GOAL's Irish Aid Programme Fund

Final Evaluation

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Acknowledgements

List of Abbreviations

ARC-D	Analysis of the Resilience of Communities to Disasters
CaLP	Cash Learning Partnership
CLA	Community Led Action
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Criteria
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HQ	Headquarters
IAPF	IrishAid Programme Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organisation
MEAL	Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning
NIPP	Nutrition Impact and Positive Practice
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PCAD	Programme Context Analysis and Design
RF	Results Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TOC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations

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Executive Summary

GOAL received framework funding from IrishAid under the Programme Fund (IAPF) from 2017 to 2021. With IAPF funding, GOAL aims "**to work with the most vulnerable communities to ensure sustainable early response in crisis, and lasting solutions to poverty and vulnerability**."

The IAPF program aims to achieve six goals: (1) people survive crises; (2) people have resilient health, (3) people have food and nutrition security, (4) people have sustainable livelihoods, and (5) strengthening public commitment and leadership to a fairer and more sustainable world, and (6) strengthening GOAL's own organisational capacity. It operates in 10 countries – Ethiopia, Uganda, Sudan, South Sudan, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Niger, Iraq and Haiti – all of which can be considered fragile. In terms of approach, GOAL focuses on four primary methodologies: (1) facilitating social and behaviour change, (2) increasing resilience, (3) influencing systems and (4) fostering inclusion.

This evaluation was commissioned to assess GOAL's performance and delivery of the IAPF according to selected OECD DAC evaluation criteria. It will help GOAL to document lessons learned and best practices generated through the programme and inform the design of a new programme. The overall objectives of the evaluation are to articulate and tests GOAL's Theory of Change and associated assumptions, and to assess relevance, coherence, effectiveness and sustainability. It examines three specific questions: the degree to which the programme is responding to the needs of participants, evidence that results are being achieved and the extent to which GOAL is building the capacity of partners.

The evaluators undertook a desk review, a quantitative survey of GOAL staff (comprising 70 respondents) and qualitative data collection with HQ and field staff, as well as partners and programme participants.

OECD-DAC Criteria

Relevance: GOAL's IAPF programme is highly relevant. It is strongly aligned, not only to IrishAid priorities but also to SDGs more broadly. There is alignment with national and local government priorities; this alignment is well recognised by field staff. GOAL is perceived as providing services to areas that are hard to reach and thus underserved by the international community. The organisation has responded well, not only to COVID-19, but also to conflict and disasters. Disaster preparedness, climate adaptation and measures to address economic volatility can be better incorporated into existing programming and risk mitigation systems. GOAL and beneficiary communities could also benefit from a clearer articulation of the organisation's approach to individual-level vulnerability.

Coherence: GOAL's IAPF programme is coherent with the organisation's TOC, as well as with portfolio and organisational goals. GOAL has effectively used IAPF funding to pilot new approaches and attract other funding from larger donors; IAPF can therefore be seen as a facilitator of change. Although there is strong coherence at a structural level, there are possibilities to support greater coherence at a more granular level - in particular, to support simpler and more robust programme design. Opportunities also exist to strengthen resilience and social change approaches, and to foster inclusion.

Effectiveness: Communities and partners have both expressed a perception that GOAL is achieving strong results at the field level; they also indicate that change is seen as being sustainable in the long term. Goals 1 and 2 (responding to crises and achieving resilient health) are well established. Goals 3 and 4 have made progress during the IAPF project period and can continue to be strengthened. GOAL has strong

accountability systems that could be integrated into programme design to a greater degree. Similarly, innovations are currently in the process of being embedded into the organisation. GOAL could improve integration between sectors and approaches to optimise potential impact[1].

Sustainability: GOAL's approach to sustainability is rooted in its focus on resilience: sustainability is achieved by working with actors identified through a context analysis (PCAD or ARC-D). The organisation's approach to government actors is well developed, and it has strong relationships with civil society. GOAL is starting to work with private sector actors; this engagement should form a point of focus in future project periods. GOAL could also consider building partnerships with international NGOs and UN agencies to complement its systems approach and mitigate risks associated with operating in fragile contexts.

Core Evaluation Questions

To what extent is the programme responding to the needs of participants in the evolving context? GOAL is meeting key community needs at the short-term level, and communities are seeing long-term change due to GOAL's interventions. Although community needs are met, there is less clarity on the degree to which GOAL meets the needs of the most vulnerable within communities. This lack of clarity exists at both staff and beneficiary levels, partially due to the fact that GOAL currently does not have a clear organisational approach to individual level vulnerability. At a community level, GOAL has a clear organisational ethos – the organisation selects strongly underserved communities as targets. At an individual level, however, GOAL could benefit from defining its specific organisational targets; such a definition would also help ensure inclusion of groups currently perceived by GOAL staff as not being fully served (notably child-headed households, the elderly, refugees and IDPs).

Is there evidence that anticipated results are being achieved at the current stage of the programme? GOAL is perceived as effective by community and partner stakeholders, as well as by field level and management level staff. It is delivering both output and outcome level results, according to indicator tracking systems and staff. Currently, for each goal or result area, at least 80% of indicators are on track; this is the case despite COVID-19. In cases where results are not being achieved, the primary causes are contextual or environmental. GOAL appears to be progressing most strongly in Goal 2; Goal 4 may require the greatest degree of organisational investment.

	Perception of Achievement		
	Communities	**Partners**	**Staff**
Goal 1	Beneficiaries identified GOAL's COVID response as a strong success.	Both international NGO partners and government partners had strong positive impressions of GOAL's capacity to respond to short term shocks	90% of staff members agree or strongly agree that GOAL's intervention helps people survive crises. 41% of staff members strongly agree with the statement.
Goal 2	GOAL's capacity to provide support for drugs, awareness raising and health infrastructure is strongly valued.	GOAL's engagement with Ministry of Health actors is strongly valued, particularly by authorities. GOAL is seen as a collaborative partner.	91% of staff members agree or strongly agree that GOAL's intervention helps achieve resilient health. 50% of staff members strongly agree.

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[1] Where program integration is defined as "the intentional combining of sectoral interventions to improve humanitarian outcomes", as per a definition used by the Global Nutrition Cluster

Goal 3	Beneficiaries positively mentioned GOAL's support with vegetable gardening and nutrition circles.	Community nutrition programmes and integrated programmes are seen as successful. Long-term engagement with communities is seen as a success.	80% of staff members agree or strongly agree that GOAL's intervention helps achieve food and nutrition security. 39% of staff members strongly agree.
Goal 4	Beneficiary FGDs were not held in communities with strong livelihoods programming.	GOAL's engagement with private sector and market systems is in its infancy - but is positively perceived by private sector actors as well as government actors.	79% of staff members agree or strongly agree that GOAL's intervention helps achieve sustainable livelihoods. 23% of staff members strongly agree with the statement.

To what extent is the organisation building institutional capacity of local partners? GOAL's approach to capacity building with governments is context sensitive and involves extensive engagement with local government actors, often at the district level. The process of engagement is appreciated by government actors, particularly in underserved and fragile contexts, where authorities are often overlooked by humanitarian actors. GOAL's approach to civil society is also comprehensive. The CSOs with whom GOAL is currently cooperating are satisfied with the cooperation. They also indicated that they perceive themselves to be engaged actively in the systems approach: they work with GOAL to approach government actors and advocate. In contexts of continual fragility, however, there are sustainability risks associated with capacity building of government actors; these risks affect not only GOAL but all NGOs. Given that field staff perceive a critical link between the systems approach and government actors, GOAL could consider methods of diversifying its partnerships to minimise risks. Such diversification could include partnership with international agencies working on national level government capacity building, and stronger engagement with the private sector.

Best Practices

Over the course of the IAPF program, several aspects of GOAL's engagement with local communities generated long-term impact, and provided examples of best practice. These best practices build a solid foundation for future programming.

- **COVID-19 Response**. GOAL's COVID-19 response was timely, efficient and cost-effective. At an organisational level, GOAL put in place a three phase response plan; IAPF was central to achieving the first phase of response. Community based programming that had been effective during the Ebola response was adapted to COVID-19 and rolled out at a wider geographic scale. IAPF funding was used to complement funds from other donors and assure minimum health and protection standards for communities (i.e. PPE).

- **Integration of the Systems Approach**. GOAL's systems approach has a strong level of organisational uptake. The approach was developed and strengthened during the previous IAPF project. In this evaluation, staff throughout the organisation showed a clear and consistent understanding of the approach. Staff and partners provided concrete examples of how the systems approach was used in their countries, and the ways in which the approach provided impact.

- **Social and Behavioural Change programming**. GOAL has invested in social and behavioural change programming, as an approach, over the course of this IAPF grant. Specifically, GOAL has developed

approaches that are methodologically robust and leave room for adaptation to the local context. Two of these approaches are strongly recognised across the organisation as best practice – notably NIPP And CLA. Not only staff, but also program participants, discussed the benefits provided by these approaches. Other similar program modalities (Community Conversations, School Health Clubs) have been developed and are in the process of being strengthened.

- **Working with Local Partners.** GOAL has developed tailored approaches to working with government actors and civil society. For government actors, GOAL aligns its programming with national and local government priorities, and tailors training and engagement to the capacity and resources of government actors. For civil society, GOAL has long-standing partnerships, and integrates civil society into the systems approach through, for example, joint advocacy to local government.

- **Accountability to Affected Populations**. GOAL's accountability system has gained credibility, not only among country and field staff, but also among beneficiaries. Beneficiaries interviewed for this evaluation indicated that they were aware of the feedback system and had received responses from GOAL when they engaged with the system. Such a strong level of uptake is due to several factors, including high levels of organisational investment and contextualisation of feedback approaches to local contexts and community priorities.

Recommendations

Programmatic recommendations are made on the basis of an analysis of challenges faced and lessons learned in current IAPF programming, and aim to support GOAL in optimising impact in the future.

Articulate an organisational approach to individual level vulnerability. A clear approach to individual level vulnerability will complement GOAL's strong and well-recognised approach to community vulnerability. It will support, not only staff, but also programme participants, to better understand GOAL's approach to targeting marginalised groups. It will also support prioritisation in situations with multiple types of conflicting need.

Review options to further integrate risk associated with climate adaptation and economic variables int mitigation systems. GOAL has developed risk management mechanisms to respond to both conflict and disaster. Additional focus is required to mainstream climate adaptation into GOAL's programming. It is also critical to develop risk mitigation measures to manage economic variables, including inflation and currency fluctuations. Both climate and economic risks can be integrated into GOAL's existing risk management system.

Engage in discussions with IrishAid to mitigate the tension between adaptive management and the Results Framework. GOAL currently has a strong results-based management system in place; this makes it possible to pilot more innovative adaptive management systems. Such systems could involve fewer output level indicators, greater focus on cross-country analysis of goals and cross cutting issues, and simplification of the processes by which targets change in the event of a shock, or as a result of programmatic learning and development.

Continue to strengthen social and behaviour change approaches across outcome areas. The NIPP program is generally considered a best practice by staff, participants and partners; it is also coherent across a variety of different contexts. GOAL has developed a variety of similar processes based, adaptable approaches, such as Community Conversations, Care Groups, and School Health Clubs. Strengthening these modalities is likely to support GOAL in achieving outcome level results and impact.

Strengthen measures to include specific marginalised groups. GOAL has made significant strides in developing and implementing three program approaches – the systems approach, social and behavioural change and resilience. GOAL's approach to inclusion is less concrete, although GESI is built into the PCAD process as Component 4. The needs of some specific groups – child-headed households, the elderly, refugees and IDPs – could be more explicitly taken into account.

Further integrate data and analysis from accountability into programme design and implementation. GOAL's accountability measures are well accepted by staff and participants, and have been strengthened over the course of the IAPF funding period. Efforts have been made to integrate recommendations and data from the accountability system in program design. These measures are well accepted by staff and participants. While data is being used in program design and implementation, GOAL should look to improve upon this more systematically, particularly in programme design. Doing so will support greater participation and quality programming.

Consider more systematic integration of programs between outcome areas. Integration of activities between outcome areas could support more sustainable community level results and could improve overall outcome levels. GOAL could develop, at an HQ level, frameworks for integration between the different outcome areas; such integration can encompass (1) how different sectors interact and complement each other when implemented in the same geographic location at the same time, and (2) how different programming modalities can be implemented sequentially to support improved impact. At country level, management teams can support regular exercises to ensure that different teams are aware of each other's activities.

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1. Context

In recent years, humanitarian need has increased dramatically, from 129 million people in 2017 to over 235 million people across 34 countries in 2020 (OCHA Global Needs Overview 2017; OCHA Global Needs Overview 2020). Today, some of the most severe needs are in health and nutrition, with 5 million children facing the threat of cholera and acute watery diarrhoea and food security. Simultaneously, over 77 million people face acute hunger, due in part to very low earning potential and livelihood opportunities (OCHA Global Needs Overview, 2020).

Need is driven by a variety of intertwined factors. COVID-19 caused significant disruption over two years, not only due to the negative health effects of the virus, but also the associated economic and social disruption. Conflict has a direct impact on humanitarian need, not only through destruction of productive resources, but also through displacement of households and disruption of livelihoods. The number of severe and frequent weather events is steadily increasing, causing issues for small scale agriculture and food production. As disease, conflict and disaster have taken their toll, certain groups, such as women, children and those with disabilities have been particularly vulnerable.

At an underlying level, need is driven, not only by recurrent shocks, but also by weak systems. Particularly in fragile states, duty bearers - that is, government actors - have limited financial, technical and human resources to provide high quality services. Civil society may not be able to substitute for government, and private sector actors may experience barriers to growth.

In this context, GOAL aims to support resilient well-being for poor and vulnerable people. GOAL is an international NGO based in Ireland whose mission is to work with the most vulnerable communities to help them respond to and recover from humanitarian crises, and to assist them build transcendent solutions to mitigate poverty and vulnerability. Between 2017 and 2021, GOAL received financing from Irish Aid, intended to realise the Irish Government's Framework for Action.

GOAL commissioned this evaluation to assess the performance and delivery of the IAPF funded programme, using the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness and sustainability. The evaluation aims to document best practices and lessons learned, support learning between programmes and improve future programme design.

2. Programme Background

The IAPF funding envelope was established to support the Government of Ireland to achieve its Framework for Action, which is a management instrument held by the Department of Foreign Affairs that underpins policy and programme decisions. The Framework outlines the Government of Ireland's goals, outcomes and results areas, thus laying a foundation for measuring performance and demonstrating accountability. At an overall level, the Framework for Action outlines three goals: (1) reduced hunger, stronger resilience; (2) sustainable development, inclusive growth, and (3) better governance, human rights and accountability.

GOAL received funding from IAPF from 2017 until 2021. GOAL's funding from IrishAid is intended to achieve its organisational objective, "**to work with the most vulnerable communities to ensure sustainable early response in crisis, and lasting solutions to poverty and vulnerability**." It does this through six programmatic goals, four of which address people in vulnerable communities, one of which

addresses the public in Ireland and one of which reflects internal capacity. The goals are as follows: (1) people survive crises; (2) people have resilient health, (3) people have food and nutrition security, (4) people have sustainable livelihoods, and (5) strengthening public commitment and leadership to a fairer and more sustainable world, and (6) strengthening GOAL's own organisational capacity. GOAL's geographic focus is on fragile contexts; IAPF funds 10 countries – Ethiopia, Uganda, Sudan, South Sudan, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Niger, Iraq and Haiti – all of which score over 80 on the Fragile States Index (the least fragile state, in contrast, has a score of 16)[2]. In terms of approach, GOAL focuses on four primary methodologies: (1) facilitating social and behaviour change, (2) increasing resilience, (3) influencing systems and (4) fostering inclusion.

GOAL has a far-reaching relationship with IrishAid. This is demonstrated both by the willingness of both parties to collaborate on new programming modalities - ranging from public engagement initiatives to Resilience Hub programming - and by the regular and positive discussion that takes place between IrishAid and GOAL in case of shocks such as COVID-19. The relationship has also been openly acknowledged in annual reports. The 2017 - 2021 Irish Aid programme was unique for both GOAL and IrishAid in several key respects:

Non-continuous programme. IrishAid provided funding to GOAL from 2017 to 2021, but it has done so through three contracts. The relationship between IrishAid and GOAL was formalised in annual contracts in 2017 and 2018. In 2019, a longer contract, lasting three years, was signed between the two agencies.

Blended programme approach. IrishAid's traditional funding modalities involve a divide between emergency/crisis response programming and longer-term development programming. These are generally addressed through two separate funding streams. The GOAL-IAPF funding relationship, however, encompassed response and rehabilitation and resilience programming. The design and implementation of the blended programme approach was a pilot for both IrishAid and GOAL, and was evaluated through a separate process. The findings of the blended programming evaluation have been integrated into this report.

COVID-19. Shortly after the three-year funding agreement between GOAL and IrishAid was signed, the COVID-19 pandemic began to have consequences. Delays, changes, and alterations to the results framework were necessitated by the pandemic.

3. Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

This evaluation was commissioned by GOAL to take place at the end of the 2019 - 2021 contract between GOAL and IrishAid. It was undertaken by Meraki Labs, a consulting company based in Canada, from August to December 2021.

The **purpose** of this evaluation is to assess GOAL's performance and delivery of the IAPF according to selected OECD DAC evaluation criteria. The evaluation will help GOAL to document lessons learned and best practices generated through this programme and inform the design of a new programme. Evaluation **objectives** are:

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[2] Rankings per country are as follows: Ethiopia: 99, Uganda: 92.2, Sudan:105, South Sudan: 109, Malawi: 83, Zimbabwe: 99, Sierra Leone: 83, Niger: 96, Iraq: 96, Haiti: 97

- To articulate and test the IAPF's Theory of Change (ToC) and associated assumptions;
- To assess relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability against the OECD DAC evaluation criteria.

Core evaluation questions, in line with the OECD DAC criteria, are as follows:

- To what extent is the programme responding to the needs of participants/beneficiaries in the evolving context? (addressed in section 4.2)
- Is there evidence that anticipated results are being achieved at the current stage of the programme? (addressed in section 6.1)
- To what extent is the organisation building institutional capacity of local partners? (addressed in section 7.2)

The evaluation methodology aimed to collect data from a variety of sources to permit triangulation. It consisted of three portions. A desk review was conducted encompassing both internal and external documents. Quantitative data was collected from GOAL staff; an online survey was administered to country and field level staff. 70 responses were received and basic cross-tabulation was conducted. Extensive qualitative data, consisting of 38 key informant interviews, 10 focus group discussions and four staff workshops, was collected. The evaluation methodology is fully described in Annex 2, and an evaluation matrix and the data collection tools are provided in Annex 3 and Annex 4.

4. Relevance

Relevance is defined as "the extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change." This section of the evaluation considers the programme's alignment to international, regional and national priorities; examines the degree to which the programme is built around participant needs, and considers the programme's possibility to evolution and adaptation.

The evaluation finds that the **GOAL's IAPF programme is highly relevant**. It is strongly aligned, not only to IrishAid priorities but also to SDGs more broadly and national and local government priorities. It provides services to communities that are hard to reach and thus underserved by the international community, and it has responded well, not only to COVID-19, but also to conflict and disasters. GOAL's COVID-19 response constitutes an organisational and sectoral best practice. Disaster preparedness, climate adaptation and measures to adjust to economic volatility can be better incorporated into programming. GOAL and beneficiary communities could also benefit from a clearer articulation of the organisation's approach to vulnerability.

4.1 Alignment to International and National Priorities
Alignment to the SDGs and IrishAid's priorities is clearly outlined in the IAPF Results Framework. GOAL has four community focused goals. The second, third and fourth goals are all mapped against relevant SDGs; not only are the SDGs identified, but the specific indicators to which the goal contributes are defined. Similarly, the IAPF programme contributes to the IrishAid Framework for Action, and the Results Framework identifies the goals and outcomes with which the programme aligns.

There is a strong recognition among GOAL staff that the IAPF programme corresponds to international priorities. 91% of staff surveyed for this evaluation agree or strongly agree that the IAPF programme meets IrishAid goals and 87% agree or strongly agree that the IAPF contributes to fulfillment of SDGs.

> "There's a strong fit generally speaking ... to IAPF programming. Global frameworks (SDGs, global strategies) … are being taken into account."

> - *HQ Level Key Informant*

The humanitarian-oriented Agenda for Humanity could be more fully reflected in the Results Framework. The first programme goal, people survive crises, is aligned to Core Responsibility 4 of the Agenda for Humanity (Working Differently to End Need). Several other Core Responsibilities may be relevant to GOAL, notably Core Responsibility 3 (Leave No One Behind) and 5 (Invest in Humanity).

At the programme design level, GOAL supports alignment with national and local government priorities. 80% of GOAL staff who responded to the survey agreed that IAPF is aligned with local government needs; this rose to 90% among field level respondents. 24% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement that IAPF is strongly aligned with local government needs. Interestingly, there is a discrepancy between HQ actors and field actors regarding alignment with national level priorities. While approximately 90% of field respondents to the survey believed[3] that the IAPF funding corresponded strongly with national priorities, but only 76% of HQ staff believed that IAPF funding corresponded strongly with national priorities. A discussion between field and HQ staff regarding the nature of national and local government priorities may be appropriate to address this discrepancy.

4.2 Response to Participant Needs

Beneficiary FGDs indicate that **GOAL is meeting key community needs at the short-term level, and that communities are seeing long-term change** due to GOAL programming. FGDs were conducted in South Sudan and Sierra Leone; in each country, when participants were asked about critical community needs, they specifically mentioned the topics GOAL is focusing on in its programming.

> "R5: The biggest challenges in this community has been [health].

> R2: GOAL [has] … improved on our health condition and death rate has minimized in our community.

> R1: I can attest to that because, before now, a lot of women died due to lack of knowledge about safe delivery. But now … I cannot remember the last time a woman died of pregnancy related issue."

> - *Participant FGD, South Sudan*

Staff, too, believe strongly that GOAL programming is meeting the needs of local communities: 81% of respondents to the survey agreed that IAPF meets local community needs, and 46% strongly agreed.

GOAL has a strong ethos, shared between staff across countries, about community-level vulnerability. GOAL staff, across field, country and HQ levels, indicated that as an organisation, GOAL seeks to reach hard-to-access areas; specifically areas in which other NGOs have limited, if any, presence. At a systemic

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[3] 'believed' indicates that a respondent selected 'agree' or 'strongly agree' in the survey

level, GOAL selects strongly underserved communities. GOAL staff have a clear focus on hard to reach and systematically underserved communities; the organisation aims to reach those who have not had access to services or resources.

GOAL does not, however, have a clear organisational approach to individual-level vulnerability. While community needs are met, there is less clarity on the degree to which GOAL meets the needs of the most vulnerable within communities. This lack of clarity exists at both staff and beneficiary levels. Staff at country and HQ level were asked in KIIs who they consider the most vulnerable to be. Approximately 25 different groups were named and there was little cohesion between answers.

Lack of clarity about GOAL's approach to vulnerability does not only affect GOAL staff. **Beneficiaries, too, expressed confusion about the ways in which GOAL meets the needs of the most vulnerable** within a community. The most vulnerable were integrated into programmes, but were not seen as target recipients of support, or as being assured of support.

> [In response to a question about whether GOAL reaches the most vulnerable]: "I can say no but to some extent one will be also right to say yes. I say no because they were not targeted directly with their programmes… But on the other hand, some of these [vulnerable groups] took part in the community groups. So by that way [they] also participated in their programmes."

> - *Participant FGD, South Sudan*

Lack of clarity about individual level vulnerability may lead to lack of appropriate service for some groups. Through the quantitative survey, staff were asked about the degree to which they felt that the IAPF programme fully accounted for the needs of particularly vulnerable groups. In general, staff indicated that GOAL fully accounts for the needs of women, girls and female headed households. However, there was an impression that **certain groups were systematically left behind** - specifically child headed households (only 54% felt that IAPF met the needs of this group), refugees (only 43% felt that IAPF met the needs of this group) and older people (54% of respondents felt that IAPF met the needs of this group).

> "Under all the different programmes - depending on the focus of the programme, households are targeted - GOAL could be more specific in defining who they target within a community for specific groups"

> - *HQ Level Key Informant*

The diversity of opinions and approaches regarding individual level vulnerability is due in large part to GOAL's emphasis on ensuring program and context specificity in the beneficiary selection process. Overarching questions of exclusion are included in context analysis tools such as PCAD. For beneficiary selection, while no standard process is outlined between countries, there is an understanding that consultations are held with community leaders and engagement takes place to form the beneficiary selection criteria. It is also clear that activities target different populations: while health is likely to target the poorest and most vulnerable, market systems development is likely to focus on critical actors in the demand and/or supply chain, and analyse their role in the system, rather than their individual level vulnerability. The need for contextualisation across geographic areas and activities leads to complexities in defining an organisational approach to vulnerability.

It may be useful for GOAL to clarify its approach to vulnerability at both the community and individual level. **GOAL's clearly articulated and understood approach to community selection is a comparative advantage for the organisation**. Interviews with partners (government, civil society and international community) indicate that GOAL is known for choosing to work in communities that are hard to reach – and that this outreach contrasts with other INGOs, who often focus on communities which are logistically easier to reach. This focus on underserved communities both complements the activities of other actors, and supports the achievement of GOAL's strategic objective of reaching the most vulnerable. It also helps to build stronger relationships with communities; in at least two FGDs conducted for this evaluation, communities expressed satisfaction with GOAL's commitment, particularly in contrast to other organisations.

Efforts on the part of GOAL to better articulate its approach to individual vulnerability may lay the foundations for similar benefits. Communities and local civil society engage intensively with GOAL; a clear statement regarding GOAL's approach to individual vulnerability may help to streamline and coordinate between these actors. Also, a more articulated approach to individual vulnerability may support more appropriate allocation of resources. It may both assist in reaching groups whose needs are not fully met now, and provide a framework for making decisions in situations where certain types of vulnerability need to be prioritised.

> "The reality is, we will always be constrained regarding the inclusion of 'all' potentially high risk demographic groups in target geographies, due to money. Thus, it's important to [target] Obviously, if we spread ourselves too thin, outcomes can not be achieved."
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> - *Country Level Key Informant*

4.3 Adapting to an Evolving Context

Over the IAPF implementation period, GOAL has managed a variety of shocks. 87% of staff surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Changes in context strongly influenced the implementation of IAPF"; 23% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. The most significant disruption noted by staff was COVID 19 (identified by 93% of respondents); a variety of other changes in context were also noted.

COVID-19 Response

COVID-19 has been a significant shock, but GOAL's response to this shock in the context of the IAPF programme can be considered a best practice. GOAL re-directed funding from the IAPF programme to the COVID-19 response, and built on existing best practices and community response approaches to both improve health outcomes and support community level resilience to COVID. GOAL's successful COVID-19 response was enabled by two factors: the first was the 'blended' funding model, and the second consisted of GOAL's existing expertise in community approaches and action.

Blended Approach. The blended approach refers to the structure of the 2017-2021 IAPF funding; this funding modality was not tied to either humanitarian or development modalities, but instead supported both medium to long-term development objectives and short-term shock response. This approach supported effective COVID-19 response in two ways. First, IrishAid as a donor proactively engaged with GOAL to support a revision of the Results Framework. Second, IAPF funding supported mainstreaming of COVID response. Some donors could not fully adapt to COVID due to procurement protocols - for example,

it was not possible to purchase PPE under OFDA funding due to procurement restrictions. IAPF acted as co-funding for these projects, allowing the purchase of PPE and the appropriate integration of COVID response protocols across GOAL country structures.

> "The COVID shock was a major shock … We put in place a 3 phase response plan and scenario planning. We were able to start Phase 1 very quickly… IrishAid were very strategic in many ways in supporting that adaptation. The fact that we had a blended programme allowed us to adapt."

> - *HQ Level Key Informant*

Community Engagement. Due in part to its strategic approach, which places emphasis on behaviour change, GOAL developed several innovative approaches to community engagement. Specifically, the community-led action (CLA) approach was developed in the context of Ebola; this approach was successful and represented best practice in that crisis. It was adapted to the COVID response, and rolled out, not only in countries where the Ebola crisis had taken place, but also across other GOAL countries. CLA was broadly considered to be an appropriate and effective response, particularly at changing behaviour regarding handwashing and hygiene.

> "Community led action developed for Ebola was redesigned for COVID_19. As such, a small injection of cash ended up having a bigger impact."

> - *HQ Level Key Informant*

Other Shocks and GOAL's Response
Although COVID represented the most significant shock during the project period, other shocks took place as well. Major shocks affecting IAPF countries, according to the staff survey, are: (1) outbreak of conflict (identified by 67% of respondents), (2) climate events (drought, flooding, etc, identified by 59% of respondents) and (3) economic challenges (e.g., macroeconomic shocks, inflation, etc, identified by 57% of respondents). GOAL has varying levels of capacity to deal with these shocks; the organisation is prepared for conflict shocks, but is less structurally prepared to manage economic volatility.

Outbreak of Conflict. GOAL's ability to manage conflict is strong. The PCAD and ARC-D tools have supported a more nuanced understanding of country level stakeholders; as these tools roll out and gain traction within the organisation, GOAL is likely to have improved capacity to mitigate conflict. The blended approach provided GOAL with the flexibility to respond quickly to outbreak of conflict. During data collection for this evaluation, political instability took place in one target country; while there is always uncertainty in this context, GOAL had strong systems and risk mitigation plans in place.

Climate Events. GOAL's capacity to manage climate risks is strong in terms of response, but the organisation could benefit from an increased focus on preparedness. Several climate events (shocks and hazards) occurred in IAPF countries during implementation: these included an earthquake in Haiti and flooding in Zimbabwe and South Sudan. Response to climate shocks took place reasonably smoothly, facilitated by the blended funding approach. Climate shock response was also supported by the systems approach; GOAL had strong links to relevant stakeholders due to this approach. KIIs indicate that GOAL's strength in adapting and responding to emergencies such as those caused by climate events is recognised, not only by GOAL staff, but also by partners (government authorities and other NGOs).

"The IAPF programmes was oriented towards the improvement of resilience in the area, when the earthquake happened GOAL levered all the links and systems that were put in place to strengthen the coordination and the response

- *Quantitative Survey Respondent*

Although GOAL has a strong basis for response to climate shocks, it could improve in terms of preparedness and adaptation. Some IAPF countries have integrated preparedness and adaptation measures – for examples, GOAL Malawi supports natural resource management committees, and GOAL Haiti strengthens governance for the management of mangroves – but other countries have not included climate as explicitly. At the HQ level, there is a recognition that climate adaptation is not fully integrated into programming; at the field level, in countries without ongoing preparedness and/or adaptation activities, little mention is made of preparedness. Preparedness and adaptation require different approaches and as such, GOAL will need to think about how it invests in climate programming – that is, if it focuses on preparedness or adaptation, and how it builds an approach. GOAL has started to integrate climate into risk analysis; this will support further strategic decisions.

"Weak integration of disaster risk response and climate adaptation measures. We are working on improving that – this is the first time that we've incorporated risk analysis in the country level context analysis [but more can be done]."

- *HQ Level Key Informant*

The COVID-19 Response

GOAL's COVID-19 response demonstrated several best practice elements.

- **Speedy response and engagement with affected communities.** GOAL developed a three phase approach for responding to COVID at an HQ level; IrishAid simultaneously supported the revision of the Results Framework to respond to COVID-19 concerns. GOAL's quick response was visible to community members; in FGDs conducted with communities, GOAL's proactive response to COVID-19 was recognised and appreciated.
- **Building on past programming, and replicating results in different contexts**. GOAL developed community-based approaches that were appropriate to pandemics in the context of the Ebola outbreak. Best practices from the Ebola response were adapted to COVID-19 and rolled out across different GOAL country contexts. Specific programs that were adapted included Infection Control and Prevention Mentoring and the Community Led Action approach. The adaptation of best practices from the Ebola response allowed an effective response that was also cost-efficient.
- **Leveraging strong community relationships.** GOAL's programming has focused, over years, on building strong relationships with communities in hard to reach and underserved areas. During the COVID-19 response, GOAL leveraged these relationships to overcome mistrust in the health system on the part of community members. In key informant interviews, staff outlined community concerns about accessing health during the pandemic, and explained how these issues were addressed by field staff.

Economic Challenges. The staff survey indicated that economic shocks - inflation, deflation, rapid changes in market conditions - is a significant risk. Although this concern was noted strongly in the staff survey, it was not mentioned by HQ staff members, and by only few country staff members in key informant interviews. The ways in which economic shocks affect humanitarian programming are being increasingly recognised by the humanitarian community - –organisations such as CaLP, for instance, are placing an increasing focus on the effects of inflation and exchange rates. Few best practices exist within the humanitarian community, however, to manage these risks. The evaluators cannot find evidence that GOAL has a system to implement risk mitigation measures that address economic challenges - but this is likely due to the fact that there is limited consensus on best practices for managing economic shocks. It may however be appropriate to start considering mitigation measures in the upcoming grant period.

5. Coherence

Coherence is defined as "the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution." This section of the evaluation outlines the coherence of IAPF funded activities, looking at: (1) coherence between IAPF activities and other activities within an individual country programme, (2) coherence between activities implemented in different countries with IAPF funding by GOAL and, (3) coherence with GOAL's ways of working as an organisation.

This evaluation finds that **GOAL's IAPF programme is coherent with the organisation's TOC, as well as with portfolio and organisational goals**. Although there is strong coherence at a structural level, there are possibilities to support greater coherence at a more granular level - in particular, to support more consistent and coherent programme design. In addition, while GOAL has mainstreamed the systems approach through its programmes, opportunities exist to strengthen resilience and social change approaches.

5.1 Coherence Within Countries

Coherence within individual IAPF countries can be considered in two ways: (1) the degree to which the GOAL programme corresponds with interventions conducted by other institutions, and (2) the degree to which the GOAL programme is internally coherent. The IAPF countries are strongly coherent with other institutions, but internal coherence is sometimes challenging, particularly across sectors.

IAPF is broadly seen to support, not only programmatic goals, but also portfolio and organisational goals. The IAPF programme is strongly coherent with the rest of GOAL's portfolio within individual countries. 80% of respondents to the staff survey agreed or strongly agreed that IAPF funding allows GOAL to pilot innovative approaches which can subsequently be replicated within a country and across different GOAL country programmes, with IA and other donor funding. . 73% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that IAPF funding helped to manage the portfolio - that is, bridge gaps between projects, manage phase-out of projects, and assure consistency between projects within the portfolio. 71% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that IAPF funding supported GOAL in accessing new donors. IAPF funding can therefore be broadly seen as a foundation upon which country level programming is built, and thus as very coherent with country level programme strategy.

> "The IrishAid programme has been a very good platform whereby we initiate some new strategies and interventions, which we then duplicate and roll out countrywide. It is a platform where we can test our strategies, once we see they work, we can take them up to a higher level."

Coherence with external parties is strong, but internal coherence, at a country level, could be improved. Internal coherence is hampered by several factors, notably:

- **Non-continuous grant modality**. IAPF funding was provided to GOAL from 2017 to 2021, but it was done through three grants - one three-year grant and two annual grants. The changes in modalities, indicators and activities between projects caused challenges for country-level coordination.

- **Challenges in accounting for co-funding**. The IrishAid programme supports engagement with other donors not only by providing a forum for piloting ideas and approaches, but also by providing co-funding. Adapting the IrishAid results framework to co-funding requirements can be challenging.

- **Complexity in logical framework and results framework**. Coherence across time, projects and geographic areas can be difficult to achieve given the complexity of the IAPF results framework. The results framework is detailed and specific, and it can be challenging to maintain an updated framework that is also appropriate to the changes in context. Some respondents also pointed out that there is a tension between the level of granularity in the framework and the principle of adaptive management.

  "there were variations across project documents that meant there was little synergy … [improvement in internal monitoring] would allow for improved adaptive management decision making. We use IAPF to fund multiple projects - and this adds a layer of complexity."

  -    *Country Level Key Informant*

5.2 Coherence Between Countries

Maintaining and monitoring coherence between ten different country programmes and four goals is a major challenge for GOAL in the context of the IAPF programme. The GOAL Theory of Change acts as the underlying foundation for the programme, assuring a minimum level of coherence in terms of sectors and approaches. There are, however, opportunities to improve coherence between countries in terms of programme design and monitoring.

Programme Design

The IAPF programme has been designed to encompass all of GOAL's programmatic outcome areas. **The breadth of the overall programme is reflective of country and organisational priorities.** Countries may choose to include some or all of GOAL's focus areas in their IAPF design, and within each outcome area, countries may focus on a range of different subjects. Health, for example, is interpreted by some countries as sexual and reproductive health and in other countries as primary health. This variation is a reflection of the varying contexts in which GOAL operates. Needs vary in beneficiary communities, and activities vary as a result; some of the reasons for this variety can be traced through PCAD and ARC-D exercises. The breadth of program activities is driven by the context, and is necessary to ensure relevance to community, local and national priorities. It also implies that coherence cannot be achieved by conducting a 'package' of activities across a range of country contexts.

Coherence is be achieved, not necessarily through replication in activities, but instead through replication in approaches. GOAL has experienced success in building programme coherence in nutrition programming. GOAL's Nutrition Impact and Positive Practice (NIPP) programme is widely used across IAPF programmes, and has been recognised as a best practice by 12 out of 70 staff survey respondents. It has

been acknowledged as a key programme building block by country management and implementation staff. One of the reasons NIPP can be used across different country contexts is that it is a community approach; it outlines, not an activity, but a process in which communities can engage to address malnutrition. GOAL has also developed or adopted other approaches that focus on process: some examples include care groups, school health clubs and community conversations. The evaluators find that GOAL's focus on developing approaches and processes that work across a range of contexts is appropriate to ensure relevance and generate impact; focus in strengthening community approaches (e.g. community conversations) could heighten effectiveness and support impact.

Some respondents to key informant interviews also recommended a narrowing of programmatic focus - IAPF programming could, in the future, address not all goals, but only one goal. **Narrowing the focus of the IAPF would offer both advantages and disadvantages**. It would improve opportunities for cross country exchange, and would support strong investment in new or innovative approaches. As such, it would be very beneficial at the programme design and innovation level. However, at a field level, health, food security, nutrition and WASH are often inter-related; narrowing the scope of programming would limit GOAL's ability to holistically address the needs of underserved communities.

Programme Monitoring

There is a strong variance in the level of activity description provided by different countries; some country activity descriptions are very specific, outlining stakeholders and precise activities, whereas others are general, and provide only a general activity area. This breadth leads to a Results Framework that, despite its strong links to the Theory of Change, is not visibly coherent at the detail level.

"Sometimes, with the Results Framework, we cannot see the wood for the trees"

- *HQ Level Key Informant*

The Results Framework supports monitoring of outputs, but may not may not be optimally designed to support monitoring of outcomes and coherence. The Results Framework document currently holds vast amounts of information: changes to activities are noted together with justifications, indicator changes are noted with strikethrough text, status against target is noted through a column and also through coloured text and assumptions are recorded. This structure is both requested by IrishAid and supports intensive and detail-oriented Results-Based Management. It has supported GOAL in broadly remaining on track with its targets and implementing a strong monitoring system. It can be difficult, however, to manipulate this information – for instance, to gain an overview of all IAPF activities, across countries, in one goal, or to gain an understanding of how gender has been integrated across country contexts. It is also challenging to fully make use of all the information in the framework.

Some changes to the Results Framework, or, alternatively, the development of a supplementary analytical tool, could support improved analysis of coherence, by both GOAL and potentially IAPF. Such potential additional pages or tools could include: (1) summaries of each goal at a full program level, and associated summaries of global approaches used; (2) summaries of key cross cutting issues (e.g. climate adaptation); (3) summaries of key beneficiary types that are of interest to GOAL. This type of analysis may help both GOAL and IAPF focus on the overall direction of the program, and ensure that discussions focus on outcomes – while simultaneously providing a framework to ensure that outputs are monitored.

"The results framework (RF) was effective to some degree … However, the RF varies significantly from one country to the next - in terms of content/ what is actually being measured, level of detail. There is also a lot of information in there that is not used and could be omitted."

- *Country Level Key Informant*

Cross Country Learning

At an HQ level, there is a recognition that cross country learning is critical. Cross country learning within GOAL takes place primarily through the HQ based technical team. Currently six technical networks are operational (Health, WASH, Food Security & Livelihoods, CVA, GESI and Nutrition). Technical teams from HQ conducted technical support visits, and support exchange between countries. Similarly, the monitoring and evaluation department sees cross country learning as part of its remit, and is taking measures to develop exchange forums.**The focus on cross country learning has led to several strong successes in terms of exchanging best practices**.

- **Adaptation of the CLA Approach from Ebola to COVID-19**. Community-led action approaches were developed in Sierra Leone in order to respond to Ebola. They were adapted to COVID-19 and disseminated, not only in Sierra Leone, but also across GOAL programmes in the IAPF programme.

- **Interface Meetings and Relationship Building Mechanisms**. The use of interface meetings between communities and health facility staff has been successfully adapted from Uganda's work on Health accountability. This approach is being increasingly adopted by many GOAL health programmes including Sierra Leone and Sudan to help build the relationship between communities and health services providers as they better understand each other's challenges and needs.

- **Market Linkage Programming**. Market linkage programming is ongoing in some GOAL countries; some countries have developed a focus on livestock. Zimbabwe's programme has developed over time and has strong recognition within the community. It was developed on the basis of best practice programming in Uganda focusing on market linkages and livestock, exchanged through the HQ technical team and the technical networks.

- **NIPP programmes**. The NIPP programmes are commonly used among several IAPF programmes, and learning and exchange is supported by the technical team in HQ. The HQ team supports technical quality, as well as transfer of best practices.

- **Community Conversations.** A Community Conversations program was piloted in 2019, and was thereafter expanded to Niger, Uganda and Iraq.

At a country level, the cross-country nature of learning is not always clear to management staff. Monitoring and evaluation staff have a strong focus on their own countries and contexts. Programme Directors also focus on their own contexts, although they also engage in working groups and initiatives to support learning. This focus on country level is likely due to two factors: (1) country staff face deadlines, constraints, staffing shortages and pressure to implement on-time and on-budget, and (2) structures to support conscious cross-country learning are relatively limited.

5.3 Coherence with GOAL Approaches

As an organisation, GOAL aims to promote four approaches: facilitating social and behavioural change, increasing resilience, influencing systems and fostering inclusion. These approaches are present in IAPF countries, but often to different degrees.

Influencing systems

GOAL's systems approach has been widely adopted, not only by HQ staff, but also at country office and field level. Understanding of the systems approach was strong among KII respondents, including those located in remote field locations. Perhaps more importantly, staff understood and supported the logic behind the systems approach. The systems approach is also a part of GOAL culture. Some of the staff interviewed in the course of this project were relatively new to GOAL; those who were new mentioned that the systems approach had formed a part of their induction and they understood that this approach was a key part of GOAL's ways of working. The uptake of the systems approach within GOAL represents a strong success.

Increasing resilience

GOAL has invested in resilience with IAPF funding during the 2017-2021 period. The most visible impact of this is the collaboration between GOAL and the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative. This collaboration resulted in the 'From Crisis to Resilience' research and webinar series. Both the research and the webinars are designed to generate systems-level change, not only within GOAL, but in the international community. At a program level, some of the most substantial changes to program quality are due in large part to the Resilience and Learning Hub and the associated development and roll out of contextual analysis tools. These tools have substantively changed programmatic approaches and promoted a transition from relief to rehabilitation in contexts including but not limited to Ethiopia and Sierra Leone.

Facilitating social and behavioural change

Where GOAL has invested in social and behavioural change approaches, its successes have been significant. Both the NIPP and the CLA approaches focus on social change, social action and behavioural change; both programmes are seen as best practices, not only by GOAL staff, but also by partners. Such approaches appear to generate community empowerment and support longer-term, more sustainable change in fragile contexts.

There are, however, two challenges associated with GOAL's social and behavioural change communication activities. In several contexts, provision of material support is seen as the primary role of NGOs; in these contexts, it can be challenging for GOAL staff to achieve buy-in to approaches which do not offer participants tangible incentives. The evaluators firmly believe that, to support sustainability, GOAL should continue to implement such programs without tangible incentives – but continued focus on best practice sharing, and support to field teams managing the requests for material support is likely to be necessary. In other contexts – specifically for the social accountability component - buy-in may take place, but it may be difficult for communities to achieve concrete change; this is particularly the case when government actors have few resources to support communities in meeting needs. If stakeholders cannot feedback to communities, then there is a risk that social change may be short-lived.

Fostering inclusion

GOAL's approach to fostering inclusion could be strengthened. The systems approach, social change and resilience were all approaches that arose organically in KIIs and staff workshops; this is likely due to a strong organisational push. Inclusion, on the other hand, is recognised as an issue - particularly in the context of displacement, with low levels of inclusion between IDPs and host communities as well as refugees and host communities. Two of the four groups identified as receiving lower levels of support

from IAPF in the quantitative survey were displacement related (refugees and IDPs). Other groups whose needs are perceived as not being fully met are child headed households and the elderly.

GOAL is making efforts to support inclusion. Inclusion is systematically included in the PCAD process as Component 4; this component supports country teams in identifying groups that are excluded and analysing ways of supporting these groups. Initiatives to support some groups, particularly women, are being undertaken – for instance, Zimbabwe applies gender action learning. More work could however be done to foster inclusion for specific groups identified as requiring additional support.

The Systems Approach in Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, GOAL's IAPF funding contributes to a comprehensive community health program. The program was designed on the basis of a PCAD exercise conducted in 2019, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health as well as community leaders. The PCAD identified two priority areas for engagement: WASH and adolescent sexual and reproductive health.

WASH: GOAL's WASH programming focuses on strengthening the system. In addition to traditional WASH activities such as borehole drilling, GOAL also addressed major system blockages, such as lack of faecal sludge management in urban areas; this investment strengthened the overall WASH system. Social and behavioural change approaches such as CLTS are also integrated into the WASH approach, and complement larger-scale investments such as faecal sludge management. GOAL is also piloting an initiative to develop the market for (low cost) sanitation products; the implementation of this integrated program has been delayed due to COVID, but the design shows promise.

Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health: GOAL has focused on community-based approaches to health, and trust-building, in Sierra Leone. When the PCAD was conducted, rising teen pregnancy was a serious issue, acknowledged by both government and community. High rates of teen pregnancy were caused in large part by lack of education and awareness; this was exacerbated by lack of trust in the health system. GOAL worked with communities to strengthen trust; this included strengthening the network of community mobilizers, and engaging with communities, including religious leaders, to support trust in the health system. The approach has generated strong results, with use of family planning among adolescents rising from 57% to 75% over the project period.

GOAL works intensively with different levels of the government in Sierra Leone; village, chiefdom, district and national levels are all included in GOAL's engagement strategy. Efforts to build the capacity of government actors are showing promise, and GOAL's relationship with government actors builds on possible synergies. GOAL supports government actors to collect data about health outcomes – and uses government data to report on IAPF indicators.

In the upcoming project period, GOAL will maintain its strong community approach, and concentrate on the sanitation marketing innovation in the upcoming implementation period.

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6. Effectiveness

Effectiveness is defined as "the extent to which the intervention is achieved, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups." This section considers the degree to which the IAPF

programme was effective. It examines effectiveness at the output and outcome level; it then considers GOAL's approach to accountability. Innovation and integrated programming are reviewed. The section concludes with a summary of the blended approach.

The evaluation finds that **GOAL's IAPF program has been very effective at the outcome and output levels, and is seen as delivering results by staff, partners and communities.** GOAL has strong accountability systems that could be integrated into programme design to a greater degree. Innovations from the Resilience and Learning Hub such as the PCAD and ARC-D analysis tools are currently in the process of being embedded into the organisation. GOAL could improve integration between sectors and approaches.

6.1 Achievement of Results

As an organisation, GOAL is achieving results at both output and outcome level. Regular quantitative monitoring takes place for output and outcome indicators. At an overall level, however, the complexity of the results framework may impede the effectiveness of shock-responsive intervention.

Outcome and Output Level Results

GOAL is perceived to be achieving outcomes and sustainable changes across all four goals by communities, partners and staff. GOAL aimed to achieve four beneficiary-oriented goals over the course of the IAPF programme, notably: (1) people survive crises, (2) people have resilient health, (3) people have food and nutrition security, and (4) people have sustainable livelihoods. This evaluation considered the achievement of outcomes in each result area from the point of view of beneficiaries, GOAL staff and partners. The table below summarises perceptions of GOAL's achievements according to each stakeholder type.

Table 1: Perceptions of Achievement

	Perception of Achievement		
	Communities	**Partners**	**Staff**
Goal 1	Beneficiaries identified GOAL's COVID response as a success. Response to other crises (floods, conflict, etc) was not mentioned.	Both international NGO partners and government partners had strong positive impressions of GOAL's capacity to respond to short term shocks including floods and outbreak of conflict.	90% of staff members agree or strongly agree that GOAL's intervention helps people survive crises. 41% of staff members strongly agree with the statement.
Goal 2	GOAL's capacity to provide support for drugs, awareness raising and health infrastructure is strongly valued. Communities continue to struggle with lack of health infrastructure (e.g. ambulance).	GOAL's engagement with Ministry of Health actors is strongly valued, particularly by government authorities. GOAL is seen as a collaborative partner. There is a strong desire for GOAL to expand geographic coverage.	91% of staff members agree or strongly agree that GOAL's intervention helps achieve resilient health. 50% of staff members strongly agree with the statement.
Goal 3	Beneficiaries positively mentioned GOAL's support with regard to vegetable gardening and nutrition circles. They mentioned lack of basic prerequisite inputs.	Community nutrition programs and programs that integrate health and nutrition are seen as successful. Long-term engagement with communities is seen as a success.	80% of staff members agree or strongly agree that GOAL's intervention helps to achieve food and nutrition security. 39% of staff members strongly agree with the statement.

Goal 4	Beneficiary FGDs were not held in communities with strong livelihoods programming.	GOAL's engagement with private sector and market systems is seen to be in its infancy - but is positively perceived by private sector actors as well as government actors.	79% of staff members agree or strongly agree that GOALs intervention helps achieve sustainable livelihoods. 23% of staff members strongly agree with the statement.

A comparison of beneficiary, staff and partner feedback gives rise to some general conclusions:

- **GOAL has achieved strong health outcomes, in large part through the systems approach**. Overall, beneficiary, partner and staff all perceived that GOAL is achieving strong results with regard to Goal 2, on resilient health. The systems approach is clearly acknowledged by government partners, and beneficiaries note, across different country contexts, positive results. Staff also see health as a clear success for GOAL.

- **Food security and nutrition programming has successes, and contextualisation may support uptake**. The NIPP programme is accepted within GOAL as best practice, and is also mentioned positively by beneficiaries and partners. Wider food security programming is slightly more challenging, however. According to beneficiary groups, some initiatives such as vegetable gardening have faced challenges due to lack of inputs (water), indicating that food security programming may need to be contextualised and tailored.

- **Livelihoods programming is achieving output level results, but work is needed to strengthen outcome level results at an organisational level**. At an output level, Goal 4 is on track, and is achieving results. In certain country contexts, strong results have been achieved with regard to sustainable livelihoods. For example, in Zimbabwe GOAL has a strong reputation with regard to its market linkages programming, including with the private sector. Interesting pilots have also been attempted, including Sierra Leone's work to support national level social security systems. Although a stronger approach to livelihoods is being developed, greater uptake is needed across the organisation. Private sector partners interviewed for this evaluation indicated that although GOAL has made progress over the last years, it could engage more systematically. Staff indicated that there are opportunities to move beyond the VSLA programming present in several countries to more impact. In some countries, staff indicated that the situation was too fragile and the context too uncertain to fully engage with livelihoods programming.

  > "The challenge is how you do it – do you give private sector free rein? Do you put in place mechanisms to see how private sector works with social development? We are trying to develop this nexus and figure out how to deal with it."

  > - Country level key informant

- **GOAL is responding to crises, but could do further work on preparedness and programmatic flexibility**. During key informant interviews, staff and partners mentioned GOAL's achievements with regard to crisis response. This encompassed both COVID-related response and response to floods, droughts and disasters. Beneficiaries however did not mention GOAL's role in crisis response; this may be due to the fact that GOAL has worked with and through governments in crises. GOAL staff indicated that speed of response could be improved, as well as preparedness with regard to specific issues (climate shocks, etc).

At an output level, GOAL's delivery under IAPF is strong despite various contextual shocks. Currently, 80% of indicators are on track; this was the case despite COVID-19. Over the course of 2021, countries have, for the most part, recovered from COVID-19 losses and issues

In cases where results are not being achieved, the primary causes are contextual or environmental. Outbreak of conflict, incidence of climatic shock or incidence of disaster has a negative consequence for delivery of activities. As discussed under the 'Relevance: Adapting to an Evolving Context' section, however, GOAL has developed several methods of managing risk and uncertainty. As such, while short-term delivery of outputs may be disrupted by shocks, long-term delivery of project results is strong.

GOAL's Public Education and Development Education programmes have also, by and large, been achieving indicators. For Public Education, two indicators are not on track: (1) the number of citizens engaged by GOAL staff in meaningful conversation and (2) the number of leaders who travel to an IrishAid funded GOAL programme on an immersion visit. Lack of achievement of both of these activities is due to COVID-19 restrictions. Similarly, for Development Education, two indicators are not on track, and both are related to COVID-19 restrictions, school closures, and lack of ability to implement over the course of the 2020-2021 school year. Given the broader and more public intention of these initiatives, it can be challenging to measure outcome and impact. A more specific framework, and a more in depth and detailed analysis, would be necessary in order to draw conclusions about outcome level results for these activities.

Output and Outcome Monitoring

GOAL's system for collecting activity level data and output level results is strong. MEAL officers are present at both the field and country level, and digital data collection is used across IAPF contexts. In the countries that participated in the in-depth data collection, digital systems were accompanied by structures and staff that supported effective utilisation of the system. At the HQ level, as well, semi-systematic mid-year and annual reviews have taken place.

> "Our monitoring is a continuous process which we have institutionalised … On the ground, we have got MEAL officers who are responsible for timely, day to day monitoring… We use Commcare for data collection; this enables us to get timely information. Then we also have weekly meetings with the MEAL officers to see where we are in terms of progress."

> - *Country Level Key Informant*

The systems that are in place at both the country and the HQ level support a culture of accountability to programmatic results. This helps to explain some of GOAL's capacity to deliver results despite adverse environments (e.g. in Sudan during and after the coup) and shocks such as COVID-19. The strength of output level monitoring and results based management indicates that there is a strong basis to assume that GOAL will continue to achieve results, even if more flexible adaptive management approaches are adopted by the organisation.

Outcome monitoring also takes place within GOAL. Country level monitoring and evaluation staff indicated that on an annual basis, outcome level indicators are measured through household surveys. Current outcome level indicators are developed in accordance with SDGs and IrishAid goals and objectives, and are monitored on a regular basis by country and HQ staff.

An ongoing discussion is taking place within GOAL regarding the most appropriate way to measure outcome indicators. The current mechanism focuses on quantitative indicators; while this provides an objective standard, it does not account for some of the subtleties, best practices and unintended consequences associated with complex systems-oriented programming. Various different options for improving outcome level monitoring were proposed.

- Develop a small number of key 'north star' outcome indicators. Close monitoring of a small number of indicators may support both coherence and improved results in key areas.

- Integrate qualitative data collection into outcome level monitoring. To capture unintended benefits and consequences (including, for instance, the effect of IAPF on co-funding), more systemic use of qualitative data was suggested. GOAL is already making greater effort to collect qualitative as well as quantitative data. It is likely that this push will continue in the future.

- Improve the participatory nature of outcome monitoring. Engage both beneficiaries and staff members to a greater degree in the process.

- Consider longer-term ex-post evaluations that support analysis regarding the overall contribution of the programme, and track changes in communities over longer periods of time. Such longer-term evaluations will support analysis of programme sustainability.

Adaptive Management and Shock Responsiveness

The IAPF programme is built on two foundations which are at least partially at odds with one another. A Results Framework governs output and outcome level monitoring; this architecture, and the indicators within it, has been negotiated in detail with IrishAid. The programme proposal also outlines the centrality of adaptive management, or the principle of changing programming on the basis of regular and systematic review. These two principles can conflict with each other, particularly in situations of shock.

The principle of adaptive management is built on the assumption that "we work in complex contexts with complex systems, so we cannot always know in advance how our programming will result in the change we are working towards." (GOAL IAPF proposal, 2019). The practice of adaptive management includes regular data review, implementation of minor course corrections, and regular questioning and revision of programme assumptions and targets.

A range of actors have produced literature regarding adaptive programming in humanitarian action, including Alnap, ODI, Mercy Corps, Intrac and Groupe URD. Some common themes arise from these studies, notably that: (1) adaptive programming stakeholders focus on outcome, rather than output, levels (URD and INTRAC, ODI, Alnap), (2) flexibility is required including developing 'light touch' systems for reducing administrative obligations (Intrac, Alnap), (3) a culture of adaptation is required; this includes organisational culture aspects as well as dynamics among project implementers (Mercy Corps, URD) and (4) a trial and scale system is necessary to support effective innovation.

GOAL and IrishAid aimed to implement adaptive management through the IAPF programme, but the extensive focus on outputs in the results framework caused challenges in delivering adaptive management. Specifically, themes (1) and (2) were difficult to achieve, in part because compliance requirements were not adjusted and adapted for the blended program modality. Under standard programming modalities, minimum due diligence and processes should be followed before a budget amendment is made, and there are limitations to the types of budget and indicator changes that can take

place. These compliance requirements – specifically around budget and indicator revisions – were in place throughout the IAPF programme, despite efforts to undertake adaptive management and use blended programme modalities. The restrictions in compliance procedures limited the capacity of countries to respond to shocks. In two of the countries which participated in data collection, country management staff indicated that, in order to respond to a shock, they first needed to fully adjust output indicators – that is, they needed to re-budget, re-plan activities and re-allocate resources. This re-planning process meant that, for a country team, requests for adjustments to respond to shocks were too heavy to permit adaptive and effective responses to shocks. The re-planning process was especially heavy given that GOAL has demonstrated a strong track record with regard to results based management and delivering on outputs. GOAL and IrishAid should consider engaging in discussions regarding simplifying the results framework and the output revision process to ensure that the results framework is more aligned with the principles of adaptive management.

GOAL has, however, been successful in achieving themes (3) and (4) of adaptive management. GOAL has developed a culture of adaptation – this includes the piloting of the RILH and the Public Engagement and Development Education outputs, as well as the development of field-level innovations ranging from PCAD to NIPP. Similarly, the effectiveness of GOAL's trial and scale system was demonstrated during the COVID-19 response, where best practices from the Ebola response were scaled up at the organisational level.

6.2 Accountability and Participation

GOAL has implemented a strong accountability and participation system across various country offices. The information generated by this system could, however, be better used by the organisation in terms of programme design.

During the IAPF project period, GOAL has invested strongly in its accountability systems. An Accountability to Affected Populations approach has been used over the project period and is regularly updated; the last update was in 2021. A field guide outlining processes and procedures for setting up a CFM system is in place, as is a statement on the principles guiding community feedback. Guidance and a training model on Stakeholder Information Sharing were also developed and disseminated in 2021.

Country staff are aware of CFM procedures, and are actively involved in implementation of these procedures. 90% of staff who responded to the survey agreed or strongly agreed that the CFM mechanism for IAPF was effective and appropriate; 37% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. **Not only did staff see the CFM mechanism as appropriate, but they had understood and internalised the reasons why CFM is important**.

> "Because the CFM give opportunity for beneficiaries to have voice and to actively take part in implementation. It gives them the independent opportunity to communicate freely with [us]."
>
> - *Country Level Key Informant*

Not only staff, but also beneficiaries indicated that feedback mechanisms are operational. In the majority of focus group discussions, beneficiaries indicated that they were aware of feedback mechanisms and had participated in these mechanisms. Some beneficiaries could specifically name various forms of feedback mechanism that were in place in their communities (hotline, suggestion box, community surveys, etc).

"I can confirm that we have been receiving not only acknowledgement of our feedback but also response to some issues. I can remember their mobilizers came to us the other day informed us about action taken relating to one of the issues that came from our feedback to GOAL."

- *Participant FGD, Sierra Leone*

Although the accountability mechanism is strong, it also stands independently from other organisational processes and procedures. In particular, **information from the community feedback mechanism does not appear, from this evaluation, to be systematically used in programme design or quality monitoring**. Country level staff - both Country Directors and Programme Directors - indicated strong awareness of the accountability system, but also expressed awareness of the fact that information from the system is not fully used across other parts of the organisation.

"I agree that the establishment of the CFM has been very successful. Less clear is the adaptions and changes made to programmes as a result of feedback. Currently it is more a communication loop as opposed to a recommendation tracker"

- *Country Level Key Informant*

There is some disconnect between HQ and the field with regard to the degree to which information from the accountability system feeds into other activities. Key informants from the field were clear, and relatively unanimous, that accountability system information was not fully used in programme design on a regular basis. At an HQ level, however, there is a perception that accountability information is being used in operational programming.

6.3 Innovation

GOAL has made an organisational commitment to innovation, specifically through the operation of a Resilience Innovation and Learning Hub (RILH). The RILH programme had two intended audiences: it targeted both internal and external stakeholders, using different sets of activities.

Innovation and Internal Audiences.

The RILH aimed to produce and roll out tools to improve country context analysis - specifically PCAD and ARC-D. Both tools were developed with IAPF funding; PCAD was developed with previous IAPF funding, whereas ARC-D was developed in 2010. The purpose of these tools is to support a systems approach.

In countries where the context analysis tools have been fully rolled out, staff see a notable difference both in programme design and in alignment with local priorities. Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and South Sudan were identified as examples of countries in which the roll-out of PCAD and ARC-D generated strong results. Specifically, HQ staff noted that programming developed after the context analysis had been completed was more nexus oriented and worked more closely with governments. Staff in one country broadly concurred with this analysis, pointing out that the tools supported a more systematic and sustainable approach to programming. In at least three of the IAPF funded countries, significant change to more long-term and sustainable programming modalities was achieved with the support of the context analysis tools.

"This in depth analysis helped us to identify what wasn't really working – there's a disconnect between the system and the [way in which it is] used… Moving forward in terms of continuation of the programme, we as an organisation can reflect"

The PCAD and ARC-D tools were not, however, uniformly used by current GOAL staff. This may be due, in part, to staff turnover - in one IAPF country, an extensive PCAD exercise was conducted, but current management staff were not with GOAL or in the country at the time of the exercise, and so have lower levels of familiarity with the tools and their outputs. When the exercise was conducted, it generated significant programming benefits - but in order to sustain these benefits, it will be necessary to ensure that analysis is updated periodically (every few years) and that staff are aware of the analysis and how it should inform programming. In addition, short-term funding, lack of sufficient funding and under-staffing cause barriers to implementation of the tools.

> "The weakest level [of our context analysis] is the project or system context analysis. We do have some examples of good analysis that has been done – but in terms of consistency, we don't have that yet. Part of the reason is that country teams don't want to spend 50K on a piece of analysis – they want to spend money on doing things."

- *HQ Level Key Informant*

GOAL management has indicated a commitment to support the continued roll out of context analysis tools. As such, it can reasonably be expected that the PCAD and ARC-D tools will be used more systematically, and that institutionalisation will take place. As this occurs, the systems approach is likely to be strengthened, along with relationships with key actors.

Innovation and External Audiences.

Through the RILH, GOAL also worked to engage with the broader humanitarian, policy and academic community. Two academic articles were developed and published to date. One article examined the effectiveness of the ARC-D toolkit; another considered the ways in which disaster risk reduction can take place in fragile contexts. Following the publication of articles, webinars were conducted to disseminate the results to both academic and humanitarian communities. **The publication of academic articles represents a success: it builds a bridge between operational humanitarian work and systematic, academic analysis of best practices.** This type of linkage is challenging to build, and offers a significant opportunity to GOAL in terms of quality of programming and capacity to influence both policymakers and academic actors.

The RILH has also built links and partnerships with other external organisations. This included developing partnerships with academic institutions (University of Botswana, University of Pretoria), engagements with donors and specific projects (USAID Global Health Momentum project) and communities of practice (Market System Resilience). Such engagement offers a strong opportunity for development and rollout of best practice.

The RILH has shown strong success in developing relationships, as well as in promoting the systems approach within GOAL. **There could also be an opportunity to build relationships between external partners and country programmes**: to leverage relationships with academic institutions to promote learning and experience sharing at the country level. Currently, although country level management has, for the most part, information about context analysis tools, they have not indicated knowledge of some of the academic institutes or learning processes that are promoted by RILH. Supporting engagement

between country teams and external partners may help to cement external relationships and promote learning mindsets within country programmes.

6.4 Integrated Programming

GOAL's IAPF programming spans four result areas; although strong possibilities for integration between results areas exist, limited integration takes place at the field level. The evaluators define integration, in line with a proposal from the Global Nutrition Cluster (2016), as "the intentional combining of sectoral interventions to improve humanitarian outcomes." The best practice nature of integrated programming is being increasingly recognised. The risks of stand-alone programming has been analysed follows: "siloed … interventions … can lead to diminished results and inefficient use of resources." (CP Alliance, n.d.) Integrated programming, in contrast, fosters two-way transfer of knowledge, and associated improvements in planning and resource use. Integrated programming is a foundation of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, and the Integrated Rural Development Approach; both approaches build on the possible benefits of integration in terms not only of outcomes but also resources required to implement high quality programming. Integration can take place, at the field level, either concurrently (with several sectors implemented in the same location at the same time) or sequentially (with sectors implemented in the same location, but with differences in terms of time).

GOAL's Theory of Change lends itself to sequential programming; the Theory of Change moves from crisis (Goal 1) through stabilisation (Goal 2 and Goal 3) into longer-term resilience and development (Goal 4). Analysis of the intended beneficiaries and approaches also indicates that there are strong possibilities to move between different types of programming over time. Identification of circumstances where different activities could be implemented (either concurrently or sequentially), and processes that can be used to support movement from one goal to another could support the organisation in realising benefits of integration.

In 2021, GOAL's technical team explicitly explored the concept of integrated programming, and how it may be relevant to GOAL's programming. GOAL as an organisation considers integration to be programming which several outcomes are achieved within one area. GOAL considers program integration to be a part of the systems approach; systems programming involves understanding the full range of weaknesses that prevent people from accessing services, opportunities etc in a system, and addressing the range of weaknesses across different sectors. The analysis could include more substantial discussion regarding: (1) intentionally developing links between outcomes to maximise impact, and (2) approaches to implement sequential cross-sector programming. GOAL is still engaging in a process of reflection on integrated programming, and it is likely that its thinking will develop over time. GOAL's thinking process may be supported by an analysis of barriers to integration at the field level.

From the field perspective, there is little indication that systematic and intentional integrated programming is taking place. GOAL staff spoke about outcome areas as separate and distinct entities. Most partner staff indicated knowledge that GOAL engaged in more than one type of programming, but also spoke only about the outcome area in which they were involved. Since GOAL implements several outcome areas in one community, beneficiaries were aware of GOAL's activities across different outcome areas - but their comments also gave little indication of common approaches or systematic efforts to ensure that different programs complement and build on each other. During staff workshops, participants

in two countries (out of four countries in which workshops took place) noted challenges in implementing integrated programmes. Barriers to integration revolve around three major issues.

Donors and portfolio. In order to implement integrated programming, funding to conduct activities in several sectors is needed; in some country contexts, the portfolio has shrunk, and GOAL does not have enough funding to operate in all of its sectors. In other cases, the portfolio as a whole operates in several sectors, but different sectors have different beneficiaries. In this case, integration is more likely to happen if donors push actively for it - but this donor push rarely occurs.

> "If I can reflect back, everything goes back to the funding… From 2015 onward, because of funding issue, focus is only on health… In the wider community perspective, you see the importance of drilling boreholes, etc – but the activities aren't being done. Some community members are complaining that they are not seeing the integration aspect into the programme."
>
> *-   Staff Workshop*

Organisational culture and coordination. In order for integration to be effective, an organisational push for integration is needed. This involves both ensuring that senior management pushes for integrated programming, and verifying that coordination takes place. At a field level, it can be difficult for coordination to take place. Given the pressures of day-to-day implementation, it can be challenging to enforce information exchange between departments. If information exchange does not take place, however, programme integration will not be possible.

> "We talk about integration but in the practice we get lost, for example under Goal 2, we don't know what the other department is doing. We need to improve on this."
>
> *-   Staff Workshop*

Technical framework. Integration requires a technical framework - a set of potential opportunities or steps to support effective integration. At a global level, some but not all of GOAL's outcome-level strategies outline systematic linkages between different sectors. The Health strategy does not include linkages to other sectors although the sector strategy itself is built on an integrated approach to health, nutrition and WASH. The Livelihoods strategy, on the other hand, explicitly outlines linkages to several sectors including nutrition, health and WASH. The lack of systemic inclusion of cross-sectoral linkages in the global strategies indicates that GOAL could emphasise integration more strongly at a global level. **Programme integration extends beyond the four beneficiary-focused goals**. GOAL engages in Public Engagement and Development Education activities. Both activity types are strongly linked to GOAL's overall vision and principles. The Public Engagement programme planned for an immersion visit for young leaders from Ireland to GOAL's field sites; this is an example of integrated programming. This visit has not taken place due to COVID-19 - but the principle of including the visit in programme design is an example of integrated programming.

In contrast, the Development Education project design has not included activities that of integrate development education with GOAL's field activities. Such engagement could take place in a variety of ways: GOAL could arrange for counterparts from local partners in the field to virtually 'visit' Irish classrooms through the Direct Education programme; GOAL could also arrange for partner 'classes'

between Ireland and a beneficiary country. The logistical feasibility of such integration options is not clear to the evaluators - but it is also not clear whether GOAL has considered such integration options.

6.5 The Blended Approach

The IAPF programme represented an innovative programme modality on the part of both IrishAid and GOAL. The programme provided blended funding, which could be used for both humanitarian and development purposes. This funding modality was unique for IrishAid, and was the subject of additional external monitoring over the course of implementation.

A research report was commissioned on the blended approach; this report found that blended funding could "allow for significantly more adaptable forms of responding to context-specific needs. The time saving potential of unified reporting, monitoring, evaluation and learning systems was also noted as a key benefit". The research found that the blended approach is particularly well suited for fragile contexts in which long-term fragility is accompanied by recurring shocks, including displacement. The approach supports nexus programming, and as such the achievement of IrishAid goals.

Key informant interviews conducted for this evaluation re-affirmed the findings of the research. The blended funding approach was seen as key facilitator in allowing GOAL to respond to shocks. Several examples were provided of the utility of the model: in one country, blended funding allowed GOAL to diverting money from livelihoods into WASH at the start of COVID-19, to support immediate response.

Blended funding supported response to a range of country-level crises. In cases such as the earthquake in Haiti, blended funding provided capacity for immediate, crisis-oriented response at short notice. Blended funding also supported response to recurring issues such as floods in South Sudan. Annual flooding generates issues within the community (e.g. damage to health facilities) that is expected, but that cannot be fully addressed by internal actors. GOAL's capacity to provide services in these contexts builds its legitimacy with government partners, as well as other international agencies.

Although the blended funding model was, by and large, successful, **country level staff indicated that the process to access blended funding was cumbersome.** While blended funding could be deployed more quickly and effectively than funding from other mechanisms (in particular, both UN funding modalities and emergency funding from other bilateral donors), the process to access the funding was still perceived to be as challenging as a full project proposal or revision. The administrative challenges associated with accessing blended funding were discussed previously under the adaptive management section. There was also a cost associated with the use of blended modalities - notably that the money needed to be taken from another part of the country budget. Use of IAPF funding to respond to a crisis was therefore undertaken, to a degree, at the expense of innovation or investment.

Working with Partners in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, GOAL has engaged with a diversity of partners, including local civil society, government and private sector actors. The diversity of engagement, and the establishment of constructive relationships, supports the achievement of the systems approach.

Government Actors: Government actors are key players in the livestock breeding programs in Zimbabwe. All GOAL trainings and programming are facilitated jointly with the government, and where possible GOAL requests government technical experts to provide trainings to local communities. This approach helps to build relationships between government actors and underserved communities. Government actors interviewed for this evaluation say that they believe GOAL has trained them to take over the project and the approach.

Civil Society: GOAL has long-standing relationships with civil society actors in Zimbabwe; with one civil society partner, relationships have developed over at least years. The local partner has expertise in gender and inclusion, and perceives its relationship with GOAL as mutually beneficial. The civil society partner acknowledges GOAL's good relationship with local government actors, and collaborates with GOAL when advocating with the government.

Private Sector: In Zimbabwe, GOAL has made a conscious effort to build linkages with private sector partners. GOAL developed its approach on the basis of best practices already in place in Uganda; technical networks supported the exchange of information regarding working with the private sector on livestock breeding. GOAL identified companies which had already expressed interest in working with rural communities, and had developed approaches and products that were suitable to hard-to-reach environments.

7. Sustainability

Sustainability is defined as "the extent to which the net benefits of an intervention continue, or are likely to continue." This section examines sustainability, taking as a starting point GOAL's systems approach and the opportunities and challenges associated with this approach. It then considers GOAL's approach to building institutional capacity of local partners. The section concludes with an analysis of diversification and the ways in which it can contribute to sustainability.

GOAL's approach to sustainability is rooted in its focus on resilience. Sustainability is achieved, in large part, by working with actors within the system, identified through a context analysis (PCAD or ARC-D). Sustainability is achieved if and when these actors experience improved institutional capacity and engage more regularly to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable communities.

The evaluation finds that GOAL's approach to sustainability through government actors is well developed, and it has strong relationships with civil society. GOAL is starting to work with private sector actors; this engagement should form a point of focus in future project periods. GOAL could also consider building

partnerships with international NGOs and UN agencies to complement its systems approach and mitigate risks associated with fragile contexts.

7.1 Building Institutional Capacity

GOAL works with a variety of actors to build institutional capacity, and could expand its network further.

Government Actors

Government capacity building is appropriately tailored to contextual needs: the approaches used in Zimbabwe, for instance, differ from those used in South Sudan. In South Sudan, government trainings focus on basic technical training; in contrast, in Zimbabwe, GOAL facilitates coordination between different government ministries. GOAL's efforts to build capacity at the local government level have been recognised. Local government actors were interviewed in this evaluation, and expressed their satisfaction with GOAL's activities, not only with the community, but also with government actors.

> "[GOAL]are giving technical part in terms of giving training of staff. This includes refresher training. Really very good, GOAL's help is very valuable. This technical support is very important. Data management, in particular, has really improved in the facilities."
>
> - *Partner Key Informant*

GOAL places a strong focus on government actors: this can represent an advantage, but also poses risks. GOAL's approach to government actors is stronger and more coherent than other humanitarian agencies. This strength could be seen both in partner interviews and in staff interviews. Interviews with government authorities indicated that they saw GOAL as a trusted and long-standing partner, in contrast to other INGOs whose engagement was seen as short-term and sporadic. Interviews with staff indicate that many field level staff interpret the systems approach to be strongly associated with government and capacity building of duty bearers. GOAL's strength in government engagement is positive, but is also associated with some risks, notably the risk of government fragility. Working with duty bearers in fragile contexts is associated with a variety of risks, including, but not limited to: (1) change in counterparts due to changes in government, (2) lack of prerequisites among duty bearers for engaging in programming (e.g., lack of willpower, lack of literacy, complications in terms of political engagement), and (3) lack of resources (e.g., pay for government staff, lack of computers, etc). These risks are pertinent, not only to GOAL but to all agencies working with government agencies. The risks may be particularly acute for GOAL, however, given that GOAL's focus is on particularly hard to access areas, and that currently GOAL field staff place a heavy emphasis on interaction with government actors.

Local and International Civil Society

GOAL currently works with local civil society and has the potential to expand this collaboration. It could also consider developing strategic partnerships with international actors to mitigate risks associated with working in fragile contexts.

Civil society partners interviewed in this evaluation were all long-standing GOAL partners. Their partnerships extended over years, and **civil society saw themselves as complementary to the core services provided by GOAL**, and a core part of the systems approach. Civil society respondents discussed the complementarity of their skills and GOAL's activities in the region, as well as the ways in which they worked with GOAL to achieve outcome level results.

> "I was fortunate to have a relationship with GOAL since they started working [here]… we've been passionate about engaging government. In elections, there is shrinking space for civil society – but we have good relations because we have integrated government from early."

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- Partner Level Key Informant

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GOAL staff indicate that, while they have strong long-standing partners, **there is a lack of new partnerships, and a lack of focus on developing local partnerships.** One reason for this is compliance related: the process of on-granting to local partners is complex and entails significant risk. A second is culture-related: the systems approach does not preclude actions with CSOs, but such initiatives are not seen as an organisational priority. GOAL HQ has been working within the last 12 to 18 months to support and encourage partnerships, but such culture shifts are likely to take time.

> "Under GOAL 1 we have an indicator: local partners can deliver effective emergency responses. We should be looking into that or making sure that it will happen. Across all the countries that is not really working out. We are still not there"

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- Country Key Informant

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The evaluators could find limited information on GOAL's approach to international partnerships. The information that did exist indicates that in certain contexts, GOAL forms consortia and partnerships with other Irish INGOs; this both maximises the impact of overall IrishAid funding and supports like minded agencies in advocating to the humanitarian communities. The evaluators identified partnerships with international agencies as an opportunity for GOAL; it could be possible to develop partnerships with agencies working on national level government capacity building, for instance, to mitigate risks associated with local government capacity building in fragile contexts.

Private Sector

GOAL has made efforts to work with the private sector; these activities represent an opportunity to support sustainability. Through Goal 4 in particular, GOAL has made efforts to reach out to private sector actors over the course of the IAPF programme. Currently, GOAL staff and partners perceive the organisation to be in the process of piloting and learning how to work with the private sector; this is further discussed in section 6.1. Within this process, there are several opportunities to build sustainable approaches Some specific activities, including improving breeding methods and building market linkages in Zimbabwe, and building business networks for MSMEs in informal settlements in Haiti, are examples of such opportunities.

Private sector initiatives may complement government engagement. The primary risk associated with working with government actors is political instability. Working with private sector actors represents a method of mitigating this risk. Strong links and engagement with private sector and market actors are tied, not to political systems, but to economic systems. During periods of political uncertainty, it is still necessary for economic systems and markets to operate; as such market actors represent a source of resilience for vulnerable communities. Continued effort on the part of GOAL to strengthen its engagements with private sector actors, and build networks that can be leveraged in case of shocks, will support and improve sustainability.

7.2 The Systems Approach

GOAL's approach to sustainability is critically linked to its systems approach. The strong linkage between the systems approach and sustainability offers opportunities and challenges.

GOAL's systems approach is based on the understanding that "all people live and work within existing, interconnected systems … In GOAL's working environments, systems often function poorly or not at all." In such circumstances, GOAL's approach is to "identify the permanent actors within a system and clearly define its role relative to these stakeholders, understanding that they are the principal catalysts of change … GOAL acts as a facilitator of change."

In practice, GOAL's interpretation of the systems approach, particularly at the field level, has implied strong working relationships with local level government officials. Community organisations (LNGOs and CSOs) as well as private sector partners also feature in the systems approach, but to a lesser extent than government actors.

Opportunities

Mainstreaming sustainability. In humanitarian contexts, and in fragile situations with high levels of uncertainty, sustainability is often not fully achieved - the focus is on effective delivery of results, as opposed to ensuring that systems can continue. Humanitarian actions are often, by definition and design, short term and limited in nature.

The systems approach supports GOAL in mainstreaming sustainability in humanitarian contexts. GOAL's programmes are underpinned by a strong contextual analysis that identifies key long-term stakeholders. When short-term, humanitarian actions support capacity development among long-term stakeholders, then humanitarian actions are designed around sustainable outcomes. This mainstreaming of sustainability offers an opportunity both to improve sustainability and to identify best practices.

Positive interaction between community vulnerability and the system approach. The data collected during this evaluation indicates that GOAL has a systematic approach to community selection - it selects communities that have not been targeted by other humanitarian actors, and that are experiencing structural vulnerabilities. It is highly likely that government actors in this area are also disadvantaged.

Application of the systems approach in underserved communities may generate economies of scale. In situations where government actors have been chronically overlooked, smaller investments of both time and money can generate larger returns. The fact that GOAL works with underserved communities, and targets government actors as key stakeholders in these communities, may support longer-lasting change for those who may have lower access to duty bearers.

Challenges

Lack of government resources. One key assumption of GOAL's systems approach is that local government actors will, at some point, have the financial, human and technical resources to take over service provision. GOAL assumes that governments can be effective duty bearers over time.

While this assumption is true in some cases - such as Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone - it is not universally true. In South Sudan, for instance, local government actors have very few resources, and the situation has remained constant over years. Capacity building in a context such as South Sudan therefore poses

difficulties; local government authorities are unlikely to have the capacity to rehabilitate clinics, purchase drugs or pay full salaries, and as such, the sustainability of GOAL's intervention is questionable.

> "as NGOs we have been able to provide [capacity building]. But the question will always be that of resources – whether the government will be able to provide salaries, proper working conditions, etc … What we can also do as civil society and NGOs is to continuously lobby the government so that there is investment in health care, as that's a huge gap."
>
> - *Staff Workshop*

GOAL could consider building and strengthening actions that promote equitable distribution of resources, such as (1) lobbying national government authorities to assure distribution of resources to the local level, (2) partnership with government capacity building NGOs and UN agencies (e.g. UNDP, World Bank) to ensure smooth transfer of information about community needs to agencies working with governments, and (3) support communities in advocating, not only at the local level, but also at national levels and with international agencies. Some such initiatives are already ongoing in GOAL programming. One example of GOAL's existing efforts to support systems building in fragile contexts occurs in Sudan: here, GOAL supports Locality Health Departments in Sudan to lobby the national government for funding, and simultaneously engaging with the national government and donors to advocate for needs on the ground.

7.3 Diversification and Sustainability

The systems approach represents a strong approach to sustainability that complements standard humanitarian action. Due to the challenges associated with consistency in government, and maintaining community initiative without incentives, GOAL could consider diversifying to achieve sustainability.

- **Continue strengthening behaviour and social change approaches**. GOAL's community approaches are considered a best practice at community, staff and partner levels. CLA, NIPP and community early warning systems represent three such approaches; GOAL has developed other approaches as well, including community conversations and school health clubs, that can be developed and strengthened.

- **GOAL could clarify its approach to localisation**. Community organisations can support smooth provision of services during situations of conflict. Strengthening approaches to localisation would involve: (1) developing a GOAL approach to localisation, including building links with the systems approach and (2) tailoring on-granting processes to account for partner size and capacity.

- **Continue to engage a variety of partners, and expand the network**. GOAL has, in specific contexts, worked with non-traditional actors such as the private sector. These engagements have delivered solid value to country level programmes. Such innovative approaches and non-traditional partnerships could be expanded. More traditional partnerships could be developed with INGOs and UN agencies working with national level government actors. These partnerships could be structured to support GOAL's systems approach – for instance, community level and local level issues (raised both by community and government actors) could feed into national level prioritisation processes, not only through government actors, but also through interactions between GOAL and UN actors managing these processes. such approaches would mitigate the risks associated with the systems approach.

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Adapting to Context Changes in South Sudan

South Sudan is a complex context: disasters, conflict and high poverty levels combine to generate high levels of humanitarian need. GOAL in South Sudan adapts to contextual changes using a variety of techniques and approaches.

Blended funding supports critical rehabilitation. South Sudan faces regular environmental challenges, including annual flooding. Local government actors have limited resources to support rehabilitation of health facilities in the aftermath of these shocks. Flexible blended funding allowed GOAL to support local government authorities to repair health facilities and assure continued provision of services.

Community engagement helps to reach inaccessible areas. Both conflict and environmental hazards affect South Sudan; as a result of these factors, some communities can be inaccessible for the humanitarian community. GOAL used community-led approaches to reach inaccessible areas. Community members in accessible areas were trained by GOAL in basic health and nutrition skills and techniques; they were then able to support individuals and households in hard-to-reach areas.

Reallocation of resources to address changes in need. Conditions can vary dramatically between different areas of South Sudan. Over the course of the IAPF programme, an inflow of returnees from Uganda to Kajo Keji took place; health and nutrition needs were high among this group. GOAL re-allocated its geographic programming to include Kajo Keji and address upcoming needs.

Co-funding assures minimum health standards. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, compliance requirements regarding provision of PPE and basic health equipment were not clear for all donors – but for implementing agencies such as GOAL, assuring minimum health standards was critical. GOAL South Sudan used IAPF funding to purchase PPE and sanitation equipment, thus helping to assure improved health outcomes for participating communities.

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8. Conclusion and Recommendations

GOAL's IAPF programme is strongly relevant and is coherent. It is perceived as effective, and producing long-term change, by participants, partners and staff.. Sustainability could be improved by further strengthening approaches to account for long-term fragility, and by consciously diversifying the stakeholders with which GOAL cooperates on a regular basis. On the basis of the evaluation data collection and analysis, the following recommendations are proposed:

Articulate an organisational approach to individual level vulnerability. A clear approach to individual level vulnerability will complement GOAL's strong and recognised approach to community vulnerability. It will support, not only staff, but also programme participants, to better understand GOAL's approach. It will also support prioritisation in situations with multiple types of conflicting need.

Review options to further integrate risk associated with climate adaptation and economic variables int mitigation systems. GOAL has developed mechanisms to respond to both conflict and disaster. Additional focus is required to mainstream climate adaptation into GOAL's programming. It is also critical to develop

risk mitigation measures to manage economic variables, including inflation and currency fluctuations. Both climate and economic risks can be integrated into GOAL's existing risk management system.

Engage in discussions with IrishAid to mitigate the tension between adaptive management and the Results Framework.. GOAL currently has a strong results-based management system in place; this makes it possible to pilot more innovative adaptive management systems. Such systems could involve fewer output level indicators, greater focus on cross-country analysis of goals and cross cutting issues, and simplification of the processes by which targets change in the event of a shock, or as a result of programmatic learning and development.

Continue to strengthen social and behaviour change approaches across outcome areas. The NIPP program is generally considered a best practice by staff, participants and partners; it is also coherent across a variety of different contexts. GOAL has developed a variety of similar processes based, adaptable approaches, such as Community Conversations, Care Groups, and School Health Clubs. Strengthening these modalities is likely to support GOAL in achieving outcome level results and impact.

Strengthen measures to include specific marginalised groups. GOAL has made significant strides in developing and implementing three program approaches – the systems approach, social and behavioural change and resilience. GOAL's approach to inclusion is less concrete, although GESI is built into the PCAD process as Component 4. The needs of some specific groups – child-headed households, the elderly, refugees and IDPs – could be more explicitly taken into account.

Further integrate data and analysis from accountability into programme design and implementation. GOAL's accountability measures are well accepted by staff and participants, and have been strengthened over the course of the IAPF funding period. Efforts have been made to integrate recommendations and data from the accountability system in program design. These measures are well accepted by staff and participants. While data is being used in program design and implementation, GOAL should look to improve upon this more systematically, particularly in programme design. Doing so will support greater participation and quality programming.

Consider more systematic integration of programs between outcome areas. Integration of activities between outcome areas could support more sustainable community level results and could improve overall outcome levels. GOAL could develop, at an HQ level, frameworks for integration between the different outcome areas. At country level, management teams can support regular exercises to ensure that different teams are aware of each others' activities.

External Evaluation of GOAL'sIrish Aid Programme Fund 2017-2021

Programme title:	Irish Aid Programme Fund
Geographical coverage: region, countries	Eastern Africa: Ethiopia, Uganda, Sudan, South Sudan
	Southern Africa: Malawi, Zimbabwe
	Western Africa: Sierra Leone, Niger
	Middle East: Iraq
	Latin America and the Caribbean: Haiti
Programme Lifespan:	One-year funding: 2017
	One-year funding: 2018
	Three-year funding: 2019-2021
Programme budget (five years):	Approximately €50 million
Evaluation Commissioning Manager:	Dr Enida Friel,
	Head of Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and
	Learning, GOAL

1. INTRODUCTION

GOAL has been a long-term recipient of Irish Government funding. Irish Aid (IA) is a key donor and partner of GOAL, as it is GOAL's home institutional donor and IA funding is at the core of everything that GOAL does. GOAL's current IA funding is implemented through a "blended approach" of development and humanitarian funding under one programme – the Irish Aid Programme Fund (IAPF). The annual budget of this programme since 2017 is approximately €10million. IAPF started in 2017 and will continue through 2021.

The Irish Aid Programme Fund's Aim is:

- To foster resilient wellbeing for poor and vulnerable people.

Under this Aim IAPF has four Goals:

1. People survive crisis;
2. People have resilient health;
3. People have food and nutrition security;
4. People have sustainable livelihoods.

A fifth Goal that covers the Development Education (DevEd) and Public Engagement (PE) work that is funded under this Programme is:

5. Global citizenship and leaders acting for a fair and sustainable world

The Goals are measured by several Core Objectives and Key Indicators, chosen as relevant by each individual country programme. These Goals, Objectives and Indicators align with GOAL's Global Strategic Plan 2019-2021.

The IAPF operates currently in 10 countries: Ethiopia, Uganda, Sudan, South Sudan, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Niger, Iraq and Haiti. In 2017 and 2018, IAPF was operational in the eight African countries only; Haiti and Iraq were added to the portfolio from 2019 bringing the number of countries to ten in 2019, 2020 and 2021. The DevEd and PE component of IAPF is implemented in Ireland.

While the IAPF will continue until the end of 2022, GOAL is planning an external evaluation in the second half of 2021, covering 2017-2020. The evaluation will inform the development of a new partnership with IA from 2023 onwards and will document GOAL's results across IAPF. The evaluation will be shared with IA, GOAL's Board, GOAL country teams, partners and beneficiaries where and as possible. The evaluation results will be published on GOAL's website and be made available to the Irish public and peer organizations in the INGO sector, interested academics, donor institutions, etc.

Individual country programme baselines, reviews, evaluations, research studies and reports that have taken place during 2017-2021 will be made available and inform the evaluation. Recent reviews of the DevEd and PE were also conducted and will be made available to inform the overall evaluation of IAPF.

The evaluation will be external and a summative evaluation.

2. DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

2.1 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The proposed objectives of the evaluation are:

- To articulate and test the IAPF's Theory of Change (ToC) and the assumptions that it is based on;
- Assess the Programme's relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability against the OECD DAC evaluation criteria.

The Evaluation will cover Goals 1-4 implemented at country level and Goal 5 implemented in Ireland.

2.2   EVALUATION PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess GOAL's performance and delivery of the IAPF (both in countries and Ireland) according to selected OECD DAC evaluation criteria. The evaluation will help GOAL to document its lessons learned and best practices generated through this Programme and inform the design of the new Programme funded by IA from 2022 onwards.

2.3   EVALUATION SCOPE

The evaluation's scope will cover the IAPF country programmes as outlined in Section 1. It will include visits (physical or virtual) to at least two country programmes preferably in different geographical region, programme scope and size. The evaluation will also assess GOAL's Resilience Hub work, as well as the delivery of the Development Education and Public Engagement aspects of the IAPF.

The evaluation will be organised around the selected OECD DAC evaluation criteria below and the Programme's ToC.

Relevance & Coherence: To what extent is the programme responding to the needs of participants/beneficiaries in the evolving context?

Is the Theory of Change (including for DevEd and PE and Resilience Hub) holding true? Is the organisation adapting appropriately in response to changes in the context? Is the programme aligned with national and international priorities? Is the programme reaching the most vulnerable groups e.g. women, young girls, children under five years of age, people with disabilities? Is the programme addressing their priority needs?

Effectiveness: Is there evidence that anticipated results are being achieved at the current stage of the programme?

To what extent is the programme (including for DevEd and PE and Resilience Hub) meeting its targets and delivering its outcomes and outputs? Is the "blended approach" of development and humanitarian funding boosting or hindering effectiveness? Are the monitoring and accountability mechanisms effective in providing timely data to inform programming decisions? To what extent can the emerging results be attributed to the programme?

Sustainability: To what extent is the organisation building institutional capacity of local partners?

Is the programme (including for DevEd and PE and Resilience Hub) enhancing local ownership and capacity to influence policy? Where relevant, is the programme contributing to localisation of humanitarian aid? To what extent are relevant partnerships/capacities being developed to ensure sustainability? Is the implementation of the "blended approach" contributing to sustainability of any aspect of the programme?

3.   EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation will be gender-sensitive, inclusive, culturally sensitive and participatory. It is essential that the process of data collection, as well as storage of data, is supported by careful ethical practice (see Section 7).

The data collection methods will be preferably mixed: quantitative and qualitative. The evaluation participants will encompass a range of stakeholders, including but not limited to, the beneficiary populations, non-beneficiaries, partner organisations, Government representatives of the countries of implementation, GOAL country teams, GOAL Ireland staff and Board and IA. Potential positive or negative spill over effects of the programme will be considered.

GOAL prefers the use of surveys for quantitative data. These will be rigorously analysed and representative of the programme within the reasonable limits and constraints of each context. Qualitative data - in the form of key informant interviews, focus groups and observations - will also be rigorously analysed and will primarily focus on developing a deeper understanding about the programme, and providing recommendations for improving or strengthening the relevance/coherence, effectiveness, and sustainability of the programme.

4.   SCHEDULE, BUDGET, LOGISTICS AND DELIVERABLES

This evaluation will take place in the second half of 2021, starting no later than 1st August 2021 with the final approved report submitted no later than 30th November 2021.

The findings of the evaluation will be shared with GOAL in the following formats by the dates specified:

- A first draft of the evaluation report submitted to the Evaluation Commissioning Manager in GOAL for feedback and comments by 1st November 2021.

- The evaluation report should follow the GOAL standard, which is available on request, including, but not limited to sections such as: Methodology, Findings, Conclusions, Recommendation.

- The report should be kept to 30 pages excluding the cover page, table of contents, list of tables/figures/acronyms, glossary and appendices;

- The report will include an Executive Summary of two pages which can be published separately to the full report;

- The final evaluation report incorporating the feedback and comments to be submitted to the Evaluation Commissioning Manager in GOAL no later than 24th November 2021;

- A closing presentation outlining the main findings and recommendations to be conducted for GOAL's Head Office and Country Programme staff at a date agreed between 26th- 30th November 2021

5.   EVALUATION RESPONSIBILITIES AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The external evaluator(s) is/are responsible for performing the evaluation, validating preliminary results and recommendations, submitting a first draft report to GOAL and a final report after feedback from GOAL has been received. The external evaluator(s) is/are also responsible for conducting a closing presentation within the timelines stated above and agreed in the contract.

GOAL is responsible for making payments, facilitating timely access to documents, stakeholders, providing other support required e.g. transport, accommodation, office space, communications etc.

The process of overcoming any possible disagreement or performance dissatisfaction between the two parties will be articulated in the contract signed between GOAL and the Evaluator(s).

The evaluation will be commissioned following GOAL's procurement policies and procedures. Evaluating Commissioning Manager will be supported by a small internal reference group. GOAL will strive to achieve a gender balance with this group and have representatives from different stakeholders e.g. GOAL Board, Head Office staff, GOAL Country Teams, partners, community members and other stakeholders.

6.   DISSEMINATION STRATEGY, PLAN AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SHARING AND USING THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the completion of the evaluation, a management response to the findings and recommendations will be developed by GOAL. This will include an action plan for addressing the prioritised findings and recommendations. Preferably the full evaluation report, and at least the executive summary and management response will be posted on GOAL's website and made available for publishing to IA.

Findings will be used to inform GOAL's grant submission to IA beyond 2022, programme development, institutional learning, accountability and influencing internally and externally. The report or the executive summary will be shared with evaluation participants and other relevant stakeholders including IA, GOAL's Board, partners, peer organisations, academia. The executive summary may be translated into local languages to facilitate community and local stakeholder accessibility.

The final report and any primary data collected will be the property of GOAL.

7.   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The evaluation team will make clear to all participating stakeholders that they are under no obligation to participate in the evaluation study. All participants will be assured that there will be no negative consequences if they choose not to participate. The evaluation team will obtain informed consent from the participants. The evaluation team will ensure prior permission is received for taking and use of visual still/ moving images for specific purposes e.g. for evaluation report and presentations. To protect the anonymity of individuals, communities, stakeholders and partners the evaluation report will not include names or identifying features of evaluation participants and will ensure the visual data is protected and used for agreed purposes only. In particular, the evaluation team will employ robust data security measures to further ensure participants' confidentiality and anonymity. The evaluation team is responsible for determining whether their proposed methodology would require Institutional Review Board (IRB) clearance and will be responsible for clearing the process and training if such approval is required.

Annex 2: Methodology

This evaluation was commissioned by GOAL to take place at the end of the 2019 - 2021 contract between GOAL and IrishAid. It was undertaken by Meraki Labs, a consulting company based in Canada, from August to December 2021.

The **purpose** of this evaluation is to assess GOAL's performance and delivery of the IAPF according to selected OECD DAC evaluation criteria. The evaluation will help GOAL to document lessons learned and best practices generated through this programme and inform the design of a new programme. Evaluation **objectives** are:

- To articulate and test the IAPF's Theory of Change (ToC) and associated assumptions;

- To assess relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability against the OECD DAC evaluation criteria.

Core evaluation questions, in line with the OECD DAC criteria and IrishAid's specific questions to GOAL, are as follows:

- To what extent is the programme responding to the needs of participants/beneficiaries in the evolving context?

- Is there evidence that anticipated results are being achieved at the current stage of the programme?

- To what extent is the organisation building institutional capacity of local partners?

The **intended audience** for the evaluation will consist of, at a minimum: (1) IrishAid, (2) Goal Head Office staff, (3) senior staff at Goal Country Office level. The evaluation will also be made available to the general public, including academics, humanitarian practitioners, and peers from other organisations.

The **scope** of the evaluation can be defined across four parameters: (1) country scope, (2) program/sector scope, and (3) thematic scope, and (4) evaluation scope.

Country scope refers to the countries selected to take part in the evaluation. In total, the IAPF funding covers 10 countries: Ethiopia, Uganda, Sudan, South Sudan, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Niger, Iraq and Haiti. Secondary data was collected from all 10 countries covered by IAPF. Primary data, however, was only collected from four countries: Sudan, South Sudan, ZImbabwe and Sierra Leone. This sub-set of countries was chosen by GOAL and Meraki Labs in close consultation. The target countries were selected on the basis of a set of criteria: (1) budget sizes, (2) sectoral profiles, (3) fragility/location along the humanitarian-development nexus and (4) operational profiles.

Program/sectoral scope refers to the types of activities to be assessed by the evaluation. The program and sectoral scope of the evaluation is defined by the program proposal and Results Framework. The focus of the program is on four activity pillars which aim to provide direct support to fragile states: (1) people survive crisis, (2) people have resilient health, (3) people have food and nutrition security and (4) people have sustainable livelihoods. In addition, outside the Results Framework, the evaluation also includes Global Citizenship activities, notably public education, development education and Resilience Hubs. A sixth goal, strengthening GOAL's organisational capacity, has been excluded from the scope of this evaluation.

Modality scope refers to the ways in which GOAL intends to achieve its outcomes. The 2018 Theory of Change identifies four modalities across which GOAL will operate, notably: (1) facilitating social and behavioural change, (2) increasing resilience, (3) influencing systems and (4) fostering inclusion. This evaluation focuses on the systems approach, as this modality has been a focus during the implementation of the IAPF program. Other modalities are, however, not excluded from the evaluation.

Evaluation scope refers to the key criteria used in the evaluation. This evaluation is conducted within the framework of the OECD DAC criteria. The OECD DAC criteria are relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability; these factors can be considered to describe all critical elements of a project. This evaluation focuses, not on all the OECD DAC criteria, but on a subset – relevance, coherence, effectiveness and sustainability. Efficiency is not being considered due to (a) the complexity associated with conducting robust efficiency analyses across 10 countries, and (b) the challenges associated with defining appropriate value for money metrics for projects in both the humanitarian and development spheres. Impact evaluation generally requires specialised methodologies, as well as the passage of a period of time following the end of project activities.

The evaluation consists of three components: (1) a desk review, (2) a quantitative component consisting of questionnaires administered to GOAL staff and (3) collection and analysis of qualitative data. The methodology has been developed to answer the evaluation questions in as parsimonious a fashion as possible, given the wide range of country contexts, themes and sectors represented in the IAPF countries.

Desk Review

The evaluators undertook a desk review prior to design of the methodology. The focus of the review was on GOAL internal documents - notably the Results Framework, annual reports from GOAL to IrishAid from the 2017 to 2021 period, project proposals and additional documentation about accountability and sector-specific approaches.

External documentation was reviewed with regard to both the policy context and the global humanitarian situation. OCHA Global Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Humanitarian Response Plans were the basis of the analysis of the global humanitarian situation. In terms of the policy context, the analysis of the humanitarian context was critically linked to the Agenda for Humanity and the Grand Bargain; the documents themselves and the associated analysis were reviewed, and any available documentation about upcoming renegotiations was also considered. Analysis of the development context was centred around the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as IrishAid's Framework for Action.

GOAL has both conducted research and supported wider discussion on the movement from crisis to resilience. The research and webinars conducted by GOAL and the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative also formed part of the desk review.

Finally, country specific analysis was conducted for the countries selected for in-depth data collection (Sudan, South Sudan, Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone). This included a review of the country Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plan, as well as MICS and DHS data and analysis from ACAPS (where relevant).

Quantitative Data

A survey was developed by the evaluators and administered to GOAL staff.

The purpose of the quantitative survey was to provide an option for country staff from all countries supported by IAPF to feed into the evaluation, and thus to triangulate qualitative information collected from target countries.

Following finalisation of the survey design, GOAL's MEAL HQ staff disseminated the survey to country offices via email. Dissemination took place to Country Directors, Program Directors and MEAL Directors; these staff members were requested to further disseminate the survey to staff both within the Country

Office and at fieldoffice level. The survey was open from 25 October until 15 November. 70 responses were collected, primarily from program and MEAL staff members at country offices and field offices.

# Submissions							
Office Type	**Staff Type**						
	Program	**Support**	**MEAL**	**Mgt**	**Senior Mgt**	**No answer**	**TOTAL**
Country Office	8	1	13	1	1	0	24
Field Office	18	2	4	0	1	0	25
HQ	9	1	2	1	1	0	14
No answer	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Regional Office	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Remote	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Roving	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	36	5	22	2	3	1	70

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data collection approaches were used to solicit the opinions of a variety of stakeholders regarding the implementation of the IAPF program. Three qualitative data collection tools were used:

Key informant interviews were conducted with HQ, country staff and country stakeholders. The use of KIIs supports collection of in-depth and nuanced data that is specific and tailored. Country 'stakeholders' include local government authorities, partner agencies, local NGOs and other actors identified as critical by country teams. Interviews were administered by Meraki Labs staff in the relevant languages.

Focus group discussions were conducted with beneficiaries; they focused on questions related to relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. Some participatory methodologies were used to support engagement with beneficiary groups. Meraki Labs worked with MEAL teams in selected countries to identify enumerators who could act as direct independent facilitators; to assure impartiality, Meraki Labs requested detailed notes, transcripts or audio recordings (the precise method was tailored to the context). This method of engaging is considered to be the optimal balancing of remote data collection restrictions and quality standards.

Staff workshops were conducted with four countries. The aim of the staff workshops is to merge the evaluation process with a learning process. The workshops brought together management and field staff to reflect on the programme design and implementation process. The workshops were conducted online.

The evaluators considered the use of interactive tools such as mentimeter and Miro, but internet connectivity, particularly in field offices, was too poor.

Data was collected in four countries out of the 10 countries in which IAPF was implemented. Countries were selected, as described under the 'Scope' section, by Meraki Labs and GOAL using a set of pre-determined criteria. The countries in which data collection took place were: South Sudan, Sudan, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe. The type and amount of data collected differed per country. Two countries, Sierra Leone and South Sudan, were selected as 'high intensity' countries, in which all qualitative data collection tools were used, and staff, beneficiaries and partners were targeted. In the other two countries, Sudan and Zimbabwe, 'low intensity' data collection took place, with staff and partners but not beneficiaries. In addition to data collection at the country level, key informant interviews were conducted with HQ staff.

The qualitative data collected is summarised in the table below.

Type of Data	Sub-Type	Target	Achieved	Comments
KII	HQ staff	10	9	Intended to have interviews with 2 external stakeholders; was not possible due to the need to ensure impartiality.
KII	Country Staff	20	20	
KII	Country Stakeholder	12	9	Some issues in contacting stakeholders due to poor connectivity and instability in Sudan
FGD	Beneficiaries	10	10	84 beneficiaries took part in the discussion
Workshop	Staff	4	4	Some connectivity issues

Limitations

The evaluators aimed to develop a data collection methodology that was relatively impartial and inclusive. The results are, however, still subject to several limitations:

Context specificity. The IAPF program covers 10 countries, including two outside the sub-Saharan African region and two non-Anglophone countries. The countries selected in this evaluation are all in sub-Saharan Africa and are all Anglophone countries; as such, they do not fully represent the spectrum of contexts covered through IAPF.

Instability in target countries. During the period in which data collection was conducted, a coup took place in Sudan, one of the target countries. The coup and the associated instability, lack of connectivity, and uncertainty regarding daily life and regulations had effects on the data collection process. When the coup took place, data collection had taken place with staff members, but not with partners. Although some partner interviews did take place, there were some restrictions due to the context.

Lack of representative data. The quantitative survey intended to solicit staff perspectives on the IrishAid program. The sampling process was, however, not fully defined; the survey did not aim to collect data

that was representative of GOAL staff across IAPF countries. Any data arising from the quantitative survey should therefore be considered only as indicative.

Annex 3: Evaluation Grid

Criterion	Guiding Questions	Assessing Future Direction	Tools
Relevance Coherence	• Did the Theory of Change hold true? • To what extent did assumptions remain valid? • Has the organisation (and activities) adapted appropriately to the context? • To what extent is the programme aligned with national and international priorities? • To what extent does the programme reach the most vulnerable and their priority needs? • To what extent are activities coherent: (1) within countries, (2) between countries? • To what extent are activities coherent: (1) with GOAL internal organisational goals, (2) with IA objectives?	• What have the most relevant changes in context been? How can they be reflected in upcoming TOCs? • What best practices and lessons learned from the COVID-19 response can be integrated into broader adaptation plans? • What national and international priorities should be reflected in the upcoming period? • What best practices and lessons learned about meeting priority needs of the most vulnerable can be identified? • Are there options to support improved strategic and activity level coherence for IAPF funded activities?	Desk Review Tool 1 Tool 2 Tool 3 Tool 4 Tool 5
Effectiveness	• To what extent is the programme meeting targets? Delivering outcomes/outputs? • How does the 'blended approach' affect effectiveness? • Are the monitoring and accountability mechanisms effective in providing timely data to inform programming decisions? • To what extent can the emerging results be attributed to the programme?	• Do any structural changes need to be made to programme outcomes and outputs? • Are there any best practices in the 'blended approach' that can be rolled out more broadly? • What structural changes are needed in M&E systems to better inform programme decisions? • Can programme design be adapted to improve results?	Desk Review Tool 1 Tool 2 (Tool 3) Tool 4 (Tool 5)
Sustainability	• Is the programme enhancing local ownership and capacity? • To what extent and how does the programme contribute to localisation? • To what extent are partnership capacities being developed? • How and to what extent does the blended approach contribute to sustainability?	• Are there best practices in enhancing local capacity that can be rolled out more broadly? • Are there gaps in partnership systems which require structural or systemic investment? • What aspects of the blended approach can be heightened to improve sustainability?	Desk Review (Tool 1) Tool 2 Tool 3 (Tool 4) Tool 5

Annex 4: Data Collection Tools

Tool 1: HQ Key Informant Interview

1. Can you please tell me about your role in the design, implementation and/or monitoring of GOAL's IAPF programme?

2. From your point of view, how well did the IAPF programme correspond to international and country level priorities? Where there was a strong fit, why was the fit strong? Where there was a weak fit, why? [as a prompt, also ask, particularly to HQ actors, about IAPF correspondence with Irish Aid and GOAL strategic directions and priorities]

3. What kind of context analysis was conducted to inform IAPF activities, at a global level? How consistent was context analysis between countries? What was effective about context analysis for IAPF funded activities? What could improve in the future?

4. How would you rate coherence of IAPF activities within individual recipient countries? Between countries?

5. From your point of view, how successful was the programme at reaching the most vulnerable? What factors supported outreach to the most vulnerable? What factors hindered this outreach? What evidence do you have regarding the programme's effectiveness at reaching the most vulnerable? How do you think targeting and evidence could be improved?

6. What were the major shocks that took place, externally and internally, in the 2017 – 2021 period? How well did the IAPF funding respond to these shocks? What factors supported adaptation? What factors hindered adaptation?

7. At a practical level, how well do you think the programme is meeting targets?

8. To what degree are intended outcomes being achieved? To what degree do you think GOAL's interventions have affected the achievement of outcomes?

9. How have monitoring and accountability mechanisms changed over the course of the project? Are they effective in providing timely and accurate data? How could they be improved?

10. Has the IAPF's blended approach had consequences for effectiveness? What kind of consequences? Do you think the blended approach supported GOAL in implementing nexus programming? How? Can you give examples?

11. To what degree is the programme supporting local ownership and capacity? What approaches have worked? What approaches have been challenging?

12. What do you consider to be the three most significant achievements GOAL has achieved with IAPF funding? What are the three biggest challenges this grant has faced?

Tool 2: Country Staff Key Informant Interview

1. Can you please tell me about your role in implementing and/or monitoring GOAL's IAPF programme?

2. From your point of view, how well did the IAPF programme correspond to country and local level priorities? Where there was a strong fit, why was the fit strong? Where there was a weak fit, why?

3. What kind of context analysis was conducted to inform IAPF activities? What was effective about context analysis for IAPF funded activities? What could improve in the future?

4. How would you rate coherence of IAPF activities within individual recipient countries? Between countries?

5. From your point of view, how successful was the programme at reaching the most vulnerable? What factors supported outreach to the most vulnerable? What factors hindered this outreach? What evidence do you have regarding the programme's effectiveness at reaching the most vulnerable? How do you think targeting and evidence could be improved?

6. What were the major shocks that took place, externally and internally, in the 2017 – 2021 period? How well did the IAPF funding respond to these shocks? What factors supported adaptation? What factors hindered adaptation?

7. At a practical level, how well do you think the programme is meeting targets?

8. What impact do you think the IAPF programme is achieving (a) by itself? (b) as a part of a broader portfolio?

9. How have monitoring and accountability mechanisms changed over the course of the project? Are they effective in providing timely and accurate data? How could they be improved?

10. Has the IAPF's blended approach had consequences for effectiveness? What kind of consequences? Do you think the blended approach supported GOAL in implementing nexus programming in your country? How? Can you give examples?

11. To what degree is the programme supporting local ownership and capacity? What approaches have worked? What approaches have been challenging?

Tool 3: Country Stakeholder Key Informant Interview

1. Can you please tell me about how you and/or your organisation have engaged with GOAL?

2. What do you think are, at an overall level, the most significant community needs? [following the answer to this] How do GOAL's activities meet these needs? How could GOAL's activities better meet needs in the future?

3. From your point of view, how successful was the programme at reaching the most vulnerable? Who was not reached? Why were they not reached? How could programmes be changed in the future to meet needs?

4. What were the most important shocks that affected your community in the last 5 years? [following the answer to this] How did GOAL respond to these shocks?

5. What do you think are the greatest achievements of the GOAL project? What are the biggest challenges GOAL faces?

6. What is the biggest long term change GOAL has made in the community? What kind of changes do you think GOAL could contribute to in the future?

7. To what degree is the programme supporting local ownership and capacity? What approaches have worked? What approaches have been challenging?

Tool 4: Country Beneficiary FGDs

1. Can you please tell me about how your community engages with GOAL? What kinds of activities do you work on together?

2. What are the biggest challenges facing your community? How would you rate GOAL's response to these challenges? [through a participatory exercise – first a group brainstorm of the challenges, then a communal/participatory ranking of GOAL's response]

3. Who is the most vulnerable in your community? Does GOAL reach these individuals? If not, how can GOAL reach out? If yes, what is GOAL doing that works well?

4. What activities conducted by GOAL do you consider to be the most successful? Why? What activities do you consider could be improved? How?

5. Have GOAL's activities changed the long-term situation for your household? In what way?

6. Within your local community, who do you trust the most to provide services similar to GOAL? Is GOAL currently working with these actors?

7. Do you know how to provide feedback to GOAL about their activities and approaches? Have you provided feedback to GOAL, or do you know people who have provided feedback? What do you think of your/their experience? Did you receive acknowledgement of or a response to your feedback to GOAL?

Tool 5: Staff Workshop

1. Introductions. Each individual introduces him or her self and the role he or she has had in the GOAL programme

2. Relevance. The group is asked to talk about relevance in three ways:

   a. They will be asked to explain the process of designing the programme. This will include the types of international and national priorities included in programme design, as well as the type of assessments that took place in designing the programme. They will be asked to rank programme relevance with regard to: (1) international priorities, (2) national priorities, (3) community priorities

   b. The group will be asked to discuss the adaptive nature of the programme. This will include discussing how IAPF supported GOAL in managing and overcoming shocks. Three major shocks (funding crisis, COVID-19 and 1 other) will be used as examples, and country teams will be asked to brainstorm or rank the degree to which IAPF helped to overcome these shocks

   c. The group will be asked to identify three best practices regarding meeting community needs, on the basis of IAPF programming.

3. Effectiveness.

   a. The group will be asked to identify the activities under IAPF which were met or exceeded, as well as those which were hardest to achieve

   b. The group will be asked to identify and rank the three most significant achievements GOAL has achieved with IAPF funding, and the three most significant challenges facing IAPF.

   c. The group will be asked to reflect on accountability – to what degree accountability has changed, what key gaps are and what are priorities going forward.

4. Sustainability

a. The group will be asked to identify the most important stakeholders in programme implementation

b. The group will be asked to identify the most important stakeholders in sustainability (ie who can take projects over)

c. The group will be asked for best practices and lessons learned in terms of working with sustainability stakeholders

Tool 6: Quantitative Staff Survey

https://forms.gle/UKw5ggik8Fq8XgHS8