

Global Impact Study

Short Summary



Global Fund for Children (GFC) recently conducted a study to assess its impact on partner organisations and the children and communities they serve worldwide.

The Study found that through the flexible funding, non-financial support, and trusting relationship that GFC provides partner organizations, GFC contributes to their growth and sustainability. This strengthened capacity enables partners to create meaningful

change in their communities, ranging from quality education, increased local leadership, improved community wellbeing, reduced violence (especially against women and girls), and more.

Methodology

The Study used **participatory methodologies** from start to finish. It was co-designed by GFC and an external professional research team (Ecorys). The data collection involved Peer Participatory Action Research (PPAR), where selected partner organisations were trained as researchers for the Study. These 31 researchers from organisations in Guatemala, India, Kenya, and the UK conducted **interviews and creative research activities** about other GFC partner organisations in their country, collecting stories of GFC's impact from staff members, children, young people, and community members. The creative research activities were also a unique feature of the Study, involving reflection through photos, drawings, videos, journalling, mind maps, and movement activities. The in-country local PPAR was complemented by online Key Informant Interviews with GFC partner organisations around the world, carried out by Ecorys.

243

interviews
conducted



134

creative reflection
exercises



49

grant partners
were researched



27

countries were
represented



A total of 243 interviews and 134 creative research activities were conducted about **49 GFC partner organisations from 27 countries** (71 interviews and 57 creative activities were conducted with children and young people). This data was analysed together with PPAR researchers using the frameworks of Contribution Analysis (CA) and Most Significant Change (MSC). CA provided a way to assess the contribution of GFC to partners, and then their contribution to communities, and MSC provided a nuanced picture of impact by determining the most frequently mentioned and widespread stories of change.



Findings

GFC's impact on children, young people, and communities

Through the organisational growth, sustainability, confidence, motivation, and mindset shifts that GFC provided its partners, GFC indirectly (mostly clearly and strongly¹) contributed to the following impacts in the communities where partners work:

Community-level impacts:

- 1 Improved **access to and retention in quality education**
 15 partners; 62%
- 2 **Shifted attitudes** around harmful cultural practices (such as child marriage) and **limiting attitudes towards women**
 12 partners; 50%
- 3 **Community-led change-making**, tackling systemic issues
 12 partners; 50%
- 4 Families **prioritising and getting involved with the education** of their children
 9 partners; 38%
- 5 A **reduction in violence**, particularly gender-based violence
 7 partners; 29%

Individual-level impacts:

- 1 Improved **prospects, life paths, or careers**, especially for young people
 21 partners; 88%²
- 2 Improved **confidence, self-esteem, and self-belief**, especially for young people
 18 partners; 75%
- 3 Increased **awareness of rights and important societal topics**
 13 partners; 54%
- 4 Improved **leadership skills**, especially for young people
 12 partners; 50%
- 5 Feeling **included and safe**
 10 partners; 42%
- 6 Improved **physical and mental health** through better nutrition, sports, feeling supported, and building friendships
 10 partners; 42%
- 7 Improved skills in **public-speaking, facilitation, reading and writing, independence**, etc.
 9 partners; 38%
- 8 Children, especially boys, being better able to **regulate emotions, calm down, and therefore have better relationships**
 6 partners; 25%
- 9 Children feeling **happy, excited, joyful, and motivated**
 4 partners; 17%

1 Our study included an assessment on how strongly GFC contributed to each impact at community level, and in most cases GFC's contribution was clear and strong.

2 This study researched 24 partner organisation's communities (i.e. the communities that partner organisations work with) by travelling to visit them and conducting interviews and reflection activities with children, young people, and adults there. Community members volunteered their stories of the different ways of how and why GFC partner organisations created a significant change for them and impacted their communities. From the hundreds of impact areas that emerged through their open-ended answers, the percentages represent the number of partner organisation communities who coincidentally told stories about the same impact area, out of the 24 partner communities researched.



GFC's relationship with partner organisations

Every GFC partner who was researched for this study mentioned that they felt **trusted, supported, and respected** by GFC.

 49 partners; 100% of researched partners³

The trusting relationship allowed partner organisations to:

- 1 Stay true to their own priorities, values, and visions**
 42 partners; 86%
- 2 Consider GFC as colleagues in partnership tackling problems together**
 19 partners; 39%
- 3 Shift towards more trust-based collaborative ways of working with their staff and their communities**
 9 partners; 18%
- 4 Experience better personal and professional wellbeing**
 9 partners; 18%
- 5 Take on challenges, experiment, take risks and grow**
 5 partners; 10%

A few partners critiqued that there were occasional lapses in trust due to **miscommunications or misunderstandings** around GFC's decision-making or selection processes (6 partners; 12%).

In terms of what made the trusting relationship work, the following factors emerged:

- » GFC staff's **care and respect** for the expertise of partners;
- » GFC's swift **responsiveness** (by phone and email);
- » GFC's **in-person visits** to partners;
- » GFC's **patience and flexibility**;
- » the ability to have open, safe, and **non-judgmental communication**;
- » **unrestricted funding and light monitoring** approaches; and
- » **values alignment** between partners and GFC.

Above: © Global Fund for Children

³ These numbers represent the number of partner organisations who mentioned GFC's impact around this area, expressing the different ways of how and why GFC created a significant change for them, during semi-structured interviews and reflection activities. From the hundreds of impact stories and areas that emerged through their open-ended answers, the percentages represent the number of partner organisations who coincidentally told stories about the same area, out of the 49 partner organisations researched.

GFC's funding approach toward partner organisations

A **very significant** number of researched partners mentioned how GFC's **unrestricted funding, light monitoring, and timely disbursement** of funds had positively impacted their work.

 46 partners; 94% of researched partners

This funding approach allowed partners to:

- 1 Listen and respond to community needs**
 30 partners; 61%
- 2 Invest and improve internal processes** of their organisation
 25 partners; 51%
- 3 Sustain their organisation's activities**
 16 partners; 33%
- 4 Expand their services and increase capacity**
 16 partners; 33%
- 5 Adapt to challenges, crises, or changing circumstances**
 14 partners; 29%
- 6 Improve the motivation, well-being, and confidence** of staff
 12 partners; 24%
- 7 Carry out holistic, long-term, uninterrupted work** with communities
 12 partners; 24%
- 8 Take risks, experiment, make mistakes, and learn**
 6 partners; 12%



Larger funding amounts had the greatest effect on partner **growth and confidence**, regardless of whether it was provided over short or long periods. **When large amounts were combined with longer funding**, this enhanced organisation's **sustainability** (strengthening internal systems, establishing self-sustaining community structures, strengthened networks, etc.) and a greater capacity to create **community-led change**.

There were some critiques of GFC's funding approach. Partners highlighted that:

- » the **funding period was too short**
 12 partners; 24%
- » there was a **lack of clarity or communication** on how long the funding would last
 9 partners; 18%
- » the **funding amount was too little**
 4 partners; 8%

GFC's non-financial support for partner organisations

There was a **strong and widespread** sense that GFC's non-financial support positively impacted partners around the world.

 45 partners; 92% of researched partners

This non-financial support allowed partners to:

- 1 Establish peer networks, become inspired and learn** from networking opportunities
 33 partners; 67%
- 2 Experience organisational development** through GFC's support to identify strengths and weaknesses, followed by relevant tailored support
 28 partners; 57%
- 3 Gain visibility, recognition, and access to further funding** through connections to other funders and advice on applications
 28 partners; 57%
- 4 Develop effective safeguarding** practices through custom support and training
 24 partners; 49%
- 5 Experience mindset shifts about power dynamics**, including changes in how to relate to staff, service users, communities, and donors
 23 partners; 47%
- 6 Improve a variety of skills** (fundraising skills, facilitation skills, communication skills, social media skills, etc.) through trainings
 20 partners; 41%
- 7 Experience better wellbeing**, prioritise staff mental health, and improve morale and communication amongst staff
 16 partners; 33%
- 8 Improve the quality of programmes** through GFC's Learning & Evaluation support
 10 partners; 20%

In terms of critiques of GFC's non-financial support, partners felt that:

- » group workshops with other partners were **not always relevant**
 5 partners; 10%
- » they could benefit more if GFC **communicated more clearly** about the support available
 5 partners; 10%
- » the support was **not consistently offered** to all partners
 5 partners; 10%



Overall view

The Study found that the ways that GFC supports partners is **very interlinked**; the trusting relationship is an integral part of providing unrestricted flexible funding, which goes hand-in-hand with the tailored non-financial support. Together, these elements create impacts for partner organisations, and subsequently, their communities.

