

Child-Friendly Accountability Initiative Early Impact Assessment



Prepared for ChildFund Alliance

By Julia Freedson in association with Yvonne Kemper, independent consultants

April 2018

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

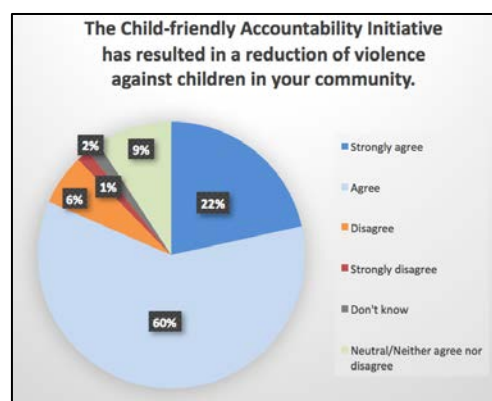
“They should do this in more places and involve more kids. The changes are slow and it is a process. It takes a lot of time so we need to stick with it.”

Child participant in Paraguay

The Child-friendly Accountability Initiative (the Initiative) empowers children to hold government authorities and local leaders accountable for their obligations to protect children. ChildFund Alliance initiated this project in 2016 as part of a global effort towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal Target 16.2, which calls for an end to all violence against children. Between May and August 2017, ChildFund country programs in India, Mexico, Paraguay and Vietnam piloted the Initiative.

This early impact assessment explores how the Initiative has made a difference in the lives of children and communities in the months since the pilot projects. The assessment is based on survey responses in pilot countries, key informant interviews and a desk review.

In short, stakeholders overwhelmingly believe that children who participated in the program gained new knowledge, skills and confidence to hold government officials and local authorities accountable for their duties to protect children. In some cases, child participants have already taken action to advocate for protection of children thereby influencing the attitudes and behaviors of their families, peers, teachers, government authorities and others.



This early assessment also indicates that some government officials and local authorities are now supportive of child protection, having made new commitments to protect children in their communities, arranged child rights trainings for teachers, and revived dormant child protection structures. Though it is still early, many stakeholders believe the Initiative has already led to a reduction of violence against children in their communities.

The main recommendation of this early assessment is to scale up the Initiative within the pilot countries and to expand it to other countries. In doing this ChildFund Alliance should invest in monitoring and evaluation to improve project design and to measure further progress towards impact.

2 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Child-friendly Accountability Initiative (the Initiative) empowers children to hold government authorities and local leaders accountable for their obligations to protect children. The premise is that children themselves can contribute to reducing violence against children when they have the knowledge, skills and support needed to hold local authorities responsible for upholding their duties. ChildFund Alliance began this Initiative in 2016 as part of a global effort to work towards the

achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 16.2, which calls for an end to all violence against children.

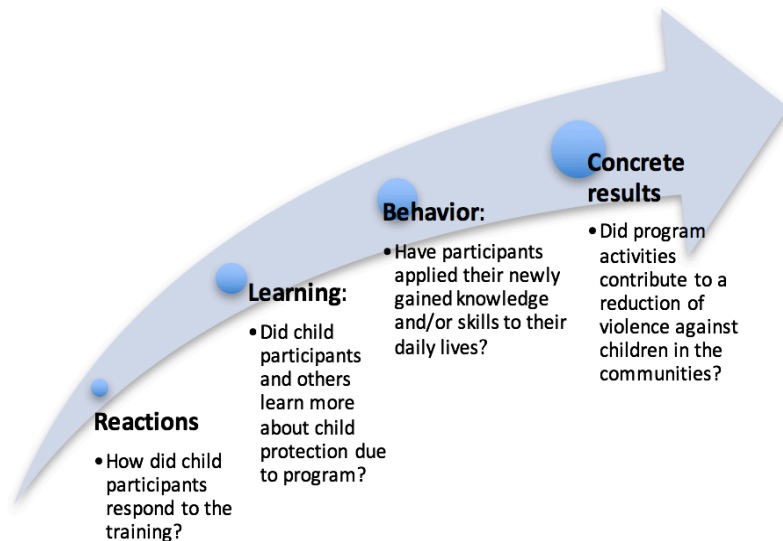
ChildFund Alliance and partners have begun conducting trainings in various countries with diverse groups of children, primarily between age 13 and 17 years.¹ These programs are based on the guidance laid out in the Initiative’s [methodology](#), Field Manual and Toolbox.² Between May and August 2017, ChildFund country programs in India, Mexico, Paraguay and Vietnam piloted the Initiative. Subsequently ChildFund has expanded the Initiative to three additional countries, with others slated to begin soon.

3 METHODOLOGY

Research methods include:

- **Desk research:** Review of the pilot project evaluation reports and other relevant Initiative documents.
- **Survey of key stakeholders:** Survey of 64 key stakeholders in India, Mexico and Paraguay.^{3, 4} (See Annex 1: Survey Responses).
- **Semi-structured interviews:** Semi-structured interviews with 10 key stakeholders in India and Paraguay. (See Annex 2: Interview Preparations and Questions and Annex 3: List of Interviewees).

This assessment focused on the following four measurement areas:⁵



Screen shot of a Skype interview with child participant in India

¹ This includes in-school and out-of-school children. The program also engages parents and other community members to build support in local communities.

² As part of the program, staff set up local child protection referral networks so that child participants can access to medical, psychosocial or other forms of support, if needed.

³ Due to unexpected anomalies, we were unable to use the survey data from Vietnam. This report, however, does include information drawn from *Report on Child-friendly Accountability Pilot Project, Bach Thong and Ngan Son Districts, Bac Kan Province, Vietnam, May - July 2017*.

⁴ Survey respondents including child participants, ChildFund staff, workshop facilitators, government authorities, local leaders, parents, school staff and others. Note that child participants made up a large portion (39%) of the total survey responses

⁵ These areas are based on James D. Kirkpatrick and Wendy Kayser Kirkpatrick, *Four Levels of Training Evaluation*, 2016.

Methodology limitations include:

- **Timing:** This assessment took place less than 6 months after the end of the pilot projects, which is too early to measure outcome and impact levels.⁶
- **Verification:** This assessment is primarily based on stakeholders' own perceptions and anecdotal reports. Ideally, the methodology would include processes for verifying these perceptions, such as site visits, verification workshops or other methods. Some interviews took place with multiple interviewees due to logistics and translation, which may have influenced interviewees' responses.
- **M&E system:** Country programs did not formally establish consistent baseline data at the outset of the pilots. Each country used different types of indicators, which made it difficult to measure progress towards outcomes and impacts or draw cross-country comparisons.
- **Limited data:** Data on program impact is limited for Mexico and Vietnam.

4 FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

4.1 INFLUENCE OF PROGRAM ON CHILD PARTICIPANTS

"I realised that in laws children are supposed to be protected but in reality not many people pay attention to that... [this] is very difficult to change... [It would help] if youth like me can be a part of [the] change process.

Girl child participant in Vietnam

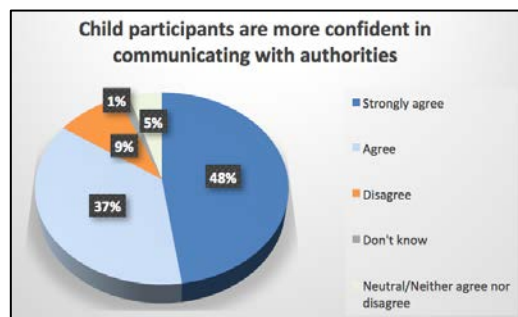
Survey respondents overwhelmingly believe child participants have developed new knowledge, skills and confidence to hold government officials and local authorities accountable to their duties to protect child rights.

- **New knowledge, skills and confidence**

Child participants reported that they gained new knowledge about child rights and are more confident in their ability to bring about change. Local authorities, teachers and parents in all four pilot countries were impressed with the transitions they observed in the children after they participated in the program.

Vietnam: A child participant said: "I was very hesitant and nervous [about participating in the program].... But when I participated I learned many new things like child rights, I know better about policies and laws. I had never heard about child protection before... I am much better in communication and can explain to others about child's rights. I will ask my parents to listen to children; and will report when I see children being abused."

Mexico: A parent said, "now children are heard and taken into account." Another parent in Mexico



⁶ Stakeholders surveyed for this study considered the early timing of this assessment as the most significant challenge for measuring impact at this time. Depending on their specific context, they also commented on other challenges (e.g. funding, lack of support from stakeholders). Analyzing and further understanding these challenges is beyond the scope of the assessment and would require further follow-up.

said, “In the case of my daughter I have noticed that she has developed better, she shows more security in herself, she is more courageous, she is not afraid to express what she thinks.”

- **Children taking action**

Most survey respondents (84%) believe that child participants have already taken actions to advance the protection of children. Interviews with stakeholders confirmed that many child participants have taken actions in groups and individually. They have advocated with local authorities, influenced the attitudes and behaviors of their families, peers, and teachers, and reported cases of violence, abuse or exploitation of children to local child authorities or helplines.

Paraguay: After participating in the program, a 16-year old girl decided to stop hitting her younger siblings when she was frustrated and convinced her mother to do the same. She also decided to make her school project about “corporal punishment” and used this as an opportunity to educate school authorities and the broader community about relevant national laws.

- **Children influencing others**

Some child participants described a shift in the attitudes of parents, peers and teachers. For example, some participants believed that more girl students are attending school because of parents’ changed attitude.

India: A child participant in India noted “I talk [to other children] about the child marriage act, infanticide act and child rights act with my peer group. Previously, [they] were seeing me as a friend and now they also see me as a trainer because I talk about rights like that.”

A male child participant in India said, “I created awareness among other children about their rights, legislations and violence against children and consequences of gender discrimination...Parents are [now] taking care of their children without discrimination based on gender.”

One parent in India said she was initially reluctant to let her daughters attend the workshop given traditional gender roles. Now she learns from her daughters about child rights and laws: “It’s very exciting and a new experience to me here in my community.”

Vietnam: Some children in Vietnam translated part of a law into local languages to educate children from the Tay and Dao communities on child protection.



Participant in Vietnam proudly presenting her child-friendly drawing about child labor

4.2 INFLUENCE OF PROGRAM ON GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND LOCAL LEADERS

“Now I am aware about child related laws such as sexual abuse of girl children, child marriage, child labour...I realize the potential of children. If any child marriage happens, we need to complain to [Child helpline service] 1098 to prevent the marriage.”

Local authority in India

Government officials and local leaders are supportive of child protection issues, according to 84% of survey respondents. In some cases, they have already taken action to improve child protection.

- **Commitment from local government officials**

Paraguay: The Mayor of the Remansito community in Villa Hayes district signed a commitment to improve four aspects of child protection in the community in response to a petition brought by a group of out-of-school child participants.

- **Field visits to child care centers**

India: Local government officials visited local childcare centers and took action to improve the centers. They did this in response to posters that a 14-year-old child participant hung in the community depicting poor conditions in the centers, such as teachers arriving late and insufficient nutritious meals for children. ChildFund staff confirmed that conditions had improved in the centers.

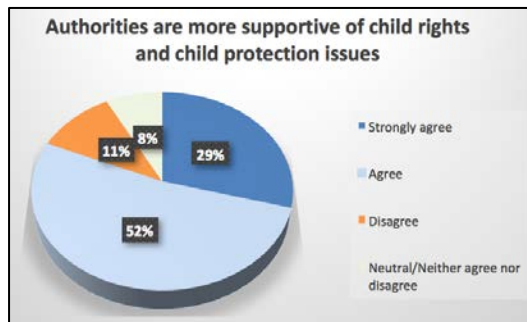
- **Child rights trainings for teachers**

India: The local government organized trainings for 251 teachers from 18 high schools (6th – 12th grade). The teachers learned about child rights and protection. The training also addressed issues in specific schools that children had raised through complaint boxes.⁷

- **Improvements in child protection systems**

Mexico: Because of the children’s work in the program, the Mexico National Human Rights Commission and ChildFund Mexico invited the children to participate in a national-level event on child rights that the two agencies co-hosted.

Paraguay: Because of the children’s advocacy, the nation’s primary child welfare agency (Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents - CODENI), now visits the local community twice per month to allow local children (who cannot easily reach the headquarters in the municipal center due to distance) can file complaints. This “was a direct impact action that benefits more than 24,000 people,” according to the



Out of schoolchildren meeting with the city mayor providing their top concerns.

⁷ As part of the Child-friendly Accountability initiative, participating schools set up complaint boxes for children.

Paraguay Program Project Coordinator.

India: The program inspired the revival of dormant district child welfare committees, which are now meeting regularly and addressing children’s issues, which they did not previously. The leader of the Local Panchayat Union indicated they intend to set up village-level child protection committees.

4.3 INFLUENCE OF PROGRAM ON REDUCTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

“I can [now] go to authorities that protect the rights, and if I see that a child is attacked, I can do something for [him or her].”

Male child participant in Mexico

Most survey respondents (82%) believe that the program has already resulted in a reduction of violence against children in their communities.

- **Less discrimination and better social relations**

India: Various stakeholders noted that group dynamics among child participants changed as a result of the program. For example, children from different castes increasingly interacted with each other, as did male and female child participants. One child participant said that teachers have started to show more respect for children in her school and no longer exclude children from sports and cultural activities due to poor academic performance.

Mexico: One child participant noted that the social relations among the adolescents had improved because they know more about their rights.

- **Reduction of violence against children at home and in school**

India: Stakeholders consistently pointed out that the project has resulted in less violence against children in their communities, including fewer cases of child marriage, child labor, sexual harassment, corporal punishment, and other violations. Several child participants said they believe this is due to changed attitudes of parents and community members and effective use of the Child Protection Helpline and the schools’ complaint boxes.



Students at the Espiritu Santo school in front of a mural they painted the entrance depicting child rights and child protection institutions.

“Violence against children [is] considerably reduced,” a male child participant asserted, “If anybody from my village comes across child labour or violence in the nearby villages, they...inform me [and] I will inform the Child line 1098 ... the District Child Protection Officer, Police Office...”

In addition, a local child protection committee plans to provide training to local government officials and religious leaders who perform marriages and require them to ask for proof of a person’s age before performing a marriage. Some respondents also reported increased awareness among girls that they are not required to marry before age 18.

- Paraguay: A school principal in Paraguay said the program “had a big influence on the attitude of teachers... They show more respect because the kids know their rights...you can see it.”

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“In my village only three children attended the Child Accountability Training... This training is very useful and needed for other children’s and community people also.”

Local women’s group leader in India

Stakeholders overwhelmingly believe that children who participated in the program gained new knowledge, skills and confidence to hold government official and local authorities accountable for their obligations to protect children. In some cases, child participants have already taken actions to protect children from violence by advocating with local authorities, influencing the attitudes and behaviors of their families, peers, and teachers, and reporting cases of violence, abuse or exploitation to local child protection authorities or phone helplines.

This assessment also indicates that government officials and local leaders are supportive of child protection issues. The Initiative has compelled local government officials to make new commitments to protect children in their communities, arrange teacher trainings on children’s rights, and revive previously dormant child protection committees. In addition, children report increased confidence in their own capacity to bring about change in their communities. Though the Initiative is still in its early stages, many stakeholders believe the pilots have already led to a reduction of violence against children in their communities, such as child marriage and corporal punishment.

Recommendations for ChildFund Alliance:

- Expand the scope of the programs within the four pilot countries and globally.
- Continue to revise and update the Initiative’s documents based on recommendations provided in the pilot reports and ongoing feedback from implementing countries.⁸
- Invest resources in monitoring and following up on commitments made by government authorities and local leaders. In some cases, this could involve connecting activities to the local election cycle.
- Increase opportunities for different countries implementing the Initiative to learn from each other, such as through regional-global workshops, cross-country assessments and sharing good practices.⁹



Participants in Mexico learning about violence against children

⁸ ChildFund has already revised various aspects Field Manual and Toolkit based on feedback received from the pilot projects.

⁹ Pilot project country teams have advised other countries that are considering undertaking the Initiative. ChildFund Alliance also organizes monthly check-in calls for all countries participating in the Initiative.

Child-Friendly Accountability Initiative: Early Impact Assessment (April 2018)

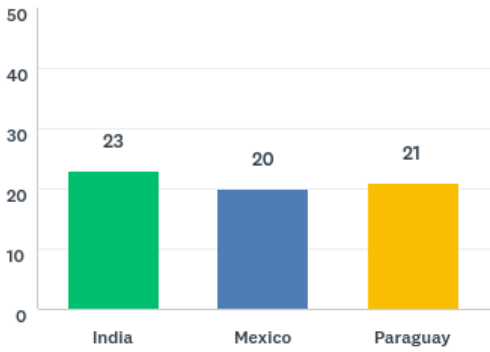
- Building on ongoing efforts, support countries to strengthen their M&E systems. This includes:
 - Establish goals and objectives that are specific, targeted and measurable.
 - Develop consistent indicators and standard formats (e.g. reporting, learning assessments) that all country programs implementing the Initiative can apply.
 - Identify relevant baseline data sources to monitor progress on core child protection areas for each country (e.g. child marriage, child labor, corporal punishment).
 - Encourage countries to consistently use quick assessments (e.g. quizzes) to evaluate children's knowledge before and after trainings.
 - Use a control group to assess the variance of knowledge of child rights among children in the program and children who are not in the program.
- In future assessments, move from self-assessments (i.e. based on observations of people close to the project) to a fully external evaluation, which would include interviews with external observers, site visits, data from relevant country/local statistics, and post-data collection verification, such as verification workshops.

ANNEXES

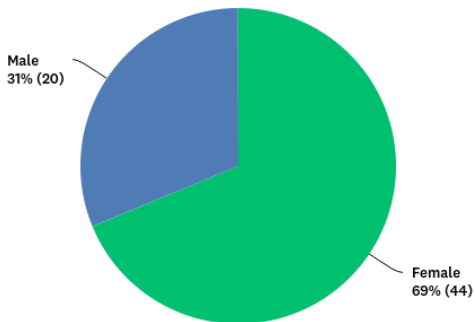
ANNEX 1: SURVEY RESPONSES

Part 1: Profile of respondents (questions 1-4)

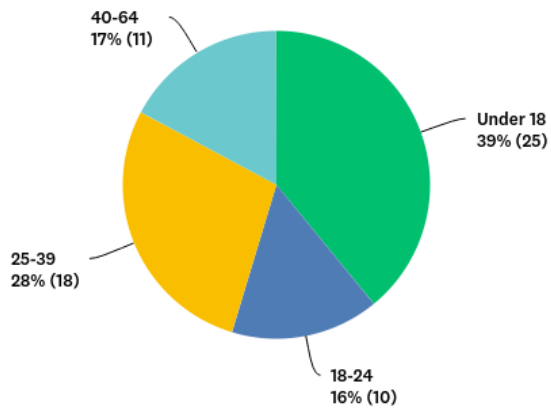
Q1: Where do you live?



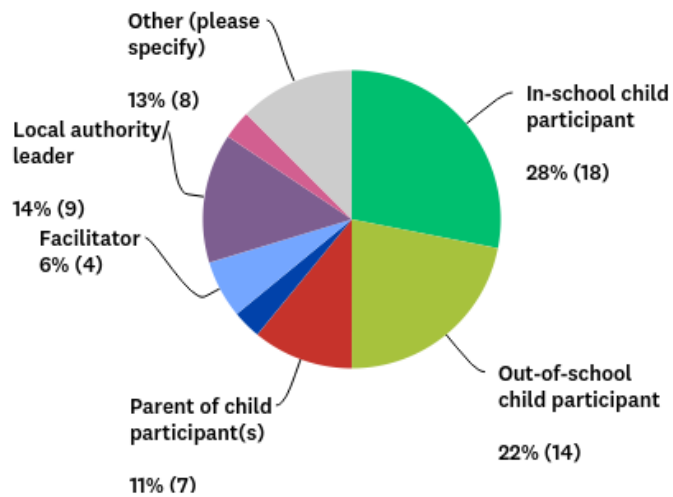
Q2: what is your gender?



Q3: What is your age?

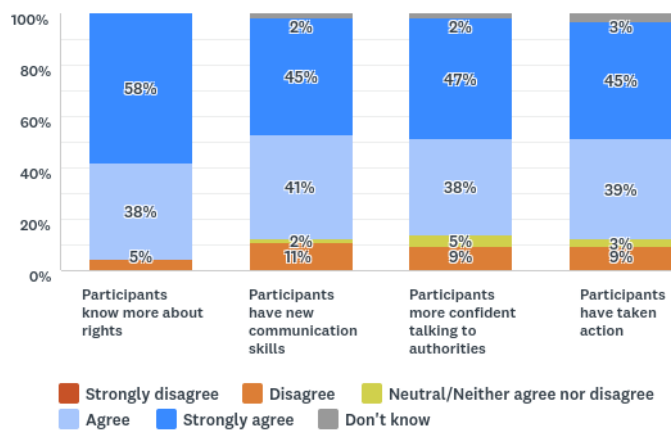


Q4: What is your role in the Child-friendly Accountability Initiative?

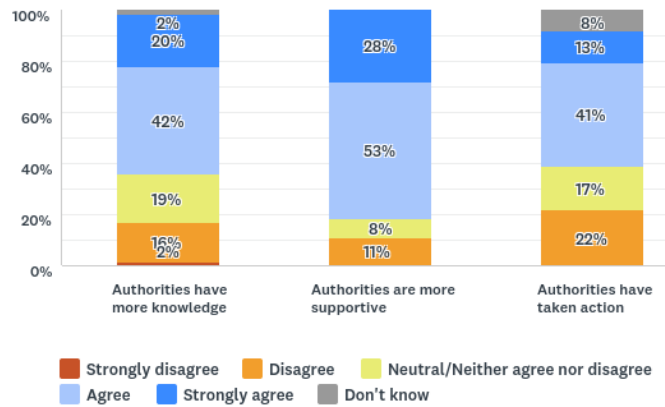


Part 2: Assessment (responds to survey questions 5-9)

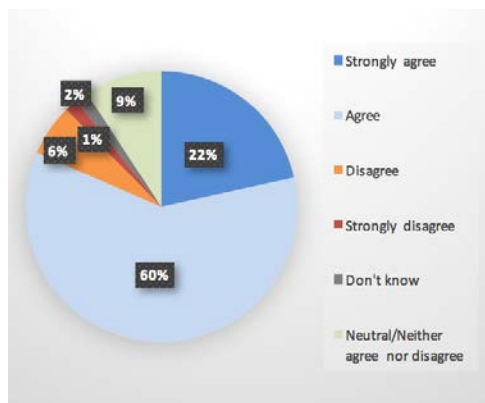
Q5: Do you agree/disagree with the following statements regarding the program’s influence on child participants?



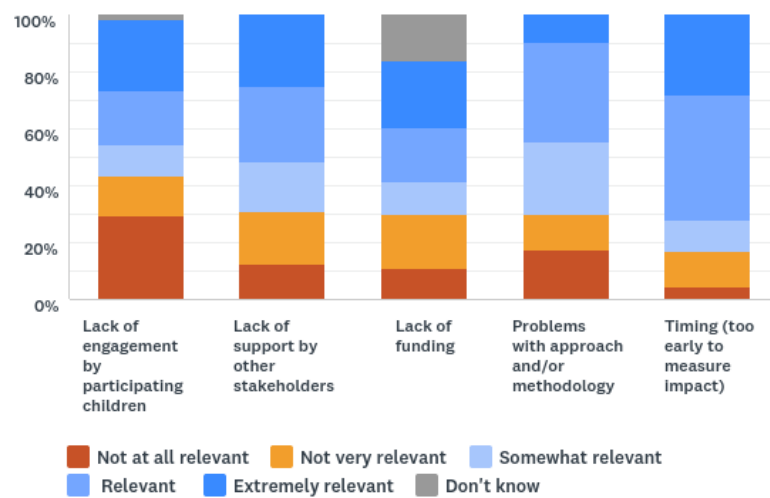
Q6: Do you agree/disagree with the following statements regarding the program’s influence on government authorities and local leaders?



Q7: Do you agree/disagree that the Child-friendly Accountability Initiative had led/contributed to a reduction of violence against children in your community?



Q8: How relevant are the following challenges for the Child-friendly Accountability Initiative in your community?



ANNEX 2: INTERVIEW PREPARATIONS AND QUESTIONS

Pre-interview

Before beginning the interview, the consultant will talk with interviewee(s) about:

- Purpose of the interview
- Timing:
- Recording
- How to cite interviewee in assessment report
- Outstanding questions by interviewee

Interview

(Note: The interview questions varied based on the interviewees' respective roles in the project.)

A. Questions for child participants

- Learning
 - What was the most important thing you learned during the Child-friendly Accountability training?
 - Did you learn any new skills through your participation? Please describe briefly.
- Behavior:
 - What aspects of the training do you use in your everyday life if any? If yes, please give one specific example. If no, why not?
 - Have you talked with your friends or parents about the project? What did you tell them? How did they react?
 - Have you taken any direct action to protect children from violence since the training or as part of the training process (e.g. advocacy activity, community or school meeting)? If yes, please describe briefly.
- Results:
 - Do you think this program has had an influence on government authorities or local leaders' attitude or actions towards children's rights? (For example, are they more supportive of child rights, more willing to engage on issues of child protection or have they taken new actions to protect children?) Please briefly describe one specific example.
 - Do you think the Child-friendly Accountability Initiative has made a difference in your community? If yes, please describe briefly what has changed.
- Recommendations:
 - Do you have one or two specific recommendations for improving this project?

B. Questions for project staff or workshop facilitators

- Involvement:
 - What is/was your role in the Child-friendly Accountability Initiative? Please briefly describe your responsibilities?
- Learning:
 - Do you think the child participants gained new knowledge and/or skills? If yes, please give a brief example.
- Behavior:
 - Have the child participants used their new knowledge and skills in their day-to-day lives? If yes, please give one example.

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- Are children talking to their parents, friends and other community members about the initiative? Do you think they are influencing these people's attitudes or behaviors? Please explain briefly.
- Have the children taken any direct actions to protect child rights since the training or as part of the training process (e.g. advocacy activities or community or school meetings)? If yes, please describe briefly.
- Results:
 - Do you think the program has had any influence on the way government authorities or local leaders think about or act towards children's rights? For example, are they more supportive or willing to engage on child protection issues, or have they taken new actions related to protecting children? Please briefly give an example.
 - Do you think the Child-friendly Accountability Initiative has made a difference in this community? If yes, please describe briefly what has changed.
- Recommendations:
 - Do you have one or two specific recommendations for improving this project?

C. Questions for other stakeholders

(Other stakeholders include government authorities and local leaders, parents of participating children, teachers, child protection providers, and other community members. Since this is a broad category, the questions would be adapted based on the respective interviewee.)

- Involvement:
 - What has been your involvement with the Child-friendly Accountability Initiative?
- Learning:
 - Do you think the child participants have gained new knowledge or skills from the program? If yes, please briefly give one example. If no, why not?
 - What have you learned from the program? Please briefly describe.
- Behavior:
 - From your perspective, do the participating children now behave differently than before the training? What changes are you observing? Please give one specific example.
 - Have the children spoken with you or others about this initiative (as far as you know)? Has this changed your attitude or behavior (or that of others) toward child protection? Please briefly explain.
 - Have the children taken any direct actions to protect child rights since the training or as part of the training process (e.g. advocacy activities, community or school meeting)? If yes, please describe briefly.
- Results:
 - Has this program had any influence on you or on the way government authorities or local [LEADERS?] think about or act towards children's rights? For example, are they more supportive or willing to engage on child protection issues, or have they taken new actions related to protecting children? Please briefly give an example.
 - Do you think the Child-friendly Accountability Initiative has made a difference in this community? If yes, please describe briefly what has changed. If no, why do think that is the case?
- Recommendations:
 - Do you have one or two specific recommendations for improving this project?

ANNEX 3: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

	Organization/Affiliation (where relevant)	Name/Title	Location	Date of interview
1.	Government	Mr. Senthil, District Child Protection Officer	India	3/13/18
2.	IRCDS	Mr. Ramu, CFAM Facilitator	India	3/13/18
3.	IRCDS	Mr. Stephen, Project Leader	India	3/14/18
4.	CFAM	Ms. Manisha Suganya, child participant	India	3/14/18
5.	Global Infancia	Ms. Johanna Walder, General Program Coordinator	Paraguay	3/9/18
6.	Children's committee (CORORE)	Mr. Isaac Gonzalez, child participant	Paraguay	3/16/18
7.	School Council group (Consejo Escolar)	Mr. Eliodoro Portillo, child participant	Paraguay	3/16/18
8.	School Council group (Consejo Escolar)	Ms. Eunice Galeano, child participant	Paraguay	3/16/18
9.	Espíritu Santo school	Prof. Lucilda Ferreira, Principal	Paraguay	3/16/18
10.	Global Infancia	Ms. Marta Fernandez, project facilitator	Paraguay	3/16/18