Research and Studies

# FINAL REPORT ON INTERNAL RESEARCH PREVENIR

**Towards a tool for measuring the outcomes of HI's interventions at community level – Genesis of the OUT-COMs approach**

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# Introduction

## Context of the research deployment

Measuring the real impact of our actions on our beneficiaries and partners is a key issue that has been of concern to our organisation for several years. How can we ensure that the energy and resources we devote to our actions have positive outcomes for those who need them? Understanding and improving the changes brought about by our actions is therefore central to our thinking. However, attempting to measure the outcomes of our multi-sector actions on a diverse vulnerable population, in often fragile and complex contexts, and with limited resources, presents a real challenge.

HI's Theory of Change, which formalises its social mission, states that the ultimate goal of HI's interventions is to enable people to enjoy a good quality of life. To achieve this goal, HI's work focuses on different actors (individuals, but also civil society organisations, policy makers, service providers, etc.): this is formalised in the service access triangle. Since 2020, with the support of many HI employees, the 3i Department has launched the project "Systematising the measurement of the outcomes of our projects", which is part of HI's 2015-2025 federal strategy. As part of this project, a measurable concept has been identified and assigned by type of stakeholder[1] , in order to measure the changes produced by interventions in a multisectoral manner. Several tools have been identified and adapted, or even designed, to be made available to teams. **This research focuses specifically on the community level, which at the time was one of the last areas to be addressed in order to have a common set of tools dedicated to measuring our outcomes. The measurable concept associated with the community level is that of an enabling environment[2] . In this**

[1] For more details, please refer to the presentations associated with the project "Systematising the measurement of our outcomes".

[2] At the start of this work, we considered possible alternative concepts: a safe, resilient, supportive or empowering environment, in particular. However, it is the concept of an enabling environment that remains the most convincing in light of current work and HI's interventions. Furthermore, the 1990 United Nations report uses the term "*enabling environment*". Other studies refer to an *empowering territory* or *empowering living environment*. However, empowering refers to several reflections on forms of power, some of which will not be addressed directly in this research. We will therefore use "enabling environment" as the terminology in English and "environnement capacitant" in French. For more details, please refer to the Scoping note for this research.

**report, we will see how we have defined and operationalised this concept in the context of measuring the outcomes of our interventions.**

The need for this research was revealed in particular by the meta-analyses carried out in 2022 and 2023 (taking into account HI projects completed in 2021 and 2022 respectively), which showed that although a number of activities were carried out at community level, it was rare to measure their outcomes. One of the reasons for this is the tendency to measure outcomes at the individual level (since this is what gives meaning to our actions), which results in certain outcomes, and therefore certain actions, being undervalued. The risk of this tendency is that it fails to demonstrate any positive change, since not all types of projects directly improve individuals' quality of life, for example. In this case, the efforts of the project teams are not highlighted, even though many interesting lessons could potentially have been learned through more appropriate outcome measurement. A second reason for the poor measurement of outcomes at the community level is the lack of tools available to teams. The aim of this research is therefore to provide teams with a tool that captures the outcomes of HI's projects (and those of its partners) at the community level. **Knowing how to measure outcomes at the community level means, on the one hand, being able to discuss the project and the factors contributing to its success and obstacles with stakeholders on the basis of evidence, and thereby being able to engage in a process of continuous improvement, and, on the other hand, ensuring the visibility and legitimacy of HI's community-based approaches among other stakeholders, such as donors, for example.**

To begin with, an initial benchmark of existing internal and external tools was carried out. To identify the tools available and/or used within HI, we conducted documentary research on HInside and in HILibrary, held discussions with technical specialists and project managers, and consulted project documents that mentioned certain tools. The main limitations of existing tool s for measuring the multi-sectoral outcomes of our projects at the community level are that some do not capture the community level but rather the individual level, some are particularly specific to a sector, others are not tools for measuring outcomes, and still others are not normative (i.e., they are a general approach). To identify existing external tools, we searched for tools offered by other international solidarity actors relating to community-based approaches, tools corresponding to the keyword "enabling environment"

(the search was conducted in French and English), tools addressing specific needs according to age, gender, disability, tools designed to deal with specific environments (school environment; work environment) and tools developed to study specific groups (deaf people, people living with HIV, LGBTQIA+ people). A total of 55 tools were identified and reviewed (we do not claim to be exhaustive). Here again, limitations were identified: some of these tools focus on aspects that are very far removed from HI's areas of intervention; some are not participatory; others do not apply at the community level (e.g. they are based on secondary national data) or apply to a population or type of environment that is too specific (e.g. people living with mental health problems or the urban environment in Europe). Other tools, such as those identified internally, cannot be deployed as outcomes measures, and still others are not normative[3] . **The inventory of existing internal and external tools reveals the need to consider the design of a new tool that can be used by teams to measure the outcomes on the enabling (or disabling) characteristics of the living environment of the people with and for whom we work. This report therefore addresses the basics of how the theoretical and methodological foundations of this new tool – called OUT-COMs – were conceived and constructed.**

**To move forward with this project, we seized the opportunity presented by phase 2 of the "Prevention of multiple risks and violations faced by vulnerable populations and multisectoral response to protection and assistance needs in the face of shocks" project (PREVENIR project), funded by the DGD-Humanitaire for the period 2023-2025. This is why we refer to PREVENIR Internal Research when referring to the research work presented here.** Multi-risk approaches are one of the community-based approaches implemented by HI and on which we have based this work. Multi-risk approaches deployed in schools (known as the SAFE-SCHOOL approach) were also taken into account in this work. Despite research support from the project's operational teams, the methodological testing phase had to be carried out outside the project's areas of intervention due to the security situation at the time of planning this field mission.

[3] For more details (including a list of the main tools consulted), please refer to the Scoping note.

## Research specifications

As mentioned above, this research aims to provide teams with a tool for measuring the outcomes of projects at the community level. The tool must therefore meet the characteristics presented below.

The tool must:

- Capture the outcomes of HI and its partners' interventions at community level;
- Be multi-sectoral;
- Be multi-context;
- Be adaptable to all types of target profiles (suitable regardless of the age, gender or disability of beneficiaries);
- Be easy for teams to deploy;
- Enable results to be easily interpreted and made understandable to all stakeholders;
- Be integrated into a participatory approach as much as possible.

In this report, we will explain how the research was conducted to ensure that the results comply with these specifications.

## The research process

The research was conducted from June 2024 to May 2025, in two complementary phases, with a total of nine stages[4] .

The exploratory phase brought together the first stages of the research, aiming to determine what an enabling environment for HI might look like, and more specifically to define what the content of the tool we are seeking to build might be. The objective was to arrive at a conceptual proposal that made sense in relation to the projects implemented by HI and its partners.

- Stage 1: Literature review – Anchoring the research in a theoretical framework based on the concept of an enabling environment.
- Step 2: Analysis of HI documents – Aligning theory with the realities of HI's interventions.
- Step 3: Use of the PREVENIR project's midline surveys – Capturing people's perceptions to enrich the theoretical framework with empirical data.
- Step 4: Conducting interviews in the DRC – Analysing people's life trajectories to compare the theoretical framework with the realities of their experiences.

The stabilisation and development phase brought together the steps focused on stabilising the theoretical framework proposed at the end of the exploratory phase and on methodological considerations. The aim here was to reach a concrete decision on how to measure our outcomes at the community level.

- Step 5: Technical consultation – Stabilise the theoretical proposal based on internal expertise.
- Step 6: Methodological review – Identifying evaluation approaches as methodological avenues consistent with the theoretical framework.
- Step 7: Consultation with future users – Ensuring the consistency of methodological proposals with project needs and constraints.

[4] For a more visual overview, an infographic entitled "9 steps to designing the OUT-COMs community-level outcomes measurement approach" is available.

- Step 8: Field testing – Decide on the most appropriate methodological approach, based on feasibility and performance criteria.

A total of nine stages were implemented to conduct this research[5] . The first eight stages are covered in this report, with the ninth stage involving the formalisation and promotion of the results (including this report). These stages were guided by the desire to ensure both a theoretical foundation and empirical validation, in line with HI's internal expertise and the realities of its interventions.

### What is the purpose of this final research report?

This report is one of the pillars of the ninth stage of the research process: the formalisation of results. Its primary purpose is to ensure the traceability of the decisions taken during this research (why these decisions were made, how they were made, on the basis of what information), which, as we shall see, led to the creation of the OUT-COMs approach. This traceability is part of a commitment to transparency, which is useful for a better understanding and therefore better appropriation of the tool by users.

- To discover the proposed theoretical model on which the analysis of the OUT-COMs tool is based, you can go directly to section 5.3 of this report.
- To discover the final methodological approach that constitutes OUT-COMs, you can go directly to section 8.3 of this report.

[5] Compared to the initial plan, one step in the development and validation phase was removed. It was decided not to conduct the survey that was intended to verify the links between the concepts in the theoretical framework, particularly between the concepts of enabling environment and quality of life, which are assumed to be closely related. This decision was dictated by time constraints (tight schedule), budgetary constraints (no budget had been allocated for this stage) and the failure to identify suitable areas for intervention (it would have been necessary to identify a project that implemented a ScoPeO survey on the quality of life of populations).

# SECTION 1 – THE EXPLORATORY PHASE

The objective of this exploratory phase was to take stock of the existing situation in order to propose a theoretical framework around the concept of an enabling environment, so that this framework would be appropriate to HI's concerns and challenges.

Here, we would like to outline the method used to construct this theoretical framework. The work was carried out using a variety of data sources: scientific articles and, more broadly, grey literature from various institutional actors, HI documents, a shared Midline survey conducted as part of the PREVENIR project, and interviews with or without interpreters. To process all of these sources, we conducted a textual analysis based on the text corpus, as well as a more statistical analysis based on the Midline survey databases.

Our textual analysis was a reflexive thematic analysis, in other words, we focused on meaning (rather than on the structure of the discourse or the vocabulary used by our interlocutors) in order to perform an exclusively semantic breakdown, given the variety of sources used. This analysis was integrated into an iterative process, since we started with a review of the literature to propose an initial encoding grid for the different elements of the corpus, but this grid evolved after being compared with HI documents and empirical elements (perception survey, life story interviews). Below, we detail the initial tree structure (which corresponds to the initial encoding grid) and its evolution to the final tree structure (which takes into account all the contributions from the elements consulted at the time of writing this document).

## STEP 1 – Anchoring the research in a theoretical framework: the literature review

The literature review was the first exercise to be carried out as part of this research, for which an internal and external benchmark had revealed the need to design a new tool. Firstly, because it is a requirement for any research to reflect on and build on what already exists. Secondly, due to more institutional considerations: we needed a cross-functional tool that would enable exchanges with partners (and therefore go beyond the scope of what HI alone does) and be relatively stable in terms of content.

### 1.1 An extensive literature review

Several objectives were set for this literature review. First, we wanted to be able to construct an initial definition of the "enabling environment", our measurable starting concept. Once defined, we needed to pre-identify the potential foundations of this enabling environment, then pre-identify the proxies and/or existing approaches that would allow us to capture these foundations. In this literature review, we also focused on age-specific characteristics (children/adults/elderly people), gender-specific characteristics (men/women), characteristics specific to the type of disability, and the role of climate change risks.

In accordance with the specifications, we took care to ensure that the literature review provided a multidisciplinary overview for different contexts (not only countries in the global North) and for different profiles.

To search for sources, we used the following keywords:

- First search: "enabling environment" / "enabling environment" + "disability" / "enabling environment" + "territory" / "enabling environment" + "gender" / "enabling environment" + "age"
- Second search: "enabling territory" / "enabling territory" + "risk" / "enabling territory" + "resilience" / "community" + "risk management"
- Third search: "spatial justice" / "spatial equity" / "cultural geography"
- 4th search: "community" + "human rights" / "territory" + "power to act" / "emancipatory territory"

We looked at all grey literature, not just academic articles:  reports and documents from associations, expert reports, *working papers* and documents related to the implementation of public policy, evaluation reports, reference documents on international solidarity, etc.

### Going further to ensure age, gender and disability sensitivity

Research was conducted based on specific vulnerability factors, leading us to address LGBTQIA+ identities, aspects related to deaf culture, caregiver status, and people living with HIV (who occupy a special place in the field of health and more broadly in the social sphere). In the case of deaf culture, we are talking about a community, but in the sense of a network, and mainly a virtual network, rather than a shared living environment as initially envisaged in the scope of this research. We will therefore later question the place to be given to virtual networks within the framework of this tool.

The documents to be consulted were selected on the basis of their titles and available abstracts. Some, which were only accessible for a fee, were replaced by working versions (provisional versions) or similar versions available on other media. At this stage, few documents from other NGOs could be identified through this literature review. Out of more than a hundred preselected documents, 89 were retained, analysed and used (to varying degrees) to construct the reflection. We considered the following disciplines: geography, sociology, economics, anthropology, political science, education science, management, and psychology.

To enable an analytical synthesis of the various documents, we organised the references consulted using thematic mapping, which allowed us to identify trends, divergences and convergences.

**A constant balancing act between the community (collective) level and the individual level**

During the literature review (but also, as we shall see in the following stages), it was difficult to clearly separate what belonged to the community (collective) level – the level on which we wanted to focus – from what belonged to the individual level. Drawing on Sen's Capabilities Approach (1999) and the list of fundamental human capabilities proposed by M. Nussbaum in 2008, which concerns the individual level, we were able to carry out this initial exercise: starting from human needs, mainly individual ones, and then transposing them to what the living environment must provide as a framework to be favourable and enable these human needs to be met. In doing so, by starting with the goals to be achieved, we do not presume the necessary means and leave room for the examination of contextual and endogenous solutions. However, this constant shift between the two scales must be clarified in order for the approach that will ultimately be adopted to be effective. To this end, we propose to use the theory of the Commons developed by Ostrom (1990) and transpose it into the analysis of collective capacities. These two theoretical approaches, Capabilities and Commons, therefore structure the rest of this work.

## 1.2 Key elements: an initial proposal for characterising an enabling environment

The concept of an enabling environment is part of a dynamic vision of human development, inspired by the work of Amartya Sen (1992, 1999) and Martha Nussbaum (2000, 2011), who emphasise the need to consider the effective freedoms available to individuals to choose and lead a life that they have reason to value. The main elements drawn from the documents consulted and the framework we have proposed as a basis for our reflection are summarised below.

### 1.2.1 Towards a general definition of an enabling environment

In order to construct an initial definition of an enabling environment, we questioned the place to be given to the population in question (the people who experience and bring to life what we call community) / local authorities (who make the decisions), as we based our thinking on the concepts of sustainability, power to act (in line with Sen's capabilities approach[6] ) and

[6] Much of the work on enabling environments is based on the Capabilities Approach[6] developed by Sen (1999). The main criticism levelled at the capabilities approach is that it is not sufficiently operational (Clark, 2005), but

common goods[7] (as developed by Ostrom). Our proposal corresponded to the following definition, adapted to HI's activities as an international solidarity actor:

> *"An enabling environment is an environment that is thought out and initiated by residents and public authorities, developed jointly with aid operators, enabling populations to access more opportunities to act on what is important to them in order to achieve and maintain a good quality of life."*

An enabling environment is therefore an environment that transforms individuals into people who know how to act (who have the capacities), who can act (who have the capabilities), and who want to act (decision-making process, motivation) in their own interests (better quality of life) and for the common good (a more enabling environment). An enabling environment is therefore an environment that provides the necessary opportunities for each person to benefit from greater power to act.

trends such as capability anthropology and environmental psychology suggest that it is possible to circumvent (at least in part) these operationalisation difficulties. For more details, please refer to the Scoping Note.

[7] Elinor Ostrom (1990, 1994) has shown that local communities are often capable of managing their common resources sustainably through well-designed rules and cooperation. This is the premise we have chosen to adopt, applying the concept of common goods to collective capabilities (e.g. a community social protection mechanism, managed by and for the community). The notion of the common good therefore allows us to make the link between individual behaviour and the general interest. For more details, please refer to the Scoping note.

**Reminder: Why make the link with the concepts of quality of life and resilience?**

The ultimate goal of HI's actions, in accordance with its Theory of Change, is to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable populations. Thus, for HI, an enabling environment must be understood as an environment that makes it easier to achieve a good quality of life.

Furthermore, an enabling environment must not only provide the necessary conditions for the development of individual and collective capacities in normal times, but also be capable of protecting and supporting its inhabitants in times of crisis. Some authors thus make a clear link between an enabling environment and resilience: to create an enabling environment, the community must be able to "*anticipate rapid or slow disruptions through monitoring and foresight, minimise their outcomes, recover and bounce back through learning, adaptation and innovation, and evolve towards a new state of dynamic equilibrium (constructed and decided democratically) that preserves its functionality* " (Villar and David, 2014). This link with the concept of resilience is also crucial for HI, particularly for multi-risk approaches such as those of the PREVENIR project, of which this research is a part, but also more broadly in the crisis contexts in which many teams operate.

Our initial approach to measuring the outcomes of our projects on the enabling characteristics of a given community was to establish a standard for what the concept of an enabling environment does (or does not) cover[8] . In order to operationalise this concept in contexts of analysis or action, we felt it necessary to propose a structure based on four main pillars: a protective environment, an economically liveable environment, a fair environment and a nurturing environment. Each of these pillars allows us to articulate the environmental, social and institutional conditions that enable the emergence, maintenance or strengthening of certain fundamental capabilities. This structure was designed not as a fixed model, but as an open framework for analysis, allowing us to analyse real opportunities for action based on the diversity of situations experienced.

[8] There is tension in the literature between attempts to draw up a universal list of capabilities (such as that proposed by Nussbaum) and the consideration of local and cultural specificities. That is why, in the following, we propose, on the one hand, generic terminology – as the teams implementing the projects and the populations concerned are best placed to assess and detail what each term covers – and, on the other hand, not to establish a hierarchy between the elements that will be retained.

### 1.2.2 A protective environment: a two-part construct, physical and psychological

The idea of a protective environment within the framework of an enabling environment is based on a fundamental principle: allowing individuals to develop in a context free from major threats to their well-being, which is conducive to the expression of their potential. According to the very definition of an enabling environment – an environment that allows people to act on what matters to them – this protection is not only a passive defence mechanism, but a prerequisite for any capacity to act. It constitutes a minimum foundation without which other forms of human development (economic, social, cultural) remain inaccessible or precarious.

From this point of view, the literature in political philosophy, public health, psychology and sociology converges to identify two main types of vulnerability that any protective environment must address: physical vulnerability and psychological vulnerability. With regard to physical vulnerability, the work of Amartya Sen (1999) emphasises how fundamental it is to be able to live in good health, move around freely and not fear for one's physical safety. Nussbaum identifies *life*, *bodily health* and *bodily integrity* among her ten "core capabilities," showing that the preservation of the body is fundamental to a dignified human life. This includes access to healthcare and healthy housing, but also to an unpolluted and secure environment, even in the face of adversity (epidemics, disasters, conflicts). The importance of community warning systems and other collective resilience mechanisms in unstable or marginalised areas supports this need (Béné et al., 2012).

At the same time, numerous studies emphasise the need for an environment that protects psychological health, now recognised (notably by the World Health Organisation) as an essential component of overall health. In her work, Nussbaum also refers to the capability to experience emotions in a safe environment, without fear or humiliation. This psychological dimension of protection refers to the possibility of living without chronic exposure to stress, anxiety or loneliness, which can severely limit one's ability to act, plan ahead or make decisions (Folkman, 1984; Jouan and Laugier, 2009). Access to clear and non-stigmatising information, particularly for people living with specific diseases (such as HIV) or in contexts of discrimination, contributes to this psychological security (Link & Phelan, 2001). The ability

to express one's emotions, to be surrounded, recognised and listened to, is therefore an integral part of the criteria for an enabling environment.

It is therefore from this dual necessity – preserving the body and preserving the mind – that the protective environment is naturally divided into two sub-pillars: "enabling the maintenance of physical integrity" and "enabling the maintenance of psychological integrity", both of which are essential to building an autonomous, dignified and chosen life path.

**A concept of protection that extends across the pillars of "Fair Environment" and "Fulfilling Environment".**

This pillar, "Protective Environment", as described here, focuses on physical and psychological integrity and does not directly address phenomena such as street harassment, police violence or systemic discrimination (racial, gender-based), which fall under the broader concept of security. These experiences affect not only the body (physical risks) and the mind (stress, fear), but also freedom of movement and social participation. In our view, these issues go beyond the categories of "physical" and "psychological" and are more about the ability to occupy public space as a recognised and legitimate subject, which some refer to as "civic security" (Taylor et al., 1994; Fraser, 2005). Similarly, access to stable administrative rights (identity papers, resident status, social security coverage) or social safety nets is often fundamental to feeling secure. However, this is neither strictly a question of physical integrity nor solely psychological. For example, the fear of losing one's home or legal status can be a form of insecurity that cannot be reduced to mental health or the body, revealing the need to take structural or institutional security into account (Castel, 1995). In both cases, this touches on collective mechanisms of regulation, recognition and equity. They will therefore be addressed in "Fair Environment", which includes procedural justice, political participation, equitable access to resources, and the fight against domination. Furthermore, work in the ethics of *care* (Tronto, 1993; Paperman & Laugier, 2006) emphasises that individuals are not autonomous but fundamentally vulnerable and interdependent. Being protected is therefore not just about preserving one's body or mind, but about being recognised as a subject worthy of attention, listening and care. This challenges an overly individualised, al view of integrity in favour of a more relational view, which will be discussed in "Fulfilling Environment".

### 1.2.3 An economically viable environment: meeting one's needs, accessing a certain degree of autonomy

From a capability perspective, an economically liveable environment is one that allows individuals to secure the minimum material conditions for existence and the possibility to choose and build their own path. Among the ten core capabilities proposed by Nussbaum, the *tenth—control over one's material* environment—explicitly includes access to decent work and the possibility of economic stability on an equal footing with others. This capability is closely linked to the possibility of existing socially and politically as an autonomous subject. Some of the sources consulted mention that the economic goal would be 'an environment that ensures human dignity'. While this notion of human dignity is important, we consider that it cannot be confined to economic aspects and is in fact broader than this single pillar. At this stage, therefore, we have not included it.

In light of work in development economics (including Alkire, 2002; Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009), two sub-components appear to be central. The first concerns the ability to meet one's basic needs. An enabling environment must provide access to a minimum standard of living: stable housing, sufficient food, drinking water and basic hygiene products. These elements are the very foundations of a viable life and are essential for health, security and access to other areas of development. This is also emphasised by approaches based on basic needs (Doyal & Gough, 1991), which emphasise the satisfaction of certain biological and social constants (such as food and shelter) as a prerequisite for autonomy. The second sub-component relates to the ability to access sources of income, i.e. to have the means to support economic autonomy over time. This is not limited to formal or salaried employment, but includes access to local productive activities, inclusive economic exchanges, financial services (credit, savings), and the ability to be resilient in the face of shocks (economic, climatic, health- ). This capacity has a twofold consequence: it enables individuals to meet their present needs, but also to plan for the future and make choices for themselves or their families.

**In a theoretical framework that focuses on outcomes, what place does "access to income" have?**

Far from a simplistic view focused solely on income growth, the Capabilities Approach emphasises people's actual ability to *make choices* that matter to them, not just the resources they have at their disposal. Access to sources of income must therefore be questioned: is it an end in itself (as positioning it as a sub-pillar suggests here), or should it be approached solely as a means of exercising freedom of choice? At this stage, given the importance of "income" (in whatever form, whether monetary, in kind, etc.) as a resource for achieving other capabilities (Robeyns, 2005), we are retaining this aspect as an end in itself. This choice will be discussed further later on.

It is on the basis of these two fundamental functions — the preservation of minimum living conditions on the one hand, and the ability to generate one's own economic resources on the other — that we propose to structure the economically liveable environment around two complementary sub-pillars: "enabling people to meet their basic needs" and "enabling people to access sources of income ." This division makes it possible to distinguish between what is necessary for survival and daily stability, and what concerns planning for the future, freedom to undertake projects, and economic integration into society.

**More complex economic realities addressed in "Enriching Environment"**

The breakdown of this pillar remains very much focused on an instrumental logic (having the resources to live and act) and does not fully take into account the subjective values associated with economic activity, such as social recognition, perceived usefulness, or creativity. However, these dimensions are central to certain approaches to decent work (Gorz, 1997; Davoine and Méda, 2008), or in the care economy (Tronto, 1993), which is why we will address them in "Fulfilling Environment".

While subsistence activities (e.g. having a vegetable garden or mutual aid), which are essential in many contexts, are means of "meeting basic needs", the term "sources of income" effectively excludes a whole part of economic reality: domestic work, informal care and family solidarity. Although we do not wish to render invisible real but non-monetary economic capacities (Polanyi, 1944; Esping-Andersen, 1999; Kabeer, 1999), caring for others will be considered as a means (as a factor enabling these other people to develop in an enabling environment that in turn empowers them) or, in cases where it is an end in itself, as a lifestyle choice (which will be found in "Fulfilling Environment").

### 1.2.4 A fair environment: between fundamental rights, safeguarding the future and respecting others

The challenge of a fair environment within the framework of an enabling environment is to identify the fundamental dimensions that allow each individual to live in a social and political environment where their rights are recognised, protected and effectively exercised. Multidisciplinary literature on social, political and environmental justice suggests that this concept cannot be reduced to a single dimension.

First, it is necessary to distinguish a dimension related to the ability to exercise fundamental rights. This dimension encompasses the institutional and social conditions[9] that guarantee access to justice, protection against discrimination and arbitrariness, as well as political

[9] Forms of domination and local justice can differ greatly from formal legal norms (Lafaye, 2014). Neo-patrimonial mechanisms, informal power games, and social pressure must therefore be taken into account when assessing whether an environment allows individuals to effectively exercise their fundamental rights.

participation[10] . Numerous studies emphasise the importance of social recognition and political control in enabling individuals to act and make informed decisions in their environment (Rawls (1971) cited by Spitz, 2011; Sen, 1999; Nussbaum; 2006; Fraser, 2008; ). The term "empowering leader" (Arnold et al., 2000; Zhang and Bartol, 2010) could also be applied to the aspects of governance[11] that we wish to highlight here.

Furthermore, reflections on environmental justice and sustainable development suggest that another essential dimension concerns the ability to safeguard the future. This dimension involves an intergenerational perspective, emphasising the equitable management of natural resources and collective ecological responsibility (Schlosberg, 2007; Agyeman et al., 2003). Justice is therefore not limited to the current rights of individuals, but also includes preserving living conditions for future generations.

Finally, the relational and ethical dimension of justice, centred on mutual recognition and respect for diversity, justifies considering a third sub-pillar: enabling people to respect others and their choices. The work of Taylor (1994) and Young (1999) shows that justice cannot be reduced to formal structures alone, but must also include the quality of social relations, the fight against oppression and the promotion of tolerance. This sub-pillar thus highlights social and cultural practices that promote harmonious coexistence.

This division into three sub-pillars — "empowering people to exercise their fundamental rights", "empowering people to safeguard the future" and "empowering people to respect others and their choices" — thus makes it possible to reflect the complexity and diversity of the issues that constitute a fair environment, including, in particular, the aspects of civic security and institutional security that were not included in "Protective Environment".

[10] In practice, political participation can be coercive or instrumentalised, particularly in authoritarian or conflictual contexts (Mouffe, 2000). Thus, even if it contributes to it, the mere formal ability to participate is not a sufficient criterion for characterising a fair environment. This is why the concept of participation, which also cuts across other pillars (e.g. participation in one's healthcare pathway), is not highlighted in our proposal.

[11] Alain Supiot, in "*Homo Juridicus*", discusses forms of governance that respect people's capacity to act within institutions (Mongin, 2005). However, in this research, we will attempt to handle the concept of governance with caution, given its ambiguous and polysemic nature: for example, Patrick Le Galès has counted 23 definitions.

**Digital protection, a specific component of fundamental rights**

In an increasingly digitalised world, issues of personal data protection and cybersecurity are becoming crucial. This type of integrity – informational or digital – does not easily fit into the "physical/psychological" duo we have proposed for "Protective Environment", although it has outcomes on both. Increasingly recognised as a new dimension of individual security (Van Deursen and Van Dijck, 2011; Dodel and Mesch, 2018; Zuboff, 2019), we propose integrating it into the issue of fundamental rights: the preservation of one's identity then becomes an extension of access to stable administrative rights and institutional protection against spoliation.

### 1.2.5 A nurturing environment: learning, social integration, exercising life choices and the opportunity to enjoy oneself

Fulfilment is a central dimension of an enabling environment, as it relates to the realisation of individuals' deepest aspirations and the quality of their life experience. Indeed, access to material resources or rights is not enough to guarantee a fully human living environment: spaces for expression, social relationships and belonging to a group are just as fundamental. The importance attached to the ability to think, imagine and have a rich intellectual life (which is one of the fundamental human capabilities according to Nussbaum) emphasises that fulfilment requires conditions that allow for the development of sensitivity, creativity and critical thinking. This dimension includes access to formal and non-formal education, but also the opportunity to participate in valued and rewarding activities. Without these spaces for learning and expression, individuals are limited in their cognitive and emotional development (Sen, 1999; Robeyns, 2006).

**In a theoretical framework that focuses on outcomes, what place is there for 'learning new knowledge'?**

The same type of question we asked about access to income can be raised here: should access to new knowledge be considered instrumental (understood as a means of exercising freedom of choice) rather than an end in itself, as presented here? Although learning for the sake of learning is not necessarily a universally shared perspective, we propose to leave it as it is at this stage and return to this discussion later.

The social dimension of fulfilment is unavoidable. The capability of affiliation (again, one of Nussbaum's fundamental human capabilities) posits that human beings need to live with others in a climate of mutual respect and recognition. The sense of belonging to a community, the opportunity to express oneself publicly, and having one's opinion taken into account in collective decisions are essential social conditions. This sociability is also the foundation that allows individuals to form relationships that nurture their emotional capacities and sense of integration (Putnam, 2000).

Finally, the recognition of the need for play, pleasure and time for oneself is confirmed by studies on quality of life and subjective well-being (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993; Samuel, Rillotta and Brown, 2012). These dimensions should not be considered incidental or superfluous, but rather as intrinsic components of a fulfilling life that contribute to self-actualisation.

Therefore, in order to organise these multiple facets of an Enriching Environment, we considered it appropriate to group them into four distinct sub-pillars. The first sub-pillar – 'enabling social integration' – reflects the importance of social ties and a sense of belonging. The second sub-pillar – "enabling access to new knowledge/skills" – focuses on the fundamental role of education and cultural activities in personal development, and economic development. The third sub-pillar – "enabling people to exercise their life choices/fulfil their aspirations" – emphasises respect for individual freedoms. The fourth sub-pillar – "enabling people to enjoy themselves" – values the opportunity to take care of oneself and have personal time. This breakdown is an attempt to reflect the full complexity and richness of human fulfilment, addressing cognitive, social and emotional needs.

**On the concept of fulfilment**

We do not seek to present fulfilment as a normative requirement: this reflection does not aim to put implicit pressure on individuals to "realise their potential", "make life choices" or "learn". The idea is to consider that any living environment (even in contexts of vulnerability or precariousness) should allow individuals to do so, at least to a certain extent, i.e. it should provide opportunities to do so and not hinder individuals seeking to seize them. Similarly, the notion of pleasure used here does not presuppose the desirable means of achieving it, nor even that one must lead a "joyful" life if that is not what the person values.

### 1.2.6 The limitations of this initial theoretical framework

By proposing a structure for an enabling environment based on four main pillars – protective, economically liveable, fair and fulfilling – we sought to make intelligible the diversity of conditions that influence individuals' ability to exercise their real freedoms. This approach aims to meet a twofold imperative: on the one hand, to avoid reducing the concept to a normative inventory by recontextualising the issues in a relational and systemic logic; on the other hand, to equip the analysis without imposing an external hierarchy of priorities, but by providing points of reference for thinking jointly about vulnerability, autonomy, justice and well-being. We have attempted to overcome certain structural limitations: issues not covered by one pillar (e.g. intergenerational justice, social recognition) often find their place in another, thereby reducing the risk of omission or analytical blindness. This division is ly intended to provide a flexible, contextualisable analytical framework that can be adapted by local actors according to their priorities, constraints and representations of well-being. However, several limitations remain.

Firstly, we believe that this framework remains culturally situated, permeated by values derived from Western philosophical traditions, particularly through references to concepts such as autonomy, self-expression, and freedom of choice, which are not universally accepted (Deneulin & Stewart, 2002; Gudynas, 2011). Other traditions were less represented in this literature review, even though numerous sources were consulted (beyond those strictly cited here). For example, Taoist considerations associated with "wu wei" (non-action) may appear to contradict some of our proposals, which may suggest a need for control and accumulation (e.g. the importance given to basic needs and income) and do not accurately reflect the search for balance found in Buddhist traditions. Nevertheless, these are aspects that we associate with lifestyle choices and aspirations (Enriching Environment). Another example is Ubuntu, a concept derived from sub-Saharan African philosophies (particularly Bantu) which roughly translates as "*I am because we are.*" It is based on a deeply relational view of humanity, where the individual cannot be conceived of outside the community (Ramose, Coetzee and Roux, 2002; Metz, 2007). The implications of this philosophy for our theoretical framework are cross-cutting: the outcomes of good health can benefit the whole community, the search for affiliation and pleasure can be

collective, and the sub-pillars of a fair environment are not incompatible with the restorative and reconciliatory dimensions promoted through Ubuntu. The implications of the cosmological vision in Guarani thought could be somewhat similar, but would probably require greater emphasis on the spiritual dimension of a "good life", which in our proposal is hidden in life choices and aspirations (Fulfilling Environment). However, the very logic of the division (and the use of Nussbaum's capabilities) remains strongly rooted in a perspective of ethical individualism (the individual and their quality of life as the ultimate goal, in accordance with HI's Theory of Change).

Still within this perspective of ethical individualism, and although the environmental issue is addressed from the angle of intergenerational justice, systemic ecological dynamics remain in the background: issues of biodiversity, global interdependencies and planetary boundaries are not addressed directly. This theoretical framework therefore appears anthropocentric, even if we can envisage integrating other forms of life in a spirit of respect for others (Fair Environment), in particular to better reflect this aspect, which is central to certain South American philosophies (such as Buen Vivir / Sumak Kawsay in the Quechua tradition, the Mapuche tradition, and Pachamamaism).

Furthermore, any division such as this may seem artificial and arbitrary. The division into sub-pillars has led us to make conceptual separations, even though many concepts are interdependent. However, by isolating these components into distinct sub-categories, we could encourage the reproduction of institutional divisions: for example, by formally separating education and mental health, we make it less visible that education can be a direct lever for good mental health. In reality, however, we have attempted to focus solely on the objectives here, and it should therefore be borne in mind that all means can be considered in order to achieve these objectives.

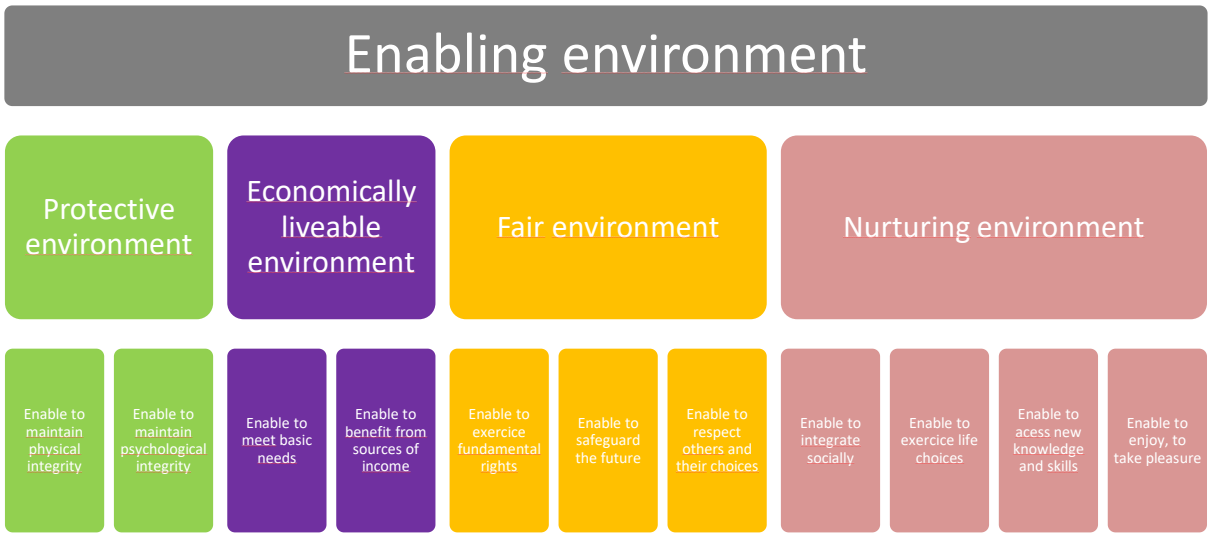
The proposed framework should therefore be seen only as a starting point for thinking about the conditions for human development and providing a common language for dialogue between disciplines (and, for HI, between its sectors). Further research should logically lead to a re-examination of this initial proposal. In the following, we will see that we will give significant weight (even if constrained by the material and operational realities of this

research) to the voices of the people concerned and to the diversity of contexts in order to limit the risk of producing a normative view of what a "good life" should be.

## 1.3 Formalised coding to integrate all sources of information that will be used

In order to compare the various elements from HI's documentation as well as empirical data (midline surveys and interviews) with this initial theoretical proposal, we established a thematic coding system and used NVIVO software. The initial tree structure corresponded to the theoretical proposal and was enriched as additions and considerations raised by other data sources were incorporated, resulting in a final tree structure (which will be presented later). An "Other" code was added to the initial tree structure to allow certain elements of the corpus to be processed a posteriori.

*Figure 1 – Initial thematic tree structure to characterise an enabling environment (constructed from the literature review)*




Additional encoding nodes[12] used in parallel were intended to account for specificities according to gender (male, female, other), age (children and young people, elderly people),

[12] In this case, encoding can no longer be exclusive, i.e. the same element can be encoded several times, with each node representing a separate encoding grid.

disabilities (people with disabilities[13] , people living without disabilities, carers). These nodes were mainly used for reviewing literature specific to certain types of vulnerabilities, for surveys and for interviews (in order to take into account the profile of the person speaking in the analysis). In particular, the aim was to answer the following two questions as the analysis progressed:

- Do children and older people, women and men, persons with and without disabilities perceive differently what could be empowering/disempowering in an environment?
- Do children and older people, women and men, persons with and without disabilities experience their environment differently?

**What role do considerations related to stigmatisation play?**

There are two forms of stigma: interpersonal stigma and self-stigma. And although approaches to stigma are often specific to a particular illness or characteristic, Stangl et al. (2019) consider that the manifestations of this stigma and its psychosocial consequences are relatively similar. As a result, the phenomena of stigma (and the means to limit it) could be appropriately integrated into the invariants (i.e. sub-pillars) that we seek to identify in order to characterise an enabling environment. However, the decision was made to treat the issue of interpersonal stigma separately, as a subject in its own right. Thus, in parallel, research is being conducted to identify and/or design a tool to measure the outcomes of HI projects on reducing interpersonal stigma related to age, gender and disability: the Stigma research. At our level, the aim will be to verify that the final tool would make it possible to highlight the outcomes of HI projects on improving community mechanisms to limit the disempowering factor of stigma (whether interpersonal stigma or self-stigma[14] ).

Ultimately, this initial literature review has enabled us to understand what is being done externally and to outline the links between the different disciplines and themes. We have arrived at an initial characterisation of the concept of an enabling environment, which will serve as a basis for further research.

[13] Although this had been planned in the encoding, the issue of multiple disabilities could not be addressed: it did not appear in the documents analysed, nor among the people surveyed or interviewed.

[14] Work on the subject shows in particular that interpersonal links and community support (sense of belonging/group identity) create favourable conditions for limiting the processes of self-stigmatisation (Lysaker et al., 2010; Bos et al., 2013; Van Der Sanden et al., 2014; Quinn and Earnshaw, 2013).

## STEP 2 – Ensuring alignment with HI's interventions: analysis of HI documents

In reviewing the literature, we deliberately took into account different sources from different disciplines, some of which were unrelated to HI's activities, in order to gain a comprehensive overview of the work currently being done. The challenge was to refocus on HI and its activities from this second stage onwards. The analysis of HI documents therefore aimed to ensure that the tool met the need and fitted in with existing programme guidelines. As we were working on the design of a new tool to measure our outcomes, we placed great importance on analysing outcome indicators, both those in the catalogues[15] and those present in past and ongoing projects[16] . We then went into greater depth by taking into account *policy papers* (or equivalent documents) in order to fully understand the current, formalised guidelines for each sector[17] .

### 2.1 What we learn from HI's outcomes indicators

A number of outcomes indicators used at HI reflect the ambition of projects to move towards a more enabling environment, and therefore as objectives for the communities with and for which HI works. We therefore wanted to list them in order to see how they fitted in with the proposed theoretical framework.

We conducted this analysis based on 88 identified outcomes indicators (including 29 standard indicators and 59 indicators used in a project over the last three years[18] ) related to

[15] The outcomes indicator matrices for each sector can be consulted in Hinside.

[16] The outcome indicators for completed projects are listed in the meta-analyses of outcomes, an annual exercise whose conclusions are available in Hinside. For ongoing projects, an overview of the outcome indicators used can be obtained via PSQUARE, HI's database of implemented projects.

[17] Most of the existing tools within HI aimed at the community level had already been consulted for the purpose of conducting an internal benchmark (and thus better defining the need for this research). The elements of this internal benchmark and the main tools consulted are listed in the Scoping note and are not repeated here.

[18] The last three years corresponded to the meta-analyses of outcomes available at the time of this research. This period was also set in order to reduce the scope of the analysis in PSQUARE.

the community level[19] . As some outcomes indicators can be associated with several categories at once, we counted them in each of the possible categories. For example, the outcomes indicator "% *of schools that establish a safe environment and develop functional internal child protection mechanisms*" can, in our view, reveal a more protective environment (children are protected from certain risks when they are at school) or a nurturing environment (knowledge acquisition is enabled by a resilient school system). Conversely, indicators that focus on access to services can sometimes be very broadly worded, making them somewhat vague for our work. For example, "% *of community actors reporting improved capacity to identify and refer vulnerable children*" or "% *of supported services and infrastructure with improved inclusiveness*". In such cases, we took into account the sector/type of project (type of services, types of infrastructure) in order to categorise them appropriately: for health services, we generally chose "Protective Environment", while for schools, we mainly chose "Nurturing Environment".

The outcomes indicators directly associated with inclusion were generally integrated into the theoretical framework under "respecting others and their choices" (Fair Environment) – in line with considerations of equity. These include indicators such as "*an improvement in the level of inclusion of community mechanisms is observed at the end of the project*", "*a reduction in barriers limiting the social participation of persons with disability*" "% *of cluster members and community leaders trained on disability inclusion who show an improvement in their knowledge*", or "*the overall level of accessibility (infrastructure, communication, attitudes) has improved at the end of the project*". Similarly, a number of outcomes indicators relate to social participation: "*a reduction in barriers to social participation for persons with psychosocial and mental health needs is observed at the end of the project*", "*increase in the number of local projects and/or groups that include children with disabilities and their parents/carers*". At this stage, it is still difficult for us to decide: should elements related to participation be considered cross-cutting or should they be categorised under "exercising life choices" (Enriching Environment) – in which case social participation is seen as an end in

[19] We do not claim to be completely exhaustive here: outcome indicator matrices do not exist for all sectors at the time of this research, and meta-analyses of outcomes are based mainly on final project reports, which are not always available. Similarly, the section on outcomes indicators in PSQUARE is not always complete. Nevertheless, the use of these three data sources gives us a relatively comprehensive overview.

itself (having control, making decisions) – or under "exercising fundamental rights " (Fair Environment) – with the central idea that a person must be able to participate in decisions that affect them? We will see below (2.2) that certain considerations related to inclusion will be taken into account as cross-cutting, rather than as a specific component of the theoretical framework.

In addition, certain indicators directly address issues of stigma. In particular, we identified outcomes indicators such as "*decrease in the level of stigma experienced by children and/or young people at the end of* the project" and "*improvement in the population's attitude towards persons with disability*", "*favourable attitudes of the community towards persons with mental health and psychosocial service needs and rights*", and "percentage *of community members who report a positive change in their perception of other identity groups within the community*". Although these are informative for our work, as mentioned above (1.3), the issue of stigma at the community level is dealt with separately, which is why we have not included them in the table above (Figure 2).

We ended up with an unclassifiable outcomes indicator that we were unable to integrate into the proposed theoretical framework: "Number of humanitarian actors who benefited from improved access to affected areas". In line with ATLAS's activities, which generally provide services not directly to the population ( ) but to other humanitarian actors, this indicator could be associated with different pillars and sub-pillars, depending on the activities of the actors concerned: "basic needs" if the supported actor has carried out distribution activities, "maintaining physical integrity" if the cold chain put in place has enabled a vaccination campaign to be carried out, for example.

*Figure 2 – Summary table of HI's outcomes indicators that we associated with the "Enabling Environment" theoretical framework*

| PILLAR | SUB-PILLAR | NUMBER OF INDICATORS | SECTORS REPRESENTED | EXAMPLES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Protective Environment | **Maintaining physical integrity** | **18** | Inclusive Education; Health; RVA; Read; Health (ECD); DRR; Health; Protection | % decrease in the number of EO accidents; An increase in the capacity of community workers to identify and refer people for diabetes care has been observed |
| | **Maintaining psychological integrity** | **19** | Health (MHPSS); RVA; Health (ECD); Protection | A decrease in the level of distress related to family and social roles is observed at the end of the project; Percentage of people feeling safer in project areas |
| ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT | **Meeting basic needs** | **7** | Health (ECD); Economic Inclusion; Economic Resilience; AHI | % of local officials who report greater capacity to ensure PH access to preparedness mechanisms, information, protection and humanitarian assistance |
| | **Accessing sources of income** | **7** | Economic Inclusion; | An increase (in %) in the level of economic resilience of communities is measured at the end of the project |
| FAIR environment | **Exercising fundamental rights** | **4** | Protection; Inclusive Governance | An increase (in %) in complaints handled with a satisfactory solution is measured at the end of the project |
| | **To safeguard the future** | **5** | RVA; DRR; Economic Resilience | Number of municipalities with contingency plans available in cyclone-prone areas |
| | **Respect others and their choices** | **10** | Inclusive governance; Inclusive education; AHI; Economic inclusion; Protection | Percentage of community leaders trained on disability inclusion who demonstrate improved knowledge |
| ENRICHING ENVIRONMENT | **Social integration** | **7** | Inclusive Governance; RVA; Inclusive Education; Economic Inclusion; AHI | % of people reporting greater solidarity/trust within the community at the end of the project |
| | **Acquiring new knowledge** | **6** | Inclusive Education; Economic Inclusion; Health (ECD) | Level of access to school/vocational training |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Exercising life choices** | **13** | Health (ECD); Inclusive Education; AHI; Inclusive Governance; Economic Inclusion; Health | An improvement in parents' attitudes towards the rights and needs of children with disabilities is observed at the end of the project |
| | **Enjoying oneself** | **0** | | |

In our analysis, we did not distinguish between so-called standard outcome indicators – which are found in the outcome matrices developed by sector and correspond to what headquarters would like to promote (alignment with the guidelines and sector documents recommended by Technical Specialists) – and the indicators actually used in projects. This is mainly because the sectoral matrices were not available for all sectors at the time of this research.

Ultimately, all of the pillars and sub-pillars could be illustrated through the identified outcome indicators, with the exception of one: the sub-pillar "having fun" (Enriching Environment). We chose to classify children's play under "acquiring new knowledge/skills", as HI's activities focus on playful activities to improve children's awareness and development. Furthermore, we did not identify a focus on access to leisure activities (for example, we preferred to consider participation in ceremonies in the "social integration" ) or on "me time" in the desired outcomes of activities related to psychological well-being.

We found many indicators relating to a protective environment, both in terms of its physical and psychological components. Several indicators were classified in both categories, such as "*improved well-being*" following joint Read and MHPSS care. However, we noticed that the indicators identified do not always focus on the same aspects: while some address dimensions related to prevention and anticipation, others deal with care once the problem has arisen. These two dimensions (prevention and care) are often found in projects, but not always: some projects focus mainly on prevention (e.g. awareness-raising, early detection) and others on responding to the problem (care for people in need of technical assistance such as prosthetics, care for survivors of sexual violence).

Many indicators have also been associated with "respecting others and their choices" (Fair Environment) and "exercising life choices" (Fulfilling Environment), as these are aspects that are addressed by the vast majority of sectors at HI.

However, outcomes indicators alone are not sufficient to reflect HI's approaches, which is why we identified and collected key documents through interviews with resource persons. Below, we summarise the main contributions from the documents consulted and the changes made to the theoretical framework.

## 2.2 An initial proposal amended to better reflect HI's approaches

### 2.2.1 Sectoral elements we have retained for a theoretical framework more closely aligned with HI's interventions

From an integrated humanitarian response perspective, victim assistance (Armed Violence Reduction sector) is distinguished by its objective of restoring physical and psychological integrity, involving a combination of preventive and curative interventions. This dichotomy is generally a key lever for improving access to care (Health sector, Rehabilitation sector), both upstream, with the implementation of prevention measures, and downstream, through "treatment" activities.

At the same time, early childhood development (health sector) views learning as an end in itself, through the acquisition of fundamental motor, language and social skills that are essential for a child's development. While this goal may seem less directly applicable to adults (learning is generally considered a means to live the life one wants to live, or at least to improve it), learning retains a social dimension in that it promotes integration and the formation of bonds.

The issue of governance, meanwhile, requires a twofold interpretation: on the one hand, the management of domestic resources and resilience in the face of uncertainty (Basic Needs and Economic Resilience sector; Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation sector); on the other hand, the ability of individuals and communities to anticipate and regulate (Armed Violence Reduction sector; Inclusive Governance sector). For example, in the context of inclusive community justice, fundamental rights — such as property rights — must be guaranteed to prevent any form of dispossession. In other words, the environment

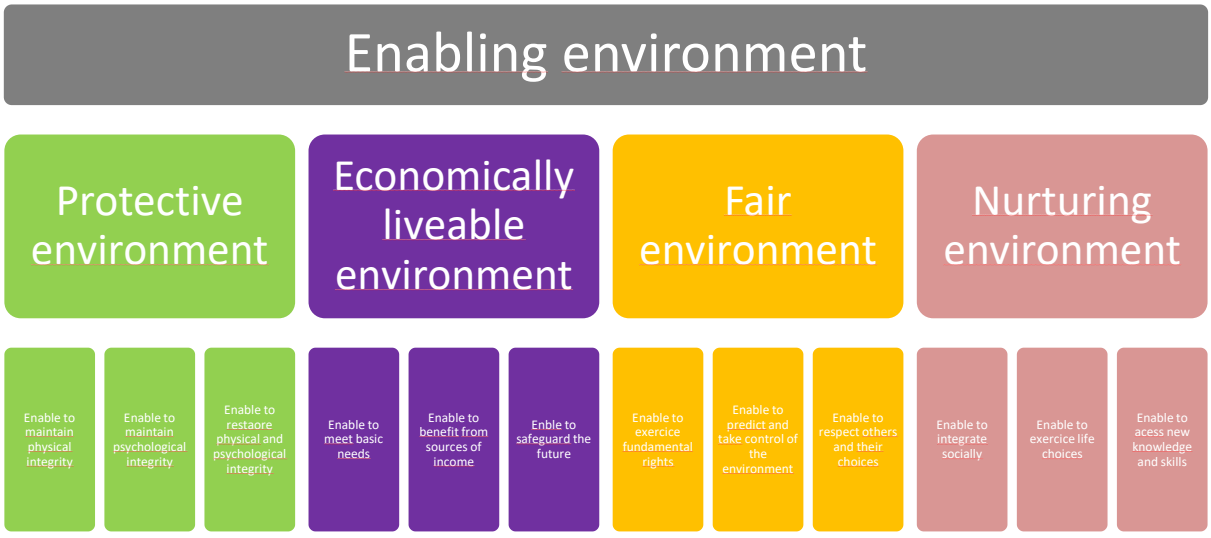
must not be too uncertain. A second term must therefore be found to cover this second meaning.

The awareness-raising work carried out by HI (across all sectors), particularly around disability or other social norms such as gender, is essential to integrate. We propose to include it in "empowering people to respect others and their choices", thereby contributing to more inclusive community dynamics.

Finally, mental health frameworks (Mental Health and Psychosocial Support sector) refocus the notion of pleasure (the ability to enjoy oneself, the ability to have fun) as an indicator of good psychological health rather than an isolated goal, emphasising the importance of self-regulation and the ability to take care of oneself.

The various elements discussed above have been incorporated into a second version of the theoretical framework, presented below (Figure 3).

*Figure 3 – Thematic tree structure following analysis of HI documents*




We have therefore distinguished between the ability to maintain one's integrity (physical and psychological) on the one hand, and the ability to restore that integrity (after an event, a shock, etc.) on the other. In addition, we retain learning as an end in itself, particularly with regard to children's awakening and development. Furthermore, 'empowering people to safeguard the future' is linked to an Economically Viable Environment, while its counterpart,

linked to a Fair Environment, has been given a new name: 'empowering people to plan for and influence their environment'.  Finally, the sub-pillar "enabling people to enjoy themselves" has not been retained, as the relationship to pleasure is to be considered an element of psychological integrity (Protective Environment).

At this stage, one question remains. Economically speaking, access to sources of income appears to be more of a structuring means than an end in itself, as it determines autonomy and freedom of choice, whereas assistance, although necessary, does not always allow the same scope for action. As we want to focus on the objectives, the place of "enabling access to sources of income" as a sub-pillar is still under consideration.

### 2.2.2 Elements considered to be cross-cutting: inclusion and access to information

Although we wanted to design a tool that was sensitive to gender, age and disability, the above proposal does not highlight an "Inclusive Environment" pillar or a sub-pillar specifically focused on inclusion. In the sub-pillar "respecting others and their choices" (Fair Environment), we have mainly taken into account the improvement of knowledge or attitudes among community actors or the general population, which represents only a limited part of what inclusion could cover. In line with the objective of improving access to services for persons with disabilities, HI defines an inclusive community as one that guarantees citizens access to all necessary services – whether standard, support or specialised services – and ensures that there are no barriers preventing participation of persons with disability in socio-economic life"[20] . More broadly, at HI, inclusion means that all individuals, regardless of the interacting factors of discrimination, are treated fairly, able to participate meaningfully without discrimination and enjoy their rights like any other citizen. We see the concept of an enabling environment as the overarching concept that encompasses these issues of equity and solidarity, which are at the heart of the collective community capacities we are interested in. Inclusion is not relegated to the background,

[20] Refer to the methodological guide "Access to services for persons with disability".

however; it is precisely what constitutes the foundations of an enabling environment through the universal dimension of the concept[21] .

In the same vein, we have not proposed to characterise the enabling environment through an "Informative Environment" pillar, since an enabling environment is only enabling if it proactively empowers its inhabitants to do and be what they have decided to do and be[22] . And while information is a particularly important aspect of the ability and freedom to choose and make decisions, access to information must be reflected in all sub-pillars: information on practices to protect and restore physical and psychological integrity, information on available services, information on how to seize and protect income opportunities, information on how to exercise one's rights, etc.

- **For further information on the theoretical basis of this research, please refer to the Scoping Note (interim deliverable 1).**

This second stage of the research process proved important in ensuring a clear understanding of project activities and, more generally, of the programmatic guidelines formalised in HI documents. The theoretical proposal was thus able to better take into account the specificities of HI's interventions. However, identifying the relevant documents often required interviews with resource persons (particularly Technical Specialists) – we therefore do not claim that our approach is exhaustive – and it should be noted that not all of HI's expertise is contained in these documents. For this reason, another working method is

[21] Work on the concept of an enabling environment highlights various characteristics. Looking at the points of convergence in this work, we conclude that an enabling environment is a space that limits obstacles and barriers (preventive dimension), promotes inclusion (universal dimension), and amplifies freedom of choice by acting on opportunities, motivation and decision-making (developmental dimension). For more details on these three dimensions, please refer to the Scoping note.

[22] It is work such as that of Fernagu Oudet (2012, 2016) and Arnoud and Falzon (2013) – with which we agree – that emphasises the "proactive" aspect that the environment must demonstrate in order to be an enabling environment. It is not just a question of aligning resources, but of ensuring that people come into contact with them, learn how to use them and want to take advantage of them according to their needs in order to truly talk about opportunities and empowerment.

being considered with Technical Specialists in the next stage of this research (see step 5, which concerns consultation with Technical Specialists).

## STEP 3 – Capturing the perceptions of the populations: the PREVENIR project midline survey

In order to pool resources to meet certain operational and research needs, we used the midline surveys conducted in the various areas of intervention of the PREVENIR project. The aim here was to inform our definition of what an enabling environment for HI might look like by incorporating the perceptions of the people most affected. It was particularly important to verify the extent to which the theoretical proposal remained relevant in different contexts and according to different profiles of people.

### 3.1 Surveys to capture people's perceptions of their environment

#### 3.1.1 Choosing the units of analysis: the village and the school

Defining the appropriate scope for the deployment of the final tool requires identifying both a scale of intervention for HI and a scale that is meaningful in terms of the realities experienced by the populations. Taking into account the various elements we have outlined in order to begin constructing a theoretical framework around the concept of an enabling environment, it seems that the scale we are looking for should meet the following criteria:

- A scale within which actors can have an impact on their environment;
- A scale that corresponds to a collective entity of power, management and control;
- A scale where inhabitants share a common history, culture and customs.

Thus, the village (or neighbourhood for urban areas) appears to be a relevant scale of analysis, as it is generally the scale of intervention and the unit chosen by the project for planning purposes. Furthermore, it corresponds to the space experienced by people (territory of use). Finally, it links the different scales (from local to global), as state structures generally draw on the "local pool" to select intermediaries.

As part of the REVENIR project, a SAFE-SCHOOL approach is also being deployed in certain areas of intervention. For the purposes of research, considering the school environment as one that should also be more empowering as a result of the project allows us to adopt a dual approach. On the one hand, we can consider the school as a learning environment, particularly from the students' point of view. On the other hand, for school stakeholders, school is also a working environment. Whether it is understood as a learning environment or a working environment, school therefore gives rise to specific expectations, potentially different from those of the living environment, with characteristic socialisation codes, as well as particular risks that may have repercussions on schooling and employment. This is why we wanted to try to take into account in this work both the living environment (the village) and the learning or working environment (the school).

### 3.1.2 A survey conducted in three areas of intervention

In order to capture people's perceptions of the characteristics of a village where they feel they can live well or a school where they feel they can flourish, we proposed 12 questions (8 multiple-choice questions and 4 open-ended questions) to be selected according to the project (community approach versus school approach). The response options were developed based on the theoretical framework as it stood at the time. In general, each respondent had to answer 4 questions. For areas where a SAFE-SCHOOL approach is being implemented, the populations directly concerned had to answer 6 questions per person. There were more questions in the second case because respondents were asked to answer first from the perspective of pupils and then from that of an educational actor.

We chose to formulate the questions and answer options as simply as possible. We wanted to facilitate any translations and ensure comprehension by both interviewers and respondents. A document explaining the different response options (to ensure proper comprehension of their meaning, by providing synonyms and examples) and training procedures for interviewers to ensure they were proficient in asking these questions was provided to the MEAL teams supporting the roll-out of this survey. The survey form is available in Appendix 1. An approach to these same questions using FGDs was prepared at the request of the teams, but to our knowledge has not been used.

Of the five countries involved in the PREVENR project, three conducted a midline survey for which we were able to analyse the data: Niger, Burkina Faso and the DRC.

### ❖ The sample of respondents in Niger

Total number of respondents[23] : 412 respondents

59% of whom were women

32% of whom were persons with disabilities[24]

5% of whom were adolescents and young people (under 20)

17% elderly people (aged 60 and over)

A majority of respondents were displaced persons (54%).

### ❖ Sample of respondents in Burkina Faso

Total number of respondents: 380 respondents

53% of whom were women

including 23% people with disabilities

6% adolescents and young people (under 20 years old)

13% elderly people (aged 60 and over)

Most respondents were displaced persons (91%), which makes it unnecessary to analyse the responses according to the person's status in terms of displacement. However, this survey included questions about the activities carried out, which we were able to use.

### ❖ Sample of respondents in the DRC

Total number of respondents: 380

71% of whom were women

53% of whom were persons with disabilities

28% of whom were adolescents and young people (under 20 years of age)

of which 1% were older people (aged 60 and over)

In this sample, we also note a very large majority of displaced persons (95%), which makes it unnecessary to analyse the responses according to the person's status in terms of

[23] After cleaning the database, i.e. the total number of responses taken into account for the analysis.

[24] Persons with disabilities were identified based on their responses to the *Washington Group Short-Set of Questions* (WGQ-SS).

displacement. Most respondents reported being unemployed, so we did not conduct any disaggregated analyses based on this criterion either.

## 3.2 Similarities but also differences depending on the areas covered by the survey

### 3.2.1 Security as the predominant characteristic of a village where life is good

Respondents seem almost unanimous: a village where people live well is first and foremost a village where they feel safe, with the means to protect children. Indeed, 72%, 63% and 72% of respondents in Niger, Burkina Faso and the DRC respectively chose this answer. These very clear responses highlight the need for security and the need to feel safe. This is hardly surprising in these contexts, which are disrupted by armed conflict and where security is volatile. In Niger and Burkina Faso, the second characteristic of a village where people live well is feeling welcome, with good neighbours (41% and 54% of respondents respectively). In the DRC, this characteristic is less prominent (compared to other responses) but remains important for 36% of respondents. Issues of mutual aid and respect for everyone's rights are widely mentioned in Burkina Faso (48% and 35% of respondents) and in the DRC (39% and 36% of respondents).

The responses collected also provide additional information. In Niger and Burkina Faso, respondents emphasise the importance of certain values, addressing issues such as religion, respect, "bad behaviour" and mutual understanding. Participation in decision-making and references to different models of governance seem to echo the need to "feel at home" and refer, at least in part, to identity considerations ("I'm not like them", "those people do whatever they want", "here, I can't make decisions"). Respondents in Burkina Faso also frequently mention social integration and social cohesion, and consider solidarity to be an essential value for living well, as if in response to particular stigmatisation or exacerbated discrimination. In the DRC, stress factors such as lack of access to services and feelings of injustice/powerlessness are presented as significant causes of distress.

### 3.2.2 School as a specific environment

By taking not only the village but also the school as a unit of analysis, we looked at two specific environments: the learning environment (for children) and the working environment

(for school education stakeholders). Respondents in Niger and Burkina Faso expressed some expectations similar to those for the living environment but also shared additional elements[25].

With regard to the learning environment, the issue of safety remains predominant in Niger (with 61% of respondents) and Burkina Faso (although in Burkina Faso, this only appears as the second characteristic of a school where students can flourish, again with 61% of respondents). However, the notion of protection can be extended to include all useful knowledge that can be applied in life: respondents mention, in particular, training on sexual and reproductive health or disease prevention more generally. The issue of social ties (a warm welcome, ease in making friends) is also paramount for 53% of respondents in Niger and 70% in Burkina Faso. The need for motivated and committed teachers to enable pupils to flourish at school and the fact that the rights of all pupils are respected (by other children and by school staff) reinforce the importance attached to interactions within the school.

On questions specific to school staff in relation to the school and the working environment, issues of protection (from danger) are also raised, as well as the importance of relationships with pupils and other school staff (56% and 57% in Niger, and 58% and 55% in Burkina Faso, respectively). In Burkina Faso, respondents emphasise that the rights of all school stakeholders must be respected in order to ensure a favourable working environment (34% - which is slightly less pronounced in Niger, with only 24% of respondents). Finally, the need for recognition is revealed by the link made between the working environment and the meaning given to one's life.

[25] As the SAFE-SCHOOL approach has not been rolled out in the DRC, questions relating to the school environment were not asked during the survey.

### 3.2.3 Insights based on respondent profiles: analysis by age, gender and disability

Based on this data, we conducted a disaggregated analysis by age, gender and disability[26] .

In Niger and Burkina Faso, it appears that the responses collected from women are not significantly different from those presented above for the general population. However, "a village where it is difficult to integrate and have good neighbours" is much more frequently cited as a characteristic of a village where it is difficult to live well by women surveyed in the DRC. Conversely, age has a more marked influence on responses: in Niger, the responses of young people show their very real need for independence ("to live as they wish"), autonomy ("to find work easily") and consideration (in relation to local authorities, their families, but also the need to limit the pressure they feel). In Burkina Faso and the DRC, prospects are significantly more often cited as a factor enabling well-being, while the difficulty of obtaining help from others is perceived as a major obstacle. Older people express a greater need for solidarity and respect for everyone's rights, as in the DRC. In Burkina Faso, older people cite access to information and services more often as essential criteria for living well. And while in Niger the response profiles showed similarities between people with disabilities and young people, in Burkina Faso the responses of persons with disabilities and older people are more similar.

The ease of finding work/income opportunities varies greatly depending on the respondents. In the DRC, "a village where it is difficult to find work" is often cited as a characteristic of a village where men cannot live well. In Niger, persons with disabilities indicate that it is not possible to live well in an environment where it is difficult to find work. It therefore seems to be a necessary factor (which affects the fulfilment of needs, the services to which one has access, but also self-esteem and social integration), but not a sufficient one, since it does not appear predominantly in the characteristics of a village where people live well (for the same respondent profiles). In Burkina Faso, respondents do not link economic difficulties with an environment where it is difficult to find work, since while the former is widely mentioned as

[26] To address the issue of disability, we only compared the responses of persons with disabilities to those of persons without disabilities. The sample size did not allow us to delve deeper into the analysis by type of disability or by severity of disability.

an obstacle, the latter is rarely cited, whether by women, young people, older people or persons with disability.

## 3.3 Considerations that enrich the theoretical framework: the need for meaning, shared values and participation in decision-making

The multiple-choice answer options proved to be quite suitable for capturing respondents' perceptions of the characteristics of an environment where people live well/learn well/work well, as the interviewers were able to match what respondents said to the answer options provided[27] . This reassured us about the theoretical framework we were using at the time. Nevertheless, the "Other" option and the open-ended questions provided additional information that we wanted to examine in more detail.

References to religion, shared values (or, conversely, bad behaviour) and the need to feel at home show that it is necessary to add a sub-pillar covering the identity dimension of the territory (shared references, world view, recognition of otherness). Not being forced to go against one's own values in the environment in which one lives can also be associated with phenomena of economic resilience (linked to "to safeguard the future") but also with psychological appeasement (in this case, more closely linked to "maintaining one's psychological integrity").

The issue of participation in decision-making/governance, which came up repeatedly in the survey responses, is also worth highlighting. While these concepts were previously included in "enabling people to exercise their fundamental rights " (Fair Environment), it now reinforces the sub-pillar "empowering people to plan for and influence their environment" since respondents associated it with control/decision-making power/regulation on the one hand and contrasted it with feelings of powerlessness on the other.

[27] Please refer to the questionnaire in Appendix 1 for details of the instructions given to interviewers during the survey.

In Burkina Faso more specifically, the notions of solidarity and social cohesion are prominent in the respondents' answers.

### The place of solidarity and social cohesion in our definition of an enabling environment

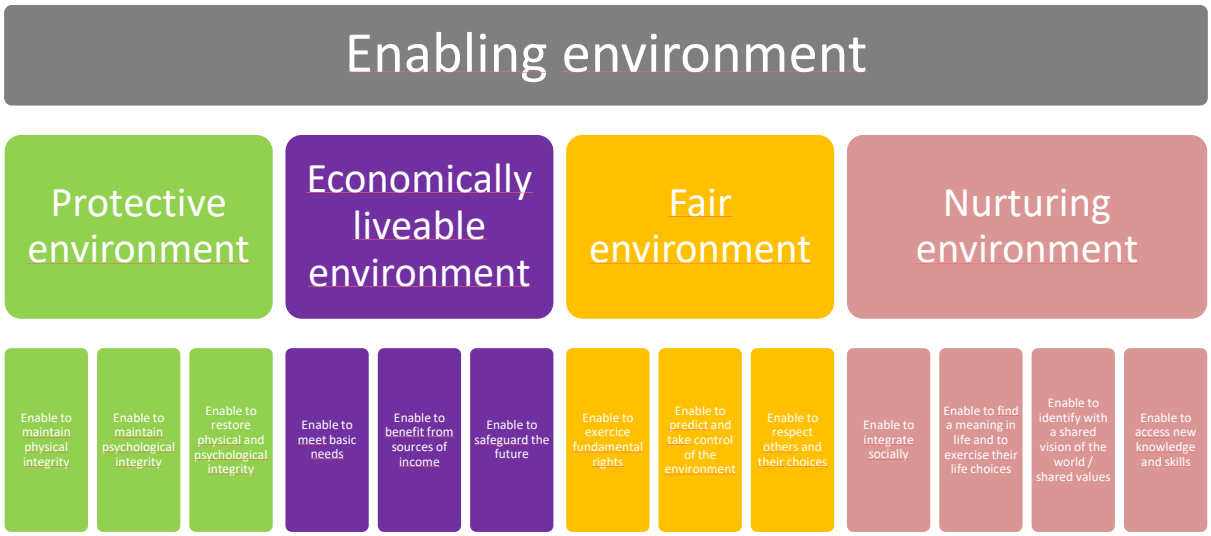
We wanted to better define the concepts of solidarity and social cohesion, which we had not previously addressed directly, in order to understand them and define their specific place in the context of this work.

Solidarity manifests itself through interpersonal practices (Durkheim, cited by Prades, 1993; Mauss, 1925, republished in 2023) but can also be institutionalised (Euzéby and Reysz, 2014; Rosanvallon, 1995; Laville, 2010). It is mobilised to respond to a specific need (usually related to situations of precariousness). Solidarity appears to be a cross-cutting principle: mechanisms based on solidarity can help meet various needs covered by the four pillars of the enabling environment (e.g. access to healthcare, schooling for children, etc.). The collective capacity to consider issues at the community level lies in the mechanism put in place to respond to solidarity issues. Solidarity is therefore a driver of collective capacities. Social cohesion, on the other hand, seems to be the result of an enabling environment. It is expressed in particular through a sense of belonging (Council of Europe), the quality of relationships (Jenson, 1998), institutional trust (Putman, 2000) and the level of inequality (OECD, World Bank). It is a force that helps to maintain a stable, cooperative and equitable social fabric, and is maintained through the protection of individuals (especially the most vulnerable), regulation based on fair institutions, the creation of a climate of trust, and support for access to various opportunities – i.e. the four pillars of an enabling environment as defined for this work. Social cohesion is therefore an indicator of the social quality of an environment.

Thus, the concepts of solidarity and social cohesion do not appear as such as pillars or sub-pillars of the enabling environment, although it is possible to refer to solidarity through 'shared values' (Enriching Environment).

The responses concerning the learning environment and the working environment highlight the need to emphasise the meaning we give to our lives. We also wish to include the reference to "good working conditions" (I have the choice or not to choose my job, I have the choice or not to ensure good working conditions).

*Figure 4 – Thematic tree structure after analysis of responses to the Midline surveys*




Finally, we used the above considerations to flesh out the "Nurturing Environment" pillar. This was amended to reflect:

- The importance of meaning: future prospects for young people, a sense of usefulness, recognition and professional development for school stakeholders – "Enabling people to find meaning in their lives and exercise their life choices".
- The importance of shared values: references to religion, good and bad behaviour, the need to feel at home – "Enabling people to identify with a shared worldview/ values».

By conducting this survey to analyse the perceptions of populations in the intervention areas regarding the characteristics of a favourable living/learning/working environment, we were able to verify that our theoretical framework was in line with the main concerns of the populations. This was all the more necessary because, by focusing on so-called crisis contexts throughout the survey, we were able to confirm the relevance of the various pillars (which can sometimes seem disconnected from people's realities). The results even highlighted aspects that had previously been obscured by generic terms. However, of the five areas covered by the project, we were only able to include responses from three of them in our analysis, as the other two did not complete the survey. Furthermore, we cannot guarantee that the survey is completely sensitive to age, gender and disabilities, and although the data proved to be very interesting for this work, the limitations associated with

the use of operational data (since the Midline survey was primarily a follow-up survey of the PREVENIR project) must be taken into account. With regard to the questionnaire, the choice of mirrored wording (antagonistic response options between elements that enable a good life and those that prevent a good life) ultimately provided little additional information. In fact, for the same respondent, the options chosen in the second question almost always echoed those in the first.

## STEP 4 – Analysing the life trajectories of populations: interviews conducted in the DRC

This fourth step, like the previous one, is part of the desire to clarify and adjust the theoretical proposal using empirical data. The perceptions of populations, as collected through the Midline survey, may be sensitive to the current situation of the people expressing them, and generally only address the most striking aspects. To go beyond the surveys, which can only provide a superficial approach to the characteristics of what a "good life" might be, we wanted to conduct interviews to explore our theme in greater depth.

### 4.1 Interviews to identify the levers and obstacles that people have actually experienced in their lives

We decided to conduct life story interviews to identify, within people's personal journeys, what had really helped or, conversely, what had been a blocking factor in leading a good life. These semi-structured interviews were organised as follows:

1) Introduction of ourselves and the objectives of the interview
2) Obtaining informed consent
3) Characteristics of the person in terms of age, gender, disabilities
4) Overall trajectory: Overview of the person's life trajectory (from the beginning of their life as an independent man or the beginning of their life as a married woman) to identify "periods" and review the shocks and opportunities for each of these periods.
5) Current situation: Description of the person's situation (in relation to other people in the community), aspirations and obstacles.

6) Expectations of the community: Inventory of existing "support" mechanisms and recipients, identification of individuals who could change to make it possible to live better.
7) Acknowledgements

The full interview guide can be found in Appendix 2.

The panel of people for these interviews was selected using a reasoned sampling method. The individuals were chosen for the diversity of their profiles, from among displaced persons and host communities, based on criteria such as age, gender, and disability. We began by interviewing local authorities (site management committee, block manager, village chief, teacher, health professional). It should be noted that we worked with the help of an interpreter, and that these interviews with community leaders had the dual purpose of complying with the rules of etiquette in force, while training with our interpreter to conduct the interviews and improve them before meeting with other members of the community.

In the end, we conducted 29 interviews that could be used[28] . They were held in three locations: the Lwashi displacement site, the Mabenga displacement site, and the village of Karambi – a village bordered by a displacement site and affected by the lava flows from the Nyeragongo volcanic eruption.

*Figure 5 – Characteristics of the people we interviewed*

| Location | Number of interviews | Profile type |
|---|---|---|
| Lwashi site | 11 | 4 women; 4 adolescents; 1 elderly person; 1 carer; 2 people with sensory disabilities; 1 person with psychosocial disabilities |
| Mabenga site | 8 | 5 women; 1 carer; 4 persons with motor disabilities; 1 person with cognitive disabilities; 1 person with psychosocial disabilities; 1 person with multiple disabilities |
| Karambi village | 10 | 6 women; 3 adolescents; 4 elderly people; 3 carers; 1 person with a sensory disability; 2 people with psychosocial disabilities |

[28] We conducted several interviews that we did not include in the analysis, as the topics discussed during the discussion led us to change the objectives and provide information to the person or ask questions specific to the situation shared in order to facilitate subsequent care (disclosure of violence suffered, significant psychological distress, etc.).

**Conducting interviews taking into account gender, age and disabilities**

We felt that certain precautions or adjustments were necessary in order to conduct these interviews in a manner that was as sensitive as possible to gender, age and disabilities.

- For women and girls: interviews were conducted away from spouses/families, and we systematically asked beforehand whether the person felt safe to talk.
- We did not have to make any specific adjustments based on age, other than asking questions in the simplest way possible and offering age-appropriate examples to start or restart the discussion. The youngest person we interviewed was 14 years old.
- We chose to use the Washington Group questions (short set version) but in the form of an interview, so as not to make certain types of disability invisible while maintaining fluidity in the exchange.
- For persons with cognitive disabilities, we had prepared visual aids (including drawings representing emotions, provided by the MHPSS teams in Goma), but these were only used once.
- For people with severe communication difficulties or an inability to express themselves, we modified the way the interview questions were asked so that the person could respond mainly with "yes" or "no".
- Finally, for people who were unable to express themselves, we focused on the caregiver's journey.

## 4.2 Real-life experiences that reveal a variety of drivers and barriers

Below, we present excerpts from some of the interviews to illustrate our analysis. The individuals whose comments we have reproduced have given their prior consent for us to use the exchanges for research purposes, as well as for communication activities.

### 4.2.1 Levers and obstacles associated with a protective environment

The situation in North Kivu, which has deteriorated over several decades, is marked by significant security issues, which have repeatedly forced people to leave their homes and seek refuge in displacement sites, particularly around Goma. As a result, physical and psychological integrity are often threatened. The various forms of violence suffered (sudden loss of loved ones, separation, forced displacement and sudden loss of property and everything that made up one's "life", sexual assault, beatings, racketeering, etc.) are

increasingly silenced. There are few opportunities to talk or confide in others, which may have additional consequences for psychological health.

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*"Everyone has lost a lot, everyone is suffering. We can't talk about what we've been through because everyone knows. And at the same time, no one really knows how it feels for each of us. There are many of us, and we are alone."*

*Testimony of M., 19-year-old woman, Karambi village – translated into English*

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Faced with violence that continues even after settling in displacement sites, a few mechanisms have been put in place to try to protect themselves as much as possible from what seems predictable: for example, young people travel in groups , women and young men when they go to collect wood or gather food in "risky" areas. The collective also seems to be a response to identifying people who seem "not to be acting as usual".

---

*"In the village, I had a good life, a job, a certain level of comfort. I worked for Don Bosco, on their plantation. Everyone trusted me, and I trusted... almost everyone [laughs]. Now I mistrust everyone. I have strange reactions, as if there were another person inside me. I can see that I am different, more fierce, more aggressive. People no longer trust me, I can't find opportunities to provide for myself and my wife. [...] So when I come home in the evening and my wife asks me for our ration (editor's note: food or money for meals), and I reply that I have nothing, that's when the argument starts. There are people around me at the site who knew me well, who were with me in the village. They were the ones who alerted me. There were so many fights (editor's note: with his wife) that they came to separate us. It happened several times, even during the night. They also told me several times that I wasn't usually like that, that I was acting differently from how I was in the village. They also told me that I shouldn't continue like that. [...] That's why I went to seek psychological help."*

*Testimony of D., 45-year-old man, Mabenga site – translated into English*

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The people we spoke to seem keen to expand and even institutionalise this type of scheme, which identifies people in difficulty through their 'bad behaviour' and advises them or refers them to organisations or individuals who can help.

Forced displacement also often leads to feelings of helplessness (especially among older people) and a loss of self-esteem due to a lack of activity. This latter phenomenon is found in many people, particularly men (who are generally engaged in productive work, due to the

gendered division of labour within households, and are therefore the main providers of income), but also persons with disabilities, among those who had found a place through their activity.

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*"Before, I had a job, I even had more customers than the other shops. I never had any problems with people, I was the one who helped them sometimes, when I could. Here, there's nothing. Thanks to aid (NDA: Church and distributions organised by NGOs), things are still okay, I have enough to live on. But I no longer have my business, I've become useless, I no longer have anything to keep me busy. And I can see that here, persons with disability are not taken into consideration. When you do nothing, you are nothing."*

*Testimony of M., 31-year-old woman, Mabenga site – – translated into English*

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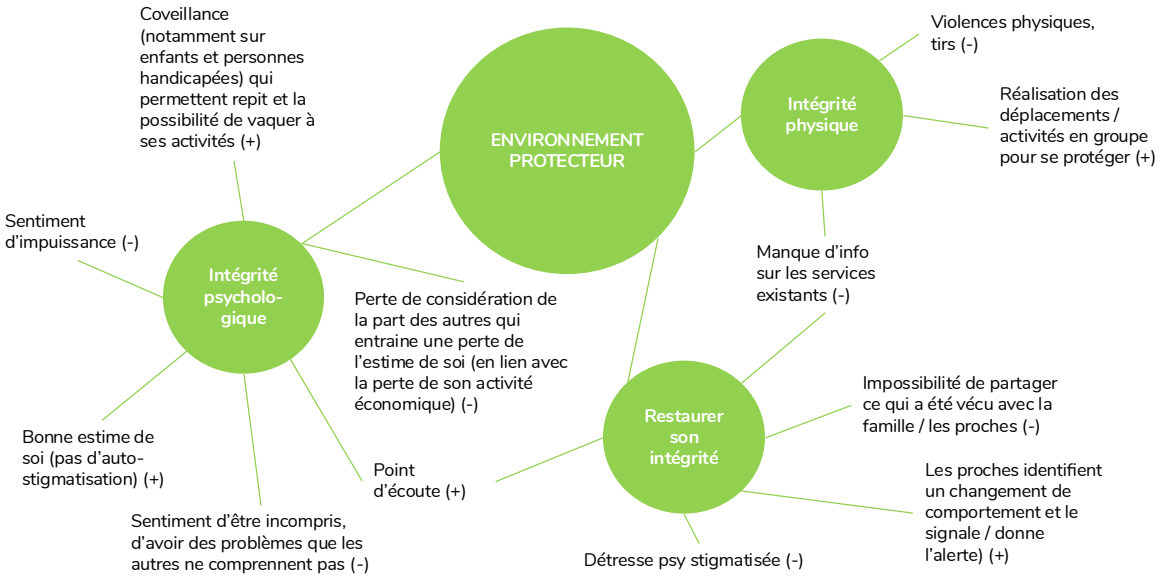
Below (Figure 6), we provide a summary of the various elements from the interviews that we were able to associate with the Protective Environment pillar.

*Figure 6 – Summary of positive and negative elements extracted from interviews associated with a Protective Environment*




*The (+) signs indicate positive elements that acted as levers in people's trajectories*

*The (-) signs indicate negative elements that acted as obstacles in people's trajectories*

### 4.2.2 Levers and obstacles associated with an Economically Viable Environment

The previous testimony (see above) also revealed the presence of aid, particularly food aid, which helped to cover some of the basic needs, as confirmed by other similar testimonies on this subject.

Despite displacement, pre-existing personal connections and "commercial" exchanges enable individuals with a good reputation to obtain, for example, credit in goods to start a small business. However, strategies for acquiring this good reputation can also be identified.

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*" I don't mix with others because they don't behave properly. Nothing good can come of frequenting the Maisons de Tolérance (NDA: drinking establishments set up in tents in displacement sites, which are also used for prostitution). What interests me is working, finding opportunities to get out of all this."*

*Testimony of R., 20-year-old man, Lwashi site – translated into English*

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While some young men try to shake off the negative image they have despite themselves, single women also work harder, for example by investing themselves in other people's fields without asking for anything in return. In some cases, this has enabled them to join a women's group and cultivate a small plot of land for themselves. Sharing common values related to work and effort is a way for them to integrate socially and earn an income[29] .

And since it is essential to preserve the few activities that have been established at all costs, tontine mechanisms are being put in place. Regularly pooled contributions are used to replenish the stocks of small commercial activities, which have been weakened by numerous demands. The frequency of forced displacement in the area has also led some people to choose activities that are less sensitive to risk.

[29] There are therefore direct links between the sub-pillars of the Fulfilling Environment and those of the Economically Viable Environment.

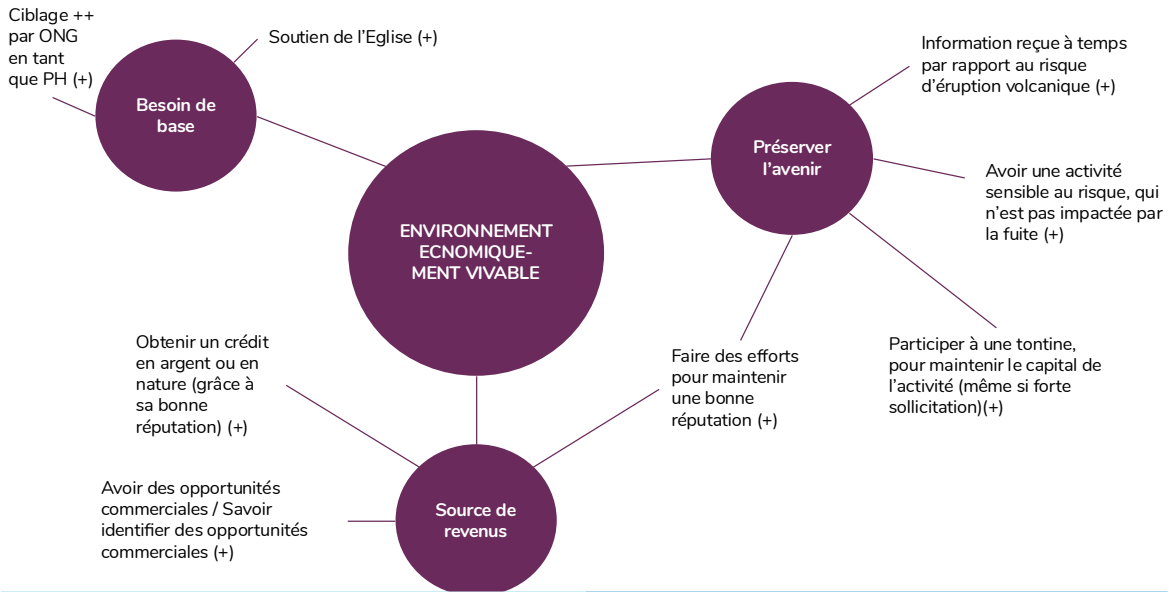
*"This isn't the first time I've been forced to leave my home. When the rebels arrive, we have to leave and abandon everything, that's how it is. So when I return to the village, I resume my activities as best I can, but what helps me is my credit transfer business. Wherever I go, my phone goes with me, and so does my business. When I arrive at a site like this, I have units to sell, which allows me to eat and settle in a little. When I return to the village, it's the same. What's more, having money on my phone (NDA: dematerialised money) means I don't get robbed."*

*Testimony of M., 33-year-old man, Lwashi site – translated into English*

Collective funds have also been set up and contributed to by displaced persons (mostly women) to prepare for their return: the aim here is to accumulate money for transport to their village, to thank their hosts/the people who helped them during their time here, and to have something to eat once they are back in the village. The fund is kept in a safe place outside the sites, with the help of local residents.

Below (Figure 7), we provide a summary of the various elements from the interviews that we were able to associate with the Economically Viable Environment pillar.

*Figure 7 – Summary of positive and negative elements extracted from interviews associated with an Economically Viable Environment*




*The (+) signs indicate positive elements that acted as levers in people's trajectories*

*The (-) signs indicate negative elements that acted as obstacles in people's trajectories*

### 4.2.3 Levers and obstacles associated with a Fair Environment

Displaced persons encountered at the sites, such as those residing in the village of Karambi, report difficulties in regulating "bad behaviour": there are no sanctions against "young people who take drugs and do whatever they want", soldiers act with impunity (racketeering, beatings, incitement to prostitution), and theft is common in the tents of displaced persons' sites and in the fields of those who manage to grow crops.

Collective resources are also being depleted due to a lack of regulation, as has been the case with amaranth plots and solidarity funds.

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*"Now all we have left are our eyes to cry with. Everyone took something, it wasn't managed, and now it's over."*

*Testimony of J, 41-year-old woman, Karambi village – translated into English*

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The issue of participation in decision-making was also mentioned, particularly by persons with disabilities, who, as we have seen above, may struggle to find or regain their place in society.

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*"The old team that managed the site did things their own way. They helped their friends and that was it. The others had to fend for themselves. It was even worse for persons with disability like me: when someone was needed to do odd jobs, he told me there was no point in applying, that I wasn't fit for the job anyway. But I can do things, lots of things. I hope that will change with the new team, and that I'll be able to participate."*

*Testimony of J, 29-year-old man – translated into English*

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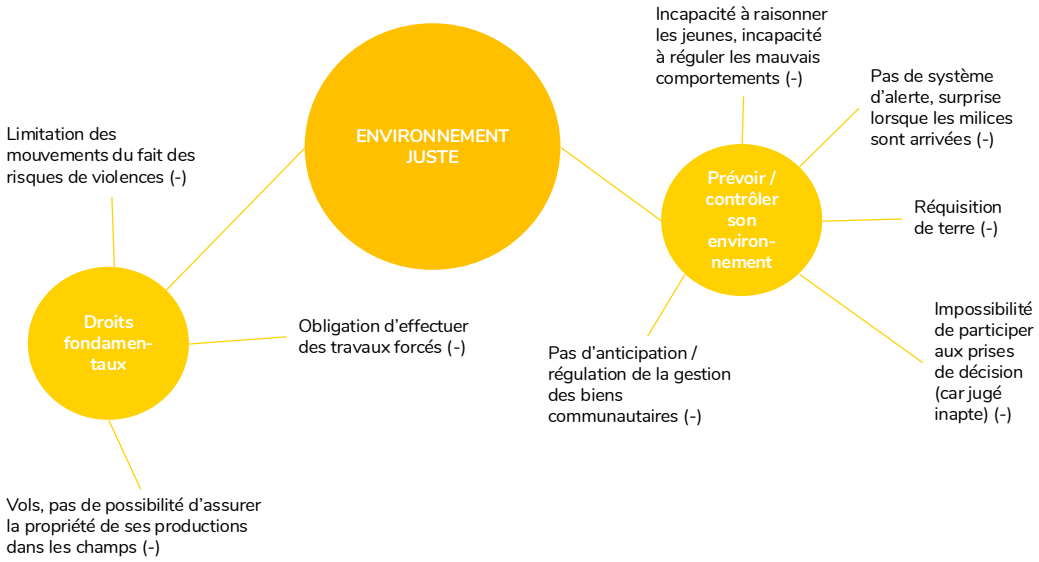
Below (Figure 8), we provide a summary of the various elements from the interviews that we were able to associate with the fair environment pillar.

*Figure 8 – Summary of positive and negative elements extracted from interviews associated with a fair environment*




*The (+) signs indicate positive elements that acted as levers in people's trajectories*

*The (-) signs indicate negative elements that acted as obstacles in people's trajectories*

### 4.2.4 Levers and obstacles associated with a Fulfilling Environment

We were surprised to find that, despite the context, many of the testimonies we collected emphasised aspects that might have been considered secondary: the difficulties in meeting basic needs and obtaining a little money did not overshadow the need to belong, the feeling of gratitude, or the search for a certain serenity, for example.

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*"It won't bring back what's lost, you have to accept the situation. I'm here, things aren't going well, but now I'm just looking for joy in my home. That's my primary goal."*

*Testimony of D., 45-year-old man, Mabenga site – translated into English*

*"We young people have strength, we can do a lot of things. And even if we can't always find work, we can use that strength to do other things. That's what's important. Besides, we can count on each other."*

*Testimonial from L, 22-year-old man, Lwashi site – translated into English*

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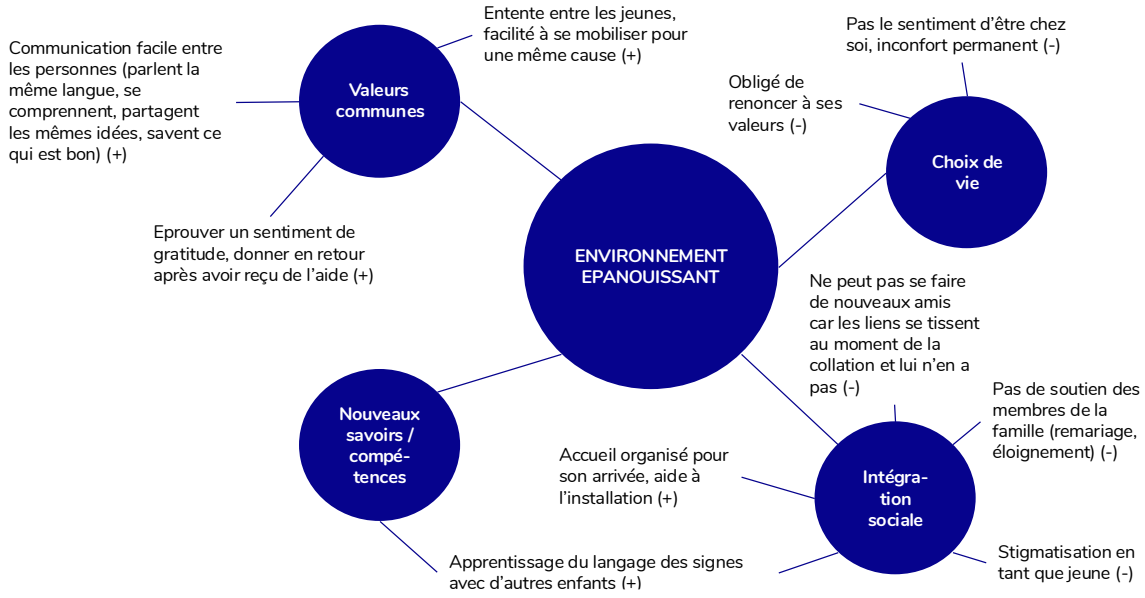
Seemingly simple acts were praised: being welcomed by the block manager and/or other people (without knowing them beforehand) upon arrival at the site, especially when arriving in the middle of the night, was mentioned several times.

We also find more fundamental issues in the trajectories: some people emphasised the fact that they had been forced to compromise their own values, and seem to retain a deep sense of pain from this.

Below (Figure 9), we provide a summary of the various elements from the interviews that we were able to associate with the Fulfilling Environment pillar.

*Figure 9 – Summary of positive and negative elements extracted from the interviews associated with a Fulfilling Environment*




*The (+) signs indicate positive elements that acted as levers in people's trajectories*

*The (-) signs indicate negative elements that acted as obstacles in people's trajectories*

### 4.2.5 The influence of age, gender and disability on trajectories

By analysing the various testimonies collected, we were able to highlight what we believe to be specific characteristics related to age, gender and disability.

The interviews conducted reveal, in particular, the stigmatisation of adolescents and young adults in displacement sites, who are accused, among other things, of using drugs, ab ing

alcohol and, more generally, of being responsible for disorder. Some of them clearly implement specific social integration strategies (with other young people in the host communities) in order to benefit from economic opportunities. They then become very vigilant about their reputation and do not socialise with other young people in the sites, as we pointed out above. Often absent or feeling uninvolved in awareness-raising activities, they have less information about the services available and the steps to take in the event of a violation of their rights. And while they are rarely able to discuss their problems with their families, they are aware of their collective strength and their ability to mobilise, and they come together around a common vision and aspirations. Older people (and even more so older women) seem to get more help from neighbours or block leaders. They also have higher expectations of others and of the community as a whole, probably because, unlike young people, they do not rely on their labour.

Unfortunately, unsurprisingly, women are much more likely to be victims of violence, particularly sexual violence. However, they retain a great capacity for networking. For example, women (even those who did not know each other before) easily form tontines, which enable them to sustain economic activity that has been weakened by urgent needs and demands. Or they organise information-sharing sessions, particularly in relation to economic opportunities. In addition, they say they show more empathy towards each other (for example, it is common for a friend to take care of another's children). Some can rely on their reputation to obtain small loans (in cash or in kind), which seems less common (less possible?) for men. Women, especially older women, receive more help, for example from block leaders. Men, especially young men, are more at risk of being lynched or requisitioned by armed groups for forced labour when they stray from the main roads. Men's psychological distress is often denied (by women and by men themselves).

NGO assistance seems to take disability into account as a criterion for targeting/allocating aid (the persons with disability we met consider themselves "lucky" to be persons with disability, especially women, because they receive specific assistance that enables them to meet at least some of the needs of their children, siblings and parents. The people interviewed also receive support (through assistance with building shelters and food donations) from relatives, the Church and neighbours. In addition, young persons with

disabilities, hearing impaired or deaf, have been able to get together and start learning sign language with other young people in the area. However, persons with disability face stigmatisation (they are considered "unfit", particularly for group activities) and are rarely (if ever) involved in decision-making processes. Psychosocial disabilities are not recognised as disabilities, and these individuals are particularly singled out, for example for bad behaviour. Persons with disability lose their self-esteem (self-stigmatisation) and the respect of others because of their idleness (inability to resume economic activity in the area).

Finally, the experiences of carers teach us in particular how much trusting others (being able to rely on others) helps to reduce anxiety and is fundamental to being able to "feel good in your own mind".

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*"My situation is terrible. My daughter (who has Down syndrome) will be left all alone. Of course, it's great that they found me a job at the health centre when I arrived here. But I cry every night because my two other grown-up daughters don't want to look after her. They're married, so they could take her in later. But no, they refuse every time we talk about it. So what will happen when I'm no longer here?"*

*Testimony of L., 57-year-old woman, village of Karambi – translated into English*

*"I'm lucky that, thanks to my neighbours, I can go out and do my activities. I know they'll look after my dad, who is elderly and very ill. They'll organise themselves, come and give him food and drink, take him outside, put him in the shade, and talk to him when I'm not there."*

*Testimonial from L., 61, village of Karambi (site) – translated into English*

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Finally, these interviews conducted in the DRC, in North Kivu, provided new information which, as we shall see below, allows us to confirm and/or clarify certain questions that had remained unanswered until then. However, these interviews were only conducted in one area of intervention, with marked differences in terms of crisis and conflict dynamics. Furthermore, identifying individual needs, levers or obstacles can sometimes be difficult to translate at the community level: how can access to income opportunities be collectively improved in this particularly tense context? How can tensions with the military personnel

circulating in the sites be limited? How can risk-sensitive activities be developed given the scale of forced displacement?

## 4.3 A theoretical framework with clarified sub-pillars

### 4.3.1 Answers to the above questions: removal of the pillar on respect for others

These life story interviews confirmed and refined several aspects of our theoretical framework. Firstly, the distinction between maintaining and restoring one's physical and psychological integrity was validated. For example, in displacement sites, organisations and/or projects that focus on preventing the risk of violence (particularly through awareness-raising and the establishment of certain community mediation mechanisms) may be quite distinct from interventions to care for victims of violence. However, it should be noted that this does not mean that maintaining physical and/or psychological integrity is solely a community responsibility and that restoring this integrity is based solely on services. Indeed, in the context of this work, we will seek to apply all of the characteristics at the community level.

Secondly, the principle of co-vigilance that emerged from the interviews (caring for dependents during an absence, trusting neighbours to intervene on behalf of the family when needed, etc.) proved crucial not only for meeting basic needs, but also for maintaining psychological integrity by significantly reducing stress levels.

Thirdly, the importance of sources of income was reaffirmed, especially in challenging environments such as displacement sites: it was difficult for us to move beyond these issues of access to work and money during the interviews and to get people to reveal the instrumental side of these issues (money as a means of ensuring or regaining one's place as head of the family, money as a means of social integration, etc.), although this was possible in a few cases. We therefore retain this element, which is so central to the discourse.

Fourthly, we associate the mention of elements reflecting the lack of regulation around community assets and reflection on their sustainability (what rules are put in place by the community to avoid depleting a resource, for example) with the ability to safeguard its future

(Economically Viable Environment), but also with the ability to anticipate and influence its environment (Fair Environment).

Fifthly, the sub-pillar "enabling people to respect others and their choices" (Fair Environment) proved to be redundant with "enabling people to exercise their life choices" (Nurturing Environment). At this stage, we have decided to remove this first sub-pillar from the theoretical proposal. Some testimonials also make the link with a third sub-pillar, "enabling people to anticipate and influence their environment". One point to note, however, is that this sub-pillar was considered an important element in relation to other forms of life, central to certain philosophies emphasising balance and respect between different forms of life. But in the context of HI's activities, we bring these considerations together in "empowering people to recognise themselves in a shared worldview and values" (Fulfilling Environment). Furthermore, this sub-pillar is closely linked to social integration, with "the feeling of being at home" and not having to give up one's values or dignity, which echoes the results of the Midline surveys.

Finally, the notion of "good neighbours", which was already mentioned in the Midline surveys, relates to both social integration and shared values, depending on the context (context, content of the discourse) in connection with the aspects of trust/mistrust and security/psychological distress observed in the displacement sites.

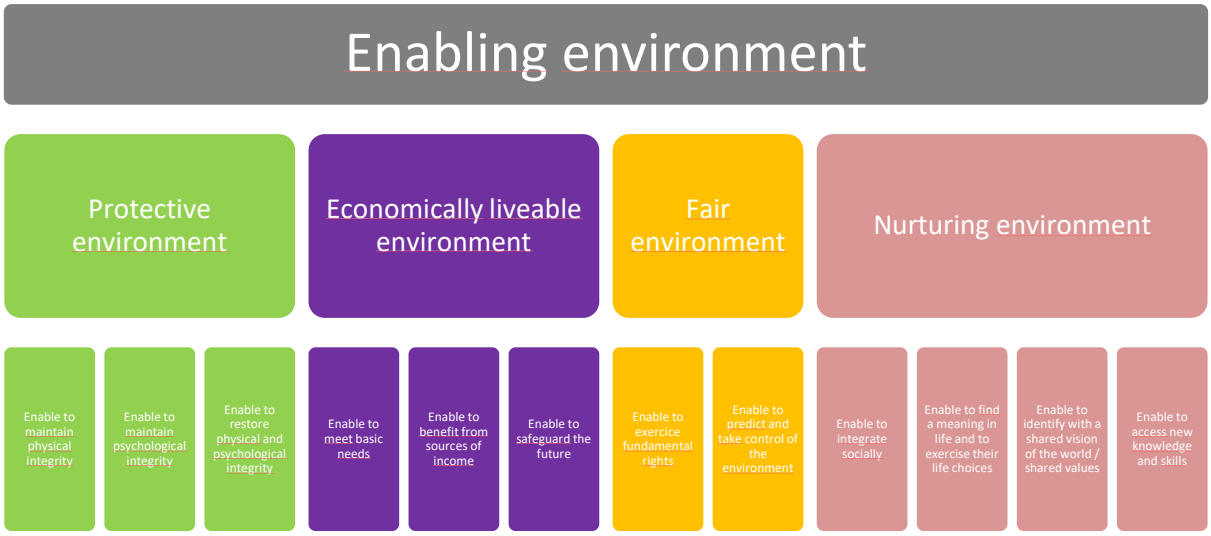
### 4.3.2 Summary: the proposed theoretical framework at the end of the exploratory phase

The various steps implemented during the exploratory phase have resulted in a well-supported theoretical framework, divided into four pillars and 12 sub-pillars.

The surveys conducted in Niger and Burkina Faso, as well as the interviews conducted in displacement sites in the DRC as part of this research, reveal that there is ultimately little hierarchy between so-called primary needs (security, basic needs) and those that could be considered secondary (finding one's place in the community), since even in the constrained environments in which we collected data, the people interviewed mentioned this need for

connection and meaning (among other things), and how this was or was not allowed by the community. This data therefore reinforced our idea of not establishing a hierarchy between the different components[30] .

*Figure 10 – Thematic tree structure after conducting life story interviews*




### ❖ A PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Definition: To be enabling, an environment must be protective. In other words, since no environment is completely safe, it must still be conducive to the physical, psychological and emotional safety of individuals, guaranteeing their dignity and well-being. This environment must meet basic needs for safety and protection from violence and degrading living conditions.

[30] We know that there is tension in the literature between attempts to draw up a universal list of capabilities (such as that proposed by Nussbaum) and the consideration of local and cultural specificities. The need to respect cultural variations in the definition and assessment of what makes an enabling environment makes the process of identifying and formulating the pillars all the more complex. For example, what is considered an essential capability in a given society (such as freedom of expression or bodily integrity), and to which the community environment could contribute, may not have exactly the same meaning or value in another. That is why we wanted to propose generic terminology on the one hand, as the teams implementing the projects and the populations concerned are best placed to assess and detail what each term covers. On the other hand, we wanted to verify whether or not there was a need to establish a hierarchy among the selected elements. Other studies support the idea that political freedoms and subsistence capabilities must be developed jointly. Nussbaum explains how the establishment of a women's collective in a region of India positively transformed women's perceptions of themselves, their living conditions and their husbands' perceptions (Nussbaum, 2008, p.71).

Sub-pillars: A protective environment must therefore enable the population to maintain their physical integrity (first sub-pillar of a protective environment), maintain their psychological integrity (second sub-pillar of a protective environment), and finally restore their physical and psychological integrity (third sub-pillar of a protective environment) when these have been compromised. These aspects relating to physical and psychological integrity are found both in the literature and in HI's projects, and are confirmed by the people we invited to share their views, both in Niger and the DRC.

### ❖ AN ECONOMICALLY LIVEABLE ENVIRONMENT

Definition: To be an enabling environment, it must also be an economically liveable environment, i.e. it must offer conditions that enable everyone to meet their needs and enjoy a minimum of freedom of choice (from an economic point of view) in a sustainable manner, despite uncertainties. This is an environment where access to decent work, inclusive economic services and vocational training opportunities is facilitated.

Sub-pillars: An economically liveable environment must enable the population to meet their basic needs (first sub-pillar of an economically liveable environment). However, while meeting basic needs is necessary, it cannot be considered sufficient to ensure a good quality of life. The environment must also enable the population to benefit from sources of income and control them (second sub-pillar of an economically liveable environment) in order to exercise a certain freedom of choice. Furthermore, enabling the population to safeguard its future (the third sub-pillar of an economically liveable environment) – in simple terms, to maintain or resume economic activity over time in order to cover basic needs and ensure a minimum level of autonomy that allows people to live the life they want – is a key concern in the face of risks. As with the elements associated with the protective environment, these three sub-pillars have been identified in the literature and in HI projects, but have also been widely confirmed among the populations of Niger, Burkina Faso and the DRC.

### ❖ A FAIR ENVIRONMENT

Definition: It is not possible to separate the concept of justice from that of an enabling environment. A fair environment is one that ensures that every person can exercise their

rights and participate in political processes through a fair system of governance. Justice here includes the procedural dimension (equitable access to justice) and the redistributive dimension (equitable sharing of resources).

Sub-pillars: A fair environment thus enables the population to exercise their fundamental rights (first sub-pillar of a fair environment). We have previously mentioned the economic dimension in relation to safeguarding the future, but safeguarding one's future also means living in a relatively predictable (not too uncertain) environment, which requires regulatory mechanisms. Thus, the second sub-pillar of a fair environment is to enable people to predict and have control over their environment. While the first sub-pillar is aligned with human rights perspectives (literature review), the second emerged mainly through the analysis of HI documents and was reinforced by interviews conducted in the DRC.

### ❖ A NURTURING ENVIRONMENT

Definition: Finally, to be an enabling environment, it must also be a nurturing environment. By nurturing, we mean an environment that allows individuals to realise their aspirations, find their place within the community, and participate fully in cultural and social life. Nurturing includes the opportunity to engage in rewarding activities, develop skills, and feel connected to others.

Sub-pillars: A nurturing environment must enable social integration (first sub-pillar of a nurturing environment) – for example, finding one's place within one's family and community – enable individuals to find meaning in their lives and exercise their life choices (second sub-pillar of a nurturing environment), but also to recognise oneself in a shared worldview and values (third sub-pillar of a fulfilling environment). This third sub-pillar was revealed through surveys and interviews, as the comments we gathered from the population showed how important this was in their lives. Finally, a nurturing environment must enable people to access new knowledge and skills (fourth pillar of a nurturing environment). The need for social integration is one of the fundamental capabilities found in research on these issues, and is also confirmed empirically. Even in so-called hostile environments, constrained environments such as those in which we produced our data, the importance of being able to give meaning to one's life and of having the possibility (to a certain extent) to choose the life

one leads was highlighted as particularly important, as was the fact of sharing common values with one's neighbours, for example. The acquisition of new skills is linked to the specific needs of children (but not exclusively), from an early age.

### What are the specific characteristics of an enabling environment according to age, gender and disability?

Measuring whether an environment is enabling **for children** involves assessing the extent to which that environment allows children to develop physically, emotionally, cognitively and socially. An enabling environment promotes, in particular, children's access to learning and socialisation opportunities, as well as their active participation in decisions that affect them. We must therefore take into account the specific needs related to children's early learning and development (Enriching Environment), as well as parents' ability to provide this supportive framework (Economically Viable Environment). Attention must be paid to issues of physical and psychological integrity, as violence against children remains prevalent (Protective Environment).

**For older people**, we must pay particular attention to how the environment can enable them to maintain their physical integrity (Protective Environment), meet their basic needs and access sources of income (Economically Viable Environment), which can become increasingly difficult at an individual level as they get older. It is therefore also important to consider carers and how the community can facilitate this role, in particular by enabling them to exercise their life choices (Supportive Environment). Having control over one's environment (Fair Environment) and sharing common values with those around them (Supportive Environment) therefore becomes fundamental.

An enabling environment **for girls and women** means an environment that allows girls and women to develop their autonomy/ their capacity to make choices, and to participate actively in social, professional, political and family life, taking into account the specificities related to maternal health, their role in the care and education of children, their vulnerability to gender-based violence (Protective Environment), and therefore more generally to gender norms. They must therefore be empowered by their environment to anticipate and have control over that environment (Fair Environment).

Finally, assessing whether an environment is enabling **for persons with disabilities** involves taking into account accessibility, social participation and respect for rights in order to allow these persons to fully exercise their freedom of choice on an equal basis with other members of the community. The environment in which they live must therefore enable them to maintain and/or restore their physical and psychological integrity (Protective Environment) and to exercise their life choices (Fair Environment and Fulfilling Environment).

# SECTION 2 – THE DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION PHASE

In the course of this research, the exploratory phase was followed by a development and validation phase. The aim was to use the theoretical framework to design a methodological approach that would enable data to be produced, analysed and interpreted, and to report on the outcomes of HI projects at community level.

To do this, we first sought to stabilise the theoretical framework (proposed above) by submitting it to technical specialists. In the following section, we also wish to present the questions and decision-making steps that led to the final methodological choices. It was necessary to identify methodological approaches, submit them to potential future users of the tool, test the pre-selected methodological approaches and finally articulate the various elements and considerations within a single approach, the OUT-COMs approach.

## STEP 5 – Consulting technical specialists: stabilising the theoretical proposal through internal expertise

The aim of this consultation was to reach a consensus on the elements that should make up an enabling environment for HI. We therefore needed to run our various proposals by the people best placed to validate or refute their relevance, especially as our analysis of the available documents we had identified within HI could not have been exhaustive. Through this consultation, we wanted to fill any potential gaps and ensure that the results (i.e., ultimately, the outcomes measurement tool) were in line with the organisation's practices: we wanted to create a tool designed by HI and for HI, which would therefore need to be adapted to current and future projects in order to be fully useful and usable. It was also a question of verifying that specific needs relating to disability, gender and age were taken into account so that the tool could be adapted to the different populations with which HI works. This consultation was also intended as an initial forum for discussion to engage those who would ultimately support the dissemination and use of the tool: we wanted to ensure

that there would be no surprises for them, hence the desire to involve them so that they could take a position and contribute to the proposed model.

## 5.1 Seeking consensus

### 5.1.1 A Delphi methodology

The methodology used for this consultation was a multi-criteria Delphi-type consensus methodology[31] . It was chosen for the transparency of its process (we will return to the thresholds and analysis criteria below), taking into account the size of the potential panel consulted (many participants can express their views), and for the flexibility it allows for participants (the panel expressed its views via an online form). The aim was to give a voice to those who wished to express their views while trying to reach a consensus within a tight timeframe, without overloading participants' schedules.

The consultation took place in two rounds[32] . In the first round, participants received our proposal for what the characteristics of an enabling environment for HI might be (see 4.3 above in this document). When completing the first online form, participants were therefore required to read this proposal beforehand. Participants then received the results of this first round. A second form was then provided to allow participants to express their level of agreement with the results of the first round and to finalise the consultation.

Participants in the consultation were asked to give their opinion on several elements[33] . Firstly, the definition of each of the pillars (protective, economically viable, fair e and fulfilling). Secondly, the quality of the various sub-pillars proposed. We used four criteria to define the quality of these sub-pillars:

- Criterion 1: The level of relevance for all the contexts in which HI works.
- Criterion 2: The ability to reflect the needs of all people who may be targeted by HI.

[31] For more information on the method, see Stone Fish and Busby (1996) or Hanafin (2004). For examples of Delphi applied outside of HI, see Lisi et al. (2018). These examples focus on health issues, but the method can be applied to a variety of issues.

[32] For more details, refer to the Information Note on the consultation, sent to participants.

[33] The forms for rounds 1 and 2 are available in the HI Library file dedicated to this research.

- Criterion 3: The level of alignment with the expected changes/potential changes brought about by HI's projects.
- Criterion 4: The level of alignment with community-based solutions (i.e. mechanisms under the responsibility of community actors).

Participants were invited to comment on the proposals as necessary.

The analysis consisted of establishing the level of agreement associated with each definition (for the pillars) and each quality criterion (for the sub-pillars). The following thresholds were set prior to the consultation.

- A pillar definition is retained when at least 75% of participants agree, in other words if 75% of responses are "Somewhat agree" or "Strongly agree". If this 75% threshold is not reached, the question is asked again in the second round, and participants' comments are shared in order to make a final decision.
- The quality of a sub-pillar is confirmed when at least 75% of participants agree with each of the four quality criteria. A validated sub-pillar is retained for the construction of the final tool. If participants only agree with 1, 2 or 3 of the 4 criteria, then the question is asked again in the second round, taking into account the comments made by participants.

"Don't know" responses were counted. As we focused on the agreement rate for each of the definitions/criteria, this means that "Don't know" responses were considered as disagreements. However, no responses were counted: a participant who "skipped" a question, whether intentionally or not, is not considered a respondent (for that question), and is therefore not considered to be disagreeing.

[34]Participation in this consultation was anonymous. It was addressed to technical specialists at headquarters and in programmes (in all sectors), TUMs/THOPs, and technical directors. There was no minimum number of respondents expected. This consultation was voluntary,

[34] Only the research officer had access to the participants' identities, which would have been used if clarification was needed.

so the subsequent research took into account the opinions of those who wanted and were able to express themselves through this consultation.

This Delphi method proved useful for several reasons. It highlighted common elements within HI, transcending the disparate realities of action across sectors and contexts, while addressing issues of legitimacy and transparency concerning decision-making procedures. However, difficulties remained in reaching the respondents.

## 5.2 Results enabling consensus on the theoretical framework

### 5.3.1 Results of round 1

In the first round of this consultation, we had 31 respondents, more than 70% of whom had in-depth experience, and 65% of whom said they were regularly involved in framing or implementing community-based approaches. While most sectors were represented, we were unable to gather the opinions of technical specialists in Protection and Atlas. Over 50% of participants reported expertise in gender, over 50% reported expertise in age, and over 80% reported expertise in disability. These results show a number of consultation participants that we considered adequate (given internal reorganisation issues and already very busy schedules), which allows us to take sectoral technical expertise into account in the process of designing the tool's content.

Overall, the results showed a fairly high level of agreement, which enabled a consensus to be reached on the four proposed definitions and on nine of the twelve sub-pillars. The sub-pillars that were not validated were as follows:

- B3 – Enabling the future to be safeguarded (associated with an economically viable environment);
- C2 – Empowering people to plan for and influence their environment (associated with a fair environment);
- D2 – Enabling people to find meaning in their lives and exercise their life choices (associated with a fulfilling environment).

The unvalidated sub-pillars still reached the agreement threshold of 75% or more for criteria 1, 2 and 4. Furthermore, they obtained a majority of "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree"

responses for criterion 3 (the level of adequacy with expected changes/potential changes induced by HI projects) - but below the 75% threshold - which is why we supplemented the second round form with illustrations taken from the comments of respondents who were somewhat or strongly in agreement in round 1.

### 5.3.2 Results at the end of round 2

For round 2, we proposed a second form to allow technical specialists to express their level of agreement with the results of the first round and finalise the consultation.

In practice, this involved checking the level of agreement with the amendments made in relation to the definitions of the four pillars on the one hand, and the illustrations associated with the sub-pillars on the other. Of the 12 sub-pillars, three remained unvalidated at this stage. For the three unvalidated sub-pillars, we asked the question about the four fundamental criteria again. Each respondent had to decide whether or not to side with the majority (the majority of participants in the first round being somewhat favourable or very favourable to the proposal). Although participation was lower in the second round, the 19 respondents generally made an effort to provide rich and precise comments that nevertheless helped to support the discussion.

- **Protective Environment**

89% of participants in the second round said they were comfortable (somewhat comfortable or very comfortable) with the proposed definition of a protective environment. At the end of round 2, 100% of respondents said they were comfortable with the first sub-pillar, 89% with the second and 95% with the third.

- **Economically Liveable Environment**

95% of participants in the second round said they were comfortable (somewhat comfortable or very comfortable) with the definition of an economically liveable environment. In round 2, 95% and 89% of respondents respectively said they were "somewhat comfortable" or "very comfortable" with the first two sub-pillars. This time, all criteria reached the agreement threshold for the third sub-pillar.

### ❖ Fair Environment

100% of participants in the second round reported feeling comfortable (somewhat comfortable or very comfortable) with the definition of a fair environment. In round 2, 95% of respondents said they were comfortable ("somewhat comfortable" or "very comfortable") with the first sub-pillar. This time, all criteria reached the agreement threshold for the second sub-pillar.

### ❖ Nurturing environment

100% of participants in the second round said they were comfortable (somewhat comfortable or very comfortable) with the definition of a nurturing environment. 89%, 95% and 95% of respondents said they were "somewhat comfortable" or "very comfortable" with the first, third and fourth sub-pillars, respectively. This time, all criteria reached the agreement threshold for the second sub-pillar.

The results of round 2 – for which the definitions were amended to take into account the comments gathered in round 1, and the sub-pillars were illustrated with examples – show even higher agreement rates than in round 1. The consensus threshold was reached for all four definitions as well as for all the sub-pillars. The fact that the sub-pillars not validated in the first round obtained higher scores in the second round seems to reveal that the initial proposal was not precise enough to allow participants to take a position: in the second round, there were no more "Don't know" responses, with very few exceptions.

Ultimately, the overall results of the consultation made it possible to stabilise the entire proposed theoretical framework.

> ⇨ **For more details about this consultation with Technical Specialists, please refer to Consultation 1 Final results (interim deliverable 2).**

The results of the consultation are not representative of all HI technical specialists – which was not the aim – but are significant enough to say that internal expertise contributed to

stabilising the content of the tool, ensuring that the proposal was appropriate for the vast majority of HI sectors, and taking into account issues related to gender, age and disability.

## 5.3 The final proposal: an enriched theoretical framework, consistent with HI's activities and stabilised

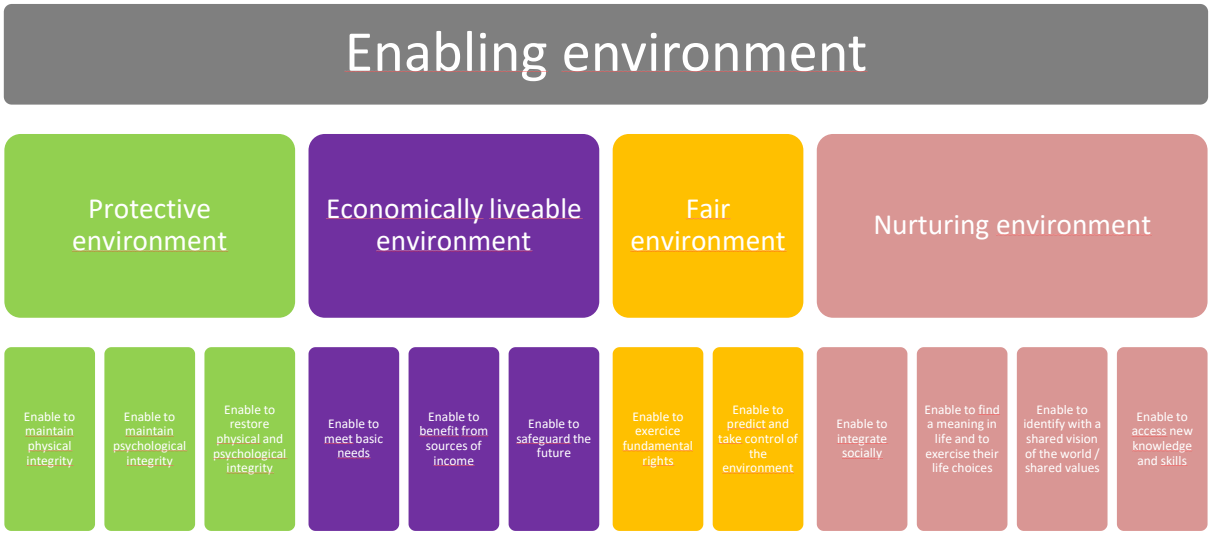
Here we summarise the elements discussed during this consultation, as well as the entire theoretical framework, its definitions and examples.

Firstly, the proposed definitions do not explicitly mention age, gender and disability, although the research is conducted in such a way that the final tool is sensitive to these three characteristics. We considered the issue of inclusion to be cross-cutting: at HI, inclusion means that all individuals, regardless of the interacting factors of discrimination, are treated equally, able to participate meaningfully without discrimination and to enjoy their rights like any o . Thus, the inclusion of people regardless of their age, gender, and disability is fundamental to what constitutes an enabling environment.

Similarly, aspects related to risk prevention/reduction are not highlighted in every case. However, we have taken into account the fact that there are risks that call into question each of the characteristics of the environment (i.e. for each of the four pillars). In the proposed definitions, emphasis has been placed on hazards and sustainability in particular. We have also identified the proactive nature of the enabling environment as a key element of the concept: "maintain", "guarantee" and "ensure" mean that the environment must enable risk prevention and protection.

In the same vein, access to information (in order to make informed decisions) is essential and cuts across all pillars: an enabling environment is only enabling – according to what we have set out in the Scoping Note – if it proactively empowers its inhabitants to do and be what they have decided to do and be. Information is a particularly important aspect of the ability and freedom to choose and make decisions: we need information on practices to protect and restore our physical and psychological integrity, information on available services, information to seize and protect income opportunities, information to exercise our rights, information to respect others, etc.

*Figure 11 – Final theoretical framework used to define what constitutes an enabling environment for HI*




### ❖ A PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Definition: A protective environment is "an environment that is favourable in terms of the physical, psychological and emotional safety of individuals, guaranteeing their dignity and well-being, even in the face of uncertainty. This environment must meet the basic needs of safety, health, protection from violence and prevention of degrading living conditions". Emotional security is considered more specifically to meet the needs of children (early childhood development, parent-child bonds, etc.). What constitutes degrading living conditions is not detailed here, but we can refer to situations of exploitation (violence, forced labour) or situations of neglect (e.g. lack of care for children, poor hygiene for people who are unable to care for themselves, etc.), situations that have an impact on health in particular.

Sub-pillars: A protective environment must therefore **enable** the population **to maintain its physical integrity** (first sub-pillar of a protective environment), **maintain its psychological integrity** (second sub-pillar of a protective environment), and finally **restore its physical and psychological integrity** (third sub-pillar of a protective environment) when these have been compromised.

In practice: Making an environment more protective may involve community support mechanisms (e.g. a solidarity fund to cover healthcare costs), in other words endogenous or more formal social protection systems. But it can also include sharing information about local

risks (explosive remnants of war, natural disasters, etc.) in order to protect people from physical and/or psychological consequences. It also means not being overly exposed to toxic agents/pollution, which can be achieved through community-level waste management (or school/camp latrines). Or setting up a community alert system (organising the response, sheltering the most vulnerable people first, etc.). Building capacity to maintain psychological integrity means, among other things, being able to be alerted by any member of the community when there are changes in behaviour or repeated unusual reactions that indicate a need for specific support. It also means maintaining good self-esteem (despite the loss of one's economic activity, for example) by being involved in other activities to develop a strong sense of belonging to the community. Enabling people to restore their physical and psychological integrity means having access to health services within a reasonable time frame thanks to an informal social protection system (solidarity fund). It means not having perceptions (particularly gender perceptions or self-stigmatisation) that prevent people from asking for help when they are in difficulty or talking about the problems they encounter – which requires community actors to regularly disseminate awareness-raising messages and information about the services available. It also means being referred by a member of the community to the right service when you need it.

### ❖ AN ECONOMICALLY LIVEABLE ENVIRONMENT

Definition: An economically liveable environment is "an environment that offers conditions enabling everyone to meet their needs and enjoy a certain freedom of choice (from an economic point of view) in a sustainable manner. It is an environment where access to economic opportunities and decent livelihoods is promoted".

Broadly speaking, income (in whatever form: money, agricultural production, etc.) must be sufficient to also benefit those who are dependent on the people who generate it: a child must be able to go to school without having to find the necessary money themselves.

Here, we have emphasised sustainability – sustainability in the face of uncertainty, but also sustainability through the preservation of the environment and natural resources. However, the issue of resource use and its regulation (from an intergenerational equity perspective, for example) is addressed in the "Fair Environment" pillar. We also mention freedom of choice (specifying that we are considering the economic point of view here), because freedom of

choice is of course dependent on other elements , and in particular on the acceptance/recognition of the choices made by individuals, which is covered by the "Nurturing Environment" pillar.

Sub-pillars: An economically liveable environment must **enable** the population **to meet its basic needs** (first sub-pillar of an economically liveable environment)**.** However, while meeting basic needs is necessary, it cannot be considered sufficient to ensure a good quality of life. The environment must therefore also **enable** the population **to benefit from sources of income (**second sub-pillar of an economically liveable environment). In addition, it **must enable** the population **to safeguard its future (**third sub-pillar of an economically liveable environment).

In practice: Enabling people to meet their basic needs means having access to assistance when needed, whether this is assistance organised by the community as a whole (donations, solidarity networks, access to contingency stocks after a disaster), by the Church, or whether it means being identified by community actors as needing specific assistance in order to enable appropriate targeting by humanitarian interventions. Building capacity to benefit from sources of income means having easier access to vocational training and potentially having community strategies for maintaining important routes that influence the economic dynamics of the area. Building capacity to safeguard the future means organising tontines so that participants can keep their income-generating activities afloat even in the face of unforeseen needs leading to temporary decapitalisation. It also means having the information to anticipate and develop a risk-sensitive activity (through community discussions), and participating in a fund to enable a return to the village and the relaunch of an activity once there.  This is one of the ways in which certain environments could become more economically viable.

### ❖ A FAIR ENVIRONMENT

Definition: A fair environment is "an environment that ensures that every person can exercise their rights and participate in political processes thanks to equitable power dynamics. Justice here includes the procedural dimension (equitable access to justice) and the redistributive dimension (equitable sharing of resources)".

Political processes cover decision-making processes that reflect power relations (who participates in them, who influences them). The amended definition no longer explicitly mentions the concept of governance in order to incorporate power dynamics in the broad sense, including informal dynamics. It therefore means being able to trust community authorities and, more generally, those who exercise power at the community level. Equity within a community can be understood both as the result of regulation (particularly in terms of resource use) between people sharing the same living space and activities, and as the result of regulation between generations (intergenerational equity).

Sub-pillars: A fair environment thus **enables** the population **to exercise its fundamental rights** (first sub-pillar of a fair environment). We have previously mentioned the economic dimension in relation to safeguarding the future, but safeguarding one's future also means living in a relatively predictable (not too uncertain) environment, which requires regulatory mechanisms. Thus, the second sub-pillar of a fair environment is to **enable people to predict and have control over their environment.**

In practice: The participation of those who wish to do so in community decision-making (community governance), the identification of provisions that allow people to move around without being subjected to racketeering, or land regulation mechanisms that favour the most marginalised people could contribute to a fair environment. More specifically, empowering people to exercise their fundamental rights means guaranteeing freedom of movement without exposure to violence, which can be achieved by organising group travel or through community advocacy. It also means having civil society organisations that facilitate access to justice or administrative documents for marginalised people. Empowering people to plan for and have control over their environment means, among other things, being able to participate in community decision-making processes if they so wish (regardless of the type of decision to be made, large or small). It also means benefiting from a known system of rules and sanctions that limit spoliation or undue property violations (absence of impunity) with .

### ❖ A NURTURING ENVIRONMENT

Definition: A fulfilling environment is "an environment that allows individuals to find their place within the community, to participate fully in social life, and to realise their aspirations in a sustainable manner. Engaging in meaningful activities means having the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge, and to feel useful and connected to others."
Here again, the mention of sustainability has been added to more explicitly cover aspects related to prevention. The issue of skills and knowledge development is important at any age, but here it refers in particular to specific applications for children, in relation to their awakening and development.
We wish to retain the term "meaning of life" to ensure that we consider more than just purely economic aspects and think about societal progress in a holistic way (see, for example, the work on the Global Meaningfulness Index, which is currently inspiring public policy).

Sub-pillars: A nurturing environment must **enable social integration** (first sub-pillar of a nurturing environment) – for example, finding one's place within one's family and community – **enable people to find meaning in their lives and exercise their life choices** (second sub-pillar of a nurturing environment), but also to **identify with a shared worldview and values (**third sub-pillar of a nurturing environment). Finally, a nurturing environment must **enable individuals to access new knowledge and skills (**fourth sub-pillar of a nurturing environment).

In practice: Enabling social integration means organising a welcome committee for new arrivals at displacement sites, providing access to social activities that allow people to meet and interact freely, and limiting negative prejudices ( xample, behaviours and messages shared by community leaders about the abilities of persons with disability in the community). It also means having the opportunity to make friends at school through activities designed for that purpose. Empowering people to find meaning in their lives and exercise their life choices it means ensuring that everyone in the community is informed and changes their behaviour where necessary so that everyone's choices and situations are respected, it means offering alternatives to idleness so that feelings of uselessness do not spread (no

income-generating activities in a restricted environment does not mean no activities at all). It also means receiving support in maintaining one's lifestyle, being able to discuss the future and develop prospects. Enabling people to identify with shared values means providing opportunities to mobilise/engage collectively around what is considered fair and legitimate, around what needs to be defended. It also means having opportunities to learn about the opinions of other people we interact with and to trust them. Finally, empowering people to acquire new knowledge and skills means giving them access to age-appropriate games for early learning, gross and fine motor skills development, etc. It also means having the opportunity to learn sign language and for others to learn it in order to improve communication. Finally, it means acquiring knowledge that is not directly essential for economic activity, if one is able and willing to do so, and having access to training in recognition of the work done and to enable social advancement.

## STEP 6: Identifying methodological approaches consistent with the theoretical framework: a state-of-the-art review of evaluation approaches

With our theoretical framework now stabilised, we had to identify the best way to capture this concept of an enabling environment. The guiding principle for our methodological reflections was therefore an outcome indicator that reflected the theoretical framework we had just developed, which we formulated as follows:

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*An increase in the capacity of the community (or environment) to provide a protective/economically liveable/fair/fulfilling environment is observed at the end of the project.*

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It is precisely this indicator that the tool on which this research focuses must be able to provide information on.

### 6.1 Overview of methodological issues

The development and consideration of the future use of the tool raise a series of interrelated questions. The first series concerns the conditions of use: in what type of project could the

tool be relevant, by whom and when could it be mobilised, and what resources (financial, human, time) need to be brought together to ensure its feasibility? Next comes the question of data collection, which raises questions about the nature of the data (what data should be collected and from whom?), the methods of collection (what methods, technical or organisational measures should be used?), and the purpose of the data (to what extent does the tool enable change to be reported in a relevant way?). Finally, the data analysis phase also raises questions: who is responsible for the analysis, what criteria are used to determine whether a change is significant, and how can we ensure that the results are understandable, transparent and useful to participants and project leaders?

In addition to these questions, there are three major challenges. The first is participation: the approach must clarify the role of the populations concerned, both in defining the data to be collected and in interpreting and reporting the results, in order to ensure an inclusive and legitimate process. The second is stabilisation: the collection and analysis stages require the production of benchmarks, protocols and guidelines to enable stakeholders to take ownership of the tool and ensure its consistent use in different contexts. Finally, an issue of institutional arbitration arises: this involves assessing the acceptable cost of implementing the tool and the added value it brings in terms of monitoring change and supporting decision-making. These questions and issues are intertwined and interdependent.

In order to answer the various questions raised and explore different ways of structuring the methodological approach, four distinct scenarios were considered. Each of them proposes a specific order for successively addressing the conditions of use of the tool, data collection and analysis. The first scenario takes as its starting point the stabilised content of the tool (the theoretical framework[35] developed during the first part of this research), thus ensuring internal consistency. To follow this scenario, the reflection is organised in three stages: identification of the most suitable proxies to capture the different elements of the selected sub-pillars, determination of the methods of analysis and visualisation, and then definition of the favourable conditions of use. The second scenario adopts a pragmatic perspective, starting from the conditions of use observed in real projects. Operational constraints and

[35] For details, please refer to 5.3.

opportunities serve as a reference (based on case studies) for determining the deployment modalities. From there, the expected results are defined (output formats, depth of analysis), and data requirements are then deduced. The third scenario focuses first on the results to be obtained, with an emphasis on dissemination and communication. For example, answering the specific question: does my project contribute to equitable change within the community? The reflection thus begins with the identification of the desired results (by pillars or sub-pillars), then moves on to the choice of data needed to produce these formats, before determining the corresponding conditions of use. Finally, the fourth scenario proposes starting from a general evaluative approach, based in particular on the literature on participatory methodologies. This approach makes it possible to identify the theoretical and practical frameworks compatible with the constraints of the project (appropriation by the teams, feasibility, contextual relevance), and then to develop an analysis approach adapted to the data collected.

*Figure 12 – Summary table of the different scenarios considered to answer methodological questions*

| | Starting point | Key stages | Purpose | Strengths | Limitations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Theoretical consistency scenario** | Tool content determined based on the theoretical framework | 1) Identify appropriate proxies (data to be collected)<br>2) Define the methods of analysis and visualisation<br>3) Determine the conditions of use | Consistent tool, derived directly from the theoretical framework | Ensures internal consistency; conceptual anchoring | Risk of insufficient consideration of practical constraints; complexity; difficulty of appropriation |
| **2. Operational anchoring scenario** | Application to cases (real projects and their constraints) | 1) Set the conditions of use (choice of cases)<br>2) Define the expected results<br>3) Determine the data to be collected | Tool that can be used in concrete contexts | Takes into account realities on the ground; operational relevance | May lack theoretical consistency; may lack stability/benchmarks (different for each project) |
| **3. Learning orientation scenario** | Expected outcomes (cross-cutting learning questions) | 1) Propose result formats (1 per learning question)<br>2) Identify the necessary data<br>3) Associate conditions of use | Useful tool for communication and promotion | Clear objectives of the approach; increased visibility of results | Risk of overdetermining the tool by communication formats |
| **4. Scenario based on general evaluation approaches**<br><br>**(selected)** | General participatory evaluation method (selection from existing methods) | 1) Identify relevant methodologies from existing ones<br>2) Compare with project constraints (potential conditions of use)<br>3) Develop an analysis approach tailored to our purpose (if not determined by the methodology) | Tool rooted in recognised practices | Flexibility, operational legitimacy; promotes ownership | May require significant adjustments to fit local specificities |

The comparison of scenarios highlights contrasting approaches: some favour theoretical consistency (scenario 1) or operational feasibility (scenario 2), while others emphasise the value of results (scenario 3). Scenario 4, on the other hand, could make it possible to articulate different aspects by drawing on recognised and adaptable evaluation methodologies. It was this last scenario that was ultimately adopted, as it allows the approach to be anchored in a proven methodology, while adapting it to the specificities of the field. The tool thus constructed is not based solely on theoretical assumptions or predetermined reporting formats, but draws on what is actually happening in the community. This approach aims to enhance the relevance, ownership and legitimacy of the tool by focusing on the dynamics observed rather than on preconceived external expectations. Indeed, one pitfall to avoid, which is common when theory is the starting point for reflection, is that of ambivalence of attributes. The characteristics of an environment can easily be considered, a priori, as positive or negative (or, for us, an enabling environment or not). However, these characteristics generally turn out to be neither one nor the other in absolute terms, and their positive or negative aspect can only be revealed in a specific context[36] . Furthermore, to guard against the risk of being too prescriptive, it will be important to focus on the objectives. Indeed, the specifications for this research indicate the need for a multi-sector and multi-context tool – the tool must therefore be able to cover different types of intervention and a variety of situations.  By considering only the objectives, it will then be possible for each area of intervention to define the most appropriate means[37] . In doing so, we potentially leave plenty of room for endogenous solutions.

## 6.2 Overview of existing evaluation approaches

The literature review was conducted using a targeted approach, aiming to identify existing methods and practices for evaluating project outcomes, with a particular focus on

[36] For example, an extensive village common can be both an asset in terms of potential natural resources and land use, but also a vulnerability due to the difficulties of controlling such a large area. The same is true of strong social cohesion, which offers opportunities to find common solutions to problems and mechanisms based on solidarity between actors. This apparent social cohesion can also prove to be an obstacle to change, with the prevalence of strong social pressure.

[37] For example, if we believe that an enabling environment should facilitate children's access to school, we cannot presume to know the best means of achieving this: making schooling free for families in order to lower the economic barrier? Deworming children to combat absenteeism? Setting up a school canteen to encourage families to send their children to school?

participatory diagnostic approaches. Initially, we consulted general documents on participatory evaluation[38] , drawing on existing bibliographic references to identify methodological principles that could be transferred to outcome measurement. At the same time, we explored general reference websites (such as BetterEvaluation, 3ie, EvalPartner, F3E, INTRAC, Collaborative Impact, EVAL, etc.), as well as several resource centres specialising in evaluations in order to broaden the spectrum of approaches documented and accessible online. Finally, particular attention was paid to regional and sub-regional associations of evaluators, such as the American Evaluation Association, the UK Evaluation Society, the APEA, the African Evaluation Association, MEMECS, the Canadian Evaluation Society and the Australian Evaluation Society, in order to gather contextualised and diverse practices according to territories and professional cultures. This approach made it possible to combine theoretical references, documentary resources and concrete evaluation experiences to fuel our methodological reflection.

### Proposing a methodology that is sensitive to gender, age and disability

To ensure that the literature review process was sensitive to gender, age and disability, several precautions were taken at each stage of the methodology. The areas of differentiation were clearly defined from the outset, guiding the selection of sources towards studies and documents dealing specifically with vulnerable or marginalised populations according to the criteria mentioned above. The methods identified were examined in terms of the possible participation of different types of people (collection), but also in terms of the extent to which the analysis would identify differentiated outcomes by type of profile. The issue of implementing secure procedures in conflict zones was also considered.

The desire to explore what is being done in different parts of the world led to reliance on associations of evaluators organised by geographical area. Unfortunately, this approach was not successful. While it did make it possible to identify certain indigenous evaluations and approaches, such as those identified in Latin America, North America and Australia, it nevertheless encountered significant limitations, mainly related to the availability of

[38] See the Bibliography at the end of this report for more details.

documents, whether in physical libraries or online bibliographic resources. Specific contacts were made in an attempt to fill these gaps, in particular to obtain information on so-called 'indigenous' methodologies or those developed by African and Asian evaluators. Unfortunately, these approaches met with rather vague responses, without clear guidance towards additional resources, which limited the effectiveness of the information gathering process. In this context, it seems necessary to review the approach to this issue for future research.

### 6.2.3 Results: 6 evaluation approaches identified

In total, around 30 documents were consulted, enabling us to identify around 15 evaluation methodologies. Of these, we selected six in particular. The principle of each approach and its merits or limitations in relation to the specifications are summarised below (Figure 13).

*Figure 13 – Summary table of the main evaluation methodologies identified*

| | PRINCIPLE | ADVANTAGES | LIMITATIONS | REFERENCES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Most Significant Change** | Collection of individual stories about change perceived as the "most significant"; collective selection of the most relevant | Encourages participation, highlights people's experiences, structures shared learning | Facilitation can be demanding and must take power relations into account (risk of competition/silencing among contributors) | MSC Guide (2005) |
| **Outcomes Harvesting (ou Récolte des Effets)** | Collects observed changes (results), then traces them back to identify the contribution of the intervention | Suitable for complex environments, inclusive of unexpected results, focused on actual changes | As with MSC, facilitation can be demanding and must take power relations into account (risk of competition/silencing between contributors) | Ricardo Wilson-Grau's manual (2018)<br><br>OH Guide (UNDP, 2012) |
| **Panel monitoring (through surveys or interviews)** | Use of surveys or interviews to ask people about their perceptions on predefined topics | Structured method, whose analysis can be relatively "automated"; allows for in-depth, evolving thematic analysis | Not very participatory or flexible and therefore not well suited to contextual dynamics; quality depends on the quality of the interview and thematic analysis (qualitative analysis) | |
| **Participatory mapping** | Collective visual representation of a system or territory with the actors concerned | Highly participatory, promotes collective ownership and understanding of territorial dynamics | It can be difficult to capture certain social/institutional dynamics | MappingForRights initiative |
| **Qualitative Impact Protocol (QuIP)** | Double-blind interviews, collection of causal assertions, mapping of links between causes and outcomes | Approach that minimises bias (qualitative analysis is carried out in a rigorous, transparent and verifiable manner) | Requires an advanced coding process, training, analytical resources | QuIP Briefing Paper |
| **Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)** | Qualitative comparative analysis based on case configurations | Allows multiple causal configurations to be identified | Requires a large number of cases, difficult to implement on a project scale | Capitalisation publication: "25 years of QCA, how far have we come?" |

The methods listed above differ mainly in terms of the degree of stakeholder participation, the emphasis placed on causal analysis and the nature of the data used. Some, such as *Most Significant Change* or *participatory mapping*, rely heavily on the participation and expression of beneficiaries, but offer limited causal analysis. Others, such as *Outcome Harvesting* or *QuIP*, aim to explicitly identify the project's contribution to the changes observed. Conversely, methods such as *perception surveys* or *panel monitoring* make it possible to track changes in views or situations but remain dependent on the quality of the interviews and thematic analysis. Finally, QCA stands out for its comparative and systematic approach,

which is suitable for contexts where a large number of cases can be analysed, but less relevant at the level of an individual project.

## 6.3 Developing an initial proposal based on the Outcomes Harvesting

After analysing the various existing approaches to evaluating and collecting information on project outcomes, the Outcomes Harvesting method was chosen as the starting point for our reflection. The other approaches have limitations that make them less suitable for our research, but above all for future use of the tool: the MSC, which is similar to Outcomes Harvesting, does not or only minimally incorporate reflection on the specific contribution of the project, even though this is a central element of the concept of outcomes; Perception surveys or Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), as well as panel monitoring, remain largely non-participatory and depend heavily on the quality of interviews and thematic analysis. Qualitative Impact Protocol (QuIP) requires significant preparatory work on the project's theory of change (i.e. it is based on theory rather than actual changes observable in the field) and also remains largely non-participatory (analysis carried out by an external observer, sometimes by someone who did not conduct the interviews); Finally, Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) requires a large number of cases for rigorous comparative analysis, which makes it particularly cumbersome at the project level and ill-suited to a participatory approach.

In comparison, the Outcomes Harvesting approach has several advantages: it is learning-oriented, relatively flexible in terms of actors, documentation methods and timing (ongoing or endline), identifies actual changes – both positive and negative – and systematically includes reflection on the plausible contribution of the project. It has also already proven its worth with international NGOs such as Oxfam, CARE, Mercy Corps and ActionAid. These characteristics in the " " form a solid and suitable basis for initiating our methodological reflection on measuring HI's outcomes at community level.

Let's take a closer look at the principles of[39] Outcomes Harvesting, a methodology that can be used to monitor and measure the outcomes of projects, programmes or organisations. Depending on the situation, an external or internal person may be appointed to lead the Outcomes Harvesting process. To ensure the success of the process, the person in charge of harvesting mobilises change agents, i.e. people who work to bring about the "outcomes". The user who needs the results of the harvest is also involved throughout the process. An outcome is defined as changes in behaviour – actions, relationships, policies or practices – of one or more social actors, to which the project has likely contributed. The process consists of six iterative steps.

1. **Designing Outcomes Harvesting:** Users identify useful questions to guide the Harvest and agree on what information to collect and how to proceed.
2. **Formulating the outcomes:** Those responsible for the Harvest identify the changes that have occurred based on the available documents, as well as what the change agents did to contribute to them.
3. **Engage informants in formulating outcomes:** Those responsible for Harvesting communicate directly with informants (agents of change) to review proposed descriptions, formulate new ones if necessary, and classify them. Informants may themselves consult with others.
4. **Document the outcomes:** Those responsible for the Harvest obtain the opinion of one or more people on the identified outcomes (third-party informants), independent of those who formulated them, in order to improve the credibility and validity of the information.
5. **Analyse and interpret:** Those responsible for the Harvest organise the descriptions of the outcomes in order to make sense of the data and analyse and interpret all of the information.

[39] This tool was developed by Ricardo Wilson-Grau with his colleagues Barbara Klugman, Claudia Fontes, Fe Briones Garcia, Gabriela Sánchez, Goele Scheers, Heather Britt, Jennifer Vincent, Julie Lafrenière, Juliette Majot, Marcie Mersky, Martha Nuñez, Mary Jane Real, Natalia Ortíz and Wolfgang Richert in 143 countries around the world. For more information, please refer to the Outcomes Harvesting .

6. **Support the use of results:** Outcome Harvesting practitioners propose discussion points to change agents and/or Outcome Harvesting users based on the answers to useful questions.

The Outcomes Harvesting method offers a certain amount of flexibility in its implementation. However, several issues remain to be clarified in order to help stabilise the methodology, as outlined above (see 6.1). In particular, it is necessary to specify who is responsible for data collection and who performs the analysis, as these choices directly influence the degree of stakeholder participation (including the populations) and the quality of the interpretation. Similarly, the methods for collecting stories of change must be made explicit in order to ensure both the richness of the narratives and their comparability. Finally, the way in which these stories are triangulated – i.e. verified and put into perspective with other sources – is a key factor in ensuring the robustness and credibility of the results. These questions represent what remains to be covered in order to be able to apply Outcomes Harvesting in practice when measuring the outcomes of projects at community level.

This step has narrowed down the scope of decisions to be made, as only the leeway left open by the Outcomes Harvesting method remains to be discussed. We now have a solid basis for further methodological reflection, ensuring greater consistency between the chosen tool and the analytical objectives of the project. However, an important point to note is the general nature of the approach: it will be necessary to define precise methods for structuring the analysis and establishing a clear link with the theoretical framework presented in 5.3.

## STEP 7: Ensure alignment with the realities of the projects: consult potential users

In order to move forward on these methodological issues, we felt it was essential to gather the views of potential future users of the tool currently being designed: the project teams – responsible for implementing and monitoring activities and therefore for decisions on how to measure their outcomes – and the MEAL teams, responsible for supporting the project

teams on methodological aspects that cut across project management and quality. To involve them in the decision-making process, we organised a new consultation process.

## 7.1 A two-stage consultation process

The aim of this consultation was to identify the methodological options considered most relevant by future users of the tool. The consultation was therefore conducted in two stages. The first stage consisted of identifying ongoing projects that indicated they were deploying a community-based approach and that did not depend on US funding[40] – as this funding had been frozen, the teams had been suspended at that point – via PSQUARE[41] ; then to provide an online form, in the spirit of a "choose your own adventure" book, to project managers and associated MEAL teams. The second stage involved organising consolidation workshops with interested participants in order to explore the survey results in greater depth and finalise the methodological choices.

We proposed an online form in the spirit of a "choose your own adventure" book, where respondents had to follow the proposed scenario and select the methodological options that seemed most appropriate to them as they went along[42] . The proposed scenario was based on the Outcomes Harvesting approach. Responding to the questions involved making various decisions: the facilitation methods to be used, the type of outcomes to focus on, the people to be involved in the process, the participants in the analysis, the format for visualising the results, etc. Each participant had to speak on behalf of their project (or the project they were supporting for MEAL) and choose the options most appropriate to their context, operational activities, feasibility within the framework of the project, and their

[40] The "American funding crisis" refers to the sudden closure of USAID, the leading agency for humanitarian and development aid funding, in January 2025. This abrupt interruption in funding for international solidarity projects quickly led to significant humanitarian consequences, the extent of which was difficult to measure (and which were not limited to financial considerations alone). The safeguard measures put in place by HI to anticipate the consequences and limit the outcomes had a direct impact on the availability of potential partners. Many projects were halted and teams suspended. For those still in post, managing this "crisis" was a major concern and took up all their time (searching for reliable information on what was happening, closing projects, following up on suspended staff, seeking new funding and negotiating with other donors, etc.).

[41] PSQUARE is the database of projects implemented by HI.

[42] The online forms are available in several versions, one for project managers and one for MEAL, in French, English and Spanish. They can be consulted in the HI Library file dedicated to this research.

experience. There were therefore no right or wrong answers. Most of the survey questions were multiple choice. However, respondents could only choose one answer. They were therefore "forced" to make a decision in order to highlight the distinct choices. Thirty-six people took the time to complete the online form, 55% of whom were project managers and 45% of whom worked in a MEAL team. The projects represented involved activities associated with different sectors (mainly inclusive education, DRR, VAW, protection against violence, SM, rehabilitation and inclusive governance), in different contexts (but mainly development contexts and chronic crisis contexts), and implemented in different geographical areas. Emergency projects and projects implemented in Latin America were the least represented in this survey.

Consolidation workshops were held in a second phase, based on the results of the online survey, in order to support certain findings and refine understanding. Those invited to participate in the workshops had to have responded to the previous form. In the end, 16 people showed interest and participated in the consolidation workshops: 9 project managers, 6 MEAL profiles and 1 multi-risk approach specialist.

## 7.2 Identifying stages conducive to community participation

The responses obtained through this consultation highlight that participants consider certain stages to be more conducive to community participation than others:

- For the identification of changes, since 50% of respondents felt that it was the population itself that should express its views on the subject, with a view to collaboration[43] ;
- For the interpretation of data, since 65% of participants opted for a grid, which can also be constructed in a participatory manner in a spirit of collaboration with the population.

Conversely, 70% of respondents felt that the project team (with or without the involvement of partners) should be responsible for designing the outcome measurement process (overall

[43] Here, the concepts of "information", "consultation", "collaboration" and "co-construction" refer to the Institutional Directive "Ensuring meaningful participation of populations and partners".

choices, planning), which is similar to an "information" level for local populations (they do not participate in decision-making, they are simply informed of what will be done).

## 7.3 Two trends identified through the response patterns

In the above, we have considered the responses to the questions one by one. However, analysing the sequence of responses for the same respondent also provides us with important information. This analysis allows us to identify two major trends in terms of response patterns.

### ❖ TREND 1 – CHOSEN BY 40% OF RESPONDENTS

Some respondents expressed interest in an approach focused primarily on the HI team (project team) and its partners. These respondents therefore prefer:

1) The approach to be decided/planned by the HI team, usually in conjunction with partners, in order to agree on how to proceed.
2) The identification of outcomes (i.e. data collection) to be carried out by these same actors, in particular to ensure the rigour of the approach.
3) Once the outcomes have been documented, they should be compared with the views of third-party informants for confirmation, providing external and objective validation (triangulation).
4) The results should then be analysed by the HI team. The involvement of partners, when proposed, seems to depend on the skills available within the partner organisations.
5) Finally, the results should be disseminated primarily to the donor, i.e. the entity financing the project, with the aim of effectively communicating the project's achievements.

This approach therefore favours internal and collaborative evaluation between the HI team and the project's operational partners.

### ❖ TREND 2 – CHOSEN BY 55% OF RESPONDENTS

However, the majority of respondents favoured a population-centred approach, emphasising a process aligned with the principles of "person-centred" or "nothing about me without me". These respondents proposed:

1) That the approach be decided by the HI team and its partners, and planned by the population.
2) That the identification of outcomes (i.e. data collection) be carried out by the population, with support from the HI team to facilitate the approach.
3) That the HI teams document and explore these outcomes in greater depth to ensure that all participants understand the process and that the mentioned outcomes are effective (data credibility).
4) The results should then be analysed jointly by the HI team and the population in order to develop a common message.
5) Finally, the results should be widely disseminated to project stakeholders, starting with the population itself, local authorities and partners, in the interests of accountability.

This approach encourages the mobilisation and active involvement of the population at every stage of the outcomes assessment process, thus ensuring that the results accurately reflect local realities. However, this requires taking into account the power relations that exist within the population concerned and ensuring that the process is inclusive.

These two trends, which reflect two different ways of proceeding, both have advantages and disadvantages, as highlighted by the participants. The strength of the first lies in the close and continuous collaboration between the team and the partners, ensuring joint implementation of the outcome measurement methodology. However, a potential weakness could be the risk of overloading the HI team (time spent planning and facilitating discussions, coordination, identifying favourable periods of availability on both sides) and the partners (regular requests, requirement to adapt to the priorities and planning envisaged by the HI team, which suggests that it is not always a collaborative dynamic) as well as a possible lack of diverse external perspectives. The second trend requires the active and

direct involvement of the population, which means that the methodology must be tailored to local needs. The advantage of such an approach is that it promotes community ownership. However, the potential for increased complexity in terms of coordination (HI team + partners + community) and the possibility of conflicts of interest or differing priorities among the various actors involved should not be underestimated.

Among the factors that can influence the choice of one or the other in the context of a project, the most discussed aspects during the workshops were the following: 1) the ability to have a relationship of trust with the population (engaging the population to measure the outcomes requires upstream links and their availability at the right time); 2) the credibility/reliability of the results (in which cases is the project team more reliable than the population in identifying changes, and vice versa).

- **For more details about this consultation with project managers and MEAL officers, please refer to Consultation 2 Final results (interim deliverable 3).**

The approach used to create the online form was welcomed by participants, although we had to produce multiple versions to allow everyone who was interested and available to give their opinion. This consultation ensures that the methodological aspects selected for the creation of a new outcomes measurement tool are relatively aligned with the majority of projects implemented by HI and its partners, and in line with the realities of the contexts and people involved in these projects.

## STEP 8: Decide on the most promising methodological approach: conduct a field test

The aim was therefore to test the methodological approaches shortlisted during the second consultation (see step 7 above) by implementing them with the project team and within communities. The objective was to verify the extent to which these approaches could (or could not) inform the outcome indicator associated with the theoretical framework and to identify which was the most appropriate.

## 8.1 Scope of the test: three approaches deployed in parallel by the Nurturing Care project team in Rwanda

The Nurturing Care project implemented in Rwanda[44] was identified as a particularly interesting alternative for conducting methodological tests, due to its multisectoral approach and strong community component.

The scope of the test was defined in order to compare three different approaches to the same question:

> *"What changes at the community level have enabled people (especially children) to live better or worse over the past two years?"*

By change, we meant any change in attitudes, discourse or practices. Community was understood to mean the living environment, which included all the people with whom children regularly interacted in the various settings of daily life: home, neighbourhood, travel routes, market, places of worship, etc. The time frame of the last two years referred to the period covered by the project since its launch.

The three approaches tested were in line with the logic of Outcomes Harvesting, but proposed to use different data collection methods:

[44] To carry out this test, it was necessary to work with a project other than the PREVENIR project. At the time, the research officer was a French national and was unable to carry out fieldwork in three of the areas covered by the project funding the internal research (Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso) because she was unable to obtain a visa to enter the territory. The schools with which the project was working in Palestine had been in a state of constant stress for months. The security situation had also deteriorated significantly in the DRC with the capture of Goma by the M23. As a result, it was no longer possible for the research officer to carry out missions directly in the project's areas of intervention.
The project "Promoting integrated child development and inclusive services for all" - co-financed by the DGD (framework agreement with Belgian cooperation) and AC6 (framework agreement with Luxembourg cooperation) is based on the Caring for Children Framework (CFCF), which describes five key elements for promoting development and protecting young children from adversity: good health, adequate nutrition, safety and security, early learning opportunities and appropriate care. This project therefore aims to improve the development and quality of life of children by mobilising the CAF among the various stakeholders involved with children aged 0 to 12, with a particular focus on children with disabilities or at risk of developmental delays.

- A method focused on the observations and experiences of project team members: Outcomes Harvesting[45] (the classic version, where the agents of change are the project team members);
- A method focused on the voices of the population: collective discussions (a more participatory version, where the population is considered to be the agents of change);
- A method focused on the expression of a specific group within the population through photography: Photovoice[46] (a more participatory, but also innovative version, with expression through photography).

For the purposes of this test, and in accordance with the project guidelines, the decision was made to focus on children aged 9 to 11, so that they would be able to express themselves easily during group discussions and could quickly learn how to use the cameras. The project carries out a variety of activities: many activities involve early childhood centres (ECD) and parent groups, but there are also some activities at the level of health services, to facilitate access to school for children with disabilities, and through protection clubs. It was particularly interesting to focus on profiles that are not most directly concerned by the project, in order to benefit from their outside perspective.

## 8.2 Methodological arbitration elements

### 8.2.1 Test results analysed using performance indicators

Three performance indicators were formalised in advance to enable transparent decision-making based on the test results.

- ❖ TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE CHANGE STORIES PRODUCED INFORM US ABOUT THE OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT?

[45] For more details on the Outcomes Harvesting approach, please refer to the following note: Outcomes Harvesting, in one page.

[46] For more details on the Photovoice approach, please refer to the following note: The Photovoice method, in one page.

Indicator: % of stories that can be considered as outcomes (among all the stories identified), i.e. with an effective and proven contribution from the project[47] .

Decision-making factor: If 50% or more of the stories cannot be linked to the project (no or very low level of project contribution), then the approach will be considered inappropriate as a measure of outcomes.

Test results: Among the change stories produced, 100% of those from the Outcomes Harvesting correspond to project outcomes – the process of implementing this approach meant that elements that were not proven were quickly set aside and therefore no longer appeared when the change stories were formalised. Sixty-eight per cent and 64 per cent of the change stories produced through group discussions and Photovoice, respectively, correspond to project outcomes. Each of the three approaches implemented thus produces more than 50 per cent of change stories that correspond to outcomes.

- ### DO THE IDENTIFIED STORIES OF CHANGE PROVIDE US WITH INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL?

Indicator: % of stories that concern the community level (among all stories produced).

Decision-making: If 50% or more of the stories cannot be linked to the community level, then the approach is not appropriate for capturing the community level.

Test results: Among the stories of change produced, 75% of those produced through group discussions relate to the community level, compared to 73% for the Outcomes Harvesting approach and 58% for Photovoice. The other stories of change relate to the individual/family level (20% of them, all methodologies combined) or services (16%). Each of the three approaches implemented thus produces more than 50% of stories of change that reflect the community level.

[47] An outcome is a change that occurred during the project implementation period (or after) and that was likely influenced by the project. To demonstrate the "likely influence" of the project, it must have been mentioned, directly or indirectly, as one of the causes or facilitators of this change.

- **TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE STORIES OF CHANGE FIT INTO THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK DEFINED IN THE FIRST PART OF THE RESEARCH?**

Indicator: % of identified outcomes that fit within the "Enabling Environment" theoretical framework.

Decision-making: If 50% (or more) of the outcomes cannot be associated with a pillar/sub-pillar of the theoretical framework, then the theoretical framework is not appropriate.

Test results: Among the change stories produced, 100%, 95% and 92% of those from Photovoice, group discussions and the Outcomes Harvesting approach, respectively, could be associated with at least one of the sub-pillars of the theoretical framework. Each of the three approaches implemented thus produced more than 50% of change stories that fit into the previously defined theoretical framework. It should be noted that, in the context of this test, Photovoice produced more diverse information: 15% of the stories of change from Photovoice relate to an economically viable environment, and it is the only approach that has succeeded in shedding light on these aspects.

In addition, success criteria were set by the team and monitored for each approach included in the test (e.g. level of children's participation in activities, level of children's satisfaction, etc.) and were followed up. Debriefings were conducted with stakeholders (team, children, parents, teachers).

### 8.2.2 Additional arbitration factors

It also seemed important to take into account two additional questions on which to base the choice of methodology: one on the comparability of the approaches in terms of content (is the narrative drawn from one approach the same as that from the other?), and the other on the feasibility and possibility of the teams appropriating such approaches.

The ability to capture information about unexpected changes varies from one approach to another. For Outcomes Harvesting, we collected 32% of change stories that correspond to unexpected changes, compared to 68% for group discussions and 70% for Photovoice. Thus, only 3% of the stories of change produced via Outcomes Harvesting provide us with

useful information other than the project's successes, while this percentage rises to 21% for group discussions and 35% for Photovoice, making the latter two approaches suitable for learning. However, Photovoice, in the context of our test, also produced "useless" data: stories of change that are not in line with the project's objectives and to which the project has made no contribution. It would therefore be necessary to identify ways of supporting the exercise that would limit the production of such useless data.

Of the three approaches, only Outcomes Harvesting does not open up a space for expression to the population, but only to the project teams and partners. For group discussions and Photovoice, the feasibility of implementing the approach depends on the acceptance of the people concerned (participants) and those around them. We therefore considered that acceptance was good for each of the three approaches in the context of this test.

With regard to the potential for ownership of the approaches, it should be noted that it is not easy for a project team to take the necessary step back to easily engage in the Outcomes Harvesting approach. In particular, it was particularly difficult to identify negative stories of change in the context of this test. With a view to project teams using the tool independently, with remote support, Outcomes Harvesting could be a laborious approach to implement. Conversely, Photovoice is a new, fun and therefore motivating method, both for participants (in this case children) and for project teams. Finally, group discussions are similar to approaches already familiar to the teams.

### 8.2.3 The final choice: towards an effective approach that remains within the teams' reach

Ultimately, this field test highlighted the following elements:

- The Outcomes Harvesting approach is the one that best meets the performance indicators set up for monitoring (i.e. does the approach effectively capture the outcomes at the community level that can be associated with the previously defined theoretical framework). On the other hand, it is also the approach that raises the most questions in terms of ownership by the teams.
- Photovoice is the most motivating method for teams and participants in this test.

- Group discussions and Photovoice provide a space for the population to express themselves and also produce more diverse information: they are more suited to learning.

Ultimately, we considered that the approaches to be retained are the two population-centred methods (which correspond to a modality chosen by the majority of participants in the preliminary consultation): 1) group discussions and 2) Photovoice. The first alternative seems to be the most widely applicable, while the second is very interesting for certain projects but can be difficult to implement in volatile security situations, for example.

➢ **For more details about this field test, please refer to the Results of methodological testing (interim deliverable 4).**

## 8.3 The final approach adopted: the OUT-COMs approach

All the work carried out during this research led us to formalise the OUT-COMs approach (OUT for *outcomes* and COMs for *communities*): a qualitative approach that places the population at the centre and aims to measure the outcomes of the intervention at the community level. It works in reverse to most of HI's current practices: it is not a question of identifying the changes we are seeking to bring about through the project and measuring the extent to which these changes are or are not occurring in the community, but rather of capturing all the changes that have taken place in the community over a given period and then seeing how they can be linked to the project and our objectives.

### 8.3.1 A five-step approach

The OUT-COMs approach was designed to inform the following indicator:

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*An increase in the capacity of the living environment to provide a protective, economically liveable, fair and fulfilling framework is observed at the end of the project.*

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In order to be used in a wide variety of contexts and with a diverse range of people, the data collection method is quite flexible, which requires careful consideration beforehand in order

to make the appropriate decisions about how to adapt the approach to the intervention. The analysis is based on a theoretical framework that draws on the concept of an enabling environment (presented in section 1 of this report, section 5.3).

The five steps for implementing the approach are presented below.

- **STEP 1: PLAN THE APPROACH**
  - Formalise the need
  - Identify available resources
  - Choose the most appropriate deployment methods
- **STEP 2: PRODUCE THE CHANGE STORIES**
  - Engage with the population
  - Formalise the stories of change (either through discussions or through Photovoice)
- **STEP 3: TRIANGULATE AND DISCUSS**
  - Corroborate the stories of change
  - Organise a debate/exhibition
- **STEP 4: INTERPRET THE RESULTS**
  - Assign scores to stories of change
  - Identify whether the stories relate to the community level
- **STEP 5: USE THE RESULTS**
  - Fill in the outcomes indicator
  - Communicate the results
  - Establish an action plan

Careful implementation of these five steps will enable you to capture the outcomes of the project at the community level.

### 8.3.2 Analysis of change stories: important considerations

We did not want to propose normative content regarding the information to be collected from populations in order to give them the space to express what they value – and the choice of a single question responds to this challenge. One of the delicate parts of using the approach we propose is the analysis. This is done by characterising and categorising the

stories of change produced, then comparing them with the theoretical framework we developed earlier (see 5.3). We detail three successive stages of analysis to guide this step: 1) Identify, for each story of change produced, whether it relates to the community level or not; 2) Categorise community-level change stories according to their alignment with the project's objectives and the likely contribution of the project; 3) Associate change stories that correspond to outcomes with the theoretical framework of the enabling environment in order to finalise the analysis and inform the indicator.

#### ❖ DEFINING WHETHER A STORY OF CHANGE RELATES TO THE COMMUNITY LEVEL: THE CONTRIBUTION OF "COLLECTIVE CAPACITIES" IN THIS WORK

In the scoping note that served as the starting point for this research, we explained why we found the theory of the Commons (developed by Ostrom) applied to collective capacities (based on the Capabilities approach developed by Sen) to be interesting: local communities are often able to manage their common resources (their common goods[48] ) sustainably thanks to well-designed rules and cooperation , and this collective capacity enables a group of people to enjoy resources over time that allow them to live better lives. Let us illustrate this by applying the theory to a community social protection mechanism: abuse of this mechanism by one member of the community could reduce its availability to others. To keep this mechanism functional, people must agree to allocate time and money (or other types of resources) to it, but there must also be clear rules that people respect. When this is the case, people in the community can find recourse in the face of unforeseen circumstances. It is with the same perspective that we wish to consider collective capacities – which are social,

[48] In Elinor Ostrom's work, a common pool resource is defined as a resource that has two main characteristics: rivalry and non-excludability.

- Rivalry: One person's use of the resource reduces the amount available to others. For example, if someone fishes in a pond, there will be fewer fish for other fishermen.
- Non-excludability: It is difficult, if not impossible, to exclude someone from using the resource. For example, it is difficult to prevent someone from accessing a forest to cut wood or from using communal pasture to graze their livestock.

In the absence of rivalry, we can speak of a public good – which does not always exclude the need to establish rules. Furthermore, certain forms of exclusion may be present in common goods – but they must be justified, fair and transparent in order for the collective management of the good to be sustainable and legitimate. Commons must therefore be understood as resources whose access is managed collectively and according to rules established by the community, with particular attention to power dynamics and social inclusion.

organisational and institutional in nature – as common goods. And this is how we propose to define what falls within the community level[49] , or not.

A story of change at the community level is therefore a story of change that shows an increase in opportunities for the population (collective opportunities), capable of strengthening its power to act, or at least that of a group of people. For example: following the success of the home-based early childhood development centres supported by HI, one mother decided to open her own centre and mobilised two other mothers to join her. The operation of this new centre represents an opportunity for young children in the community who did not previously attend a centre (or whose centre was too far away) and their parents. The initiative taken by these parents represents a collective capacity (coordination, investment of time, money or products, dissemination of messages, etc.) that can be sustained if the parents of other children entrust their children to them, but also if they remunerate the parents involved and/or offer their help with activities, meal preparation, or in case of unforeseen events.

We will not include stories of change at the individual level in our analysis. For example: a person was identified and referred to a service. Even if this enabled the person to then undergo training and return to work, what should be highlighted is the fact that within the community, people know how to identify and make appropriate referrals. The entire population can benefit from this opportunity if the need arises. And it is up to the community to maintain this capacity (recognising the skills required and disseminating these skills, promoting referral cases in whatever form, etc.).

Special case: A politician decides to set up a health centre in the area. The population therefore benefits from the new health centre, but this is not a community initiative: the person who has changed is the political decision-maker. Furthermore, unless there are specific issues at stake (for example, if it is a rehabilitation service and there are plans to conduct a national advocacy campaign to raise awareness of the added value of this type of

[49] As we pointed out earlier in this document (see 1.1), there has been tension from the outset between what falls within the community (collective) level – the level on which we wish to focus – and what falls within the individual level. In the literature review, as in the surveys and testimonials, we have very often relied on the needs of the individual to reflect on what the environment should provide.

service), there is probably no need to document the outcomes of the arrival of a new health service in a locality, as the benefits of access to healthcare are well established.

### ❖ A NECESSARY CATEGORISATION OF STORIES OF CHANGE: NOT ALL STORIES ARE OUTCOMES

Once community change stories have been identified, their interpretation begins with the assignment of two scores: 1) a score reflecting the level of importance of the change in relation to the project's objective (for example, to what extent the change contributes to child protection, if that is the project's objective); 2) a score associated with the level of contribution of the project to the change (for example, to what extent the change is caused by a project activity or one of its consequences). For the first score, if the changes represent obstacles to the project's objectives (the change runs counter to the project's objectives, it delays the achievement of these objectives), then a negative score will be assigned. [50]These scores will be used to establish five categories:

- Project successes: these correspond to positive change stories that are both aligned with the project's objectives (score greater than or equal to 3) and for which the project's contribution is proven (score greater than or equal to 2). These are therefore the project's successes.
- Project nuisances: these correspond to negative stories of change, i.e. those that prevent the project's objectives from being achieved (score less than or equal to -2) and where the project's contribution is also proven (score greater than or equal to 2). These are therefore the "harm" caused by the project.

Only these first two categories constitute the outcomes of the project. The other categories, as we have said, are nevertheless useful for learning purposes.

- Contextual drivers: these are positive changes that are aligned with the project's objectives – score of 2 or more in terms of alignment with the project's objectives – but to which the project has made no or very little contribution – score of 1 in terms of the project's contribution. Thus, we discover changes that contribute to the

[50] Illustrations for each of these categories are available in the Photovoice report from the Nurturing Care Project in Rwanda (2025).(French only)

achievement of the project's objectives, caused by initiatives of other actors or project stakeholders, but without the project having any influence on the idea or implementation of the initiative.

- Contextual obstacles: these correspond to negative changes that run counter to the project's objectives, even if the cause is external to the project – score of -2 or less in terms of alignment with the project's objectives; score of 1 in terms of the project's contribution. Although this is not "harm" caused by the project, these changes reveal the emergence of obstacles to the project: reluctant actors, unfavourable behaviour, etc.
- Unexpected dynamics: these are changes caused (at least in part) by the project – score of 2 or more in terms of project contribution – but which are not directly in line with the project's objectives – score of 1 or -1 in terms of alignment with the project's objectives (when the change is negative).

Therefore, to inform the impact indicator, only change stories that actually correspond to the project's outcomes, i.e. those that fall into the first two categories, should be taken into consideration.

It is also interesting to discuss, in parallel with this analysis, the objectives that the project had set itself but which are not reflected in the change stories produced.

#### ❖ LINKING TO THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO INFORM THE OUTCOMES INDICATOR

The enabling environment theoretical framework helps to structure the results by providing benchmarks for analysis and narrative. By grouping together the change stories produced that correspond to outcomes at the community level by pillar and/or sub-pillar, we can explain how the community has increased its capacity to provide a protective, economically viable, fair and/or fulfilling environment, which pillars or sub-pillars the project seems to have had the most or least effect on, etc. Referring to the theoretical framework is all the more interesting as the actual changes that have been captured may differ from those initially expected, and it is then possible to highlight them by 'labelling' them and showing how they also contribute to making the community an enabling environment. Similarly, there may be negative outcomes to consider, and positioning them by pillar or sub-pillar, comparing them

with the position of the positive outcomes, can provide a better understanding (and explanation) of the overall influence of the project.

While this testing phase was decisive in selecting and formalising the approach adopted – and thus in arriving at OUT-COMs – we can identify three limitations to this test, which will require particular attention going forward.

- Firstly, the scope of the test. Testing a single project does not allow us to know whether the results between the methods would be similar if they were implemented elsewhere (other team, other project, other area, other population). However, it was not possible to do otherwise given the available budget and the US funding crisis that had been impacting programmes and projects since the beginning of the year.
- Secondly, the acceptability of the Photovoice method. Although the issue of acceptability was monitored during the activity, we did not plan to follow up after the exhibition-debate, as the feedback from stakeholders was very positive and the use of the approach in the rest of the project had not yet been decided. We therefore have no information on any change in the level of acceptance of the activity after the fact, once the participants in the debate understood the purpose of the children's photos.
- And finally, the replicability of the analysis. Unfortunately, the project teams were not involved in analysing the data produced during the test. This was mainly due to the time available for research and the need to obtain results as quickly as possible in order to present them to the Steering Committee, but also due to a lack of time at team level (R2 preparation period) and the freezing of DGD funding in March 2025 (just after the test data had been collected) as a result of diplomatic tensions between Rwanda and Belgium. However, this involvement would have been important in order to verify the replicability of the analysis process, identify any problems that might arise, and adjust this stage of the analysis to enable a common understanding.

# Conclusion

This research, funded as part of the PREVENIR project, aimed to design a tool to measure the outcomes of HI (and its partners') projects at the community level. This report therefore traces the origins of the OUT-COMs tool.

## The research process: eight steps designed to be sensitive to gender, age, disability and conflict

The design of an approach to measuring outcomes at community level raised many questions, as the aim was to propose a solution that could be used across all our areas of intervention and working contexts and that was tailored to the profiles of the people with and for whom we implement projects. Several milestones structured the thinking process. These milestones were formalised through four interim deliverables, outlined below. Particular attention was paid to ensuring that the research process was sensitive to gender, age and disability. Appendix 3 summarises how these aspects were integrated. Similarly, we wanted to take into account aspects of conflict sensitivity, which mainly manifest themselves in the choices that a project team has to make when deploying the OUT-COMs tool. These aspects are therefore addressed in the OUT-COMs methodological guide.

The exploratory phase brought together the first stages of the research, aiming to determine what an enabling environment for HI might look like, and more specifically to define what the content of the tool we are seeking to build might be. The objective was to arrive at a conceptual proposal that made sense in relation to the projects implemented by HI and its partners.

- Stage 1 - Literature review: The aim of this first stage was to anchor the research in a theoretical framework based on the concept of an enabling environment. The literature review enabled us to propose an initial definition of this concept based on potential invariant elements.
- Step 2 – Analysis of HI documents: The aim was to align the theoretical framework outlined above with the realities of HI's interventions. We therefore formulated a

second version of the theoretical framework, incorporating the various elements drawn from the documents consulted.

**Interim deliverable 1:** A scoping note summarises the research and its principles, as well as the internal and external benchmarking that was carried out. It then addresses the various disciplines that use the concept of an enabling environment in the literature and the main trends that emerge from this in order to formulate an initial definition. The importance attached to various methodological aspects is also highlighted in order to outline some initial guidelines.

- Step 3 - Use of the PREVENIR project's midline surveys: To capture the perceptions of the populations, we were able to draw on the PREVENIR project's midline surveys. Based on a few simple questions about their living environment, we were able to enrich the theoretical framework and highlight the elements considered most important by the populations surveyed.
- Step 4 - Conducting interviews in the DRC: We incorporated other empirical data into our analysis, this time drawn from an analysis of people's life trajectories, focusing on their actual experiences rather than their perceptions.

At the end of this first phase of research, we therefore had a theoretical framework, amended through various sources, as well as elements indicating the components (sub-pillars) most likely to be of particular importance to people according to their age, gender, disabilities (or carer status).

The stabilisation and development phase consisted of steps focused on stabilising the proposed theoretical framework and methodological considerations. The aim here was to reach a concrete decision on how to measure our outcomes at the community level.

- Step 5 - Technical consultation: The aim of this fifth step was to compare the results of the work carried out in the first phase of the research (i.e. the theoretical framework ) with HI's technical expertise. This enabled us to stabilise the theoretical proposal.

**Interim deliverable 2:** HI's technical specialists were consulted using a consensus method in order to amend and validate or reject the definition of the concept of an enabling environment. The aim was also to compare the proposals with aspects related to age, gender and disability. The results of this consultation 1 present the various elements and definitions selected to characterise an enabling environment for HI.

- Step 6 – Methodological review – We consulted the literature once again to identify existing evaluation approaches. This enabled us to select several methodological approaches consistent with the theoretical framework, based on approaches that had already proven their worth.
- Step 7 – Consultation with future users: At this stage, it was essential to compare the methodological proposals with the needs and constraints of the projects. This consultation enabled us to more clearly define the options to be tested going forward.

**Interim deliverable 3:** Through consultation with project managers and MEAL officers, which aimed to ensure feasibility and relevance to the realities of the interventions, several options were selected. The results of consultation 2 present the methodological options favoured by the programme teams and the importance given to community participation.

- Step 8 - Field testing: Finally, the field test aimed to verify the performance and feasibility of the three methodological options selected at this stage. At the end of this test, we were able to stabilise the overall approach by integrating two data collection methods (to be chosen).

**Interim deliverable 4:** The results of the methodological test show how this test was implemented, what criteria were used for decision-

making, and what options were ultimately selected to form the final approach.

### Research results: the OUT-COMs tool

This research led to the design of a theoretical framework and the identification of a related data collection and analysis methodology, enabling the following indicator to be informed:

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*An improvement in the ability of the living environment to provide a protective, economically liveable, fair and nurturing framework for people is observed at the end of the project.*

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The final approach, called the OUT-COMs approach, is a qualitative approach that provides a space for the population concerned to express themselves – either through discussions or by taking photos – which works in reverse to our usual practices. It aims to formalise stories of change that have occurred in the community, then analyse all the stories of change in terms of 1) their alignment with the project's objectives, 2) the level of contribution of the project to this change, and 3) their link with the characteristics of an enabling or disabling environment.

The link between the research process, marked by different stages, and the decisions that characterise the OUT-COMs approach is explained in a summary table in Appendix 4.

To implement this OUT-COMs approach in a project, refer to the methodological guide " The OUT-COMs approach: measuring the outcomes of your project at the community level ". Now it's up to you!

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# A ppendices

## Appendix 1 – Survey form used in Niger, Burkina Faso and the DRC to capture people's perceptions of their environment

The aim of the questions is to capture people's perceptions of what an enabling environment (community or school) might be.

Two versions of the questionnaire:

- 1 general version (VG): respondents answer 4 questions.
- 1 version specific to the SAFE-SCHOOL approach, intended for R1 beneficiaries in Niger and Burkina Faso (V-R1-school). In this version, there are more questions because the respondent is asked to answer i) from the perspective of the pupils (learning conditions) and ii) as an educational actor (working conditions): the respondent answers six questions.

**VG QUESTIONNAIRE**

*The following questions concern the place of residence and what contributes to a good quality of life in that place.*

1) **How would you describe a village where people live well?** *(multiple answers possible, do not read the answers but tick the boxes that most closely match the respondent's answers. If you do not know, tick "other" and write the answer. If you have several answers in "other", separate them with a comma. If the respondent has difficulty answering, suggest the first answer as an example. If the respondent does not know, tick "Other" and indicate "NSP").*

- ❑ **A village where you feel welcome, with good neighbours**
- ❑ **A village where you feel safe, with ways to protect yourself from danger**
- ❑ **A village where everyone's rights are respected**
- ❑ **A quiet village where you can avoid stress**
- ❑ **A village where residents help each other**
- ❑ **A village where it is easy to find work**
- ❑ **A well-managed village, with effective local authorities**
- ❑ **A village where you can live as you wish**
- ❑ **A village where everyone has access to information**
- ❑ **A well-integrated village with access to public services and humanitarian aid**
- ❑ **A village that listens, where everyone can participate in decisions**
- ❑ **A village full of hope, where residents believe in a bright future**
- ❑ **Other: *(Please specify)* .....**

**2) Conversely, how would you describe a village where life is not good?** *(multiple answers possible, do not read the answers but tick the boxes that most closely match the respondent's answers. If you do not know, tick 'other' and write the answer. If you have several answers in 'other', separate them with a comma. If the person has difficulty answering, suggest the first answer as an example. If the person does not know, tick 'Other' and indicate 'NSP').*

- ❑ **A village where it is difficult to integrate and have good neighbours**
- ❑ **A dangerous village, with many risks (violence, disasters)**
- ❑ **A village where people's rights are not respected**
- ❑ **A stressful village, with no means of limiting stress**
- ❑ **A village where it is difficult to get help from others**
- ❑ **A village in economic crisis, where it is difficult to find work**
- ❑ **A poorly managed village, with ineffective local authorities**
- ❑ **A village with a lot of pressure and little freedom of choice**
- ❑ **A village where information does not circulate well**
- ❑ **A village with little access to services and humanitarian assistance**
- ❑ **A village where only a few opinions are taken into account, and others are ignored**
- ❑ **A village where residents find it difficult to believe in a bright future**
- ❑ **Other: (Please specify) .....**

*Now we would like to know your opinion about <u>your</u> village.*

**3) In your opinion, is it possible to live well in your village at present?** *(only one answer possible)*

- ❑ **Yes, absolutely**
- ❑ **Yes, somewhat**
- ❑ **No, not really**
- ❑ **No, not at all**

*If the answer to question 3 is 'Yes, absolutely' or 'Yes, somewhat', go to question 4.*

*If the answer is "No, not really" or "No, not at all", go to question 5.*

**4) If yes, what do you consider to be the most important factor for living well in your village?** *(open question, summarise the respondent's answer in a few words).*

**5) If not, what do you consider to be the biggest obstacle to living well in your village**? *(open question, summarise the respondent's answer in a few words)*

**QUESTIONNAIRE V-R1-school**

*The following questions concern the school environment and what enables pupils and educational stakeholders to flourish at school.*

**1a) How would you describe a school where pupils can thrive?** *(multiple answers possible, do not read the answers but tick the boxes that most closely match the respondent's answers. If you do not know, tick 'other' and write the answer. If you have several answers in 'other', separate them with a comma. If the respondent has difficulty answering, suggest the first answer as an example. If the respondent does not know, tick 'Other' and indicate 'NSP'.)*

- ❑ **A school where pupils feel welcome, where they can easily make friends and have good relationships with educational staff**
- ❑ **A school where pupils feel safe, where measures are in place to protect them from violence and other dangers**
- ❑ **A school where the rights of all pupils are respected**
- ❑ **A calm school where pupils can find ways to reduce their stress**
- ❑ **A school where pupils can talk about their problems and get help when they need it**
- ❑ **A school where pupils learn things that are useful for everyday life and for their future**
- ❑ **A well-managed school with clear rules and penalties if the rules are not followed**
- ❑ **A school where we can learn about things that interest us**
- ❑ **A school that helps disseminate information to students**
- ❑ **A school connected to health services, social services and dynamic cultural and leisure associations**
- ❑ **A school that listens, where pupils can participate in decisions that affect them**
- ❑ **A school that inspires hope, where pupils can dream and help build a bright future**
- ❑ **Other: *(Please specify)* .....**

**1b) How would you describe a school where educators can flourish?** *(multiple answers possible, do not read the answers but tick the boxes that most closely match the respondent's answers. If you do not know, tick 'other' and write the answer. If you have several answers in 'other', separate them with a comma. If the respondent has difficulty answering, suggest the first answer as an example. If the respondent does not know, tick 'Other' and indicate 'NSP'.*

- ❑ **A school where educators maintain good relationships with each other and with students**
- ❑ **A school where one feels safe, with means of protection from danger (violence, disasters)**
- ❑ **A school where the rights of all educational stakeholders are respected**
- ❑ **A calm school where stress can be avoided**
- ❑ **A school where you can talk about your problems and get help when you need it**
- ❑ **A school where you can find meaning in your work and develop**
- ❑ **A well-managed school where rules are enforced**
- ❑ **A school where you can have autonomy in your work (for example, to set up educational projects)**
- ❑ **A school where everyone has easy access to information**
- ❑ **A school with good links to health and social services to ensure proper monitoring of students**
- ❑ **A school that listens, where everyone can participate in decisions that affect them**
- ❑ **A school that inspires hope, where you feel that you are helping to build a bright future**
- ❑ **Other: *(Please specify)* .....**

**2a) Conversely, how would you describe a school where it is difficult for pupils to flourish?** *(multiple answers possible, do not read the answers but tick the boxes that most closely match the respondent's answers. If you do not know, tick 'other' and write the answer. If you have several answers in 'other', separate them with a comma. If the respondent has difficulty answering, suggest the first answer as an example. If the respondent does not know, tick 'Other' and indicate 'NSP'.)*

- ❑ **A school where pupils are not made to feel welcome, where it is difficult to make friends and have good relationships with educational staff**
- ❑ **A school where pupils do not feel safe, where there are no means of protecting them**
- ❑ **A school where the rights of all pupils are not respected**
- ❑ **A stressful school, where pupils have no solutions to limit their stress**
- ❑ **A school where pupils cannot talk about their problems or get help when they need it**
- ❑ **A school where pupils do not learn useful things for everyday life and for their future**
- ❑ **A poorly managed school, with vague rules and no penalties when the rules are broken**
- ❑ **A school where you cannot choose to learn about things that interest you**
- ❑ **A school that blocks information or participates in spreading false information to students**
- ❑ **A school with poor links to health services, social services and cultural and leisure associations**
- ❑ **A school where pupils cannot participate in decisions that affect them**
- ❑ **A school where students cannot hope to build a good future**
- ❑ **Other: *(Please specify)* .....**

**2) How would you describe a school where it is difficult for educators to flourish?** *(multiple answers possible, do not read the answers but tick the boxes that most closely match the respondent's answers. If you do not know, tick 'other' and write the answer. If you have several answers in 'other', separate them with a comma. If the respondent has difficulty answering, suggest the first answer as an example. If the respondent does not know, tick 'Other' and indicate 'NSP'.)*

- ❑ **A school where educational staff do not have good relationships with each other or with students**
- ❑ **A school where one does not feel safe, with no means of protecting oneself from danger (violence, disasters)**
- ❑ **A school where the rights of educational staff are not respected**
- ❑ **A stressful school, with no means of limiting/managing stress**
- ❑ **A school where you cannot talk about your problems or get help when you need it**
- ❑ **A school where you cannot find meaning in your work or develop**
- ❑ **A poorly managed school, where the rules are unclear or not respected**
- ❑ **A school where you cannot have autonomy in the practice of your profession**
- ❑ **A school where access to information is difficult**
- ❑ **A school that is poorly connected to health and social services**
- ❑ **A school where educators cannot participate in decisions that affect them**
- ❑ **A school where educators do not feel that they are contributing to building a bright future**
- ❑ **Other: *(Please specify)* .....**

*Now we would like to know your opinion about your school.*

**3) In your opinion, is it possible to thrive in your school at present?** *(only one answer possible)*

- ❑ **Yes, absolutely**
- ❑ **Yes, somewhat**
- ❑ **No, not really**
- ❑ **No, not at all**

*If the answer to question 3 is 'Yes, absolutely' or 'Yes, somewhat', go to question 4.*

*If the answer is 'No, not really' or 'No, not at all', go to question 5.*

**4) If yes, what do you consider to be the most important factor in helping you thrive at your school**? *(open-ended question, summarise the respondent's answer in a few words).*

**5) If not, what do you consider to be the biggest obstacle preventing you from thriving at your school?** *(open-ended question, summarise the respondent's answer in a few words)*

# Appendix 2 – Interview guide used in the DRC to collect life stories

**Introduction**: My name is Lise. I work for HI, and I am here today to talk to several people from this village/site.

**Objective:** I would like to better understand your life story and work with you to identify what, at the community level, is a lever or, on the contrary, an obstacle to leading a good life. The information gathered from our discussion will be used to improve HI's long-term interventions (not the project you are currently benefiting from).

**Why you?** Everyone has interesting things to say that could serve as a source of inspiration for us. However, I cannot interview everyone.

- I am proposing you on the advice of…
- I am proposing you because you have expressed a desire to participate
- I am proposing you so that we can discuss the situation you encountered, due to…

**Conditions of participation:**

- Voluntary participation: You have the right to participate or not to participate. This will have no impact on the assistance you receive, in either case, nor on your future relationship with HI teams.
- Anonymity: Your participation will be anonymous; your name will not be disclosed at any time. I will, however, take notes of our discussion. I will process the data myself, and therefore I will be the only one with access to what we discuss today.

**Procedure:**

- Duration: approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour
- We can discuss this now or schedule an appointment for later.

**Consent:**

- Do you agree to participate?
- Where would you feel most comfortable discussing this?
- Are you ready? Shall we begin?

If you feel uncomfortable during the discussion, please do not hesitate to tell me why. Similarly, if you want us to stop, please do not hesitate to let me know.

If you have any questions afterwards, or if you would like to share a comment or complaint about our discussion, please do not hesitate to contact the freephone number (*card distributed with the number*).

**Characteristics of the person:** Age group, gender

Before you tell me about your life, I would first like to know how you are feeling. I also need to know if I need to adapt the interview to make our discussion easier/more pleasant.

1. Do you have any vision problems, [even with your glasses]?
2. Do you have difficulty hearing, [even with hearing aids]?
3. Do you have difficulty walking? (e.g. that would prevent you from going elsewhere or make you more comfortable for this conversation)
4. Do you have difficulty remembering things or concentrating? (e.g. if I talk to you about the past; if this interview takes a little longer than expected)
5. Do you have difficulty taking care of yourself (getting dressed, washing)?
6. Do you have difficulty communicating in your usual language, understanding others or making yourself understood?

Is there anything else you would like me to know that might hinder or, on the contrary, facilitate the discussion?

**OVERALL TRAJECTORY**

- Changes in the household situation: from the time you settled here (start of independent life for men or married life for women) to the present, taking into account family composition (dependents), activities carried out, coverage of basic needs (access to food and water, school, healthcare, housing), ability to cope with the vagaries of daily life

⇨ Identify periods of prosperity, periods of difficulty, opportunities, shocks

- Focus on shocks (in the past): how they were overcome / what resources (including community resources) were mobilised / how things could have gone better – what support was lacking (particularly at the community level) and would have been beneficial.

- Focus on opportunities (in the past): what explains these opportunities – what enabled you to seize them (and perhaps not other people) / are there any opportunities that you missed – what could have helped you to seize them (particularly support from the community)

**CURRENT SITUATION**

- Description of the current situation: how does it compare to other households in the community?

- Risks: perceived risks (in general) / what are the means of protecting yourself against them / if the problem arises, what are your possible recourses?

- Personal well-being: level of stress or serenity / what or who can you rely on to feel better if necessary

- Aspirations: what the individual would like to do (to improve their living conditions, make an investment, develop an activity, etc.), and why (where did the idea come from, in particular) / what could facilitate this / what are the difficulties in doing so (obstacles/fears)

**EXPECTATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY**

- Overall, what do you currently feel you can rely on within your community? (What help, information, protection, etc.)
- What are your expectations of other people in the community (relatives, neighbours, community authorities)?

*Acknowledgements*

*If possible, ask if you can take a photo and/or quote certain parts of the discussion in internal communications (newsletter).*

# Appendix 3 – Some elements for conducting research that is as sensitive as possible to disability, gender and age

| | STEP | DESCRIPTION | APPROACH TO ENSURE HGA SENSITIVITY | LIMITATIONS/POINTS TO CONSIDER |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DECISION | **Definition of the scope of the research** | When defining the scope, the following question must be answered: "Which population will use the final tool?" | We began by detailing the profiles that could be concerned so as not to overlook certain specificities and needs: children, elderly people, men, women, people with different types of disabilities. | |
| RESEARCH PROCESS (approach) | **Internal benchmark** | Inventory of existing/used tools of interest within HI that may be directly or indirectly related to the research topic | The inventory also took into account tools specific to certain profiles, even if they are less relevant to the research topic (children, women, survivors of violence, persons with disability) – as potential sources of inspiration. | The internal benchmark does not claim to be exhaustive (depending on what is available in HiLibrary/Hinside, the availability of resource persons; old documents probably not identified) |
| | **External benchmark** | Inventory of existing tools of interest outside HI that may be directly or indirectly related to the research topic | The inventory focused in particular on tools specific to certain profiles that are potentially less directly addressed in HI tools (here: LGBTQIA+ communities; deaf community; people living with HIV; schoolchildren; elderly people; carers; women; workers) | The external benchmark does not claim to be exhaustive.<br>The categories of populations with specific needs were chosen in a reasoned manner to provide a slightly different perspective (compared to the internal benchmark). |
| | **Literature review (theory)** | Consultation of research on the research topic and related topics in different disciplines. | The literature review was conducted by keyword but also by profile type (in this case: LGBTQIA+ communities; deaf community; people living with HIV; schoolchildren; elderly people; carers; women; workers)<br>Research was also conducted on the consequences of intersectionality in relation to the research topic | The literature review does not claim to be exhaustive.<br>The categories of populations with specific needs considered were chosen on a reasoned basis (as for the external benchmark). |
| | **Analysis of HI documents** | Inventory and analysis of the content of sectoral and multisectoral documents and cross-cutting approaches related to community approaches | The inventory took into account documents specific to certain profiles, even if they are less relevant to community-based approaches | Specific interviews on HGA aspects were conducted in parallel (as not all of HI's international expertise is formalised in the available documents) |

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| | **Exploratory data collection** | Data collection to gather people's perceptions of the characteristics of a favourable living environment and their assessment of their environment at the time of the interview (midline survey + FGD depending on the country). | The questions were formulated as simply as possible and adapted to the context (so that people would feel more comfortable speaking in the FGDs).<br>The profile of the people surveyed was recorded (age, gender, disability). During the analysis, the data were disaggregated according to HGA.<br>The FGDs were designed to gather children's perceptions. | Sampling for the midline survey was carried out by the MEAL teams based on the activities of the PREVENIR project, which meant that not all profiles were represented. The data collectors were not persons with disability. Although some data collectors were used to working with HI, including a module on better HGA inclusion in their training would probably have been beneficial.<br>In Palestine and Mali, FGDs could not be held, so the data processed only includes respondents from Niger, DRC and Burkina Faso.<br>The low number of respondents by type of disability/level of disability severity meant that these elements could not be included in the analysis. |
| | **Mission 1: Interviews with the population** | Conducting life story interviews with a panel of the population in the DRC | The panel of people to be interviewed was selected by cross-referencing HGA criteria (women with school-age children; girls with motor disabilities; etc.).<br>The questions were formulated as simply as possible and adapted to the context; visual aids were used when necessary. | Working in only one country of intervention meant that it was not possible to compare the perceptions of women in different countries or the gender gap in different countries, for example. |
| | **Consultation 1** | Delphi method to obtain consensus among HI technical specialists on the elements that constitute an enabling environment, i.e. the content of the tool being designed (online questionnaire) | The consultation was open to all technical specialists, both at headquarters and in the field.<br>Information on respondents' HGA expertise was requested during the consultation to verify the level of coverage of these aspects in the feedback provided by participants. | Participants' expertise was captured on the basis of self-declaration rather than job title. |
| | **Consultation 2** | Consultation with project managers and MEAL officers in two stages: online form followed by a workshop to consolidate the responses to the online form. The consultation focused | | The issue of specificities related to HGA was not taken into account at this stage. |

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| | | on methodological options and the scope of the test to determine the final format of the tool. | | |
| | **Mission 2: Methodological testing** | Implementation of the methodological test (deployment of the tool and testing of possible options in order to decide on the most appropriate ones) in one field. | Three methods were tested. The decision was made to work with children aged 9 to 12, both girls and boys, including children with disabilities. The analysis of the profiles of the test participants was to be verified subsequently, using the CFM databases. | To our knowledge, only one disabled girl participated in the test. The CFM data that we planned to refer to was ultimately not available. |
| RESULTS | **Research report** | A research report has been written. | The research report has been checked for compliance with internal accessibility rules as far as possible. | There was no time to have the report reviewed by HGA experts prior to publication. |
| | **Toolkit** | A toolkit is made available to teams | The methodological approach/tools proposed have been screened using a dedicated checklist to verify that HGA has been taken into account in the data collection processes.<br>A number of recommended practices for effective HGA inclusion are explained for each stage of the tool's deployment, to the best of our knowledge. | **TO DO: Communication materials for gathering feedback from the population once the tool has been deployed must be provided in addition to facilitate communication that does not reinforce stereotypes.** |

# Appendix 4 – Summary table of the various decisions taken during the PREVENIR research project that led to the OUT-COMs approach

| Characteristics of the OUT-COMs approach | Why/how was this decision made? | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| 1 **The measurable concept chosen is that of an enabling environment** | The concept of an enabling environment is used in the 1990 United Nations report and presented as the ultimate goal of development.<br>This concept is now particularly relevant in work on inequality and, more generally, on development, working conditions, living environments for persons with disability, learning conditions and human rights. | The literature review identified other alternatives, but these were less convincing.<br>For more details, please refer to the Scoping Note, pp. 12-13. |
| 2 **HI's definition of an enabling environment comprises four pillars and 12 sub-pillars.** | The construction and stabilisation of this theoretical framework was a significant part of this research. Several steps led to this choice: a literature review, analysis of HI documents, surveys and interviews with local populations, and consultation with technical specialists in order to reach a multisectoral consensus. | For more details on all the stages involved in constructing this theoretical framework, please refer to the Final Research Report, stages 1 to 5.<br>For more details specifically on the consultation process and the opinions of the technical specialists who participated, please refer to Consultation Results 1. |
| 3 **The OUT-COMs approach is a qualitative approach** | The decision to use a qualitative approach provides the flexibility needed to 1) adapt to HI's different areas of intervention and 2) adapt to the different profiles of the people concerned.<br>The emphasis was placed on understanding changes (causes/consequences) in order to overcome the criticisms levelled at other HI outcome measurement tools, such as ScoPeO. | It is important to respect the wording of the impact indicator associated with the OUT-COMs approach: "An increase in the capacity of the living environment to provide a protective, economically liveable, fair and nurturing environment is observed at the end of the project."<br>OUT-COMs does not allow for the provision of a number or percentage. |
| 4 **The pillars and sub-pillars that make up the enabling environment for HI are not ranked in order of importance.** | Leading proponents of the Capabilities Approach, such as M. Nussbaum, advocate for a holistic consideration of human needs. This was confirmed by interviews conducted in displacement sites in the DRC, where respondents sometimes prioritised aspects related to the fulfilment of populations over the coverage of basic needs. | It is therefore not useful to truncate the outcomes indicator to retain only one of the pillars; it is the analysis that will reveal how the project has contributed to improving the living environment... and sometimes in unexpected ways! |
| 5 **The OUT-COMs approach is deployed in the middle or at the end of the project** | The decision not to base the approach on a Baseline + Endline stems from the observation that many tools and survey are already in place when the project starts. The aim is therefore not to overload the teams. | Approaching change retrospectively, as OUT-COMs proposes, can be more difficult if the context has been significantly disrupted during the project (natural disaster, conflict, etc.), as the changes that come to mind for participants will be more closely linked to this event. If a very significant change is anticipated, it is best to implement OUT-COMs in the middle of the project (e.g. before the hurricane season) and then at |

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| | | | the end of the project, in order to capture elements related to the first part of the project. |
| 6 | **The OUT-COMs approach works "backwards" and focuses on actual changes** | Due to the difficulty of mobilising a working group at the time of the US funding crisis in early 2025, it was decided to base the methodological reflection on an Outcomes Harvesting approach and to work with the available contacts from this initial proposal in order to get into the subject more quickly and minimise the need to mobilise them.<br><br>Furthermore, focusing on actual changes ensures that many lessons can be learned from the impact measurement exercise, even if the expected outcomes are not fully achieved. In particular, it is a way of approaching potential negative outcomes from a "Do No Harm" perspective. | For a quick overview of Outcomes Harvesting, please refer to the one-page note Outcomes Harvesting.<br><br>An alternative that had been considered beforehand was that of role-playing. However, technical specialists raised concerns due to certain experiences that were unconvincing or even damaging to the key messages conveyed by the project. |
| 7 | **The OUT-COMs approach includes a space for people to express themselves (participatory approach)** | The idea of providing a space for people to express themselves as part of the approach stems from the desire to align the approach with the spirit of community-based approaches, which are often participatory in nature.<br><br>Consultation with future users of the approach, namely Project Managers and MEALs, aimed in particular to determine at which stages it would be beneficial to adopt as participatory an approach as possible and at which stages they would prefer decision-making to be carried out by HI teams (and possibly partners). | For more details on the consultation process with project managers and MEALs and on the results, please refer to Consultation Results 2. |
| 8 | **The space provided for people to express themselves within the OUT-COMs framework can take the form of either discussions or a Photovoice** | The methodological test made it possible to compare the performance and feasibility of three options simultaneously. While one of the options was rejected following the test, the other two were retained. When deploying OUT-COMs, the team must decide on the most appropriate way to produce stories of change, discussions or Photovoice. | For more details on the testing process, the indicators used for decision-making and the results, please refer to the Methodological Test Results.<br><br>To facilitate decision-making, a decision tree is provided in the Methodological Guide. |
| 9 | **The OUT-COMs approach includes an analysis of the project's contribution** | A project outcome is a change that has occurred and has been influenced by the project. Integrating consideration of the project's contribution into the approach ensures that this essential aspect is not overlooked. | For more details on contribution analysis in general, refer to the Scoping Note, pp. 42-43.<br><br>In the context of OUT-COMs, there are two possibilities: the contribution analysis can be carried out by the project team or directly by the populations. Refer to the Methodological Guide for more details. |
| 10 | **The concept of an enabling environment is used for the analysis (and not to guide data collection).** | The OUT-COMs approach, as well as its theoretical framework, developed through this research, is intended to be multi-sectoral and appropriate in the vast majority of contexts. The use of a general, non-prescriptive approach has the advantage of being directly applicable to all types of | While this choice facilitates data collection by offering a method that is valid in the vast majority of cases, it requires more careful consideration when analysing the data. |

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| | projects, as it does not require the prior definition of normative content. | However, the advantage would be to be able to analyse outcomes common to various projects. |
| **11** **The OUT-COMs approach is deployed by project teams** | The OUT-COMs approach first requires preliminary consideration to decide on the best way to deploy it within the specific framework of the project concerned. Providing a space for people to express themselves also requires that relationships of trust have already been established (although this is not mandatory) and that the project activities are well understood, even if they are not directly mentioned. This is why the project team is often best placed to implement the approach. It is not recommended to use consultants in this case. | Although the project team is generally best placed to implement the OUT-COMs approach, it is nevertheless advisable to involve the MEAL team in order to benefit from an outside perspective. If the database containing all the stories of change is correctly filled in, the MEAL team can participate in the analysis. |

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# FINAL REPORT - Towards a tool for measuring the outcomes of HI's interventions at community and territorial level: Genesis of the OUT-COMs approach

The aim of this research was to identify and formalise a method for measuring the outcomes of HI projects at community level. The final report outlines the various stages involved in this process, in order to explain the different decisions that were taken and which led to the development of the OUT-COMs approach.

The research process drew on a variety of methods: literature review, formal consultations with resource persons, surveys in different HI intervention areas, semi-structured interviews, and methodological testing within the framework of an HI project.

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