

Kenya country programme evaluation 2024

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Carried out by: DeBi Consulting Ltd.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background: Finn Church Aid (FCA) is the largest Finnish development cooperation organization and provider of humanitarian assistance. FCA currently operates in 13 countries globally including in Kenya and has focused on assisting the most vulnerable individuals, irrespective of their religious, ethnic, or political affiliations, particularly in fragile contexts. Since 2017, FCA has pursued a dynamic and open-ended global strategy that was revised and approved in 2022. The strategy focuses on three thematic areas: the Right to Livelihood (R2L), the Right to Quality Education (R2QE), and the Right to Peace (R2P). FCA's Global Programme (GP) operationalizes FCA's Strategy and provides strategic guidance to the country programmes. FCA's first comprehensive GP was developed in 2017, and implemented from 2018, initially covering the period 2018-2023 before review in 2021 to cover 2022-2025. This report presents the findings and recommendations of the independent evaluation of FCA Kenya's Country Programme (CP) for 2018 to 2023. The evaluation was conducted between April and August 2024.

Methodology: The evaluation utilized a mixed methods approach to gather data and address the evaluation questions. Primarily, qualitative data was analysed to respond to these questions. Secondary data sources were also incorporated to enhance the primary data collected. The methodological approach was also utilization-focused and participatory.

Key Findings and Conclusions:

Relevance

The CP interventions highly reflect the priorities of targeted areas and groups. Evidence consistently showed that the changes envisioned by FCA were very pertinent to the communities' needs and priorities. While it is evident that context analysis has been included in problem diagnosis in the CP, the evaluation was unable to directly link or clearly anchor some interventions to the context analysis. The youth bulge in Kenya presents a significant, strategically relevant opportunity for FCA programming to consider. A broader, youth-focused approach is needed to explore opportunities that align with the diverse interests of young people, providing more opportunities to earn a living but also to promote their agency and participation in decision-making as well as peacebuilding.

Coherence

FCA's work in the three thematic areas of R2QE, R2P and R2L shows significant thematic consistency with the national and county development priorities. There are however opportunities for FCA to further synchronize with the Medium-Term Plan IV (2023-2027) themed Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) for inclusive growth, especially under the social, environment and governance sectors. Despite FCA's participation in development of some of the third generation of County Integrated Development Plan (CIDPs) covering 2023-2027, there is need to review the CIDPs in the target areas for new areas of alignment.

Effectiveness

The CP has seen significant growth, both financially and in human resources, which according to internal stakeholders has contributed largely to effective implementation. The CP's operational framework, including the working relationship with the Service and Accountability Centre (SAC),

represents important factors that enabled programme effectiveness. The main factors that undermined the attainment of CP objectives were resource-based conflicts in Kerio Valley, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change impacts, and shifting donor priorities leading to reduction in funding for the CP.

Efficiency

There is evidently a strong focus on education in the CP, with significant increases in funding over the CP period. The R2P thematic area similarly experienced consistent growth in the scope of peacebuilding interventions. The emergency funding surpassed the R2L and R2P allocations, indicating the CP's capacity to adjust and respond to emergencies or crises in the fragile context rather than a focus on humanitarian assistance. The evaluation found no significant implementation delays of interventions under the CP except for the COVID-19 related disruptions and delays that affected CP interventions in 2020 and 2021. The considerable social capital that FCA has built up over time has been extremely important in allowing FCA to talk across different types of partners and institutions and made it possible for FCA to work efficiently and effectively in areas which are potentially sensitive and problematic. FCA's active participation in the county-level sector working groups in education, gender, WASH and peace was useful in coordination and avoiding duplication.

Partnerships

Partnerships with private sector for resource mobilization and programme implementation are both relatively new ways of working for FCA. While the FCA global programme provides a comprehensive overview of approaches for engaging with the private sector—particularly under the three pillars of the R2L strategic theme (employment, entrepreneurship, and emergency livelihoods)—it is less explicit regarding partnerships with the private sector for resource mobilization. The country strategy (2017-2023), the CP and the annual plans show limited focus and planning for partnerships with the private sector, specifically for resource mobilization. The absence of an elaborate resource mobilization strategy impeded proper positioning and optimal engagement with the private sector.

Impact

There are significant impacts in education from the CP interventions which point to expanded access to quality education, especially for the most marginalized children in the Kalobeyei settlement and the ASAL regions. Additionally, the CP interventions have significantly contributed to building the agency of women, facilitated their inclusion in decision-making processes and helped positively alter the image and position of women, challenging power relations. There is evidence of reduced incidences of conflicts in the targeted communities in Kerio Valley. The evaluation found opportunities to better define “impact” for FCA both at global, regional and country level as well as preferred approaches to measuring impact. Although there was clear strength in tracking and reporting quantitative results, especially under R2QE, there were challenges in optimally reporting and tracking progress related to advocacy, peacebuilding, and civil society strengthening.

Sustainability

The sustainability of benefits is assessed as mixed. In some respects, the prospects for sustainability are generally positive, especially around the capacity strengthening of local partners and technical soundness of school infrastructure. There are other areas, however, where the prospects are dependent on strengthening community ownership and continued government support. In some instances, community ownership and sustained government support appeared uncertain. The evolving funding architecture has favoured short-term humanitarian assistance over long-term development cooperation. Sustainability is affected by the choice of modality with humanitarian interventions mainly aiming to address emergency situations and may thus be viewed differently in terms of sustainability compared to development interventions.

Recommendations:

The evaluation suggests the following recommendations which are further elaborated in the recommendations section of this report.

For Kenya Country Programme

1. Incorporate the voices and interests of youth in livelihood programming to facilitate more impactful, relevant economic opportunities for youth in the different contexts. Similarly, more efforts focusing on youth participation and leadership in peacebuilding to strengthen response to and mitigation of climate induced conflicts are recommended.
2. Explore partnerships and innovations that link targeted participants to financing, market linkages or other relevant support to strengthen economic opportunities.
3. Consider in education programming the unique Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) challenges faced by targeted communities in the ASALs and other programme contexts of FCA's operations.
4. Consider aligning the next country strategy and programme with relevant national frameworks including the social, environment and governance sectors of Medium-Term Plan (MTP IV) of 2023-2027 and the third generation CIDPs for 2023-2027 in the CP geographical areas to identify new opportunities of alignment with FCA's strategic priorities and goals.
5. Prioritize the systematic integration of Rights-Based Approaches (RBA) across all thematic areas to ensure consistent application and appreciation.
6. Develop and implement a comprehensive climate mainstreaming framework to enhance awareness, coordination, and application of climate change strategies across all thematic areas.
7. Continue participation in national and county sector working groups and platforms and leverage the social capital in amplifying FCA's objectives.
8. Develop a comprehensive private sector engagement strategy covering various aspects of engagement and with clear objectives and tactics for partnerships.
9. Develop an elaborate long-term resource mobilization strategy for KECO, which would include strategic partnerships with the private sector for resource mobilization.
10. Continue working with local civil society with a deliberate focus on the technical capacity strengthening interventions as well as learning from the local partners.
11. Strengthen focus on impact assessment for the CP interventions through clearly defining impact and appropriate methods and measurement plans.
12. Strengthen the knowledge management function and appropriately document results ensuring they are shared internally and externally on platforms that enhance KECO's visibility.
13. For the next country strategy clearly consider sustainability and incorporate it in the broad framework of the strategic elements and provided for it in the country programme for implementation.
14. Strengthen community engagement and ownership to enhance sustainability of programmes results based on a thorough assessment of sustainability prospects at project level.

For FCA Globally

1. Clearly define "impact" for the Global Programme and consider communicating causal pathways on a simpler theory of change graphic.
2. Optimize focus on impact monitoring and assessment by providing sufficient guidance for a comprehensive approach to impact assessment.
3. Provide guidance on private sector engagement that is comprehensive and with objectives for partnerships with the private sector.

4. For the global strategy and global programme consider reinforcing sustainability definitions to provide guidance to country programmes on how to plan, evaluation and report on sustainability.
5. Consider strengthening integration of youth focused programming in the planning, implementation and reporting of FCA work.