

Felm¹⁸⁵⁹



With support from
Finland's development
cooperation

Felm
Development Cooperation
Progress Report 2024

Contents

Summary	3
Tiivistelmä	4
1. Changes in the operating environment	5
1.1 Global trends in 2024	5
1.2 Operating environment in Felm partner countries	6
2. Coordination and collaboration	8
2.1 Cooperation and coordination with other CSOs in Finland	8
2.2 Cooperation and other funding sources	8
2.3 Multisectoral cooperation	8
3. Implementation strategies	9
3.1 Program activities	9
3.2 Alterations to the plans and reallocations	10
3.3 Humanitarian aid	10
3.4 Advisory support in the regions	11
3.5 Advocacy work in Finland	12
3.6 Development Communications	14
3.7 Global citizenship education	14
4. Results	15
4.1 Outcome area 1: Resilience to climate change and disasters	16
4.2 Outcome area 2: Inclusive, quality education	19
4.3 Outcome area 3: Rights of persons with disabilities	22
4.4 Humanitarian-development nexus	26
4.5 Cross-cutting objectives	26
4.6 Contributions to development policy	28
5. Beneficiaries	28
6. Resources of the program	30
6.1 Staff in Finland	30
6.2 Financial report	31
7. Sustainability and capacity building	33
7.1 Partners' capacity building	33
7.2 Developing Felm's capacity	33
7.3 Sustainability of the projects	34
7.4 Localization and ownership	35
8. Risk management	36
8.1 Risk management system	36
8.2 Risk management in 2024	36
9. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning	37

Summary

The third year of implementation of the Felm Development Cooperation Program saw heightened political repression, escalating armed conflicts, and intensifying climate crises that exposed vulnerabilities in development efforts and increased humanitarian needs worldwide. The shrinking space for civil society, inflation, and fragile economic growth further complicated project implementation. Despite these challenges, Felm's partners and civil society actors remained resilient and adaptive. The program's 35 partner projects achieved strong results with 98% funding absorption, effective management, and adaptive support. In 2024, the program directly served a total of 173,053 beneficiaries. This figure comprises 157,180 rights-holders and more than 15,873 duty-bearers who were directly engaged through program activities. 54.3% of all rights-holders were women and girls, and 8.8% were persons with disabilities.

The converging megatrends accentuated the critical need for adaptive, inclusive, locally led, and climate-resilient approaches in development cooperation. An additional 888,000 euros were reallocated during the year for specific innovative development actions supporting climate resilience, persons with disabilities, and inclusive education (among others). Felm advisors provided capacity building, risk assessment, and program restructuring support for partners. These efforts helped them to adapt to crises, adjust projects, strengthen staffing, and deliver quality interventions to marginalized groups. In 2024, the Development Cooperation Program's funding reached 7.3 million euros, with 6.3 million euros contributed by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA). Administration costs were 10% of the total, covering all key departments. Development communications, advocacy, and global citizenship education totaled 156 882 euros (approx. 2.2%).

Felm played a central role in Finnish and international development policy advocacy, engaging with politicians, government officials, businesses, and civil society to promote key issues such as climate justice, human rights, and tax and corporate responsibility. Felm also co-organized international events and webinars, supported civil society campaigns, and provided expertise in areas such as gender equality, peace processes, and children's rights. Thus, climate change was featured in Finland's foreign and security policy report and was made a top priority in trade and development policy. Media engagement led COP29 coverage to include Global South priorities, with Felm cited. Based on Felm's suggestion, EU negotiators added Indigenous knowledge and disability inclusion to adaptation metrics.

The program made notable progress in climate resilience, education, and the advocacy of persons with disabilities. Over 119 inclusive disaster risk management committees were established and 15,000 people trained in risk management, while 6,700 households adopted climate adaptation practices. Nearly 16,500 smallholder farmers received support for sustainable agriculture. Inclusive education initiatives were successful in mother tongue-based multilingual education, teacher training, and participation of marginalized students. Advocacy for persons with disabilities was strengthened with 2,500 civil society organization members trained and 3,000 officials engaged in supporting the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Legislative and consultation reforms were reinforced, and disability inclusion in community structures was improved. Cross-cutting efforts included enhanced monitoring tools for climate resilience and gender, as well as improved disability inclusion through new data collection methods. Felm also strengthened its safeguarding efforts by appointing a dedicated safeguarding officer, launching a whistleblower channel, forming a Complaints Committee, and training all staff on key policies including the Code of Conduct and guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH).

Tiivistelmä

Globaali muutos jatkui ohjelman kolmantena toimintavuonna, ja sitä leimasivat kärjistyneet aseelliset konfliktit, lisääntynyt poliittinen sorto ja voimistuvat ilmastokriisit. Nämä kehityskulut lisäsivät kehitysyhteistyön haavoittuvuutta ja humanitaarisia tarpeita maailmanlaajuisesti. Myös kansalaisyhteiskunnan tilan kaventuminen, inflaatio ja hauras talouskasvu vaikeuttivat hankkeiden toteutusta. Lähetyseuran kumppanit ja kansalaisyhteiskunnan toimijat löysivät kuitenkin ratkaisuja ja onnistuivat mukauttamaan toimintaansa muuttuvaan toimintaympäristöön sopivaksi. Ohjelman 35 kumppani-hanketta saavuttivat hyviä tuloksia: 98 % rahoituksesta käytettiin suunnitellusti ohjelman toteutukseen, hankkeiden hallinto oli tehokasta ja mukautui muutoksiin. Vuonna 2024 ohjelmaan osallistui yhteensä 173 053 hyödynsaajaa. Tästä määrästä 157 180 oli oikeudenhaltijoita ja yli 15 873 vastuunkantajaa. Oikeudenhaltijoista 54,3 % oli naisia ja tyttöjä ja 8,8 % vammaisia henkilöitä.

Yhtenevät megatrendit korostivat mukautuvien, osallistavien ja ilmastokestävien lähestymistapojen tarvetta kehitysyhteistyössä. Lisäksi vuoden aikana kohdennettiin uudelleen 888 000 euroa innovatiivisiin kehitystoimiin, jotka tukivat muun muassa ilmastokestävyyttä, vammaisten henkilöiden asemaa ja inklusiivista koulutusta. Lähetyseuran asiantuntijat tarjosivat kumppaneille tukea kapasiteetin vahvistamisessa, riskien arvioinnissa ja ohjelmien suunnittelussa. Näin kumppanit pystyivät sopeutumaan kriiseihin, tekemään tarvittavia muutoksia hankkeisiin, vahvistamaan henkilöstöä ja tuottamaan laadukkaita toimenpiteitä haavoittuville ryhmille. Kehitysyhteistyöohjelman rahoitus ylsi 7,3 miljoonaan euroon, josta ulkoministeriön osuus oli 6,3 miljoonaa euroa. Hallinnon osuus oli 10 % kokonaisuudesta. Kehitysviestintään, vaikuttamiseen ja globaalikasvatukseen käytettiin 156 882 euroa (noin 2,2 %).

Lähetyseura oli keskeinen toimija kehityspoliittisessa vaikuttamisessa. Lähetyseura osallistui vuoropuheluun poliitikkojen, viranomaisten, yritysten ja kansalaisyhteiskunnan toimijoiden kanssa sekä edisti keskeisiä teemoja kuten ilmasto-oikeudenmukaisuutta, ihmisoikeuksia, verotusta ja yritysvastuuta. Lähetyseura oli myös mukana järjestämässä kansainvälisiä tapahtumia ja webinaareja, tuki kansalaisyhteiskunnan vaikuttamistyötä ja toimi asiantuntijana muun muassa sukupuolten tasa-arvon ja lasten oikeuksien edistämässä sekä rauhanprosesseissa. Vaikuttamistyön ansiosta ilmastomuutos nostettiin Suomen ulko- ja turvallisuuspoliittiseen selontekoon ja ilmastomuutosta priorisoitiin kauppa- ja kehityspoliitikassa. Tämän medianäkyvyyden myötä COP29:n uutisoinnissa huomioitiin globaali etelä ja Lähetyseura mainittiin lähteenä tapaamisen raporteissa. Lähetyseuran ehdotuksesta EU-neuvottelijoiden sopeutustoimien mittareihin lisättiin alkuperäiskansojen tieto ja vammaisten huomiointi.

Lähetyseuran kehitysyhteistyöohjelmassa saavutettiin merkittävää edistystä ilmastokestävyydessä, koulutuksessa ja vammaisten henkilöiden oikeuksien edistämässä. Ohjelman tuella perustettiin yli 119 katastrofiriskien hallinnan komiteaa ja koulutettiin 15 000 henkilöä riskienhallinnassa; lisäksi 6 700 kotitaloutta sopeutui paremmin ilmastomuutoksen vaikutuksiin ja lähes 16 500 pienviljelijää sai tukea kestäväan maatalouteen. Osallistava koulutus onnistui tavoitteissaan monikielisessä opetuksessa, opettajien koulutuksessa ja syrjäytyneiden opiskelijoiden osallistumisessa. Vammaisten oikeuksista koulutettiin 2 500 kansalaisjärjestöjen ja vammaisten omien järjestöjen edustajaa, tämän lisäksi 3 000 viranomaista osallistui Vammaisten henkilöiden oikeuksia koskevan yleissopimuksen toteutukseen. Lainsäädäntöä ja osallistavaa päätöksentekoa uudistettiin ja vammaisten henkilöiden oikeudet paranivat paikallisyhteisöissä. Läpileikkaavien teemojen eli ilmastokestävyyden, sukupuolten tasa-arvon ja vammaisten henkilöiden oikeuksien osalta kehitettiin uusia seuranta- ja analyysimenetelmiä, joiden avulla edistettiin haavoittuvassa asemassa olevien ihmisten oikeuksia. Lähetyseura vahvisti myös suojelutoimiaan (Safeguarding) perustamalla uuden tehtävän, joka keskittyy yksinomaan suojelukysymyksiin, sekä käynnistämällä väärinkäytösten raportointikanavan, valitusten käsittelytoimikunnan ja henkilöstön koulutukset keskeisistä toimintaperiaatteista.

1. Changes in the operating environment

1.1 Global trends in 2024

The Felm Development Cooperation Program is implemented in nine countries on three continents. The program countries are Cambodia, Colombia, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Myanmar, Nepal, Senegal, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. The program also has regional activities in Eastern Africa beyond the program countries. The program is adjusting and responding to the societal and environmental changes in the global and local contexts.

The rules-based international order continued to erode in 2024, as violations of international conventions persisted with impunity, often with the tacit or explicit support of major Western powers. Geopolitical tensions intensified, and global confrontation deepened.

Armed conflicts spread across 36 countries. Especially the conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, and in the Sahel triggered profound ripple effects across the development landscape, straining aid flows and reshaping both priorities and diplomatic alliances. These conflicts also widened the divide between the Global South and North, with growing criticism of Western double standards, particularly in relation to the grave human rights violations and allegations of genocide in Gaza. Felm and its partners have been able to react quickly at a local level in program countries such as in Myanmar, in Ethiopia and in Mauritania

Democracy remained in decline, while autocratic governance gained ground. Across all nine development cooperation partner countries, civil society space shrank alarmingly with deteriorated freedom of expression, tighter funding conditions, regulatory pressure, and diminishing donor flexibility undermined locally led initiatives and community resilience.

The global food crisis, driven by increasingly erratic climate patterns, was exacerbated by these conflicts, leading to a surge in chronic hunger worldwide. Humanitarian needs grew more complex and prolonged, while many countries in the Global South faced the risk of declining international assistance and shifting donor priorities. In Ukraine, Russia's ongoing war of aggression led to escalating humanitarian demands. The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza worsened, with Israel's military operations and restrictions on aid delivery compounding the suffering of civilians.

Climate change remained the most significant threat to the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable communities in Felm's program areas. The year 2024 followed the record-breaking heat of 2023, with continued extreme weather events including devastating floods, prolonged droughts, and intensified storms. Glacial melting accelerated, Arctic Sea ice remained at historic lows, and greenhouse gas concentrations continued to rise. The lingering effects of the 2023–2024 El Niño further disrupted global weather systems and food production, deepening food insecurity in many regions. The irreversible impacts of climate change were increasingly evident in Felm's program areas, where communities faced mounting losses and damages, reinforcing the urgency of climate-focused interventions. Women's role in climate adaptation and mitigation remained largely overlooked in program countries, while they were often harshly impacted by disasters and declining livelihoods.

Global inflation persisted into 2024, continuing to drive up the cost of food, essential goods, and project implementation. Interventions faced rising operational costs, necessitating increased funding to maintain impact and reach.

In Finland, the political climate shifted further in 2024, with the government's austerity measures and new policy positions raising concerns about the future of civil society. Funding cuts further reducing civil society space and affecting development cooperation prompted a strong response from Finnish NGOs. Program support organizations united to advocate for the protection of civil society and the continuation of Finland's development commitments. Felm actively participated in public discourse, challenging the rationale behind development aid cuts and defending the essential role of civil society actors in both domestic and international contexts.

1.2 Operating environment in Felm partner countries

In Cambodia, Prime Minister Hun Manet strengthened his leadership in 2024, maintaining tight control over civil society and opposition. New regulations and licensing requirements further restricted independent media and activists. Despite these constraints, civil society groups adapted. The economy remained heavily reliant on Chinese investments, raising environmental and community concerns. The Cambodian education sector took a hard hit with the withdrawal of Sweden as a development partner. Inclusive education remained hindered by stigma and inadequate infrastructure, especially for girls and persons with disabilities.

In Myanmar, the protracted conflict continued to generate widespread humanitarian needs, as conditions deteriorated further, especially for vulnerable populations. The military junta's draft forced many young people to flee, seek asylum abroad, or join armed groups. While some foreign organizations still operate in Yangon, the overall environment remains dangerous, affecting Felm's partners. Myanmar endures severe threats to civil society under military rule, though digital tools offer limited avenues for resistance. Myanmar is one of the hardest hit countries by the shift of funding towards other conflicts and disrupted support for development. Education is deeply disrupted by political unrest, particularly affecting ethnic and displaced children. Climate action is stalled by instability, and gender-based violence has intensified since the coup.

Nepal experiences authoritarian tendencies, but youth clubs and local policies help sustain civic engagement. The socioeconomic landscape was shaped by the upcoming 2026 graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status. Tourism rebounded by 30%, but political instability and dissatisfaction with ruling parties grew. This unrest was reflected in rising support for pro-monarchy movements and criticism following the Kathmandu floods. Marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities and Dalits, continued to face challenges, while mass migration left many women with increased economic responsibilities. Inclusive education is challenged by limited budgets, teacher shortages, and caste-based discrimination. The country is vulnerable to natural disasters and struggles with effective climate planning.

In Ethiopia, political and humanitarian challenges persisted. Access to concessional resources and sustainable climate declined and economic growth slowed down. The Pretoria Peace Agreement brought some stability to Tigray, but conflicts in Amhara and Oromia displaced nearly five million people. Over 21 million people had humanitarian needs due to conflict and drought, including over 15 million people facing severe food insecurity. Civil society is heavily monitored, yet journalists and activists persist in advocating for justice. Positive developments included a national dialogue,

transitional justice policy, and resumed basic services. Education, however, remains strained by rapid population growth, unemployment, and ethnic tensions. Cultural norms and conflict-related violence significantly hinder gender equality.

In Tanzania, the economy grew by 5.1% in 2023-2024, with inflation held at 3.2%. Opposition parties gained momentum but faced repression, including disappearances and blocked protests. Press freedom improved slightly under President Samia Suluhu Hassan, though restrictive laws like the Cybercrimes Act and widespread self-censorship remain. El Niño brought floods and droughts, affecting agriculture. Rapid population growth strains services, while churches promote peace and justice. Rural schools suffer from a lack of inclusive resources, limiting educational access. Gender inequality affects access to education and employment opportunities.

In Zimbabwe, economic instability continued despite reforms and the introduction of the Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG) currency in April 2024. Political uncertainty followed the 2023 elections, with limited opposition activity and increased regulation of NGOs and media. A cholera outbreak and extreme weather worsened conditions. Droughts and floods strain agriculture, worsened by governance issues. The government pursued foreign investment and human rights reforms, including abolishing the death penalty and expanding abortion rights. The economic crisis severely limits educational access, especially in rural areas and for students with disabilities.

In Mauritania, 2024 was relatively stable. Peaceful presidential elections and balanced foreign relations supported economic growth, though 30% of the population still lives in poverty. Security threats from Mali and Islamist extremists remain, but the government has maintained control through conservative religious governance and suppression of dissent, earning the country the nickname "port of peace." However, Mauritania struggles with high school dropout rates and teacher shortages. Extreme weather events drive food insecurity. Child marriage and violence against women persist.

In Senegal, civil society faced restrictions ahead of the 2024 elections, which the opposition won peacefully. The new government began distancing itself from France and emphasized neo-Africanism and regional cooperation. It aims to mediate between Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso and revive ECOWAS. Youth and civil society support the government, but economic struggles, rising debt, and conservative religious influence pose challenges. Senegal faces declining education quality and overcrowded classrooms, particularly in rural areas.

In Colombia violence surged, affecting peasant leaders, land claimants, and ex-combatants. Armed groups like ELN and FARC dissidents expanded control, causing civilian casualties and displacements. Peace accord implementation remains mixed, with only 32% fully enacted. Women, children, Indigenous leaders, and human rights defenders face threats and violence. Social movements and religious actors continue peacebuilding efforts amid ongoing conflict and polarization. Rural education is underfunded and disrupted by conflict, affecting Indigenous learners and learners with disabilities. Deforestation and land conflicts highlight the underrecognized role of rural women in climate efforts. Gender-based violence and underrepresentation, especially among Indigenous and Afro-Colombian women, remain pressing issues.

2. Coordination and collaboration

2.1 Cooperation and coordination with other CSOs in Finland

The Finnish CSOs receiving MFA Program-Based Support (PBS) continued to engage in discussions with the MFA regarding the content and process reforms of the PBS process. Felm was a member of the Fingo task force to comment on the PBS process. Felm also shared experiences in the KPMG audit process. Moreover, the coordination group engaged in joint advocacy efforts engaging in the policy dialogue on Finnish development policy. The group commented on draft versions of major policy papers such as the Strategy on Civil Society and the government report on International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation. The group also exchanged ideas and experiences in adaptive management principles and enablers as well as the PMEL practices in support of adaptive management and further shared this information with the MFA. Moreover, Felm chaired the consultative sessions of the OECD DAC Peer Evaluation on Development Cooperation.

Felm actively participated in development policy advocacy with Fingo's member organizations (see chapter 3.5). As a member of the Finnish development cooperation CSOs' Working Group on Quality and Impact, Felm participated in the sharing of good practices and finding solutions to common challenges, including decolonized program work and monitoring of advocacy work. Additionally, Felm was part of the Fingo-coordinated core group focused on shifting power in global development, which supported many of Felm's internal processes, especially regarding decolonization, anti-racism, and MEL practice development.

2.2 Cooperation and other funding sources

In Tanzania, Felm is continuing to support an EU-funded consortium. The consortium consists of three Tanzanian organizations: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, C-Sema, and the Amani Girls Organization. It is supported by associate organizations including Fida, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the Lutheran World Federation, the Tanzanian Development Trust, ACT Alliance, and Felm. In 2024 Felm provided technical support to the consortium on EU compliance and interim reporting as well as daily operational support to the project staff. Felm is also operating as a secretary in the Project Consortium Coordination Committee and is a member of the Project Steering Committee. Felm also provides 8.31% (€90,584) co-funding for the project.

In Cambodia, together with its partner Integral Cooperation in Cambodia (ICC), Felm received additional funding from EKOenergy to increase the scope of the actions in Ratanakiri province. With EKOenergy funding, 8 solar water pumps with 3 000-liter water tanks will be installed to support 1,651 households' food security during the dry season when farming is difficult or impossible. The project is planned to be implemented by the end of 2025.

2.3 Multisectoral cooperation

From November 2023 to May 2024, Felm collaborated with Aalto University's IDBM program on a multidisciplinary industry project course. A student group was tasked to explore how funding for humanitarian aid, development cooperation, and peace work could better support locally led and sustainable change. The group conducted research in Ethiopia, Denmark, and the Netherlands,

leading to a report with recommendations to strengthen equality and local leadership in peacebuilding funding.

In 2024, Felm received funding from the Gofore Foundation and started a joint project with private sector partner Valoa Impact Ltd to improve participatory measurement in locally led peacebuilding. This initiative focuses on co-designing a digital solution that addresses participation, ownership, and reporting challenges by incorporating local needs and contexts. The project runs through 2025 and aims to pilot the developed concept with partners.

3. Implementation strategies

3.1 Program activities

The 35 partner projects advanced as planned, reaching a 98% overall funding absorption rate—97.5% for general programs and 99% for disability inclusion—with just one project below 80%. Three new humanitarian responses were funded based on partners' needs in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Myanmar (see chapter 3.2). Felm's strong program management and advisory support supported the excellent partner performance with organized management cycles, results-based capacity building, and peer learning workshops contributing to positive outcomes.

A mid-term evaluation reviewed environmental changes and their effects on beneficiaries and project performance, highlighting Felm's flexibility. Regular meetings, financial advising, and tailored support reinforced high administrative standards. Partners also requested greater advocacy support, particularly in climate resilience, inclusive education, and disability rights, along with increased cross-sector collaboration and stakeholder mapping.

The two Myanmar projects adapted to security risks, but challenges such as military checkpoints limited efforts to support rural persons with disabilities. Around 200 beneficiaries at eight schools gained improved access through teacher training and awareness. The multilingual education project in Myanmar spent 78% of its budget, falling short of targets; similarly, Tanzania's inclusive learning project did not reach the 90% expenditure goal. In Colombia, community violence led to relocation of key people and activities, with new stakeholders brought in.

Innovation within the program entails piloting new approaches across various contexts. Although Felm recognizes the importance of continued exploration, innovation, and pilot initiatives, circumstances over the past year have not been particularly conducive to experimentation. In the spring, civil society organizations—including Felm—undertook preparations for potential policy changes. During the autumn, Felm's efforts were primarily directed towards internal processes related to change negotiations.

In parallel with the program implementation in 2024, Felm revised its' global strategy and program 2026-2029. Felm will implement its program work based on these two documents starting in 2026.

3.2 Alterations to the plans and reallocations

A total of €887,919 in unused or unallocated funds was redistributed to 25 partner projects addressing the partners' needs. Key allocations included: €141,100 to Ethiopia (4 projects), €140,000 to Cambodia (4), €138,000 to Zimbabwe (3), €108,600 to Tanzania (4), €92,000 to Mauritania (2), €89,219 to Nepal (6), €64,700 to Senegal (2), €3,000 (plus non-monetary) to Myanmar (2), €8,600 to Colombia (1), and €101,700 for program development (3).

Funds were reallocated for the following purposes:

Climate resilience and food security	€312,700	10 projects, 5 countries
Marginalized groups	€174,500	7 projects, 5 countries
Urgent needs (food assistance etc.)	€170,000	Ethiopia and Zimbabwe
Program support/quality assurance	€164,700	5 projects
Persons with disabilities	€118,319	7 projects, 6 countries
Inclusive education	€69,900	5 projects, 3 countries

The MFA showed flexibility, enabling adaptive fund use between development and humanitarian work. Internal budget reallocations strengthened staffing: one full-time equivalent person-year shifted from administrative costs to the B-section and another 0.75 person-year added to enhance quality and capacity. Training modules were reorganized to fit partners' needs, reducing training events and saving costs.

3.3 Humanitarian aid

An additional €200,980 was reallocated from MFA support to the Felm Development Cooperation Program, reaching 14,779 people in vulnerable positions. In two project areas in rural Zimbabwe, MFA support funds to the Felm Development Cooperation Program were reallocated to overcome "lean periods" during climate-related droughts while project participants were adjusting to climate-resilient agriculture and other income-generating activities. In Ethiopia, budget reallocations benefited persons and groups such as internally displaced persons, their host communities, and ethnic minorities in areas that suffer from the consequences and aftermath of protracted conflict in Ethiopia, with focus on Tigray. Also, the conflict in neighboring South Sudan that induced cross-border refugee mobility and temporary settlement in Ethiopia, together with climate-related conditions, contributed to the need for humanitarian food and livelihood support through budget reallocation. In Zimbabwe, the Gwai Grandmothers' Group, which supports orphaned children, was allocated humanitarian funds for food security and nutritional gardens for the benefit of children and other persons in vulnerable positions, especially persons with disabilities.

In 2024, Felm addressed lifesaving needs through supporting humanitarian interventions aligned with its humanitarian policy, focusing on sudden and protracted crises. Humanitarian aid was delivered through partners and networks, with €536 650 channeled via the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) and Children's Bank, directly benefiting 39,427 people, including 19,882 children and 1,196 persons with disabilities. The DRF funded 11 projects in 10 countries (€384,000): Bolivia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Tanzania, Thailand, Zimbabwe, and Ukraine. Also, post-earthquake work in Syria was completed during the first quarter of 2024. Aid was channeled primarily through bilateral partnerships with churches and other faith-based organizations, addressing urgent needs such as food, water, hygiene, and shelter. In large-scale crises (e.g., Gaza, Ukraine, Syria), Felm contributed via ACT

Alliance, focusing on health care, mental health and psychosocial support, shelter, and support for groups that face barriers in accessing support, such as elderly people. Children's Bank supported six humanitarian projects in six countries (€152,650): Bolivia, Cambodia, Mauritania, Myanmar, Palestine, and Venezuela, safeguarding children's rights and addressing lifesaving needs through food, hygiene, education, and medical support for children in vulnerable positions and their caretakers.

3.4 Advisory support in the regions

Throughout 2024, Felm's thematic, administrative, and financial advisors in the regions actively supported the partner organizations. Felm's advisors contributed to capacity-building through peer learning and risk assessment, while also helping partners restructure programs, reallocate budgets during crises, and strengthen staffing for greater impact. This collaborative approach enabled partner organizations to develop the quality of their interventions, reach marginalized groups more effectively, and to adapt to evolving development and humanitarian needs in the communities.

In 2024, advisory support represented 12,6% of total regional program implementation. For MFA-funded part-time roles, time was recorded and costs allocated as required by funding sources. Table 1 shows the advisors' working time in the regions and the realized share of working time during the period. Actual advisory support hours were 23,2% below the planned 16,05 person-years.

Table 1. Felm advisors in regional positions during 2024

Location	Position	Actual working time
Global		
	Advisor for Climate Resilience	65 %
	Advisor for Disability Inclusion	67 %
Regional		
Latin America	Program Manager	36 %
	Advisor for Communications	-
	Regional Director	18 %
West Africa	Program Manager	9 %
	Advisor for Financial Administration and Good Governance	-
	Senior Program Manager	39 %
Eastern and Southern Africa	Program Manager	43 %
	Program Manager	26 %
	Advisor for Financial Administration and Good Governance	39 %
	Advisor for Communications	43 %
	Senior Program Manager	21 %
	Regional Director	16 %
South and Southeast Asia	Program Manager	70 %
	Program Manager	3 %

	Advisor for Livelihood and Food Security	30 %
	Advisor for MLE	30 %
	Advisor for Financial Administration and Good Governance	28 %
Country Specific		
Ethiopia	Program Manager	71 %
	Program Manager	37 %
	Advisor for Financial Administration and Good Governance	29 %
	Advisor for Inclusive Education	100 %
	Country Director	5 %
	Country Director	17 %
Tanzania	Program Manager	43 %
	Advisor for Education	99 %
Nepal	Program Manager	28 %
	Program Manager	37 %
	Advisor for Communications	41 %
	Country Director	61 %
Myanmar	Program Manager	8 %
	Advisor for Disability Inclusion	73 %
Person years		12,32

3.5 Advocacy work in Finland

Felm is among the key civil society contributors to Finnish development policy dialogue and one of the actors involved in maintaining the NGO “Agile” development policy coordination group for joint advocacy to strengthen the political governance of development cooperation. In 2024, activities included both formal and informal meetings with politicians at public hearings and events, media outreach, and dialogues with government officials. Felm also participates in other forums such as the Development Policy Committee (Kehityspoliittinen toimikunta, KPT), where the leading advocacy specialist has provided expertise and ideas for fostering impactful dialogue with political leaders, directing the research resources of the KPT to salient development issues such as mobilizing innovative financial flows and sharpening the statements and public outreach of the KPT. Felm reported 81 contacts with public authorities and decision-makers in the newly established transparency register.

In the thematic areas, Felm contributed to Finnish policy on tax and development by engaging in program reviews, advocating for continued funding, and drawing attention to discussions around a potential UN tax committee and convention. Felm's work includes human rights advocacy and efforts to support civil society space, described further below. The organization engaged with businesses through joint advocacy initiatives, project proposals, and evidence-based dialogue with decision-makers and academia. New development policy initiatives encountered limited political space. Felm's advocacy supported government consideration of civil society freedoms and the prioritization of

CSOs in development finance. Felm also participated in the OECD DAC review of Finland through Fingo and the Development Policy Committee, with OECD recommendations reflecting some of Felm's positions.

For climate advocacy, Felm participates in two coalitions: the Finnish development cooperation climate group (led by Felm) working to influence national climate finance policies, and the ACT Alliance climate advocacy coalition focused on justice within the UNFCCC and other international contexts. In 2024, efforts were made to enhance the evidence base for equitable climate finance. Outreach included magazines, newspapers, and three research studies supporting a human rights-based approach to climate foreign policy and finance. Examination of loss and damage has provided tools for developing programmatic responses to climate issues within ACT Alliance and beyond.

Three notable impacts include: Climate change was incorporated into the governmental report on Finnish foreign and security policy. Climate action became one of the three priority areas in the Finnish trade and development policy report. Following media training and engagement with reporters, coverage of Baku COP29 addressed Global South priorities in these negotiations for the first time, with Felm cited in reports from Baku. Based on Felm's suggestion, EU negotiators included a focus on Indigenous knowledge and disability inclusion in their final adaptation metrics decision.

Felm demonstrated significant engagement in human rights advocacy through various national and international collaborations. Its efforts encompassed impactful initiatives such as co-organizing an international webinar with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to launch the Freedom of Religion and Belief Toolkit, which has since been utilized by the EU Commission for training purposes. Additionally, Felm played a crucial role in events at the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68), emphasizing the implications of tax abuse on women and advocating for gender-responsive climate finance. Collaborating with ACT Alliance, Felm also organized a side event at the Human Rights Council (HRC) to spotlight the contributions of women in peace processes, drawing participation from nearly 30 states as well as leading international stakeholders. Beyond these global platforms, Felm actively supported civil society efforts domestically and across Europe, contributing to campaigns like "Act Because You Can" and monitoring developments in Finland's national civil society strategy. Additionally, Felm provided statements during the civil society consultations held in connection with Finland's membership in the Human Rights Council, with a particular emphasis on the rights of people in vulnerable situations in the countries where Felm operates.

Felm's advocacy further extended into critical domains, including taxation and corporate responsibility. It vigorously championed the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) and engaged in tax-related campaigns to promote equitable policy measures. In Cambodia, Felm provided substantial support to a coalition advocating for children's rights within the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, facilitating training and drafting recommendations. Meanwhile, its involvement in Finland's OECD Development Policy Review showcased its commitment to influencing policy at the national level, with Felm representing civil society during parliamentary discussions on the review's findings. Across its diverse engagements, Felm consistently highlighted pressing human rights issues, including gender equality, climate justice, civic participation, and challenges faced by marginalized communities in regions such as Myanmar, Ethiopia, and Israel and Palestine, showcasing its unwavering dedication to advancing human rights globally.

3.6 Development communications

In 2024, Felm's development communications produced a multitude of interesting and engaging content in various media channels and reached all together over 2.2 million people in different age groups. Felm communicated about the program results and raised awareness of development cooperation.

One of Felm's development communications initiatives is to closely follow one specific project from the start to the end of the project. In 2024, Felm produced videos about a climate resilience project in Nepal as part of this initiative. These videos have reached an audience of around 46,000 as of March 2025. The results of the project were also addressed in advertorial articles published in newspapers such as Maaseudun Tulevaisuus, Turun Sanomat Extra, Hufvudstadsbladet, Västra Nyland, Borgåbladet, Ilkka-Pohjalainen, Savon Sanomat and Karjalainen. Together these articles reached an audience of nearly 693,000 people.

Felm also participated in the security discussion by contributing to the "Kokonaisturvallisuus" section published in the magazine Suomen Kuvalehti and Helsingin Sanomat. In the article, Felm raised four security risks that are not recognized: the climate crisis, the influence of Russia in Africa, lack of media freedom and shrinking civil society space, and youth unemployment. These pieces together reached around 500,000 people. Felm also published an article about the role of churches in development cooperation in various parish and church-related newspapers, reaching around 530,000 people.

During the year, Felm created videos featuring Finnish photographer Laura Malmivaara and Oscar Rutenge from Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service (TCRS) discussing forests and climate change, highlighting regional developments since Malmivaara's 2018 visit to Tanzania. Additional videos covered wood-saving stoves in Tanzania and Zimbabwe, as well as mushroom cultivation and multilingual education in Cambodia, reaching over 186,000 people on social media by March 2025.

Felm also promoted the Colombia 360 and Tanzania 360 virtual reality games, aimed at raising awareness of community-based development, through exhibitions, educational magazines (reaching 157,600), and social media influencers. Influencers Ville Mäkipelto and PapiPike's videos about the games reached a combined 72,300 young viewers. Felm further published articles and posts on development themes and cooperation results throughout the year.

3.7 Global citizenship education

Global citizenship education materials from Felm's Globaalikasvatusportaali (global citizenship education portal) have been moved to Felm's website under the materials section for centralization and cost-effectiveness. This open-access site organizes materials by theme without requiring registration.

Global Agents, a platform to boost understanding of sustainable development, is enhanced with an interactive game based on Finnish primary and junior high school curricula to support Agenda 2030 themes. The game teaches students sustainable choices through age-appropriate and inspiring exercises. The Swedish translation of the game was completed in 2025 to ensure accessibility in both official languages. By 2024, the game reached its final testing phase, with collaboration planned with Lasten ja Nuorten keskus for launch and distribution. Five testing groups in autumn 2024 found the game enjoyable and aligned with curriculum goals, appreciating its mix of information, tasks, and videos.

The portal and game were finalized in 2024, reaching their target audience, with growth expected in 2025. Marketing plans include features in Finnish and Swedish teacher magazines. The game launched at the Educa fair in January 2025.

4. Results

In 2024, the program continued to deliver strong results across its core thematic areas. Despite fragile political environments and shrinking civic space in several partner countries, the program has remained on course, with partners demonstrating adaptability and commitment to reaching communities under difficult conditions. Most output-level targets have already been achieved, and there are promising signs of progress toward longer-term outcomes. While comprehensive outcome-level data collection was not conducted this year, limiting the scope of available data especially in climate resilience and inclusive education, evidence from partner reporting and field monitoring highlights several areas of notable success. In the 2025 reporting, this evidence will be further confirmed by surveys with the households in the partner communities, as well as with individual students and persons with disabilities.

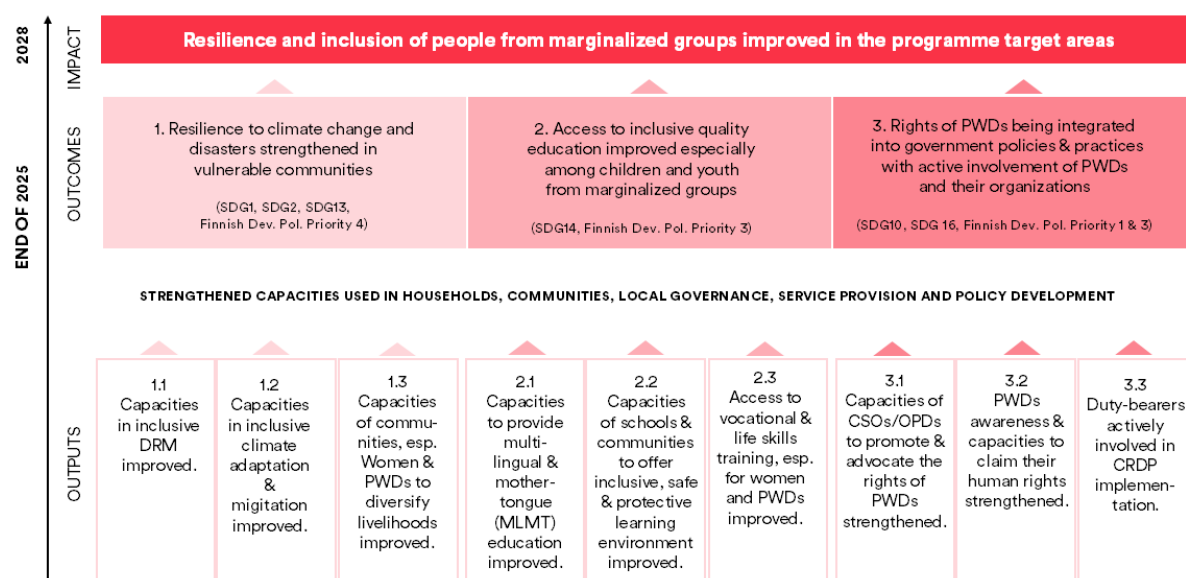
A major achievement was recorded in disaster risk management (DRM), as the partner communities' interest in and engagement with inclusive and functioning DRM structures already surpasses the expected numbers. This is particularly significant given the increasing challenges posed by climate change, which continues to raise the bar for resilience work. In inclusive education, the program has seen steady growth in the enrollment of students with disabilities in partnering schools. Adult literacy and vocational training, particularly in Senegal, contributed to women's increased confidence, decision-making power, and economic independence.

Advocacy for the rights of persons with disabilities continued to advance. In Burundi, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) became recognized actors in national climate policy, while in Rwanda, they influenced inclusive development strategies. These examples reflect strengthened civil society engagement and growing recognition of OPDs in policy processes. The program's flexibility also enabled timely responses to emerging needs, with unspent funds reallocated to humanitarian support in program areas, demonstrating a commitment to a holistic and context-sensitive approach.

Capacity development and peer learning remain key strengths. Partners reported that Felm's support in program and financial management, networking, and thematic learning has improved the quality and effectiveness of their work. Peer learning in particular has supported collaboration and mutual exchange across thematic areas, contributing to strengthened partner capacity and more consistent integration of inclusive approaches.

The program's Theory of Change continues to hold, with evidence suggesting that the intended results from outputs to outcomes are functioning as expected in many areas. For example, the establishment of inclusive DRM structures and the diversification of livelihoods have contributed to improved community resilience, while teacher training and awareness-raising among caregivers have supported increased enrollment of students with disabilities. Similarly, capacity building of OPDs has led to their active participation in policy processes and legislative reforms.

Table 2: Felm Development Programme Theory of Change



These examples suggest that the program’s strategic assumptions remain largely valid and that outputs are contributing to the expected outcomes. However, the horizontal linkages related to vocational and skills training and livelihoods diversification between outcome areas may not have worked as expected: there are reports that it is often a struggle to find markets to the goods produced by the participants of the skills trainings. The underlying assumption related to markets has not held true as expected. This should be addressed in the planning of the next phase of programming, learning from successful interventions. For example, in Ethiopia, linking trained persons to government services has proved successful.

The MFA aggregate indicator data is presented in appendix 7.

4.1 Outcome area 1: Resilience to climate change and disasters



Contributing to SDGs 1, 2, and 13, outcome area 1 aims to strengthen resilience to climate change in vulnerable communities through inclusive disaster risk management (DRM), sustainable, community-led adaptation and mitigation, and improved livelihoods. The Felm approach to climate resilience is holistic and inclusive community-based development with a focus on food security, sustainable livelihoods, and climate change mitigation and adaptation, with a special focus on women and persons with disabilities. Based on the reported outcomes, resilience to climate change continues to grow in the program’s partner communities, indicating that the program is producing the desired change.

Substantial change is ongoing in Felm’s partners’ projects implemented in Cambodia, Colombia, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Nepal, Senegal, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, as communities realize adapted and context-specific approaches that respond to varied vulnerabilities and climate risks. The 2024 results, along with the cumulative achievements since 2022, indicate that the program has contributed to improving the climate resilience of vulnerable communities. Although outcome-level indicators requiring household surveying were not reported this year, the available data indicates that the 2025

targets have already been exceeded. In addition, narrative reports and other evidence demonstrate strong qualitative progress under Outcome 1. For example, the proposed activity of funding inclusive and functioning disaster risk management committees (OI 1.1) has been very popular, and the number of committees has already reached 119, surpassing the target of 100.

By 2024's end, committees developed 72 local disaster risk reduction plans (exceeding the target of 70), and 15,300 people were trained in disaster risk reduction (target: 11,600), with over 5,000 trained in 2024. In Tanzania (TZK001), communities created 37 management plans, and more than 7,500 people have been trained since the project's start, including 5000 persons trained in 2024 only.

Table 3: Disaster risk management results

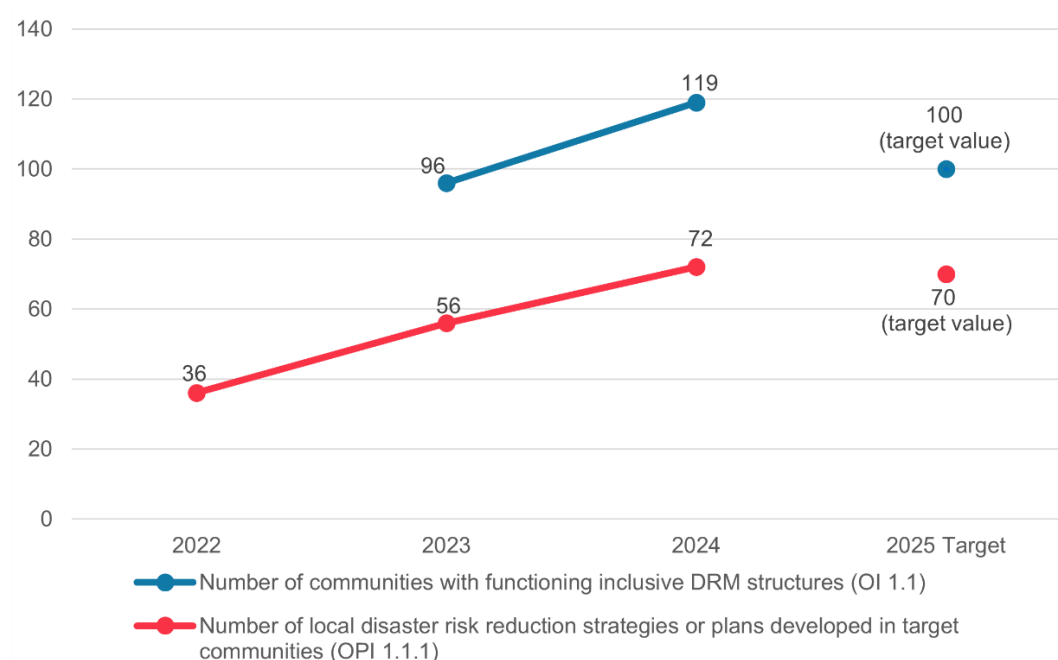
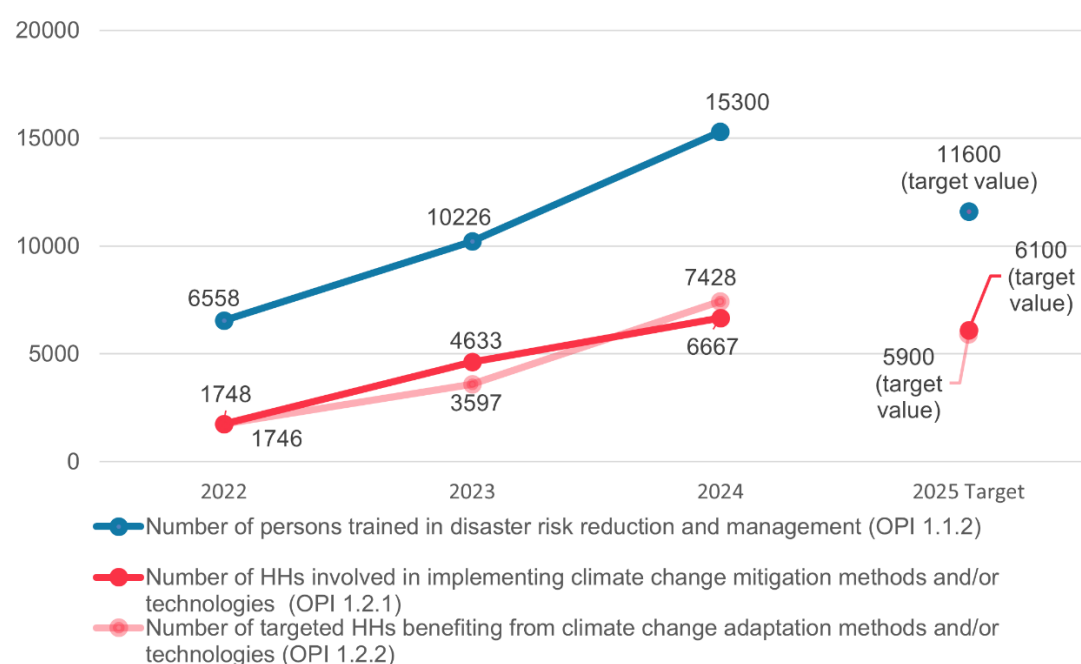


Table 4: Climate change resilience results



Significant progress was made in community capacity for inclusive climate adaptation and mitigation. By 2024, nearly 6,700 households altogether have adopted climate change mitigation methods, exceeding the 6,100 target. Over 7,400 households benefited from adaptation technologies, surpassing the expected 5,900. In Nepal, more than 2,100 households used adaptation methods, and around 750 applied climate-resilient, gender-responsive agricultural technologies. Nearly 120 households received women-friendly equipment like portable irrigation systems and brush cutters, boosting income and reducing labor. These initiatives also improved social status and dietary diversity among marginalized communities. Partners in Senegal and Zimbabwe realize drought-resistant agricultural methods and diversify their income beyond farming to build more solid financial buffers to climate change. In Senegal, communities are drawing on traditional knowledge, reintroducing resilient crop varieties and water-saving practices with the help of elders and leaders. These efforts strengthen resilience, preserve culture, and support generational knowledge transfer.

First signs of the program's impact are visible in increasing climate advocacy. In Ethiopia (ETK006), community leaders gained confidence through involvement in decision-making, leading to greater cohesion and collective action. The project also built stronger networks with local stakeholders, establishing lasting support for climate resilience and sustainable development. Additionally, social cohesion improved as residents created internal savings groups, strengthening both resilience and solidarity. In Nepal, the climate advocacy work bore fruit as community members successfully encouraged municipalities to allocate 13.5 million rupees for climate adaptation projects like tree planting, water conservation, and clean energy (NPK003). In Ethiopia (ETK005), refugee camps supported by Felm partners saw increased demand for local briquettes and tree seedlings, reflecting a shift toward sustainability.

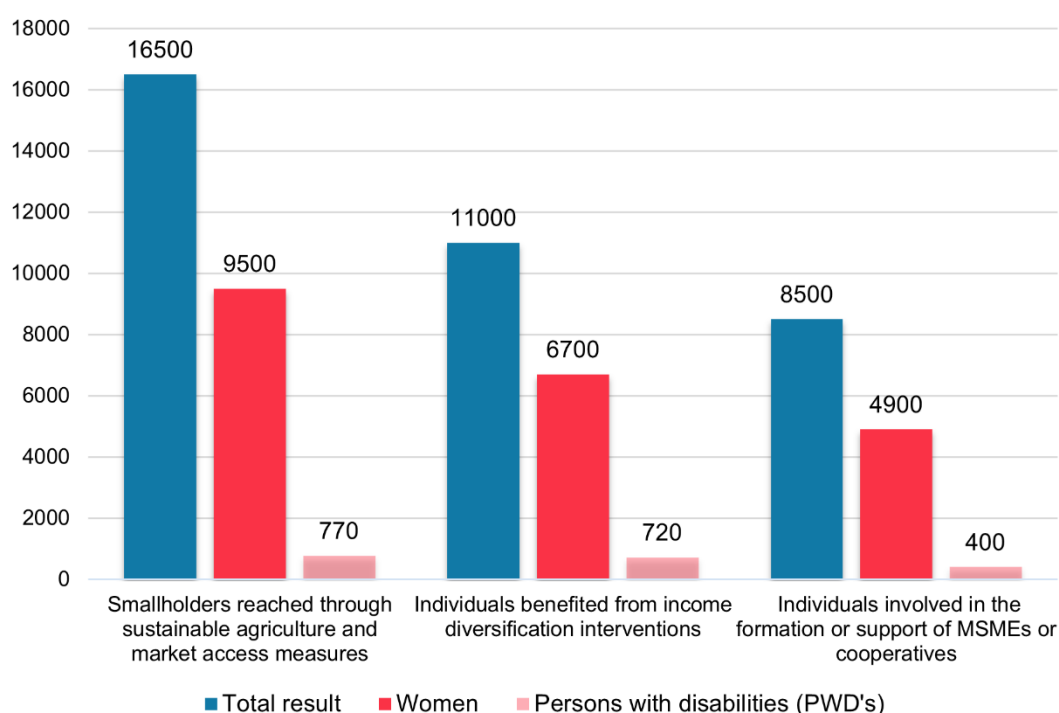
Changes are also perceivable in strengthening and diversifying sustainable livelihoods and improved financial resilience of communities. By the end of 2024, nearly 16,500 smallholders—over 9,500 women and about 770 persons with disabilities—were supported to boost sustainable agriculture or market access, surpassing the target of 11,200 (OPI 1.3.1). More than 11,000 individuals, including almost 6,700 women and about 720 persons with disabilities, benefited from initiatives to diversify income sources beyond staple crops, exceeding the goal of 6,000 (OPI 1.3.2). For instance, in Nepal (NPK003), over 300 households expanded their incomes through activities such as livestock farming, tailoring, and snack shops. In Mauritania (MRK001), a positive cycle was created by the beneficiaries reinvesting the profits of their income-generating activities in diversified income sources such as a small grocery store, a cell-phone recharging and money transfer kiosk, and tailor shops. Several beneficiaries accessed savings and credit through microfinance services for the first time. Additionally, new green livelihoods emerged as “barefoot engineers” began working in solar energy and manufacturing wood-saving stoves (MRK002). Nearly 8,500 people participated in new or supported micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises MSMEs or cooperatives (OPI 1.3.3), surpassing the target of 5,900. Of these, 58% were women and 5% were persons with disabilities. Reports from partners and Felm's monitoring show that most climate resilience projects have diversified livelihoods, enabled communities to add value to their products, and improved both income generation and household food security.

The program demonstrates a strong commitment to gender justice and disability inclusion in various projects, notably in Senegal and Nepal, where both local initiatives and policy advocacy highlight the benefits of inclusive resilience strategies. In Ethiopia, participation in decision-making improved confidence and leadership skills, while in Senegal, reviving traditional drought-resistant methods involved marginalized groups and ensured their voices were considered. Such inclusion ensures that

interventions are designed to address both general community vulnerability and the specific requirements of women and persons with disabilities. This approach involves developing targeted strategies, providing access to microfinance, and enhancing social networks and savings groups within the community. These measures have contributed to disaster risk management and diversification of livelihoods, as well as increased opportunities for participation in leadership roles. By involving women and persons with disabilities in development initiatives, communities have seen changes in resilience, livelihood options, social cohesion, empowerment, and broader systemic dynamics.

While the program has had successes, the accelerating climate crisis has created challenges that were unforeseen at its inception. Partner communities face more frequent disasters and rapidly changing conditions, which have sometimes undermined disaster risk management efforts and caused unexpected loss and damage. These worsening impacts are beginning to threaten the program's gains in climate resilience. However, the project has helped communities develop adaptive skills like disaster risk management and savings group management, strengthening social ties and preparedness for future challenges. At the program level, there is an increased need to enhance partner capacity to address loss and damage. Felm will provide comprehensive training using insights from the 2024 ACT Alliance Loss and Damage Report.

Table 5: Women's and PWD's active roles reflected in key achievements



4.2 Outcome area 2: Inclusive, quality education

Contributing to SDG 4, this program outcome area aims at improving access to quality inclusive education, focusing on children and youth from marginalized groups. This is achieved by improving capacities to provide multilingual and mother tongue education in partnering schools and communities (output 2.1), by strengthening the schools' and communities capacities to offer an inclusive, safe, and protective learning environment (output 2.2), and by improving access to vocational and life skills training, especially for women and persons with disabilities (output 2.3). Thus, program activities focus on learners in vulnerable positions who often

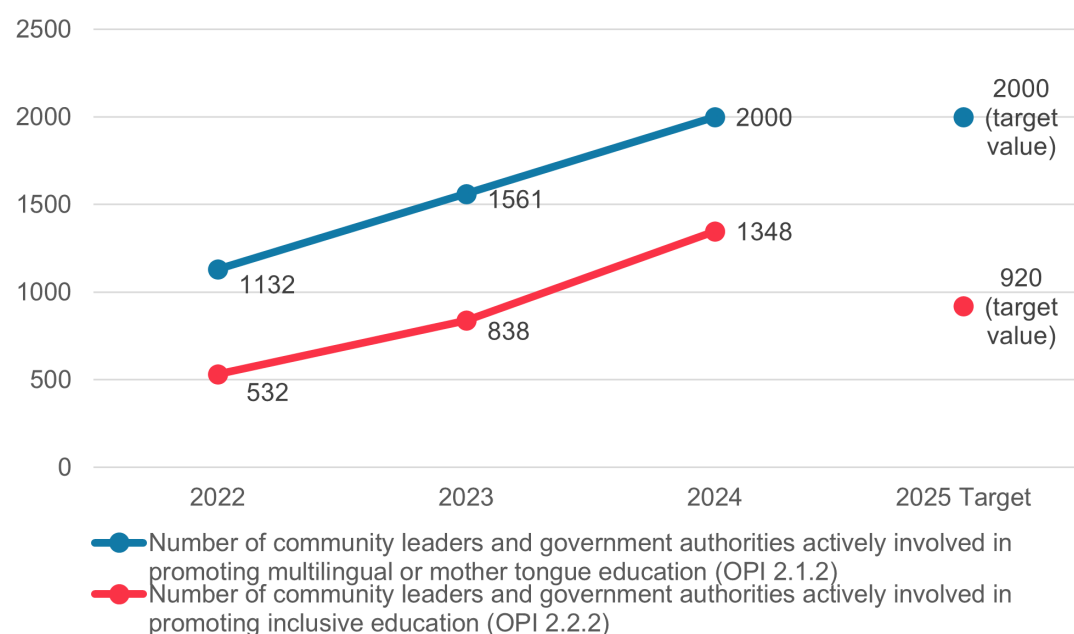


lack adequate access to education, such as children and young people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples and linguistic minorities, and women and girls. Inclusive education projects are carried out in Cambodia, Colombia, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nepal, Senegal, and Tanzania.

Reporting data from 2024 indicates significant progress towards the 2025 targets, with many indicators on track or already reaching the level of expected results. While 2024 data is not available for all outcome-level indicators, 2024 output-level results have contributed to improved access to inclusive education for people in vulnerable positions, demonstrating that the logic of the Theory of Change continues to hold for outcome 2. There have been notable achievements in several key areas, including advocacy and community engagement, teacher training, development of culturally relevant learning materials, and increased enrollment and participation of students from marginalized groups in both formal and non-formal education.

In terms of advocacy and community engagement, in 2024, a cumulative total of 2000 community leaders and government authorities were actively promoting multilingual and mother tongue education (OPI 2.1.2), already reaching the 2025 target of 2000, and a cumulative total of 1,348 community leaders and government authorities were actively promoting inclusive education (OPI 2.2.2), already exceeding the 2025 target of 920. The active role of duty-bearers is important for ensuring cultural relevance, policy support, and long-term sustainability. Their influence helps build trust, mobilize communities, and secure resources, while also holding systems accountable for upholding the right to education. This collaborative approach strengthens advocacy efforts and improves access to education and learning outcomes, especially for marginalized groups.

Table 6: Community engagement/Inclusive education results



Examples of leaders and authorities actively promoting multilingual/mother tongue or inclusive education include collaborating with the project on curriculum development (Colombia, COK002), collaborating with the project on development of learning materials and teaching training (Cambodia, KHK004), collaborating with linguistic organizations for language development for an Indigenous language (Cambodia, KHK004), and organizing campaign days together with project staff to promote mother tongue education in project areas (Senegal, SNK002). In Ethiopia, a project contributing to

inclusive education for deaf and hard-of-hearing students (ETK001) has been especially strong in reaching government authorities to promote multilingual or mother tongue education (in this case, for sign language). A combination of negative impressions related to disability and misinformation about the potential of persons with disabilities has often led to a lack of investment in the education of students with disabilities by authorities. A Felm staff member working with the project noted that it has been particularly effective to invite authorities to visit the project so that they can see what students with disabilities are able to achieve if they are appropriately supported. This realization has brought about positive changes in authorities' attitudes and priorities regarding education for students with disabilities. The visits have impacted authorities to take actions such as allocating appropriate budgets for the education of students with disabilities, better investing in teacher training and continuous professional development, increasing the number of special education teachers, providing necessary assistive devices, encouraging parents and guardians to send children with disabilities to school, and other changes that better facilitate the education of students with disabilities.

Similarly, the number of caregivers of children from marginalized groups reached on their children's right to education (OPI 2.2.3) reached a cumulative total of 14,582 in 2024, well on track expected 2025 result of 15,000, indicating the scope of awareness-raising efforts by Felm and its partners. One remarkable example of this comes from Nepal (NPK005), where the project achieved its annual target by 230% in 2024, and the project target has already been reached by 125%.

The number and percentage of students with disabilities in partnering pre-primary and primary schools (OI 2.3) also made progress towards the expected share of 5%, already surpassing the expected share for pre-primary schools at 6% and nearing the expected share for primary schools at 4.5% in 2024.

In terms of teacher training, as of 2024 a cumulative total of nearly 3000 teachers or teacher education students had been trained on inclusive and child-friendly teacher methods (OPI 2.2.1), already well above the 2025 target of 2,300. In Cambodia, teacher training on autism and intellectual disabilities along with collaboration with public schools enabled the integration of children with disabilities into mainstream schools (KHK003). In Myanmar, training on inclusive teaching methods and classroom management led to 47 teachers learning the skills to teach students with disabilities together with others in inclusive ways according to training pre-test and post-test data and staff observation reports (MMK001).

In 2024, almost 1300 teachers or teacher education students altogether had been trained in multilingual or mother tongue education (OPI 2.1.1). This development falls below the expected pace in teacher training, as the 2025 target is 2,200 trained teachers. This may possibly be due to some projects choosing to focus on deepening the skills of previously trained teachers with additional training at this stage rather than focusing on training new teachers. However, in Colombia (COK002) the multilingual teacher training has been very popular and already 130 teachers have been trained against the expected 50 teachers trained at this point. Reporting from Colombia mentions that strengthening mother tongue education has brought about the intended change in the preservation of Indigenous languages and reinforcing cultural identity. Individuals who previously did not have access to education have received education – especially in their mother tongue – are now empowered to participate in society and to defend their rights, both within and outside their communities. The appointment of the first Kogui woman as an early childhood education teacher marked a notable advancement in promoting the visibility and empowerment of women within Indigenous

communities. Additionally, the Ministry of Education's formal recognition of nine teachers as ethno-educators strengthened the autonomy and sustainability of Indigenous Education Systems (SEIPs).

Partnering in teacher training with Tumaini University Makumira in Tanzania (TZK002) supports the project's sustainability and wider systemic impact. The project and university are engaged in a time-intensive process of integrating gender responsive pedagogy, language supportive pedagogy, and environmental education into the university's mainstream teacher education program. Because Tanzania's education system is centralized, government-approved curricula at Makumira could influence other universities nationwide, spreading successful program elements.

The program is making the intended change as 1,500 non-formal education students have gained functional literacy skills (OI 2.6) out of the 1,800 expected in the end of the program period. 74% of these students were female, which demonstrates how literacy training and other skills training for adults promote gender justice. Over 1,700 students cumulatively were enrolled as literacy or life skills learners. For example, in Senegal, where 95% of adult mother tongue literacy learners are female, literacy has given women more decision-making power and more responsibility in the community and the home. In addition, income-generating activities and training on microbusiness management have enabled women to become more self-sufficient, develop their skills, and gain confidence (SNK002). Similarly in Colombia, literacy skills have enabled women to communicate better about health issues and access basic services more equally (COK002).

These results were strengthened by the numerous culturally relevant learning materials produced in the projects (OPI 2.1.3), supporting mother tongue-based multilingual education and improving student engagement, comprehension, and cultural identity. Over 203 new preschool, primary, and secondary resources were created in Cambodia (KHK004) and Nepal, making learning more accessible and context-specific for Indigenous and linguistic minority students. However, adaptation for students with disabilities still needs better guidelines and funding.

4.3 Outcome area 3: Rights of persons with disabilities

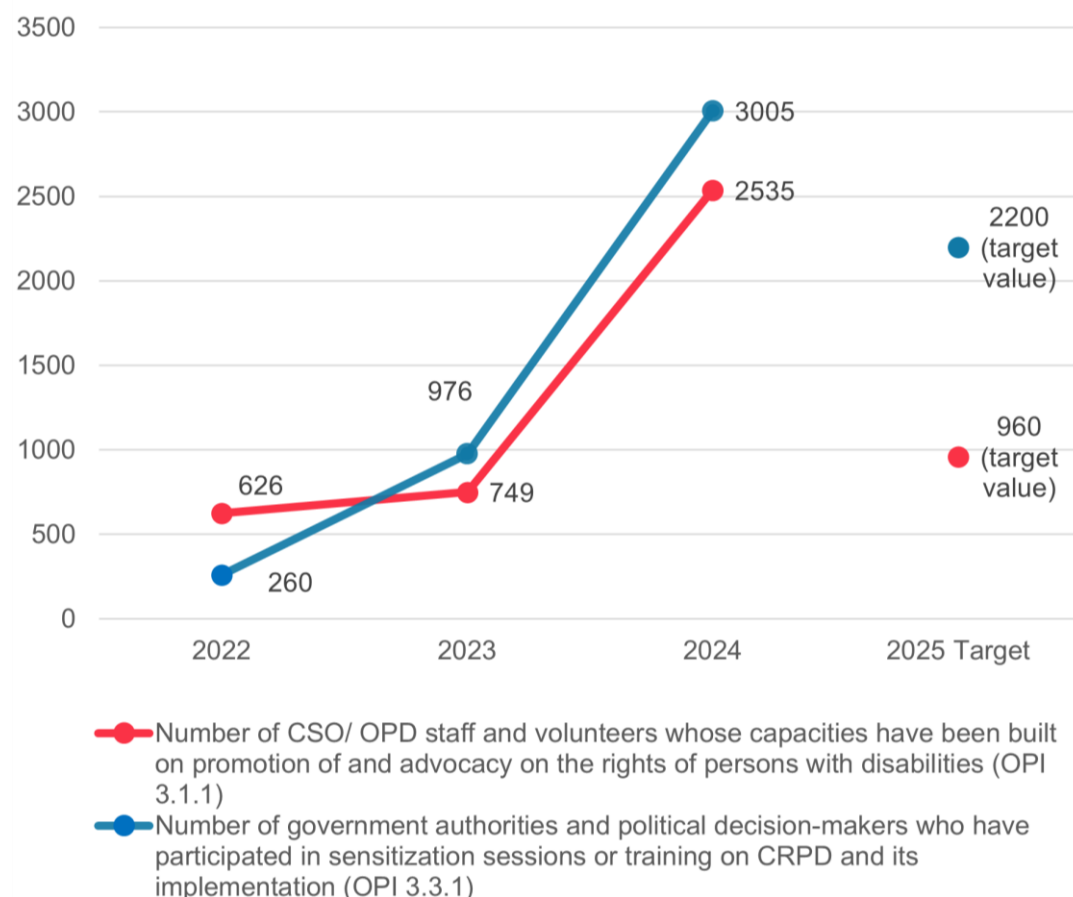


Contributing to SDGs 10 and 16, Outcome 3 involves persons with disabilities and their organizations in the integration of their rights into government policies and practices. In line with the principle of “nothing about us without us,” the program aims at strengthening capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs), especially organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), to promote and advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities so that they can, for example, take part in government consultations, working groups, and processes on legislation and policies that define the implementation of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

In 2024, CSO/OPD staff and volunteers' capacity to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities was strengthened in 7 countries, including Columbia, Cambodia, Nepal, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Burundi, and Rwanda. Since the beginning of the program, 2535 CSO/OPD staff and volunteers (48% women, 31% persons with disabilities) have participated in this capacity building, and the expected result for the program period (960) has already been exceeded (OPI3.1.1). In addition to strengthening the capacities of CSO/OPD staff and volunteers, government duty-bearers' active engagement in the CRPD implementation was strengthened so that they carry out the necessary legislative and policy reforms as well as policy enforcement processes that support the implementation of the CRPD. In

2024, duty bearers' active engagement in the CRPD implementation was promoted in 7 countries, including Columbia, Cambodia, Nepal, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Burundi, and Rwanda. Since the beginning of the program, 3005 government authorities have participated in sensitization sessions or training on CRPD and its implementation, and the set target (2200) for 2025 has already been exceeded (OPI3.3.1).

Table 7: Promotion of rights of people with disabilities



In Columbia (COK003), organizations of landmine accident survivors raised municipal officials' awareness about disability rights. In Ethiopia (ETK004), OPDs trained parliamentarians on CRPD-compliant policymaking, emphasizing disability inclusion in policies and budgets. Sensitization efforts by OPDs and persons with disabilities toward duty-bearers have proven effective.

Since 2022, the strengthened capacities contributed to the supported organizations' abilities to advocate for 11 ongoing and 3 completed legislative or policy reforms in Burundi, Rwanda, and Ethiopia (OI3.1). The strengthened capacities of the supported organizations and the efforts to sensitize and train government officials and decision-makers on CRPD also contributed to consultations of the supported OPDs in 16 government processes in 2024, including 5 national-level, 7 regional-level, and 4 local-level government processes in Burundi, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Nepal (OI3.2). Since the beginning of the program, OPDs supported by the program have been consulted in 49 government processes, which is an excellent achievement as the program expects to influence 45 government processes.

In Burundi (XXK004), OPDs have successfully established their role in national climate action. Involvement of OPDs ensures that climate policies become inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs and contributions of persons with disabilities. Decision-makers have recognized the value of meaningful engagement and participation of OPDs and persons with disabilities in climate mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction processes, leading to proactive government collaboration with OPDs. The government engaged OPDs in climate change adaptation and mitigation measures by consulting OPDs in these processes and requesting more advisory support and capacity development by OPDs to the government officials. In Rwanda (XXK004), National Union of Disability Organization in Rwanda (NUDOR) advocated for disability inclusion development policies through the Rwanda National Strategy for Transformation (NST 2), which will lead to Rwanda Vision 2050. In NST 2, disability inclusion is a cross-cutting objective in sectors of education, healthcare services, social protection, infrastructure, agriculture, sports, employment, and ICT, aiming to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are realized. Rwanda Vision 2050 is a national development strategy aiming to transform Rwanda into a high-income, inclusive, and climate-resilient nation by 2050 through sustainable development, human capital investment, and economic modernization. Mainstreaming disability inclusion into the national development strategy ensures development processes are equitable, reflect diverse needs, and promote social justice, leading to more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable societies.

The program also aims at strengthening the capacities of persons with disabilities as right-holders so that they feel increasingly respected and can take an active role in their respective communities. In 2024, awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities was raised through peer support groups, community awareness sessions, and other awareness-raising activities in 5 countries, including Columbia, Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, and Ethiopia. 868 persons with disabilities (56% women) were involved in peer support groups or activities (OPI3.2.4). For example, in a project focusing on the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities (NPK001), peer support groups provided monthly meetings, counseling, and home visits to 208 persons with psychosocial disabilities. 81 peer support group members were also linked with municipalities and like-minded organizations for income-generating opportunities, contributing to their overall well-being. At the end of 2024, the project conducted a survey among peer support group members and identified that 89% of the members reported self-recovery, increased self-esteem, and increased self-confidence. 47% reported respectful inclusion in the family, and 92% reported full or partial participation in the decision-making processes in the family.

Since the beginning of the program, Felm's partners have conducted 108 community awareness sessions on the rights of persons with disabilities (OPI3.2.2). While only 60% of the program level target has been reached, Felm's partners have been successful in raising awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities in some other ways. For example, in Cambodia (KHK003), social media and high-quality videos have been used very successfully to raise awareness, reaching over 300,000 views on social media and demonstrating the potential of social media in awareness-raising. In Ethiopia, disability issues received media attention when a workshop and panel discussion on promoting Ethiopian sign language and empowering deaf communities, organized in cooperation with the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences, was broadcasted on TV.

At the impact level, Felm's program aims at improved resilience and inclusion of people from marginalized groups in the program target areas. From the disability perspective, the program monitors the number of persons with disabilities in the mainstream community structures and groups in the partner communities (II3). In 2024, the number of persons with disabilities in the mainstream

community structures or groups was 261 (57% women). For example, within a project focusing on psychosocial disabilities in Nepal (NPK001), 90 persons with psychosocial disabilities (71% women) were part of mainstream groups, such as school management committees, community forest user groups, and saving groups. Five of them were in key positions in the mainstream groups, challenging the existing social norms and stigma surrounding mental health and psychosocial disabilities. Within a project focusing on persons who survived mine accidents (COK003), the community groups included spaces such as community action boards, community councils, ethnic community structures, municipal and departmental victim groups, community sports activities, and higher education training.

At the impact level, Felm's program is designed to enhance resilience and promote inclusion of individuals from marginalized groups. From a disability perspective, the program systematically monitors the participation of persons with disabilities in mainstream community structures and groups among partner communities (II3). In 2024, there were 261 persons with disabilities (56% women) involved in these mainstream groups or structures.

For example, in a project addressing psychosocial disabilities in Nepal (NPK001), 90 individuals with psychosocial disabilities (67% women) participated in mainstream organizations such as school management committees, community forest user groups, and savings groups. Notably, five individuals held key positions in these groups, actively challenging prevailing social norms and stigma related to mental health and psychosocial disabilities.

Similarly, in a project supporting survivors of mine accidents (COK003), community group involvement included spaces such as community action boards, community councils, disability committees, ethnic community organizations, municipal and departmental victim groups, community sports initiatives, and higher education training programs.

Felm's program continues to demonstrate effectiveness in strengthening the capacities of persons with disabilities as right-holders. Three projects in East Africa, Ethiopia, and Nepal are strong in national and local advocacy work. However, Felm's partners have also reported some challenges in advocacy work. In Ethiopia, engaging government authorities in training, advocacy, and lobbying actions have proved challenging due to their assumption that disability issues are not related to their responsibilities. Additionally, the high turnover of government authorities presents a challenge, as newly appointed officials have frequently reversed prior decisions. This requires advocacy work to be re-initiated and continuous awareness raising for duty-bearers about their responsibility to mainstream disability perspectives in their policy making. In Nepal, the translation of verbal commitments into written commitments in government plans and budgets at the local level has been a key challenge, requiring continuous lobbying and advocacy. Another challenge experienced in Rwanda and Burundi (XXK004) was the limited access to affordable irrigation solutions for women with disabilities, which hindered their ability to water their kitchen gardens. These women often experience a shortage of water, and due to physical impairment and environmental barriers, they have been unable to collect the water themselves. As a result, they have needed to hire others for support, leading to extra disability-related costs. Addressing these challenges requires inclusive and accessible solutions that reduce financial burdens and promote self-sufficiency. To overcome this, some women with disabilities have invested in water tanks to collect rainwater for irrigation. However, as it is not possible to everyone, OPDs are in dialogue with local duty-bearers aiming to find longer term solutions for the issue.

4.4 Humanitarian-development nexus

Felm's strategy places community priorities at the forefront, ensuring practical, locally driven responses that adapt to rapidly changing contexts. The new organization plan for 2024 integrates more clearly the objectives and advocacy shaped by partner input and on-the-ground realities. It further recognizes that the triple nexus and decolonization are themes that concern the entire organization, and that moving them forward requires targeted action. With this regard, Felm's nexus approach offers an adaptive, locally tailored response to the complex, intertwined needs of humanitarian aid, development, and peacebuilding. Their 2022–2025 Theory of Change emphasizes cross-cutting objectives and continuous adaptation, shaped by partner input and changing realities. By integrating humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, and peace initiatives, Felm nurtures collaboration among all stakeholders and empowers communities to identify and address their unique priorities, resulting in flexible, sustainable interventions.

In 2024, Felm redirected €170,000 in unused funds to address urgent needs across four projects in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, demonstrating how the nexus method enables rapid adaptation. In Ethiopia's Gambella region, €40,000 supported urgent food, nutrition, and protection for over 1,400 people, indirectly strengthening resilience for 26,000 others. Similarly, in Tigray, €60,000 provided critical food and livelihood support to more than 3,200 internally displaced people, with overall benefits reaching 6,000 individuals.

In Zimbabwe, where climate change and economic challenges caused 57% of rural households to be cereal insecure in late 2024, €58,000 was used for food, seeds, and operational upgrades in Gwai, supporting over 1,100 people. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches reallocated €70,000 to deliver nutrition and livelihood support in Zvishavane, Mwenezi, and Gwanda, prioritizing pregnant women, mothers, and young children and training health workers for greater long-term impact.

By flexibly bridging humanitarian aid, development work, and peace efforts, Felm's nexus approach ensures that resources and interventions evolve with shifting needs, building a pathway from crisis response to sustainable, community-led progress.

4.5 Cross-cutting objectives

Climate resilience and low-emission development

During 2024 the Climate Resilience Best Practices Handbook was developed and then published in January 2025. Best practices were collected in a peer-learning workshop where five partners were present from Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. A subsequent edition is planned to further widen the scope.

During the year 2024, the cross-cutting objective Climate Marker monitoring tool was also developed and piloted. It is on KoboToolbox, which is a data collection tool that can also be used without an internet connection. Information about the amount of different climate actions was collected from all projects in Cambodia, not only climate projects. The results were combined to monitor the scope and effectiveness of Felm's projects in relation to climate resilience and low-emission development. The results showed that climate resilience projects involve versatile climate actions: mitigation, adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and awareness-raising. Results also showed that non-climate resilience projects involve climate actions, but typically in only one climate-related theme, such as disaster risk reduction. After collecting data, feedback from partners was also requested. This feedback

indicated that the Climate Marker tool had helped partners to discuss and widen their climate actions towards the end phase of the program. After piloting and giving feedback, Felm has further developed the Climate Marker monitoring tool and used it with other MFA partners. Felm's own climate neutrality target and other environmental targets and actions with the Church Environmental Certificate continue, and emission development and measures are monitored annually.

Gender equality

For the cross-cutting objective of gender equality, Felm's priority in 2024 has been to conduct gender analysis with partners to ensure that the "do no harm" level of gender equality is achieved. During the year, the gender analysis tool was developed, and it will be implemented in 2025. The tool was developed so that it can be adjusted to local conditions, and it takes into consideration that the partner countries are diverse.

Although several planned training sessions were cancelled due to organizational changes within partner organizations, peer-learning activities continued in some countries. Notably, in Cambodia, partners conducted a gender analysis as part of a regional workshop. This collaborative exercise facilitated the identification of shared challenges and led to context-specific adaptations of the tool. These experiences not only strengthened local ownership of the process but also laid the groundwork for more systematic integration of gender perspectives in future programming.

In 2024, many partners continued to apply gender-sensitive approaches in their work, contributing to meaningful progress at the community level. In 2024, 54.3% of all the rights-holders were women and girls and 47.4% of all duty-bearers were women. Efforts to promote gender equality also led to improved and safer access to resources, particularly for women-headed households. Women were encouraged to take on leadership roles in peacebuilding and community development, although their overall representation in decision-making remains an area for further growth.

Education initiatives also advanced gender equality, with increased opportunities for women and girls to participate in learning and take on roles traditionally held by men. At the same time, program assessments revealed that women and other vulnerable groups have not always benefited equally from interventions. These findings highlight the ongoing need for inclusive planning and the use of gender analysis to identify and address barriers to full and equitable participation.

Disability inclusion

For the cross-cutting objective of disability inclusion, Felm's priority development area is to expand the use of Washington Group data collection tools at the program level to improve disability-inclusive data collection and programming. In 2024, Felm continued piloting the use of Washington Group Short Set of Functioning questions (WG-SSQ) as part of the mid-term evaluation process in climate resilience projects, aiming to enhance data collection on functional difficulties that may create barriers in their environment. Partners received technical support and guidance from Felm's advisors for the data collection. This enhanced partners' capacity to collect and analyze disability-inclusive data at the project level as well.

One of the key findings from the development cooperation program's mid-term evaluation was that some of Felm's development cooperation partners have limited understanding of the human rights-based approach to disability inclusion and how to incorporate the approach comprehensively into their work. To address this, Felm created a pedagogically designed workshop Removing Barriers for

the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities with the objective of enhancing partners' capacity to assess and address barriers to inclusion in their day-to-day work. This material will be used in 2025 in a peer-learning session.

Furthermore, partner-led peer-learning activities on disability inclusion continued during 2024. 12,646 persons with disabilities were reached, representing 8.8% of all rights-holders. This is a 3% increase from the previous year. In terms of duty bearers, 5% are persons with disabilities. In Asia, Felm facilitated collaboration between partners through online peer learning and sharing of good practices in climate resilience and livelihood projects among partners implementing projects in Nepal and Cambodia. Additionally, Epic Arts, a partner organization with strong expertise in the rights of persons with disabilities, held workshops and awareness-raising sessions for other program partners on disability-inclusive language and communication. Partner-led peer-learning and training activities facilitated by local disability rights experts were identified as successful good practices which will be used more effectively during the final year of the program.

4.6 Contributions to development policy

Appendix 7 indicates the alignment of the Felm program to development policies, including the UN Sustainable Development Goals, DAC indicators, the development priorities of the MFA, and the MFA aggregate indicators. The impact statement of the program contributes to the achievement of the development policies, with each outcome area also contributing directly to different SDGs and providing inputs to the MFA aggregate indicators.

Outcome 1 is in line with Finland's development policy priorities of Rights of Women and Girls, Peaceful, Democratic Societies, and Climate and Nature as well as several Sustainable Development Goals (SDG10, SDG1, SDG2, SDG13, and SDG16). Some of the outcome area's indicators provide inputs to the MFA's aggregate indicators.

Outcome 2 is in line with Finland's development policy priority Quality and Inclusive Education as well as Sustainable Development Goal 4. Some of the outcome area's indicators provide inputs to the MFA's aggregate indicators.

5. Beneficiaries

The total number of direct beneficiaries of the program reached 173,053 persons in 2024. The number of direct beneficiaries in 2024 consists of 157,180 rights-holders and over 15,873 duty-bearers directly reached by the program. Table 8 shows the detailed disaggregation of rights-holders and duty-bearers by age, gender, and disability status.

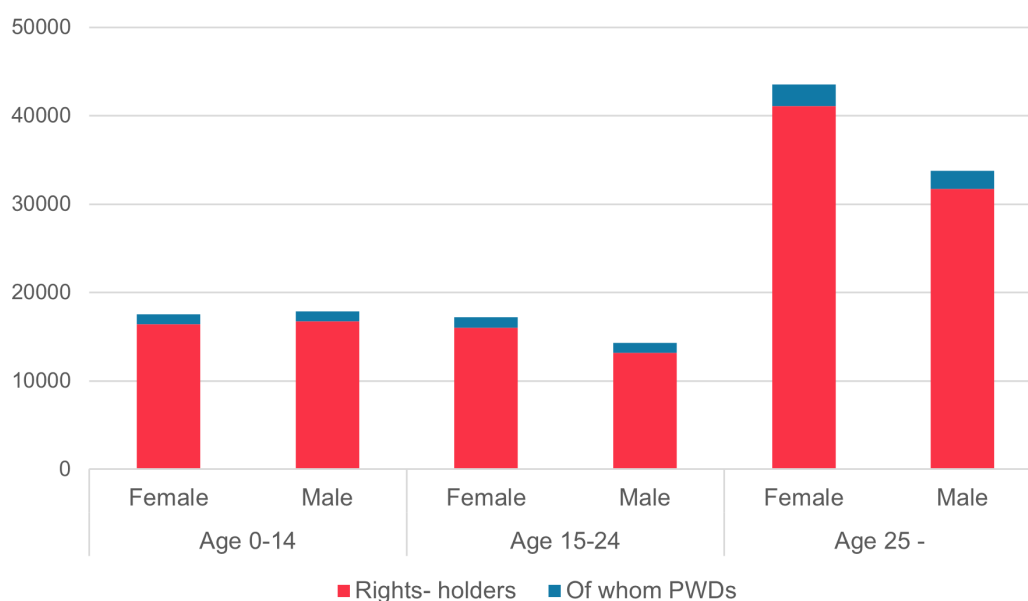
54.3% of all the rights-holders were women and girls, which reaches the targeted share of female rights-holders. The biggest group was women over 25 with 43,553 beneficiaries, while it was also the biggest participant group for men with 33,790 beneficiaries. The program reached 17,224 girls and 14,299 boys from the age group 15-24 and 17,559 girls and 17,872 boys from the age group 0-14. Gender analysis and gender mainstreaming were among key topics covered in Felm's partners' capacity building training sessions. Training sessions were often delivered by local experts, which guaranteed a strong understanding of the local context and nuances around gender equality and social norms.

Table 8: Number of beneficiaries

	Total	Age 0–14		Age 15–24		Age 25 -	
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Rights-holders	144,297*	17,559	17,872	17,224	14,299	43,553	33,790
... of whom PWDs	12,646 (8.8 %)	1,506 (8.6 %)*	1,503 (8.4 %)*	1,165 (6.8 %)*	1,083 (7.6 %)*	2,037 (4.7 %)*	1,683 (5.0 %)*
Duty-bearers	14,880*			409	530	6,641	7,300
... of whom PWDs	747 (5.0 %)			17 (4.2 %)	56 (10.6 %)	304 (4.6 %)	370 (5.1 %)
Indirect beneficiaries	1,876,176						

*) The total of disaggregated rights-holders/duty-bearers is less than the total of rights-holder/duty-bearer beneficiaries, since the disaggregation was incomplete.

*) In the rights-holders group, the disaggregation was incomplete for persons with disabilities per age group. Therefore, the shares of PWD's per age groups are indicative due to missing data.

Table 9: Total disaggregated number of rights-holders

12,646 persons with disabilities were reached, representing 8.8% of all rights-holders. This is a 3% increase from the previous year in the number of persons with disabilities reached. When analyzed per age group, the share of identified persons with disabilities is the highest among beneficiaries aged under 15, eventually thanks to the strong focus on inclusion in the education sector work. Adult persons with disabilities have been the hardest to identify and reach. Felm expects to reach 65,000 persons with disabilities overall, representing 15% of the total of 434,000 intended rights-holders. The reported number is gradually increasing as the Washington Group training sessions have improved the partners' ability to identify persons with disabilities.

During 2024 Felm's program reached 15,873 duty-bearers in total. The number of duty-bearers increased because the program's advocacy and awareness-raising activities were fully underway in the third year of the program. 47.4% of all duty-bearers are women, with a strong representation of adults (over 25 years). This figure showcases an increased participation of women duty-bearers from 2023. Women and men over 25 years old represent 93.7% (88% of all, also not disaggregated) of all the duty-bearers as in the 2024 reporting year. 5% of duty-bearers are persons with disabilities. Despite the progress, persons with disabilities are clearly underrepresented among duty-bearers. This is due to intersectional discrimination that has existed since the very beginning of the educational path. The disability advocacy program is expected to engage a stronger representation of persons with disabilities in decision-making bodies, but achieving concrete changes takes time and is also determined by factors beyond the program's influence. Number of young men with disabilities in decision-making bodies has increased which can be a sign of increased employment opportunities in leadership and decision-making roles. However, the representation of men with disabilities is significantly higher compared to young women with disabilities which indicates the gender-based inequalities in accessing work and education.

In 2024, a total of 1,876,126 indirect beneficiaries, in addition to 6,197,146 media consumers, were reached through different means, including media, advocacy work and through the program's direct beneficiaries. Different forms of media form a central means for reaching indirect beneficiaries. The biggest group of indirect beneficiaries were reached through TV and social media, with 5 million in Tanzania and Rwanda.

Intersectional approach - Focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized groups

Felm directs its efforts toward the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, with target groups identified by local partners based on context. The program prioritizes women, girls, and people with disabilities, and considers intersectional discrimination. The levels and types of vulnerabilities depend on the local context, and vulnerable communities and individuals are hence carefully identified by partner organizations. Both rights-holders and duty-bearers are recognized as active agents in development interventions.

Felm works with right-holders likely to face intersectional discrimination, such as girls with disabilities and women from minority ethnic groups. Felm refines its strategies to address overlapping factors of discrimination in both project design and partner collaboration and builds partners' capacity to understand and advocate for intersectionality, raises right-holders' awareness of their rights, involving duty-bearers to support structural change. This intersectional approach helps address the diverse needs of right-holders across all program outcome areas and actions.

6. Resources of the program

6.1 Staff in Finland

The program staff was composed of both the program staff in Finland and the advisory support staff in the regions, with 9.63 full-time equivalents (person-years) allocated to the Helsinki office and 16.05 full-time equivalents to the partner countries. This chapter focuses on the staff in Finland.

The Development Cooperation Program staff in Finland was composed of both part-time and full-time staff. The part-time staff included the Head of Unit, Program Support and Institutional Funding 50%; Advisor for PMEL 60%; Advisors for Communication 83%, Advisor for Global Education 10%, and Thematic Advisors with 60% share and 4 x 10% share. The full-time staff consisted of six staff members: Program Director for Development Cooperation, Finance Manager, Administrative Coordinator, Senior Program Advisor, Project Coordinator, and Program Coordinator. The salary of the Advisor for Humanitarian aid was entirely covered by Felm. The Felm Gender Advisor worked closely with the Development Cooperation Program throughout the year.

The role of the Unit for Program Support and Institutional Funding in Felm's Development Cooperation Program is to advise and support the program globally, including humanitarian aid. The Helsinki-based thematic advisors provided capacity building and support to both Felm staff and the partners.

6.2 Financial report

Co-financing of the Development Cooperation Program by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

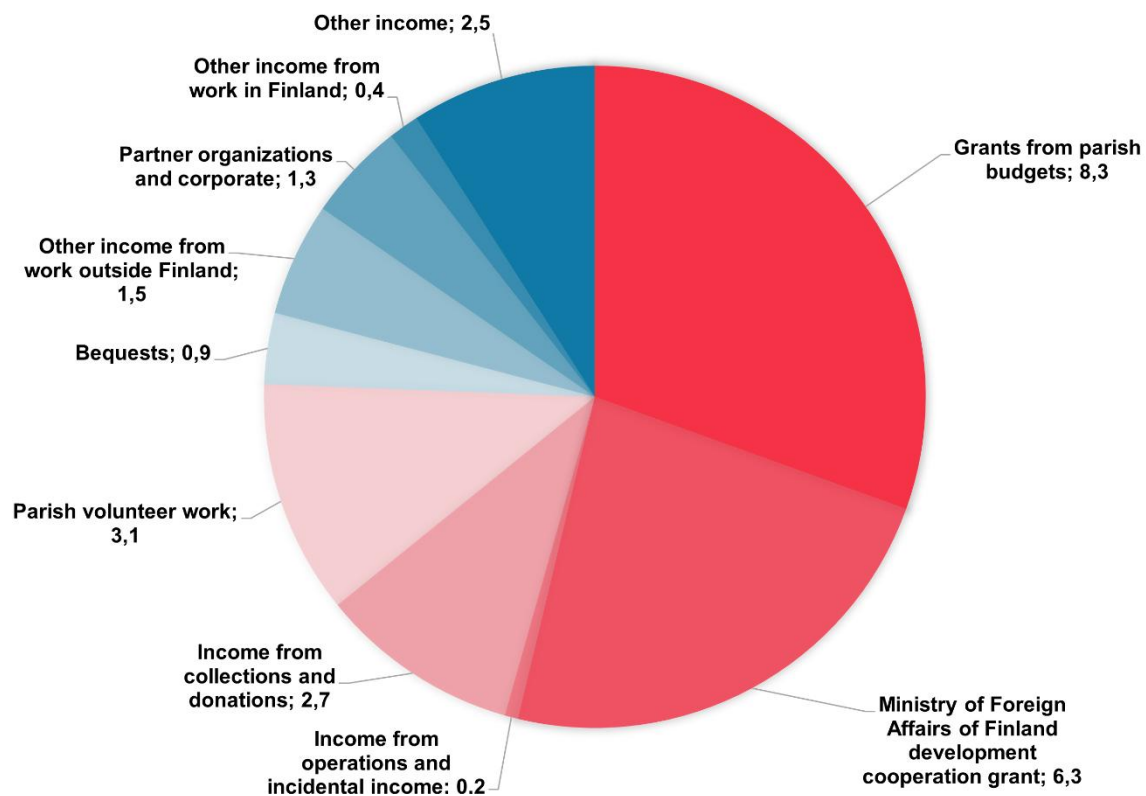
The grand total of Felm's development cooperation operations for 2024 amounted to 7 268 030 euros. The total share of MFA support to the Felm Development Cooperation Program employed during the reporting year was 6 286 711 euros, including grant funds carried over from 2023. The funds were allocated according to the annual plan. The projects have valid project agreements and addendums, which contain agreements regarding the use of amended budgets.

Administration costs amounted to 10% of the total Development Cooperation Program costs and covered costs directly arising from the administration of Felm's development cooperation funds by various departments of the organization. In addition to the International Department, the Department for Parish Relations and Fundraising, the Finance and Administration Department, the Communications Department, as well as the office of the Managing Director and the board of directors and organizational administration were allocated their own share. The total development communications, advocacy, and global citizenship education costs amounted to 156 882 euros (approx. 2,2%).

Development Cooperation Program self-financing share

Felm's operations are funded by parishes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and Christian organizations in Finland, the MFA, the EU, and individual donors. Felm's total income for the fiscal year was 27.2 million euros (2023 27.5 million euros), including non-MFA financial support of 16.3 million euros. Financial support consisted of parishes' budgetary grants, church collections, parishes' volunteer activities, testamentary donations, other direct donations and collections, as well as other income. Parish budgetary grants were not used to cover the self-financing share, as they include funds collected through the church tax. Nor are grants directed toward operations in Finland or other income, or other grants received from the MFA, considered in the self-financing share of the Development Cooperation Program. Further information can be found in Felm's report on operations and financial statements.

Table 10: Felm income 2024



The 981 319 euros of targeted funds for the support of the Felm Development Cooperation Program were received in 2024 from individual donors either directly or through parishes.

Permanent sources of funding include long-term service agreements made with parishes and organizations for the support of individual projects or specialists working in them. Service agreement funds were collected in parishes through, among other events, bazaars, voluntary work, events, collections, and mission circles.

The total self-financing share of Felm's Development Cooperation Program was 981 319 euros in 2024. This corresponds to a 7.5% share for projects promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and a 15% share for other projects.

An external auditor has conducted an audit of development cooperation operations carried out with Finnish government funding. The auditor's reports, prepared based on the audit, form part of the finance report. The audit report for 2024 (KPMG) concludes that the financial statements accurately present the financial position of the association and the results of its operations in accordance with current Finnish laws pertaining to preparation of financial statements and meets statutory requirements.

7. Sustainability and capacity building

7.1 Partners' capacity building

Throughout 2024, partner capacity was strengthened through a variety of tailored efforts. In the area of program management, partners received support through both in-person and virtual mentoring, with a focus on improving project planning, reporting, and monitoring and evaluation practices. These efforts often included workshops and consultations tailored to the specific needs of each partner, helping them adapt to changing political and operational contexts.

Thematic capacity building was another major area of development. Partners engaged in training sessions and workshops covering a wide range of topics such as gender justice, disability inclusion, climate resilience and peacebuilding. These sessions were often complemented by participation in global and regional consultations, which provided valuable opportunities for peer learning and knowledge exchange.

For example, Felm's Colombian partners received a mix of programmatic and thematic support. Felm facilitated workshops on gender justice, leadership, and non-violent communication. Regular virtual meetings and on-site visits provided ongoing mentoring and feedback. The support also included strategic planning for future programming and the development of gender policies and advocacy strategies.

In Cambodia, capacity building was multifaceted. Felm organized disaster management and project management training sessions, with a strong emphasis on gender and disability inclusion. Partners such as M'lup Russey and First Step Cambodia enhanced their skills in safeguarding, reporting, and disaster preparedness. These efforts were part of a broader initiative to foster collaboration among civil society organizations and improve child protection in disaster-prone areas.

Financial management capacity was enhanced in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Senegal through structured training programs, including multi-day workshops on budgeting, bookkeeping, and anti-corruption practices. These sessions were often facilitated by Felm's finance and governance advisors and included the introduction of tools like QuickBooks and cloud-based systems to improve financial transparency and accountability.

In addition to these core areas, partners also benefited from broader organizational development support. This included leadership coaching, strategic planning assistance, and guidance on governance and sustainability. Some partners participated in consultations and networking events that fostered collaboration and shared learning across regions and sectors.

However, in some cases, no specific capacity-building actions were taken. This was often due to the partner already possessing strong existing capacities, the conclusion of project collaborations, or logistical challenges such as conflict or limited connectivity.

7.2 Developing Felm's capacity

Felm staff training was practically oriented and focused on supporting understanding of key processes as well as the tools and concepts used in the program. These included, for example, financial

management capacity development for regional staff and advisors. Staff members both delivered training sessions and took part as participants in thematic training sessions designed for partners in gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusion of persons with disabilities, climate resilience and low emission development, and psychosocial support. The benefit of this was that regional advisors and partners gained common ground in understanding the concepts.

7.3 Sustainability of the projects

Projects continued implementing their sustainability and exit strategies and action plans to strengthen the institutional, economic, socio-cultural, technological, and environmental sustainability of the projects. The planned actions are mostly capacity building for project participants, stakeholders, and authorities as well as advocacy and networking events, aiming at equipping them with necessary resources, skills, and ownership to continue the activities or phase out in a sustainable manner after Felm's support ends. Generally, projects reported good progress during the year 2024, although constraints were faced. Main challenges for sustainability efforts were economic instability, worsening security situations, and environmental or climate change-related factors. In some regions the increasingly difficult political situation led to major project plan revision.

In 2023 Felm decided to withdraw from several operating countries in 2026-28. Due to the decision, financial support for the development cooperation projects in Senegal and Mauritania will come to an end. Preparations for phasing out and accelerated efforts to ensure the sustainability of achieved results and capacity began in early 2024. Partners were supported through strengthening their fundraising capacities and joint exploration of alternative strategies to sustain their work.

In Mauritania, the partner organizations have long-term experience in the project implementation areas and excellent working relationships with the local authorities and civil society. The partners are committed to continuing their work in the current project areas and are trying to find other funding sources. It is expected that at least some of the project activities that support communities to develop their livelihoods and invest in their future will continue after 2025. In Senegal, the partner church Église luthérienne du Sénégal (ELS) is actively looking for other sources of funding for the continuation of the projects. The education project has strengthened collaboration with educational authorities as well as strengthened school committees and community involvement to be engaged in the work. The resilience and livelihood project is a solidly community-based project that strengthens resilience and livelihoods within communities, especially among community members in vulnerable positions. The knowledge, good practices, and progress in income generation will not disappear; rather, the new practices are already being adopted in the villages surrounding the project communities and by families that were not the primary beneficiaries of the project. The cooperatives and well-managed cereal banks have the potential to grow to cover a larger number of families. For the partner church ELS, Felm has promoted the idea of merging the development cooperation department with the already established development NGO of ELS, supported by another donor. It seems that this will now happen. As part of a bigger development NGO, the partner's staff have better possibilities to sustain their capacities and potential. Felm's support to the church in its own general program until end of 2028 will further ensure a smooth transition.

7.4 Localization and ownership

Equal and diverse partnerships are central to Felm's program. Collaborating with local partners, Felm prioritizes dialogue, mutual respect, trust, and the exchange of knowledge. Felm aims to strengthen local ownership and leadership and supports a locally led approach in international cooperation.

Felm addresses decolonization and antiracism as related areas, considering them together due to their focus on recognizing racism, white supremacy, and colonialism as ongoing systems within global power structures. The organization began its efforts to advance antiracism and decolonization in 2023 with internal training sessions. In Spring 2024, Felm conducted an internal survey on decolonization for all staff, followed by facilitated discussions. A brief survey was also shared with Felm's partners, which informed dialogues during partnership consultations held both online and in person in Helsinki in 2024. These conversations identified the need for greater local leadership in addressing complex systemic challenges and acknowledged the significance of global collaboration at multiple levels. Changes in international cooperation practices were recommended, including those related to PMEL (Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning), language use, and project-centered approaches. The need for new methods in working and collaborating with stakeholders was recognized to enhance systemic and sustainable responses to global issues.

After these discussions, Felm approved the Action Plan for Anti-Racism in December 2024. This plan covers all departments, including international work, human resources, domestic operations, and communications. Additionally, Felm formed a cross-departmental working group on decolonization and antiracism to support implementation of the action plan. The approach acknowledges that decolonization is an ongoing process, encouraging continued self-reflection regarding racism and power dynamics both individually and organizationally within Felm.

Through partner consultations held regionally and in Helsinki, partners contributed to shaping Felm's strategy and international program priorities. In 2024, Felm reformed the Felm International Advisory Board (FIAB), a network of the organization's partners from various sectors. FIAB serves as an advisory body, supporting Felm's vision and goals, especially in strategy, international programming, and partnerships. The 2024 strategy highlights increased involvement of local actors and aims to shift power within international aid structures.

On an operational level, Felm established an Advisory Group for Program Work, consisting of eight program and project staff members from partner organizations. This group provides input through regular dialogue and reflection on topics such as the Theory of Change, development of PMEL practices, program methodologies, Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS), global funding and joint priorities. During planning for the 2026-2029 program period, launched in 2024, Felm worked to ensure that international priorities and objectives reflect the needs of local communities, emphasizing the triple nexus approach and contextual relevance. The planning process included opportunities for partners to participate and express their priorities.

Felm's commitment to the Core Humanitarian Standard as of December 2024 sets objectives for developing Felm's and its partners' activities, centering community ownership and participation in planning, implementation, monitoring, and decision-making, consistent with the localization agenda.

8. Risk management

8.1 Risk management system

In 2024, Felm adopted a new risk management policy aligned with ISO 31000:2018, establishing clear responsibilities throughout the organization. This policy aligns program and country-level risk management approaches, guiding decision-making through Notion. The process focuses on managing uncertainties within the organization's control, with tailored risk treatment plans. Annual risk reporting is based on identified risk treatment plans, ensuring continual oversight and transparency via Notion.

Stakeholder involvement is crucial, incorporating their insights into a dynamic approach that adapts to new risks and changes in context. Decisions are based on the best available data and expertise, considering human behavior and culture. Felm is committed to continual improvement, evolving with the organization and its environment.

Risk factors are reviewed in context analysis workshops for country-specific assessments. Risk management is implemented at the national and program levels, with a three-year cycle from 2025 to 2027 and annual reports.

Felm acknowledges heightened risks of financial misconduct, fraud, resource abuse, and collusion, especially in fragile and corrupt contexts. The organization addresses these risks proactively through training, monitoring, and auditing, promoting high ethical standards and transparency. Safeguarding is essential, protecting individuals from harm, including PSEAH (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment). Felm adheres to international safeguarding standards and principles. In 2024 Felm created a new position and employed a person whose role is dedicated only to safeguarding issues. Felm also established a Complaints Committee in January 2024, following the launch of a whistleblower channel and related staff training. In 2024, all staff received training on the Code of Conduct, PSEAH guidelines, and safeguarding, with mandatory signing of key policies in November. Additionally, Felm developed safer space principles, launched a public safeguarding webpage, and began partner training in early 2025.

The program provides several feedback channels for reporting issues or misconduct:

- Direct Reporting
- Whistleblowing Channel
- Complaints Committee

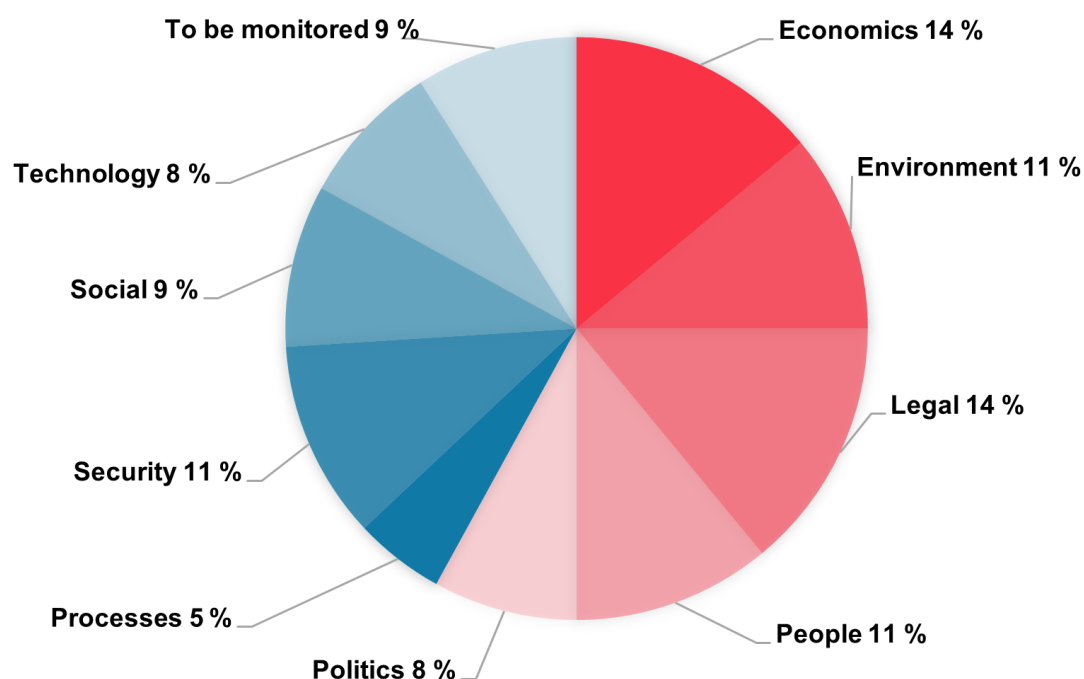
The program also promotes these accountability channels through training, regular communications, and notifications from a Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) perspective.

8.2 Risk management in 2024

During the end of 2024, regional teams and country teams were tasked with identifying risks in their operating countries, following the categorization of the new risk management system. A total of 100

risks were found, and a total of 122 mitigation actions were planned for the coming year. The risks identified are divided into the categories as follows:

Table 11: Identified risks



Several key lessons emerged from realized risks during 2024. In contexts where civic space continued to shrink (e.g. Myanmar), flexible operational models and strategic relocation of staff proved essential for maintaining program continuity. Economic instability and inflation required adaptive budgeting and strengthened local ownership to safeguard implementation (e.g. Myanmar, Zimbabwe). Heightened security threats underscored the importance of remote monitoring and flexible planning (e.g. Ethiopia, Colombia), while climate-related disruptions highlighted the need for disaster preparedness and eco-friendly approaches (e.g. Zimbabwe). Generally, health security risks, particularly in fragile healthcare environments, were mitigated through flexible support and comprehensive staff insurance. The limited prioritization of disability rights in some countries reinforced the value of mainstreaming inclusion and improving data collection. Lastly, the grassroots focus of the program prompted a strategic revision to enhance scalability and long-term impact.

9. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning

In 2024, Felm organized a call for tenders for an external mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the program, with Appraisal Consulting submitting the winning proposal. The evaluation investigated the program's relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability, giving 3 recommendations for the ongoing program period and 9 recommendations to guide the planning of future programming. The final evaluation report was submitted in October 2024. A management response was formulated under the direction of the Head of Development Cooperation and approved by Felm management in December. The results of the evaluation were validated in a workshop with Felm staff. The dissemination of the report proved challenging due to sensitive information related to a specific fragile

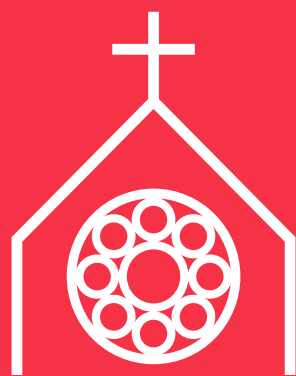
program context included in the report and the need to avoid risks to Felm's project partners in that context. The risk mitigation delayed the external dissemination of the report to early 2025.

The mid-term evaluation fed into program development in view of the next program period. The development of the next program started in spring 2024, informed by initial discussions on updating Felm's strategy. In August 2024, a core group of Felm's staff was appointed to coordinate the process. Soon after, an advisory group consisting of selected representatives of Felm's partners was formed to advise the program planning and program work. In autumn 2024, Felm's regional teams revised the partnership portfolio and conducted country-level context analyses and risk management planning using a new digital platform. These processes already benefit the program during the current program period while simultaneously supporting the planning of future work. The Theory of Change of the 2022–2025 program was revised to align with Felm's new strategy, partner consultations, and changes in context. Project planning was launched with the designing of project concept notes.

Digital data collection with KoboToolbox was promoted amongst Felm's partners working with climate resilience in the Southern and Eastern Africa region. Some of Felm's partners in the region have extensive experience in using the tool, and therefore peer learning proved useful. Felm's partner Zimbabwe Council of Churches supported another partner, the Gwaii Grandmothers' Group, in collecting household survey data through the KoboCollect app. Felm also developed a household survey form on KoboToolbox suitable for collecting data for Felm's program indicators for climate resilience and shared it with the partners in the region. It was concluded that the tool works well for collecting this type of data, but Felm does not need to invest heavily in supporting partners in the uptake of these tools. The selection of a data collection tool should be based on each partner's specific needs in the project context. These tools are particularly beneficial for larger projects, and many of the partners involved in such projects have the capacity to start using them independently if they wish to do so. Also, the mid-term evaluation recommended investing in the development of qualitative data collection methods, making it reasonable to focus resources on that area.

There were updates to the program's results framework in summer 2024 in connection with the analysis of the 2023 annual reporting data. This included revision of many of the program's target values based on additional data from the projects, as well as small adjustments to indicators and even abandoning some indicators that were not working and thus not providing additional value to monitoring. During autumn 2024, the PMEL team also worked on small improvements and clarifications to Felm's reporting portal software to enhance the quality of reporting data from projects. Nevertheless, some challenges related to data gaps and quality continued to affect the 2024 reporting, which limited the extent to which program-level progress and results could be fully assessed. This suggests that certain indicators may still be overly complex. It highlights the need to further strengthen the shared understanding with partners regarding indicator definitions and data collection methods ahead of the final year of implementation, and to provide additional support for data collection where needed.

The annual program review meeting was hosted in May 2024 in a new format after Felm's organizational restructuring the previous year. This time, Felm's thematic advisors came together in a workshop organized by the PMEL team, discussing analysis and observations related to annual reporting data and working on identifying potential ways forward. The feedback was mainly positive, but the need for stronger participation of Felm's regional staff working directly with projects was highlighted. This was taken into consideration in planning the annual program review process for the following year.



Felm¹⁸⁵⁹