



Endline Evaluation of the Tharaka Nithi Child Protection
(Jukumu Letu) Project in Tharaka South and Igambangombe
Sub-Counties



Final Evaluation Report
ChildFund Kenya

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Abbreviation and Acronyms

AAC	Area Advisory Council
ARP	Alternative Rites of Passage
CBO	Community Based Organisations
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
DCS	Department of Children's Services
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
IDI	In-depth Interviews
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAAC	Local Area Advisory Council
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NCCS	National Council of Children's Services
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
ODK	Open Data Kit
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UNCRC	The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Executive Summary

This report gives feedback of the final evaluation of ChildFund Kenya's Jukumu Letu project in Tharaka Nithi. The three-year project was implemented in partnership with Childrise Development Programme with funding from ChildFund Korea. Specifically, the project was implemented in Tharaka South and Igambangombe sub counties. The project targeted three outcomes namely: Increased responsiveness of the formal and informal child protection mechanisms; increased participation of children in their own protection within Tharaka Nithi County and decreased number of girls adversely affected by retrogressive cultural practices.

Tharaka-Nithi County is divided into five sub-counties namely, Tharaka North, Tharaka South, Chuka, Igambangombe, and Maara with a population of 393, 177 (193 764 males and 199, 406 females). The county is faced with various child protection risks including retrogressive cultural practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriages resulting from deeply entrenched cultural beliefs that lead to child abuse and gender inequality since most of the girls are affected.

Evaluation objectives

The evaluation sought to assess the performance of the project and capture project achievements, challenges and best practices to inform impact and/or future programming in the region. The specific objective was to: assess the responsiveness of existing formal and informal child protection mechanisms and establish existing child protection linkages between formal and informal community-based systems; establish the extent of change in retrogressive cultural practices in the project area especially for girls and indirect effect on boys; establish children's level of understanding on their rights to protection and how they maintain and utilize community-based child protection structures to address cases of abuse experienced by them; and review the project according to the OECD DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability).

Methodology

The evaluation employed a pre-post evaluation design that used mixed methods i.e. quantitative and qualitative data. World Health Organization (WHO) sampling methodology was employed in the endline evaluation with four supervision areas randomly selected per sub-county totalling eight supervision areas. Data were collected on three objectives. A total of 1,077 people participated in the final evaluation. The participants for the surveys included 337 parents and caregivers of children, as well as 312 children aged 12-17 years. Thirty-two KIIs and 17 IDIs were conducted. Key informant interviews were conducted with n=22 people who had specialized knowledge of issues affecting children in Tharaka Nithi County, while n=10 in-depth interviews were conducted with child protection champions and community members who had participated in ChildFund activities. Exploratory analyses were carried out to undertake descriptive statistics with 95% confidence intervals, with frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations computed in the analysis. Grounded theory technique was used to analyse qualitative data and findings triangulated with the quantitative data.

Findings

The Jukumu Letu project contributed to strengthening of the formal child protection coordination mechanism through supporting the proper constituting of Local Area Advisory Councils and training its members as shown on the excerpt below;

Things were very bad before the project. There was no awareness in the village. People could just go Scott free for their actions. But when the project came and we go round with chiefs and police officers, people now took it seriously and mend their ways. Even here, people became responsible. (KII, LAAC Champion)

In addition, there is increased awareness of reporting mechanisms and responsiveness of the formal and informal child protection referral systems. 73 percent of children know where to report or the procedure for reporting child abuse as opposed to the 35% at baseline. On the other hand, 81.6% of caregivers were aware that child abuse should be reported. Moreover, 39.9% of the children had knowledge of reported cases of child abuse and 64.9% were aware of those that had been addressed or resolved. This is an increase from the baseline where only 10% of the children reported knowledge of case resolution.

There was no child friendly rescue centre making the rescue efforts difficult. The project has ensured that the much-needed girls rescue centre is built and followed up to ensure operationalisation albeit with temporal approval from the Department of Childrens services at the time of the evaluation. The centre is yet to be registered. The temporal approval has paved way for rescue of girls and at the time of the evaluation, one girl had been admitted to the facility. The study confirmed that rescue services still go on with the children being taken to the chiefs camp, the police and childrens office. When asked if the children at risk of harmful practices received services, 60% of the children said that the targeted girls are rescued while 40% confirmed the targeted boys being rescued.

At baseline, the study established that children in need of protection were 60%. The proportion of children in need of protection that received support was 36%, with boys said to be receiving more support than girls. Conversely, at endline, 48.4% of children needed protection of whom 50% received support, mostly being girls. This could be explained by presence of a child rescue centre established to support girls rescued from early marriages and female genital mutilation (FGM).

Supporting the involvement of children in child rights clubs, community forums and their involvement in national activities like the Day of the African Child increased their knowledge of their rights and participation in their own protection. This was evidenced by increased access for children to avenues for airing their grievances and complains (60%), children being better informed about their rights of participation and protection regularly (67%), views of children being accorded attention based on their age and maturity (65%) and children are influencing their own environment to be more protective (63%) among other indicators.

The project was relevant to the needs of the communities and Tharaka Nithi policies and priorities even through the COVID19 pandemic period when government restrictions were in force. In addition, it addressed the priorities of the national government as identified in the National Plan of Action for Children 2015-2022, Female Genital Mutilation Act 2011. Some of the issues included; limited of knowledge of child rights and where to report violation and fear of exposure, unavailability of rescue centres for children who are in abusive circumstances; need to enhance child participation, need for strengthening the child protection system at national and county level and insufficient capacity among the duty bearers and need to improve competences in the social workforce serving the children. Similarly, the baseline evaluation

confirmed that Tharaka Nithi children needed care and protection with 51% of the children reporting abuse within their community with FGM and early marriage being some of the abuses.

In terms of coherence, the project complemented similar efforts by Obligation to Protect project which was a 3-year project implemented in Tharaka. The project sought to contribute towards behaviour change on the practice of female genital mutilation/cutting and is ended in 2020. The two project teams worked together to conduct anti FGM campaigns which led to reduction of cases to some extent and increased reporting of child abuse cases. Moreover it was anchored on ChildFund Kenya's Country Strategic Plan 2019-2021 whose one key priorities was to ensure functioning child protection systems that support increased community responsiveness to the protection needs of children among ChildFund's local partners by June 2021. It also linked with the donor's priorities i.e. Child Protection Sector Framework which aims to help children be protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, and abuse to grow in the safe environment through supporting government to fulfil its role and responsibility in exercising children's right, and support to create relevant law and system for child protection.

The project was effective in achieving its planned outcomes of increasing responsiveness of the formal and informal child protection mechanisms, increasing participation of children in their own protection and decreased number of girls adversely affected by retrogressive cultural practices. There was an increase from baseline (10%) to 64.9% of the children had knowledge of reported cases of child abuse which had been addressed or resolved. At baseline, the study established that children in need of protection were 60%. The proportion of children in need of protection that received support was 36%, with boys said to be receiving more support than girls. Conversely, at endline, 48.4% of children needed protection of whom 50% received support, mostly being girls. This could be explained by presence of a child rescue centre established to support girls rescued from early marriages and female genital mutilation (FGD).

Supporting the involvement of children in child rights clubs, community forums and their involvement in national activities like the Day of the African Child increased their knowledge of their rights and participation in their own protection. This was evidenced by increased access for children to avenues for airing their grievances and complains (60%), children being better informed about their rights of participation and protection regularly (67%), views of children being accorded attention based on their age and maturity (65%) and children are influencing their own environment to be more protective (63%) among other indicators.

Children form play groups with their peers. These Children move in groups thus ensuring thus ensuring no child is alone in isolated or dark places, since such areas pose dangers to children. Children also encourage each other to speak out, that is, tell of any harm they are facing to their parents or guardians. Further, children who are older help protect their siblings especially when they are walking around in the neighbourhood or by the roadside. Other children may help in reporting such cases especially when the victim is afraid to tell their parents or guardian. (IDI, Community Leaders).

The project has ensured that the much-needed girls rescue centre is built and followed up to ensure operationalisation albeit with temporal approval from the Department of Childrens services at the time of the evaluation. The centre is yet to be registered. This is not only a great milestone for the project but also for the child protection services in Tharaka Nithi county since by the time of the baseline study, there was no child friendly rescue centre making the rescue efforts difficult. The temporal approval has paved way for rescue of girls and at the time of the evaluation, one girl had been admitted to the facility.

The project efficiency was demonstrated by several parameters. For example, ChildFund Kenya receipt of funds from the donor (ChildFund Korea) was timely, without any delay. The project established a centralized financial and procurement management system at country office in Nairobi. This allowed for efficient monitoring, procurement and disbursement of funds to field project implementation. Disbursement of funds were said to be within the required time. However, some components of the projects were undervalued during the proposal development stage which required re-evaluation thus resulting in delays. In each calendar year the project was audited. In terms of reach it has reached approximately 24,035 children in addition to teachers and caregivers. The project had achieved much of its targets by January 2022 and 87% burn rate. The balance of 13% attributed to the delayed construction of the rescue centre borehole where ChildFund normally pays 90% of the cost and 10% upon completion. Collaboration with the Childrise Development Program as the local implementing partner has facilitated reaching out to the beneficiaries cost effectively. The delayed activities due to COVID-19 had been rescheduled and have now been carried out successfully. The project reports, as well as interviews with the local implementing partner and community members, indicate that the project has met expected outputs at endline.

In terms of impact, the project has strengthened the capacity of formal child protection mechanisms which were not in existent at baseline i.e. LAACs. The project also supported monthly and quarterly coordination mechanisms which have contributed to ensuring they are responsive to child abuse and protection cases. Generally, there has been an increase of the children reporting these actions between baseline and endline.

Supporting the involvement of children in child rights clubs, community forums and their involvement in national activities like the Day of the African Child increased their knowledge of their rights and participation in their own protection. More children, especially girls in need of protection are receiving support and rescued from early marriages and female genital mutilation.

For sustainability, the community-based and community-led approach that the project employed ensured that there was ownership and ultimately sustainability of the project. It is important to note that we cannot talk about sustainability without talking about ownership. In conversations with most of the community members and child protection champions, there was a sense ownership that emerged. None of the child protection champions reported being paid to do the work they are doing. Almost all the child protection champions indicated that they were championing the rights of children and engaging the community on issues of child rights out of their own will.

The work was out of willingness and passion so we will continue with the work. Chief also promised that every champion will be employed so we are still waiting to see who will be absorbed first (FGD, child protection champions)

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Project

ChildFund International, an international non-governmental organization, through its presence in over 30 countries, continues to spread change and impacting communities to better care for their children and young ones. In Kenya, ChildFund programs have so far reached over 2.2 million children, families and community members working with 12 community organizations spread in 23 counties across the country. The overall aim of ChildFund programming is to change underlying conditions that limit children from reaching their full potential. It places communities at the centre of its activities and programming. This is done by strengthening capacities of communities to prevent and respond to threats on children's wellbeing.

ChildFund Kenya in partnership with Childrise Development Programme with funding from ChildFund Korea, have been running Child Protection (Jukumu Letu) project in Tharaka Nithi County in Kenya. The three-year project (July 2018-June 2021) with a no cost extension for additional month of August 2021 and a costed extension running up to end of February 2022 was implemented specifically in Tharaka South and Igambangombe sub counties. The project targeted three outcomes of: Increased responsiveness of the formal and informal child protection mechanisms; increased participation of children in their own protection within Tharaka Nithi County and decreased number of girls adversely affected by retrogressive cultural practices – female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage.

To achieve the above three outcomes Jukumu Letu aimed at strengthening community support structures to facilitate rescue and reintegration of girls from or at the risk of FGM and child marriage through: introducing alternative rites of passage (ARP); holding community discussions; engagement of men and boys; educating various target community members; and engaging role models and mediators. The project also aimed at building the capacity of community-based child protection champions to prevent and facilitate response to all protection issues affecting children including engaging duty bearers to step up efforts in enforcement of relevant legislation, support efforts to enhance the capacity of the formal child protection mechanisms, and champion for multi stakeholder collaboration in delivery of protection services to children by the government.

This final evaluation reports the overall value and merit of the Jukumu Letu project by reviewing how the project fared in achieving its strategic objectives. It also looks at the challenges faced by the project and the lessons learnt in the process to inform future

programming. The final evaluation was carried out between December 2021 and February 2022.

1.2 Overview of the project location

Tharaka-Nithi County is one of the forty-seven counties under the Constitution of Kenya 2010. It is divided into five sub-counties namely Tharaka North, Tharaka South, Chuka, Igambangombe, and Maara. According to the KNBS (2019) Tharaka Nithi had a population of 393, 177 (193 764 males and 199, 406 females). Nevertheless, there are no clear records on the population of children (0-19 years), except for the County's 2018 projections of 211, 562 (Tharaka-Nithi CIDP, 2018-2022).

The county is faced with various child protection risks including retrogressive cultural practices such as FGM and child marriages resulting from deeply entrenched cultural beliefs. At the beginning of the Jukumu Letu project, project report indicate that female genital mutilation was at 95 percent especially in Tharaka South and 58 percent in other parts of Tharaka Nithi County. The practice was most rampant in Igambangombe and in both North and South Tharaka sub counties where girls as young as 7 years old were circumcised. As a result of these practices, many children between the ages of 7-18 years (especially girls) have dropped out of school and died. In the project's specific target areas, shunning circumcision is a sure way to social rejection. Although Kenya prohibits FGM through the FGM Act 2011 and has progressive laws on child protection, there is little evidence of the effectiveness of relevant legislations. Tharaka Nithi County Development Plan CIDP 2018-2022 in line with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 and Kenya's vision 2030, targets to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls in private and public spheres. These include elimination of all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation and recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work. However, weak enforcement of these legal frameworks and community attachment to culture at the expense of children's wellbeing and weak and uncoordinated formal child protection structures still contribute to worsening the scenario. The project has therefore been seeking to reverse the trend and enable girls and children in general have a different experience growing up in the care of a protective community.

1.3 Objective and Purpose of the endline evaluation

1.3.1 Purpose

The purpose for this evaluation is to assess the performance of the project and capture project achievements, challenges and best practices to inform impact and/or future programming in the region.

1.3.2 Objectives

The objectives of the proposed endline evaluation is to:

1. Assess the responsiveness of existing formal and informal child protection mechanisms and establish existing child protection linkages between formal and informal community-based systems
2. Establish the extent of change in retrogressive cultural practices in the project area especially for girls and indirect effect on boys.
3. Establish children's level of understanding on their rights to protection and how they maintain and utilize community-based child protection structures to address cases of abuse experienced by them.
4. Review the project according to the OECD DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability)

2 Evaluation Methodology and Approach

2.1 Evaluation Matrix

<i>The DAC / OECD Evaluation Criteria</i>	Thematic questions of assessment	Source of Data/Data Collection Method/MOV	Data Collection Tool
<p><i>Relevance:</i> <i>The extent to which the project is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group and the context.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess how the Jukumu Letu project was aligned to the needs of project beneficiaries? • Assess the extent of policy alignment of project initiatives on strengthening formal and informal child protection systems • Was the design of the intervention relevant to the wider context? • Was the intervention in line with the needs and priorities of the most vulnerable groups (people, boys and girls)? • Was the intervention design and objectives aligned with the needs of the government? • Was the intervention aligned with ChildFund International, Korea and donor policies and priorities? • Did the design and implementation of the intervention consider the available capacities? (ChildFund and Childrise, Local community etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jukumu Letu Project documents • Qualitative data collection with project stakeholders (GoK, school/community representatives, girls) • GoK policies, strategies, plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGDs • Document review • KIIs

<p><i>Coherence: How well does the intervention fit? The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the project create duplication of efforts with other actors in Tharaka? • Did the project undermine or supplement the effects of any existing programs or policies? • Can the project succeed/fail if other programmes or support-system falters? • To what extent were context factors (political stability/instability, population movements, etc.) considered in the design and delivery of the intervention? • To what extent was ChildFund intervention coherent with policies and programmes of other partners operating within the same context? • What have been the synergies between the intervention and other ChildFund interventions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ChildFund Korea Child Protection Sector Framework and Strategic Plan • ChildFund Kenya policies and documents e.g. Country Strategic Plan • Tharaka Nithi County Integrated Development Plan 2018-2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document Review • KIIs with NGO workers
<p><i>Effectiveness The measure of the extent to which the project attained its objectives / results (as set out in the project results framework)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent were the project activities deployed, and to what extent were the results achieved? (How are this comparable to the baseline value)? • Were the outputs and outcomes achieved? • What major factors influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the outcomes? • Were there unintended (positive or negative) outcomes of assistance for participants and non-participants? • Is the achievement of outcomes leading to/likely to lead to meeting intervention objectives? What major factors influenced this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project workplan-assessing the activities deployed so far, against the planned, • Logframe targets to assess the beneficiaries reached out of the planned target. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • KII with staff • FGDs

<p><i>Efficiency:</i> Measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which refers to whether the project was delivered cost effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent was project management efficient, timely, and economic? • Was the intervention cost-efficient? • Was the intervention implemented in a timely way? • Was the intervention implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives? • Did the targeting of the intervention mean that resources were allocated efficiently? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jukumu Letu project, financial documents • Qualitative data collection with project staff, implementing partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KII • Documents review
<p><i>Impact:</i> Assesses the changes that can be attributed to the Jukumu Letu project relating specifically to higher-level impact (both intended and unintended)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes were brought about by the project? Were they positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended? • Were there any gender-specific impacts? Did the intervention influence the gender context? • Were there impacts on institutions? • Did the intervention contribute to long-term intended results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative data collection with project staff, GoK representatives, development partner representatives, beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGD • KIIs
<p><i>Sustainability:</i> This will be concerned with measuring whether the benefits of Jukumu Letu project are likely to continue after the project/funding ends.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the elements of the project activities that are likely to continue and spread to other communities? • To what extent did the intervention implementation consider sustainability, such as capacity building of national and local government institutions, communities and other partners? • To what extent will intervention benefits continue after ChildFund’s work cease? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project sustainability strategy • Project documents, studies, reporting • Monitoring reports • Qualitative data collection with key stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KII • Documents review • FGD

*Lessons learnt
(Assesses whether there are any promising practices and lessons that can inform review of the design of the project for better outcomes)*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the learning arising from the project interventions and emerging best practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jukumu Letu annual reports • Qualitative data collection with beneficiaries and key stakeholders at the formal and community level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGDs • KIIs • Documents review
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Evaluation Objectives tools

Questions

Data Source

Data

Review the functionality of existing formal and informal child protection mechanisms

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the existing formal and informal child protection mechanisms? • How do the formal and informal systems function? • What linkages exist between the formal and informal child protection mechanisms? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussions • Jukumu Letu project reports • Stakeholders' interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGDs • IDIs • KIIs
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Establish the extent of retrogressive cultural practices in the project area especially for girls and indirect effect on boys.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What retrogressive cultural practices are still being practiced in the context? • What is the proportion of the population that reports still practicing the retrogressive cultural practices? • How are boys and girls affected? • How have the practices change over time? • How has the project contributed to this change? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jukumu Letu annual reports • Government reports • Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) • Group discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey tool • FGDs • Documents review • KII
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<p><i>Establish children's level of understanding on their rights to protection and how they maintain and utilize community-based child protection structures to address cases of abuse experienced by them.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What proportion of children are ware of children's rights? • Are children well informed to effectively identify and respond to child abuse? • How do children respond to cases of abuse? • What elements of the child protection system is utilized by children? • Do children report cases of abuse? If yes, where and how? • What is the contribution of Jukumu Letu project in building the knowledge and capacity of children to identify and effectively respond to child abuse? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jukumu Letu annual reports • Government reports • Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) • Group discussions • KIIs with the community stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey tool • FGDs • Documents review • KII
<p><i>•Establish existing Child Protection linkages between formal and informal community-based systems</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What linkages exist between the formal and informal child protection system? • What child protection concerns are handled by the formal and informal child protection system? • How does the formal and informal child protection system work together in handling a child protection issue? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jukumu Letu project reports • KIIs with the community and formal system stakeholders • Group discussion with the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • KII • FGD

2.2 Evaluation Design

The study employed a pre-post-intervention research design to collect information from caregivers and children in the two sub-counties-Igambangombe and Tharaka South Sub) in Tharaka Nithi County where the Jukumu Letu Project was being implemented. The study followed a multi-method design and included qualitative and quantitative components, and document review, namely:

1. A questionnaire-based survey for caregivers,
2. A questionnaire-based survey for children aged 12-17 years in the selected sub-counties,
3. Key informant interview (KIIs) with selected stakeholders including community leaders (Chiefs, assistant chiefs); teachers; police officers; NGOs and representatives of government and county government departments.
4. Focus Group Discussions with adult men and women, girls and boys.
5. In-depth interviews (IDIs) with village elders; child protection champions who were part of the project.
6. Review of Jukumu Letu project documents, and related reports on child protection and retrogressive cultural practices.

2.3 Study Population

2.3.1 Study Sites

Tharaka South and Igambangombe Sub-Counties in Tharaka Nithi County were the sites of the Jukumu Letu intervention and the data collection as indicated in table 1 below.

Table 1: Study sites

<i>No</i>	<i>Sub County</i>	<i>Sites Covered</i>
1	Tharaka South	Tunyai, Gakurungu, Nkarini, Kamarandi Kamanyaki, Chiakariga
2	Igambangombe	Kamaindi, Kajuki, Kithangani, Kamwimbi Itugururu, Mariani, Mutino

2.3.2 Study Population

A total of 1,077 people participated in the final evaluation. The participants for the surveys included 337 parents and caregivers of children, as well as 312 children aged 12-17 years. In addition, 17 IDIs and 32 KIIs were conducted with child protection champions, and a range of

formal and non-formal child protection actors including teachers, health care workers, social workers, police, government officials, Jukumu Letu Project Officer, ChildFund and Childrise Development Program staff, community leaders, and youth leaders.

2.4 Sampling

For the surveys with caregivers and children, a multi-stage sampling strategy was used. Sampling size for the household survey was determined using WHO sampling guide and calculator. The confidence interval was set at 95%, with a 5% margin of error. The estimated sample size was N=400 for caregivers and N=400 for children. An additional 10% was added to account for respondents who could not be reached or declined to participate, for a final sample size of N=440 for both caregivers and children.

Within the project area, population proportionate to size (PPS) methodology was used to determine the sampling frame of the communities and number of households included in the sample. Next, within each of the communities, households were sampled systematically (i.e. sampling every 2nd house), after determining a random start point. The household sample is proportional to the household population. The final survey sample size was N=437 for caregivers and N=436 for children after data cleaning. However, due to the vast area of the study location and short data collection period, the researchers only managed to reach N=337 for caregivers and N=312 for the children. The household set up was chosen because at the time of the study, it was not feasible to conduct the study in school set up due to the government's decision not to allow parents and community into the schools so as not to interfere with learning. Trained enumerators randomly administered the baseline survey questionnaire to sampled children in primary and secondary school as at household level during the weekend.

A total of N=32 KIIs and 17 IDIs were conducted. Key informant interviews were conducted with n=22 people who had specialized knowledge of issues affecting children in Tharaka Nithi County, while n=10 in-depth interviews were conducted with child protection champions and community members who had participated in ChildFund activities as shown in table 2.

Table 2: In-depth and Key informant interviews distribution

Category	Location		
	Tharaka south Sub-County	Igambangombe Sub-County	TOTAL
<i>In-Depth Interviews</i>			
Child protection Champions	3	4	7
Community leaders	7	3	10
<i>Key Informant Interviews</i>			
Faith leaders	1	1	2
LAAC members	7	4	11
ChildFund/Childrise	2	3	5
National Government	2	1	3
County Government	1	0	1
Other key informants (teachers, social work, police)	5	5	10
GRAND TOTAL	28	21	49

2.5 Data collection techniques

2.5.1 Review of secondary literature

A comprehensive review of literature related to the evaluation objectives was conducted to enable the consultants to understand the Jukumu Letu project well and for the adaptation and modification of baseline and midterm tools. Some publicly available documents such as the Constitution of Kenya 2010, The Framework for the National Child Protection System for Kenya (2011), Tharaka Nithi Development Plan CIDP 2018-2022 and Tharaka Nithi County Annual Development Plan 2022/23 FY were reviewed. Project documents reviewed included project proposal, Monitoring and evaluation plan, project progress reports, and baseline and midterm reports.

2.5.2 Recruitment and training enumerators

Twenty-eight (28) numerators were identified by the help of ChildFund and Childrise Development Program and were provided with a 2-day training which included: project overviews; conduct during research process; review of questionnaire and translation: paperless data collection; mock interviews in-classroom and field piloting.

2.5.3 Pretesting and revision of data collection tools

The questionnaires were pre-tested in a peer-to-peer interview method and feedback from the test was used to further contextualize the questionnaire and improve quality. They included both quantitative and qualitative tools. The quantitative tools included a survey for caregivers, and a survey for children (12-17years). The survey questions focused on:

1. Child protection issues
2. Feelings of safety
3. Violence at home, school, and in the community
4. Child vulnerability
5. Knowledge about protective actions
6. Use of child protection mechanisms (formal and non-formal)

2.5.4 Primary data collection

Data collection took place between 15th and 17th January 2022 and was conducted by a team of 28 enumerators. The project officer provided on-site support, while the two consultants engaged in the conduct of KIIs and field team monitoring and support.

Quantitative data was obtained through child and caregiver surveys while qualitative information was obtained through key informant interviews and in-depth interviews. A summary of the primary data collection is given in the table below;

Table 3: Primary data collection summary

Method	Description
Child Survey	A survey with children aged 12-17 lasting approximately 40-50 minutes. The survey asked about demographic information, information about child rights, types of child protection issues experienced, feelings of safety, experiences with violence, participation in activities to reduce child protection risks, connection to their caregiver, and well-being.
Caregiver Survey	A survey with caregivers of children aged 12-17, lasting approximately 45-60 minutes. The survey asked about demographic information, child protection issues, ability to identify and report child protection issues, knowledge and use of existing formal and non-formal child protection mechanisms, perceptions of safety about their children, and willingness to report child protection issues.
Focus Group Discussions	Focus Group Discussions carried with men, women, girls and boys. Each group with 6-10 people to understand child protection risks which children are exposed too, establish if children access quality education, level of participation in their own protection needs and explore

	children’s level of understanding on their rights and available child protection referral mechanisms for child protection. The specific target groups were spread out in the project area to ensure diversity of opinion.
In-Depth Interviews	In-depth interviews lasting approximately 30-45 minutes were conducted with child protection champions; village elders; and local AAC members.
Key Informant Interviews	Open ended interviews that were approximately 30-45 minutes in length, were conducted with government and county government stakeholders, community leaders, ChildFund and Childrise Development staff, teachers, police, and other key informants.

Data entry was performed by each enumerator using Open Data Kit (ODK), an android app designed for administrating surveys. Data saved in each tablet was uploaded to the server at the end of each data collection day.

2.6 Data management, analysis and processing

2.6.1 Quality Assurance

Several quality assurance methods were used during data collection. The use of mobile devices for the survey improved data quality by allowing data validation rules and consistency checks that were integrated in the ODK software program to be used. It also allowed the consultants to check the timing and length of the surveys to ensure the enumerators were following protocol of doing systematic sampling, not rushing interviews, having adequate time to explain the informed consent process, and to do monitoring of data consistency, gaps and any problems. Data security was ensured for respondents as no names or personal identifiers were on the surveys and only the research team had access to the data. The two supervisors also monitored the data collectors in the field, and in conjunction with the consultant, conducted debrief and feedback sessions with them so they could assess the situation and problem solve.

2.6.2 Data Analysis

Quantitative Data

The synchronized data were exported to MS Excel then exported into The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. Exploratory analyses were carried out to undertake descriptive statistics, with frequencies, percentages, means, medians and standard deviations computed in the analysis. The descriptive statistics included 95% confidence intervals (CI) to facilitate comparison with baseline and mid-term values. The results were presented in tables,

graphs, and charts. The values for each outcome were generated by calculating the average of the values of all parameters that assess that outcome.

% of children whose cases have been reported and addressed	Numerator: Number of children whose abuse cases have been reported and addressed Denominator: Total number of children who reported abuse cases formally or informally
% Increase of children in need of protection accessing services by 2021.	Numerator: Number of children in need of protection in community or school who receive help/necessary support Denominator: Number of children in need of protection in community or school
% Increase in children's participation in their own protection.	Numerator: Number of children who report being actively empowered to speak out about exploitation abuse, neglect and violence in their lives and able to participate in decisions affecting them (particularly regarding their care or restoration) Denominator: Total number of children sampled in the survey
% Increase in the enrolment of girls in the rescue centre	Numerator: Number of girls in need of protection from abuse enrolled in the rescue centre Denominator: Total number of girls in need of protection from abuse, early marriage and female genital mutilation
No of girls rescued	Number of girls enrolled into Kamarandi rescue centre

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data analysis was conducted using a grounded theory technique.¹ The raw data was plotted into Excel and key categories, themes, and patterns identified inductively, through holistic reading, and examined through processes of triangulation with different subgroups (e.g., caregivers; girls; boys; child protection actors). Since qualitative data frequently provides insight into processes of social change and the mechanisms through which changes occur, they were triangulated with the quantitative data, boosting analytic power through convergent findings whenever possible.

¹ Bhattacherjee, 2012

2.7 Ethical considerations

The final evaluation recognized and sought to address the ethical complexities and dilemmas associated with research on children. It was conducted in a manner designed to ensure that the benefits to participants outweighed any costs or unintended harm, and that the process embodied the ethical principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, beneficence, non-maleficence, and the best interests of the child. All the data collectors were bound by ChildFund's Child Protection Policy, which defined key principles, harmful actions that must be avoided, and processes for reporting violations and responding to them in an appropriate manner. Ethical considerations also included how to talk in a respectful and empathic manner when querying people about sensitive topics.

Informed consent was obtained through careful procedures that did not involve coercion. Children's assent was also obtained together with the consent of their parents/caregivers. The participants were free to end their involvement in an activity at any time. To protect confidentiality, the records contain no names or personal identifiers. Throughout, care was taken not to raise expectations that the participants or their family or community would receive material benefits such as money as a result of their participation.

2.8 Limitations

1. Self-reported behaviours may not always be aligned with the individual's actual practices, and social desirability bias results when respondents provide the answer they think data collectors want to hear, rather than the most accurate response. To diminish this bias, different levels of triangulation occurred:
 - a. within quantitative results from different groups of respondents and
 - b. between quantitative and qualitative results.
2. The emergence of Covid-19 is a confounding factor. Additional questions were included in both the surveys and interviews about the impact of Covid-19 as it related to outcomes about child wellbeing to learn about this factor.
3. The vast geographical area where the project was implemented/study location coupled with budgetary limitations meant few enumerators could be hired to work within a short data collection period.

4. The household set up was chosen because at the time of the study, it was not feasible to conduct the study in school set up due to the government’s decision not to allow parents and community into the schools so as not to interfere with learning. Trained enumerators randomly administered the baseline survey questionnaire to sampled children in primary and secondary school as at household level during the weekend.

3 Study Findings

This section discusses the study findings as per the evaluation objectives. Efforts have been made to compare with the baseline findings to see how the project fared. The midline evaluation results were largely omitted since the Covid-19 situation made it to use different formula reaching a smaller population that cannot be a representation of the study population under normal circumstances.

3.1 Demographic and socio-economic background of households

A total of 312 children were reached for this endline evaluation. The process purposely targeted equal representation of all genders. Most of the children respondents were aged between 13-15yrs (60%). Ninety percent of the children respondents were in school with majority at primary level (74%). This presents a slight difference with those interviewed at baseline, where there was almost equal representation of those in primary and secondary levels (50% and 48% respectively). Sixty four percent were from families with both parents 64%. Table 4 below gives complete demographic information of children reached during this evaluation.

Table 4: Children demographics

Demographic	Description	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Boys	150	48.1
	Girls	155	49.7
	Intersex	7	2.2
Age	10-12 years	49	15.7
	13-15 years	188	60.3
	16-17 years	75	24.0

Education level	Primary	231	74.0
	Secondary	78	25.0
	Out of School	3	1.0
Parental Status	I am an orphan	11	3.5
	I have one parent	73	23.4
	I have both parents	200	64.1
	I stay with a guardian	28	9.0
Sub-county	Tharaka South	149	47.8
	Igamba Ngombe	163	52.2

On the other hand, a total of 337 caregivers were reached. Of this, majority were females at 59.6% and males at 40.4%. Most households in the area were headed by males at 69.4% with majority of the caregivers being married (72%). Majority of the caregivers had completed primary education (27%) and were mainly dependant on casual labour (65%) as their main source of livelihood.

Table 5: Children demographics

Variable	Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Sex of the respondent	Male	136	40.4	40.4
	Female	201	59.6	59.6
Sex of the household head	Male	234	69.4	69.4
	Female	103	30.6	30.6
What is your marital status?	Single	36	10.7	10.7
	Married	243	72.1	72.1
	Widowed	28	8.3	8.3
	Divorced	18	5.3	5.3
	Separated	12	3.6	3.6
What is the highest education level you have completed	None/non-formal education	18	5.3	5.3
	Primary incomplete	89	26.4	26.4
	Primary complete	91	27.0	27.0
	Primary plus technical training	21	6.2	6.2
	Secondary incomplete	39	11.6	11.6
	Secondary complete	53	15.7	15.7
	Vocational training	19	5.6	5.6

	University	7	2.1	2.1
Main income generating activities	Sale of agricultural produce (crops /livestock	183	54.3	54.3
	Day labour/ casual worker	218	64.7	64.7
	Informal/small business	84	24.9	24.9

3.2 Child Protection risks

3.2.1 Harmful cultural practices

At baseline, the level of awareness on existence of harmful traditional practices in the community by children was at 36% with more girls aware at 39% and the boys 34%. At endline, the situation has slightly improved with 31% of the children reporting existence these traditions within the community. More boys 49% were aware than girls at 45% and intersex at 6%. However, when asked how common these practices were, only 0.3% reported that the practice is regular, 1.6% believe its occasional, 17.6% believe it's for specific families, 11.9% did not know, while majority (68.6%) believe that it is not common.

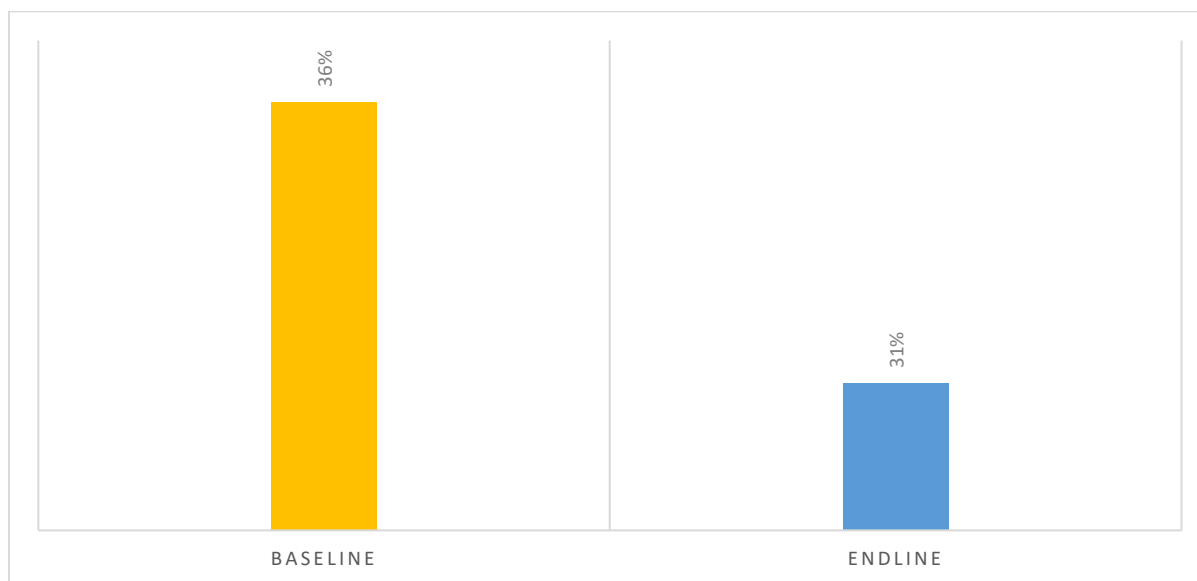


Figure 1: Prevalence of harmful traditional practices at baseline and endline

The practice of FGM has substantially slowing down due to the sensitisation and campaigns conducted by the Jukumu Letu project team and other partners such as Plan International. When the children were asked if they know of girls who had been subjected to female circumcision or

other harmful cultural practices, only 16 % said yes with a majority at 72.8% saying no and 11.2% do not know. When parents were also asked for knowledge of any circumcised girl in their neighbourhood in the last one year, 89% were unaware with only 11% answering on the contrary. Compared with the numbers at the beginning of the project when the prevalence of such practices was recorded at an average of 36%, the change witnessed becomes a key project milestone that can be built upon in future programming.

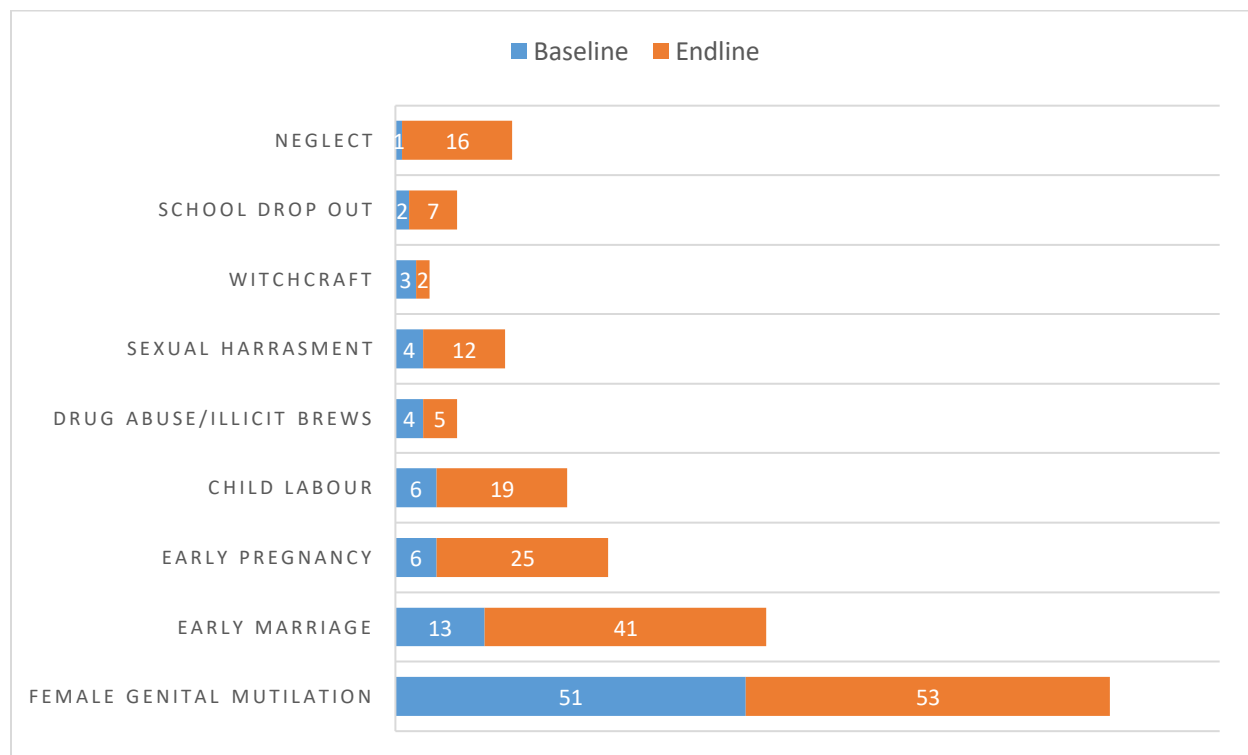


Figure 3: Identified negative cultural practices at baseline and endline

Figure 3 above identifies some of the child protection risks identified by study respondents as prevalent in Tharaka Nithi County. Like baseline, more than half of the children considered FGM as the most negative cultural practice (n=53) followed by child marriages (n=41) and teenage Pregnancy (n=25) and Child Labour (n=19).

Similar views were also gathered from the KIIs as per the excerpt below.

The value for FGM is diminishing in the recent times unlike before when it was perceived that girls who undergo FGM have moral values (KII, Project Staff).

Most parents (91.3%) also affirmed their children’s position by agreeing that they would want the practice of FGM to stop.

Well, for issues like harmful cultural practices for example FGM, I would say there has been a change. In the past, FGM was a common practice here but now it is uncommon since the children and the community at large are now enlightened on the harmful effects of such a practice (IDI, Community Leader).

The role of education in influencing behaviour was underscored. When levels of illiteracy and ignorance are high in community, children easily fall into peer pressure/bad company and are at high risk of being abused. This is because they have no one to counsel and guide them. With increased level of awareness and knowledge by both parents and children, better decisions are made and they are likely to shun practices like FGM and early marriages. The evaluation results indicate that 98.7% of educated families abhor the idea of girls' circumcision. Majority of the girls (98.1%) who have gone to school also distaste the practice.

The training was mostly on child rights and protection. I was also trained on harmful cultural practices such as FGM and their campaign, "End FGM". I have also been educated on HIV/AIDS, its effects and preventative measures (KII, Community Champion).

Young people were also incorporated into the training ensuring no one was left behind in the community.

The trainings helped me a lot because after the training I have been able to rescue many children and also trained many parents on how to handle their children (KII, Youth Champion).

3.2.2 Access to rescue and reintegration services

One of the Jukumu Letu project's outcomes was to decrease the number of girls adversely affected by retrogressive cultural practices in the community. The aim was to construct a rescue centre that would accommodate girls who are rescued from FGM and child marriages and empower them on various aspects such as life skills, education, mentorship, psychosocial support to both rescued girls and others within the community previously exposed to child marriage, teenage pregnancy and FGM among other protection issues and provision of legal services. It was noted that the intended rescue centre was already constructed, and a temporary approval of the operationalisation issued by Department of Childrens services awaiting registration. The County government has committed to support the centre.

"Tharaka South Area Advisory Council (AAC) unanimously approved the operations of girls rescue centre and its registration. The admission of girls/operations are to start immediately as the DCS proceeds with the registration. The approval was done after the Sub County Children officer (DCS) and the project team tabled the inspection report and provided clarification in all areas of concern. The AAC members were so grateful to know that there will be a safe space to

refer girls who are facing protection threats, specifically FGM, child marriage and exploitation. (Project Officer, KII).

On the same day, some of the project team members participated in CSOs meeting with the governor and county officials where we explained CFK & Childrise areas of interventions in the County; including putting up the only Girls rescue centre in the County. The governor assured us that the county is committed to support the initiatives as they largely contribute to their overall development goals. (KII, PC Childrise).

This is not only a great milestone for the project but also for the child protection services in Tharaka Nithi county since by the time of the baseline study, there was no child friendly rescue centre making the rescue efforts difficult. The temporal approval has paved way for rescue of girls and at the time of the evaluation, one girl had been admitted to the facility. The study confirmed that rescue services still go on with the children being taken to the chiefs camp, the police and childrens office. When asked if the children at risk of harmful practices received services, 60% of the children said that the targeted girls are rescued while 40% confirmed the targeted boys being rescued as shown in table 5 below. The difference in the number can be attributed to the fact that FGM and child marriages mostly affect girls.

Table 5: Access to rescue services

Variable	Description	Baseline	Endline
<i>Are the targeted girls rescued?</i>	No	66%	24%
	Yes	23%	60%
	Do not know	11%	16%
<i>Are the targeted boys rescued??</i>	No	69%	40%
	Yes	21%	40%
	Do not know	10%	20%

The children mentioned the services in the figure below as part of the support given to those in need of protection:

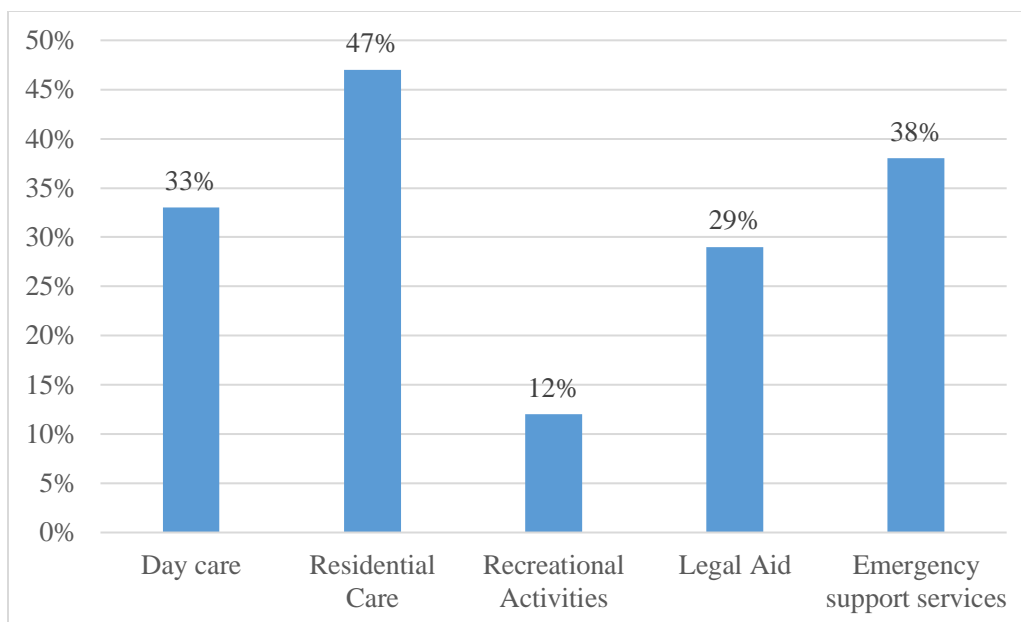


Figure 2: Kind of support for vulnerable children

As part of the integration services, the study found out that the place of alternative rights of passage (ARP) for the girls was increasingly being acknowledged. Among the children, ARP awareness increased from 16% at baseline to 50% at endline. Some of the ARPs mentioned included holiday seminars, camps, *Ntanira na Mugambo* where children are trained on life skills, peer counselling sessions and campaigns against FGM.

Table 6: Awareness of alternative rites of passage

Variable	Description	Baseline	Endline
Awareness of existence of alternative rites of passage	No	83.8%	50%
	Yes	16.2%	50%
Awareness of children taken through alternative rites of passage	No	87%	54.8%
	Yes	13%	45.2%

On the other hand, 95.5% of caregivers indicated that the community was willing to pursue ARP instead of the cut. This was collaborated with findings from children who indicated 45.2% of children have been taken through ARP. A desk review of the project document indicates that there is a pre-set ARP curriculum that the girls are taken through as shown below.

A total of 120 girls were trained on the alternative rites of passage in Tharaka South Sub County, 20 from each of the six locations. The girls who were drawn from the 6 locations (Kamanyaki, Kamarandi, Chiakariga, Tunyai, Nkarini and Gakurungu) where two locations would have one meeting point based on their proximity to each other. 3 locations, through the support of local administration hosted the trainings in different days. The facilitators were the Department of children services, medical practitioners, police officers, teachers, champions, and project staff. Various topics were covered using different teaching approaches particularly on, Personal hygiene, effects of female genital mutilation, importance of education, life skills, self-esteem, children rights and responsibilities, reporting cases, time management, among others. (2020 annual report)

Change of attitude among the men was also noted with most of them (96.4%) saying they were fine marrying girls who've undergone ARP and not the cut. This is a major milestone that the project achieved in ensuring men change how they perceive females not taken through FGM. Failure to have the cut for the girls was no longer attracting shame as it used to be. The community appreciated the newfound reality that gave power to their daughters to decide their destiny by making choices of what they want.

The community was now upholding "Ntanira na Mugambo" as an Alternative Rights of Passage (ARP) as a way to end FGM (KII, Community Champion).

3.3 Child Protection Systems

3.3.1 Prevalence of child abuse

The study has found out that child abuse is slightly less prevalent in Tharaka Nithi County with more than half (50.7%) of participating children reporting having witnessed a child being subjected to harsh treatment or abuse baseline which has reduced to 39.7%. This can be attributed to the project sensitization activities in the community.

Children were asked about some of the problems they face at home or school to measure the prevalence of child abuse in their community. As indicated in figure 3, majority (48%) reported verbal abuse while begging to support family was the least type of abuse experienced by the children at 4%. When compared to the baseline data, begging, FGM and caning/physical abuse are the only abuses that have reduced. Children being denied food increased from 23% to 34%, while hard labour increased from 27% to 39% and denied chance to go to school.

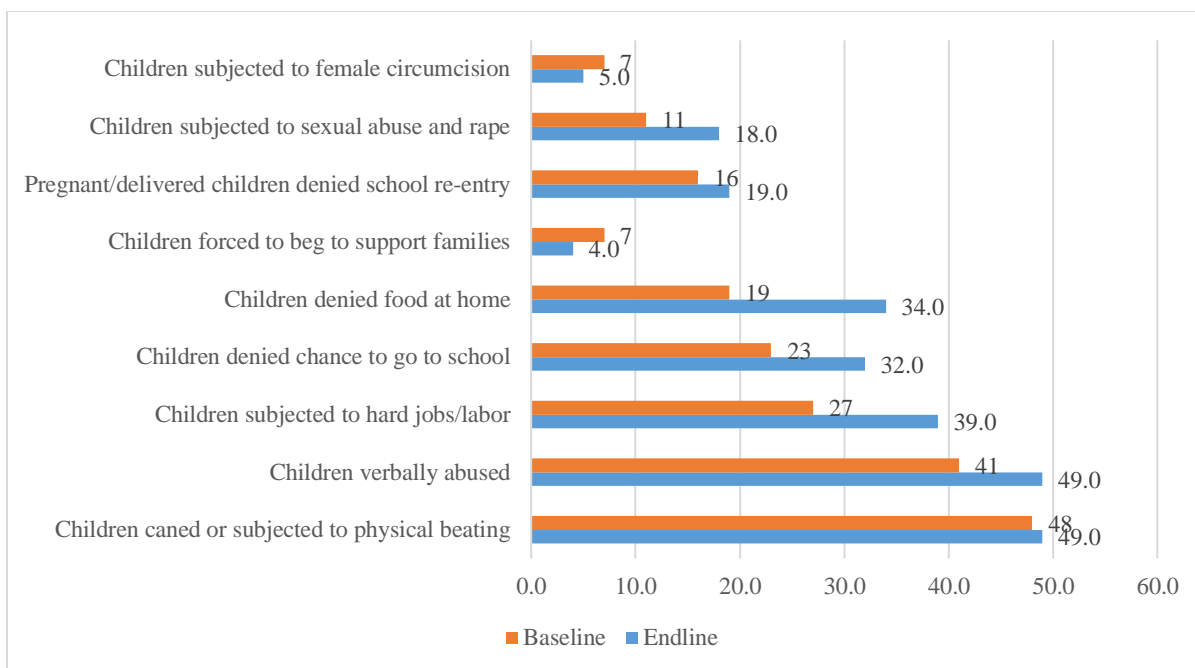


Figure 3: Prevalence of Child Abuse and ill treatment at Baseline and Endline

The study found out that homes are still leading in places where abuse of children happens with 62% of the children reporting this compared to baseline at 53.6%. There was a significant increase in children reporting home and roadside as places of child abuse while there was a decrease in those reporting other social places and school as a place of child abuse as shown in table 6 below.

Table 6: Common places of child abuse

VARIABLE	DESCRIPTION	BASELINE %	ENDLINE %
WHERE ARE SUCH ABUSES MOST COMMON?	Roadside	12.5	20
	Home	53.6	62
	School	11.6	7
	Church/Mosque	0.5	1
	Other social places	21.9	11

The increase in some forms of child abuse and places where the abuse is most common can be because of increased knowledge about abuse where children are able to identify it or effects of COVID-19 as per the below excerpts from the in-depth interviews and KIIs.

Well, frankly speaking the situation was very bad during Covid-19. With children out of school, they were very idle hence most children were easily influenced into drug abuse; especially boys. On the other hand, girls also engaged in premarital sex resulting in early pregnancies and early marriages. With Covid-19, most children also lacked food at home since businesses were slow hence no enough income (IDI, Community Leaders, Kajuki).

Many girls never come back to school, they got married and some got pregnant. Boys who were used to provide labour in farms and at the sand collecting sites dropped out (KII, teacher)

Covid-19 impacted the children negatively, a lot. Maybe a child has gone to be employed because the parent was in Nairobi and has lost the job (KII, Kiaritha)

The local partner Childrise Development Program and other stakeholders need to explore the root causes leading to increase in the forms and places of child abuse and plan for appropriate intervention.

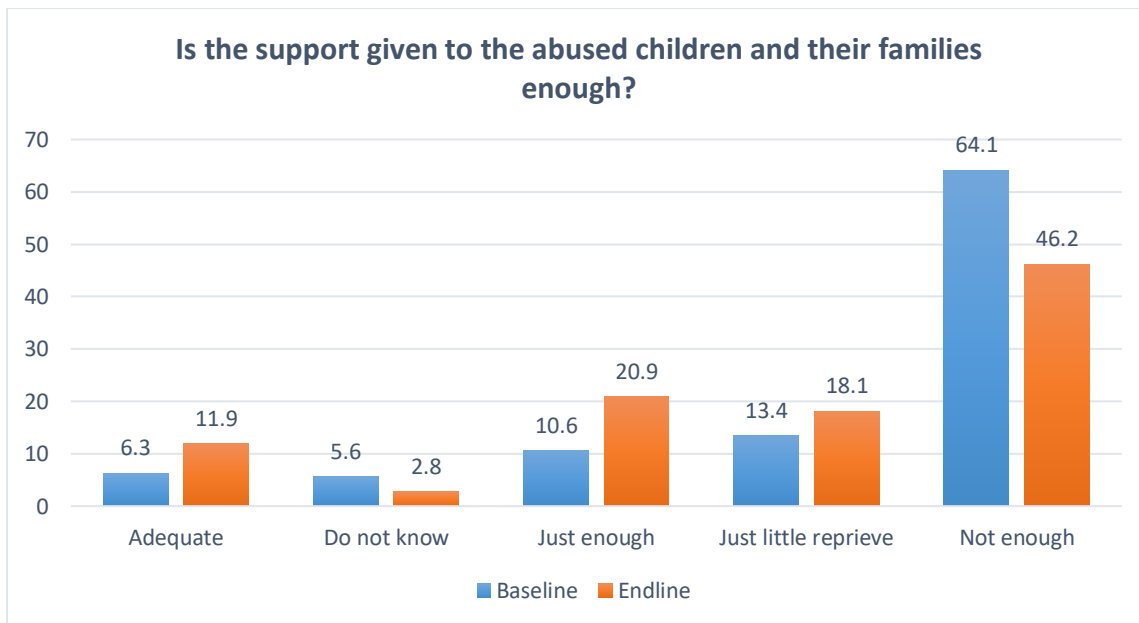


Figure 4 Families receiving enough support when their children are abused

When child abuse occur children are affected differently and some are more vulnerable to abuse. The study established a slight increase from 6.3% to 11.9% of families whose children are abused receive adequate support whereas there was a double increment from baseline at 10.6% of those who reported the support as just enough to 20.9% as indicated in the figure 4. An indication that many child abuse cases are being addressed.

3.3.2 Existence of formal child protection coordination mechanisms

A child protection coordination mechanism is important in ensuring that government departments and key stakeholders work together to benefit the child. For instance, the Local Area Advisory Council (LAAC)'s work is to ensure support and monitoring of service delivery, development of referral networks that increase access to essential services by children, establishment of child help desks, and mobilizing local resources for the benefit of children among other services.

One of the project outcomes was to ensure responsiveness of the formal and informal child protection mechanisms. The baseline survey established that LAAC was weak in Tharaka Nithi and therefore, the project targeted strengthening it. In addition, there only existed volunteer children officers who work closely with the Sub-County Children officers to identify child protection risks or children who are victims of child abuse. The endline evaluation established that the Jukumu Letu project supported in constituting a proper LAAC and offered trainings to its members to deliver proper child protection services as indicated in the KIIs below.

The project facilitated LAAC quarterly meetings which has improved their functioning in overseeing child protection issues. Their linkage with the Department of children services has encouraged reporting of Child protection threat cases and follow ups of the same. Their linkage with the Department of children services has encouraged reporting of Child protection threat cases and follow ups of the same. Government law enforcers have been very supportive in ensuring children rights are adhered as well as arresting the perpetrators of children rights (KII, project staff)

We are trying to push parents to take their children to school, this has been made possible by involving LAAC, "nyumba kumi" and teachers or any other informants within the community, together we try to enlighten parents on the importance of children being in school. As they get to interact with other children in school (KII, Female LAAC Champion)

This is a great milestone that ensures sustainability of the projects' achievement.

3.4 Functional community-based child protection structures

3.4.1 Child protection reporting mechanism

Having knowledge of the types of child abuse is important and so is having awareness of reporting the same. Once child abuse is reported, it is important for the cases to be handled properly and perpetrators brought to book. Below is a comparison of various aspects of the child protection reporting mechanism at baseline and endline evaluations to show how the Jukumu Letu project fared in this area.

3.4.1.1 Awareness of reporting mechanism

Seventy three percent of children reported knowing where to report or the procedure for reporting child abuse as opposed to the 35% at baseline. They also reported learning about the reporting largely from school (52.4%) and community champions (41.9%) as shown in table 7 below. On the other hand, 81.6% of caregivers were aware that child abuse should be reported. This indicates that the project activities involving safe reporting of child abuse in schools and training community champions on child protection were effective and should be continued by childrise and other actors.

Table 7: Knowledge of reporting of child abuse

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Do you know where to report or the procedure for reporting child abuse?</i>	No	83	26.6
	Yes	229	73.4
<i>Where did you learn where to report to and the procedure?</i>	School	120	52.4
	Community champions	96	41.9
	Other	13	5.7

3.4.1.2 Where cases are reported

Children are most likely to report cases of child abuse to parents as reported by 85% of them. Similar sentiments were shared by the children at baseline though at 65%. The increase in reporting to the parents can also be caused by the increased cases of abuse in the homes. Once again, the community champions are seen to be playing a crucial role in child protection in the communities with the data showing a 30% increment (from 4% at baseline to 34% at endline) in children who report cases to them. It is also important to note the new entrants in this reporting space –village elders (22%) and *nyumba kumi* (11%), which indicate that the project has supported the community child protection structures in a great way. Figure 4 below gives a summary of the people that children report child abuse cases to.

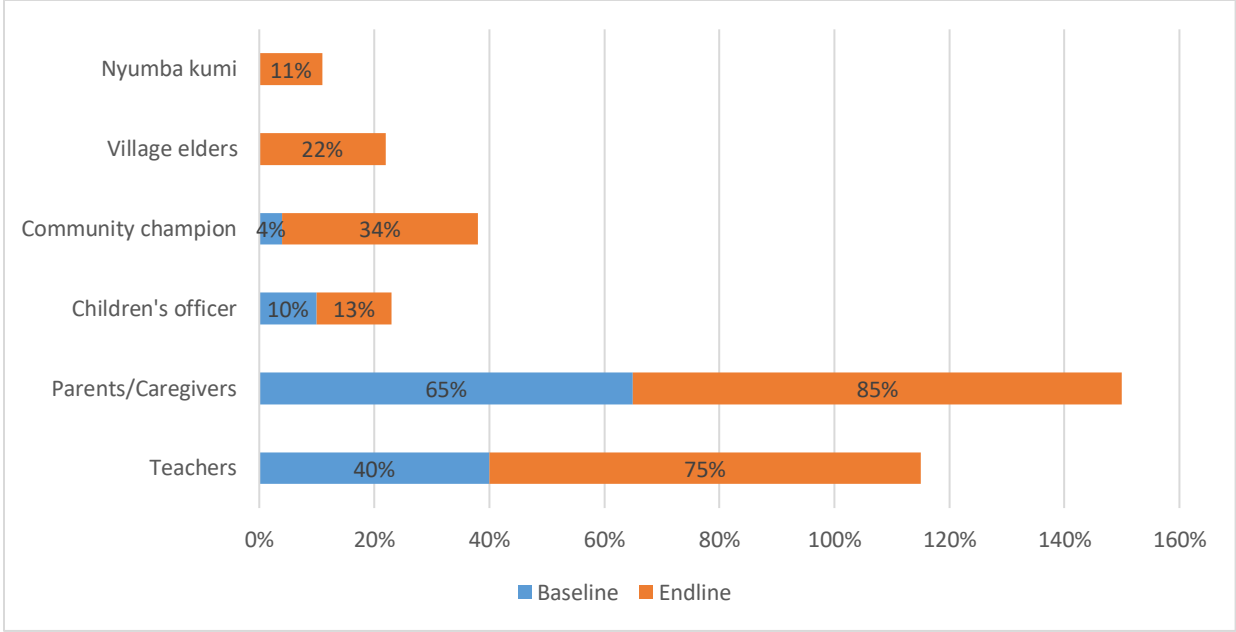


Figure 4: Where Children report cases of Child Abuse

On their part, the caregivers were likely to report child abuse cases to the assistant chief/chief (90.5%) followed by the police (49.9%) while the traditional healer was the least person they could report to at (0.3%). A summary of where parents were likely to report these cases is indicated in the figure 5 below.

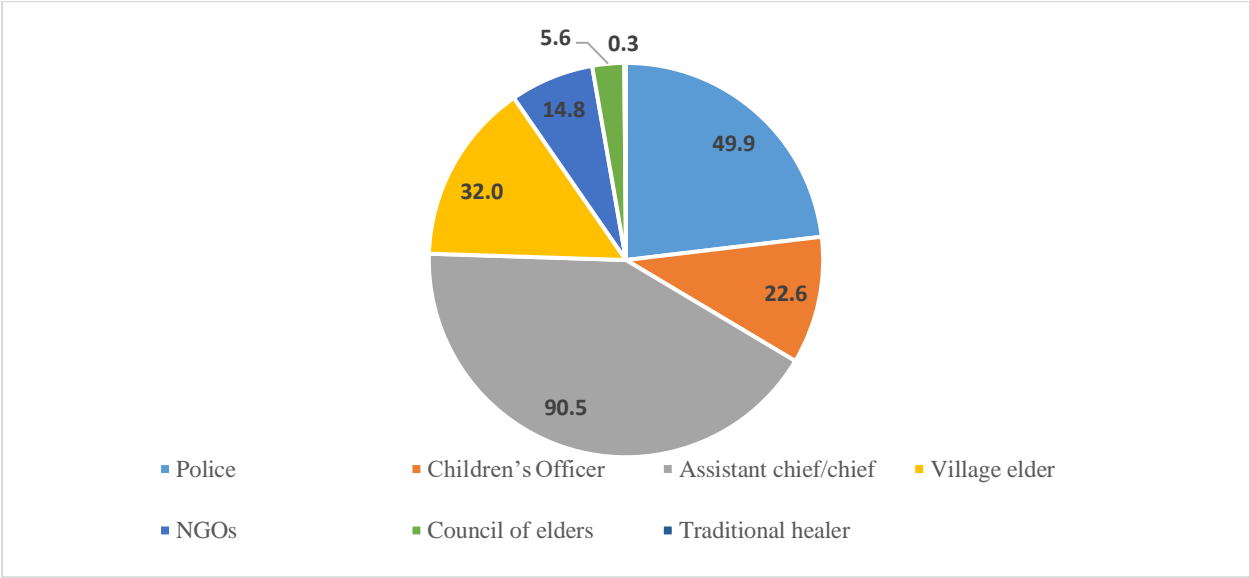


Figure 5: Caregivers reporting child abuse cases

Despite the children’s and their caregivers’ awareness of the need to report child abuse and knowing where to report, they are sometimes discouraged from reporting due to various factors. Forty six percent of the children feel that the support given to the abused children after reporting is enough. Lack of justice (70%) and corruption/asking for bribery (61%) discourages caregivers from reporting the cases as indicated in the table 8 below.

Table 8: Why caregivers do not report abuse

Variable	Description	Frequency	Percent
Why do people not report child abuse cases?	Don’t know where to report	26	26.0
	Corruption/ask for bribery	61	61.0
	No justice	70	70.0
	Fear of being attacked in the community	37	37.0
	Fear of being stigmatized in the community	36	36.0
	Fear of being socially neglected in the community	29	29.0
	Fear of being beaten by the husband	9	9.0
	If a family member, people do not report	20	20.0
	Prefer to solve as family	36	36.0
	Prefer reporting to the elders	5	5.0
	I cannot report as a woman	3	3.0

Similar views were gathered from qualitative interviews as shown below.

Whenever we report defilement, early pregnancies cases to chief then chief forwards the report to the police after few days you see the perpetrators walking round free. We are threatened by the perpetrators (KII, LAAC female treasurer)

ChildFund has really tried. The government have tried to use chiefs and assistant chiefs but that has not been so effective. Whenever a case was reported they don't put much effort into providing justice unlike ChildFund who have been penetrating into the rural areas. Very serious cases like defilement you find out that don't go past Chief's office I believe it is a way they make money from the perpetrators. When such a case is reported to a champion they will make a direct call to ChildFund for action (KII, LAAC Champion)

The project needs to interrogate the corruption cases and refer to the necessary authorities or engage those involved in trainings on the importance of handling cases of child abuse.

Though 39.9% of the children had knowledge of reported cases of child abuse, only 28.7% were aware of those that had been addressed or resolved. However, this is an increase from the baseline where only 10% of the children reported knowledge of case resolution. Figure 6 below shows

percentage of children reporting actions taken when child abuse cases are reported. Generally, there has been an increase of the children reporting these actions between baseline and endline.

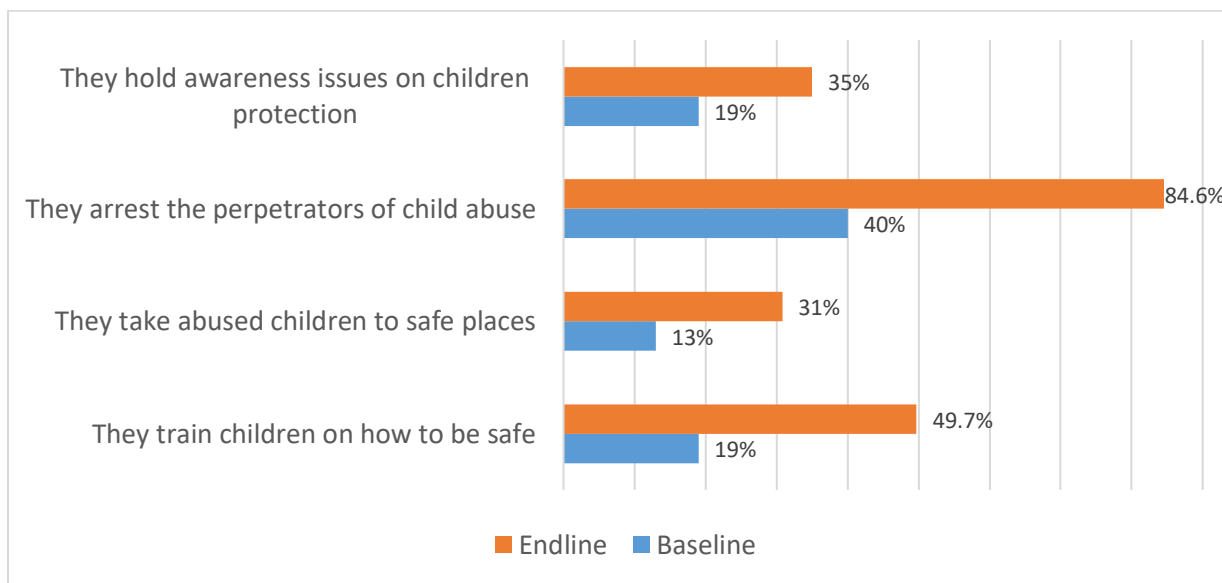


Figure 6: Action taken when cases of child abuse are reported

3.4.2 Access to referral service

Case referral is the process of directing or redirecting a child and the caregivers to an agency for appropriate services depending on the needs of the child. Jukumu Letu project aimed at referring children in need of protection to services such as psychosocial support, medical care, access to justice, and peer counselling among others. This endline evaluation sought to know if the children are being referred for these services and reasons for not being referred.

At baseline, the study established that children in need of protection are 60%. The proportion of children in need of protection that are receiving support was 36%, with boys said to be receiving more support than girls. Conversely, at endline, 48.4% of children needed protection of whom 50% received support, mostly being girls. This could be explained by presence of a child rescue centre established to support girls rescued from early marriages and female genital mutilation (FGD). Finding show that only 17.9% of the children reported awareness of children in the community referred in the past year by community members (family members or other community members) directly to social services as opposed to the 38% at baseline.

However on further probe, only 22% were aware of children who had been abused and not referred to access services unlike at baseline 33%. Notable, just like at baseline, girls are the mostly not referred group to access these services at 41.1% which brings the issue of the rescue centre to the fore once again.

Table 9: Summary of access to referral services

Variable	Description	Percent
<i>Are you aware of Children in the community referred in the past year by community members (family members or other community members) directly to social services</i>	Yes	17.9
	No	82.1
<i>Are you aware of children who have been abused and not referred to access any services?</i>	No	77.6
	Yes	22.4
<i>If Yes, who are mostly not referred to access any services?</i>	Girls	41.4
	Boys	17.1
	Children experiencing all forms of violence e.g. FGM, Beating etc	5.7
	Children living in poor homes	25.7
	Children with adolescent moms	1.4
	Children affected by HIV/AIDS	2.9
	Children with special needs	5.7

Some of the reasons given by the children and caregivers for not accessing referral services included; lack of finances for following up on the cases, parental ignorance on the importance of referring their children for further assistance when abused, the tedious process of some referred cases.

3.4.3 Community based child protection structure

The Framework for the National Child Protection System for Kenya² recognises the community-based child protection structure as including parents, teachers, neighbours, relatives and the public. Their role in child protection revolves around mobilizing local resources to protect children, reporting violence and exploitation against children and discouraging retrogressive cultural practices to protect children. Similarly the Jukumu Letu project sought the children's

² The Framework for the National Child Protection System for Kenya, 2011

understanding of those involved in protecting them from abuse. The figure below gives the children’s knowledge on the community-based child protection structure both at baseline and endline evaluations. While the baseline shows parents leading with 30.8% followed by community elders with 20.9%, the endline shows the chief/assistant chief leading with 81.1% followed by parents at 72.2% and the NGO/CBOs coming in third with 37.1%. Overall, figure 7 below shows increase in the children’s knowledge of the community child protection structures meaning that they are either visibly working to protect the children or the project has really sensitized the children well both of which show the project’s effectiveness.

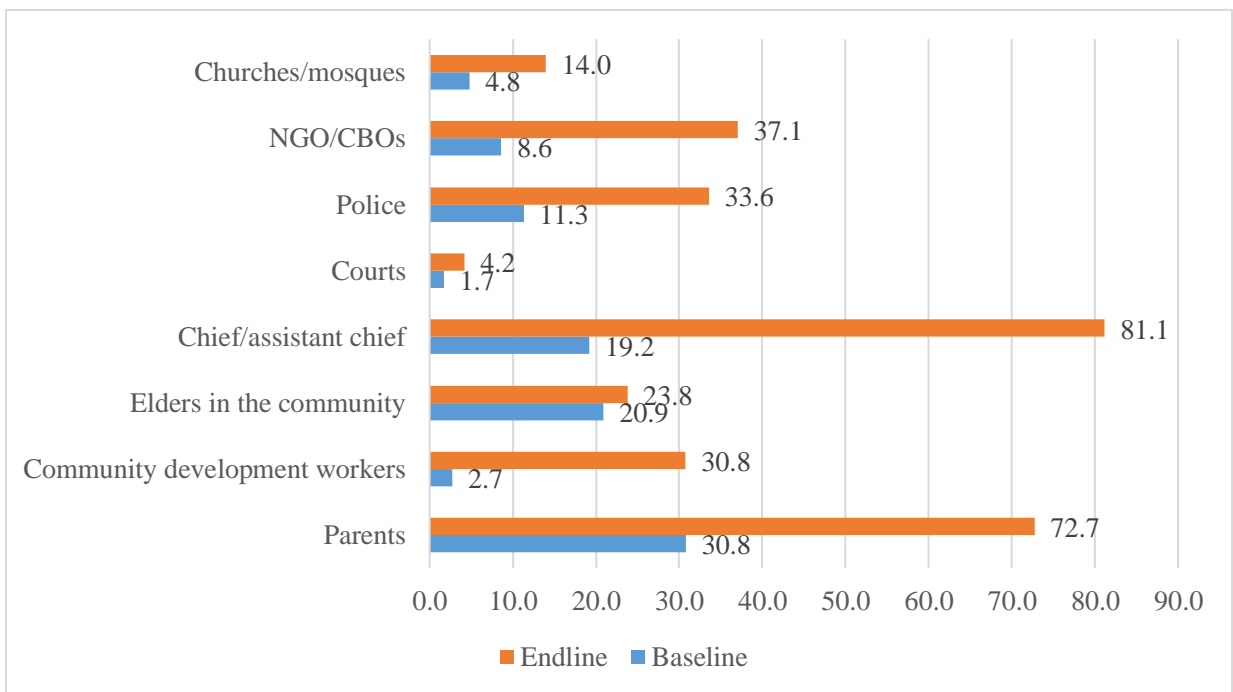


Figure 7: Community based child protection structures

The excerpt from the KIIs below shows the project work with the community-based child protection structures.

Jukumu Letu project took us for a one-week training, all the chiefs we were trained together with the assistant chiefs, then date 20th together with the stakeholders, they also trained the primary school head teachers together with the BOM members, we also involved the ward administrator then we formed a committee whereby we give a report as per every sub-location. The meeting was continuing very well but currently due to covid-19 we have a lot of obstacles. So far we have also identified the needy students whom we are also paying school fees for. There are specific number

per location. This area has a lot of child protection issues. This is the area whereby girls are being cut and we are fighting for that (Village elder, Tharaka South).

3.5 Participation of Children in their own Protection

3.5.1 Child Participation in own Protection Needs

In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) article 12 that recognizes the right of child participation in decision making, one of the Jukumu Letu project's outcome was; increased participation of children in their own protection within Tharaka Nithi County. The project has been enhancing the children's knowledge on how to protect themselves through mentoring them and having them participate in forums such as the Day of the African Child. As a result, children have become bold to not only advocate for their own protection but also to monitor activities or discussions involving their protection. This is shown in the responses given to the question on how the project seminars have helped them;

Respondent 1: *The activities helped me because they taught distinguishing between the bad thing and the goods things, the method to handle them, Respondent 2: It has helped me know where to report the abuse and the procedure to use. Respondent 3: It taught me that i have a right to make decision to something that is not of benefit for me. Respondent 4: It also helped me get courage to face anyone who will try to abuse my right without any fear. Respondent 5: The activities have helped me because now am educated and am comfortable aware on my rights and what to do after abuse (IDI, school girls)*

Figure 8 below shows the improvement in all aspects of child participation in protection with the least score at endline being 53%.

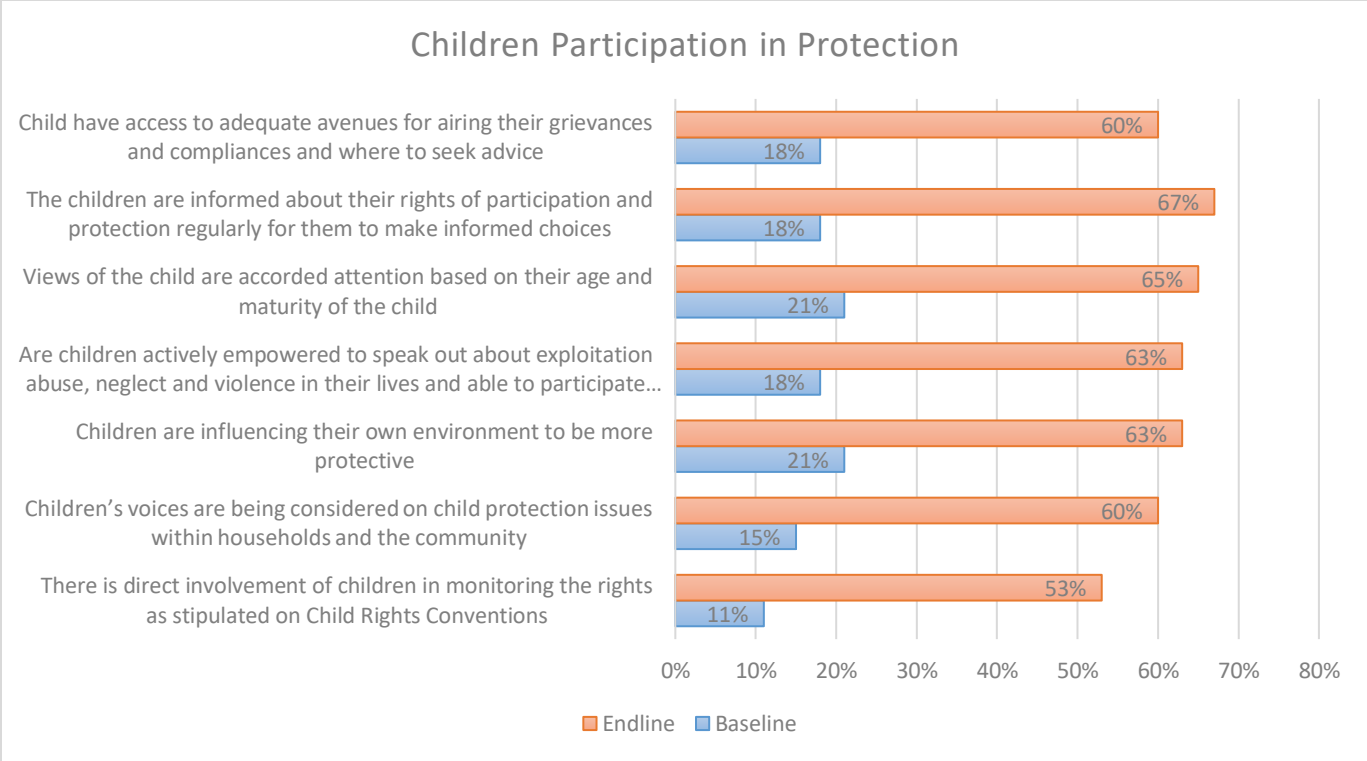


Figure 8: Child participation in their protection

3.5.2 Child Participation in Mentorship Programs

Child mentorship is important in not only helping the child perform well at school but also help them to be bold enough to advocate for their rights. The Jukumu Letu project aimed at mentoring the children in different thematic area and exposing them to different people such as community resource persons, government officials and local celebrities to develop their self-confidence. The children were asked if mentorship sessions were being conducted in their schools and their knowledge of those participating in these sessions. The figure 8 below indicates their feedback with 72% of the children confirming that the sessions were being conducted and 90.7% having knowledge of those attending the mentorship sessions. This is an improvement from the baseline where the sessions were reported at 36% and attendance at 76%.

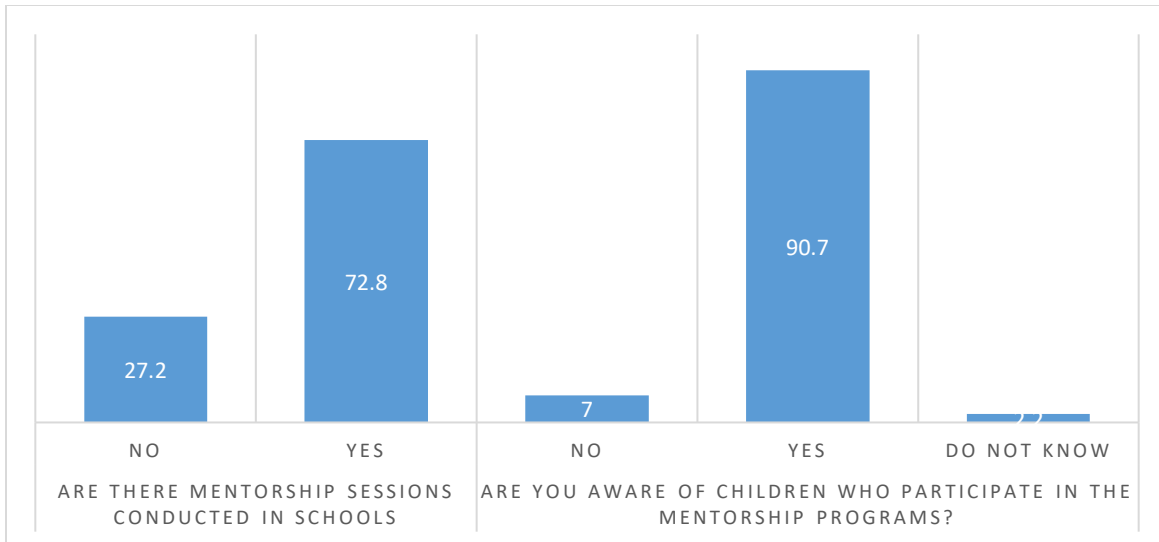


Figure 9: Mentorship sessions in schools

The project’s annual report 2020, indicates that mentorship sessions were done during school assemblies, child right club meetings, one on one by children leaders, parent meeting and closing/prize giving days. The report further highlights that a total of 20,578 children were mentored. This represents 88% of the project’s target of 23,500 children for the quarter 4 of 2019.

In-depth interviews with the children also confirmed that they were involved in community seminars aimed at enhancing their skills on child rights.

We got involved in the activities by the champions where they came publishing that there will be an event at Kamarandi training on the right of children and they informed as to attend because there was no payment and the training was for free. The seminar they had conducted 2019 December for 5 days at Kamarandi secondary school organised by Jukumu Letu (IDI, primary school girls).

3.6 School based Child Protection Structures

3.6.1 Prevalence of child abuse in schools

As reported in 3.3.1, at baseline, 11.6% of child abuse cases occur in schools compared to other places as opposed to 7% reported during endline. The study further sought to ascertain the prevalence of child abuse in schools by asking the children if they had witnessed their fellow pupils being hit or humiliated by adults in the school and if this resulted in school dropouts. Similarly this has reduced from the baseline’s 28.6% to 18.9% at endline evaluation.

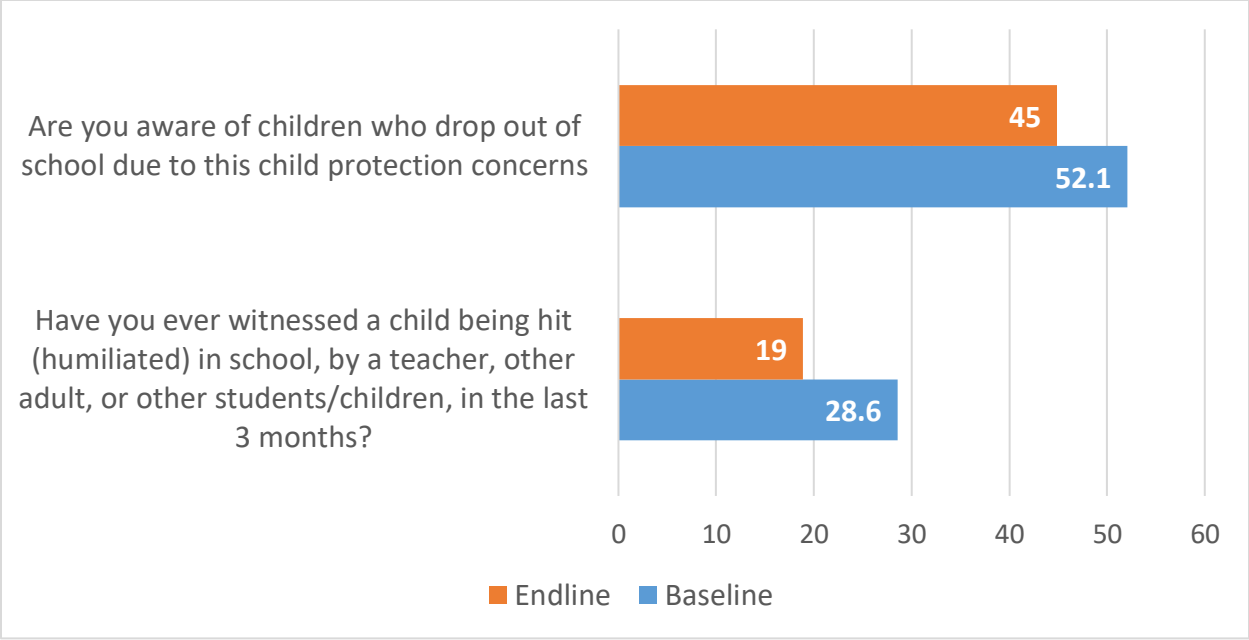


Figure 10: Prevalence of child abuse in schools

3.6.2 Safe spaces in schools

Children spend most of their active time in school and thus they need to feel safe while there so that they can concentrate on their education for better outcome. This evaluation sought to find out how the children considered safety of their schools and the feedback was that majority (97%) felt that their schools were safe as indicated in figure 10 below. This is a 21% increment from the baseline and shows that the children still consider the school to be the safest place compared to their homes.

Variable	Baseline	Endline
Do you consider your school safe for children?	76%	97%

Table 11: Percentage of children considering their school as safe

When asked in the in-depth interviews if they felt safe in school, this was their feedback;

Yes. I have a lot of friends we play together, and I feel safe around them. I feel safe around teachers too (IDI with schoolchildren)

At school we feel very safe because there is enough security, and we can move anywhere we feel like without any doubt or fear. The schoolteacher, suggestions box, the caretakers of the school ensure every child feel comfortable for better of their studies (IDI, primary school girls)

Given that some of the children did not consider the school as safe, the evaluation sought to find out the areas in the schools and their surrounding environment that were considered unsafe. The data was compared to that of baseline to see if there have been any changes. Most of the areas with high percentages are those that surround the school, meaning that the community sensitization and security measures need to be enhanced. Teacher’s private office takes the lead (6%) in unsafe places within the school compound followed by the school garden at 4%. Overall, there has been reduction from the figures given at baseline with stage/bus stop reporting a 3% increment, an indication that the efforts put in by the project have been effective. A summary of their feedback is shown in figure 11 below.

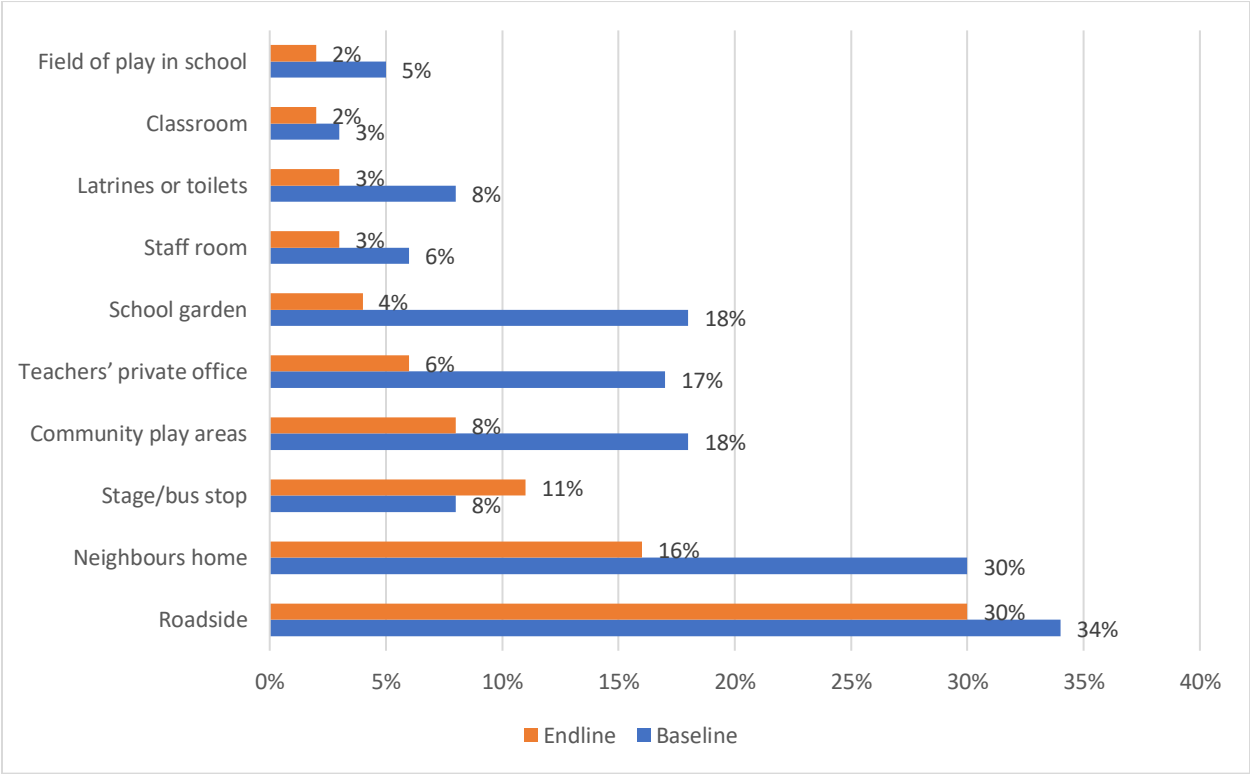


Figure 12: Areas children reporting to be most unsafe around school environment

3.6.3 Child Protection champions

To achieve its objective, Jukumu Letu project engaged in training and working with the child protection champions. These were to support in awareness creation on child protection, coordination of capacity building of children, and identification and reporting of child abuse cases. In this section, we will focus on those involved at the school level. The study sought to find out

the children’s awareness of existence of child protection champions in their schools, if the champions are trained, who trains them and the composition of the champions. The table 10 below shows the children’s feedback comparing baseline and endline evaluations’ data. Seventy two percent of the children were aware of the existence of child protection champions in schools with majority 68% being teachers. ChildFund, school law clubs and teachers were mentioned as the trainers for these champions.

Table 10: School child protection champions

Variable	Description	Baseline	Endline
<i>Knowledge of child protection champions in schools</i>	Yes	23%	72%
	No	77%	20.6%
<i>Are children protection champions trained</i>	Yes	10%	80%
	No	90%	20%
<i>Composition of child champions</i>	Children	11%	8%
	Teachers	4%	68%
	Children and teachers	6%	26%
Trainers majorly ChildFund, School law clubs and teachers at endline			

Children also reported the existence of these champions during the IDIs when asked where they learnt child rights from as shown below;

At school with our champion (IDI, school boys)

And when asked if they know where to report abuse cases, their feedback was;

We report the matter to my champions at our community or champion at school (IDI, school girls)

A champion teacher says;

I was trained as a champion last year October, we were trained for four days. Am able to identify people who are in need through observation I can tell there is a problem. Through I have a skill of approaching problems through the channels how I can start addressing problem from the office to the administration then to the chief, but there is a problem most cases reach at the chiefs office without progress (IDI, Teacher)

3.6.4 Existence of independent reporting mechanisms in schools

A functional child abuse reporting mechanism is good and most important is one that ensures a child’s confidence while reporting. An example is the speak-out box in schools that ensures anonymity of the child reporting abuse cases thus preventing backlash. This evaluation sought to find out if these boxes existed in the schools. Feedback from the children shows that there has been

an improvement in their knowledge about these boxes with 65% reporting existence of the boxes as opposed to 33% who reported at baseline. This feedback is shown in the figure 12 below.

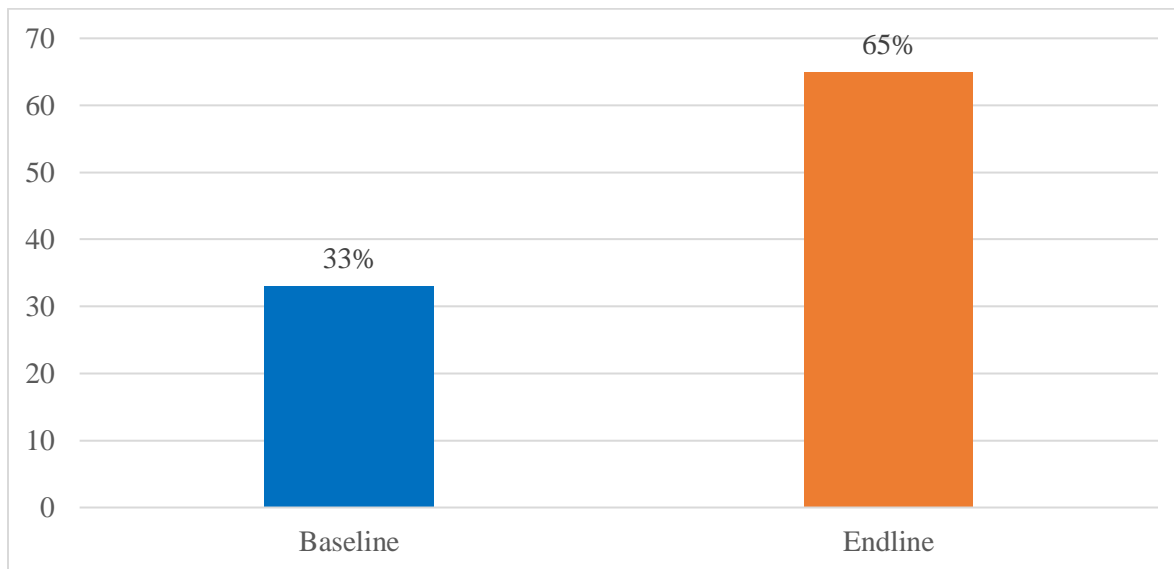


Figure 13: Percentage of children reporting existence of speak out boxes in schools

In addition, 63% of the children reported that they do have access to these speak out boxes as shown in the table below;

Table 11: Access to independent reporting mechanism in school

Variable	Description	Frequency	Percent
Do children have access to independent reporting mechanism (like Speak out boxes) in your school?	No	115	36.9
	Yes	197	63.1

3.6.5 Child Participation forums in school

As earlier discussed under section 3.5 child participation is important and creating avenues that will enhance it is key. Child rights clubs, child parliaments and other community forums that bring children together encouraging them to advocate for their rights are equipping them on how to do so are essential. This evaluation sought to find out the existence of these clubs and compare with the baseline data. Fifty four percent of the children reported the existence of child rights clubs and

community forums. This is a 21% increment compared to the baseline data as shown in figure 13 below.

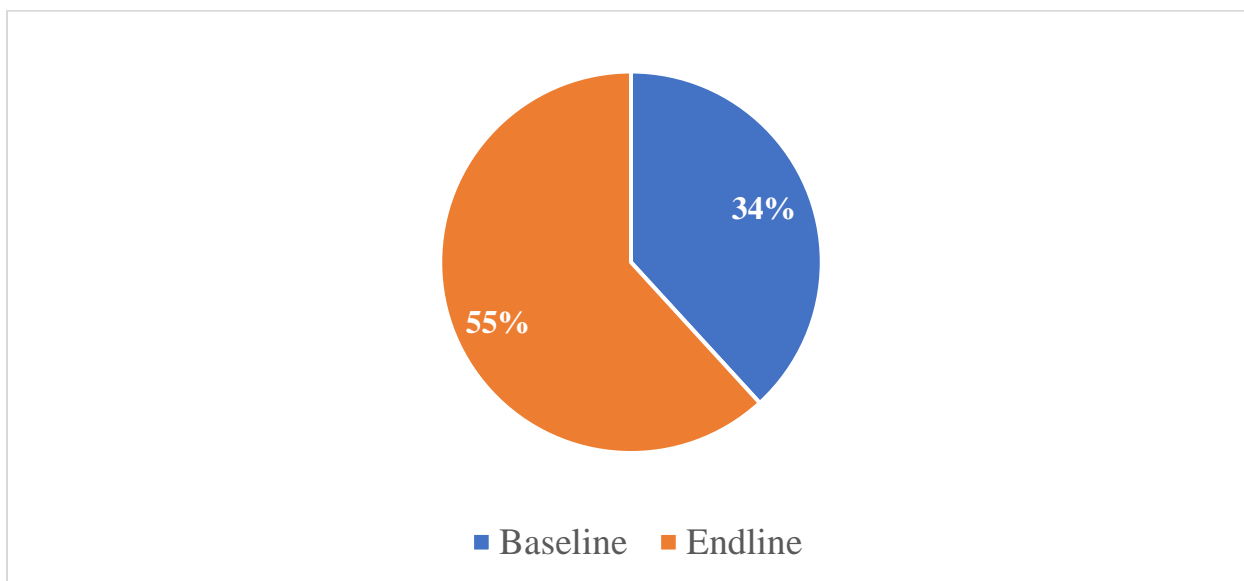


Figure 14: Percentage of children reporting existence of child rights clubs

3.6.6 Role of board of governance members in child protection

As reported at the baseline, the school board of governance, otherwise known as the School Board of Management (BOM) members are supposed to be responsible for ensuring that child protection guiding principles are adhered to in school. However, these members lacked skills and knowledge in child protection work and could not adequately promote the fulfilment of children rights in school. As a result, the Jukumu Letu project equipped the BOM members with skills that will enable them to maintain the school safe spaces structures and continue supporting child protection initiatives in the schools and in the communities. The below excerpt from the projects annual reports shows that the project reached its target of training the BOM members.

The head teachers from 65 targeted schools were approached and the project planned activities for schools shared with them. Board of management (BoM) representatives were invited from each school in both Sub Counties (Tharaka South and Igambangombe) for training. In collaboration with the ministry of Education and the Department of children services, the BoM members were trained on Child protection for two days to enable the support the child protection and participation initiatives in schools. Through their support, 65 classrooms in the target schools were branded with child protection messages and drawings. In addition, the BoM members promised to support installation of and hearten use of talking boxes where children will be

encouraged to voice out their issues anonymously. This will enhance sustainability of child protection activities in schools (Final Report, 2018)

3.7 Analysis of the Project against OECD DAC Criteria

3.7.1 Project Relevance

The overall objective of the Jukumu Letu project was extremely relevant in the context of Tharaka Nithi County, where there is an urgent need to strengthen the child protection system. Through its accessible and holistic model, the Jukumu Letu initiative addressed a recognised gap for the fulfilment of the rights and needs of children. Most importantly, the model encouraged child protection stakeholders to improve collaboration and coordination with government agencies at the county-level, especially among law enforcement, and broader social service sectors.

The Framework for the National Child Protection for Kenya (2011) and the National Plan for Action for Children 2015-2022 identify;

- Limited of knowledge of child rights and where to report violation; and fear of exposure
- Improving information management system and referral mechanisms;
- Insufficient child friendly desks for reporting violations against rights of children;
- Unavailability of rescue centres for children who are in abusive circumstances;
- The need to enhance child participation
- The need for strengthening the child protection system at national and county level;
- Insufficient capacity among the duty bearers and need to improve competences in the social workforce serving the children;
- Enhancing coordination between service providers;

On the other hand, the Tharaka Nithi CIDP 2018-2022 identified existence of retrogressive cultural practices such as FGM and child marriage despite it being banned by the FGM Act 2011.

Similarly, the baseline evaluation confirmed that Tharaka Nithi children needed care and protection with 51% of the children reporting abuse within their community with FGM and early marriage being some of the abuses. The need to strengthen the Local Area Advisory Council and Board Of Management, lack of a rescue centre and the need for child participation were all reported as well as other child protection needs identified above.

Therefore, the project's need for; increased responsiveness of the formal and informal child protection mechanisms, increased participation of children in their own protection within Tharaka Nithi County, and decreased number of girls adversely affected by retrogressive cultural practices,

align well with the needs of the children in the project implementation area. The quote below from a teacher champion also affirms the relevance of the Jukumu Letu project.

Yes the project was relevant because it was tackling about the children protection. Being a teacher, I was in a position to know how to help and intervene when children problems. They called us one time in Kajuki and we have been going there in fact for refresher courses. We were taught the ways of protecting our children because they have become so fragile (KII, Teacher Champion)

According to research conducted by Plan International Kenya, GTZ and the Kenya Bureau of Statistics, Female Genital Mutilation is at 95 percent especially in Tharaka South and 58 percent in other parts of Tharaka Nithi County. In this regard, the objectives of the project were relevant to addressing child protection issues through the systems strengthening approach. Save the Children (2019)³, highlights the following reasons to strengthen the child protection systems:

- Child protection systems offer the best method to address complex problems to prevent and protect children from all forms of violence.
- Systems strengthening efforts support a focus on prevention and response and aim to treat children and their families in a holistic manner.
- Child protection systems serve all children and have greater capacity to reach the most vulnerable.
- To prevent and better address poly-victimization (that different forms of violence are interconnected, and that one type of victimization can increase susceptibility to other forms). For example, a child who is trafficked is also at risk of being physically harmed, psychologically affected, sexually abused and/or separated from his/her family.
- A systems approach helps overcome the limitations of a fragmented approach to child protection, which traditionally focused on specific child protection issues (in both development and humanitarian contexts).
- To more effectively build upon the strengths and resilience of children, families, communities, and governments to protect and care for children.
- Child protection system strengthening efforts are more cost-effective and of greater benefit in tackling the diverse range of child protection concerns affecting girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds.
- Child protection system strengthening is guided by long-term thinking, and thus is more likely to be sustainable.

³ Save the Children, Guidance for Country Offices: Strengthening Child Protection Systems, 2019

3.7.2 Project Coherence

The Jukumu Letu Child Protection project was implemented in Tharaka Nithi County. The evaluation sought to explore whether it undermined or supplemented the effects of any existing programs or policies, whether context factors such as political stability/instability, population movements were considered in the design and delivery of the intervention, coherence with the policies and programmes of other partners operating within the same context and the synergies between the intervention and other ChildFund interventions.

It was observed that the project was in line with the Tharaka Nithi County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) 2018-2022 which prioritises policies on child protection, welfare and development and acknowledges partnerships within the county with other actors such as NGOs like Plan International, and others to ensure that issues of children rights like child marriage and FGM are addressed properly. The same is included in the CIDP M&E Framework which outcome aims at increasing in number of children accessing care and protection services.

In the same county, other similar project implemented by Plan International named "Obligation to Protect" was a 3-year project implemented in Tharaka. The project sought to contribute towards behaviour change on the practice of female genital mutilation/cutting and is set to end in 2020. The two project teams worked together to conduct anti FGM campaigns which as led to reduction of cases to some extent and increased reporting of child abuse cases.

The project was anchored on ChildFund Kenya's Country Strategic Plan 2019-2021 which included child protection mechanism as one of the key priorities to ensure functioning child protection systems that support increased community responsiveness to the protection needs of children among ChildFund's local partners by June 2021. This would be done through support capacity building of existing and new community based child protection structures, support strengthening of the formal child protection mechanism and promote linkage of the CBCPM with formal child protection systems and supporting multi-sectorial collaboration for child protection.

Moreover, the project is linked with the donor's priorities. ChildFund Korea Child Protection Sector Framework which aims to help children be protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, and abuse to grow in the safe environment through supporting government to fulfil

its role and responsibility in exercising children's right, and support to create relevant law and system for child protection. In addition to help local community build child protection system to reinforce community-based child protection practices in responding to relevant issues, preventing child abuse, and improve child protection service accessibility.

3.7.3 Project Effectiveness

The Jukumu Letu project worked to ensure that the community members and children get to understand what abuses are, understand the need to report child abuse cases and that the reported cases are properly handled. This was done through strengthening the formal child protection coordination mechanism through supporting the proper constituting of LAAC and training its members. The project also saw increased awareness of reporting mechanisms and collaboration of the community structures in protecting the children. This is indicated in the KII excerpts below.

Things have changed in the last 3 years. Like now we have few cases that we handled for children who have been mistreated by their parents and we were able to tackle that. We also advise children and their parents on how they are supposed their children. And if they are not going to change, we will take action so that the children can get their rights (KII, Teacher Champion)

Things were very bad before the project. There was no awareness in the village. People could just go Scott free for their actions. But when the project came and we go round with chiefs and police officers, people now took it seriously and mend their ways. Even here, people became responsible. (KII, LAAC Champion)

Seventy three percent of children know where to report or the procedure for reporting child abuse as opposed to the 35% at baseline. On the other hand, 81.6% of caregivers were aware that child abuse should be reported. This indicates that the project activities involving safe reporting of child abuse in schools and training community champions on child protection are effective and should be continued by Childrise Development Program and other stakeholders. Moreover, 39.9% of the children had knowledge of reported cases of child abuse and 64.9% were aware of those that had been addressed or resolved. This is an increase from the baseline where only 10% of the children reported knowledge of case resolution. At baseline, the study established that children in need of protection are 60%. The proportion of children in need of protection that received support was 36%, with boys said to be receiving more support than girls. Conversely, at endline, 48.4% of children needed protection of whom 50% received support, mostly being girls. This could be

explained by presence of a child rescue centre established to support girls rescued from early marriages and female genital mutilation (FGM).

Supporting the involvement of children in child rights clubs, community forums and their involvement in national activities like the Day of the African Child increased their knowledge of their rights and participation in their own protection. This was evidenced by increased access for children to avenues for airing their grievances and complains (60%), children being better informed about their rights of participation and protection regularly (67%), views of children being accorded attention based on their age and maturity (65%) and children are influencing their own environment to be more protective (63%) among other indicators.

Children form play groups with their peers. These Children move in groups thus ensuring thus ensuring no child is alone in isolated or dark places, since such areas pose dangers to children. Children also encourage each other to speak out, that is, tell of any harm they are facing to their parents or guardians. Further, children who are older help protect their siblings especially when they are walking around in the neighborhood or by the roadside. Other children may help in reporting such cases especially when the victim is afraid to tell their parents or guardian. (IDI, Community Leaders).

The project has ensured that the much-needed girls rescue centre is built and followed up to ensure operationalisation albeit with temporal approval from the Department of Childrens services at the time of the evaluation. The centre is yet to be registered.

This is not only a great milestone for the project but also for the child protection services in Tharaka Nithi county since by the time of the baseline study, there was no child friendly rescue centre making the rescue efforts difficult. The temporal approval has paved way for rescue of girls and at the time of the evaluation, one girl had been admitted to the facility. The study confirmed that rescue services still go on with the children being taken to the chiefs camp, the police and childrens office. When asked if the children at risk of harmful practices received services, 60% of the children said that the targeted girls are rescued while 40% confirmed the targeted boys being rescued as shown in table 5 below. The difference in the number can be attributed to the fact that FGM and child marriages mostly affect girls.

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Endline	Target	Source/MoV
Outcome 1: Increased responsiveness of the formal and informal child protection mechanisms	% of children whose cases have been reported and addressed	10%	65%	50%	Childrens semi-structured interview questionnaire
	% Increase of children in need of protection accessing services by 2021.	36%	50%	75%	Childrens semi-structured interview questionnaire
Outcome 2: Increased participation of children in their own protection within Tharaka Nithi County.	%Increase in children's participation in their own protection.	18%	63%	80%	Childrens semi-structured interview questionnaire
Outcome 3: Decreased number of girls adversely affected by retrogressive cultural practices.	% Increase in the enrolment of girls in the rescue centre	0%	0%	50%	Project documents/reports Registration List
	No of girls rescued	0	1	100	Project documents/reports Registration List

3.7.4 Project Efficiency

The project has contributed to decline in harmful retrogressive cultures by educating children on their rights while also empowering parents through knowledge to be able to uphold these rights, with immediate impact being shift from harmful children cultures and improved child rights knowledge. Key informants also note's as indicated below as the direct benefit of Jukumu Letu Project in Tharaka County

“The first one is the strengthening of the structures on the ground because we have champions in every village and they are able to address and report issues of child protection and then there is also issues of awareness even among the children because of the many sensitization forums. The child protection champions in schools are also able to enlighten others on the dangers of FGM, and discourage some practices like early marriages and the like. “

ChildFund (Kenya) also notes receipt of funds from the donor (ChildFund Korea) was timely, without any delay. The project established a centralized financial and procurement management system at country office in Nairobi. This allowed for efficient monitoring, procurement and disbursement of funds to field project implementation. Disbursement of funds were said to be within the required time. However, some components of the projects were undervalued during the proposal development stage which required re-evaluation thus resulting in delays.

In each calendar year the project is expected to have an audit. The Jukumu Letu project has undergone through audits, that is 2018, 2019, 2020 and the next one will be February 2022. In terms of reach it has reached approximately 19,500 Children in addition to teachers and caregivers.

The project had achieved much of its targets by January 2022 and 87% burn rate. The balance of 13% attributed to the delayed construction of the rescue centre borehole where ChildFund normally pays 90% of the cost and 10% upon completion.

Collaboration with the Childrise Development Program as the local implementing partner has facilitated reaching out to the beneficiaries cost effectively. This is mainly because Childrise is community-based organization and have in depth understanding of the community. They help in the selection of the beneficiaries as per the needs of the community. The project carried out its trainings as scheduled; the advocacy part has also been implemented as scheduled. The delayed activities due to COVID-19 had been rescheduled and have now been carried out successfully. The project reports, as well as interviews with the local implementing partner and community members, indicate that the project has met expected outputs at endline.

3.7.5 Project Impact

The project's goal was to contribute to mitigation of the effects of retrogressive cultural practices on children through strengthening the formal and informal child protection systems in Tharaka Nithi County. The assessment generally sought to find out the existence and functionality of both formal and informal child protection systems. This was mainly done through response pathways analysis which entails analysis of the responses taken by children and caregiver whenever a child is exposed to or at risk of being abused, as well as the existing preventive and responsive mechanisms in the formal and informal child protection systems.

One of the project outcomes was to ensure responsiveness of the formal and informal child protection mechanisms. The baseline survey established that LAAC was weak in Tharaka Nithi and therefore, the project targeted strengthening it. In addition, there only existed volunteer children officers who work closely with the Sub-County Children officers to identify child protection risks or children who are victims of child abuse. The endline evaluation established that the Jukumu Letu project supported in constituting a proper LAAC and offered trainings to its members to deliver proper child protection services as indicated in the KIIs below.

The project facilitated LAAC quarterly meetings which has improved their functioning in overseeing child protection issues. Their linkage with the Department of children services has encouraged reporting of Child protection threat cases and follow ups of the same. Their linkage with the Department of children services has encouraged reporting of Child protection threat cases and follow ups of the same. Government law enforcers have been very supportive in ensuring children rights are adhered as well as arresting the perpetrators of children rights (KII, project staff)

We are trying to push parents to take their children to school, this has been made possible by involving LAAC, "nyumba kumi" and teachers or any other informants within the community, together we try to enlighten parents on the importance of children being in school. As they get to interact with other children in school (KII, Female LAAC Champion)

Seventy three percent of children reported knowing where to report or the procedure for reporting child abuse as opposed to the 35% at baseline. They also reported learning about the reporting largely from school (52.4%) and community champions (41.9%) as shown in table 7 below. On the other hand, 81.6% of caregivers were aware that child abuse should be reported. This indicates that the project activities involving safe reporting of child abuse in schools and training community champions on child protection were effective and should be continued by childrise and other actors. The community champions are seen to be playing a crucial role in child protection in the

communities with the data showing a 30% increment (from 4% at baseline to 34% at endline) in children who report cases to them. It is also important to note the new entrants in this reporting space –village elders (22%) and *nyumba kumi* (11%), which indicate that the project has supported the community child protection structures in a great way. On their part, the caregivers were likely to report child abuse cases to the assistant chief/chief (90.5%) followed by the police (49.9%) while the traditional healer was the least person they could report to at (0.3%).

Despite the children's and their caregivers' awareness of the need to report child abuse and knowing where to report, they are sometimes discouraged from reporting due to various factors. Forty six percent of the children feel that the support given to the abused children after reporting is enough. Lack of justice (70%) and corruption/asking for bribery (61%) discourages caregivers from reporting the cases as indicated in the table 8 below.

Similar views were gathered from qualitative interviews as shown below.

Whenever we report defilement, early pregnancies cases to chief then chief forwards the report to the police after few days you see the perpetrators walking round free. We are threatened by the perpetrators (KII, LAAC female treasurer)

ChildFund has really tried. The government have tried to use chiefs and assistant chiefs but that has not been so effective. Whenever a case was reported they don't put much effort into providing justice unlike ChildFund who have been penetrating into the rural areas. Very serious cases like defilement you find out that don't go past Chief's office I believe it is a way they make money from the perpetrators. When such a case is reported to a champion they will make a direct call to ChildFund for action (KII, LAAC Champion)

Though 39.9% of the children had knowledge of reported cases of child abuse, only 28.7% were aware of those that had been addressed or resolved. However, this is an increase from the baseline where only 10% of the children reported knowledge of case resolution. Generally, there has been an increase of the children reporting these actions between baseline and endline.

At baseline, the study established that children in need of protection are 60%. The proportion of children in need of protection that are receiving support was 36%, with boys said to be receiving more support than girls. Conversely, at endline, 48.4% of children needed protection of whom 50% received support, mostly being girls. This could be explained by presence of a child rescue centre established to support girls rescued from early marriages and female genital mutilation (FGD).

Jukumu Letu project took us for a one-week training, all the chiefs we were trained together with the assistant chiefs, then date 20th together with the stakeholders, they also trained the primary school head teachers together with the BOM members, we also involved the ward administrator then we formed a committee whereby we give a report as per every sub-location. The meeting was continuing very well but currently due to covid-19 we have a lot of obstacles. So far we have also identified the needy students whom we are also paying school fees for. There are specific number per location. This area has a lot of child protection issues. This is the area whereby girls are being cut and we are fighting for that (Village elder, Tharaka South).

There is a big change, like now we go for the meetings and enlighten the parents to know how to handle their children. Already now the boys are scared. The committee does the outreach weekly because of other duties we cannot do it weekly but the committee does and they file the reports.

KII Village Elder

There's a very big difference. One, FGM is going down at a supersonic speed that is the positive part of it. Secondly, many students are going to school.

KII Village Elder

There are so many changes because like for now, there are so many ladies who had dropped out of school, some being defiled, some ladies taken through FGM which has been very serious. We went for seminars and counselled ladies, they could now even call to inform you what is going on, so it ended up them knowing their rights. Its not only ladies, we deal with boys too.

KII Women Leader

3.7.6 Project Ownership and Sustainability

The community-based and community-led approach that the project employed ensured that there was ownership and ultimately sustainability of the project. It is important to note that we cannot talk about sustainability without talking about ownership. In conversations with most of the community members and child protection champions, there was a sense ownership that emerged. None of the child protection champions reported being paid to do the work they are doing. Almost all the child protection champions indicated that they were championing the rights of children and engaging the community on issues of child rights out of their own will.

The work was out of willingness and passion so we will continue with the work. Chief also promised that every champion will be employed so we are still waiting to see who will be absorbed first (FGD, child protection champions)

The aspects of sustainability emerged in four main areas in this project:

i. Increased knowledge and change of practice

Increased knowledge was mainly achieved through training of child protection champions at the community level, teacher champions in schools, and community sensitization through the chief's barazas. Furthermore, the establishment of child rights clubs in schools enhanced knowledge of children about their own rights. As reported by almost all the stakeholders, child protection champions and community members interviewed, increased knowledge on child rights, including awareness of retrogressive cultural practices, reporting mechanisms has ultimately resulted in positive practice in the community. Specifically, most of the communities members are reported to have abandoned FGM while a substantial proportion are not only aware of the right channels of reporting but are taking action to report cases of abuse in the community.

The community used to engage in kangaroo courts but the trainings made a huge turn and the community Barazas could now follow the right procedures of reporting cases

(FGD, child protection champions)

ii. Strengthening the already existing community-based child protection systems

The project adopted a bottom-up approach in strengthening existing child protection mechanisms. Specifically, the project identified and capacity built existing community structures such as the chiefs, teachers, religious leaders, women group leaders, child protection champions to strengthen the informal child protection systems. Moreover, at the formal level, the project strengthened the capacity of LAAC. Through the capacity building, all these structures became aware of child rights, including retrogressive cultural practices and the right action to take in case of an abuse. Importantly, the project took a back seat and allowed these empowered community structures to take leadership and action on matters child protection. These structured played a key role in enhancing community awareness, identification and reporting child protection concerns and become the point of contact with the formal child protection system. Since the project did not create a parallel system in the community, it is highly likely that these already existing and empowered community structures will continue championing the rights of children.

We understand that every community has its own leadership and therefore we picked people that were doing something like the women group leaders, religious leaders, the area managers, and the Nyumba

“Kumi Initiative” guys that were started by the government. And therefore, these were the people that we capacity build on child protection skills. And they become community-based child protection champions. We call the CBCPC (KII, Jukumu letu project officer)

On the formal part, the project has trained 77 child protection champions at the community level (KII, Jukumu letu project officer)

In schools, the project also engaged in capacity building of teacher champions as well as the board of management.

The project has been working with 65 schools and it has trained 65 teachers as school-based child protection champions. So these are the teachers that children confide in and they are the ones that initiated child right clubs in their schools. They are the ones who have been manning the speak-out boxes, leading the speak-out forums in their schools. They also spearhead the child protection issues in schools. On the same we’ve trained the school board of management to support the initiatives that the project came up with (KII, Jukumu letu project officer)

iii. Creating strong linkages between the formal and informal child protection systems

Community-based child protection mechanisms cannot in a vacuum, they must work in accordance with the jurisdictional legal and policy framework. In this regard, linkages between the formal and informal child protection systems is extremely important in strengthening child protection systems. Through the formation of LAAC that was not in extent prior to the project was very in not only bringing the formal child protection closer to the community or in the community, but also creating the first connection of the formal system to the community.

Secondly there was no locational area advisory council so we formed two one in Kamwimbi and another one in Nkarini location. These are very vibrant councils that have been able to oversee the child protection activities and initiatives in the location. And the matters that are not fully addressed in the locational area advisory council, they find their local area advisory council. For the locational area advisory council, the chief is the chairman and the voluntary children officer is the secretary. At the sub county level, deputy county commissioner form as DC chairs the meeting and the sub county children officer is the secretary (KII, Jukumu Letu Project Officer)

An innovative approach employed by the project was creating a WhatsApp group that brings together all the community champions and the formal child protection system in one platform. According to most of the stakeholders interviewed, this WhatsApp group has not only played a key role in terms of linkages between the formal and informal child protection systems, but has facilitate reporting of child protection issues within a very short time. It is important to note that the two sub-counties where the project was implemented are very remote areas. Prior to the project, it took a very long time to access child protection services, with some community members saying it used to take a whole day’s travel to report a child protection case. With the WhatsApp group,

reporting of cases now take a few minutes. This emerged as a key milestone in strengthening the linkages between the formal and informal child protection systems.

Lastly, the project also endeavoured to bring the formal child protection stakeholders in the community. During the community sessions, it is reported that the department of children's services and other key stakeholders did not only speak to the community about child rights, but also mingled freely with the community members.

3.8 Best Practices and Lessons Learned

While implementing Jukumu Letu project the team has considered some of the best practice they considered to be effective as well as valuable lessons as shared below.

3.8.1 Best practices

1. Employing a community-based and community-led approach to strengthening child protection systems
2. Formation of school and community-based child protection champions is one of the best approaches in ensuring child protection at the community level. These have been confirmed by reduce cases of child protection compared with before as confirmed by the teachers during feedback forum and the DCS officer.
3. Training girls on alternative rite of passage increased children participation in their own protection as well as increasing community awareness on need for girl's protection against FGM, child marriage and child pregnancy. It is one of the best approaches in reaching children to create awareness on child protection.

3.8.2 Lessons Learned

1. Continued collaboration with the key duty bearers (police, medics, County, and national government administrators) led by the Department of Children Services has eased the project implementation as well as assuring sustainability of project initiatives in child protection
2. Strengthening and support of formal Child Protection structures such as AAC and LAAC will ensure sustainability of project activities such as operationalization of the Girls Rescue Centre.

3. Continued partnership with Childrise (Implementing partner) smoothens implementation process of the project activities assuring sustainability of most of the child protection initiatives implemented through *Jukumu letu* project.
4. Child right clubs and the use of talking boxes have proven to be safe avenues for children to air out their views freely with any fear of stigmatization or victimization. These should be encouraged in all schools to increase children participation in their own protection
5. Training of school and community-based child protection champions is one of the best approaches in ensuring child protection at the school and community level. This provides a direct link between the formal and informal child protection structures, which enables speeded help to children in case of protection threats.
6. Participatory project identification was the most effective way of identifying the children problems and potential solutions, as well as building stakeholder buy-in
7. Building strong collaboration between the community members, existing community-based systems and the formal child protection system is the key to a successful system strengthening approach. Rather than seeing child protection as something the department of Children's Services needs to do, creating dialogue and joint ownership between the community-based systems, community members and the formal child protection system is crucial to achieve sustainability.
8. Involving children in their own protection will result in a more sustained, effective way of change as its in expensive and produces required result.
9. Project involvement of community and school as target areas is likely to produce desired results as results indicate they are relied upon by children for child protection.
10. Community participation is essential in strengthening child protection systems and building strong linkages with the formal child protection system. A meaningful participation requires deep and continuous consultation with communities---children, to understand their contexts, issues and needs and adults. Deep consultations allow for greater understanding of child protection issues, relevant to the design and implementation of the project.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The study found that there has been a reduction in the practice of harmful cultural practices including FGM and child marriages since the Jukumu Letu project interventions began and the community members are embracing ARP. Though the child rescue centre is not yet operational, rescue services have been going on with 60% of the girls and 40% of the boys in need of these services receiving them.

Though FGM has reduced, most of the child abuse cases have increased especially those that happen at home. This was linked to child Covid-19 that led to most parents lacking income and closure of schools. On the other hand, LAAC is currently active and properly delivering its mandate courtesy of the Jukumu Letu project.

There is increased awareness on reporting of child abuse cases with schools and community champions being acknowledged as the trainers. Most of the cases are reported to the teachers and the caregivers. However, reporting is still a challenge owing to some cases of corruption. The community-based child protection structure is visibly working to protect the children with chiefs taking the lead with 81.1%.

On child participation, it was noted that children have been empowered to participate in their own protection owing to the child rights clubs and involvement in community and national forums.

Children consider schools to be safe courtesy of the speak-out boxes through which they are able to report abuse cases anonymously and the existence of child protection champions who identify and report these cases. However, 45% of the children reported being aware of those that have dropped out of school due to being hit or humiliated, making the school unsafe.

4.2 Recommendations

National and County Government need to have budgets that will support the NCCS, AAC and LAAC activities in ensuring that all the stakeholders working to protect the child are doing so and not only depend on the donors.

ChildFund Korea/Donor needs to support the implementing partners with enough funds that will enable them to carry out investigations on the effects of Covid-19 on child protection and enable them carrying out activities that will help to mitigate the same.

ChildFund Kenya and Childrise need to follow up with the Directorate of Children services and make sure that the rescue centre certificate is issued to enable to operations to begin. They also need to interrogate the increase in child abuse cases within the communities and plan for proper interventions

The community leaders need to ensure that the members of their communities adhere to the child protection laws and take action against corrupt officers.

Parents need to take charge of their children's protection by being at the forefront in advocating for their rights and not be the major causes of their abuse. They should make use of the knowledge received during this projects' term in ensuring that the retrogressive cultural practices stop and ARP is embraced.

The school administration needs to follow up on the cases of child abuse in schools especially in the teachers' private offices and school gardens and ensure that schools are 100% safe for the children. They should also ensure that the champions that were trained by the Jukumu Letu project continue carrying out their duties beyond the project's tenure and the child rights clubs as well as the speak out boxes remain functional.

5 Annexes

5.1 M&E matrix



ME%20matrix%20summary.docx

5.2 Evaluation Schedule/Workplan



Work Plan_Jukumu
Letu-GANTT Chart.xl

5.3 Evaluation Data collection tools



Data collection
tools final.zip

5.4 Raw data and analysis excel files



Evaluation
Datasets.zip