SUPPORTING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION OF CHILDREN ASSOCIATED WITH ARMED FORCES AND ARMED GROUPS INCLUDING THE CIVILIAN JOINT TASK FORCE (CJTF) IN NORTHEAST NIGERIA

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i. Acronyms

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Accelerated Learning Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>AOG</td>
<td>Armed Opposition Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIC</td>
<td>Best Interest of the Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAAFAG</td>
<td>Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBCPC</td>
<td>Community Based Child Protection Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CJTF</td>
<td>Civilian Joint Task Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDDRS</td>
<td>Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KII</td>
<td>Key Informant Interviewers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMC</td>
<td>Maiduguri Metropolitan Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>MWASD</td>
<td>Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFI</td>
<td>Non-Food Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVC</td>
<td>Other Vulnerable Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC</td>
<td>Project Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QDA</td>
<td>Qualitative Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACER</td>
<td>Relevant, Acceptable, Credible, Easy and Robust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFCG</td>
<td>Search for Common Ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBEB</td>
<td>State University Basic Education Board</td>
</tr>
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</table>
ii. Executive Summary

This project by the Search for Common Ground seeks to support the long-term socio-economic reintegration of children associated with armed groups, including the Civilian Joint Task Force, in the Northeast of Nigeria. Additionally, the project also aims to provide support and services to other vulnerable children not associated with armed groups. The project has taken an integrated approach towards implementation and has involved a diverse range of stakeholders – from the children and their families and communities, to traditional and religious leaders and finally, local and national governing bodies. Along with providing practical supportive services, the aim is to foster an environment of understanding and empathy in the communities, so that the children may be accepted back into their families and homes without the burden of stigmatisation.

This project is important to establish a framework for sustainable reintegration programmes for children formerly associated with armed forces. The involvement of such a wide ranging and high number of stakeholders’ further points towards the benefits of a common ground approach. The evaluation of this project will be critical in understanding the facilitation of future long-term reintegration programmes for children in conflict settings.

Methodology

The evaluation used a participatory evaluation approach which combines secondary analyses (project documents and reports, as well as Key Informant Interviews (KII), semi-structured questionnaires, and focus group discussions (FGD) to collect data from all the stakeholders involved in the project. The stakeholders include staff of Search, community and religious leaders, families and caregivers of targeted children, local government authorities, community members and the targeted children.

This approach has supported the generation of sufficient relevant data and provides findings that are significant in achieving the objectives of the evaluation. In all phases, a strong participatory approach has been applied to ensure maximum engagement of all the relevant stakeholders. Purposive, random, and snowball techniques have been used to select informants. Key informants have been selected for their specialised knowledge and unique perspectives on the issues examined.

Findings
Relevance: This project is highly relevant for a diverse range of partners and stakeholders. It has engaged 1,300 vulnerable children, especially those who have been formerly associated with armed forces, as well as a further 7,450 youth in the targeted communities and approximately 35,000 other indirect beneficiaries. The project has taken a nuanced approach with needs-based support, with the aim to facilitate the multifaceted reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups (CAAFAG) into their communities, as well as support other vulnerable children not associated with armed groups. This has involved traditional and religious leaders at the community level as well as governing bodies at the local as well as state level in service provision and programme activities; all partners have been extremely supportive of the project and have shown increased levels of empathy and acceptance towards the targeted children, which is critical for successful reintegration.

Intervention Logic, Monitoring and Learning: The logframe is well designed and of good quality, with four clearly stated outputs. The intervention logic has identified several context specific risks, with a risk matrix developed to monitor the same. The indicators as set during the design stage of the project were unambiguous and Relevant, Accepted, Credible, Easy and Robust (RACER) and can be used to measure the progress made by the project. Building on previous lessons learned from projects implemented by Search, the project has monitoring tools and structures designed for regular feedback, including from staff and community members, as well as corrective measures when necessary. A Project Advisory Committee that includes representatives from several relevant government ministries was established at the first phase of the project; the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) consists of a wide range of government actors with a duty to provide services for the beneficiaries, and as such have a symbiotic relationship with project actors. It acts as an oversight body, making regular field visits, and meets quarterly, putting forth recommendations along with the Project Implementation Team, which was formed after the evaluation of Phase 1 of the project. However, the risk factors identified did not account for natural disasters or a pandemic, which required improvisation and adaptability during implementation.

Efficiency: The common ground and community-based approach adopted by Search has brought together a wide range of stakeholders, all of whom bring significant socio-political capital to the project. A good working relationship between stakeholders was established by the end of the first phase of the project, with considerable levels of trust building and information sharing contributing towards positive project outcomes. The involvement of community members has increased ownership of the project and its sustainability. The unforeseen circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as lockdowns and curfews, caused delays in implementation as well as problems in accessing beneficiaries. Additionally, there are security challenges in some of the target LGAs from armed groups as well as roadblocks, which have had further implications for project implementation.
Effectiveness:

Significant progress has been made in producing the expected outputs under each of the outcome areas. Provided below, under the specific result areas, are some of the outputs that were delivered.

Outcome 1) Between 2019 and 2021, 1308 children (788 boys and 520 girls) were identified by Search after receiving their names from UNICEF and registered as beneficiaries of the project. This is 87% of the target set which is 1500; Between 2019 and 2020, 1087 children (636 boys and 451 girls) received psychosocial support, such as Trauma Awareness and Resilience Building; Between 2019 and 2021, 36 trauma awareness sessions were conducted in the targeted LGAs. This is 21% more than that of the target set which is 30; Between 2019 and 2021, 1257 (934 boys and 323 girls) affected by grave violations benefitted from case management follow up activities. This is 84% of the target set, which is 1500; In 2020, 12 Community-Based Child Protection Committees (CBCPCs) were established in the targeted LGAs. This is 20% more than the target set which is 10.

Outcome 2) Between 2020 and 2021, 1086 children (639 boys and 447 girls) received Birth Certificates or identification documents with the support of the project. This is 9% more than the target set, which is 1000 children; Between 2020 and 2021, 479 children (277 boys and 202 girls) were provided with Back to School kits to support their learning. This is 96% of the target set which is 500 children; Between 2020 and 2021, 462 children (267 boys and 195 girls) were provided with Accelerated Learning. This is 92% of the target set, which is 500 children.

Outcome 3) Between 2020 and 2021, 799 children (484 boys and 315 girls) completed market-orientated training programmes. This is 80% of the target set which is 1000; Between 2020 and 2021, 28 Micro Enterprise training were conducted in the targeted LGAs. This is 93% of the target set which is 30; Between 2020 and 2021, 775 children (457 boys and 318 girls) received entrepreneurial/self-employment grants or goods in kind, which is 77.5% of the target set which is 1000. The grant amount per child amounts to approximately 100,000 Naira. Alongside this private sector actors who received children under the mentoring and coaching component of the project were also provided with 20,000 Naira per child, for the support they provided.

Outcome 4) Between 2020 and 2021, 11 community led social cohesion initiatives, including building trust among community members and identifying addressing conflicts at the community level were implemented in the LGAs. This is 73% of the target set, which is 15; Between 2020 and 2021, 39 radio shows were aired on selected FM radio stations, with the programmes aired in Hausa and Kanuri languages. This is 100% of the target set; Between 2020 and 2021, 1042 adults (767 males and 275 females) attended participatory community
theatres in the targeted LGAs. The target set is 5500, however, there was a shift in approach because of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the use of the radio participatory theatre methodology was resorted to by the Project Implementation Team; Between 2020 and 2021, 30 participatory theatre performances were delivered in the targeted LGAs, which is 100% of the target set.

Specifically on the indicator that has to do with the percentage of children associated with armed groups who report applying skills learned to generate an income, out of the 298 children who indicated that they are involved in economic activities, 61% indicated that they are already applying the skills they have gained from vocational and technical skills training provided by the project to generate an income.

On assessing the indicator on the percentage of children that are involved in peace promotion in their communities, out of the 394 children that answered the question, 61.7% indicated that they are involved in peace related

On the indicator that assesses the percentage of community members willing to accept children released from armed groups, 103 out of the 117 community members engaged in the evaluation, which is 96.7%, indicated that they will readily accept children in their community and will support their reintegration at any point in time.

**Impact:** The project has made significant gains towards its outcomes. Vulnerable and demobilised children have been provided with the specific support that they require to reintegrate successfully into their communities. The involvement of community members and caregivers, along with traditional and religious leaders, as partners in the project has further established the long-term viability of the project. Sensitisation activities have led to a deeper understanding between the children and their communities and families, creating a supportive foundation for long-term trust building, and breaking down stigmatisation and stereotyping. The number of children leaving their communities to join armed groups has been reported to have decreased since project implementation started.

**Sustainability:** The community-based approach which defines the implementation of this project will go a long way towards its sustainability. Community members have been more accepting of their children who were formerly a part of armed groups and the engagement of traditional and religious leaders in reintegration will contribute towards positive and continuous community engagement. The financial support provided, such as the small enterprises the youth are working with, along with the CBCPCs, are helping to sustain a well-

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1 The 117 respondents consist of 103 community members and leaders who participated in FGDs and 14 community leaders who participated in KII s.
rounded reintegration effort. However, serious security challenges remain, with armed groups still operating in the region, leaving the community open to conflict vulnerabilities.

**Cross-Cutting Issues:** One of the critical factors that the project is based on is the protection and promotion of the rights and welfare of children in a conflict affected setting. The involvement of traditional and religious leaders, community members and CBCPCs is meant to facilitate and strengthen this rights-based approach by increasing awareness and empathy within the community towards the children. The second cross cutting issue is gender equality as the project ensures that both boys and girls formerly associated with armed forces are reintegrated successfully within their communities. With the aim to increase women’s representation, men and women have both participated equally in programme activities, while girls are also involved in skills training.

**Conclusion:** The project design and evaluation methods have utilised the expertise of Search as well as UNICEF and have implemented a highly relevant and successful project in the reintegration of children associated with armed groups, as well as providing additional support to other vulnerable children. The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed project implementation due to government restrictions, but the 3-month extension of the project timeline has helped mitigate this challenge. However, context specific challenges that are beyond the scope of the project, such as the continued conflict and operation of armed groups in the region, remain.

**Recommendations:**

The recommendations listed below build on the findings and some suggestions provided by the stakeholders consulted on what could be done by specific actors to improve on future interventions and their programming.

- Given the context in the targeted locations, future activities should to the greatest extent possible establish mechanisms and structures through which materials needed could be provided to the targeted children, without providing them with money to buy materials they require. In some cases, the voucher system can be used to ensure that the children are provided with the materials they require by the vendor when they produce the voucher given to them by the project team.

- Future projects should ensure that the economic component of the project has a Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) methodology. The VSLA methodology will help to educate and provide the beneficiaries with the platform they require to save the profits that they will make from the trade that they are involved in.
• For future projects, staff should be provided with psychological support on a quarterly basis to enable them better deal with the stress associated with delivering the project.

• The project team should set up a post-project monitoring mechanism, to be conducted on a six-monthly basis.

• The project implementation team should engage with and encourage private sector actors to continue to provide mentoring support to the children that were with them as mentees.

• The partner organisations should link the children to other services provided by the government and their development partners working in the region to maximise the gains made by this project.

• Future programming should be fully based on programming within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as it appears that the pandemic will persist for a while.

• The different phases of the project should be adequately planned, with potential challenges identified, with mitigating measures put in place to address them. The provision of economic support immediately after the training activities is key to ensuring that the children get mentoring and coaching support within the life span, with such support monitored to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

• Future projects should encourage and support all the children in the project to be involved in peace related activities. This should include working with the communities to develop children friendly activities, with the communities integrating the children into such project.
Final Evaluation | Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria Project.
1. Introduction

The Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in North-East Nigeria project is funded by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and is the second phase of a project that was also implemented by the Search for Common Ground (Search). The project, which was implemented between May 2018 and April 2019 in three Local Government Areas (LGAs), Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC), Jere and Mafa, aimed at ensuring that children separated from the CJTF and Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG) in the targeted LGAs received psychosocial and socio-economic reintegration support, and communities, CJTF and relevant government ministries understand the importance of their separation and reintegration. The project demonstrated the success of a holistic community-based approach, and it precipitated the need for the development of another phase, with the aim of building on the gains made by the project and also to reach additional conflict affected children.

The second phase of the project was developed with an implementation timeframe of 16 months with the aim of supporting the successful reintegration of children associated with armed groups or those returning from captivity into society. The project built on the lessons learnt from the previous phase and it guided the methodological approach that was used in developing the project. Common-ground and community-based approaches are used to implement the project, with principles such as the Best Interest of the Child and Do no Harm to guide the process. Thus, a wide range of actors are involved in the project, including state and non-state actors.

As the implementation of the project ends, the partners including UNICEF and Search have commissioned a final evaluation with the aim of assessing the continued relevance of the project, the progress made towards achieving its planned objectives, the challenges that the project has been contending with and how they were addressed, and the potential for sustainability.

This report provides the methodology that was used in conducting the evaluation, the relevant findings, lessons-learned, and recommendations that will be widely shared with the donor, UNICEF, partners, and local stakeholders. It will also be used to guide and inform future programming.

Noting that the assignment was conducted within the context of the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the methodology ensured that all regulations and protocols were fully
observed to ensure the safety and security of both the evaluation team and those that engaged during the assignment.

The report has five sections: Sections 1.1 and 1.2 present the objectives of the assignment and the methodology used in the evaluation; Section 2 presents an analysis of the context that precipitated the need for the project and how the context has evolved over time; Section 3 provides and analyses the findings, specifically using the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee’s (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria, including Relevance and Design of the Project, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability and Cross-Cutting Issues. Sections 4 and 5 provide conclusions and recommendations that will be essential in strengthening future interventions by the respective partners.

1.1. Purpose of the Final Evaluation

With the “Supporting the long-term socio-economic reintegration of children associated with armed groups, including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in the Northeast of Nigeria” project coming to an end, the Search has commissioned a comprehensive and cost-effective external final evaluation. Its specific objectives are to:

- Evaluate the relevance and appropriateness of this intervention, based on local needs and conditions as well as the best interest of the children, and clearly document the outcomes;
- Determine the effectiveness and efficiency of implementing the project, including which actors contributed to or hindered its progress, and the lessons we can learn;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of this intervention by looking at socio-economic and protection outcomes of the targeted beneficiaries and the process of identification of Orphan and Vulnerable Children by Community Based Child Protection Committee (CBCPC);
- Suggest clear and actionable recommendations for future reintegration programming in the region;
- Determine the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic affected the project objectives, implementation, and sustainability.

1.2. Description of the Project and its Intervention Logic
The project has been implemented between November 2019 and May 2021. It was initially designed as a 16-month project but has since been extended to a 19-month project. The goal of the project is “Supporting the long-term reintegration of children associated with vigilante groups (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria”.

The project has four outcome areas:

**Outcome 1:** To strengthen the well-being and resilience of children formerly associated with armed groups, and other vulnerable children, in Northeast Nigeria. The outputs set under this result area include: 2,461 children associated with armed groups have shown increased well-being to support their psychosocial reintegration into their communities.

**Outcome 2:** To support children formerly associated with armed groups, or other vulnerable children, to resume or return to school and become ambassadors for peace. The outputs set under this result area include: 500 children associated with armed groups supported to resume or continue school education and become ambassadors for peace.

**Outcome 3:** To empower and support children formerly associated with armed groups, and other vulnerable children, for increased economic reintegration. The outputs set under this result area include: 1,000 children associated with CJTF have increased financial literacy, enterprise understanding and skills to support their economic reintegration.

**Outcome 4:** To create a conducive environment and community support for the social and economic reintegration of children associated with armed groups. The outputs set under this result area include: 1,000 children associated with CJTF have increased financial literacy, enterprise understanding and skills to support their economic reintegration.

The main beneficiaries of the project are: 1,300 children, 7,450 community youths, men, and women, and approximately 35,000 indirect beneficiaries in the targeted LGAs.

### 1.3. Methodology

The evaluation used a participatory evaluation approach which combines primary and secondary analyses (project documents and reports) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), semi-structured questionnaires, and focus group discussions (FGD) to collect data from all the stakeholders involved in the project. The stakeholders include staff of Search, community and religious leaders, families and caregivers of targeted children, local government authorities, community members and the targeted children. The data collection tools were developed using the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria including: Relevance and
Design of the Project, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability and Cross-Cutting Issues. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse quantitative data and the Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) mining has been used to analyse qualitative data. It is important to note that all COVID-19 regulations were fully adhered to during field consultations.

This approach has supported the generation of sufficient relevant data and provided findings that are significant in achieving the objectives of the evaluation. In all phases, a strong participatory approach has been applied to ensure maximum engagement of all the relevant stakeholders. Purposive, random, and snowball techniques have been used to select informants. Key informants have been selected for their specialised knowledge and unique perspectives on the issues examined in the evaluation.

Four out of five LGAs were visited during the evaluation, and they are - Jere, MMC, Mafa and Gowza. It was impossible to conduct the evaluation in Dikwa because of the current security challenges, which have rendered it inaccessible. Additionally, the telephone and internet networks are not working and as such, it was difficult to reach and recruit enumerators to support the data collection project in the LGA.

1.3.1. The Respondents

A total of 532 respondents participated in the evaluation and below is a table of the tools, categories of respondents, and the specific numbers per tools administered per category of respondent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Type of Respondent</th>
<th>MMC</th>
<th>Jere</th>
<th>Mafa</th>
<th>Gowza</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Structured Questionnaire</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>177 (121 boys and 56)</td>
<td>17 (11 boys and 6 girls)</td>
<td>67 (46 boys and 21 girls)</td>
<td>135 (89 boys and 46 girls)</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KII</td>
<td>Staff of Search</td>
<td>9 staff, 7 males and 2 females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KII</td>
<td>Stakeholders - local government</td>
<td>0 FGDs were conducted</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13 (9 males and 4 females)</td>
<td>11 (8 males)</td>
<td>24. Out of this number 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The evaluation was conducted by an external consultant and assisted by eight enumerators - four males and four females - to ensure a gender balanced team. The enumerators collected the data in the local communities. The staff of Search in Maiduguri and social workers deployed in Gowza and Mafa helped to mobilise the respondents in the communities visited. A one-day training was conducted for the enumerators to familiarise them with the tools and prepare them for the data collection process.
2. Context Analysis

Since Nigeria gained independence from the British in October 1960, the country has been contending with a variety of complex political challenges such as inequality, corruption, oil disputes and national disunity. This has significantly contributed to fueling ethno-regional, sectarian, religious, pastoralist and transhumance related conflicts and insurgencies in...
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several regions across the country (Kamta, Azadi & Scheffran 2020; Marks 2020; Moshood & Thovoethin 2017).

One of the most prominent conflicts that have inundated the Northeastern region of the country since 2009 has been the Boko Haram Islamist insurgency. The group was initially led by Muhammad Yusuf, a radical Islamic cleric, who was eventually captured and killed in Maiduguri on 30 July 2009.2 The death of Yusuf led to intense clashes between the Nigerian military and members of Boko Haram. With the death of Yusuf, Abubakar Shekau, one of Yusuf’s lieutenants, emerged as the leader of the group (Barkindo 2018). Shekau adopted a much more militant and confrontational approach than Yusuf and prepared Boko Haram for a full-scale war with the GoN.

In closely examining the origin and the operations of the group, it is worth noting that “Boko Haram” represents a violent fringe of the spectrum of Salafist movements in Northern Nigeria. The term is a macaronic phrase mixing Hausa (Boko: denoting Western education) and Arabic (Haram: forbidden by Islam) (Peter 2014). Fundamentally rejecting the idea of Western institutions, including a secular democratic Nigerian state, the movement believes in the use of Jihad to establish an Islamic caliphate. What started as a small group in Maiduguri metamorphosed into a well-established military structure which has, for the last 12 years, been waging a full-scale transnational insurgency in not only Nigeria, but also in Cameroon and Chad. From late 2014 to early 2015, a Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was formed by the affected countries with the purpose of strengthening regional cooperation in the fight against Boko Haram and the recovery of the territories occupied in those countries (International Crisis Group 2010).

In Nigeria, although there have been intense military actions against the group between 2009 and 2018, insecurity and violence do not only persist, but have increased since 2018. Multiple militias and vigilante groups operate in Nigeria’s Northeast against Boko Haram and its splinter groups. The largest is an umbrella organisation — the CJTF — that claims to have 31,000 members. Other groups include Kesh-Kesh groups of the nomadic Arab Shewu communities, hunters’ associations, and the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN).3

For many local communities, the militias are the main agents for policing, security provision, and perform a range of governance functions, including dispute resolution and judicial

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processes. Sometimes local communities see the militias as being more accessible than the official police or military.

Since 2012, non-state armed groups in northeast Nigeria have recruited and used children as combatants and in support roles, raped and forced girls to marry its members, and committed other grave violations against children. UNICEF in 2019 reported that more than 3,500 children, most of whom were aged 13-17, were recruited by armed militant groups between 2013 and 2017 and have been used in the ongoing armed conflict in northeast Nigeria.\(^4\) They serve as active combatants, cooks, load carriers, spies and are also sexually exploited.

In addition to the above, factors such as peer and family pressure, poverty, hunger and destitution, social injustices, and a desire to seek revenge or protect their communities lead children to volunteer in armed groups. At the same time, armed groups also take advantage of children and recruit them into their folds, as they swell up their numbers and provide both active and passive combat and other related services which are essential for the sustenance of the groups' war efforts (Brett & Specht 2004).

In the second country (Nigeria) report of Secretary-General of the United Nations on Children and Armed Conflict in Nigeria released on 24 July 2020, he stated “Boys and girls in northeast Nigeria continued to endure gruesome violations at the hands of Boko Haram and to be deeply affected by military operations against the group by Government Forces despite noteworthy efforts and commitments.”\(^5\) This report was preceded by the listing by the Secretary General of the United Nations in 2016, of the CJTF and other armed groups in Nigeria as recruiters and users of children as combatants, which is a war crime, crime against humanity and a violation of International Humanitarian Law. The CJTF eventually signed an Action Plan with the United Nations to end and prevent these violations. The UN was able to verify these cases as the CJTF granted them access to their military barracks in the framework of the Action Plan.\(^6\)

The use of children as soldiers has had significant emotional, psychological, and physical challenges for the children that have been involved in the conflict. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), while living among armed actors, children experience unconscionable forms of violence. They may be required to participate in


\(^6\) Ibid.
harrowing training or initiation ceremonies, to undergo hazardous labour or to engage in combat – with great risk of death, chronic injury, and disability. They may also witness, suffer, or be forced to take part in torture and killings. Girls, especially, can be subjected to gender-based violence.\(^7\)

Amid the ongoing conflict, UNICEF and its partners have been working on identifying and supporting the release and reintegration of children from armed groups. Thus, this report is based on one of the projects of UNICEF and its partners to support the release and reintegration of children associated with armed groups in Borno State.

### 3. Findings

This section presents findings from data collected from 532 respondents, using FGDs, survey and KIIs. The demographic of the respondents is provided in the methodology section above. The findings are based on the evaluation criteria, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues.

#### 3.1. Relevance

The project is highly relevant and directly responds to the needs and aspirations of the primary target group - children and adolescents who have suffered from grave violations, including those formerly associated with armed groups in which they have played either active or passive roles. Upon returning from captivity, they have been provided with the psychosocial, social, educational, and economic support they require to successfully reintegrate into their communities. This involves contextualising the support that they require and using community-based and common ground approaches to ensure that their needs are adequately responded to.

When questioned on the relevance of the project, all the children engaged in the study, which is a total of 396, indicated that the project is relevant to them. A child that participated in the evaluation in Gowza had this to say:

> This project is very important to me, as I am back with my family and no longer in the bush or carrying a gun. I went through a lot when I was with the CJTF but now I am a different person and all the fears that I had of what will happen to me when I return

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home, are no longer there. This would not have happened without UNICEF and Search.\textsuperscript{8}

Like the comments by the child in Gowza, a child engaged in the MMC said:

Life would have been very difficult without the Search project, and it came at the right time and helped me to go to school, with my parents doing business with the support they received. I have always wanted to go back to school but feared that it might never happen. Now I am happy that I am having education and my dream has come true.\textsuperscript{9}

The project also responds to the needs of the families and the caregivers of the children by providing them with financial assistance that is essential in reducing their household poverty, thereby fostering an economically sustainable environment for the reintegration of the children. Significantly, the project takes a best practice approach and involves children that were not involved in armed groups, complying with the provisions of the Paris Principles of 2007, and responding to the needs of other vulnerable children in target communities. Only targeting children formerly associated with armed groups would have led to a backlash and would have undermined the community-based approach that is at the core of the approach to implementing the project. The children whose needs have been responded to by the project were those identified by UNICEF, while Search has used the case management criteria to identify children in need of reintegration assistance, through peace clubs, radio programs, participatory theatre, and community initiatives. Community members indicated that the inclusion of other children means a lot to them, as it helped to extend opportunities and support to other poor and vulnerable children in the targeted communities. An Imam that participated in a FGD in Mafa indicated:

If the focus of the project had been limited to only children that were with armed groups, it would have affected the perception of families with children that had suffered from the war but have received no support. The inclusion of other children made our work easy in terms of educating community members on the approach of the project and the need to support it. The project is our project, and it is our children that benefit from it, so Search is only helping us to better perform our responsibilities as parents and caregivers.\textsuperscript{10}

Key to responding to the needs of the target groups is the use of community-based and common ground approaches that fully integrate community members into the project. It was recognised from Phase I of the project that the success of any reintegration project or programme depends heavily on the buy-in, ownership, leadership, and commitment of the

\textsuperscript{8} Interview conducted on 26 May 2021. 
\textsuperscript{9} Interview conducted on 21 May 2021. 
\textsuperscript{10} FGD conducted on 22 May 2021.
community to that project. Essentially, the project also responds to the needs of community members as the engagements with them serve two purposes:

a. On one hand, it has created mass awareness of the need for the communities to support the reintegration of the CAAFAG, reunified kids and OVCs, and
b. On the other hand, it has created an awareness of what the communities need to do to prevent the recruitment and use of children as combatants.

This is especially critical given the fact that the project is implemented in communities in which armed groups continue to operate. In line with the above, the project further responds to the needs of the children, their families, and communities as it engaged armed groups such as the CJTF, on the need to release children that were with them and desist from recruiting children as fighters.

The project uses a multi-layered and webbed approach to respond to the needs of the beneficiaries, with its result areas identifying and providing solutions for the communities’ diverse requirements. This includes providing psycho-social, social, economic, and educational support, all of which holistically addresses the needs of the children; give them something to look forward to; reduce their vulnerabilities; and prepare them to live as regular children in their communities. Thus, the blend of increased knowledge and positive attitude and behaviour towards the targeted children by the community, combined with the positive attitude and the ability to better relate and cope with the changes in their communities on the part of the children because of the project, contributed significantly to meeting the project objectives.

The design of the project is adapted to the institutional, human, and financial capacities of the Search and its key stakeholders. Search indicated that they held several consultations during project design to better assess project requirements and their capacity to undertake a project with as broad a mandate as the one under review. Thus, the project was designed with those elements taken into consideration. Additionally, the project has worked with a wide range of stakeholders including the State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (MWASD) and other actors at the local government level in Borno State and the respective LGAs, thus establishing its expanded scope and holistic approach.

During the review, the choice of Search as the implementing organisation has been deemed appropriate due to the organisation’s extensive experience of working with children in Northeast Nigeria and its implementation of a previous phase of the project. Thus, this project is built on the experience Search has gained over the years, with the lessons learnt and best practices used to develop and implement the project under review. In addition to this, Search is familiar with the practices and procedures of UNICEF, which makes it easier for them to implement the project.
It has been observed that stakeholders in local communities are very supportive of the project and are working closely with the partners to ensure that the objectives of the project are met. For instance, religious and traditional leaders have indicated that they are committed to the project and are working on ensuring that the targeted children get the support they require from their communities for their successful reintegration. The continued support and commitment to the project by the respective actors will go a long way in enhancing the reacceptance of children and strengthening the roles played by families and communities to increase the sustainability of the project.

The project is highly relevant to the Government of Nigeria and has integrated several national as well as local government institutions as it sought to complement its activities related to the release and reintegration of children formerly associated with armed groups. The institutions involved are the State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Youth Empowerment, State Agency for Mass Education, Borno State Governor’s Office, Borno State Emirate Council, Borno State Council of Elders, State Ministry for Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement, management of Bulumkutu Rehabilitation Center and Federal Ministry of Finance. The project is also embedded in the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children formerly associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups and the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the UN Sustainable Development Goals 5, 7 and 10.

### 3.2. Intervention Logic, Monitoring and Learning

As indicated under the relevance section, Search has brought to the project several decades of expertise working with children, especially those in conflict-affected settings. Additionally, the organisation has extensive experience in Northeast Nigeria and has worked on a previous project that the project under review seeks to build on. The lessons learnt and best practices from the previous project have been identified as critical components of the current project during the review. Further, the guidance and support of UNICEF during the design of the project has been reported to be key to having a model that is acceptable to all partners.

The logframe is well-designed and is of very good quality. It has four outcomes, each with outputs that are distinctly defined and clearly speak to what the project aims to achieve. The intervention logic has comprehensively identified context-specific assumptions and risks; they include:
Children associated with AOGs are identified as such by communities because of their participation in the project, putting them at risk.

Parents/guardians of children associated with the CJTF do not support their children participating in the intervention.

Communities are resistant to Search’s intervention and the goals of the project.

CJTF requests incentives/payment to allow access to beneficiary children and challenge access without this.

Children associated with the CJTF or AOGs suffer from levels of trauma that affect their ability to fully engage in the project.

Children re-associate with armed groups.

A risk matrix was developed at the project design stage with impact and probability, countermeasures, and management responses, with the inclusion of the parties responsible for assessing and managing each risk factor. The risk factors were monitored and assessed by the project’s implementation team. Crucially, the initial design of the risk factor did not consider determinants such as natural disasters and pandemics. The COVID-19 pandemic has had implications for the implementation of the project as the outbreak occurred at the onset of project implementation. Thus, there was the need to adapt to the extraordinary circumstances to ensure the delivery of services to the target groups.

The indicators as set during the design stage of the project were unambiguous, Relevant, Acceptable, Credible, Easy and Robust (RACER) and can easily be used to measure progress. It has four result areas, and they are largely interlinked and have shaped the approach of the project. The four result areas are:

- **Outcome 1**: To strengthen the well-being and resilience of children formerly associated with armed groups, and other vulnerable children, in Northeast Nigeria.
- **Outcome 2**: To support children formerly associated with armed groups, or other vulnerable children, to resume or return to school and become ambassadors for peace.
- **Outcome 3**: To empower and support children formerly associated with armed groups, and other vulnerable children, for increased economic reintegration.
- **Outcome 4**: To create a conducive environment and community support for the social and Economic reintegration and separation of children associated with armed groups.

Target values are set for every indicator, and they are realistic and achievable and are said to be regularly updated. For instance, indicator 1.1. reads “Number of boys and girls receiving psychosocial support, such as Trauma Awareness and Resilience Building”. Indicator 2.1. reads “Number of boys and girls provided with Back-to-School Kits to support their learning”.

The targets set are sex-disaggregated and provide a clear indication of the number of males and females included in the project. The final evaluation of the first phase of the project serves as a baseline for this project and is used to determine the benchmarks and targets for
the project. Additionally, a reflection and recalibration workshop was also held with the Project Implementation Team on the results of the first phase of the project to address and incorporate specific learnings and establish a common understanding of the deliverables and objectives of the second phase. This exercise went a long way in framing the approach to the project and ensuring that it is in line with the expectation of the respective stakeholders.

### 3.3. Efficiency

This section assesses areas such as the implementation, coordination and monitoring mechanisms established by the project, the nature of the relationship between the implementing partners and the beneficiaries, the availability of human and financial resources and their use to maximise value for money, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic and delays in implementing some components of the project.

#### 3.3.1. Project Implementation, Coordination and Monitoring Systems

To support the implementation and monitoring of the project, a Project Advisory Committee which was established during the first phase of the project was retained. It includes representatives of the State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Youth Empowerment, State Agency for Mass Education, Borno State Governor’s Office, Borno State Emirate Council, Borno State Council of Elders, State Ministry for Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement, management of Bulumkutu Rehabilitation Center, Federal Ministry of Finance, and Network of CSOs.

The Project Implementation Team consists of the technical staff directly implementing the project report to the Advisory Committee, which monitors their activities and provides oversight support and recommendations whenever there is a need for corrective measures. As is evident, the Project Advisory Committee consists of a wide range of state and non-state actors with significant socio-political capital to help the project achieve its objectives. They also have the responsibility as duty bearers to deliver similar services to the beneficiaries. As such, there is a complementary relationship between these actors and the project.

The Project Advisory Committee meets quarterly, and the Project Implementation team meets every Monday and has reviews monthly. In addition to this, reflection meetings are held on a quarterly basis by the Project Implementation Team. Search provides feedback on observations from the field from community members, caseworkers, social workers, and other stakeholders, with UNICEF regularly engaging Search on project implementation-related issues.
The Project Implementation Team has undertaken regular field monitoring activities in which they have involved community members who provide feedback on the implementation of the project. The feedback is a significant component of the reports produced from the field consultations and subsequently, the quarterly and yearly reports. It is important to note that because of the security challenges in the state, there were usually difficulties in conducting direct monitoring visits and, in some cases, virtual means had to be used to engage the beneficiaries and case workers in affected areas.

The project has systems and structures developed by Search that ensure that activities at different levels are adequately monitored with feedback used to take corrective measures when necessary. The project has shown good practices such as the use of tools like attendance lists, radio logs, pre/post-tests, school enrolment registers, school assessment records registers, non-food items (NFIs) (uniform, books and stationery, school bag, and their fees), distribution registers, observation guidelines and notes, semi-structured interview guidelines etc. to collect data and measure progress. These tools help guide the monitoring and assessment of each activity and ensure that the expected outputs are delivered.

The logframe has also been observed to be utilised as a management tool, which allows Search and its partners to be fully updated on a regular basis on the achievements of the objectives of the project. Staff of Search, especially those at the field level, demonstrated that they are highly familiar with the content of the logframe, which was essential for the smooth implementation of the project. It was also concluded that the reports produced by Search are well written and of high quality. They provide insightful details on the implementation of the project, existing challenges and the corrective measures that are taken.

3.3.2. Relationship between Search and Stakeholders

Search adopted a common-ground and community-based approach that brought together a wide range of actors, especially at the LGA and community levels, and provided the socio-political capital that was crucial for the success of the project. It appears that significant trust and confidence was harvested from phase one of the project, which has been helpful in enhancing a good and efficient working relationship among the respective actors involved. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of the children engaged in the study indicated that the project’s team has been very respectful to them and constructively engage and guide them. The remaining two percent indicated that they do not know if the project’s implementation team is respectful to them. When probed on what respect means to them, they referred to factors such as politeness, show of compassion, listening to what they have to say, and providing advice to them when necessary.
Critical to the implementation of the project is the fact that Search is working with a wide range of state and non-state actors who are directly engaged with and have supported the activities of the project. This integrated and inclusive approach to programming has contributed to the potential of the project to achieve its expected outcomes. All these actors also indicated that they are very familiar with the project, were fully integrated into it and there has been a respectful working relationship between them and Search. A community member in MMC had this to say:

We have known SFCG for a very long period and they have been a credible and reliable partner that has succeeded alongside UNICEF to support several children in our community. They respect us and we respect them, and that relationship will always be like that.\(^{11}\)

A case worker of Search in Mafa\(^{12}\) indicated that alongside the training they receive, there is a lot of emphasis placed by Search on the need for them to be respectful and supportive to the beneficiaries and communities in which they work. Alongside this, it was deduced from the evaluation that several years of working in Northeast Nigeria had provided Search with the socio-political capital it requires to implement a project of this nature. In addition to this, the use of the Do no Harm and Best Interest of the Child principles and conflict sensitive programming has helped the organisation to strengthen its relationship with the local actors.

### 3.3.3. Availability and use of Human and Financial Resources

It has been concluded by the review that the resources provided by both UNICEF and Search are adequate and meet the financial requirements of the project. Both institutions have fulfilled their commitments to the project and thus, there are no challenges identified in relation to the financial commitments of the partners. UNICEF has provided approximately 90% of the funds while Search has financed the rest. Furthermore, the review of financial reports and budgets has revealed that outputs have been delivered in a cost-efficient manner, and that value for money has been ensured. This means that the costs of outputs delivered are realistic and are within the actual market prices and the spending of resources available to the project is in line with the budget.

Additionally, the human resources of Search have been made fully available to the project, with project and field staff performing their roles and responsibilities. In addition to this, the offices of the partners are used for the implementation of the project.

The project implementation team identified several personal challenges that they faced during the implementation of Phase 1, such as psychosocial and physical difficulties resulting

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\(^{11}\) FGD conducted on 25 May 2021 in MMC LGA.

\(^{12}\) Based on an interview conducted on 24 May 2021.
from fatigue and stress from long hours of work, the security risks involved, and the need to meet the expectations of the project within the context of Northeast Nigeria. This resulted in support mechanisms being embedded in this project to strengthen the resilience and mental and psychosocial wellbeing of the staff. Thus, staff were provided with monthly support sessions, conducted training on psychosocial activities and, alongside this, self-care activities focused on staff well-being such as art therapy, group reflections and stress relief exercises were also implemented.

3.3.4. COVID-19 Pandemic and Delays Encountered in the Implementation of the Project

The implementation of the project has encountered some delays which have had implications for its timely administration. This section discusses the key challenges and how they were addressed. The principal challenge that the project has faced is the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic affected Nigeria in early 2020 and has impacted the implementation of the project, as it has led to delays in some activities. The pandemic has also brought its own security challenges, which include adhering to government regulations, including lockdowns and curfews. Due to the delays resulting from the pandemic, the participatory theatre approach has been transformed to radio programmes developed and produced by the Communications Unit of Search. Additionally, activities such as the Micro Enterprise and Fundamentals Training, the Business Administration and Support Sessions and the Strategy for Trauma Awareness and Resilience were initially postponed. However, the Project Implementation Team indicated that they were able to adapt to the context of the pandemic and have gradually delivered the services needed by the children. A three month no-cost extension was also requested and was granted by UNICEF to ensure that all components of the project were fully delivered.

The security challenges in the state also had additional implications for the project, especially with the intermittent inaccessibility due to attacks by armed groups in some LGAs or roadblocks by security actors or armed groups and criminal groups. These activities limited the flow of the project, with beneficiaries at times having to wait for long periods to receive the support they required. Additionally, there were times when the Search team had to ask case workers and community stakeholders to distribute the economic support packages to the children and caregivers, as they could not travel to the LGAs themselves.

3.4. Effectiveness

Significant progress has been made in producing the expected outputs under each of the outcome areas. Provided below, under the specific result areas, are some of the outputs that were delivered.
Outcome 1) Between 2019 and 2021, 1308 children (788 boys and 520 girls) were identified by Search after receiving their names from UNICEF and registered as beneficiaries of the project. This is 87% of the target set which is 1500; Between 2019 and 2020, 1087 children (636 boys and 451 girls) received psychosocial support, such as Trauma Awareness and Resilience Building; Between 2019 and 2021, 36 trauma awareness sessions were conducted in the targeted LGAs. This is 21% more than that of the target set which is 30; Between 2019 and 2021, 1257 (934 boys and 323 girls) affected by grave violations benefitted from case management follow up activities. This is 84% of the target set, which is 1500; In 2020, 12 Community-Based Child Protection Committees (CBCPCs) were established in the targeted LGAs. This is 20% more than the target set which is 10. In 2020, 60 Community-Based Child Protection Committee members (43 males and 17 females) from the 12 CBCPCs established benefitted from skills training geared towards having them support children formerly associated with the CJTF. This is 33% more than the target set which is 45; Between 2020 and 2021, 35 Transformative Dialogue sessions were conducted in the targeted LGAs. This is 17% more than the target set which is 30. Between 2019 and 2021, 635 (boys males and 260 girls) caregivers, religious and community leaders participated in Transformative Dialogues to support successful reintegration of children. This is 96% more than the target set, which is 324;

Outcome 2) Between 2020 and 2021, 1086 children (639 boys and 447 girls) received Birth Certificates or identification documents with the support of the project. This is 9% more than the target set, which is 1000 children; Between 2020 and 2021, 479 children (277 boys and 202 girls) were provided with Back to School kits to support their learning. This is 96% of the target set which is 500 children; Between 2020 and 2021, 462 children (267 boys and 195 girls) were provided with Accelerated Learning. This is 92% of the target set, which is 500 children; Between 2020 and 2021, 10 peace clubs established and are holding meetings and sensitising their peers and community members in the targeted LGAs, which is 100% of the target set.

Outcome 3) Between 2020 and 2021, 799 children (484 boys and 315 girls) completed market-orientatated training programmes. This is 80% of the target set which is 1000; Between 2020 and 2021, 28 Micro Enterprise training were conducted in the targeted LGAs. This is 93% of the target set which is 30; Between 2020 and 2021, 775 children (457 boys and 318 girls) received entrepreneurial/self-employment grants or goods in kind, which is 77.5% of the target set which is 1000. The grant amount per child amounts to approximately 100, 000 Naira. Alongside this private sector actors who received children under the mentoring and coaching component of the project were also provided with 20, 000 Naira per child, for the support they provided; Between 2020 and 2021, 200 caregivers received four-month training and economic assistance packages that are meant to conduct the trade they were trained on. This is 100% of the target set.
### Outcome 4)

Between 2020 and 2021, 11 community led social cohesion initiatives, including building trust among community members and identifying addressing conflicts at the community level were implemented in the LGAs. This is 73% of the target set, which is 15; Between 2020 and 2021, 39 radio shows were aired on selected FM radio stations, with the programmes aired in Hausa and Kanuri languages. This is 100% of the target set; Between 2020 and 2021, 1042 adults (767 males and 275 females) attended participatory community theatres in the targeted LGAs. The target set is 5500, however, there was a shift in approach because of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the use of the radio participatory theatre methodology was resorted to by the Project Implementation Team; Between 2020 and 2021, 30 participatory theatre performances were delivered in the targeted LGAs, which is 100% of the target set.

### 3.4.1. Other Indicators Assessed

This section of the report measures and analyses indicators that have to do with the:

i. % of children associated with armed groups who report applying skills learned to generate an income;

ii. % of community members willing to accept children released from armed groups, and

iii. % of children that are involved in activities that promotes peace in their communities.

It was deduced from the evaluation that the bulk of the children engaged in the evaluation are occupied in activities of the project. As could be seen in the chart below, 48.7% indicated that they are in school, 50% indicated that they are engaged in economic activities and 25.3% indicated that they are engaged in both school and economic activity. Few children (1.3%) indicated that they are not currently involved in any activity, and this was attributed to the fact that they had not received their economic support by the time of the review. They were expecting to receive their support package a few days after the review process, which they eventually did.
A. Specifically on the indicator that has to do with the percentage of children associated with armed groups who report applying skills learned to generate an income, out of the 298 children who indicated that they are involved in economic activities, 61% indicated that they are already applying the skills they have gained from vocational and technical skills training provided by the project to generate an income. The remaining 39% indicated that they have either not received their economic support package yet or have not started making gains from the activities they are either involved in, or are working on getting started. However, most of those who indicated that they had not received their economic package by the time the survey was conducted, succeeded in receiving the packages the following week, the week of 24-30 May 2021. A beneficiary interviewed in Mafa indicated:

Through the Search for Common Ground project, I was able to get trained and received financial support that has helped me to begin my own small tailoring business. I am no longer afraid of what tomorrow may bring as I know that my destiny is in my hands, and I need to work hard to make my business grow. With your own business, you have something to think of and look forward to. I can never go back to any armed group as I have my business to focus on.13

Similar sentiments were expressed by most of those who are already utilising the skills that they gained, and as described by the interviewee above, now have something to look forward to, thus reducing their vulnerability.

B. On assessing the indicator on the percentage of children that are involved in peace promotion in their communities, out of the 394 children that answered the question, 61.7% indicated that they are involved in peace related activities and 38.3% indicated that they are not involved in peacebuilding activities in their communities. Activities that some of the children are involved in include trauma healing sessions and transformative dialogues, peace clubs and sporting activities such as football, that promote peace. It was observed that more

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13 Interview conducted on 26 May 2021.
Final Evaluation | Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria Project.

_in school_ children are involved in peace activities than children who are not in school. Those who are involved in business appear to be focusing more on their businesses than on peace activities.

C. On the indicator that assesses the percentage of community members willing to accept children released from armed groups, 103 out of the 117\(^{14}\) community members engaged in the evaluation, which is 96.7%, indicated that they will readily accept children in their community and will support their reintegration at any point in time. As could be seen from the figures, this commitment cuts across all the targeted communities and is attributed to the awareness raising and sensitisation activities undertaken by the project. Some of the community members already have children under their care and are willing to accept more children.

To triangulate the responses provided by the community members, the children respondents were questioned on how satisfied they are with the treatment given to them by their family members and caregivers. The graph below illustrates that 95.7% of the children engaged in the evaluation indicated that their families are making efforts to ensure that they feel included and accepted within the family unit. This category also includes caregivers who are also making sure that the children in their care feel at home and are in an environment where they are catered for and looked after as children need to be.

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\(^{14}\) The 117 respondents consist of 103 community members and leaders who participated in FGDs and 14 community leaders who participated in KIIs.
3.5. Impact

The project has succeeded in making tremendous progress, which contributed to the achievement of some of the goals of the project. Importantly, a significant percentage of the children engaged are satisfied with the support that they received. As could be seen in the graph below, when questioned on how satisfied they are with the level of support they have received from the project, 79.5% of the children engaged in the review indicated that they are very satisfied, 16.7% indicated that they are satisfied, 3.3% indicated that they are neutral.

This high level of satisfaction was also expressed by the bulk of the caregivers and community members engaged in the evaluation. Some of the reasons provided for the tremendous progress of the project are provided below under each result area, and they contribute to the high levels of satisfaction among the target groups.
Outcome 1:

- The project has succeeded in providing the targeted children with the support they require to be reintegrated into their communities. As such, the targeted children are currently either living with their parents or caregivers. This has gone a long way in transforming their lives, reducing their vulnerabilities, and enabling them to live as normal children in their communities. Additionally, the interventions of the project are helping to reduce the vulnerability of the children and their households, thereby cutting down the rate of recidivism and the potential of vulnerable children volunteering into armed groups. The psychosocial support provided goes a long way in helping the children better deal with their trauma and relate with their family and community members.

- The approach of the project to target other children who were not previously involved in armed groups has helped to provide support to children that are vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups. The inclusion of such children is a good practice as it has succeeded in ensuring that children who were part of armed groups were not exclusively targeted. The inclusion of children of varied vulnerabilities has helped to strengthen the community-based approach adopted by the project and at the same time, maximised the benefits of the project to a wide range of households.

- The establishment and strengthening of the capacity of the CBCPCs help to not only improve on awareness and support related to children formerly associated with armed groups, but also to improve on the knowledge of community, traditional and religious leaders, and their members, on the rights, welfare, and dignity of children in their communities.

- The participation of male and female caregivers, religious and community leaders in Transformative Dialogues is said to be highly effective by the bulk of those who are engaged in the study and have participated in such sessions. The respondents said that these sessions are helping to shape their mindset to better understand how to support the successful reintegration of children that were involved in armed groups.

Outcome 2:

- The Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) component of the project has been critical in helping older children gain some form of education, especially literacy and numeracy. It has helped some children have access to education provided by a professional education institution, and at the same time, get involved in businesses that enable them to be economically stable. Classes are held three times a week for a period of nine months and the service is provided by the State Agency for Mass Literacy. The children can continue to gain further education after the months if they
want to. Though they will be required to pay, the fee is low and affordable as it is a government institution.

- As a result of poverty and economic hardship, families struggle to meet the needs of children that would like to return to school and as such, the back-to-school support provided by the project is said by both the children supported and caregivers that were engaged in the evaluation, to be crucial in enhancing the return and retention of children in school. This is helping to meet the needs of the children and promoting their education.

- The establishment of peace clubs for children is a remarkable grassroots approach that involves children in peacebuilding promotion, with them owning and leading the process. The peace clubs facilitate peer-to-peer education, which may have more effect on children than other forms of awareness activities conducted. Additionally, the children involved can also educate their relatives on the knowledge and awareness they gain from the clubs. Thus, there is the need for such a practice to be replicated in future programmes. All the children that are part of peace clubs in the MMC and Jere indicated that the peace clubs are essential, help create awareness and support the reintegration of children that are in their schools and communities. A child who is a member of a peace club in the MMC stated:

> The Peace Club is a good idea as it brings children together, with the teacher helping us to understand what we need to do to help promote peace and help children in our class and community to be reintegrated.\(^\text{15}\)

The sentiments expressed by the child are like those that were expressed by other children, teachers and community members that were engaged in the evaluation.

**Outcome 3:**

- The practice of providing economic assistance to caregivers of young children by utilising the profit from the enterprises that they are involved in for the care of the children, is a good practice. It is said by all the caregivers engaged in the evaluation to be very useful and has succeeded in helping to reduce vulnerabilities in homes, with the children attending and being retained in school. In places like Mafa and Gowza, some caregivers indicated that without the support provided for caregivers, life would have been very hard for them and the children, which would have undermined the successful reintegration of the children. When further questioned, they indicated that the children might have needed to be involved in petty trading or to fend for themselves on the streets and thus, unable to attend school, rendering them vulnerable.

\(^{15}\) Interview conducted in the MMC on 21 May 2021.
vulnerable. Additionally, the hunger that would have affected them could have led to them going back to armed groups.

- The mentoring and coaching component of the project has succeeded in strengthening the involvement of private sector actors in the project and building a support mechanism for the children. This is because there was an effort made by the project team to mainstream the private sector into the project as its economic component largely depends on the longer-term relationship that will be developed between the children and the business owners. Practical long-term skills related training can only be provided by private sector actors at the community level, and the continued relationship will provide extra support through advice when the children face challenges and where possible, additional contacts for the children. The project has also helped provide additional capital for investment by the small and medium scale businesses that took the children for on-the-job training support. The provision of 20,000 Naira per child was said by respondents to have helped in strengthening the financial capacity of enterprises and also to develop a longer-term relationship that will continue even after the end of the project. As indicated by an artisanal worker in the MMC, “this is a win-win for us and the children. They get trained and get advice from us and we become like a family and get some money to expand our business.”

Outcome 4:

- The use of the radio participatory theatre methodology alongside the community participatory theater approach, with the media in most cases replacing the community participatory theatre because of the COVID-19 pandemic, went a long way in helping to widen the sensitisation program of the project. The messages also included sensitisation on the COVID-19 pandemic and the regulations for the children and community members to follow. The use of the media helped the project to adapt to the pandemic and to continue awareness related activities. All the radio programmes were developed and produced by the communications unit of Search.

- The awareness raising and sensitisation activities undertaken by the project were reported by community members engaged in the evaluation to have provided the communities with the awareness they need to support the reintegration of children, and address challenges related to stereotypes and stigmatisation. Community leaders and community-based structures are playing a central role in mitigating stereotypes and stigmatisation against the targeted children. As indicated by a community leader in Mafa:

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16 FGD held in MMC on 24 May 2021.
We have made it our business to engage and educate our community members on the need for them not to treat the children that we are reintegrating in our community as strangers or enemies. They are our children, and we owe it to them to protect them and make sure that they feel welcomed. We also preach in our mosques for them to understand what we are trying to say.\textsuperscript{17}

Similar sentiments were expressed by a member of a CBCPC in Gowza:

We have been very active in getting community members and the families of children reintegrated to understand that we have an obligation to protect them from stigmatisation. We cannot afford to have our children feeling like they are safe and insecure in our community, as that will make them leave again and join armed groups. We do community meetings and visit households. This is helping to build confidence and trust between the children and the community members.\textsuperscript{18}

From the evaluation findings, it appears that the efforts that the community leaders are making are helping to strengthen the relationship and trust between community members and the targeted children.

- Based on the findings from the evaluation, it has been concluded that there is a positive shift in the perception of families and community members in relation to reaccepting children formerly associated with armed groups. As indicated above, out of the 117 community members engaged in the evaluation, 103 which is 96.7\% indicated that they will readily accept children in their community and will support their reintegration at any point in time. Additionally, as illustrated above, 95.7\% of the children engaged in the evaluation indicated that their families are making efforts to ensure that they feel they are included and accepted within the family unit. This provides a clear balance between what is indicated by the community members and the perception of the children. If the children that are going through reintegration efforts had indicated that they are not properly treated, then that would have signaled a need to further question the answers of the community members. This shift in mindset is critical to any reintegration process, as the rejection of the children will have immediate negative effects on their reintegration. Thus, the use of a common ground and community-based approach, which augmented the full involvement of community members and local structures into the project, is contributing to

\textsuperscript{17} Interview conducted in Mafa on 24 May 2021.
\textsuperscript{18} Interview conducted in Gowza on 25 May 2021.
changing mindsets, with more community members willing to reaccept children formerly associated with armed groups.

- The engagements with CJTF and the general awareness building on child protection and the mitigation of the recruitment of children as soldiers, is helping to reduce the initial attraction on the part of armed groups, especially the CJTF, to recruit and use them. Community members have indicated, when engaged, that there are very limited reports in their communities of children being used by the CJTF and that there are very limited numbers of children leaving their communities to join groups such as Boko Haram.

3.5.1. Some Key Reflections

This section presents some key reflections from the evaluation on programmatic and contextual opportunities and challenges.

- The project’s quarterly M&E Reflection meetings is a good practice that helps the project to critically reflect on the progress made and the challenges that should be addressed. Such meetings provide a platform for corrective measures to be adopted to address challenges immediately after they are identified. Search should continue the use of such an approach to programming as it is effective and produces the desired results.

- The use of an integrated community-based approach is a good practice that promotes local ownership, buy-in and leadership of reintegration programmes. The use of this practice has played a critical role in ensuring its success. It is important for the model alongside the common-ground approach to always be embedded in the projects and programmes of Search.

- The psychosocial support provided for staff is critical for their performance and success. It should be further strengthened and monitored to ensure that staff are getting the best support possible, before, during and after returning from the field. This will help to enhance their psychosocial and mental health and foster service delivery.

- It was deduced from the evaluation that some children were provided with cash support as part of their economic reintegration assistance. The argument proffered by the staff of Search for this, is that some trades such as the production of local perfumes require cash at hand for the procurement of local products and that it is also important for the children to have the confidence of handling money, including bank accounts for savings and trading purposes. Thus, 50,000 Naira is provided to them as a first instalment and the use of the money is monitored; upon a satisfactory review by Search, the remaining 50,000 Naira is disbursed. Even though the
evaluation did not specifically try to assess the implications of the provision of cash for children, the IDDRS and International Principles that guide the reintegration of children discourage the provision of cash to children as part of their economic reintegration assistance, as it could lead to extortion and misuse of funds, with exploiters taking advantage of the children and the project, children also refuse to go to school and prefer the cash option. However, given the context in the targeted locations, future activities should to the greatest extent possible establish mechanisms and structures through which materials required by the children are provided to them, rather than providing them with cash. In some cases, the voucher system can be used to ensure that the children are provided with the materials they require by the vendor when they produce the voucher given to them by the project team.

- A critical challenge that is beyond the control of this project, has to do with the fact that contextual challenges persist and the children that are reintegrated continue to live in communities that are conflict affected, with armed groups directly operating in some of them, for instance in Dikwa, Mafa and Gowza. Thus, there is the fundamental question of ‘reintegrating the children into what?’ It is worth noting that reintegration programmes and projects are not responsible for the overall recovery in any context - they only feed into it. The success of any reintegration programme or project is dependent on positive changes in the context. Thus, even though this programme has made significant gains, the onus falls on the Government of Nigeria as the principal duty bearer of human rights, safety, and security in the country, to work with its development partners to end the conflict and positively transform the lives of people in Northeast Nigeria.

### 3.6. Sustainability

This section examines factors that enhance the potential for sustainability as well as the factors that may, to some extent, undermine sustainability of some aspects of the project. A key factor in relation to sustainability is the community-based approach adopted by the project, through which community; religious and traditional leaders and structures buy into, own, and lead the project. This highlights the significant social capital present, which is fundamental to ensuring sustainability. Through the project, these actors have been provided with the awareness and the skills that they require to support the reintegration of children and they will continue to use these skills and awareness to not just promote the reintegration of children but also to educate their people on issues related to the rights and the protection of children in their communities. Thus, it is expected that these engagements,
which these leaders indicated that they are committed to, will continue after the lifespan of the project.

The knowledge and awareness that the community has gained because of the project is sustainable and will be retained by them. There is much more willingness on the part of family and community members to reaccept children formerly associated with armed forces, and to discourage their recruitment and use as soldiers. Additionally, the awareness raised by the project and the expected continuous engagement by traditional, religious and community leaders will help to mitigate stereotypes and stigmatisation, both of which usually undermine reintegration processes.

Tied to the above, is the establishment of the CBCPCs, which have been provided with the technical capacity they require to function efficiently and effectively. These groups consist of community members who volunteer, and they function within their communities; as such they do not need financial resources to carry out their responsibilities. The CBCPCs are sustainable structures and are critical for the reintegration of children and the protection and promotion of the rights and welfare of children in their communities. It is also expected that Search, through other projects, will continue to engage the CBCPCs and provide them with technical and other support when possible. It is, however, important for the relationship between the CBCPCs and government institutions, especially those in the Project Advisory Committee, to be strengthened to enable them to receive support from those institutions and establish a sustainable working relationship on children related issues.

The provision of psychosocial and socio-economic support to children has helped to provide them with a new and more stable life, and with something to look forward to. Thus, they are less vulnerable and are also provided with family and community support, which are essential for their long term psychosocial and mental health stability and their ability to focus on education or the trade that they are involved in. Due to this, there is said to be a very limited rate of recidivism, with children much more willing to focus on improving through the support that they have been provided. A vital component in relation to sustainability is the fact that the children are linked to private sector actors who are providing mentoring and coaching support. Through such support mechanisms, the children are building socio-economic networks that will help promote the longevity of their economic activities. Some of these mentors will continue to provide essential advice and guidance to the children to ensure that they are on the right track.

As indicated in the sections above, the security challenges in the state undermine some of the gains made by the project, due to the continued presence of armed groups, with some functioning in the very communities the children live in. Thus, the threat of communities being destroyed, with the investments of the children looted, or even the children abducted by Boko Haram, remains. There is an urgent need for a change in the context, which, as
indicated earlier, is beyond the scope and ability of the project. Despite this, Search should continue to intermittently monitor the beneficiaries to assess the progress they are making and the challenges that they contend with. Search should also seek to link the beneficiaries to other projects that they, or other development partners, may be implementing, and which will be of additional benefit to the beneficiaries.

3.7. Cross-Cutting Issues

In relation to cross-cutting issues, two areas have been examined, i) Human Rights and Rights Based Approach ii) Gender Equality.

i) Human Rights and the Rights-Based Approach:

The project is based on the need to protect and promote the rights and welfare of children in a conflict affected setting. It uses multiple approaches to both protect the rights of children and mitigate the factors that render them susceptible to armed groups. The project directly follows UNICEF’s equity-based approach and aims to address factors that can lead to discrimination and inequality for vulnerable children associated with armed groups. Embedded in the project is the common ground approach that promotes inclusion, participation, and an integrated approach to programming. Through this approach the project provides opportunities to reintegrate children into their communities regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, income, physical attributes, geographical location, or other basis for marginalisation. The changes have been gradual but there is finally recognition that the targeted children should have a place, identity, recognition, and a voice in their communities.

The inclusion of community, religious and traditional leaders, and community structures such as the CBCPCs are meant to strengthen the approach towards human rights and the rights-based approach. The awareness raising activities that they are involved in alongside other stakeholders are all geared towards protecting and promoting the rights and welfare of children in their communities.

ii) Gender Equality:

The project is designed to ensure the reintegration of both boys and girls who were formerly associated with armed groups, as well as other vulnerable children. In addition to this, it seeks to provide the children with the voice, identity, recognition, and place that have been denied to them and has led to some of them volunteering in armed groups. It is worth noting that out of the 1308 children that are included in the project, 788 are boys and 520 are girls.
The inclusion of 520 girls out of the total number is very impressive, especially in a place like Borno State where patriarchy has shaped gender relations and dynamics for several decades, thereby usually undermining the inclusion and participation of women and girls in projects and programmes. Furthermore, the project promotes gender equality by consciously engaging both women and men in local communities and ensuring their participation in project activities aimed at educating the communities on the rights of girls formerly associated with armed groups and the need for them to support their reintegration.

The establishment of networks and the training of women, as well as their inclusion in the CBCPCs provides them with the platform to support the reintegration of both boys and girls in their communities. The project is also aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals 5 on Gender Equality and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

4. Conclusion

This project by the Search for Common Ground to support the long-term reintegration of children associated with armed vigilante groups in Northeast Nigeria, is timely and highly relevant, given CJTF’s signing of an Action Plan in 2017 to end the recruitment of children in its forces. With the demobilisation of children from armed forces, comes the necessary step to reintegrate them holistically into their communities, and the project has identified four main objectives to achieve successful reintegration: strengthening the well-being and resilience of the targeted children, supporting their return to school, and becoming ambassadors for peace, empowering them, and supporting their economic reintegration. To
foster an environment of support and acceptance for the children’s sustained reintegration, this project has utilised an integrated common-ground and community-based approach, involving diverse stakeholders such as various local governing bodies in Borno State as well as national ministries, CBOs, and traditional and religious leaders as well as the families and community members of the children.

This project has gone beyond its scope to utilise best practices, and in accordance with the Paris Principles of 2007, has involved other vulnerable children who are not formerly associated with armed groups. Over a period of 19 months, 1,300 children, 7,450 community youths, men, and women, and approximately 35,000 indirect beneficiaries in four of the five targeted LGAs have been engaged. Data collection tools have been designed using the OECD/DAC criteria and a participatory evaluation approach has primarily been utilised for evaluation, involving all varied stakeholders and partners. This has helped in identifying and providing services that are specific to the needs of the targeted children and their communities, including psychosocial, social, economic, and educational services.

This provision of needs-based services has led to high levels of acceptance and understanding by the community and family members towards the children, increasing project sustainability and meeting project objectives. Providing financial support to caregivers of children has resulted in increasing retention of reintegrated children in school, as well as decreased possibility of children to re-join armed groups. Additionally, involving children in educational as well as economic activities such as working in local enterprises, has given them something to look forward to as well as a sense of normalcy. The involvement of the private sector in mentoring and coaching roles is a further value addition to the project.

The cross-cutting issues of Human Rights and Gender Equality have been well addressed, with the project design following UNICEF’s equity-based approach, while capacity building has integrated both women as well as men in the communities in programme activities. Women have been included in the CBCPCs, and the psychosocial as well as educational and economic activities have focused on providing the children with an agency, identity, and distinct voice of their own to reduce their vulnerabilities.

In terms of the limitations of the project, the primary one has been the challenges related to inaccessibility due to the Covid-19 pandemic. While staff members of the Search implementing the project displayed considerable adaptability to the challenges of the pandemic, government restrictions as well as security challenges made it impossible to conduct the evaluation in Dikwa. Staff members of the Search also reported increased levels of stress and exhaustion due to long hours and difficult working conditions; this has been mitigated through monthly staff meetings and various self-care activities such as therapy and reflection exercises. When it comes to project design, the use of direct cash transfers as
economic support to children has been indicated to be detrimental to the project's objectives, as they may be misused by the children or end up in the wrong hands. Families who do not match the criteria for targeted beneficiaries may also attempt to enter the programme in a bid to gain access to the cash.

The primary stakeholders are highly committed to the project – with UNICEF funding 90% of the project and Search providing the remaining 10%, as well as their expertise in the region and the learning gained from years of working with CAAFAG. There has been increased participation from within the community as well, with volunteers working with the established CBCPCs, and in tandem with traditional and religious structures, to provide support to the reintegrated children and their families. The evaluation has found that the project has largely achieved its four objectives.

However, context specific obstacles remain which are beyond the scope of the project, with the region still experiencing conflict, and armed groups are continuing to operate within the communities of the reintegrated children. The Government of Nigeria must escalate efforts to bring an end to this conflict which contributes to the high vulnerability of the children and their communities. It is recommended that the primary stakeholders involve the targeted children and their communities in other projects being implemented in the area to build capacity and lengthen project sustainability.
5. Recommendations

The recommendations listed below build on the findings and some suggestions provided by the stakeholders consulted on what could be done by specific actors to improve on future interventions and their programming.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor(s) recommendation is targeted at:</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search and UNICEF</td>
<td>Even though the evaluation did not specifically try to assess the implications of the provision of cash for children, the IDDRS and International Principles that guide the reintegration of children discourage the provision of cash to children as part of their economic reintegration assistance, as it could lead to extortion and misuse of funds, with exploiters taking advantage of the children and the project, children also refuse to go to school and prefer the cash option. However, given the context in the targeted locations, future activities should to the greatest extent possible establish mechanisms and structures through which materials needed could be provided to the targeted children, without providing them with money to buy the materials they require. In some cases, the voucher system can be used to ensure that the children are provided with the materials they require by the vendor when they produce the voucher given to them by the project team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search and UNICEF</td>
<td>Future projects should ensure that the economic component of the project has a Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) methodology. The VSLA methodology will help to educate and provide the beneficiaries with the platform they require to save the profits that they will make from the trade that they are involved in. However, to not put pressure on the children, the model should be set up to begin functioning after the children have started earning from the trade they are involved in. Additionally, the amount to be saved per week should be set at a low rate agreed to be based on an assessment of what will be reasonable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search</td>
<td>Future projects should ensure that the provision of psychosocial support services to staff should be made on a quarterly basis due to the immense mental and psychosocial challenges that they must regularly deal with. This is exacerbated by the security situation and the complexities involved in undertaking an assignment in</td>
</tr>
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</table>
places such as Mafa, Gowza and Dikwa. For instance, traveling to Dikwa and Mafa by road and going through highly risky terrains, with the possibility of being ambushed by armed groups. The continuous provision of psychosocial support will help to improve the mental state of the staff to deliver the project.

**Search**
The project team should set up a post-project monitoring mechanism that will ensure that the progress made and the challenges that the beneficiaries contend with are identified, with advice provided to them on how to address their challenges. The monitoring should be done on a six-month basis.

**Search**
The project implementation team should engage with and encourage private sector actors to continue to provide mentoring support to the children that were with them as mentees. The private sector actors could be providing essential advice to the children and guiding them on how to manage and build on their businesses.

**Search and UNICEF**
The partner organisations should link the children to other services provided by the government and their development partners working in the region. They should also ensure that the children are supported by other projects that they are implementing. The exposure to other projects and their benefits will help to maximise the gains made by this project.

**Search and UNICEF**
Future programming should be based on programming within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as it appears that the pandemic will persist for a while. Whatever the case may be, with the design of future programmes, the risk and assumptions matrix should cover factors such as health pandemics and natural disasters.

**Search**
The delays in providing the economic assistance package until the end of the project to some children in Gowza and Mafa should be avoided in future projects. The different phases of the project should be adequately planned, with potential challenges identified, with mitigating measures put in place to address them. The provision of economic support immediately after the training activities is critical to ensuring that the children get mentoring and coaching support within the life span, with such support monitored to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

**Search**
It was concluded that fewer children, especially those that are out of school are participating in peace related activities in their communities. Future projects should encourage and support all the children in the project to be involved in peace related activities. This should include working with the communities to develop children friendly activities, with the communities integrating the children into such project. Child Friendly Spaces could also be established in which both in and out of school children could meet and participate in peace related activities.
6. Bibliography


7. Annexes

7.1. Annex 1: List of People Interviewed

The list below provides details of some of the respondents that were engaged in the evaluation; it does not entail the names of beneficiaries that participated in the survey and community members that participated in FGDs, as the principle of anonymity was applied during engagements with them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael Oyinlola</td>
<td>Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Manager</td>
<td>Search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kassim Khalid</td>
<td>Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Coordinator Northeast</td>
<td>Search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elijah Maina</td>
<td>Senior Education Officer</td>
<td>Search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed Kyari</td>
<td>Psychosocial Support Officer</td>
<td>Search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bassie Jeremiah Yusif</td>
<td>Case Management Officer</td>
<td>Search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Okafor</td>
<td>Enterprise Coordinator</td>
<td>Search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhoda Daniel</td>
<td>Media Coordinator</td>
<td>SFGC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatima Madaki</td>
<td>National Programme Manager</td>
<td>Search</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.2. Annex 2. Data Collection Instruments

This section presents the tools that will be used for data collection and the actors to be consulted during the review.

**Annex 1.1. Tool A: Key Informants Interview Guide**

**Title: Final Evaluation of the Project for Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups Including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria.**

The purpose of this assignment is to carry out a terminal evaluation of the project for Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups Including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria, with the aim of understanding the extent to which the project achieved its objectives. The evaluation will focus on assessing the project’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, cross-cutting issues, and initial impact. This evaluation serves as an important accountability tool that will provide critical lessons for stakeholders and partners with an impartial assessment of the results of the project’s intervention. Given the need to reach many children in disadvantaged positions, the findings of this evaluation are vital because they will be used to understand the level of support that these children need as well as serve as a key resource mobilisation tool.

**Section 1: BASIC INFORMATION**

| County: | Community: |

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19 Kindly note that not all questions will be asked to everyone, rather, questions will be shaped to meet the specific nature of the involvement of the respondent in the project.
## Final Evaluation | Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria Project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Name of interviewee:</td>
<td>Duration of interview (in minutes):</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Age of interviewee:</td>
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<td>Short summary of interviewee’s:</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Position within the organisation:</td>
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### Section 2: Interview Guide

#### Relevance
- How relevant was the project?
- What were the key factors that necessitated the development of the project?
- To what extent did the project respond to the needs of the project beneficiaries including women and young people?
- To what extent was the project being catalytic in addressing some of the root causes of challenges that youth contend within Nigeria?
- To what extent was the project aligned with national development, peacebuilding and other priorities?
- To what extent was gender addressed in the design of the project?

#### Design of the Project
- Did the design of the project take into consideration the needs of the target groups?
- Did the design of the project take into consideration contextual issues, actors and potential challenges?
- What are the thematic areas that the project sought to address?
- Were the target groups involved in the design of the project? If yes, to what level were they involved?
- Was there a logframe designed for the project?
- Was the logframe used as a management tool?
- What thematic areas were covered by the project?
| **Final Evaluation | Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria Project.** |
|---|
| **Were partners involved in the design of the project? If yes, which partners?** |
| **Was the design realistic, when compared to the resources available for the implementation of the project?** |
| **Were the indicators in the logframe assessed and revised to keep them relevant and updated?** |
| **Were potential risks that may undermine the project identified, with mitigation factors established at the design stage?** |
| **To what extent was gender addressed in the design of the project?** |
| **Was the gender marker data assigned to project representative of reality?** |
| **Was the project sector involved in the design of the project?** |
| **Efficiency** |
| **Were SFCG’s approaches and resources best suited to achieve the planned outcomes?** |
| **To what extent were outputs delivered on time?** |
| **Was there an economic use of financial and human resources?** |
| **Did the monitoring and evaluation systems that Search had in place help to ensure that activities and outputs were managed efficiently and effectively?** |
| **Were alternative approaches considered in designing the project?** |
| **Did the partners have the capacity to deliver the project?** |
| **How effective was the engagement with national partners and other relevant development partners during the implementation of the project?** |
| **How well did the implementing manage their relationships across their various areas of responsibility (with government institutions, donors/partners, civil society, and local communities etc.)?** |
| **How effective was communication and coordination among and between the various actors involved in the project?** |
| **What were the impacts of security related challenges and the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the project?** |
Final Evaluation | Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria Project.

| Effectiveness | • Were there delays in the implementation of the project? If yes, were they substantial and what measures were put in place to address the consequences of the delays?  
• Were all the outputs set in the project delivered?  
• Were the outputs of sufficient quality?  
• Were there challenges in the delivery of outputs? If yes, what are they?  
• Was the implementation of the project gender responsive?  
• Were beneficiaries and partners satisfied with the quality of the outputs delivered?  
• Did the outputs contribute to the development of the capacity of the target groups?  
• Did the outputs delivered contribute to the achievement of the overall objective of the project?  
• To what extent are the results inclusive i.e. ensuring the fair distribution of effects across different groups of the population?  
• Did the intervention have any unintended positive or negative effects? Were the negative effects considered for possible (risk) mitigation? |
| Impact | • Are there visible positive changes among the CAAFAG?  
• If the answer to the question above is yes, could the changes be attributed to the project?  
• Do the target groups now have the capacity to function as expected by the project?  
• Are there signs that the project did not achieve its set objectives due to the way the project was implemented?  
• What are the perceptions of the target groups in relation to the impact created or not by the project?  
• Were there specific components of the project that need to be revised to enhance the impact created by the project?  
• If yes, what are they and what adjustments were made?  
• Are there documented evidence of changes/transformation in the behaviour, perception and life of the CAAFAG? |
To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality? Were there any unintended effects?

**Sustainability**

- Are there signs of sustainability since the project ended?
- What mechanisms have been set by the SFCG to support the Government of Nigeria to sustain improvements made through the project’s interventions?
- To what extent was a sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key national stakeholders, used during the implementation of the project?
- To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support?
- What is the likelihood of a lasting positive impact of the project on the CAAFAG?

**Cross-cutting Issues**

- How did the project promote gender mainstreaming and responsive?
- How did the project promote issues related to human rights and the rule of law?
- How did the project promote issues related to good governance and democracy?
- What role did the private sector play in the implementation of the project?
- How did the project promote the welfare of vulnerable and Specific Needs Groups?
- How was the Rights-Based Approach integrated into the project?
- How did the project promote the visibility of the partners?

*Note: Please collect secondary available literature from key informants*
Annex. 1.2. Tool B: Semi-Structured Questionnaire for CAAFAG

Title: Final Evaluation of the Project for Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups Including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria.

The purpose of this assignment is to carry out a terminal evaluation of the project for Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups Including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria, with the aim of understanding the extent to which the project achieved its objectives. The evaluation will focus on assessing the project’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, cross-cutting issues, and initial impact. This evaluation serves as an important accountability tool that will provide key lessons for stakeholders and partners with an impartial assessment of the results of the project’s intervention. Given the need to reach many children in disadvantaged positions, the findings of this evaluation are vital because they will be used to understand the level of support that these children need as well as serve as a key resource mobilisation tool.

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<tr>
<th>N°</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Primary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 Kindly note that an Informed Consent section was included in the online tool that was developed and administered.
5. Are you familiar with the project—Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups Including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If yes, go to the next question

6. Which activities and services provided by the project, did you personally benefit from?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Education support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Psychosocial Counselling/Drug Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sexual Reproductive Health Service/Medical Response and /Treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reintegration with family and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Livelihood Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Economic assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Other (s), Please specify</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can choose more than one answer

7. Were you satisfied with the services that the project provided to you?

| 1. Yes |
| 2. No  |
| 3. Somewhat |

8. Which component(s) of the project did you find to be most useful to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Education support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Psychosocial Counselling/Drug Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/___/
### Final Evaluation | Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria Project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Sexual Reproductive Health Service/Medical Response and Treatment</td>
<td>Yes, No, Do not Know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reintegration with family and community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Livelihood Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Economic reintegration support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Other (s), Please specify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Where there are differences in the services provided for boys and girls?</td>
<td>1. Yes, 2. No, 3. Do not Know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Do you feel welcomed and respected in your family and community?</td>
<td>1. Yes, 2. No, 3. Do not Know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. If the answer above is no, kindly provide details for the answer provided</td>
<td>Details:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. How did you become a member of the armed group that you were part of?</td>
<td>1. Abduction, 2. Volunteered into the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. If the answer above is No 2. What was the reason?</td>
<td>1. Poverty, 2. Hunger, 3. Peer-pressure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Taken by a family member
5. Maltreated by family
6. Need for revenge
7. Orphan
8. Street child
9. Do not remember
10. Other, please specify:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 14. | Has the situation changed now and do you feel safe in your home and community? | 1. Yes
   | 2. No
   | Please provide reason for answer provided: |
| 15. | Do you feel that your family members are doing much to make you feel that you are part of them? | 1. Yes
   | 2. No
   | Please provide reason for answer given: /___/ |
| 16. | If the answer above is Yes, could the improvement be attributed to the SFCG project? | 1. Yes
   | 2. No
   | 3. Do not know /___/ |
| 17. | What are you currently involved in? | 1. Schooling
   | 2. Economic activity
   | 3. Schooling and economic activity /___/ |
| 18. | Was there any form of support that you would have loved to receive from the | 1. Yes
   | 2. No
   | If yes, please provide details: /___/ |
Final Evaluation | Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria Project.

| project but did not receive? |

Thank you very much for your time and contributions

Annex 1.3. Tool C: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Family and Community Members of CAAFAG

Title: Final Evaluation of the Project for Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups Including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria.
The purpose of this assignment is to carry out a terminal evaluation of the project for Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups Including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria, with the aim of understanding the extent to which the project achieved its objectives. The evaluation will focus on assessing the project’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, cross-cutting issues, and initial impact. This evaluation serves as an important accountability tool that will provide key lessons for stakeholders and partners with an impartial assessment of the results of the project’s intervention. Given the need to reach many children in disadvantaged positions, the findings of this evaluation are vital because they will be used to understand the level of support that these children need as well as serve as a key resource mobilisation tool.

Section 1: BASIC INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County:</th>
<th>Community:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session code:</td>
<td>Respondent number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator code:</td>
<td>Date / time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants:</td>
<td>Duration of FGD (in minutes):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of participant:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short summary of interviewee:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Position in community:

1. Consent

Consent forms must be distributed among focus group participants prior to beginning the focus group discussion (FGD). Consent forms must emphasise confidentiality, and if sessions are to be taped/recorded, this must be outlined. Participants must also be given the right to refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the group at any time. Contact details for
the evaluators who holds the focus group discussion should also be distributed, so that participants are able to contact them later with any question or to withdraw from the exercise if they wish.

**II. Introduction**

The evaluator conducting the focus group discussion should welcome the participants, ensure that COVID 19 regulations are respected, have participants introduce themselves to the rest of the group and then clearly explain the nature of their assignment. Lastly, the researcher should also explain to the participants why they have been selected to join the focus group. FGDs should last between 45 minutes and one hour.

**III. Explanation**

The researcher should explain to the participants what a focus group discussion is and how it works. S/he should explain that there are no right or wrong answers and that they must feel free and confident while participating in the discussion. FDGs should take about an hour and participants should be made to feel free to move around, leave, use the bathroom etc. when they require. Participants should also be encouraged to agree to some guidelines which will govern the sessions including:

- Everyone contributes to the discussion in order that it does not become a conversation between just two or three participants;
- The discussion will remain confidential;
- The group should try and stay on topic;
- Phones should be switched off or put on silent.

At this point the evaluator leading the focus group discussion can turn on the recorder, and then ask the group if there are any questions before they begin. When asking the questions, the researcher facilitating the discussion should allow people time to think and use further probing questions to ensure all issues are covered.

**IV. Focus Group Discussion Questions**
Questions for FGDs should be centred broadly on the following issues. However, the questions and issues should be tailored based on the specific category of participants and the evaluators should ensure that caution is taken when discussing sensitive issues. All ethical related principles will be observed during FDGs. The issues to be discussed will include:

V. Guiding Questions

❖ Are you familiar with the project for Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups Including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria?
❖ If the answer to the question above is yes, what do you know about it?
❖ Who are those that are involved in the project?
❖ Were community members involved in the design of the project and its implementation?
❖ What kinds of activities are undertaken that the community members are familiar with that have to do with the reintegration of CAAFAG?
❖ What are some of the factors that led to the involvement of children in armed groups?
❖ Do those factors still exist in the communities, if yes why? If no, can the changes be attributed to the SFCG project?
❖ Do you have any children associated with armed groups and armed forces in your household?
❖ If the answer to the question above is yes, do they feel like they are accepted in the household and community, or do they feel marginalised?
❖ Are you willing to accept CAAFAG into your homes and community?
❖ What were the specific activities undertaken by the project to support the reintegration of the children?
❖ Do the children feel accepted in the community? If no, why not?
❖ What support did the project provide to your community to promote the reintegration of the CAAFAG?
What is the nature of the relationship between the CAAFAG and other children in the community? Is it cordial or are there tensions between them? If there are tensions, what are the reasons and how are those tensions resolved?

Did the project provide support to other children in your community? If yes, what kinds of support were provided?

Are they approachable and peacefully relate with community members?

Are there differences in the way that the children associated with armed groups and armed forces behave in your community?

Are you observing positive changes in the behaviour of the beneficiaries of the project?

What would you have loved to see the project do to better support the reintegration of the CAAFAG that was not done?

What do you feel could be done by future programmes to better support them?

It is expected that more issues will be raised during the FGDs that would be of additional value to the exercise.

I. Concluding remarks

When concluding, the facilitator should thank everybody for their participation and reiterate the earlier comments regarding confidentiality and the right to withdraw, as well as making sure everyone has the contact details of the researcher should they have any questions they would like to ask later.
7.3. Annex 3 Terms of Reference

“Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria”

Project final evaluation 2021
Search is seeking a consultant who can evaluate the link between our programming and shifts in social norms relating to reintegration of children and adolescents who have suffered from violations, including those formerly associated with armed groups or returning from captivity, into their communities. Following our 16-month program, we are primarily interested in the norms around violence, identity, and agency, and how these influence the reintegration of such children into their communities. Consultant’s research proposals should include a plan to analyze these shifts across gender, age, and religious demographics. Candidates’ teams should have experience researching norms to explain the connection between programming, the context, and the changes observed.

1. Context

Search for Common Ground

Search is an international conflict transformation NGO that aims to transform the way individuals, groups, governments and companies deal with conflict, away from adversarial approaches and towards collaborative solutions. Headquartered in Washington DC, USA, and Brussels, Belgium, with 52 field offices in 29 countries, Search designs and implements multifaceted, culturally appropriate and conflict-sensitive programs using a diverse range of tools, including media and training, to promote dialogue, increase knowledge and determine a positive shift in behaviors.

Our Program in Nigeria

We launched our programs in Nigeria in 2004. Now in 2020, the country program has offices in Abuja, Jos, Maiduguri, Benue, Warri, Bayelsa and Yola. We work with partners in target states of the country to support peaceful resolution of conflict. Each program is adapted to specific local context and conflicts, and all apply common ground tools from our toolbox.

Search has established a permanent presence in Abuja as an operational base and all our Nigeria offices are currently supporting a host of programs with activities that include capacity building, dialogues, peace architecture, media programming, participatory theatre and collaborative joint activities.

The Project

The overall objective for the project is to support the long-term reintegration of children associated with armed groups (CJTF) in the North East of Nigeria. The project has been implemented in Borno State over 16 months with the expectation that within this period, children formerly associated with armed groups or returning from captivity, will be supported to successfully reintegrate into their communities. It has four specific objectives and corresponding expected results:
Objective 1: To strengthen the well-being and resilience of children formerly associated with armed groups, and other vulnerable children, in North East Nigeria.

E.R.1.1: Children associated with armed groups, and other vulnerable children, show increased capacity to engage constructively with and in their communities.
E.R.1.2: Children formerly associated with armed groups, and other vulnerable children, are better protected.

Objective 2: To support children formerly associated with armed groups, or other vulnerable children, resume or return to school and become ambassadors for peace.

E.R.2.1: Children associated with armed groups are supported to resume or continue school education, as well as accelerated learning provisions.
E.R.2.2: Children are supported to become ambassadors for peace through peace education and activities in peace clubs.

Objective 3: To empower and support children formerly associated with armed groups, and other vulnerable children, for increased economic reintegration.

E.R.3.1: Children associated with armed groups and other vulnerable children have increased financial literacy and enterprise understanding; and
E.R.3.2: Children associated with armed groups and other vulnerable children show enhanced capacities to access self-employment or wage-employment.

Objective 4: To create a conducive environment and community support for the social and economic reintegration and separation of children associated with armed groups.

E.R.4.1: Target communities in North East Nigeria better understand and value the socioeconomic reintegration needs of children separated from armed groups, and other vulnerable children, and recognize the positive role children play in communities as agents of peace; and
E.R.4.2: Social cohesion in target communities is strengthened through small scale community initiatives.

The project was implemented among community-based organisations (CBOs), local traditional and religious structures in the project activities (such as participatory theatre and community strengthening initiatives) as facilitators and conversationalists to the communities and to deepen the community engagement. Search also worked with SUBEB, Ministry of women affairs, ministry of Education as a member of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). As part of the community-based approach, Search also targeted other vulnerable children that are not associated with CJTF in project interventions and activities. Search also developed the education, economic, and social cohesion intervention so as to ensure the majority of activities are implemented within the communities where the children come from and live. In doing so, the training or other economic opportunities will
not take them outside their communities. Also, there was a media and community-based outreach to sensitise and raise community awareness.

2. Goal and Objectives of Study

As the project is coming to an end, Search needs to undertake a comprehensive and cost-effective external final evaluation. The evaluation will cover relevant DAC criteria, including other criteria such as Effectiveness, Appropriateness, Connectedness, Impact, Coherence and Coverage of the project. Key principles that should drive the design of the final evaluation are the Common Ground Approach, Conflict Sensitivity, Do No Harm principles, the best interest of the child and UNICEF’s equity approach.

Specific objectives of the evaluation:

- Evaluate the relevance and appropriateness of this intervention, based on local needs and conditions, as well as the best interest of the children, clearly documenting outcomes of these;
- To determine the effectiveness and efficiency of implementing the project, including who contributed to or hindered these, and what lessons we can learn.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of this intervention looking at socio-economic and protection outcomes of the targeted beneficiaries and the process of identification of OVC’s by Community Based Child Protection Committee (CBCPC);
- Suggest clear and actionable recommendations for future reintegration programming in the region.
- To determine the extent to which the COVID 19 pandemic affected the project objectives, implementation and sustainability

The report will also be shared widely with project participants and partners, and presented during Search Nigeria programs. The evaluation report – with sensitive details redacted – will eventually be published on Search’s website and shared with other learning networks in order to enhance contributions to reintegration programming in Nigeria and regionally.

3. Key Questions of the Study

Key questions for the study include, but are not limited to:

- Did the activities and strategies fit the objectives?
- What are the negative and positive unintended outcomes from the project?
- What real differences has the activity made to the project participants?
- To what extent did the project achieve to change the targeted stakeholders understanding, perception and attitudes and achieve the intermediate outcomes?
- What were the internal or external factors that facilitated or hindered the achievement of objectives?
Final Evaluation | Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria Project.

- What are the major best practices and lessons learned stemming from the project?
- Are the changes introduced by the project long term and sustainable?

In addition to the above lines of inquiry, the evaluation is expected to provide quantitative and qualitative information on the key indicators as listed below:

- % of children associated with armed groups who report applying skills learned to generate an income
- % of community members willing to accept children released from armed groups.

4. Geographic Locations

Based on the verification of the children associated with CJTF and other vulnerable children including those formerly associated with OAGs carried out by UNICEF, the research is expected to cover the undermentioned locations:

Five **LGAs in Borno State**:

1. Maiduguri MMC;
2. Jere LGA;
3. Mafa LGA;
4. Dikwa
5. Gowza

5. Methodology and Data Collection Tools

Using Search’s tools and guidelines for working with project beneficiaries, the evaluation will target community residents in the locations where the project is being implemented. It will be conducted using a mixed methodology that includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods. The proposal should also include the sampling strategy and approach to analysis, with clear justifications for these. In addition to Do No Harm strategies, any proposed deliverables for sharing the findings of the study should be included in this section of the proposal. This will allow for the triangulation of information, allowing for in-depth findings and recommendations.

The proposed methodology is to be clearly stated in the technical offer, detailing why the methodology is preferred and its relevance to the state and purpose of the evaluation. The tools utilized and the means of analysis should be determined based on what is necessary and relevant to the project, and a justification for this should be included. Each tool/method should then be listed with justification of its use, intended target groups for the tool, and numbers of each target group to be reached. The technical offer should include details on
Deliverables

Search expects the following deliverables from the external consultant(s) as they correspond to the timeline and budget:

- An inception report detailing the methodology, data collection tools and timeline;
- Any necessary training of data collectors or set-up of systems for data collection;
- Supervision and participation in data collection;
- Oversight of data coding and analysis;
- All original data submitted to Search;
- A draft evaluation report in English, for review by Search staff and partners;
- A final report in English (40 pages max in length, excluding appendices) consistent with Search branding and standards for evaluation. The report:
  - Uses the Search evaluation template unless otherwise agreed in the contract
  - Provides a clear connection between the conflict or context assessment and the intended results, articulate the project's ToC, and include other relevant project specifics
  - Fully explains the objectives and research questions of the study, limitations and methods chosen for analysis,
  - Findings respect Search's evaluation standards, are structured around the main objectives of the study, and are presented in relation to the intended target groups. The findings should speak to the link between the project, its Theory of Change and its contribution to our strategy. It should explain adaptations that occurred during the project and their impact on results.
  - Recommendations should have a clear audience and be specific, accessible, and actionable.
  - Indicator table showing all indicators
  - Appendices should include detailed research instruments, list of interviewees, terms of references and evaluator(s) brief biography.

The inception and final reports will be developed by the consultant and/or team, and reviewed and approved by Search. The tools will be administered by the consultant and/or team, working with a team of data collectors, while the data will be analyzed by the consultant and/or team chosen to perform this research. In addition, the consultant and/or team chosen will develop the report with guidance and reviews by Search’s DMEL team.

Logistical Support
Consultant(s) will be responsible for organizing their own logistics for data collection (vehicles, fuel, and drivers), and this must be budgeted into the study. Search can provide support in arranging logistics as agreed upon based on the consultant’s proposal. At least one Search staff member may be available to support data collection and logistics.

In addition, Search and partners will share the following elements with the external consultant(s): Background materials including the project proposal and logframe, M&E plan, etc.

6. Ethical Considerations

The research team will respect the following ethical principles:

**Comprehensive and systematic inquiry:** Consultant should make the most of the existing information and full range of stakeholders available at the time of the review. Consultant should conduct systematic, data-based inquiries. He or she should communicate his or her methods and approaches accurately and in sufficient detail to allow others to understand, interpret and critique his or her work. He or she should make clear the limitations of the review and its results.

**Competence:** Consultant should possess the abilities and skills and experience appropriate to undertake the tasks proposed and should practice within the limits of his or her professional training and competence.

**Honesty and integrity:** Consultant should be transparent with the contractor/constituent about: any conflict of interest, any change made in the negotiated project plan and the reasons why those changes were made, any risk that certain procedures or activities produce misleading review information.

**Respect for people:** Consultant respect the security, dignity and self-worth of respondents, program participants. Consultant has the responsibility to be sensitive to and respect differences amongst participants in culture, religion, gender, disability, age and ethnicity.


7. Data Quality Assurance and Management

- An inception report detailing the proposed method, study matrix, and work plan. It is to be approved by Search’s DMEL staff before starting data collection.
- Research and data collection tools (developed by the candidate and/or team with the input of Search’s DMEL staff) are to be approved by Search’s DMEL staff before starting data collection.
- Draft report for review by Search staff and other stakeholders
Final Evaluation | Supporting the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups including the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Northeast Nigeria Project.

- The report should be structured according to the evaluation questions
- All data collected for this research including audios and transcripts for all interviews, and quantitative data entered in a template, based on the methodology used will be included
- Appendices, including data collection tools and list of interviewees
- A power-point presentation summarizing the report’s findings

All studies will be reviewed and approved by our country office and global Institutional Learning Team prior to acceptance of the final product.

Useful to have all raw data submitted to search after the evaluation for future reference. ie should we have the need for more findings of our own

8. Timeline

The consultancy period will be from **February to early March, 2021.**

9. Budget

The total budget available for this study is $14,548.18. A detailed budget should be provided, including daily rates for personnel, and costs related to data collection (per total number of people sampled, sites for collection, etc.), analysis, and production of deliverables as part of the submitted proposal.

10. Requirements of Consultant

The following skills and experience are expected by Search for our evaluator for this project:

- Proficiency in English (written and spoken); Hausa as well.
- More than 5 years of experience in project evaluation, including collecting data in interviews, surveys and focus groups;
- Experience in conflict analysis and working with children or in reintegration.
- Experience working with international organizations;
- Experience conducting quantitative surveys and analysis;
- Evaluation methods and data collection skills;
- Familiarity and experience with contextual challenges in the geographic location(s) where the study will take place.

**Selection Criteria**
Consultant proposals will be selected for:

1. Relevance of proposed methodology to the goal, objectives, and research questions for the project.
2. Quality of proposed methods, conflict sensitivity approaches, and quality control measures.
3. Qualifications of the candidate(s).
4. Proposed budget in relation to proposed methodology, deliverables and team.
5. Timeline for proposed activities.

Applications

To apply, interested candidates (individuals or teams) are requested to submit the following two documents:

Curriculum vitae;
A technical proposal proposing a methodology for the baseline together with a financial proposal for the completion of the deliverables and a short cover letter.

Note: Only two documents can be submitted, so the technical and financial proposals must be combined, along with the short cover letter.