolidated framework better fit to capture and assemble additional results, deriving from the proposed strategic adaptations.

Meticulous monitoring and control should prevail, obviously, but reporting could be simplified and shortened, with less reporting on the activity level. IAS should strengthen the strategic perspective, and thus focus on overview of achieved outcomes and the wider impact. Quarterly reports could thus be replaced with financial reports with a column linking to programmatic performance and completion of activities.[30] These could be replaced with short consolidated semi-annual strategic status updates, which will be better fit to provide management with sufficient background for initiating adaptations at the strategic level in due time.[31] As consultants we have recommend a modified the RF.

5.1.1.2 Quality assurance and validity of data

Backing data to establish the results is well controlled. At local level, the data is collected, discussed, checked and verified in monthly synergy meetings involving all partners and stakeholders. The data thus passes the country level MEAL officer for yet another control process and is then finally submitted to the lead HQ MEAL officer. This is a monthly process. To increase legitimacy, it is advised per default to require copies of the underlaying data sheets as attachment to the monthly and quarterly reporting.

In phase III, in each country, the staffing of the IE programme was expanded with a part time MEAL officer. This has raised quality and validity of data at all levels, according to the lead MEAL officer, Mrs. Isabel Wamuyu. Baseline studies likewise supports evidence of progress.[32] The lead MEAL officer is wisely placed at the regional level in proximity to the IE programme countries, which increase efficiency, allowing for short travels on a regular base to support the countries. Also, IAS staff at HQ level conduct regular monitoring visits, in average two per year. IAS shall be commended for high quality reporting from the monitoring visits. In summary, IAS and the IE programme can be said to be wisely organized serving to ensure quality of data and validity.

Advise: The Job Descriptions for the MEAL officers should be revised and focused on Learning during the final period of the project.

5.1.1.3 Digital MEAL

IAS has initiated to tailor a MEAL system for digital management of data. In general, digital solutions are recommendable and secure storage of data. However, as confirmed by a number of staff

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[29] Indicator tracking contains the baseline information.

[30] Scope of the quarterly reports should be reduced to ideally one of third of the present size. This is to raise efficiency - achieve the most important information in the cheapest way – avoiding the high amount of staff-time going into reporting and filing in the various sheets.

[31] Format could be copied from the annual CISU reporting.

[32] Data is also Baselines differ significantly from country to country. The short indicator-based Sudan baseline provides a useful overview and is sufficient. Value for money should be looked into, also taking note of the lengthy baseline report in South Sudan that only operated one year. Most probable, fortunately the baseline report is however useful as South Sudan is said to continue IE activities after IAS support ended with year 2022.

unfortunately the system has not been adequately designed and has not yet added value. Nevertheless, for the purpose of information, it is rather processed qualitative information that is needed. It is evidence of results to build strengthened advocacy cases that is at the center. [33]

Advise: With respect to storage of quantitative data from outputs, it is advised to leave the present IAS tailored digital model behind. In the longer run IAS could test recognized digital data systems[34] which allows for more sophisticated data management.

5.1.2 The IE programme and related learning

With two years left for implementation, the IE programme should start the consolidation and preservation of learnings, involving capture of promising practices and upscaling of successful approaches. A solid program handbook has been developed and could be of benefit to many beyond IAS and IAS partners. Concepts and modalities are solidly tested and functioning, and must be sufficiently solidified and replicable, which implies that internal learning pathways would benefit from a ´strategic overhaul`. IE programme could take advantage of **the collective google drive** as a source for learning, by making it available beyond IAS and its partners. To facilitate this, the MEAL coordinator could lead an onboarding process aiming to commit staff groups to systematically upload and for everyone to make use of the variety of valuable materials, such as manuals, guides and operational research.

The unique concept of **operational research** which IAS and partners have developed stands out as of special value. It is directly linked to programming, addressing selected issues and approaches. Each country decides on their particular priorities regarding operational research. This concept was assessed to be very useful and relevant in the previous phase. Each country has two operational research pieces on their budget. Two research reports, from Tanzania and Kenya respectively have yet been completed in the phase III.

Advice: Research designed to address issues of particular interest to IE sub-committees, may be considered a feasible way to strategically position IAS and partners. Likewise, it may also be considered to include cross-country research. LMI-TZ could also take responsibility together with ICD to initiative and disseminate specific learnings as part of advocacy.

This **annual cross-country conference** constitutes a significant opportunity for sharing and learning. In 2024, the conference took place in early February in Tanzania and the MTR consultant had the opportunity to participate. Staff in different positions are at the conference and strategic as well as technical issues are addressed. The main purpose is to take stock, to review and plan for adaptations – and to consolidate programmatic cross-learning which the conference gives ample opportunities for.

As the IE programme spans three countries, cross-country perspectives could be given more emphasis. One way of benefitting would be to organised for **cross-country peer learning** with exposure visits, staff swops and on the ground planning to increase effectiveness. Kenya and Tanzania have a lot to learn from each other. Kenya has in comparative terms stronger achievements under component 1 and the opposite is the case regarding component 2, where Tanzania stands out. Such peer learning at implementation level is recognized for rendering strong learning outcomes.

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[33] To meet such needs, IAS should consider train selected staff in using Artificial Intelligence mechanisms and moreover, engage more staff with proficiency in development of captive information products.
[34] Proposed digital systems include SPSS, Stata and KOBO

Advice: It must be noted that the learning outcomes of swaps and exposure visits are dependent on the equivalent level of staff being involved. Exchange should focus on ground staff, those working at the operational level with implementation, with similar proficiencies, in each of the countries involved.[35]

5.2 Phase out of South Sudan and Sumbawanga [SPECIAL ISSUE 2]

5.2.1 Phase out of South Sudan

The rationale for South Sudan, SSD being part of the programme for only one year was driven by the wish to run a solid phase out process. Based on the findings from the capacity review in early 2021, it was recommended to phase out SSD of a future phase III. This was based on the assessment that SDD would not gain the capacity and ability to contribute to the advocacy infrastructure and influence advocacy for IE at the national level in SDD. As this was the proposed focus for a third phase, it led to rule out SDD. At this stage in the phase phase II, LM[36] It was thus decided to include SSD in the first year of phase III, thus advancing sustainability allowing for more time to design and run a solid closure process of the IE programme in Terekeka, giving 2022 for exit.

Ahead of the exit process, an exit strategy and an action plan were developed. These documents contain a long list with 19 key areas, each with a long range of activities that was to be implemented during 2022. Also, it should be taken into account that some of these areas were new or had new angles, expected to be launched, implemented and be concluded within one single year. Nevertheless, SSD appears to have been extremely efficient, and successful in transitioning the following areas: a) school clubs and children's self-advocacy activities and b) the focus on fragility and peace aspects *"Increased community awareness on IE through peace-building initiatives"* and alike *"Improved IE infrastructure for enhanced assessment of children in emergencies"*. The phase out plan is ambitious regarding provision beyond conclusion of the programme, even comprehensive capacity building to take place, based on voluntary provision.[37]

Like in Tanzania (see below) a leadership group was established as an exit facility to promote and lead continuation beyond the funding period during 2022. A long range of key intervention areas was shaped to enhance sustainability. To this end, the focus on lobbying the government to take over key activities, the broader awareness raising and not least provide a comprehensive roll out of tailored capacity building of various civil society groups. Completion of the assessment centers and the model schools supported sustainability, serving as models for showcasing best practices, and being available to the various CS groups active in advocating for IE in the Terekeka county worked as a strong reference point.

Moreover, a selection of income generating activities, IGA were initiated in Terekeka. The IGA provision aims at enhancing the income base for both the SIIE and the three FSGs (a total of 64 people) to help them become able to have livelihood secured and thus being able to allocate time to support IE.[38]

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[35] A tendency to let senior staff and managers pursue such peer learning swaps has taught us that trickle down does not work in this case.
[36] IAS representative in SSD
[37] AIS, 2022: South Sudan Exit Strategy, p. 12.
[38] IGA for the leadership procurement of tents, chairs, utensils and a music system to generate income for the SIIE through hiring out to different groups during events, ceremonies and functions within Sumbawanga. IGA for the FSGs encompass sunflower milling, packaging and selling. A sunflower milling grinder was procured by the programme.

Technical skills provision has included tailoring, weaving and knitting and were supplemented with knowledge about entrepreneurship and marketing.

5.2.2 Phase out in Sumbawanga

The exit from Sumbawanga was motivated and justified by the fact that the area didn't respond efficiently to building direct links to the national level advocacy for policy change which in phase III has become a key programmatic goal. Moreover, it is argued that the IE interventions in Sumbawange had been running for more than 10 years. According to IAS, the IE engagement is likely to continue after the project has closed its engagement in Sumbawanga.[39]

According to the exit strategy, in Sumbawanga the focus is mainly on component 2. The leadership group is expected to continue the IE local support without funding and technical support. The leadership group is a unique structure established for the purpose of the continuation of the IE beyond the present phase III. The continuation of IE beyond the present funding has been titled "Sunbawanga initiatives for IE", SIIE. The leadership group consists of 17 actors and representatives, encompassing also nine program steering committee members and a five members of the disabled peoples umbrella organization, the Tanzania Federation of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities in Tanzania, the SHIVYAWATA. The significant inclusion of OPDs in the composition of the leadership group is a wise move, strategically and operationally. The affiliation with the OPDs may open doors to parliament and government as the disability movement is very well positioned politically. Also, the SHIVYAWATA will be key in sustaining continuous affiliation with the National Education Coalition in Tanzania, TEN/MET, and their sub-committee on inclusion. A monitoring visit in late 2023 showed considerable achievements in the IE programme in Sumbawanga.[40] Current involvement and provision from government is promising in terms of sustainability prospects. The government has since 2021 continued to implement IE in the district, for instance supported 24 schools to become inclusive.

In summary, the plan for the continuation of the programme can be said to be very ambitious, most probably also too ambitious. The exit strategy would have benefitted from a bit more critical and prioritized implementation plan. Nevertheless, the leadership group is a unit composed to ensure representativity and guarantee the involvement of experienced actors. The leadership group may shrink in seize during the years to come but even with a significant reduction in number of members it can continue to be operational to a certain extend. *"This organization (the leadership group, red.) is composed of individuals representing various groups who have collaborated with the project since its initiation and who have got the interest of CSEN and girls at heart."[41]*

5.2.3 Consolidated assessment of the conceptual design applied to exit processes
There are full three exit processes involved in this programme. Due the current conflict, the Sudan exit planned for the end of 2024 is expected to be re-designed. The South Sudan and the Sumbawanga exits have been well designed, it appears that the applied exit concept has been purposeful and worked well. The exit concept in mentioning involves two main tracks: one being to establish the leadership groups, based on a representativity from the IE networks and the CS groups but also including experienced individuals, such as the chairs from the PSCs. United in the leadership group, they take responsibility for

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[39] Request for modifications accepted by CICU, December 2022.
[40] 2023 monitoring visit (11th – 21st December) and reporting by Isabel Wamuyu (IE MEAL coordinator)
[41] IAS, 2023: Exit strategy for Sumbawanga, Tanzania. P. 8.

continuation of the IE lobby and advocacy beyond the project period ensuring that IE will continue to be given attention and implemented. The other track is to strengthen the leadership groups and affiliated groups providing tailored support to IGA, with income generating activities that will increase the income base and thus allow these groups to better have time to volunteer in support to IE.

CISU has requested for an impact study of the exit processes. The consultant finds it relevant to document the effect and the relevancy of the conceptual approach. Documentation of the mentioned tracks will contribute to deeper understanding of the effect of the mentioned components, in particular to establish to what extent, also timewise, volunteering can be retained. It should be noted that the impact study in mentioning is not expected to be able to encompass the Sudan exit. It is not anticipated to be possible to run a formalised exit process in Sudan as the prolonged conflict will prohibit access to the country.

5.3 Programme ability to work with advocacy including linking to the national level [SPECIAL ISSUE 3]

The ability of the IE programme to work with advocacy, linking local to the national level has been dealt with and concluded under section 3.2.1.

5.4 Potential needs for changes in the programme for the remaining two years [SPECIAL ISSUE 4]

The needs for changes are attended to throughout the report. Needs for changes have been addressed in different ways, including being integrated in the text without any special marking or needs for changes are highlighted and appear as advice or recommendations respectively. Both advice and recommendations are marked with red. Recommendations are furthermore listed in sections 6.2.

On top of the needs for change already dealt with, two additional areas nominees to change are dealt with in the sections below.

5.4.2 Precipitated exit from Sudan

Based on the context and the programme results, another central adaptation is proposed. Sudan experienced an outbreak of conflict in April 2023. Since, implementation of activities has been limited and IE activities have been put to almost a complete stop. Permissions for implementation cannot be achieved as none of the rivalling parties hold authority. In the Dilling area where the IE programme is implemented, currently no education is taking place as schools provide residency for internally displaced people, IDPs. Non-formal education, ALP, which has been attempted to be establish as an alternative addressing the IDPs and locals who stay back, this could in theory also support IE. However, the ALP programme cannot officially be appropriated.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Sudan continues to the end of the year 2024 on a ´survival budget` to allow IAS Sudan and closest partners to function as political observers and run some adequate small-scale activities[42] with the IDP community.

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[42] Dialogue activities that are small interactions and awareness raising meetings, led by the IDP community that that can be conducted without permission from authorities.

5.4.3 Re-stratification to strengthen PSEAH

PSEAH is the abbreviation for Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment. IAS has in recent years engaged in formalization and mainstreaming due diligence in rolling out child protection and safeguarding. The issue is measured via the RF and results are few.[43] IAS has all policies and procedures in place: a child protection policy; a PSEAH policy; a section on the issue in the IE manual; a complaint response policy and a complaint log. The PSEAH implementation has followed the action plan, including providing staff and partners with basic training. Also, the issue was addressed during the annual conference in 2022, with a presentation of Disability-Inclusive Child Safeguarding.

As accounted for, significant efforts have been put in place, however, the consultant finds that there is a need to further attend to the issue to ensure leverage. This is based on a number of observations, e.g. during the MTR field review in Dodoma and Bahi the local partners and actors in no instances mentioned the issue. Also, during the annual conference there was a relatively low commitment to engage in the discussion about the issue. Yet another triangulating observation is that the issue of child exploitation and harassment seems almost absent in the quarterly narrative reports. The CISU status report for 2022 only accounts for skills among staff and partners developed. While declaring commitment to a rights-based approach, IAS should observe the principles laid down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child[44] and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the CRPD[45], respectively. IAS must take due action to ensure to curb the significantly elevated risk for harassment and sexual abuse that children with disabilities face.[46]

The feel of urgency was further raised while interviewing the girls club member in Dodoma.[47] The team of consultants while exploring a different issue, focusing on how the club can support children in skills building and confidence and their ability to support each other, unasked the children brough up the issue of sexual exploitation of the CWDs, also explaining that the boys the club children were particularly exposed to sexual exploitation. The children emphasised how friends in the clubs served as an important source of comfort in this respect.[48] Yet another source of information is the specific baselines on child abuse and exploitation, undertaken in Kenya.[49] This baseline further stipulates the need for action.

Recommendation: IAS should give priority to develop and implement a strategic cross-country PSEAH intervention as part of the IE-sub committees with NEC during the remaining two years and thus increase performance and results related to protection across country. Building national coalition on

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[43] Outcome 2.4 and indicator 2.4.4: "Decreased incidences of child (CSEN and girls) abuse and sexual harassment within the target communities".

[44] https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child

[45] https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities

[46] Children and adolescents with disabilities are 3 to 4 times more likely to experience physical, sexual violence and neglect and facing significantly increased risk of sexual violence as up to 68% of girls and 30% of boys with intellectual or developmental disabilities are sexually abused before reaching their 18th birthday.

[47] An integrated club with also boys and children with disabilities.

[48] For ethical reasons, we did not go further into details, as we were with the whole group of children.

[49] The PSEAH baseline in Kenya for instance shows that the prevalence is high, with 53% of adults claiming to have knowledge of sexually harassed/exploited/abused/impregnated boys and girls. The MTR consultant sees this as indicating a high level of cases, although the team behind the report concludes that this level is considered moderate/relatively low. See also IAS, April 2023: An assessment to determine the risk of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) in the IE programme target area – Hola.

this main-stream policy area, could become a great resource and learning and networking opportunity also for the national advocacy on issues related to CWD.

CWDs face disproportionate high rates of abuse and harassment. IAS is encouraged to add additional measures to make sure the organisation will be successful in implementing PSEAH. It is a sensitive issue, and experience shows lots of tacit resistance at all levels should be expected. The first requirement for succeeding is that the global team marks the importance by taking lead and consistently follow up.[50] One initiative could be to appoint a staff member as focal point, who should be supported in obtaining the proficiency needed to guide and ensure state-of-the-art in roll out of actively fighting sexual and other forms of exploitation. Moreover, IAS is highly encouraged to systematically develop their prevention work to include wider norm change endeavours, along with advocacy aiming to change prevailing negative attitudes towards disabilities.

Advice: IAS program handbook is a significant contribution to the project implementation. A similar handbook for PSEAH would be of equal benefit.

5.5. The IE-program in relation to and as part of the overall strategy and thematic areas of IAS-DK [special issue 5]

IAS is founded on Christian values and is the Mosaik churches in Denmark's umbrella organization for relief and development work. The Mission of IAS is to: *"Save lives, create opportunity for self-help, give humans dignity through transformation that goes beyond relief and development"*. The vision is *"a transformed society that reflects Gods justice, love and peace. A society where citizens live in respect and care for each other, and where people spiritual, mental and material needs are met"*.[51] The MTR has found, that the IE program is well aligned to the Mission of IAS. The IE program contributes directly to IAS's mission and vision, thereby maximizing impact and relevance internally in the organization. Alignment of program activities, policies, and practices with broader organizational strategies and external mandates is evident. It involves IE program supporting the mission, vision, and objectives of IAS while meeting external requirements. The programme addresses specific priorities identified by IAS's strategic plan and it reflects the organization's commitment to inclusive practices.

IAS strategy prioritizes the strategic driven to needs, considering that needs "are endless". As a result "focus on RBA and prioritization on the marginalized and vulnerable rights by strengthening IAS partners through organization, capacity building that they themselves are capable of implementing the program" is at the core of IAS. The IE program is aligned to this ambition. Its focus on CWD and marginalized girls contributes to IAS fulfilling its strategy ambitions RBA and prioritization of marginalized and vulnerable.

The focus on IE networks and groups at local level – and linking these to the national level – is equally a strong alignment. According to the IAS strategy, it is through partnership that IAS extends its thematic competency. Further, IAS see themselves as uniquely positioned, with a large church-based constituency in Denmark, as well as partners who equally are well positioned and executing their influence. The IE Programme is founded in civic mobilization influenced by the churches although the majority of partners are independent of the churches. More can be done to engage local church-based actors to support groups at local level. Though I can be observed, that while FPCTs church affiliation in Tanzania on a local level is a considerable strength and denominator for success, it may also in certain cases lead to

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[50] The issue of PSEAH was discussed with a former employee, Mr. Stephen Mwaua. Knowing the programme, and the previous attempts to advance the issue, he suggested to let the overall management take lead to ensure action in this area.
[51] IAS strategy 2022-2024

questioning its legitimacy on the national level policy development like in the NECs. It may have partly contributed to the weak results on Outcome 1. In Kenya and Sudan, the implementing partners may be defined as faith based but not church based, which seems to allow for easier access to engage more deliberate with others technical organizations on equal footing in national advocacy.

Recommendation: IAS and partner should give priority to engaging the local church-based partners in scalable and low-cost models for inclusion and support of CWD and marginalized girls. Partnering with church- and faith-based actors ensure strategic compliance, but in the field of national advocacy, partnering with technical capable and positioned organisations such as co-implementing partners should be modelled better.

While monitoring and evaluations frameworks policy and advocacy influencing strategies across programmes in IAS are duplicated across themes, capacity building and compliance is synergetic and community engagement in north and south relevant for IE and other projects as per strategy. As such, IAS identify opportunities to scale up successful approaches and interventions from other projects within the Inclusive Education Program and vice versa and has proven beneficial. Facilitation of learning exchanges between various programme teams to share lessons and best practices has rendered great impact and contributed synergetic and IAS building its capacity as a proficient and technically strong and well positioned civil society organization.

Advice: Further it is recommended, that IAS and its IE partners strengthen its church-based partners to become capable agents of scalable IE program components, as this will increase impact and sustainability in a cost-effective matter.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

A Mid Term Review of the programme has been conducted in the first month of 2024. The programme undergoing an MTR, the titled *"Sustainable and Equal Quality Education Opportunities for All",* implemented by IAS and partners in four countries. Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan and Tanzania is developed to promote IE and reduce the barriers to education and social inclusion, children with disabilities and marginalized girls face.

The programme is found highly relevant. The assessment of performance and results concludes that results and progression against targets differ. There are outcomes with impressive achievements but also outcomes where performance has been weak.

Some adaptations should be undertaken to maximize the effect in the remaining years. A revision of the Result Framework, RF is recommended and expected to strengthen harvesting of results and include systems to make this possible. The MEAL system as such would benefit from simplification and likewise a merger of different documents and templates. However, most importantly, shifting focus to outcomes and change and how these can be attributed to the IE programme, this is the most important modification to engage in.

Strategically, the programme has managed to lift local level advocacy to the national policy level, most prominently in Kenya. The local level interventions comprise a mixture of advocacy and support to strengthening the implementation of quality education which has been successful with a remarkable civic engagement. As a novelty, children themselves obtained a voice and role in advocacy. Setting out to

accentuate a nexus approach and integrating IE into conflict prevention and peacebuilding have been less successful.

Efforts have been put in place to strengthen child protection and prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, PSEAH. Nevertheless, the consultants find that implementation and activities related to child protection must be further advanced to ensure leverage.

In summary, the IE programme is assessed to be well aligned to the IAS mission and strategy. It aligns with the IAS "*focus on RBA and prioritization on the marginalized and vulnerable rights by strengthening IAS partners through organization, capacity building that they themselves are capable of implementing the program.*" is at the core of IAS. The IE program is aligned to this ambition, focusing on CWDs and marginalized girls contributes to IAS fulfilling its strategic ambitions.

7.2 Recommendations

Recommendation: The IE programme should prioritise to develop their messaging and information work related to building links between local and national advocacy – and radically upscale it.

Recommendation: It is recommended to re-strategize Component 2 and to a large extend replace strategic services with a focus on outreach and replication in new schools, here mobilising civil society, parents and children to engage in local advocacy and support of CSEN and marginalized girls.

Recommendation: The RF should be modified, aiming to build a consolidated framework with indicators capturing the strategically most relevant results. Also, monitoring and reporting tools in the IE project should be revised and made significantly more simple.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Sudan continues to the end of the year 2024 on a ´survival budget` to allow IAS Sudan and closest partners to function as political observers and run some adequate small-scale activities[52] with the IDP community.

Recommendation: IAS should give priority to develop and implement a strategic cross-country PSEAH intervention as part of the IE-sub committees with NEC during the remaining two years and thus increase performance and results related to protection across country. Building national coalition on this main-stream policy area, could become a great resource and learning and networking opportunity also for the national advocacy on issues related to CWD.

Recommendation: IAS and partner should give priority to engaging the local church-based partners in scalable and low-cost models for inclusion and support of CWD and marginalized girls. Partnering with church- and faith-based actors ensure strategic compliance, but in the field of national advocacy, partnering with technical capable and positioned organisations such as co-implementing partners should be modelled better.

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[52] Dialogue activities that are small interactions and awareness raising meetings, led by the IDP community that that can be conducted without permission from authorities.