



Interim Impact Report

August
2025

Executive summary

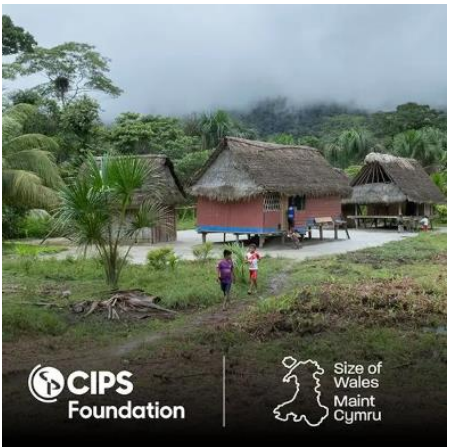
CIPS Foundation awards grants to charities supporting projects that improve supply chains to eradicate poor practices, and bursaries to individuals to complete their studies. By embedding responsible sourcing practices and fostering fair, transparent, ethical supply chains, procurement transforms purchasing decisions into catalysts for positive change.

In 2025 we are supporting four transformative projects that are driving ethical procurement, social impact, and sustainability across the UK and internationally. These initiatives—Unseen, Size of Wales, Children’s Book Project, and ActionAid Rwanda—are making measurable progress against their KPIs, delivering tangible outcomes in data innovation, deforestation-free supply chains, literacy infrastructure, and food security. This report outlines progress made during the first 6 months of these projects and the environmental and social impact they have made against many of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Key highlights include:

- **Unseen** revolutionising modern slavery intelligence with tech upgrades and business engagement.
- **Size of Wales** embedding deforestation-free public procurement practices across Welsh councils and suppliers to support indigenous communities in Africa, South America and South East Asia.
- **Children’s Book Project** undergoing a CIPS procurement transformation to scale children’s access to books nationally.
- **ActionAid Rwanda** empowering 3,300 women farmers to boost nutrition, income, and climate resilience.

These projects exemplify the Foundation’s commitment to ethical, inclusive, and sustainable procurement practices.



Project highlights - Unseen

About Unseen

Unseen is a UK charity providing safehouses and support in the community for survivors of trafficking and modern slavery. They also run the UK Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline and work with individuals, communities, business, governments, other charities and statutory agencies to stamp out slavery for good.

Project update

The CIPS Foundation grant will enable Unseen to enhance data systems to provide businesses with timely, accurate intelligence on exploitation risks in UK supply chains.

Unseen has made important strides in strengthening the data foundations of the UK Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline, with direct benefits for businesses seeking to secure ethical supply chains. A major milestone has been the rollout of Computer Telephony Integration (CTI), which has replaced a manual nine-year process and now allows helpline staff to instantly access caller histories, saving time and improving the quality of data captured.

The team has also redesigned call flows to streamline reporting, begun upgrading the online webform to enhance the amount of actionable information entered in initial webforms to action cases more efficiently, and improve data capture.

The project has also looked ahead to its next phase, a modernised insights portal, improved referral workflows, and Power BI dashboards for dynamic data visualisation.

Alongside these developments, Unseen's Business Services Team continues to deliver tangible impact. In 2024 alone, the Business Portal alerted companies to 57 potential cases of exploitation involving an estimated 190 workers, with tailored guidance provided to help businesses respond. With 15 dedicated consultants now working across sectors, Unseen is scaling its support for ethical procurement, ensuring that UK businesses can better identify, prevent, and respond to exploitation in their supply chains.



Progress against KPIs - Unseen

UN Goals



Impact Highlights

Faster, more accurate intelligence is being developed for businesses on modern slavery risks, increasing their ability to act on exploitation. Through the Business Portal, 57 alerts to potential exploitation cases were sent to registered users, and more sector engagement, with dedicated consultancy and training has been rolled out.

Key Achievements

Technology Enhancements

- Rolled out **Computer Telephony Integration (CTI)** – now automatically links repeat callers with case histories, replacing a nine-year manual process.
- Implemented a redesigned **call flow** to improve efficiency and data accuracy for Helpline Advisors.
- Began upgrading the **webform platform** to improve quality of data captured at first contact.

Data & Team Development

- Upskilled the Data Team with support from the Technology Consultant, increasing resilience and analytical capacity.
- Strengthened data capture and made improvements to the data model laying the groundwork for more robust business intelligence outputs.

Business Services Impact

- In 2024, the **Business Portal alerted businesses to 57 potential cases of exploitation**, involving an estimated **190 workers**.

- Provided tailored modern slavery remediation guidance to those businesses.
- Expanded Business Services Team to 15 consultants, actively engaging across sectors to deliver training, consultancy, and intelligence-sharing.

Next Steps

- Improve email deliverability and operational infrastructure for more efficient data entry.
- Enhance referral workflows and explore new technologies to support this.
- Major upgrade to the webform platform.
- Modernise the case insights portal and automate insight generation.
- Explore Power BI dashboards for dynamic reporting and better data visualisation.
- Implement rich text case comments, stronger data validation, and streamlined data cleaning tools (moving away from manual Excel-based workflows).

Key Successes

- CTI rollout – a major milestone improving efficiency and data quality.
- Noticeable improvement in data team confidence and skills.
- Clear strategy for Phase 2, including optimising and innovating our data through the adoption of new technologies such as an AI driven data structuring tool and enhanced insight-sharing with businesses.

Challenges

- Iterative nature of tech enhancements requires continuous adjustment and testing.
- Balancing day-to-day helpline operations with implementing new systems.

Lessons Learned

- Investing in team upskilling alongside tech improvements ensures long-term resilience.
- Incremental changes, like redesigned call flows, can have immediate impact on efficiency and accuracy.
- Strong collaboration with external tech partners has been critical to progress.

Project highlights - Size of Wales

About Size of Wales

Size of Wales works with Indigenous and local people across Africa, South America and South East Asia to grow trees and protect at least 2 million hectares of tropical forests – an area the size of Wales. They educate and inspire people in Wales to recognise the critical role Indigenous communities play in protecting the climate, biodiversity, and livelihoods. Size of Wales also campaign to drive policy change and are calling for Wales to become the world's first Deforestation Free Nation.

Project update

Between January and June 2025, Size of Wales has significantly advanced efforts to embed deforestation-free procurement across Wales. Through training workshops with 11 public bodies and 8 major suppliers, 92% of participants reported greater confidence in identifying forest-risk commodities such as palm oil, soy, and beef.

This work is already translating into action: Cardiff Council has adopted a new procurement

policy with explicit deforestation-free commitments, while key suppliers including Castell Howell, Harlech Foods and Andrew Rhys Butchers have begun auditing their supply chains and exploring sustainable alternatives.

A distinctive strength of the project has been the role of young people in influencing change. Primary school pupils in Carmarthenshire, Rhondda Cynon Taff council, and Aberdare have audited school menus, and engaged directly with Wales' largest wholesaler, and even persuaded councils to reduce palm oil use.

This intergenerational approach is helping to bring procurement decisions closer to the end consumer while fostering a culture of global responsibility. Challenges remain, particularly in engaging the dairy sector and scaling up supply chain audits, but the early signs of policy shifts, supplier action, and youth-led advocacy demonstrate the project's strong impact and momentum.



Progress against KPIs – Size of Wales

UN Goals



Impact Highlights

The impact of the Size of Wales education programme is evident in Cardiff Council's procurement policy, demonstrating how engagement can directly shape ethical procurement at scale across the supply chain. School children influencing suppliers and councils demonstrates the power of youth voices in shaping future food systems and sourcing decisions.

Key Achievements

Training & Awareness

- Delivered four workshops (hybrid, online, and in-person) to 11 public bodies (61% of target) and 8 suppliers (47%).
- 92% of participants reported increased confidence in identifying forest-risk commodities (soy, palm oil, beef).
- Positive feedback highlighted greater awareness of links between Welsh supply chains and global deforestation.

Supply Chain Audits & Business Action

- Three of the largest suppliers have begun auditing their supply chains using Size of Wales' toolkit.
- Wales' largest wholesaler is developing a comprehensive Deforestation Policy, reviewing sourcing of high-risk corned beef, and considering soy-free feed alternatives.
- Smaller suppliers such as Andrew Rhys Butchers and Harlech Foods have started to question their suppliers and integrate audit tools.

Public Body Action Plans

- **Cardiff Council** adopted a new Socially Responsible Procurement Policy with explicit deforestation-free commitments.

- **Rhondda Cynon Taf Council** has removed some palm oil products and committed to RSPO-certified alternatives.
- **Bridgend Council** is engaging with schools and council members on forest-risk food reduction.

Youth Engagement

- Pupils from **Cross Hands and Teilo Sant Primary Schools** presented findings on their review of school menus to their key supplier, calling for deforestation-free sourcing and Fairtrade cocoa.
- Schools in **Aberdare and Gwauncelyn** worked with councils on palm oil and hosted events with procurement officers to influence their decisions on school meals provision and responsible sourcing.
- New intergenerational work linking schools and care homes is planned in Caerphilly.

Resources & Advocacy

- Produced training resources, audit tools, and a highlights video for wider sharing across procurement networks.
- Shared real-world case studies (e.g., Monmouthshire Council's deforestation-free work) to inspire action.

Progress Against KPIs

- Engagement: On track – 11/18 public bodies and 8/17 suppliers engaged.
- Knowledge: On track – 92% of participants report increased understanding.
- Supply chain audits: Behind schedule – 3 businesses engaged so far, alternative approaches being explored (e.g., dairy sector farm visits).
- Youth engagement: 2 strong examples to date, more planned in new school term.

Challenges & Lessons Learned

- Difficulties managing hybrid training – future sessions will be either in-person or fully online.
- Harder to engage the dairy sector – alternative farm-based approaches are planned.
- Indigenous Peoples' testimonies are powerful in motivating participants to act.

Project highlights– Children’s Book Project

About the Children's Book Project

The Children’s Book Project seeks to tackle book poverty and to give every child the opportunity to own their own book.

The charity believes empowering children to choose a book they are motivated to read and in the power of reading communities. They put on book gifting events that are inclusive, joyful and have a tangible impact on every family that participates, distributing over 520,000 books a year.

Project update

Supported by the CIPS Foundation, a diagnostic assessment of the Children’s Book Project (CBP) was carried out using a tailored version of the CIPS Global Standard for Procurement Excellence to set the charity up for future growth. The diagnostic delivers a detailed gap analysis with practical recommendations and tools to help CBP strengthen its procurement function, reduce risks, and build a scalable infrastructure to

support their growth target of distributing a million books to children by 2026.

The process will help them grow sustainably and in line with their values, looking at their core focus functions like warehousing and logistics to be able to move even more books to those children that need them.

The review analysed CBP’s procurement maturity across leadership, strategy, people, processes, and performance, using stakeholder interviews and documentation review to benchmark against 40 best-practice criteria.

The assessment recognised CBP’s early-stage procurement capability and voluntary-sector context, identifying strengths alongside clear areas for development.



Progress against KPIs – Children’s Book Project

UN Goals



Impact Highlights

This project is a turning point for Children’s Book Project. It will provide the charity with professionalised procurement systems that both safeguard operations and enable sustainable scale-up, ensuring more children and communities across the UK benefit from access to books and improved literacy.

Project Aim

To strengthen CBP’s procurement systems and infrastructure, by utilising CIPS Advisor Services, ensuring the charity can scale nationally while reducing risks and maintaining its values-led approach.

Diagnostic Findings

Overall maturity score: 1.5/4 – between *Emerging* and *Progressing*.

Strengths identified

- Strong values-led culture with focus on sustainability and social impact.
- Effective use of the CRM system for stakeholder and impact tracking.
- High partnership potential, including collaborations with Asda.

Key gaps identified

- No Procurement Policy or Strategy in place.
- Lack of formal accountability for procurement.
- No standardised contract management or supplier performance processes.
- Under-use of systems for procurement.
- Warehouse and logistics challenges that could limit future growth.

Implementation Priorities (Apr–Oct 2025)

Seven focus areas are being implemented to build fit-for-purpose procurement infrastructure:

- Warehousing – optimise current/future storage and reduce bottlenecks.
- Logistics – improve transport efficiency and sustainability in book flow.
- Waste & Materials – embed circular economy practices and sustainability scorecards.
- Systems – enhance data visibility and spend tracking.
- People Development – provide toolkits and training for ethical, light-touch procurement.
- Performance Tracking – introduce KPIs, dashboards, and supplier scorecards.
- Final Review – re-score maturity, hand over templates, and embed best practice.

Expected Outcomes by Oct 2025

- Maturity score increase from 1.5 to 2.5 (clear progression).
- Scalable procurement infrastructure aligned with CBP’s mission and values.
- Documented, transparent processes reducing risk and improving governance.
- Tools and training that empower staff without adding burden.
- Stronger supplier management and accountability systems.

Governance & Next Steps

- The work is fully supported by CIPS and led by an experienced procurement professional.
- Delivered collaboratively, in a “light-touch” style that reflects CBP’s culture.

Board actions

Endorse implementation priorities and timeline.
Approve the appointment of a Procurement Lead.
Ensure oversight of risk mitigation, particularly in warehousing/logistics.

Project highlights – ActionAid Rwanda

About ActionAid

ActionAid is a global federation working in over 70 countries to achieve social change, gender equality and to address the structural causes of poverty and injustice.

Project update

In Rwanda, ActionAid is supporting 3,300 women smallholder farmers to build resilient food systems and tackle hunger. The CIPS Foundation Funding, alongside funding from the European Commission, provides training for women farmers in sustainable resilient farming practises.

Tackling food insecurity and malnutrition in Rwanda by empowering 3,300 women smallholder farmers across 110 cooperatives with sustainable farming skills, improved access to markets and finance, and stronger resilience to climate change.

The project is aligned with Rwanda's national agricultural transformation strategy and places women's economic empowerment at its core.

Over 80% of farmers have adopted agroecological practices such as mulching, composting and natural pest control, leading to a four-fold increase in soybean yields and new income opportunities like soy milk and tofu production. Through nutrition training, over 4,000 families have improved their diets, with 36 children already moving out of malnutrition.

Farmers have also saved over £112,000 through cooperative groups, reinvesting in livestock and inputs, while new partnerships with schools are creating stable local markets. These changes are not only improving food security today but building women's economic independence and climate resilience for the future.



Progress to date – ActionAid Rwanda

UN Goals



Impact Highlights

Women farmers are leading the transformation of Rwanda’s food systems. In just six months, they have boosted production, improved community nutrition, and saved over £100,000 through cooperative schemes — building resilience against climate shocks and driving local food security.

Key Achievements

- Adoption of agroecology: 83% of farmers now use techniques such as minimum tilling, mulching, and integrated pest management. 85% have set up composting structures, already recognised by local districts for wider rollout.
- Boosted production & nutrition: Soybean yields have increased four-fold, with one cooperative producing soy milk and tofu, creating both nutrition and income opportunities.
- Community nutrition impact: 218 “trainers” reached over 4,000 families, enabling 2,500 parents to prepare healthier meals; 36 children moved out of malnutrition risk levels.
- Financial empowerment: Farmers saved £112,519, of which £81,250 was loaned back into farms (livestock, inputs, etc.). 85 new Village Saving Loan Associations (VSLAs) established.
- Supply chain linkages: Five cooperatives are already supplying produce to 13 schools, with 92 schools engaged in negotiations for longer-term contracts.
- Environmental resilience: 330,000 tree seedlings distributed and widespread uptake of vermicomposting to improve soil fertility and crop yields.

Progress Against Outcomes

- Supply chain diversity & capacity: Strong uptake of agroecological and nutrition-sensitive practices, improved marketing skills, and early steps in formalising school supply contracts.
- Supply chain efficiency: Farmers applying eco-friendly post-harvest techniques; large-scale rollout of cold storage, irrigation pumps, milling, and vermicomposting scheduled for later in 2025.
- Supply chain resilience: Growing financial access through cooperatives, savings schemes, and training; strengthened market links via district shows and advocacy with government leaders.

Challenges

- Land insecurity – landowners sometimes reclaim improved plots; mitigated through formal contracts with local leaders.
- Low soil fertility & acidity – addressed through composting, crop diversification, and greenhouse seedling production.
- Seed shortages & costs – tackled by working with partners to establish greenhouses for Irish potato mini-tubers.
- Funding delays – late donor disbursements slowed some activities, but plans are on track for full rollout in the second half of Year Two.

Lessons Learned

- Field-based, hands-on learning drives long-term adoption of practices.
- Close collaboration with local leaders ensures ownership and sustainability.
- Linking with other ActionAid programmes extends impact beyond this three-year project.
- Lasting change requires mindset shifts alongside technical knowledge.

Next steps

All four projects are tracking to the agreed key performance indicators and are making good progress. The projects cover many of the UN Sustainable Development goals and are having a direct impact on the communities across the world.

This ActionAid video shows first-hand how investment in educating women farmers in Rwanda is helping them to be more financially independent and better able to support their children's education.

The projects that CIPS Foundation fund all deliver long-term sustainable change. CIPS Foundation aligns with everything we stand for as procurement professionals and members of CIPS, driving positive change by promoting and embedding ethical and sustainable best practice procurement.

A full impact report will be published in early 2026 once the projects conclude.



Short films for each project have been produced to showcase their impact. These are available to view here.

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8X9hTyAg6_SO-FqKRgZLHsMOynAAG_nN&si=JJxoDY2GEbd0jzfv

ActionAid impact video

[Click here](#) to view the video below to see how women farmers in Rwanda are becoming more financially independent through the programme.





About CIPS Foundation

CIPS Foundation is a linked charity of CIPS, the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply. We award grants to support charities and individuals with the aim to improve global supply chains through better education and best practice.

Our grants apply ethical and sustainable standards to alleviate societal challenges aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals to build ethical supply chains that are committed to:

1. Eradicating corruption
2. Reducing the impact on the environment
3. Improving the lives of communities and citizens globally

Find out more at www.cips.org