



Member Association:	Burundi
National Director:	Pascal BIZIMANA
Reporting period:	2024
Date & MEDIABOX-ID of most recent child rights situation analysis:	2022: Needs assessment
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (2 pages)

1. National context and stakeholders (½ page)

The high cost of living, the persistent shortage of petroleum products, the scarcity of foreign currency and the impact of the floods were the main features of 2024.

The devaluation of the currency led to widespread inflation of 36.5%, compared with 27.1% in 2023, with repercussions on the prices of essential goods. In addition, the local currency continued to depreciate compared with the dollar throughout the year. BIF lost around 49% of its value on the parallel market, falling from BIF 4,700 per USD in December 2023 to BIF 7,000 per USD in December 2024.

The El Niño phenomenon caused torrential rain, flooding and landslides in the low-lying provinces of the Imbo plain. Between January and mid-April, more than 179,200 people were affected and more than 31,200 people were displaced.

In response to the Simian Smallpox Pandemic declared by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in August 2024, the Ministry of Public Health and Fight against AIDS called on technical and financial partners working in the health sector to mobilize and combat the pandemic. By 31 December 2024, 2,650 confirmed cases, including one death, had been reported in 46 of the 49 health districts.

The economic situation of households remained precarious throughout 2024. The financial support provided by SOS Children's Villages International to the participants and employees of SOS Children's Villages in Burundi to help them cope with the high cost of living was very useful and greatly appreciated by SOS Children's Villages in Burundi.

The MA was honored by a virtual visit from the President of the federation. It was an opportunity to show him the impact of SOS Children's Villages in Burundi in the community. It should be noted that the stakeholders (PSA, IOR, IO) took part in the visit.

The organization's main partners who played a significant role during the year are as follows: The government of the Republic of Burundi via the sectoral ministries, the DGD via SOS Belgium, Forum Civ via SOS Sweden, the European Union, DHL, KIYO, Entraide et Fraternité, Louvain Coopération as well as community-based organizations.

2. Member association analysis (1 page)

Strategy implementation status [see 2.1]
Achievements
1. Alternative Care The alternative care cluster provided care for 1,735 children and young people, including 473 in FLC, 647 in FFC/Kinship and 599 in SIL. The assessment of the placement of children and young people led to the successful reintegration of 58 children and young people (16 girls, 42 boys) during the year to live with their families of origin. 3 new SOS family houses (Gitega, Muyinga, Rutana) have been physically integrated into the community and are happily participating in community activities, bringing the total number of integrated SOS family houses to 10. 106 new children in need of assistance - 5 in FLC, 51 in FFC, 50 in Kinship and 12 in small group homes - have been admitted to various programmes. The MA is therefore well on the way to significantly reduce the number of children and young people in FLC, while exploring other community-based alternative care options, such as foster care and kinship care. A total of 60 young people exited the AC programme, 17 of whom were employed.
2. Family Strengthening

Direct family Empowerment (DFE) supported 8,321 participants, while Community empowerment for family empowerment (CFE) reached an annual average of 7,568 participants in 2024. These statistics were achieved by 2 standard project services and two grant projects in 5 locations. The annual assessment of the preparation of families for leaving care showed how far families had progressed towards self-reliance. Of the 1,236 families assessed, 172 families, or 13.9%, will leave after achieving self-reliance, 1,013 families, or 81.9%, still need additional support to reach the required level of self-reliance, while the remaining 37 families, or 2.9%, are unlikely to reach the required level of self-reliance given the various difficulties they face.

The organisation has supported 1,236 families with income-generating activities (IGA) to the tune of 57,737,880 FBU. This has enabled them to take better care of their children. To improve the employability of caregivers participating in Direct Family Empowerment (DFE), 107 caregivers acquired skills in income-generating trades.

3. Youth employability

As part of the GoTeach project (SOS Children's Villages - DHL partnership), 31 young people benefited from coaching/orientation and training in their entrepreneurial projects.

In order to strengthen the professional skills and increase the employability of our young people, 74 young people have benefited from computer training, 113 young people have acquired knowledge about entrepreneurship and financial education, and 93 young people who have dropped out of school have received training in income-generating trades. It should be noted that 47 young people from SIL left the programme with a self-reliance rate of 60% (28 young people are autonomous). 17 of them have a job and the other 11 are still looking for a job.

4. Advocacy

Following advocacy sessions carried out in partnership with other child protection organizations on compulsory basic education in Burundi, a ministerial order on the subject was drawn up by the Ministry of National Solidarity, Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender.

5. Digitalisation

In 2024, the organization continued to implement Connect SOS within programmes and finance to facilitate the digitisation processes of these key functions. With regard to improving the digital infrastructure, the Internet connection was increased at the National Office and in all locations to enable employees to work more easily. Cybersecurity compliance has been strengthened.

The PDB2 programme database has been our source of data, despite its instability.

Challenges

- The prices of essential goods have risen sharply (double or even triple for some products). This situation was exacerbated by the lack of fuel on the market throughout the country, which made it more difficult for families to access essential services. In response, SOS families were encouraged to build up safety stocks and make group purchases.
- The level of participation by CBOs in mobilising resources for OVCs is not satisfactory. SOS Children's Villages in Burundi intends to step up its interventions by supervising and monitoring the economic activities of the CBOs so that they can strengthen the families in return.
- The instability of PDB2 has affected programme monitoring and reporting.

Lessons learned [see 2.2]

- The social integration of SOS families is more effective when children and parents are involved throughout the process.
- Partnerships with other strategic actors can reduce project costs.
- Joint funding of family IGAs increases sustainability and solidarity between families.

Sustainability actions [see 2.4]

- Reinforcing the reintegration of children and young people in the care of SOS into their families of origin strengthens the political viability of the organization.
- The transfer of skills to the CBOs via training/awareness-raising sessions on the various themes will enable the CFE to be properly implemented.

- With the collaboration of the local administration and community members, community structures for the protection and promotion of children's rights have been set up and revitalised. These include community-based organizations (CBOs), protection committees (CPEs), peer educators, focal points and reporting monitors. The capacities of the members of these structures have been strengthened to improve their involvement and responsibility in resolving the problems of their communities.

3. Overview of programme(s) (¾ page)

In 2024, MA Burundi continued to operate in the 5 programme sites of Bujumbura, Cibitoke, Gitega, Muyinga and Rutana by implementing standard and grant projects through the services of FLC, FFC&Kinship, SIL, SGH, DFE, CFE, MED, ECD and EDU.

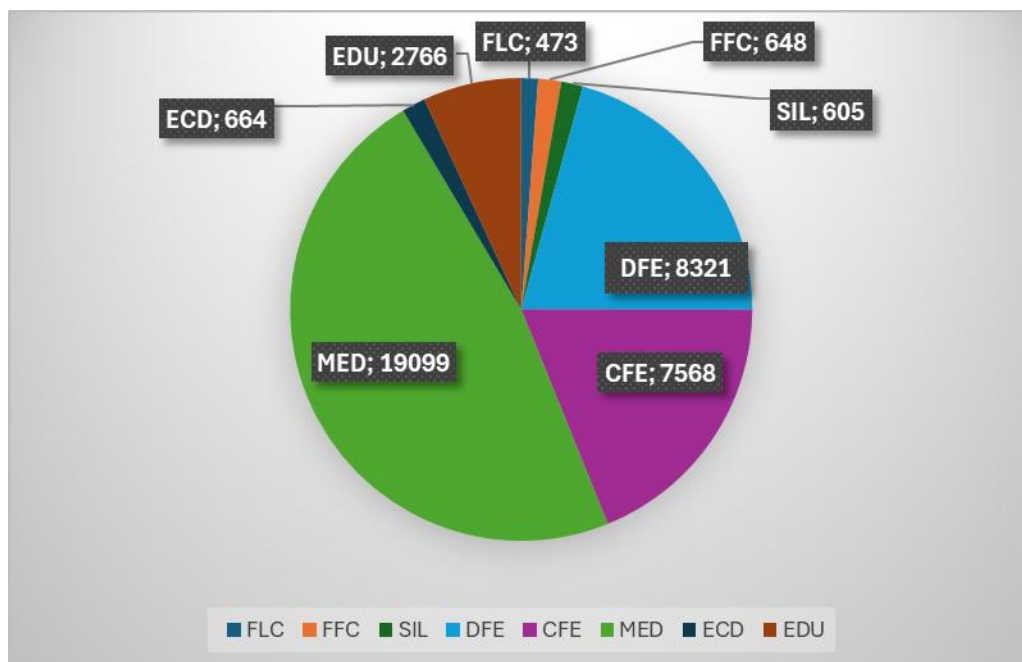


Figure 1: Scope of the programme in 2024

As shown in Figure 1 above, the MA directly supported 40144 participants (22882 women and 17262 men) through its services in the 5 programmes. It should be noted that community-based alternative care continues to increase and that care in 'FLC' children's villages is decreasing in line with the MA's strategic ambition, which is to move from 473 in 2024 to 334 in 2028.

With regard to social and physical integration and the implementation of the RAP recommendation, 3 new houses (Gitega, Muyinga and Rutana) have been integrated into the community, bringing the total number of integrated family houses at the national level to 10.

As far as reintegration is concerned, 58 children and young people have been reintegrated into their families of origin, including 7 from FFC/Kinship, 20 from FLC and 31 from SIL.

The DFE service of the Bujumbura standard project was able to empower 51 families out of the 66 that left the programme in 2024, giving an empowerment rate of 77%. These families have demonstrated their ability to look after and protect their children after having acquired the parenting skills they need to provide adequate care for their children.

47 young people left SIL with a self-reliance rate of 60% (28 young people are autonomous). 17 of them have a job.

In terms of advocacy, the MA has continued to increase its presence on the national and international scene and has taken part in various national commemoration and advocacy events to promote the rights of children and young people.

The MA has made progress in implementing Connect SOS. A total of 20 employees have acquired the knowledge needed to better meet the donor's requirements. In addition, the Connect SOS application documents (Concept Note, Results Framework and Financial Plan) for the two locations of Cibitoke and Gitega were reviewed, and the required changes were incorporated before they were submitted to the donor.

In terms of education, the SOS schools reached 3,430 participants, including 1,813 girls and 1,617 boys. In terms of health, the annual average number of participants reached by our medical centers is 1,039 (5,511 women and 4,528 men).

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1. NATIONAL CONTEXT AND STAKEHOLDERS (2 PAGES)

a. General description of national context (1 page)

The high cost of living, the persistent shortage of petroleum products, the scarcity of foreign currency and the impact of the floods were the main features of 2024. The devaluation of the currency led to widespread inflation of 36.5%, compared with 27.1% in 2023, with repercussions on the prices of essential goods. In addition, the local currency continued to depreciate compared with the dollar throughout the year. BIF lost around 49% of its value on the parallel market, rising from BIF 4,700 per USD in December 2023 to BIF 7,000 per USD in December 2024, making expensive imported necessities including fuel, medicines, building materials, etc. Prolonged fuel shortages have caused disruption to field activities.

The El Niño phenomenon caused heavy rains, floods and landslides in the low-lying Imbo Plain provinces. Between January and mid-April, more than 179,200 people were affected and more than 31,200 people were displaced. The provinces most affected are Cibitoke, Bubanza, Bujumbura and Rumonge.

In response to the simian smallpox pandemic declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in August 2024, the Ministry of Public Health and Fight against AIDS has called on technical and financial partners working in the health sector to mobilize and combat the pandemic. The first case of simian smallpox (Mpox) was reported in Burundi on 25 July 2024. By 31 December 2024, 2,650 confirmed cases, including one death, had been reported in 46 of the 49 health districts, but the epidemic remains largely concentrated in and around Bujumbura and the political capital, Gitega. Almost all suspected cases of Mpox are tested, and the test positivity rate is around 49%.

The MA is pleased that no cases of Mpox have been reported among participants and employees of SOS Children's Villages.

The economic situation of households remained precarious during 2024. The financial support provided by SOS Children's Villages International to the participants and employees of SOS Children's Villages in Burundi to help them cope with the high cost of living was very useful and greatly appreciated by SOS Children's Villages in Burundi.

The MA was honored by a virtual visit from the President of the federation. It was an opportunity to show him the impact of SOS Children's Villages in Burundi in the community. It should be noted that the previous parties (PSA, IOR, IO) took part in the visit.

b. Key partners at national level (1 page)

Table 1.2 Key partners

Name of partner	Description (purpose of partnership)	Progress in last year (key actions taken)	Effectiveness of partnership (contribution to results)	Formal agreement signed
The Government of the Republic of Burundi via the sectoral ministries	Support for the implementation and monitoring of the Organisation's programmes and capacity-building	The government has granted SOS Children's Villages in Burundi subsidies worth BIF 37,800,000, as well as a donation of 3,000 kilos of	Facilitation of the implementation of MA interventions thanks to its support	Yes

		rice worth BIF 3,500 per kilo.		
The DGD via SOS Belgium	The Children 4 Change programme runs until 2026.	4,541 direct participants from 901 families and 3,640 children and young people were supported as part of the C4C programme.	Helping to reach the highest possible number of people in the target group	Yes
ForumCiv via SOS Suède	Funding for a three-year DFE project on 8 hills in Gashikanwa commune, Ngozi province.	1,494 direct participants, including 1,130 children and young people and 364 caregivers, were admitted to the DPCE project.	Contribution to reaching a large number of the target group	Yes
European Union	Funding for the NKingira NKURE NEZA project	3 Provincial CPCs (Child Protection Committee), 6 Communal CPCs and 60 Hillside CPCs, 60 CBOs, 6,000 children from 60 partner schools. 30 CSOs and 1,500 families in need, 1,800 members of the CBOs, 54,000 children attending the 60 partner schools. And 5,000 children who are victims of violations of children's rights, 1,200 disabled children, 6,000 children in need, including 1,000 Batwa children.	Contribution to the achievement of IS2 and IS7 results	Yes

DHL	Capacity building in employability and self-reliance for young people	Capacity building for young people.	Contribution to the achievement of the Organisation's Results 4.	Yes
KIYO	Synergy partnership in the operational framework for implementing the C4C programme.	Capacity building	Contribution to achieving project results 3 and 4.	Yes
Entraide et Fraternité	Synergy partnership in the operational framework for implementing the C4C programme.	Capacity-building and experience sharing on a new cross-functional gender approach	Contribution to achieving project result 2.	Yes
Louvain Coopération	Synergy partnership in the operational framework for implementing the C4C programme	Guidance and training on the environmental integration tool and participation in the workshop to share this tool with Louvain Coopération's NGO partners.	Contribution to achieving project result 1.	Yes

2. MEMBER ASSOCIATION ANALYSIS (5-7 PAGES)

a. Strategy implementation status (2-3 pages)

i. Alternative care

a. Achievements

As of 31 December 2024, the alternative care programme had 1,738 children and young people, including 473 in FLC, 455 in FFC, 192 in Kinship, 599 in SIL and 16 in 3 Small Group Homes, 2 of which are community-based. In order to increase the number of children in the target group and meet the ever-growing need for childcare, MARP (accelerated participatory research method) workshops were run and social surveys carried out in the target families in collaboration with the administration and technical partners resulted in the admission of 106 new children in need of assistance, i.e. 5 in FLC, 51 in FFC, 50 in Kinship and 12 in small group homes.

As part of social and physical integration and the implementation of the RAP recommendation, 3 new family houses (Gitega, Musinga and Rutana) have been integrated into the community, bringing the total number of integrated family houses at the national level to 10.

As regards reintegration, 58 children and young people (16f, 42g) were reintegrated into their families of origin, including 7 from the FFC/Kinship, 20 from the FLC and 31 young people from the SIL.

In terms of psychosocial support, 116 children and young people were identified as having psycho-emotional problems, such as lack of concentration, frequent crying for no apparent reason, enuresis at an advanced age, poor school performance, blank stares, aggressiveness, isolation, dislike of

school, etc. They received psychological support from local psychosocial support teams through sessions of psychodrama, trauma healing, discussion groups, narrative and creativity therapy and Team Up.

Of these, 81 made improvements. They developed self-esteem, empathy and tolerance, and their school results improved. In addition, their follow-up plans were updated. It should be noted, however, that 3 children/young people were transferred to a neuropsychiatrist for specialist care. The psychosocial support teams have also been updated, with the aim of forming a team integrating all the services.

In terms of personal development, 250 children and young people from the 5 SOS Children's Villages in Burundi relaxed during an exchange visit to Bujumbura, the economic capital. They had the opportunity to visit tourist areas (Lake Tanganyika and the Living Museum). This was an opportunity for them to learn about the way animals live, as well as expand their circle of friends through the exchange of gifts. The children/young people also enjoyed a range of socio-cultural activities.

In order to improve the quality of care for FLC and FFC/Kinship children, 103 SOS parents/candidate mothers, 79 foster parents and 20 community volunteers acquired knowledge in various areas, including parenting skills, health and school monitoring for children/young people, psychosocial support for children with psycho-affective difficulties, child and adolescent psychology, children's rights, early detection of warning signs of psycho-affective disorders, gender and advocacy techniques during training, awareness-raising and coaching sessions. In addition, the capacities of 33 employees were strengthened in psychosocial support under the facilitation of SOS Children's Villages and its partners, including the Bible Society. The foster parents also acquired knowledge on how to implement IGAs for their own self-development.

b. Challenges

- The prices of basic necessities have risen sharply (doubling or even tripling for some products). This situation was exacerbated by the lack of fuel on the market throughout the country, which made it more difficult for families to access essential services. In response, SOS families have been encouraged to build up emergency food stocks and make group purchases.
- The socio-economic situation of most volunteer foster families and extended families is precarious and worrying. In view of this situation, the plan is to strengthen the families' economic situation by helping them draw up development plans so that they can undertake income-generating activities to help them become self-sufficient.
- The persistent shortage of fuel is hampering activities on the field, including close monitoring of families and children.

ii. Family Strengthening

a. Achievements

Regarding family strengthening, the MA is currently implementing Direct family Empowerment (DFE) and Community Empowerment for Family Empowerment (CFE). 3 standard projects and 3 grant projects are currently being implemented in the 5 programmes.

In 2024, Direct family Empowerment (DFE) supported 8,321 participants in 1,588 households. Community Empowerment for Family Empowerment reached 7,568 participants. This was made

possible by the work of community-based organisations. It should be noted that 1,751 children and young people were provided with school supplies, health care, food, etc. by 41 community-based organisations (CBOs) and other community stakeholders.

With the aim of raising awareness of children's rights among direct participants and members of children's rights clubs, 2,085 child participants in the programme and 3,541 members of the various clubs were made aware of their rights. To enhance the employability of young people participating in Direct family Empowerment (DFE), 73 young people were trained and certified in vocational jobs (sewing, plumbing, welding, carpentry, car mechanics, bricklaying, and bakery).

Concerning the economic strengthening of families, the organisation has supported 1,236 families in income-generating activities (IGA) at BIF 57,737,880. This enabled them to improve the care of their children. To enhance the employability of caregivers participating in Direct family Empowerment (DFE), 107 caregivers acquired skills in income-generating professions.

In 2024, only the Bujumbura standard project exited families, with a total of 66 families, 51 of whom are self-sufficient, representing an empowerment rate of 77%. In addition, 1236 families participating in the programme and 29 intervention communities have benefited from an evaluation of their preparation for exiting the programme. Based on this assessment of the family readiness to exit, it was found out that of the 1236 families assessed, 172 families, i.e. a rate of 13.9%, were ready to exit after achieving self-sufficiency, 1013 families, i.e. a rate of 81.9%, still needed additional support to reach the required level of self-sufficiency, while the remaining 37 families, i.e. a rate of 2.9%, were unlikely to reach the required level of self-sufficiency, given the various difficulties they faced. It was also found that a focus on strengthening household capabilities to increase production contributes to increasing income levels and the accumulation of assets for production. Thus, the hypothesis that access to financing and asset accumulation reinforces self-sufficiency and reduces household dependence on external aid while promoting access to essential services, is verified. Also increasing income boosts the ability of households to provide for essential services such as health, nutrition, housing and education.

It was also found that the quality of care for children and young people improved in households thanks to capacity building in parenting skills. Thus, the hypothesis that improvements in the quality of care depend on the accumulation of knowledge in parenting skills is also proven.

Households' awareness of community assets increases their chances of accessing available services, thanks to connections with the community, decentralised government services and other stakeholders.

b. Challenges

- Food prices continued to rise, widening the gap in food consumption, particularly for poor households, and even more so in the region where incomes are the lowest. The situation has continued to worsen due to the fuel shortage observed throughout the year in the country.
- Household purchasing power, already weak, continues to deteriorate, with the depreciation of the Burundian currency and the disruption of market supplies aggravating the food shortage. Rampant inflation is limiting the achievement of the objectives set in relation to family and community empowerment. As part of the mitigation measures, families have been encouraged to develop agro-pastoral IGAs and diversify their sources of income through commercial IGAs.
- The level of involvement of CBOs in mobilizing resources for Orphans and Vulnerable Children is unsatisfactory. SOS Children's Villages in Burundi intends to multiply its interventions by supervising and monitoring

iii. Youth care and employability

a. Achievements

To improve support for young people, personalised coaching visits were carried out for 170 young people who had been reunited with their families, 47 young people attending secondary schools and 8 young people in post-placement care. As part of the GoTeach Project (SOS Children's Villages - DHL partnership), 31 young people benefited from coaching/orientation and training in their entrepreneurial projects.

In order to strengthen the professional skills and increase the employability of our young people, 74 young people have benefited from computer training, 113 young people have acquired knowledge of entrepreneurship and financial education, and 93 out-of-school young people have received training in income-generating professions. It should be noted that 47 young people from SIL exited the program with a self-reliance rate of 60% (28 young people are autonomous). 17 of them have a job.

b. Challenges

- The unemployment situation among young people is worrying. Once they have completed their studies, finding a job is a challenge. Increasing their chances of employability through further training is one of the solutions. In addition, negotiating partnerships with certain companies that could support these young people by granting professional internships, and why not employment, would be another attempt at finding solutions. Similarly, developing the entrepreneurial skills of young graduates through training could help them cope with unemployment.

iv. Advocacy

a. Achievements

As part of the EU-funded NKINGIRA NKURE NEZA project, SOS Children's Villages took part in six advocacy sessions on mandatory basic schooling in Burundi, led by Search for Common Ground and other child protection stakeholders. Following these advocacy sessions, a ministerial order "mandatory basic school education in Burundi" was drawn up by the Ministry of National Solidarity, Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender.

v. Human resources

a. Achievements

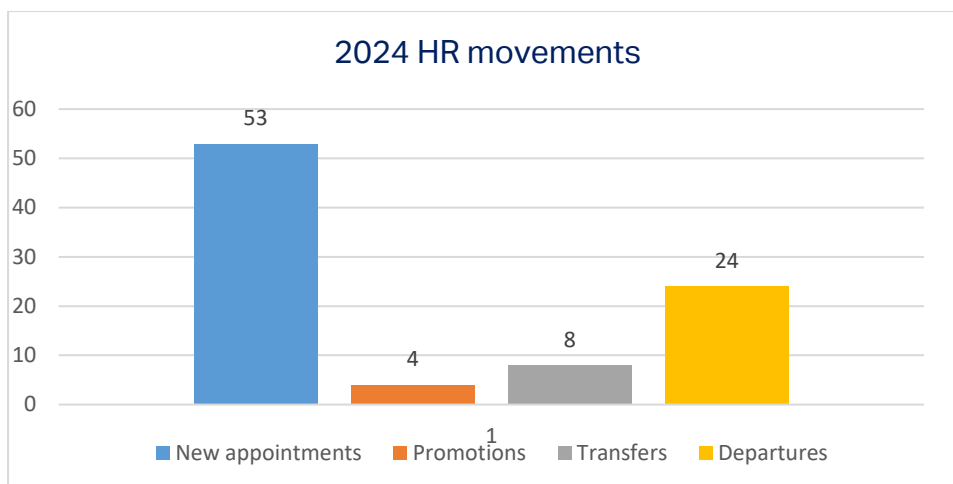


Figure 2: Human resource movement in 2024

The chart above provides an update on human resources movements in 2024, notably 53 new staff were recruited, 12 of whom were reintegrated into the Bujumbura kindergarten, 4 were promoted, 8 others were transferred from their previous programmes to fill gaps in other programmes, and 24 left the organisation either through dismissal, resignation, death or retirement.

Thanks to the partnership between SOS Belgium and the Allen&Overy lawyer's office, 10 employees of the National Office improved their knowledge of time management and internal communication.

As part of the exchange of experience and support between MAs, 5 representatives of Burundi's local psychosocial and mental health support teams shared clinical intervention practices in this field with their colleagues from Rwanda. In addition, teams from the DPCE project (funded by Forum Civ via SOS Sweden) in Burundi and Benin exchanged best practices and lessons learned in the implementation of this project. An exchange of experience on the use of evidence in programme management also took place between MA Kenya, Ethiopia, Somaliland, Malawi and Burundi. SOS Children's Villages in Djibouti also received support from the National Alternative Care Coordinator in assessing the reintegration process used. Recommendations were made to improve it in the best interest of the child.

In terms of staff development, two employees were trained in "Initial safeguarding investigation" to improve their child safeguarding skills. In addition, 25 employees improved their digital skills in ICDL and 168 employees out of the 176 initially planned acquired SOSAFE cybersecurity skills. Also, 54 employees received training in the renewed brand's policies, regulations and guidelines.

A satisfaction survey was carried out in December, with satisfactory results due to the inflation-linked salary adjustment that took place at the same time as the survey.

b. Challenges

- The departure of experienced staff, resulting in the loss of investment in skills development.
- Failure to consider annual inflation when drawing up salary budgets has adverse consequences for the smooth running of the organisation, such as reduced purchasing power, staff dissatisfaction, turnover and failure to meet the requirements of competent candidates when recruiting.
- The absence of a digital personnel management system leads to errors and work overload.

vi. Internal processes and digitalisation

a. Achievements

In 2024, Information and Communication Technology continued to provide important tools to keep staff in touch and MA running.

Access to and use of digital solutions by staff and programme participants were improved thanks to several training sessions organised.

As part of the development of the Digital Villages (ICT4D Development), 5 ICT coaches were recruited to provide training in new technologies to participants and SOS parents.

The table below lists the programme participants and parents trained per location:

	Young people trained	SOS parents trained	Total per location
Bujumbura	116	3	119
Cibitoke	51	10	61
Gitega	35	9	44
Muyinga	61	17	78
Rutana	50	0	50
Grand Total	352		

Regarding the improvement of the digital infrastructure, the Internet connection has been increased at the National Office as well as in all locations to enable employees to work easily. In addition, various licenses (Meraki, Office365, Intune, Adobe Premiere Pro) have been ordered and activated.

b. Challenges

- PDB2 instability affected programme monitoring and reporting
- Approval of the 2024 budget was late, which delayed orders for ICT equipment from DANOFFICE.
- The payment of invoices issued by DANOFFICE by the Central Bank was not made on time. The lack of foreign currency has led us to consider payments from subsidies, but this type of payment can only be made twice a year, in July and September. This means that we will have to place our orders before July to benefit from this type of payment.

vii. Fund development

a. Achievements

As part of our search for funding, our organisation submitted 4 funding applications to institutional donors (Postcode Lottery, Swedish government, BMZ via HGFD, FCIL Canada and UNICEF). None of them received a positive response.

HGFD-funded programme staff have acquired skills in project preparation in line with their donor's requirements. Following this training, their concept notes, results frameworks and financial plans were revised and sent to the donor for funding over the next 4 years.

With the aim of informing sponsors about the development of the children/young people they sponsor, 13,618 sponsors were informed about the development of the 1,098 children and young people they sponsor.

In terms of fundraising, the equivalent of BIF 226,608,028 was raised. The total amount corresponds to cash donations from public and private sources equivalent to BIF 112,453,464, of which BIF 50,009,134 was donated by individuals, BIF 2,000,000 by private companies and BIF 60,444,330 by the government. In-kind donations, estimated at BIF 114,154,564, came mainly from the government (BIF 74,798,264), companies (BIF 37,464,000) and individuals (BIF 1,892,300).

b. *Challenges*

- The socio-economic situation remains precarious, making the local fund-raising environment difficult. Compared with previous years, some donors are no longer able to meet our requests for contributions.

b. *Lessons learned (1 page)*

Table 2.2 *Lessons learned*

Type	Lesson learned	Action(s) to be taken	Status of action
<i>[challenge / good practice / observation]</i>			
Good Practice	Partnerships with other strategic stakeholders can reduce project costs and make it easier to monitor our participants.	Our partnership with the Red Cross has enabled us to closely monitor participants from FFC, Kinship and the families of origin who have taken in the reintegrated children and young people.	Successfully completed
Good Practice	The social integration of SOS families is most effective when children and mothers are involved in the whole process.	3 family houses have been integrated into the community as planned for 2024	Successfully completed
Good Practice	Joint financing of family IGAs increases sustainability and solidarity between families.		In progress
Good Practice	The long-term planning process has improved staff skills in long-term visioning/planning.	Connect SOS application documents have been drawn up and submitted to donors	
Challenges	Prices for basic commodities have dramatically risen (from double to three times higher for some products). This situation was worsened by the lack of fuel on the market throughout the country, making it more difficult for families to access essential services.	SOS families have been encouraged to build up safety stocks and make joint purchases.	In progress

c. *Cross-cutting topics (¾ page)*

During the period covered by this report, we continued to focus on the following cross-cutting issues:

RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT	4 programmes have been certified at the standard level and have submitted standard project documentation. All our programmes have demonstrated a strong commitment to strengthening programme quality within the RBM framework. The level of RBM implementation is 90% standard and 66% basic for the MA.
CHILD/YOUTH PROTECTION and SAFEGUARDING	To promote child protection in our intervention communities, 474 caregivers and 56 members of community structures improved their knowledge of the importance of respecting and promoting children's rights. In addition, 194 children and young people improved their knowledge of children's rights after an awareness-raising session on the International Day of the African Child. Furthermore, during the celebration of the Day of the African Child, the competition for the presentation of sketches showing the situation of children's rights in the community, organised between 4 schools in the location, enabled more than 800 pupils to be made aware of their rights. The National Office and the programmes Bujumbura and Cibitoke obtained level 1 keeping children safe certification, which confirms that a comprehensive child protection framework is in place and meets the standards for protecting children from harm and that there will be an appropriate response to any concerns should they arise. An orientation session on the "Misconduct Incident Management Regulation" document was held at the National Safeguarding Children and Young People Workshop.
ENVIRONMENT	21 social workers from the C4C programme improved their knowledge of the environmental integration tool thanks to a capacity-building workshop offered by Synergy partner NGO 'Louvain Coopération'. As a result, in 2024, 375 families in the 6 locations of Direct family Empowerment (DFE) took environmental integration into account in their agricultural and pastoral activities thanks to the community coaching provided by the programme's social workers.
GENDER	An online experience-sharing session with SOS Togo on active fatherhood enabled 6 local Direct family Empowerment (DFE) coordinators to develop a 2024-2025 action plan for implementing this approach in Direct family Empowerment (DFE) families. In collaboration with the Ministry of National Solidarity, Human Rights and Gender, the Gender Focal Point took part in a national workshop on assessing the joint action plans of partners working in the fields of women's and girls' economic empowerment, fighting against sexual and gender-based violence, women's and girls' participation in the decision-making sphere and gender integration in sectoral programming. Women's Rights Day was celebrated, and gestures of solidarity were made towards those most in need. In addition, our participants acquired knowledge on various gender-related themes (gender integration issues in schools, positive masculinity and female leadership, etc.).
AUDIT	Risk management, detection and prevention of fraudulent behaviour and internal control are the key themes on which the staff have been strengthened through awareness-raising and capacity-building. To improve the quality of programmes, ensure compliance with existing procedures, take corrective measures and strengthen donor confidence, two assessments of the HGFD Minimum Requirement for

	Funding were carried out following their feedback, and an action plan was drawn up. Moreover, an assessment of the organisation's procedures was carried out. During the year, the programmes Gitega and Cibitoke were subject to a national internal audit and the risk was rated as medium. Recommendations were made to remedy the weaknesses identified. For the 2024 external audits, the grant Forum Civ and C4C projects were audited in accordance with donor regulations, not forgetting the external audit to validate the MA financial statements. The implementation of previous audit recommendations is monitored on a quarterly basis. At the end of the year, the level of implementation of recommendations was 73.7% for external accounting and financial audits, 75% for national internal audits and 66% for regional internal audits.
COMMUNICATION AND BRAND	In the area of communication and visibility, our mission, achievements and prospects were presented at the launch of the 'Nkingira Nkure Neza' project funded by the European Union, in the presence of some fifty participants. In addition, key activities received media coverage and were posted on our website and social networks to carry the message further. As part of the virtual visit by the President of the SOS Children's Villages Federation, twenty videos were produced and shared with stakeholders. Similarly, impact stories were shared with the PSAs. In addition, MA Burundi took part in the celebration of national and international days such as Women's Rights Day, the Day of the African Child, Children's Rights Day, etc., as well as in the international 'Stomping for Peace' campaign. As part of the preparation of the 2023 international report, the advocacy message of a young Burundian girl was ranked first and awarded a prize.

d. Sustainability actions (¾ page)

- Reinforcing the reintegration of children and young people from SOS alternative care into their families of origin strengthens the political sustainability of the organisation. This is in line with the UN guidelines for alternative care and the government policy direction that children in residential care must return to their families of origin.
- Transfer of skills to the programme's partner CBOs via training/awareness-raising sessions on the various themes.
- Community structures for the protection and promotion of children's rights have been set up and revitalised in collaboration with the local administration and members of the community. These include community-based organisations (CBOs), protection committees, peer educators, focal points and report monitors. The capacities of the members of these structures have been strengthened to improve their involvement and responsibilities in resolving the problems of their communities. This community ownership of child protection is a good mechanism for ensuring the sustainability of the programme's interventions.

3. OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMME(S) (½-1 PAGE PER PROGRAMME)

a. Programme location: **BUJUMBURA**

The alternative care services have 413 children and young people, including 91 in FLC, 148 children/young people in SIL and 174 in FFC/Kinship. During the year, 15 children/young people from SIL and FFC left the programme (1 from FFC and 14 from SIL). It should also be noted that 21 new children were admitted to the FFC and Kinship.

In terms of psychosocial and mental health support, 15 individual counselling sessions were held, including 10 children/young people referred to the Medical Centre's partner psychosocial support team (MSPLS-ALUMA) and 6 group counselling sessions for 27 children/young people each. Of the 10 children/young people monitored by the Medical Centre partner, 3 were referred to the neuropsychiatrist.

Direct support for families was provided to 948 participants, including 731 children and young people and 217 guardians. Community reinforcement for strengthening families reached an annual average of 917 participants. It should be noted that 66 families left the programme with a 77% rate of self-reliance.

In terms of capacity-building for caregivers, 44 guardians learned about parenting skills and active fatherhood. Following this training, a couple who had been separated for more than 3 years was reconciled.

As part of the family empowerment programme, 20 IGAs (19 individual and 1 collective) were funded to help families become more self-sufficient, at a time when 6 guardians were pursuing vocational training, including 3 in dressmaking and 3 in beauty salons. In addition, 48 households have benefited from seeds to improve their agricultural productivity.

In the area of community development, 27 Community Savings and Loans Associations are operational, with 749 members, including 75 men and 674 women. At least 80% of members have already benefited from micro-loans to carry out IGAs to improve household living conditions.

After 5 years of handover to the association supporting the SOS children's village in Bujumbura, the ECD has been reintegrated into the programme services and is under international funding. It takes care of 236 participants while the EDU is attended by 1,309. At the SOS-HG secondary school, three pedagogical workshops were held to analyse strategies for supervising pupils in junior and senior classes to improve their results. As a result of these actions, the success rate was 98.15% in basic (primary) school and 90.4% at SOS Secondary School. As for health, an annual average of 5,700 participants benefited from the medical services offered by the Bujumbura Medical Centre.

b. Programme location: **CIBITOKÉ**

The programme reached out to 1,080 participants through the services offered by the standard Cibitoke project (FLC: 94, FFC: 69, Kinship: 41, SIL: 102, SGH: 4, ECD: 89, EDU: 343, MED: 9,438).

As part of the preparations for family reintegration and the strengthening of family ties between the children/young people and their families of origin, the socio-economic capacities of 179 families of origin of the children and young people were assessed. The results of this assessment were used to draw up the concept note 2025 to 2028 to meet the development needs of these families for effective reintegration.

Psychosocial support for 38 children/young people experiencing psycho-emotional difficulties through creativity sessions, psychodramas, narrative therapy, discussion groups and trauma healing

enabled 33 children to develop self-esteem, empathy and tolerance. In addition, 50 FFC/Kinship guardians learned about the signs and behaviours of a child/young person experiencing psycho-emotional difficulties, and how to provide appropriate support in each case. In the same vein, a partnership with the association "Solidarity to Promote Mental Health" has been set up to support the local psycho-social support team in offering a comprehensive package of services to children and young people in need of mental health services.

In terms of personal fulfilment, the village's "AGAKURA Club", which brings together 36 children/young people, has formed a partnership with the local "IHUNJA cultural club." This helps to integrate the children/young people into the community and develop their talents.

To help the FFC/Kinship guardians on their way to self-reliance, a workshop was organised for 50 members of 4 savings and loan groups to share their experiences on the operation and management of the group. The testimonies given during this working session on the implementation of development projects (agriculture, livestock, trade, construction of decent housing) using funds borrowed within their groups show that these guardians have understood the importance of working together and of savings and loans.

Through the C4C grant project, 1,815 participants in 318 households were supported in the Direct family Empowerment (DFE) and an annual average of 968 participants in the community empowerment to empower families.

As part of community capacity-building, 202 members of the Community Savings and Loan Associations representing the others acquired knowledge of the savings culture, responsible management of loans taken out and their role in supporting unassisted children.

To strengthen parenting skills, 318 families learned about personal, clothing and environmental hygiene, children's rights and duties, as well as parental roles and responsibilities in childcare.

Regarding the economic strengthening of CBOs and families, the programme supported the social enterprises set up by the 8 CBOs with BIF 1,000,000 each. This enabled 47 children in the community to receive school equipment. Financial support of one hundred thousand Burundi francs per family was granted to 158 families whose business plans were approved in 2024 to undertake IGAs. The homes of 19 families have been improved thanks to sheet metal support. The granting of 296 medical assistance cards to families and young people in the C4C programme gave them access to healthcare.

In education, during the 2023-2024 school year, the school presented the first Grade 9 winners of the national test. It had a 100% success rate and was ranked 7th nationally and 1st provincially.

c. Programme location: **GITEGA**

The programme offered alternative care to 338 children and young people, as follows: 101 in FLC, 105 in FFC & Kinship and 132 in SIL. 20 new children were admitted to FFC/KS and 10 young people were resettled.

As part of holistic care centred on their rights, an assessment of the placement situation of the children and young people was carried out. As a result, 12 children and young people were reunited with their biological families and the progressive reintegration plan was updated. In addition, 4 children regained their identity and were registered in the Civil Registry, and 2 of them who had been separated from their families of origin were reintegrated. A new family house has been integrated into the community.

Regarding partnerships, the Burundi Red Cross supports the close monitoring of children from foster families and those reintegrated into their biological families. A collaboration plan has been drawn up and monitored. To ensure quality care, the programme supported the strengthening of parenting skills for 61 FFC and Kinship family guardians and 65 Red Cross volunteers.

In the context of psychosocial support, care staff have increased their knowledge of the early detection of mental disorders. As a result, 42 children and young people identified as having psycho-emotional and social problems have received support through the use of discussion groups, trauma healing, psychodrama and creativity, depending on their individual needs.

Concerning the support and employability of young people, 30 young university students were visited and their development plans monitored. One young person from FS received a kit that will enable him to start his own business after receiving training in sewing; 77 young people received additional training in Income-Generating Activities, including 4 in driving school, 2 in English, 64 in computer skills, 1 in sewing and 6 in metal welding.

As part of the support for young people in post-placement, 7 resettled young people were helped with their entrepreneurial projects. In addition, 17 young people strengthened their stress management skills in the student environment, which enabled them to be informed and adopt positive attitudes to stressful situations in everyday life and prevent them from dropping out of school. It is worth mentioning that 2 young people found employment.

The new EU-funded project 'NKGIRA NKURE NEZA' has been launched and is now empowering 20 communities in the communes of Gitega and Makebuko to better protect children's rights. The project is working with other stakeholders to establish a solid and sustainable community system for the protection of children's rights. Child protection committees have been revitalised and strengthened at provincial, communal and hill level in the two intervention communes. Two partner Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have been identified and memoranda of understanding signed to empower 500 families caring for an average of 2,500 children and young people.

The C4C programme took care of 1,905 participants in 379 households through Direct family Empowerment (DFE) and an annual average of 3,389 participants through community empowerment. The programme helped to improve household and community incomes by supporting 314 Income-Generating Activities for families participating in the programme and 9 micro-projects for 9 partner CBOs. In addition, 13 households received support for decent housing.

To help protect the environment, 9 CBOs received 1,600 fruit trees (mandarin, orange, avocado, etc.), i.e. 177 fruit trees per CBO. In addition, 58 have benefited from ecological toilets enabling them to make efficient use of black and yellow gold.

In the field of education, the SOS HG school in Gitega ended the 2023-2024 school year with 376 children/young people in EDU, of whom 202 were girls, and 122 in ECD. The overall success rate was 90.66%. It is 100% for the National test done at the end of grade 9 and only 37.5% for the State exam giving access to university studies.

During this year, out of 30,444 participants planned, the MC recorded 32,093 curative, preventive and promotional services and 10,765 representing children aged 0-17, i.e. 33.5%.

d. Programme location: MUYINGA

The programme offered alternative care services to 372 children and young people, including 122 in FLC (65 boys and 57 girls), 140 in FFC/Kinship, 8 in SGH and 102 in SIL (57 boys and 45 girls). 18 new children were admitted to the FFC/KINSHIP services and 4 to the FLC.

An assessment of the situation of the children in alternative care was carried out. A progressive reintegration plan for the children has been updated. Regarding integration, a family house was integrated into the community.

Concerning partnerships, the Burundi Red Cross is supporting the close monitoring of children from foster families. This has enabled Red Cross volunteers to monitor and supervise 95 families providing care for 148 children and young people benefiting from the FFC and Kinship services.

In addition, two biannual child protection coordination workshops have been held, attended by 54 participants (CSOs, NGOs and the public administration: police, justice, local government, DPDFS (Provincial Department for Family and Social Development), and health).

With the aim of boosting their employability, 47 young people who had dropped out of school received training in income-generating trades (35 in sewing, 2 in car mechanics, 3 in bakery, 1 in bricklaying and 6 in hairdressing).

The programme offered Direct family Empowerment (DFE) and community strengthening services to strengthen families through three grant projects.

- The DPCE (Community-Led Development for Children) project, financed by ForumCIV, is supporting 364 families with 1,541 direct participants (880 girls and 661 boys), including 1,118 children and young people, with 423 caregivers. The skills of 22 young peer educators were strengthened through various training and awareness-raising sessions on different themes. - 15 peer educators were trained in techniques for reporting and responding to cases of abuse. As a result, 3 cases of abuse were reported and dealt with.

The employability of 78 caregivers and 31 young people was increased following their training in income-generating trades (25 young people and 53 tutors in sewing, 6 young people in hairdressing, 25 tutors in saponification). After the training, the graduates organised themselves into small groups to start a collective IGA linked to their trade, to be able to increase their income and effectively look after their children.

The skills of 24 members of the leaders of 8 CBOs in the administrative management of associations, leadership and business plan development were improved through training. Afterwards, each CBO drew up a business plan before initiating collective IGAs that will enable them to increase their income to help OVCs in their communities.

In terms of psychosocial support, 14 young heads of households with psychosocial problems took part in the discussion group session. As a result, their psychological balance was restored and their self-esteem increased.

- The C4C programme, funded by DGD, supports 204 families with 1,193 direct participants, including 880 children/young people and 313 caregivers. The programme supported the income-generating activities of 68 families to the tune of BIF 2,964,000. To improve the housing of participants, 18 families were supported with iron sheets.

Thanks to community advocacy, 229 children and young people in need living in the 5 communities in C4C's intervention zone have benefited from various forms of support from CBOs to the value of FBU 1,323,400: 91 kg of beans, 100 kg of cassava, 2 rehabilitated houses, 67 kg of maize, payment of 3 healthcare bills, payment of 6 Health Insurance Cards, payment of 9 pairs of school uniforms, payment of 171 exercise books and 22 pens. In addition, 8 children and young people returned to school following advice and awareness-raising by members of the community.

- The NKingira NKure NEZA project, funded by the European Union, has been launched. In collaboration with the community and partner CSOs, 500 families caring for 1,547 children and 281 young people will be supported throughout the project. During the year, 50 hillside CPEs were renewed and revitalised on 50 hills in the communes of Buhinyuza and Musinga.

In education, ECD Muyinga is attended by 129 participants, while EDU is attended by 414 participants.

e. Programme location: **RUTANA**

During the year 2024, the Rutana Programme offered alternative care to 308 children and young people, including 84 in FLC, 118 in FFC & Kinship and 106 in SIL. There were 22 new admissions, including 1 to FLC, 11 to FFC and 10 to Kinship.

As for the health of children and young people, 98 children and young people, including 83 from the FLC and 15 from the FFC & Kinship, received health check-ups. In addition, 48 foster families, including 38 from Foster Care and 10 from Kinship, have been given access to healthcare thanks to the provision of health insurance cards from community health mutuals.

To improve socio-affective development, 7 children/young people identified as having psycho-affective problems were supported and helped through psychodrama and empathic listening sessions. As a result, their condition has improved. In addition, 19 empathic listening sessions were carried out for 17 pupils with difficulties adjusting to school.

As part of the social integration of children and young people, 3 young people were reunited with their families of origin, including 1 from the FLC, 1 from the SIL and 1 from the FFC, and 12 young people from the SIL who had achieved self-reliance were emancipated. In addition, the situation of 74 children and young people and their families of origin was assessed to plan their reintegration. Following the assessment report, a reintegration plan for the children/young people was drawn up. To facilitate the social integration of the children/young people, an SOS family was integrated into the community.

In terms of personal development, 174 children and young people, including 98 from the FLC and 75 from the SIL, benefited from family outings in the location. Similarly, as part of the World Peace Games, 30 young people from the programme played 4 football matches with 30 young people from 3 neighboring schools. The 2 winning teams - one for boys and one for girls - each received a football as a prize.

The Family Strengthening programme supported 162 families providing care for 744 children and young people. In addition, 162 caregivers acquired knowledge about parenting skills and resource mobilization. Subsequently, 100 caregivers developed individual IGAs, i.e. 61.7% of the caregivers participating in the programme.

Regarding the academic performance of children and young people cared for by families, 275 of the 353 children and young people who were enrolled in school achieved a satisfactory grade during the past year, representing a pass rate of 77.9%.

To improve the living conditions of programme participants, 35 vulnerable homeless families have acquired decent housing thanks to the programme's provision of iron sheets to cover the houses built for them by members of the community.

As far as partnerships are concerned, 87 community structure leaders have improved their knowledge of responsibility in the protection of children's rights and community care. This enabled 3 OVC to receive support to pay for hospitalization, while 2 other OVCs received support for school fees. In addition, 412 OVC received school equipment worth 5,345,000 Fbu thanks to the income-generating activities of the TUREREREHAMWE collective, a partner of the FS. This collective has carried out conflict resolution activities in 2 families in the community.

In the area of employability, professional skills development and empowerment, 10 young people improved their computer skills, and 75 young people learned about financial education. In addition, 4

young people were supported in obtaining professional internships thanks to the collaboration with two companies.

In terms of education, 416 children and young people attended the SOS school, including 218 from the target group (78 from the FLC, 1 from the FFC, 7 from the RF, 132 scholarship holders from the school), which represents 52.4%. The school also took in 198 children and young people from the community. The success rate was 100%, and the school was ranked first at the provincial level in the national competition giving access to post-basic education. Moreover, the annual progress rate was 92.57% for the results of the 2023-2024 school year, which ended in June 2024.

In terms of health, 10546 participants benefited from our services, including 5315 from the target group, i.e. 50.3%.

ANNEX

ANNEX 1: HYPERLINKS TO RELATED MATERIALS

Topic	Person responsible	Source information of	MA file should be saved to:	Hyperlink
Actual statistics of the MA	N.a.	Compass report accessed via the following path: Compass -> Federation Steering -> Statistical Key figures -> SKF Beneficiaries / SKF staff -> filter for MA and year	No longer required	Statistical Key Figures - Power BI
List of board members	National director	MA fills in template list of board members	Federation planning & steering: MA annual reports	N/A - please upload list of board members as separate document onto MA annual reports workspace
MA mid-term plan	National director	MA fills in template for mid-term planning	Federation planning & steering: Mid-term & annual plans	<i>Insert hyperlink of the mid-term plan</i>
MA annual plan	National director	MA fills in template for annual planning	Federation planning & steering: Mid-term & annual plans	<i>Insert hyperlink of the annual plan</i>
MA website	National director	Member association website	Not applicable: provide link only	<i>Insert hyperlink of the MA website</i>
Online directory page for MA	National director	SOS Online Directory	Not applicable: provide link only	<i>Insert hyperlink of specific page for the MA</i>

ANNEX 2: SUMMARY OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES OF THE MEMBER ASSOCIATION

[Provide an overview of major activities that occurred at the national level for the reporting period (e.g. audits, trainings/workshops, visits, etc.). Please mention which mid-term objective these activities support and what the results of the activity were.]

Major activities of the MA	Date	Corresponding national mid-term objective	Results
National internal audit missions were carried out in the AC Gitega and Cibitoke, and FS Cibitoke services.	February June	Improve programme quality	Weaknesses and risks encountered were identified and plans for implementing the recommendations were drawn up.
The implementation of recommendations arising from external accounting and financial audits and national and regional internal audits was assessed on a quarterly basis.	January April July October	Improve programme quality	The level of implementation of the recommendations is known and efforts are being made to improve it
Develop and submit 10 IPD project proposals based on programme requirements and needs	December	Diversification of funding sources	4 projects were drawn up and submitted to institutional donors (Postcode Lottery, Swedish government, BMZ via HGFD, FCIL Canada and UNICEF). None of them received a favorable response.
Implementation of connect SOS(D365for finance&PRODIGI)	October	Simplify SOS	17 finance staff know how to use D365 after an orientation session, the deployment of the 2024 financial data has taken place.
A national formulation workshop was held for key staff from the National Office and the Cibitoke and Gitega programmes, facilitated by the PSA focal point (HGFD) and the regional programme development advisor (focal point for Burundi).	August	Improve programme quality	A total of 20 staff members acquired the knowledge needed to better meet the donor's requirements. In addition, the connect SOS application documents (Concept Note, Results Framework and Financial Plan) for the two locations of Cibitoke and Gitega were revised, incorporating the required changes, before being submitted to the donor.
A national capacity-building workshop for national and local emergency management teams was held with the facilitation of two global and regional emergency response programme advisors.	November	Improve programme quality	8 senior staff from the National Office and 16 members of local emergency management teams have acquired knowledge on the preparation and implementation of basic humanitarian actions as well as on the SOS companion for the protection of children in humanitarian action and are able to pass on the knowledge acquired to their colleagues.
Mid-term assessment of the Children 4 Change programme	July	Improve programme quality	The final assessment report has been made available to stakeholders and a plan for implementing the recommendations has been drawn up.

Experience-sharing visit between MAs Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Ethiopia and Somaliland	September	Improve programme quality	14 colleagues have improved their practical skills in using data and IT systems to produce evidence and write evidence-based reports.
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