

# Children Lead the Way

Highlights from the Mid-Term Evaluation



Save the Children

# Introduction

Save the Children is the world's leading independent organization for children committed to ensuring children realize the rights to which they are entitled under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Save the Children Canada, one of 30 Save the Children member organizations working in over 120 countries, has prioritized two areas within its programming strategy, i) Children and Work and ii) Gender Equality. Within the Children and Work strategy, Save the Children addresses the complexity of this broad issue through an integral approach that combines an expertise in child protection, economic strengthening, health and education to create opportunities for children to become healthy, educated and empowered citizens. Our Gender Equality strategy, means directly addressing gender discrimination and promoting gender equality in order to ensure that no harm comes to children, and to advance the vision for a world where every child attains their equal rights. The Children Lead the Way program is Save the Children Canada's flagship program advancing these two important strategic objectives. Children Lead the Way is a five year program focused on empowering working girls and boys to become engaged citizens and access decent work in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Nicaragua, and Peru with a total funding of \$17.7 million through a contribution agreement with the Canadian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD).

The program has implemented different programming approaches according to each country and community context to enable children and adolescents who are engaged in different forms of work, including domestic, agricultural, mining and services, to access education, to be protected, and to participate actively in their societies. These approaches include providing access to basic education through subsidies and school kits; improving the learning environment by making it friendly to children who work as well as more relevant to market realities; facilitating access to apprenticeships, vocational and entrepreneurship training; working with teachers, parents, and employers to reduce harm related to working conditions; and organizing children and adolescents into clubs and organizations where they can learn about their rights and how to advocate for them.

The program underwent a rigorous internal evaluation process at the mid-term point to measure progress against the program's key performance indicators in the five countries and across all thematic areas. Over 3,000 children were interviewed, as well as teachers, parents, employers, government authorities and partners, to gather insights on the achievements, challenges and ways forward for Children Lead the Way. The following highlights the key findings from the Mid-Term Evaluation.

## Methodology

The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) adopted a mixed method approach to the evaluation design which combined both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and data collection tools, coupled with a review of program reports and documents. By using multiple data sources, methods, analyses and triangulating the data, the MTE sought to overcome any bias that could arise from using only single informants or single methods. The MTE used the following data collection techniques and tools:

- Surveys conducted with primary and secondary school children, teachers, Working Children's

Organizations (WCO) (Quantitative data collection tools)

- Key Informant Interviews (KII) conducted with government officials and partners (Qualitative data collection tool)
- Focus Group Discussions (FGD) conducted with parents, community members, and employers (Qualitative data collection tool)
- Secondary document review of program reports, country-specific Logic Models and Performance Measurement Frameworks

SAMPLE SIZE: The MTE interviewed/surveyed a total of 3,446 children/youth across the five countries – 1,719 boys and 1,727 girls. It also interviewed, through KII and FGDs a total of 1,158 adults.

## NICARAGUA

**207** primary school children:  
94 BOYS 113 GIRLS

**189** vocational/technical students:  
94 BOYS 95 GIRLS

**93** PARENTS & COMMUNITY MEMBERS: 44 MEN 49 WOMEN 8 GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

**11** Interest Group Leaders:  
6 BOYS 5 GIRLS

**166** Interest Group Members:  
94 BOYS 72 GIRLS

## PERU

**300** primary school children:  
153 BOYS 147 GIRLS

**312** secondary school children:  
153 BOYS 159 GIRLS

**18** WCO Leaders: 11 BOYS 7 GIRLS **49** parents and community members: 18 MEN 31 WOMEN 12 GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS **57** TEACHERS

**170** community centre children:  
70 BOYS 100 GIRLS

**109** WCO Members:  
55 BOYS 54 GIRLS

## BOLIVIA

**163** primary school children:  
79 BOYS 84 GIRLS

**189** secondary school children:  
92 BOYS 97 GIRLS

**4** WCO Leaders: 2 BOYS 2 GIRLS **138** parents and community members: 68 MEN 70 WOMEN 12 GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

**172** school teachers:  
90 primary 82 secondary

**219** WCO Members:  
150 BOYS 69 GIRLS

## BURKINA FASO

**404** primary school children:  
202 BOYS 202 GIRLS

**125** adolescents

13 secondary school students

57 vocational students

47 non-formal education students

5 technical school students

**178** WCO Members: 89 BOYS 89 GIRLS **128** parents and community members: 62 MEN 66 WOMEN **103** EMPLOYERS **15** TEACHERS

**24** WCO Leaders:  
11 BOYS 13 GIRLS

## KENYA

**220** primary school children:  
100 BOYS 120 GIRLS

**100** secondary school children:  
47 BOYS 53 GIRLS

**18** WCG Leaders: 10 BOYS 8 GIRLS 56 VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

**95** TEACHERS **83** EMPLOYERS **60** COMMUNITY MEMBERS 24 GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

**101** apprentices:  
56 BOYS 45 GIRLS

**107** WCG Members:  
52 BOYS 55 GIRLS

**109** parents and caregivers:  
29 MEN 80 WOMEN



# 94%

of primary & secondary schools in the program areas are applying ILPE

**2/3** of the teachers (68%) reported that students showed improved motivation to stay in school/continue learning

75% OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

81% OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

76% OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

75% OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

45% OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

57% OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

indicated that Spanish and various Indigenous languages were used in the classroom. As a result, students experienced less frustration with learning; increased understanding of school subjects; improved communication; increased participation.

reported that they were participating in productive education training.

indicated that they were applying productive education training at home and on their farms

55% OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

59% OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

acknowledged opportunities to take on leadership roles and participate in decision making through the student government structure



# BOLIVIA

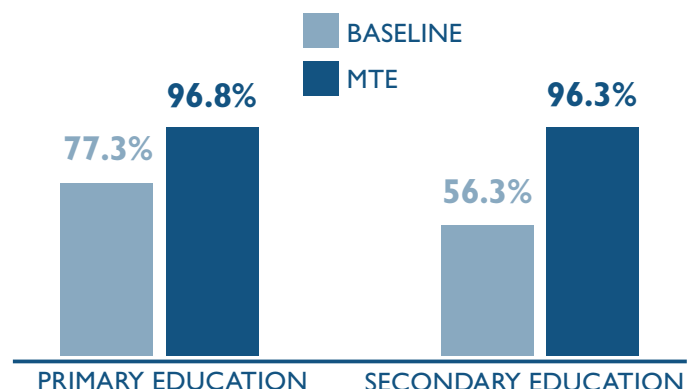
## Creating a positive school environment for learning

Although Indigenous people in Bolivia are currently undergoing social and political transformation and experiencing rights never before attained, the centuries of marginalization and oppression have left a deep mark. The education system has been one of the institutions which systematically reinforced the suppression of Indigenous people by introducing content which was alien to Indigenous peoples' realities, and in a language that many did not speak. In response, the Government of Bolivia passed the Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Perez Law (070) which specifically promoted Indigenous knowledge and the development of curriculum and teaching methodologies that were relevant to Indigenous people. With the support of the program, an Intra, Inter & Pluri-lingual Education (IPE) methodology has been introduced across 80 primary and secondary schools, which included teaching classes in the local Indigenous language; organizing classes in cultural identity, traditional practices and values; introducing relevant productive education training programs; establishing student governments; and encouraging and supporting environmental awareness and care among students.

According to the partners, the various IPE approaches applied within the schools have created a positive and relevant learning environment that has encouraged the retention of children in school, leading to the completion of grade and school levels. Based on the feedback received from primary and secondary school children and their teachers, market relevant productive education training, being taught in one's Indigenous language and about one's culture and traditions have provided children with useful livelihood skills and tools. These are applicable and transferable to their current lives, as well as relevant learning that values and

promotes Indigenous knowledge. The introduction of these educational approaches has provided the children with quality education that focuses on preparing them for life by building knowledge valuing both traditional wisdom and mainstream knowledge. These approaches coupled with other programming initiatives such as enhancing parent awareness of the importance of school; educating children as to their rights to education; and government policies such as the cash-transfer bonus for parents who send their children to primary school (Juancito Pinto Bonus) have all contributed in a notable increase in retention and completion rates in primary and secondary school, specifically:

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN COMPLETING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL



In the case of secondary school completions, productive education with its income generating potential, has in all likelihood contributed to making the school curriculum more relevant and applicable for older children, leading to a greater number of children staying in school. This completion rate represents a 40% increase over the baseline. Since these are secondary school students who are known to often drop out of school, this represents a large increase.



65%

of children identified changes in their lives or community as a result of the WCOs, including

**GREATER**

RESPECT & SUPPORT from the community

62%

WERE ACTIVELY participating in WCOs

**44.9% WERE** involved in advocacy **activities**

Children have engaged and interacted with local and regional decision makers with a view to having their voices heard on issues directly affecting their lives.

12.8%

ATTENDED PUBLIC FORUMS & CONSULTATION SPACES

11%

attended meetings with decision makers

10%

INVOLVED IN MEDIA AWARENESS RAISING



# PERU

## Working Children's Organizations (WCOs) are actively involved in promoting the rights of working children

As members of WCOs children have been accessed numerous opportunities to engage and interact with local and regional decision makers with a view to having their voices heard on issues directly affecting their lives. Specifically, children have:

- provided input in the working plan of the Ombudsman Office
- taken part in the participatory budget process of municipalities
- been consulted in the elaboration of the Regional Plan for Children and Adolescents and the Province Plan for Children and Adolescents (Ica)
- engaged with political candidates in Ica and Cusco, putting forward requests and proposals, and talking about governance, citizenship and the well-being of the community, especially for children. Six candidates signed agreements to fulfill promises if they were elected, which will be tracked by the children. Topics put forward included protection against violence, access to quality education, registry of working children, foundation of a vocational training facility
- taken part in consultative processes at the local and regional levels where children have presented their concerns and demands to respective authorities
- presented projects for funding to municipalities that included recreational, cultural and sports spaces
- participated in the Consultative Council for Children (CCONNA)
- participated in a Regional Committee for Children and Adolescents (CORENNA)

These are important avenues of participation for children in their evolution as 'advocators' for their own

needs and demands; demonstrating not only their growing influence, but also the apparent recognition by adults and the State of the importance of listening to the voices of children.

## Government entities demonstrate commitment to the issue of children and work

Local government commitment as to the importance of the issue of children and work can be seen in the numerous policies and programs that have been implemented by local government entities, – i.e. work related programs for children, awareness raising activities, and general support to children – as well as the various child protection entities established. In the three program areas - Cusco, Ayacucho and Ica - local and regional government entities have been established addressing the issue of child protection for working children. Specifically, the partners have:

- facilitated the establishment of three Consultative Councils for Children (CCONNA) that gives children an avenue for interacting and engaging with decision makers and presenting proposals and ideas for improvement;
- helped establish and strengthen three Municipal Defense for Children and Adolescents that identifies and deals with child abuse cases and community awareness raising; and
- helped set up a Regional Committee for Children and Adolescents (CORENNA)
- Noteworthy is the influence that the program has had in regions outside of the CLW program, with the establishment of two CCONNA in Chincha and Pisco, following the example of the CCONNA established in Ica.



47%

of adolescents involved in technical/vocational training cited the benefit of new knowledge and skills;

44%

cited job-related benefits such as being able to get a good job or starting up their own business

78%

OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN WHO TOOK TUTORING REPORTED THAT LEARNING WAS NOW EASIER; WHILE 25% REPORTED THAT THEIR GRADES HAD IMPROVED.

87% OF CHILDREN

72% OF ADOLESCENTS

reported that their teachers were aware of the problems facing children who worked

94%

OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS REPORTED THAT

THEY WERE DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY AT SCHOOL AS A CONSEQUENCE OF LIFE SKILLS TRAINING – INCLUDING SPEAKING IN CLASS MORE OFTEN, SHARING INFORMATION WITH PARENTS AND SIBLINGS, JOINING ACTIVITIES





# NICARAGUA

One of the objectives of the CLW program in Nicaragua was to increase the school access and retention for children and adolescents who work on coffee plantations and family farms, and to provide them with non-formal education to complement their learning, including tutoring, vocational and technical training, and life skills and gender training. By supporting these educational opportunities, the partners have broadened the scope of educational opportunities available to working children and adolescents, encouraging them to remain in school, and complementing the formal educational curriculum for children and adolescents for whom there are no opportunities for secondary school education in their communities. Through a multi-pronged approach the partners have strengthened the educational environment by:

- Training teachers in improved pedagogical practices (e.g. technical subjects, child rights, child and adolescent protection, proper treatment of children, tutoring skills) all to reduce the school drop-out rate.
- Promoting mothers and fathers as leaders in providing classes in carpentry, baking, sewing, etc. as well as farmers who provide spaces on their farms for the basic rural technology classes.
- Increasing the awareness among the community members and parents about the proper treatment of children and the importance of school attendance.

As a consequence, the program saw:

- the primary school completion rate increase from 40% at the baseline line to 73% at the MTE;
- while successful student completion of vocational and technical training increased from 4% to 40%.
- In addition, 53% of the children and adolescents subsequently went on to further education in the form of vocational and/or technical training, an increase from 19.4% at the baseline.

A teacher from El Cuá related how times have changed regarding the importance of education and their responsibility to encourage children to remain in school.

***“Previously, there were children who would be absent for an entire week while picking coffee. In the last few years they no longer take children out of school because everyone has been trained – teachers, children and parents[...]In the past[...]teachers didn’t worry if children dropped out or failed the year. Now they hardly drop out, and if they do, teachers are on top of it, and talk with children’s families. The past and the present are very different.”***

- Teacher, La Dalia

## Working in partnership with government entities

Involving the national government entities – i.e. the Ministries of Education, Health, and Labour – as collaborative partners of the program, ensured that they comprehensively understood the issues facing working children and this knowledge resulted in the implementation of 12 new programs/initiatives to address, and in some cases mitigate major issues faced by working children. Specifically,

- the implementation of academic tutoring plans for students to encourage children to stay in school and help them advance to the next grade.
- the implementation of ‘educational bridges’ on two coffee plantations in order to provide educational opportunities and proper child care for children accompanying parents during the coffee harvest
- the delivery of 150 work site inspections on large coffee plantations.
- the signing of 76 MOU agreements between large coffee plantations and the Ministry of Labour regarding the provision of facilities to provide children with school areas, day care centres, and/or dining areas.

**96.7%** OF THE CHILDREN  
REPORTED THAT  
THEY WERE APPLYING  
LIFE SKILLS AT HOME

**98.7%** of the children reported  
that they were applying  
life skills at school

**83.4%** of the children reported  
that they were applying  
life skills at work

**93.8%** OF THE CHILDREN  
REPORTED THAT THEY WERE  
APPLYING LIFE SKILLS IN  
THEIR COMMUNITY





# BURKINA FASO

## Life skills training leads to positive and empowering behaviour changes for children

The objective of life skills training, delivered through the school system, was to equip children with the social and interpersonal skills that would enable them to cope with the demands of everyday life, in the present, and as they grow into adults. Training focused on, among other things, building self-confidence, encouraging critical thinking, fostering independence, and fostering effective communication skills. With the dual objective of assessing knowledge of life skills and behaviour and mindset changes on the part of children as a consequence of the life skills training, children were asked how they were using or applying the life skills learning at home, in school, at work, and within the community.

MTE findings showed that reported behaviour changes at school and at home received the highest number of responses from boys and girls and across urban and rural settings. Eighty-nine percent (89.6%) of children reported that they were now speaking in class more often; while two-thirds reported that they were now doing their homework (66.1%). In the home, 79.5% of the children indicated that they were no longer afraid to talk to their parents about things that were important to them; while over a third of the children (39.7%) reported that they were now included in family decision making regarding issues affecting them. This points to a clear demonstration of not only enhanced knowledge of life skills, but the translation of those skills into greater self-awareness on the part of children of their own needs and desires, and the confidence to not only advocate for changes in their lives, but also to initiate changes for themselves – be it speaking in class, or talking with their parents.

Behaviour changes in the community scored the next highest percentage of responses, and included such behaviour as voicing their opinions, involvement in community groups/clubs, taking on leadership roles, and volunteering. These are important behaviour changes for children, and demonstrate enhanced self-confidence and external awareness of the world around them, that these children have translated into tangible actions vis-à-vis the community and their desire to make the community a better place to live.

Over 80% of the children reported behaviour changes at work. As a certain degree of confidence is required to initiate change within a work setting that is different from either the home or the school, this likely explains the lower percentage reported in this setting. Nevertheless, three-quarters of the children (74.5%) reported that they were now more careful about their health and safety while working; while a quarter of the children (25.6%) indicated that they were now taking decisions.

Rural children in particular appeared to have significantly benefitted from life skills training in comparison to urban children, specifically in the all-important areas of school and home. While there were only slight differences noticed between boys and girls. Overall, what can be concluded from these findings is that both boys and girls would appear to have a clear understanding of how to protect and promote their well-being, and that they have translated this knowledge into greater confidence and more self-awareness of their own needs/desires. Based on these findings, life skills training would appear to have a positive and discernible impact on children, equipping them with the social and interpersonal skills that will enable them to cope with the demands of everyday life, in the present, and as they grow into adults.

TO DATE  
**25 WCGs**  
have been established with  
a combined membership of  
**877 children**  
(493 BOYS 384 GIRLS)

**84%**  
of the children surveyed  
were found to be actively  
participating in WCGs

**3/4** were identified  
as participating  
in advocacy  
related activities

**95%**  
OF THE CHILDREN IDENTIFIED  
CHANGES IN THEIR LIVES OR  
COMMUNITY AS A RESULT OF  
ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY  
THE WCGs, INCLUDING:  
**MORE SUPPORT  
AND PARTICIPATION**

**55%**  
reported an  
improvement in  
overall well-being  
among children  
**50%**  
reported parents  
were now aware  
about child rights.





# KENYA

One of the objectives of this program is to “improve the promotion and protection of boys’ and girls’ rights among civil society, government, children’s groups and the private sector.” This objective was addressed by strengthening the participation of working children in public and private spheres, so that they would be able to express their needs and desires, and advocate for the creation of better realities for all children. To that end, program partners focused on establishing, strengthening and supporting Working Children’s Groups (WCGs), which included training of working children in child rights and life skills; and facilitating advocacy and awareness raising activities targeted at local and national governments.

## Establishment of Working Children’s Groups (WCGs)

The establishment of Working Children’s Groups has been a major accomplishment of the program, as the concept of such groups had not existed in Kenya prior to the start-up of the CLW program. These groups have been established as a support system for working children that enables children to meet on a regular basis to share and discuss key issues affecting them. Role models in the community act as patrons to the groups, mentoring the children and working closely with the partners to ensure that all concerns raised by children are addressed.

**Working Children’s Group members are actively involved in promoting the rights of working children**

WCG members have accessed opportunities under the program to engage and interact with local and regional decision makers with a view to having their

voices heard on issues directly affecting their lives. Specifically, almost half of the members (42.9%) have attended meetings with decision makers; while over a quarter (28.0%) have participated in public forums, and consultation spaces. These are important steps in the evolution of children as advocates for their own needs and demands; demonstrating not only their growing influence, but also the apparent recognition by adults and the State of the importance of listening to the voices of children.

According to the CLW partner staff in Kenya:

***“Through their pro-activity within their respective communities, there has been a change of perception and attitude on what children can do and the level at which they should to be involved in all matters. Communities are now slowly appreciating children’s contribution to the development agenda.”***

Ninety-five percent (95.4%) of surveyed children identified changes in their lives or community as a consequence of activities carried out by the WCGs - changes both in the community – i.e. ‘more support/ recognition by the community of children or children’s organizations’ – as well as changes within themselves such as ‘ children participate / more involved in the community’. Over half of the children (55.7%) reported an improvement in overall well-being among children, while 50.0% reported that parents were now aware about child rights.

# Ways Forward for Children Lead the Way

Children Lead the Way has been Save the Children Canada's flagship program in advancing the organization's strategic priorities of Children and Work and Gender. The Mid-Term Evaluation has highlighted a number of key learnings and findings that can serve as best practices to inform future programming in this area.

## IN BOLIVIA

The innovative combination of linguistically and culturally relevant education (IIPE), market-based productive education curricula, and Save the Children's child friendly school approach, has shown substantial improvements in learning and school completion for Indigenous working children. Key to this success has been the involvement of the entire school, the community and the local government. The productive education projects are locally owned and implemented and there is a strong potential and energy for these projects to become self-sustaining and to become integrated into the local markets for income generation. Further engagement is needed for this to really take-off.

## IN KENYA

Unlike all other countries in the CLW program, the concept of organized working children was new to the Kenya context, yet it is the area where the most growth can be seen across all five countries. The children who participate in these organizations come from contexts of extreme poverty, harmful child labour, and limited or no schooling. They are now active leaders, advocating for and seeing changes in their communities. The working children's group, in which important life skills such as self-esteem and gender equality are learned, is the common thread across the Kenya CLW program which, combined with investments in education and protection, has enabled the empowerment of these girls and boys.

## IN NICARAGUA

The program provides an excellent model for working through partnerships in making improvements in the well-being of working girls and boys. By bringing together local NGOs, parents, teachers, government ministries (health, labour and education) as well as employers (coffee plantations), the program partners helped to ensure that during the coffee harvest, children did not work and remained in school and that adolescents were protected from harmful work and learned technical skills to improve their livelihood prospects. Children and adolescents themselves were involved in advocating for and defining their needs as working children to their employers, local government and communities, best seen through the 76 MOU agreements signed between large coffee plantations and the Ministry of Labour that protects the rights of children and adolescents present during harvest season.

## IN PERU

The participation of working children and their increased capabilities and roles in advocating for their rights at the municipal level shines as a strength of the program in Peru. As a result of the organization and advocacy of working children and partners, in three regions of the country Consultative Councils for Children were formed – including in municipalities outside of the program's target area; and Municipal Departments for Defense for Children and Adolescents were revitalized and mandated with the well-being of working children. This is a key result for the sustainability of the program, and a demonstration of what investments in child participation for working children can achieve.



## IN BURKINA FASO

The impact that life skills have had on the working girls and boys in the Burkina Faso proves to be its strongest result within the program. The skills obtained by children in self-esteem, leadership, and gender have translated to reported behavioural change within their homes, communities, schools and the workplace. Inclusion of life skills, together with support for access to education and strengthening of the protective environment, is a key component to any future programming with working children. However, although life skills demonstrated a significant impact on working children in schools, the perceptions of girls and boys that participate in apprenticeships, as well as the reflections of local partners, raised some concerns as to the conditions and protection of children and adolescents in this culturally embedded and wide-spread practice. Ensuring strong incorporation of life skills training for children in apprenticeships as well would be greatly beneficial. Also, Save the Children has piloted guidelines to improve the working conditions of learners in apprenticeships, and it is clear that more work is needed in this area to raise the awareness of communities, government and employers.

## OVERALL

Children Lead the Way's experience has made it evident that the issue of Children and Work is complex, with practices and norms deeply rooted in local cultures and traditions, in addition to the macro level economic circumstances that boys, girls and communities find themselves in. The interventions in each country, meant to reduce harm to children; ensure they are learning; and empower them to create change are embedded in the realities, local contexts, beliefs, and norms of the communities in which Save the Children works as mitigated by our local partners. Although the program shared

objectives and expected outcomes, which resulted in a challenge in being able to reflect the nuances of each context and intervention in reports, advances were made due to a flexible approach which put the child, and his or her best interests at the centre of the program.

Gender equality, as a transversal objective throughout the program, presented Save the Children and the partners with major challenges, major learnings and major achievements in working towards the equal fulfilment of rights and program outcomes for girls and boys. Guided by Save the Children's *'Principles for Gender Equality'*, partners and communities designed and reflected on the differing interventions required to address the specific needs and realities of girls and boys, all of which can strongly inform future programming. As a result across all countries, we see three-quarters of the children (73.6%) attesting to an understanding of gender equality and how it impacts girls and boys, with no discernible difference between boys (73.6%) and girls (73.7%).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Save the Children Canada Monitoring and Evaluation Team would like to thank the hundreds of people who were involved in the Mid-Term Evaluation across the five countries including the country office programming staff, drivers and translators; the partners and their staff and volunteers; the data collectors; the children and youth; the parents and community members; the government officials. Thank you to all individuals involved for their whole-hearted commitment and participation in this process.

**THANK YOU  
MUCHAS GRACIAS  
MERCI BEAUCOUP  
ASANTE SANA**

**Save the Children** works in more than 120 countries. We save children's lives. We fight for their rights. We help them fulfil their potential.

**OUR MISSION** is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives

**OUR VISION** is a world where every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

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