

Help a Child (Red een Kind)

Maintenance Audit 1 – Report - 2025/01/17

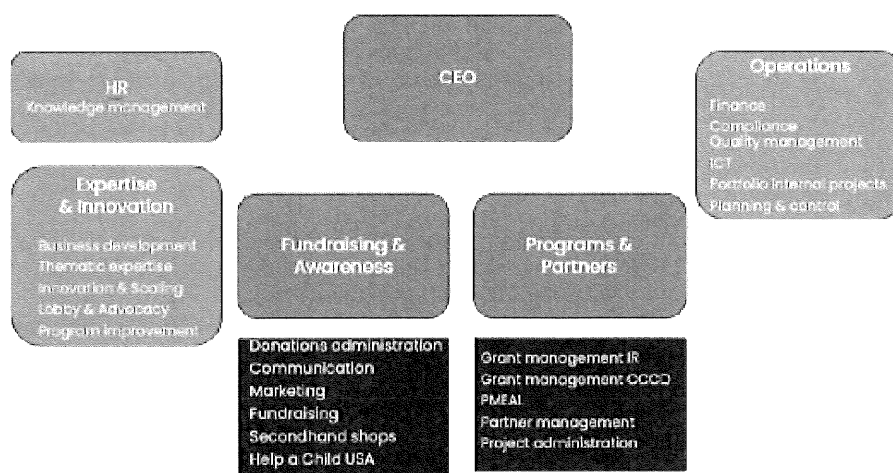
1. General information and audit activities

Role / name of auditor	Sarah Kambarami	
Audit cycle	First Cycle	
Opening Meeting	Date / number of participants	Any substantive issues arising
	2 nd December 2024 / 7 participants	None
Closing Meeting	6 th December 2024 / 3 participants	None
Interviews	Position / level of interviewees	Number
	Management - HQ	3
	Staff - HQ	6

2. Actions and progress of organisation

2.1 Significant change or improvement since the previous audit

Since the Initial Audit (2024), there have been some significant changes within Help a Child that impact on the application of the CHS in general. Following a period of strategic reflection, Help a Child have developed two new strategic documents. A 10-year Strategic Compass (2025-2034) and a 4-year Strategic Plan (2025-2028). Both emphasise the importance of a number of areas linked to the CHS, including investing in programme quality and accountability, strengthening local actors, mitigating the effects of climate change and shifting towards working in fragile states to have increased impact by working with children most in need. In order to align with this new strategic direction, Help a Child has also made some structural changes within the team in the Zwolle Head Office. The Expertise and Development department has been split into two new departments: 'Programs and Partners' and 'Expertise and Innovation'. Together with the managers of the Finance & Operations, HR, and Fundraising & Awareness departments, this brings the Management Team (MT) to a total of six members.



In response to the findings of the Initial Audit (2024), Help a Child has taken a number of strategic steps to close the gaps identified. A systematic and participative approach was taken to develop the improvement plan, with clear timelines and responsibilities allocated for each corrective action. Progress against the improvement plan is regularly monitored and every four months, the Management Team requests an update on progress. All staff interviewed demonstrate a thorough understanding of their role in the improvement plan and there is a strong culture within Help a Child of welcoming the opportunity to learn and improve. As detailed below, progress has been made to close all the gaps identified in the previous audit, with clarity on next steps to take prior to the next renewal audit to embed changes into their working practices. The improvement plan also includes a number of ways in 2025 to monitor the effectiveness of the corrective actions put in place in 2024. For example, conducting global reviews of multi-annual project plans to assess the extent to which new elements (e.g. DRR, Do No Harm etc) have been integrated into programmes, as well as a 'listening project' that will seek direct feedback from community members in relation to their awareness on expected staff behaviour and how to complain.

Help a Child has also developed a more strategic, long-term, cooperation approach with all its strategic partners. A Memorandum of Collaboration (MoC) is now in place with all strategic partners which describes the overall partnership with a focus on quality. Specific project and funding agreements are then developed under this umbrella MoC. The Partnership Policy is currently under revision.

Overall, Help a Child has demonstrated a strong commitment to learn and improve, based on the findings of the Initial Audit. The progress so far has focused primarily on addressing root causes of the gaps, by revising or adapting policies, guidelines and processes, and training staff and partners. Efforts over the coming two years will focus more on implementing these changes in practice at the programme level, together with Help a Child's partners.

2.2 Summary on corrective actions

Corrective Action Requests (CAR)	Type and resolution timeframe	Progress made to address the CAR and in response to the findings of the indicator	Evidence (doc no., KII)
2024-3.2: Help a Child does not systematically integrate DRR into its programmes and does not use the results of existing community preparedness plans to guide activities.	Minor by 2027 Renewal Audit	<p>Help a Child has integrated Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into its CCCD manual which guides the development programming within Help a Child. A specific section is included on DRR with links to further resources to support partners in integrating DRR effectively into development programming. Help a Child has also revised the formats for annual planning and reporting to include specific sections on DRR.</p> <p>Help a Child also updated its Disaster Response Policy which was approved by the Management Team (MT) in June 2024. This includes an update to the needs assessment guidelines which now include two specific points related to DRR. The guidance recommends gathering information on existing community preparedness plans, and mapping and analysing risks and hazards at the needs assessment stage in order to develop effective DRR activities to integrate into the response work. A review of needs assessment tools is underway.</p> <p>An e-learning module has been developed on DRR and taken by 49% of relevant staff. Further revisions are planned and staff are able to access the training on demand via the HAC Academy. Additionally, the updated elements in the Disaster Policy, including DRR, were discussed on exchange visits with Disaster Response staff and local partners.</p> <p>In 2025, a review of all Community Challenge Multi-Annual Project Plans (MAPPs) will be undertaken to</p>	<p>ORG159, ORG160, ORG161, ORG179, ORG180, ORG181</p> <p>Staff interviews</p>

		assess how well DRR has been systematically integrated into Help a Child's programmes.	
2024-3.6: Help a Child does not systematically identify potential unintended negative effects at the community level in all the areas required by this indicator.	Minor by 2027 Renewal Audit	<p>Help a Child has included sections on Do No Harm principles in both the revised CCCD manual and the Disaster Response Policy. The Kids at Risk proposal format includes a section on Do No Harm, with clear guidance prompting systematic consideration of the full range of possible areas of unintended negative effects to consider as outlined in indicator 3.6. However, this same detailed guidance is not yet included in other tools such as annual planning and reporting templates and the Do No Harm Checklist.</p> <p>Ongoing awareness raising of the importance of systematically identifying potential unintended negative effects of programmes on people and communities with partners is planned for 2025. This will be achieved through a combination of discussions in Community of Practice meetings as well as through monitoring and field visits.</p> <p>Help a Child plans to review the Community Challenge MAPPs during 2025 to assess how well the revised guidance is supporting a thorough incorporation of Do No Harm into programme planning.</p>	ORG159, ORG179, ORG180, ORG181 Staff interviews
2024-4.5: Help a Child does not have a policy or guidance for information sharing with communities in place.	Minor by 2027 Renewal Audit	<p>Help a Child has developed a new Knowledge Management Strategy which includes a section on information sharing guidelines to communities. Specific reference is made to ensuring relevant information is shared with all community members on the Why, How and What of Help a Child, as well as how Help a Child and partner staff should behave (Integrity & PSEAH) and on how feedback and complaint systems are working. The strategy includes reference to the tools and approaches to be used to put this into practice, including use of visual materials and verbal briefings at the start of projects. A RACI matrix was also developed to help clarify who is responsible for different aspects of knowledge management in Help a Child, indicating who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed. Discussions clarifying responsibilities, specifically on information sharing to communities, are ongoing.</p> <p>Help a Child is currently in the process of discussing with Country Offices and partners what the most effective ways are to share information with communities. This analysis will support the development of relevant tools and communication materials for use at project level. The focus will be on effective communication of Help a Child's integrity procedures including communicating about expected staff behaviour and how to complain. This work is also helping to address the open CAR in 5.6 related to community awareness of expected behaviour (see below).</p>	ORG162, ORG182 Staff interviews
2024-5.1: Help a Child does not ensure that their partners implementing CCCD programmes have effectively consulted with communities on the design, monitoring and	Minor by 2027 Renewal Audit	<p>Since the last audit, Help a Child has updated the Integrity and PSEAH Policy, including Annex 4 – Integrity Procedures for communities and partners. The Community Based Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CBCFM) manual was also updated. Both documents include a strong emphasis on community consultation and participation in CBCFMs, particularly in the design stage. There is also recognition that CBCFMs need to be child-friendly and so child-inclusive approaches are also emphasised.</p>	ORG 163, ORG164, ORG165, ORG166, ORG167, ORG168, ORG178, ORG184, ORG185, ORG186,

implementation of complaints handling processes.		<p>Help a Child has undertaken a systematic review of the CBCFMs in place per country. This was discussed with country staff and partners and an overview of strengths and weaknesses of current mechanisms was put together. In addition, bi-annual reports are made to the Management Team based on CBCFM data received from all programme areas. Coaching of country-based staff and partners on how to implement effective CBCFMs is ongoing.</p> <p>At the start of each new project, staff and partners have received training (in person or remote) on how to establish an effective CBCFM, including the importance of consultation with communities. Training for all Country programmes is ongoing. Coaching on CBCFM has also taken place in Community of Practice meetings with relevant Country Office staff. An e-course on CBCFM basics is planned to be developed in 2025.</p> <p>A Community Satisfaction Survey is also planned for 2025 in Help a Child's programme areas to collect feedback on people and communities awareness of how to give feedback and complain using existing CBCFMs. Discussions are ongoing among the team in regard to whether this activity will lead to more regular and consistent monitoring of community understanding of how to report concerns and complaints, and how they will be addressed, as required by the revised CHS.</p>	<p>ORG187, ORG188</p> <p>Staff interviews</p>
2024-5.6: Help a Child does not systematically ensure that communities and people affected by crisis are fully aware of the expected behaviour of staff, including organisational commitments on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.	Minor by 2027 Renewal Audit	<p>Help a Child's revised Knowledge Management Strategy was approved by the Management Team in April 2024. It includes information sharing guidelines to communities as well as references to tools to help staff and partners to ensure that all community members know the Why, How and What of Help a Child, know how Help a Child and partner staff should behave (Integrity & PSEAH), and know how feedback and complaint systems are working.</p> <p>The Knowledge Management Coordinator is currently in the process of discussing with Country Office staff and partners about what support may be required to implement these guidelines in practice. There is recognition that contextualised visual communication materials, particularly to help communicate about expected staff behaviour and organisational commitments on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, are useful, but not sufficient. Most partners and Country Office staff have indicated that regular verbal discussions about these topics is most effective.</p> <p>In 2025, a Community Satisfaction Survey is planned in Help a Child's programme areas to collect feedback on the extent to which people and communities are aware of the why, how and what of Help a Child, expected behaviour of staff, and PSEAH commitments. Discussions are ongoing among the team in regards to whether this activity will lead to more regular and consistent monitoring of community understanding of expected behaviour, as required by the revised CHS.</p> <p>The extent to which the new information sharing guidelines and tools are effective in systematically ensuring that people and communities are aware of</p>	<p>ORG162</p> <p>Staff interviews</p>

		expected behaviour of staff and PSEAH commitments of Help a Child will be assessed at the Renewal Audit.	
2024-9.4: Help a Child does not systematically consider the impact of its operations and programme activities on the environment.	Minor by 2027 Renewal Audit	<p>Since the Initial Audit, Help a Child has committed to identify, prevent, mitigate and address potential and actual negative impacts of programmes on the environment in their revised Environment, Social, Governance (ESG) Policy. However, apart from the 'Kids at Risk' planning template which specifically prompts staff and partners to consider risk to the environment in the 'Do No Harm' section, it is not yet clear what other processes have been introduced at the programme level to support staff and partners to do this in practice.</p> <p>Help a Child has also committed to support climate adaptation in their programmes. Relevant guidance, planning and reporting tools have been adapted to reflect this. 'Environment Quick Scans' were conducted for all Country Programmes to provide a participatory analysis, with communities, on the impacts of climate change in their context and how programmes can support communities to adapt to climate related threats. The results of these Quick Scans are being incorporated into ongoing programming.</p> <p>Help a Child is also demonstrating how it is systematically considering the impact of Help a Child's <i>operations</i> on the environment. The new office location, close to the station, was chosen in part to enable significant increase in use of public transport for commuting. The new Green Travel Policy also incentivises staff to make transport decisions that minimise their impact on the environment. In 2025, 'Climate Stewards' will support Help a Child to measure its carbon footprint. Data from 2023 will be used as a baseline and then organisational KPIs for emissions reduction will be established. The extent to which Country Offices, as well as the Head Office, consider the impact of their operations on the environment will be assessed at the Renewal Audit.</p>	<p>ORG160, ORG173, ORG174, ORG175, ORG176, ORG179, ORG180, ORG181, ORG190, ORG191.</p> <p>Staff interviews</p>
2024-9.6: Policies and processes governing the management of resources in an environmentally responsible way, for assessing and managing risk on an ongoing basis, and for accepting funds in a way that does not compromise ethics or independence are not in place.	Minor by 2027 Renewal Audit	<p>Help a Child has strengthened a range of policies and processes governing the management of resources since the Initial Audit.</p> <p>In relation to managing resources in an environmentally responsible way, Help a Child has revised its Corporate Social Responsibility Policy into an "Environment, Social, Governance" (ESG) Policy. This outlines three key environment ambitions for Help a Child for the coming strategic period (2025-2028) including: i) identify, prevent, mitigate and address potential and actual negative impacts of programs on the environment; ii) measuring carbon footprint and setting carbon reduction targets and iii) mainstream climate consideration into all programming to support climate adaptation. These ambitions are also reflected in the new Strategic Plan, with KPIs to be developed in 2025. This increased emphasis on the Environment has also been included in recent revisions to the Disaster Response Policy.</p> <p>In relation to managing risk on an ongoing basis, Help a Child included a thorough risk analysis as input to the new strategic planning process. In addition, the global risk register has been reviewed and updated by the Management Team with plans in place to repeat this</p>	<p>ORG160, ORG169, ORG170, ORG171, ORG172, ORG177, ORG179, ORG180, ORG181, ORG189, ORG190, ORG191, ORG192, ORG193, ORG194, ORG195.</p> <p>Staff interviews</p>

		<p>every six months. Sections on risk assessment have also been incorporated into the planning and reporting templates for country programmes. In 2025, a process for ensuring risks can be linked from programme to global levels will be introduced.</p> <p>In relation to accepting funds in a way that does not compromise ethics or independence, Help a Child has addressed this in the 10 year Strategic Compass, with clear targets for maintaining independence with at least 40% their 'own income' and a maximum of 60% 'other income', for example from institutional donors. In addition, there is a clear process for deciding on whether to apply for funds from new donors. This includes a detailed checklist in the International Funding (IF) form which requires due diligence on potential new donors in a number of defined ethical areas. This form requires approval by Country Director and Manager Fundraising & Awareness for any application above EUR100,000, or by the Management Team for anything over EUR1 million.</p>	
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3. Summary of non-conformities

Corrective Action Requests (CAR)	Type	Status	Resolution timeframe
2024-3.2: Help a Child does not systematically integrate DRR into its programmes and does not use the results of existing community preparedness plans to guide activities.	Minor	Open	By 2027 Renewal Audit
2024-3.6: Help a Child does not systematically identify potential unintended negative effects at the community level in all the areas required by this indicator.	Minor	Open	By 2027 Renewal Audit
2024-4.5: Help a Child does not have a policy or guidance for information sharing with communities in place.	Minor	Open	By 2027 Renewal Audit
2024-5.1: Help a Child does not ensure that their partners implementing CCCD programmes have effectively consulted with communities on the design, monitoring and implementation of complaints handling processes.	Minor	Open	By 2027 Renewal Audit
2024-5.6: Help a Child does not systematically ensure that communities and people affected by crisis are fully aware of the expected behaviour of staff, including organisational commitments on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.	Minor	Open	By 2027 Renewal Audit
2024-9.4: Help a Child does not systematically consider the impact of its operations and programme activities on the environment.	Minor	Open	By 2027 Renewal Audit
2024-9.6: Policies and processes governing the management of resources in an environmentally responsible way, for assessing and managing risk on an ongoing basis, and for accepting funds in a way that does not compromise ethics or independence are not in place.	Minor	Open	By 2027 Renewal Audit
Total number of open CARs	7		

4. Claims Review

Claims Review conducted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Follow-up required	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
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5. Lead auditor recommendation

In my opinion, Help a Child has demonstrated that it is taking the necessary steps to address the CARs identified in the previous audit and continues to conform with the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.

I recommend maintenance of certification.

Name and signature of lead auditor:



Sarah Kambarami

Date and place:

17th January 2025

Bonn, Germany

6. HQAI decision

- ☒ Certificate maintained
☐ Certificate suspended

- ☐ Certificate reinstated
☐ Certificate withdrawn

Surveillance audit before: 2026/01/20

Name and signature of HQAI Executive Director:

Désirée Walter



Date and place:

Geneva, 20 January 2025

7. Acknowledgement of the report by the organisation

Space reserved for the organisation

Any reservations regarding the audit findings and/or any remarks regarding the behaviour of the HQAI audit team:

If yes, please give details:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings:

I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit

☒ Yes ☐ No

I accept the findings of the audit

☒ Yes ☐ No

Name and signature of the organisation's representative:

Andries Schuttinga

Date and place:

21/1/25 Zwolle

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Appeal

In case of disagreement with the quality assurance decision, the organisation can appeal to HQAI within 14 workdays after being informed of the decision.

HQAI will transmit the case to the Chair of the Advisory and Complaint Board who will confirm that the basis for the appeal meets the appeals process requirements. The Chair will then constitute an appeal panel made of at least two experts who have no conflict of interest in the case in question. The panel will strive to come to a decision within 45 workdays.

The details of the Appeals Procedure can be found in document PRO049 – Appeals Procedure.

Annex 1: Explanation of the scoring scale*

Scores	Meaning: for all verification scheme options	Technical meaning for all independent verification and certification audits
0	Your organisation does not work towards applying the CHS commitment.	<p>Score 0: indicates a weakness that is so significant that the organisation is unable to meet the commitment. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent verification: major weakness. Certification: major non-conformity, leading to a major corrective action request (CAR) – No certificate can be issued or immediate suspension of certificate.
1	Your organisation is making efforts towards applying this requirement, but these are not systematic.	<p>Score 1: indicates a weakness that does not immediately compromise the integrity of the commitment but requires to be corrected to ensure the organisation can continuously deliver against it. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent verification: minor weakness. Certification: minor non-conformity, leading to a minor corrective action request (CAR).
2	Your organisation is making systematic efforts towards applying this requirement, but certain key points are still not addressed.	<p>Score 2: indicates an issue that deserves attention but does not currently compromise the conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent verification and certification: observation.
3	Your organisation conforms to this requirement, and organisational systems ensure that it is met throughout the organisation and over time – the requirement is fulfilled.	<p>Score 3: indicates full conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent verification and certification: conformity.
4	Your organisation's work goes beyond the intent of this requirement and demonstrates innovation. It is applied in an exemplary way across the organisation and organisational systems ensure high quality is maintained across the organisation and over time.	<p>Score 4: indicates an exemplary performance in the application of the requirement.</p>

* Scoring Scale from the CHSA Verification Scheme 2020

