

# JOINT EVALUATION REPORT

May 2019

## UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage





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# UNFPA-UNICEF GLOBAL PROGRAMME TO ACCELERATE ACTION TO END CHILD MARRIAGE

## JOINT EVALUATION

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# CONTENTS

<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Résumé analytique</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Resumen ejecutivo</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>32</b>
1.1 Background and strategy of UNFPA/UNICEF support to end child marriage	33
1.2 UNFPA and UNICEF global programme approach	34
1.3 Objectives and scope of evaluation	37
<b>2. Methodology</b>	<b>39</b>
2.1 Evaluation approach	40
2.2 Evaluation phases and work plan	41
2.3 Evaluation design and methodology	41
2.4 Evaluation matrix and questions	43
2.5 Analysis and validation	44
2.6 Evaluation limitations	44
<b>3. Main findings and analysis</b>	<b>45</b>
3.1 Global programme logic	46
3.2 Relevance and responsiveness	52
3.3 Programme effectiveness	66
3.4 Sustainability	97
3.5 Governance and management effectiveness and efficiency	115
<b>4. Conclusions</b>	<b>146</b>
4.1 Relevance and responsiveness	147
4.2 Programme effectiveness	148
4.3 Sustainability	149
4.4 Governance and management effectiveness and efficiency	150
<b>5. Recommendations</b>	<b>151</b>



# ACRONYMS

<b>APRO</b>	Asia Pacific Regional Office (UNFPA)
<b>ASRO</b>	Arab States Regional Office (UNFPA)
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AWP</b>	Annual work plan
<b>C4D</b>	Communication for Development
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
<b>EMG</b>	Joint UNFPA-UNICEF Evaluation Management Group
<b>ESARO</b>	East and Southern Africa Regional Office
<b>GPECM</b>	UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage
<b>GPSU</b>	Global Programme Support Unit
<b>GRF</b>	Global Results Framework
<b>HDI</b>	Human Development Index
<b>ICRW</b>	The International Centre for Research on Women
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>MENARO</b>	Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (UNICEF)
<b>NAP</b>	National action plan
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>ROSA</b>	Regional Office for South Asia (UNICEF)
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SAIEVAC</b>	South Asian Initiative to End Violence Against Children
<b>SAARC</b>	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNIDO</b>	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
<b>WCARO</b>	West and Central Africa Regional Office
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization



# PREFACE

Child marriage – marriage before the age of 18 – is globally recognized as a harmful practice and a human rights violation. Yet despite laws against it, the practice remains widespread. Globally, 21 per cent of young women are married before the age of 18.

Ending child marriage is a key priority in the strategic plans of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and together, these agencies developed the Joint Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage (GPECM). Launched on 15 March 2016, the programme is being implemented in three phases over 15 years, reflecting the understanding that ending child marriage is a long-term goal. Beginning with an initial 12 countries in four regions, the programme was built to capture the complementarity of the work of each agency towards eradicating child marriage and uses a range of strategies, working with multiple partners at the national, regional and global levels.

This joint evaluation was undertaken collaboratively by the evaluation offices of UNFPA and UNICEF. Conducted by a team of three external consultants, the evaluation applied a variety of methods and approaches to assess progress towards results, the sustainability of interventions and programme efficiency and effectiveness.

The evaluation highlights that the programme is on track to achieve programme outputs. Aggregate tracking suggests that the GPECM is extending its reach and accelerating its approach for most outputs. The programme has surpassed its targets, reaching millions of people in the 12 programme countries with interventions designed to end child marriage. The evaluation also notes that UNFPA and UNICEF have both played key roles in maintaining momentum to end child marriage by positioning the issue on global, regional and national agendas, providing national policy and legislative support, and demonstrating innovative community action. The programme has played a unique role in bringing together the combined capabilities of UNFPA and UNICEF to facilitate a multi-sectoral approach, which is vital to addressing the complex set of inter-related issues that enable child marriage.

On behalf of the UNICEF Evaluation Office, I would like to extend my appreciation to the evaluation team for generating a useful report, the insights from which will be valuable in designing the next phase of the programme. The evaluation team consisted of Andrea Lee Esser (team leader), Isabelle Cazottes (thematic expert) and Francoise Coupal (research/data analyst).

I would also like to thank Mathew Varghese, Valeria Carou-Jones, Karen Cadondon and Laurence Reichel for managing the evaluation.



## PREFACE (cont'd)

Special thanks go to the joint Evaluation Reference Group, composed of representatives from UNFPA and UNICEF and the Steering Committee. The contribution of the GPECM leads at UNICEF and UNFPA, Nankali Maksud and Satvika Chalasani, as well as the continued support of Joseph Mbirizi, were extremely valuable. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the lead counterparts in UNFPA and UNICEF regional and country offices, especially in the three case study countries (Mozambique, Nepal and the Niger).

I commend the efforts of all those involved in this vital work, and trust that our colleagues in both UNFPA and UNICEF will find the findings, insights and recommendations useful and timely to further improve the design and overall effectiveness of the next phase of the joint global programme.

George Laryea-Adjei  
Director, Evaluation Office  
UNICEF





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the first phase of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage (GPECM). The programme is jointly managed by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), with UNICEF serving as the convener and administrator.

## BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Ending child marriage is a key priority for both UNFPA and UNICEF. The GPECM is designed to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 5.3. The programme is implemented in 12 countries in 4 regions with multiple partners and stakeholders at the national, regional and global levels.

The GPECM approach and logic are illustrated in the global theory of change, which informed the programme design, allowing for country-level contextualization and adaptation. The expected impact/goal of the programme is that girls fully enjoy their childhood free from the risk of marriage; and that they experience healthier, safer and more empowered life transitions while in control of their own destiny, including making choices and decisions about their education, sexuality, relationship formation/marriage and childrearing.

The programme's strategic objective is to accelerate action to address child marriage by enhancing investments in and support for married and unmarried girls and making visible the corresponding benefits; engaging key actors – including young people as agents of

change – in catalysing shifts towards positive gender norms; increasing political support, resources, positive policies and frameworks; and improving the data and evidence base.

The GPECM was designed to take place over three phases with the understanding that ending child marriage is a long-term goal. The first phase of the programme started on 1 January 2016 and will continue through 31 December 2019. This initial phase had an indicative four-year budget (2016–2019) estimated at US\$246.7 million. Actual funds received for Phase I are only 40 per cent of the target (US\$94.5 million).<sup>1</sup>

## OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation was conducted between October 2018 and January 2019. The key objective of the evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of progress towards results, sustainability of interventions and programme efficiency and effectiveness, bearing in mind the complexity of operations across the 4 regions and 12 countries. The evaluation highlights good practices and lessons learned from the first phase of implementation to inform future programming.

The evaluation covered the different programme levels (global, regional and national), focusing on issues related to programme relevance, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Team members visited three countries for case studies; the other nine countries and four regional offices were handled through desk review and remote interviews.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Evaluability Assessment', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.



The evaluation used five complementary forms of data collection to improve reliability and add richness and depth to findings: 1) desk review of background documents; 2) questionnaire for desk review offices; 3) key informant interviews with stakeholders; 4) focus group discussions with stakeholders and beneficiaries; and 5) direct observation during field visits.

## KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

### Relevance and responsiveness

The GPECM responded to growing global momentum to end child marriage and occupies a very important space within the global movement to end child marriage. The programme is well aligned to global and regional frameworks and commitments to end child marriage. The key role that UNFPA and UNICEF have played through the GPECM is an important niche; and both organizations have a strategic role to play in maintaining forward momentum to end child marriage.

The theory of change that guides the GPECM was constructed to address the main recognized determinants that lead to marrying girls as children, though gaps were identified in the intervention logic that will require some adjustments in Phase II of the programme.

The application of the GPECM has been responsive to local contexts and has been adapted in each country, though only a few countries have formally adapted the theory of change. Country offices demonstrated strong abilities to respond to structural and contextual changes that affected the operating environment.

The widespread acknowledgment that child marriage impinges on children's rights and welfare provides a strong foundation and rationale for the ending child marriage agenda. The GPECM takes a gender-targeted approach, focusing on

adolescent girls. The involvement of adolescent boys has not been systematic, which may hamper efforts to facilitate girls' empowerment. Child grooms should be incorporated in the future, particularly in those contexts where consensual child marriage is prevalent.

Despite efforts to target high prevalence areas and reach the most vulnerable, interventions have not yet reached the most remote areas in many instances, including many of those that are furthest behind. Disability has not been addressed systematically, though steps have been taken to improve guidance and targeting. The impact and reach of communication campaigns for those affected by multiple vulnerabilities have not been well tested. Strategies should focus on moving into more challenging areas in the next phase, bearing in mind the implications on human and financial resources.

### Programme effectiveness

The GPECM has been well designed to foster change processes with outcomes that include top-down, bottom-up and individual empowerment interventions. The programme has begun to track higher-level indicators, though data availability and reliability across countries, especially for qualitative measurements, remains an issue that will require continued focus.

The programme is on track to achieve its outputs, with aggregate tracking showing signs that the GPECM is extending its reach and accelerating its approach in 2018 under most outputs despite significant reductions in funding, largely due to the strategic use of pool funding. Performance varies in terms of output focus and reach across countries. As the programme shows signs that it is beginning to scale up, it is important to consider the interaction between different programme outcomes to ensure that rising demands are met with opportunities and services of sufficient quality.



**Outcome 1** – The GPECM is increasingly able to reach adolescent girls with activities under Output 1.1, having reached nearly 5.5 million girls by mid-2018, far exceeding the programme’s objective to reach 2.5 million girls by the end of 2019. Aggregate figures are disproportionately driven by India. Evidence from case study countries suggests that life-skills initiatives are making a positive contribution to Outcome 1. The programme has reduced its reach under Output 1.2 every year and only half of the countries are funding activities in 2018 to promote girls’ school access, though complementary funding has been utilized for work under this indicator that is not well captured by reporting systems.

**Outcome 2** – Country offices have significantly expanded community outreach (Output 2.1) and the GPECM shows signs of scaling up, reaching approximately 11.5 million individuals with information related to ending child marriage in the first half of 2018, significantly more than in 2016 and 2017 combined. Evidence of scaling up is occurring in the absence of a sound evidence base on the impact of interventions and this requires immediate attention. While boys and men have been targeted by programme activities to varying degrees, little work has been done to look at child marriage among boys despite the fact that consensual marriages between children may comprise more than one third of all children globally who are married young. Further focus is needed to measure social norms and utilize critical mass theory to target approaches.

**Outcome 3** – Country offices have increased targets for girls’ access to health and protection services every year of the GPECM and have collectively exceeded targets each year (Output 3.1). Mid-term 2018 data show collective delivery rates more than six times the target, suggesting that the programme is moving towards accelerating interventions. The programme was able

to scale up its activities around girls’ education in 2018 (Output 3.2), assisting more than 8,000 schools to improve the quality of girls’ education over the first six months of the year. This is equivalent to the total number of schools reached over the first two years of the programme. Aggregate data under Outcome 3 is dominated by India. Evidence of the efficacy of approaches is critical to supporting scale up.

**Outcome 4** – UNFPA and UNICEF have worked collaboratively at the highest levels to support governments to develop and implement national/state action plans to end child marriage. This is a role for which the United Nations is uniquely positioned and integral to ensuring that momentum towards ending child marriage continues. Nine countries have developed action plans, five of which have allocated government resources to their plans. Advocacy for greater government investment, costing strategies and tracking of budget allocations is required over the next years of the programme, along with a continued focus on strengthening legal and other policy frameworks to support adolescent rights.

**Outcome 5** – GPECM investments in research and data have contributed to building a stronger evidence base on child marriage, though tracking has not offered an indication of data quality and usability to date. There is a significant risk that the programme is beginning to scale up interventions without sufficient proof of efficacy, making evidence generation a top priority for the final year of Phase I.

## Sustainability

The GPECM has fostered sustainability through advocacy, institutionalization, strengthening systems, developing capacities and mobilizing complementary funding. Community-level interventions were designed in such a way that durable changes can be expected.



Institutionalization of interventions is not monitored by the Global Results Framework (GRF), nor are there specific indicators to measure government ownership or capacities to take up initiatives. Efforts supported by the GPECM show the potential to contribute to improved national monitoring of child marriage, but the GRF has not explicitly monitored support for data integration into national systems. Additional efforts are needed to focus programme support towards better national tracking, including real-time tracking.

Country offices engaged in the GPECM have done a remarkable job delivering programme results with limited funds drawing on the strategic use of pool funding and leveraging complementary resources. Insecure and insufficient funding and limited capacities among implementing partners in many countries pose challenges to furthering the ending child marriage agenda. Continuous efforts to mobilize resources and support governments and convening stakeholders will be necessary to sustain the agenda.

The GPECM has had a catalytic effect within and between countries. The programme has successfully garnered broader stakeholder engagement on child marriage and adolescent girls' rights. The extent to which national/state action plans will be funded and operationalized at the lower levels in most of the programme countries remains to be seen.

GPECM-supported interventions show promise for providing scalable models and some are already being replicated, but country offices are still working on fine-tuning and providing evidence on the impact of interventions. Insufficient efforts have been put into measuring and documenting results and translating experiences into costed packages that may be taken to scale.

## Governance and management effectiveness and efficiency

The GPECM has played a key facilitative role in bringing together the combined forces of UNFPA and UNICEF to contribute to the ending child marriage agenda. The programme has made a significant contribution to enhancing inter-sectoral and complementary collaboration on child marriage at all levels of operation. A multi-sectoral approach is seen as a more effective and efficient means of reducing girls' vulnerability to child marriage and other harmful practices, though hard evidence that tests the theory has yet to be generated across countries and must be a priority to guide the next phase.

The first phase of the programme has been a growth period for designing effective management structures; variations in cohesiveness between countries and at different levels of operations remain. Joint operationalization at the sub-national level remains a key priority and challenge for the future. The criteria by which convergence is defined requires further elaboration. While the GPECM has moved towards convergence and complementarity, geographic convergence has been complicated and uneven.

The GPECM has taken positive steps to improve monitoring and reporting systems, though weaknesses persist and the GRF does not adequately reflect the scope of the programme. Measuring and standardizing indicators has been time consuming and challenging at all levels. While the data generated has made some important contributions to programme direction, some studies have been more directly targeted to the programme focus than others. A lack of focus on impacts is particularly evident. While the programme has helped to foster a learning environment within countries, opportunities for learning and sharing across countries, including high-prevalence countries that are



not included in the programme, have been limited. More attention is needed to strengthen systems, data generation and knowledge management for the next phase of the programme.

UNFPA and UNICEF have leveraged their respective comparative advantages to contribute to ending child marriage, focusing on interventions that fit within their technical and human resources capabilities. The bulk of programme funds have focused on Outcomes 1 and 2. This finding, combined with the evidence that reach began to scale up in 2018, points to the need for programme countries to ensure that there is a balance in focus across outcomes to reduce the risk of creating a demand for services that cannot be met.<sup>2</sup>

Agencies have made strategic adjustments to their approaches in the face of restricted financial resources by drawing significantly on available human and technical resources within both agencies; only a fraction of these have been funded by the GPECM. Country office utilization of complementary human resources demonstrates the catalytic role that the GPECM has played, though overreliance on human resources that are not supported by the programme may compromise focus and/or quality in the face of competing future agendas. Human resources inputs need to be more structured to effectively manage the programme in the next phase.

## Recommendations

### 1. Prioritize normative leadership

Leverage the comparative advantage of UNFPA and UNICEF in the convening leadership role to focus on country-level normative work. Prioritize high-level work in convening stakeholders at every level and supporting

government commitment to and ownership of the ending child marriage agenda with a view to harmonizing interventions to contribute to national or state action plans. Measures of programming effectiveness should be based on how governments are performing against their own policies and plans (e.g. the extent to which governments dedicate funds to initiatives; the extent to which work is operationally mainstreamed into key sectors such as health, justice, education, social protection; and the extent to which governments target the most vulnerable girls).

### 2. Expand framework for country contextualization (theory of change)

Programme design for the next phase should allow for a greater degree of country-specific flexibility embedded within an overarching framework. The global theory of change should be reviewed and redesigned based on feedback from the evaluation and the evaluability assessment. Countries should continuously deepen their understanding of the underlying determinants of child marriage, drawing on experiences and learning in the first phase to develop their own theories of change that are embedded within a broader global framework.

### 3. Consolidate and strengthen the evidence base and knowledge management

Position UNFPA and UNICEF more visibly within the movement to end child marriage, ensuring formal linkages with key stakeholders through regular dialogue in the form of a reinvigorated partners advisory group or alternative structure in the next phase of the programme. Elevate the profile of the ending child marriage agenda through participation in ongoing forums, as well as support for more learning events and

<sup>2</sup> Balance in focus across outcomes does not necessarily require additional programme resources, but demonstrated consideration to ensure that needs and services are in sync.



knowledge sharing within and between countries, including countries that are not currently part of the programme.

Greater focus in the final year of the GPECM is required to generate the evidence needed to support scaling up and identify what defines a joint approach, what it costs and what it delivers in terms of results. A stronger evidence base will also support resource mobilization.

Elaborate a straightforward joint knowledge management strategy at the global level, drawing on the existing strategy, which can be adapted at lower levels. New modalities for sharing in formats such as newsletters and webinars are good practices and should continue to give recognition to stellar achievements in an accessible format. More focus is needed on regional sharing events, as well as subject-specific events on key issues. Opportunities should also be expanded for sharing experiences at local levels (provincial, district) within countries.

#### 4. Define and monitor 'jointness', 'convergence' and 'complementarity'

More clearly define programmatic complementarity and geographic convergence at the provincial, district and community levels to facilitate operational convergence at lower levels. Generate evidence that illustrates the efficacy of each approach. Effective models may include complementarity and/or convergence. Future monitoring frameworks should support the multi-sectoral convergence approach by defining and measuring 'jointness' with indicators on: 1) joint programme design and planning; 2) joint advocacy; 3) coordinated implementation; and 4) joint monitoring, evidence generation and reporting of results.

#### 5. Strengthen and contextualize monitoring and reporting systems

Key points:

- Develop and disseminate cost-effective means of monitoring changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices, as well as changes in social/gender norms, including qualitative data and intermediate indicators;
- Offer programmatic guidelines on optimum financial investments in monitoring and evaluation and learning;
- Develop indicators to monitor the integration of child marriage tracking into systems such as country programme monitoring frameworks, national and lower level administrative systems and other existing government mechanisms, including support to real-time tracking;
- Include documentation of unintended consequences (negative and positive in annual reporting).

As part of 2018 annual reporting, the Global Programme Support Unit (GPSU) may continue to build a database of outcome and impact indicators for tracking trends over Phase I, recognizing limitations. Alternatively, the decision may be made at the highest level to omit tracking at the outcome and impact level for Phase I (given the lack of baselines and incomplete data) and to focus efforts on design for Phase II.

Refine/redesign indicators and develop intermediate indicators as part of the design of the new phase of the programme, drawing on the findings of this evaluation and cumulative programme learning. Indicators should be designed in full consultation with agencies' technical data/statistics experts, as well as



regional and country offices. Flexibility may be built into the next phase by allowing country offices to select from a larger pool of indicators in the GRF to design country-level results frameworks. Specific guidance would be needed to support the development of locally contextualized results frameworks, potentially combining mandatory and optional indicators.

Ensure that for the next phase, monitoring and evaluation and reporting systems have standardized guidelines for differentiating between results that may be directly attributed to the GPECM versus those that are indirectly or partially attributed to the programme. While output indicator monitoring should be limited to those indicators that are directly attributed to the GPECM, outcome-level monitoring may capture broader changes and allow space to document partial or indirect contributions to change processes.

## 6. Invest in human resources

Human resource requirements for the next phase of the GPECM should be considered in a more structured manner that uses guidelines for the percentage of funds allocated for salaries and strategic allocation of staff time at different levels/sectors. As the programme begins to scale up and target more remote areas, human resources will need to be allocated strategically to manage processes and ensure quality control. The capacity of the GPSU should be augmented to ensure expertise is in place in line with programme design, including the ability to address knowledge management, global advocacy and other issues of programme management. Lines of management and technical support should be clarified between regional offices and Headquarters to provide enhanced assistance to country offices.

## 7. Strengthen the programme

Consider the following in the design of the next phase:

- The interaction and balance between different programme outcomes in targeting to ensure rising demands are met with opportunities and services as the programme begins to scale up;
- Involving boys (including child groomers) and men systematically to create a supportive environment for girls' empowerment and foster positive models of masculinity;
- Assess the ability of different approaches (including use of technologies and innovations) to intensify efforts to reach the most vulnerable and extend successful approaches to more difficult areas/individuals;
- Ensure programme frameworks guide the prioritization of investment in systems strengthening, supported by capacity development;
- Ensure linkages to support economic empowerment for adolescent girls and their families to enhance sustainability of decisions to delay marriage;
- Draw on critical mass theory to facilitate information transference within and between communities as a scaling-up strategy.

Findings and conclusions do not lead the evaluation team to recommend expanding the number of GPECM countries based on current levels of financial and human resources. Findings do not suggest that any of the programme countries are in a position to consider phasing out at this point in time, as each country needs to consolidate its evidence base and build on the learning components of the first phase to deepen efforts



in the second phase. Countries that show signs of sustainability may well be considered candidates for phasing out in the third phase of the programme, allowing the GPECM to bring in new high-prevalence countries. Future phases should preference expansion in the Middle East and North Africa/Arab States region, as well as in those countries dealing with humanitarian crisis situations, to address hotspots and allow for greater synergistic learning within the ending child marriage programme.

## 8. Find funds

Greater commitment is needed in the next phase of the programme to ensure predictable funding streams to the extent possible, complemented by continued efforts to mobilize resources at all levels.<sup>3</sup> Country offices should continue to employ successful strategies to maximize programme reach, including the strategic use of pool funding, as well as leveraging complementary human and financial resources. Programme design and prioritization in the next phase must bear in mind the reality of donor commitments and the funding environment and structure accordingly. Strategies may draw on the resource mobilization strategy designed for the programme moving forward, but ultimately, if the programme cannot find funds, then it must find a narrower focus (refer to recommendation 1).

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<sup>3</sup> This is consistent with evaluability assessment recommendations to develop and implement a resource mobilization strategy and allocate two-year funding commitments to country offices, which was agreed to by management. The strategy was finalized in early 2018 but has yet to yield results at this stage. United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Evaluation Management Response – Final' (internal document), 10 August 2018.



# RÉSUMÉ ANALYTIQUE

Ce rapport présente les conclusions de l'évaluation de la première phase du Programme mondial UNFPA-UNICEF visant à accélérer la lutte contre le mariage d'enfants (Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, ou GPECM). Ce programme est géré conjointement par le Fonds des Nations Unies pour la population (UNFPA) et le Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'enfance (UNICEF), l'UNICEF agissant en tant qu'organisateur et administrateur.

## CONTEXTE ET VUE D'ENSEMBLE

Mettre fin au mariage d'enfants est une priorité essentielle pour l'UNFPA et l'UNICEF. Le GPECM est conçu pour aider à atteindre la cible 5.3 des objectifs de développement durable (ODD). Le programme a été mis en œuvre dans 12 pays et quatre régions, avec la collaboration de multiples partenaires à l'échelle nationale, régionale et mondiale.

L'approche et la logique du GPECM sont expliquées dans la théorie mondiale du changement, à partir de laquelle le programme a été conçu et qui permet de le contextualiser et de l'adapter en fonction du pays. L'impact attendu/le but du programme est que les filles profitent de leur enfance sans risquer d'être données en mariage et qu'elles franchissent les étapes de la vie sans danger, en bonne santé et de façon autonome, tout en prenant en main leur propre destinée, notamment en ce qui a trait au choix et aux décisions concernant leur éducation, leur sexualité, leur engagement dans une relation/le mariage et le fait d'élever des enfants.

L'objectif stratégique du programme est d'accélérer la lutte contre le mariage d'enfants en accroissant l'investissement et l'aide en

faveur des jeunes filles, mariées ou non, et en démontrant l'impact bénéfique de ces mesures ; en mobilisant des acteurs déterminants, comme les jeunes gens, pour amorcer le changement et promouvoir l'adoption de normes de genre positives ; en intensifiant le soutien politique, la mobilisation des ressources, l'élaboration de politiques et cadres de travail favorables, et en enrichissant l'ensemble de données et de faits probants.

Le GPECM a été conçu pour se dérouler sur trois phases, étant entendu que mettre fin au mariage d'enfants est un objectif à long terme. La première phase du programme a débuté le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 2016, et se poursuivra jusqu'au 31 décembre 2019. Pour cette phase initiale, le budget sur quatre ans (2016-2019) avait été estimé, à titre indicatif, à 246,7 millions de dollars des États-Unis. Dans la réalité, les fonds reçus pour la phase I représentent seulement 40 % du budget visé (94,5 millions de dollars É.-U.)<sup>4</sup>.

## OBJECTIFS ET MÉTHODOLOGIE DE L'ÉVALUATION

L'évaluation s'est déroulée entre octobre 2018 et janvier 2019. Le principal objectif de l'évaluation est de fournir un examen indépendant des progrès réalisés, de la viabilité des interventions et de l'efficacité et de l'efficacités du programme, tout en tenant compte de la complexité des activités à travers les quatre régions et 12 pays. L'évaluation souligne les pratiques exemplaires et enseignements tirés de la première phase de mise en œuvre pour éclairer la programmation future.

<sup>4</sup> Fonds des Nations Unies pour la population et Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'enfance, « Programme mondial UNFPA-UNICEF visant à accélérer la lutte contre le mariage d'enfants : Examen de l'évaluabilité », UNFPA et UNICEF, 2017.



L'évaluation concernait les différents niveaux du programme (mondial, régional et national), tout en se concentrant sur les questions liées à la pertinence, la réactivité, l'efficacité, l'efficience et la durabilité. Des membres de l'équipe se sont rendus dans trois pays pour réaliser des études de cas ; les neuf autres pays et les quatre bureaux régionaux ont fait l'objet d'une étude documentaire et d'entretiens à distance.

Dans le souci d'enrichir, d'approfondir et d'accroître la fiabilité des conclusions, cinq méthodes complémentaires de recueil de données ont été mises en œuvre dans le cadre de l'évaluation : 1) examen documentaire de l'information contextuelle ; 2) questionnaire à l'intention des bureaux chargés des examens documentaires ; 3) entretiens d'informateurs clés avec les parties prenantes ; 4) discussions par groupes de réflexion avec les parties prenantes et les bénéficiaires ; et 5) observation directe lors de visites sur le terrain.

## PRINCIPALES CONSTATATIONS ET CONCLUSIONS

### Pertinence et réactivité

Le GPECM s'est mobilisé face à l'ampleur croissante du mouvement contre le mariage d'enfants dans le monde, et occupe une place centrale dans l'élan mondial pour bannir cette pratique. Le programme est en phase avec les cadres et engagements mondiaux et régionaux visant à mettre fin au mariage d'enfants. Grâce à leur action déterminante à travers le GPECM, l'UNFPA et l'UNICEF occupent un créneau important, et les deux organisations ont un rôle stratégique à jouer dans la poursuite du mouvement pour abolir le mariage d'enfants.

La théorie du changement sur laquelle s'appuie le GPECM a été élaborée pour s'attaquer aux principaux facteurs connus pour être responsables du mariage précoce des filles, même si

des lacunes identifiées dans la logique d'intervention exigeront certains ajustements dans la phase II du programme.

Le GPECM a été mis en œuvre de façon à tenir compte du contexte local et à s'adapter à chaque pays, bien que seuls certains d'entre eux aient officiellement modifié la théorie du changement en fonction de leurs besoins. Les bureaux de pays ont fait preuve d'une réelle capacité à réagir aux changements structurels et contextuels affectant l'environnement dans lequel se déroulent les interventions.

Le fait que le mariage précoce enfreint les droits des enfants et altère leur bien-être est largement reconnu, ce qui fournit un fondement et une justification solides pour mettre fin à cette pratique. Le GPECM se fonde sur une approche ciblée sur le genre qui se concentre sur les adolescentes. L'implication des adolescents n'a pas été systématique, ce qui risque d'entraver les efforts visant à encourager l'émancipation des jeunes filles. À l'avenir, les garçons mariés devraient être intégrés au programme, en particulier dans les contextes où prévaut le mariage d'enfants consensuel.

En dépit des efforts pour cibler les zones où le mariage d'enfants est très répandu et pour venir en aide aux plus vulnérables, dans bien des cas, les interventions n'ont pas encore atteint les endroits les plus reculés, dont un grand nombre sont le plus en retard. En outre, la question du handicap n'a pas été traitée systématiquement, bien que des mesures aient été prises pour améliorer l'orientation et le ciblage des personnes concernées. L'impact et la portée des campagnes de communication à l'intention des personnes vulnérables à plusieurs titres n'ont pas encore été bien testés. Dans la prochaine phase, les stratégies devraient s'efforcer d'évoluer vers des domaines plus difficiles, tout en gardant à l'esprit les implications sur le plan des ressources humaines et financières.



## Efficacité du programme

La conception du GPECM vise à encourager le processus de changement pour obtenir des résultats supposant des interventions descendantes, ascendantes et individuelles pour favoriser l'autonomie. Le programme a commencé le suivi d'indicateurs plus précis, mais la disponibilité des données et leur fiabilité à travers les pays, en particulier en ce qui a trait aux mesures qualitatives, demeurent problématiques et exigeront une attention soutenue.

Le programme est en bonne voie de générer les produits attendus, si l'on en croit les signes provenant du suivi des données agrégées qui indiquent que, pour la plupart des produits, le GPECM prend de l'envergure et que la dynamique s'est accélérée en 2018 en dépit d'une réduction substantielle des financements, en grande partie grâce à l'utilisation stratégique de financements groupés. Les performances varient en termes d'importance des produits et de portée du programme à travers les pays. Alors que le programme semble commencer à prendre de l'ampleur, l'interaction entre les différents effets du programme doit être prise en compte pour garantir que les exigences croissantes sont satisfaites avec des possibilités et des services de qualité suffisante.

**Effet 1** – Le GPECM connaît de plus en plus de succès auprès des adolescentes grâce aux activités prévues dans le cadre du Produit 1.1. À la mi-2018, il avait permis d'atteindre 5,5 millions de jeunes filles dans le monde, dépassant ainsi largement l'objectif de 2,5 millions d'ici à la fin de 2019. L'Inde est représentée de façon disproportionnée dans les chiffres agrégés. Les données probantes tirées des études de cas réalisées dans les pays révèlent que les initiatives concernant les compétences nécessaires à la vie courante contribuent favorablement à l'Effet 1. Dans le cadre du Produit 1.2, la portée du programme diminue chaque année et, en 2018, seule la moitié des pays finançaient

des activités pour promouvoir l'accès des filles à l'école, même si des financements complémentaires ont été utilisés pour travailler dans ce sens ; néanmoins, cet indicateur n'est pas rendu correctement par les systèmes de présentation de rapport.

**Effet 2** – Les bureaux de pays ont intensifié leur présence de manière significative auprès des communautés (Produit 2.1) et le GPECM semble prendre de l'envergure, car des informations relatives au mariage d'enfants ont été diffusées auprès d'environ 11,5 millions de personnes durant le premier semestre 2018, ce qui est beaucoup plus qu'en 2016 et 2017 réunis. Des preuves que le programme prend de l'ampleur sont en train de surgir, sans qu'il existe pour autant une base de données probantes sur l'impact des interventions, ce qui exige une attention immédiate. Même si les activités du programme ont ciblé les hommes et les garçons à des degrés divers, peu de choses ont été faites pour s'intéresser aux jeunes garçons en dépit du fait que les unions consensuelles entre enfants pourraient constituer plus d'un tiers de tous les mariages précoces dans le monde. Une attention redoublée est nécessaire pour mesurer les normes sociales et pour recourir à la théorie de la masse critique afin de cibler les approches.

**Effet 3** – Chaque année, les bureaux de pays ont revu en hausse les objectifs en matière d'accès des jeunes filles aux services de santé et de protection et, chaque année, le GPECM a globalement dépassé ses objectifs annuels (Produit 3.1). Les données de mi-2018 révèlent que, globalement, le nombre de personnes bénéficiant du programme est six fois plus important que celui initialement ciblé, ce qui permet de penser que les interventions sont en cours d'accélération. En 2018, le programme a pu étendre ses activités en faveur de l'éducation des filles (Produit 3.2) pour aider 8 000 écoles à améliorer la qualité de l'enseignement, et ce, au cours des six premiers mois de



l'année. Cela équivaut au nombre total d'écoles atteint durant les deux premières années du programme. Dans le cadre de l'Effet 3, les données agrégées sont dominées par l'Inde. Il est essentiel de disposer d'éléments de preuves démontrant l'efficacité des approches pour soutenir l'élargissement du programme.

**Effet 4** – L'UNFPA et l'UNICEF ont collaboré aux plus hauts niveaux pour aider les gouvernements à élaborer des plans nationaux et infranationaux en vue d'abolir le mariage d'enfants et de soutenir les mécanismes de coordination. C'est un rôle particulièrement adapté à l'UNFPA et l'UNICEF, et leur action est essentielle pour garantir que la mobilisation contre le mariage d'enfants se poursuive. Neuf pays ont élaboré des plans d'action, et cinq d'entre eux y ont alloué des ressources gouvernementales. Il faut plaider en faveur d'investissements gouvernementaux plus importants, de l'évaluation des stratégies d'établissement des coûts, et du suivi des allocations budgétaires et des résultats, de même que d'efforts continus pour renforcer le cadre juridique et l'établissement d'autres politiques pour défendre les droits des adolescents dans les prochaines années du GPECM.

**Effet 5** – Les investissements du GPECM dans la recherche et la production de données ont permis de constituer une base de données probantes plus solide pour abolir le mariage d'enfants, mais, à ce jour, le suivi n'a pas fourni d'indications quant à la qualité et l'utilité des données générées. Il existe un véritable risque que le programme commence à intensifier ses interventions sans apporter suffisamment de preuves de son efficacité, ce qui signifie que la génération de données probantes doit être une priorité absolue durant la dernière année de la phase I.

## Durabilité

À travers la sensibilisation, l'institutionnalisation, le renforcement des systèmes, le développement des capacités et la mobilisation de financements complémentaires, le GPECM a encouragé la durabilité. Les interventions au niveau des communautés ont été conçues de façon que des changements durables puissent en découler.

L'institutionnalisation des interventions n'est pas incorporée au cadre mondial des résultats ; de même, il n'existe pas d'indicateurs particuliers pour mesurer l'engagement des gouvernements ou leur capacité à prendre le relais des initiatives. Les efforts soutenus par le GPECM révèlent la possibilité de contribuer à un meilleur contrôle des mariages d'enfants à l'échelle nationale, mais le cadre mondial de résultats ne couvre pas explicitement le suivi de l'intégration des données dans les systèmes nationaux. Des efforts supplémentaires sont nécessaires pour que le soutien apporté par le programme soit axé sur un meilleur suivi national, et notamment un suivi en temps réel.

Les bureaux de pays impliqués dans le GPECM ont réalisé un travail remarquable pour atteindre les résultats attendus avec des fonds limités, en recourant à l'utilisation stratégique des financements groupés et en exploitant des ressources complémentaires. La précarité et l'insuffisance des financements, ainsi que les capacités limitées des partenaires chargés de la mise en place du programme dans un grand nombre de pays, posent des problèmes pour continuer à œuvrer en faveur de l'abolition du mariage d'enfants. Des efforts continus pour mobiliser les ressources, soutenir les gouvernements et rassembler les parties prenantes seront nécessaires pour atteindre cet objectif.



Le GPECM a eu un effet de catalyseur au sein des pays et entre eux. Le programme est parvenu à inciter davantage de parties prenantes à se mobiliser contre le mariage d'enfants et en faveur des droits des adolescentes. Il reste à voir dans quelle mesure les plans d'action nationaux/étatiques seront financés et mis en œuvre dans les sphères inférieures dans la plupart des pays concernés par le programme.

Les interventions menées dans le cadre du GPECM laissent présager la création de modèles évolutifs, dont certains sont déjà en train d'être reproduits, mais les bureaux de pays continuent à faire des ajustements et à recueillir des faits probants sur leur impact. Les efforts pour mesurer et documenter les résultats et pour traduire les expériences en démarches chiffrées pouvant être transposées à plus grande échelle ont été insuffisants.

### Effizienz et efficacité de la gouvernance et de la gestion

Le GPECM a joué un rôle essentiel en facilitant le regroupement des forces combinées de l'UNFPA et de l'UNICEF pour mieux lutter contre le mariage d'enfants. Le programme a permis d'enrichir substantiellement la collaboration complémentaire entre secteurs sur le mariage d'enfants, à tous les niveaux de fonctionnement. Une approche multisectorielle semble être la manière la plus efficace et efficiente de limiter l'exposition des jeunes filles au mariage précoce et à d'autres pratiques néfastes, bien qu'il reste encore à produire des preuves tangibles à travers les différents pays pour soutenir cette théorie, ce qui doit être une priorité afin de pouvoir définir l'orientation de la prochaine phase.

La première phase du programme a été une période de croissance, axée sur la conception de structures de gestion efficaces ; néanmoins, des variations au niveau de la cohésion entre pays et entre différents niveaux de fonctionnement

persistent. La mise en œuvre commune sur le plan infranational demeure une priorité essentielle et un défi pour l'avenir. Par ailleurs, les critères définissant la notion de convergence exigent une explication plus détaillée. Bien que le GPECM privilégie la complémentarité et la convergence, la convergence géographique s'est avérée compliquée et disparate.

Des mesures ont été prises dans le cadre du GPECM pour améliorer le suivi et les systèmes de présentation de rapports, même si des points faibles persistent et que le cadre mondial de résultats ne reflète pas la portée du programme de façon adéquate. La mesure et la standardisation des indicateurs ont pris du temps et ont été complexes à tous les niveaux. Bien que les données générées aient contribué substantiellement à l'orientation du GPECM, certaines études se sont focalisées plus directement sur l'objectif du programme que d'autres. On observe en particulier un manque évident d'attention à l'égard des impacts du programme. Bien que le GPECM ait favorisé la création d'un environnement propice à l'apprentissage au sein des pays, les possibilités de transférer le savoir et d'apprendre entre pays, notamment dans ceux où le mariage d'enfants est largement répandu, mais qui ne sont pas inclus dans le programme, se révèlent limitées. Dans la prochaine phase du programme, il faudra consacrer plus d'attention au renforcement des systèmes, à la production de données et à la gestion des connaissances.

L'UNFPA et l'UNICEF se sont appuyés sur leurs avantages comparatifs respectifs pour contribuer à l'abolition du mariage d'enfants, en se concentrant sur des interventions correspondant à leurs capacités techniques et de ressources humaines. De ce fait, la plus grosse partie des fonds du programme a été consacrée aux Effets 1 et 2. Cette constatation, associée aux éléments attestant que la portée du programme a commencé à s'amplifier en 2018, indique que les pays participants doivent



veiller à préserver un équilibre quant à l'attention accordée aux différents effets pour limiter le risque de créer une demande de services qui ne peut être satisfaite<sup>5</sup>.

Face aux restrictions financières, les agences ont procédé à des ajustements stratégiques de leurs approches en ayant largement recours aux ressources humaines et techniques disponibles en leur sein ; seule une fraction de ces ressources a été financée par le GPECM. L'utilisation, par les bureaux de pays, de ressources humaines complémentaires, illustre le rôle de catalyseur joué par le GPECM, bien qu'une dépendance exagérée vis-à-vis d'un personnel qui n'est pas pris en charge par le programme risque de compromettre la pertinence et/ou la qualité des résultats, si d'autres causes venaient à les concurrencer à l'avenir. Les apports en ressources humaines doivent être mieux structurés afin d'assurer la gestion efficace du programme durant la prochaine phase.

## Recommandations

### 1. S'appuyer sur le leadership du GPECM pour établir des normes

Il faut tirer parti de l'avantage comparatif de l'UNFPA et l'UNICEF eu égard à leur capacité de leadership et de rassemblement, pour se concentrer sur l'établissement de normes à l'échelle des pays. Il faut donner la priorité aux travaux de haut niveau en mobilisant les parties prenantes à chaque échelon et en soutenant l'engagement et l'implication des gouvernements vis-à-vis de l'abolition du mariage d'enfants dans le but d'harmoniser les interventions et de contribuer ainsi aux plans d'action nationaux ou étatiques. Les mesures de l'efficacité de la programmation devraient se fonder sur la performance des gouvernements au regard de leurs propres politiques et plans (p. ex. la

mesure dans laquelle les gouvernements consacrent des fonds aux initiatives ; dans laquelle les efforts sont opérationnellement dirigés vers des secteurs essentiels comme la santé, la justice, l'éducation et la protection sociale ; et dans laquelle ce sont les jeunes filles les plus vulnérables qui sont ciblées).

### 2. Élargir le cadre de travail pour l'adapter au contexte du pays (théorie du changement)

La conception de la prochaine phase du programme devrait permettre une plus grande souplesse vis-à-vis du contexte des pays et l'incorporer à un cadre général. La théorie du changement devrait être revue dans sa globalité et repensée en fonction de l'évaluation et de l'examen de l'évaluabilité. Les pays devraient constamment approfondir leur compréhension des éléments déterminants qui sous-tendent le mariage d'enfants, mettre à profit leurs expériences et apprendre, durant la première phase, à développer leurs propres théories du changement, elles-mêmes incorporées à un cadre global plus vaste.

### 3. Consolider et renforcer la base de données probantes et la gestion des connaissances

L'UNFPA et l'UNICEF doivent occuper une place plus visible au sein du mouvement pour l'abolition du mariage d'enfants, en établissant des relations formelles avec les parties prenantes par le biais d'échanges réguliers sous la forme d'un groupe consultatif de partenaires redynamisé ou d'une structure alternative dans la prochaine phase du programme. Il faut rehausser la visibilité de la cause de l'abolition du mariage d'enfants en participant régulièrement à des forums, ainsi qu'en encourageant

<sup>5</sup> Préserver un équilibre quant à l'attention accordée aux différents résultats n'exige pas forcément l'allocation de ressources additionnelles de la part du programme, mais une réelle réflexion pour garantir l'harmonisation des besoins et des services.



davantage les occasions d'apprendre et de partager les connaissances au sein des pays et entre eux, y compris ceux qui ne participent pas au programme à l'heure actuelle.

Pendant la dernière année du GPCEM, il faudra redoubler d'attention afin de produire les données probantes nécessaires pour justifier l'élargissement du programme et identifier ce qui définit une approche conjointe, son coût et ses résultats. Une base de données probantes plus solide sera également requise pour étayer la mobilisation des ressources.

Une stratégie conjointe, simple, doit être élaborée pour gérer les connaissances à l'échelle mondiale. Elle s'inspirera de celle déjà existante qui pourra être adaptée aux échelons subordonnés. Les nouvelles modalités de partage des connaissances sous forme de bulletins ou de webinaires fonctionnent bien, et devraient continuer à être utilisées pour saluer les réalisations remarquables, par le biais d'un support accessible. L'accent doit être mis sur le partage des connaissances à l'échelle régionale, ainsi que sur les événements thématiques spécifiques en rapport avec les questions essentielles. Les occasions de partager les connaissances devraient aussi s'étendre à l'échelle locale (province, district) au sein des pays.

#### 4. Définir les notions de « conjonction », « convergence » et « complémentarité » et assurer un suivi

La complémentarité des programmes et la convergence géographique doivent être plus clairement définies au niveau des provinces, districts et communautés afin de faciliter la convergence des interventions dans les échelons inférieurs. Des données probantes, illustrant l'efficacité de chaque approche, doivent être produites. Les modèles optimaux peuvent inclure la complémentarité et/ou la convergence. Pour étayer la convergence multisectorielle, les futurs cadres de suivi

devraient définir et mesurer la « conjonction » grâce aux indicateurs suivants : 1) conception et planification conjointe des programmes ; 2) action de sensibilisation conjointe ; 3) mise en œuvre coordonnée ; et 4) suivi, génération de données probantes et présentation des résultats conjoints.

#### 5. Consolider et contextualiser les systèmes de suivi et de présentation de rapports

Points essentiels :

- Élaborer et disséminer des moyens rentables de faire le suivi des changements relatifs aux connaissances, aux attitudes et aux pratiques, ainsi que des modifications des normes sociales/de genre, ce qui inclut des données qualitatives et des indicateurs intermédiaires ;
- Proposer des lignes directrices pour les programmes concernant l'optimisation des investissements financiers dans le suivi, l'évaluation et l'apprentissage ;
- Concevoir des indicateurs permettant de contrôler que la surveillance des mariages d'enfants est intégrée à des systèmes tels que les cadres de suivi des programmes de pays, aux administrations nationales et infranationales, et aux mécanismes gouvernementaux existants, ce qui inclut une surveillance en temps réel ;
- Inclure les documents relatifs aux conséquences inattendues (négatives et positives, dans le rapport annuel).

Dans le cadre du rapport annuel 2018, l'Unité de soutien au programme mondial (Global Programme Support Unit ou GPSU) pourrait continuer à construire une base de données sur les indicateurs d'effets et d'impacts pour faire le suivi des tendances durant la phase I, tout en sachant qu'il y a des limites. Sinon, la décision pourrait être prise au plus haut niveau de renoncer à faire le suivi des effets et des impacts



pour la phase I (compte tenu de l'absence d'estimation initiale et des données incomplètes) et de concentrer les efforts sur la conception de la phase II.

Affiner/refondre les indicateurs et élaborer des indicateurs intermédiaires dans le cadre de la conception de la nouvelle phase du GPECM, en s'inspirant des constatations de cette évaluation et des enseignements accumulés au cours du programme. Ces indicateurs devraient être conçus en pleine concertation avec les experts en données techniques/statistiques des agences, ainsi qu'avec les bureaux de région et de pays. La prochaine phase pourrait être conçue de manière plus souple, en permettant aux bureaux de pays de faire leur choix parmi une plus grande variété d'indicateurs dans le cadre mondial des résultats afin d'élaborer leur propre cadre de résultats national. Une orientation particulière serait nécessaire pour soutenir le développement de cadres de résultats adaptés au contexte local, en combinant possiblement indicateurs obligatoires et facultatifs.

Veiller à ce que dans la prochaine phase, les systèmes de suivi, d'évaluation et de présentation de rapports comportent des directives standardisées permettant de différencier les résultats directement attribuables au GPECM et ceux indirectement ou partiellement attribuables au programme. Le suivi des indicateurs de produit devrait se limiter aux indicateurs concernant directement le GPECM ; néanmoins, le suivi des résultats pourrait révéler des changements plus vastes et permettre de documenter des contributions partielles ou indirectes aux processus de changement.

## 6. Investir dans les ressources humaines

Les besoins en ressources humaines pour la prochaine phase du GPECM devraient être envisagés de façon plus structurée, en ayant recours à des directives pour déterminer la proportion de fonds destinée aux salaires et l'assignation

stratégique du personnel à différents niveaux/secteurs. Tandis que le programme commence à prendre de l'envergure et à cibler des zones plus reculées, les ressources humaines devront être affectées stratégiquement pour gérer les processus et assurer le contrôle de qualité. Les capacités du GPSU devraient être renforcées pour veiller à ce que l'expertise pertinente soit en place, ainsi que pour prendre en charge la gestion des connaissances, la sensibilisation mondiale et d'autres questions relevant de l'administration du programme. Les relations hiérarchiques en matière de direction et de soutien technique devraient être éclaircies entre bureaux de région et siège social pour fournir une meilleure assistance aux bureaux de pays.

## 7. Renforcer le programme

Il faudrait prendre en considération ce qui suit dans la conception de la prochaine phase :

- Au moment de définir les cibles, tenir compte de l'interaction et de l'équilibre entre les différents résultats du programme pour garantir que les exigences croissantes sont satisfaites avec des possibilités et des services au fur et à mesure que le programme prend de l'ampleur ;
- Impliquer systématiquement les garçons (et notamment les garçons mariés) et les hommes pour créer un environnement propice à l'émancipation des filles et encourager des modèles masculins positifs ;
- Évaluer la capacité de différentes approches (ce qui inclut le recours aux technologies et innovations) à intensifier les efforts pour venir en aide aux plus vulnérables et étendre celles qui portent leurs fruits à des zones et situations individuelles plus complexes ;
- Veiller à ce que les priorités d'investissement dans le renforcement des systèmes soient établies conformément aux cadres du programme et soutenues par le développement des capacités ;



- Préparer le terrain pour favoriser l'autonomie économique des adolescentes et de leurs familles et garantir la viabilité des décisions de remettre les mariages à plus tard ;
- S'appuyer sur la théorie de la masse critique pour faciliter la transmission des informations entre communautés, comme stratégie pour élargir le programme.

À la lumière de ses constatations et conclusions, l'équipe d'évaluation ne recommande pas d'élargir le GPECM à d'autres pays, compte tenu des niveaux actuels des ressources humaines et financières. En effet, rien ne permet de penser que les pays participants sont en position d'envisager de mettre un terme au programme dans l'immédiat, car chacun d'entre eux a besoin de consolider sa base de données probantes et de tirer les enseignements de la première phase pour intensifier ses efforts durant la deuxième phase. Les pays montrant des signes d'impact durable du programme pourraient bien être considérés comme capables de s'en détacher progressivement lors de la troisième phase, ce qui permettrait au GPECM d'intégrer de nouveaux pays où le mariage d'enfants est très répandu. Les prochaines phases devraient privilégier l'expansion dans la région Moyen-Orient et Afrique du Nord/États arabes, ainsi que dans les pays en situation de crise humanitaire pour parer au plus urgent et générer une dynamique d'apprentissage plus vaste dans le cadre du programme de lutte contre le mariage d'enfants.

## 8. Trouver des fonds

Un plus grand engagement est nécessaire pour la prochaine phase afin de garantir, dans la mesure du possible, des sources de financement plus prévisibles, de même que des efforts soutenus pour mobiliser les ressources à tous les niveaux<sup>6</sup>. Les bureaux de pays devraient continuer à utiliser les stratégies qui ont fait leurs preuves pour optimiser la portée du programme, notamment le recours stratégique aux financements groupés, et mettre à profit la complémentarité des ressources humaines et financières. Dans la prochaine phase, il faudra garder à l'esprit la réalité des engagements des donateurs et des conditions financières pour structurer la conception du programme et l'établissement des priorités en conséquence. Pour ce faire, il est possible de s'inspirer de la stratégie de financements groupés pour amplifier le programme, mais au final, si des fonds ne sont pas trouvés pour alimenter le GPECM, celui-ci devra se concentrer sur un objectif plus restreint (voir recommandation 1).

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<sup>6</sup> Ceci est conforme aux recommandations de l'examen de l'évaluabilité de développer et mettre en place une stratégie de mobilisation des ressources et d'allouer l'équivalent de deux ans d'engagements de financement aux bureaux de pays, auxquelles la direction a donné son accord. La stratégie a été finalisée au début de 2018, mais n'a pas encore donné de résultats à l'heure actuelle. Fonds pour l'enfance des Nations Unies, « UNICEF Evaluation Management Response – Final » (document interne), 10 août 2018.



# RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

Este informe presenta las conclusiones de la evaluación de la primera fase del Programa Mundial para Acelerar las Medidas Encaminadas a Poner Fin al Matrimonio Infantil (GPECM) del UNFPA y UNICEF. El programa está administrado conjuntamente por el Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas (UNFPA) y el Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia (UNICEF), y donde UNICEF actúa como convocante y administrador.

## ANTECEDENTES Y PANORAMA GENERAL

Poner fin al matrimonio infantil es una prioridad fundamental tanto para el UNFPA como para UNICEF. El GPECM está diseñado para contribuir al logro de la Meta 5.3 del Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS). El programa se ejecuta en 12 países de 4 regiones en colaboración con múltiples asociados y partes interesadas a nivel nacional, regional y mundial.

El enfoque y la lógica del GPECM se basan en la teoría general del cambio, que sirvió de base para el diseño del programa y facilitó su contextualización y su adaptación a nivel de cada país. El impacto/objetivo previsto del programa es lograr que las niñas disfruten plenamente de su infancia sin riesgo de contraer matrimonio y que las transiciones en las distintas etapas de su vida sean más saludables, seguras y autónomas, al mismo tiempo que controlan su propio destino, lo que incluye hacer elecciones y tomar decisiones acerca de su educación, su sexualidad, el establecimiento de las relaciones/matrimonio y la crianza de los niños.

El objetivo estratégico del programa es acelerar las medidas para hacer frente al matrimonio infantil mediante un aumento de las inversiones y el apoyo a las niñas casadas y solteras, destacando los beneficios de este aumento; involucrar a los principales agentes –incluidos los jóvenes como agentes de cambio– en la tarea de catalizar los cambios hacia unas normas de género positivas; incrementar el apoyo político, los recursos, las políticas y los marcos positivos; y mejorar la base de datos y de pruebas.

El GPECM fue diseñado para que fuese aplicado en tres fases basándose en la idea de que terminar con el matrimonio infantil es una meta a largo plazo. La primera fase del programa comenzó el 1 de enero de 2016 y continuará hasta el 31 de diciembre de 2019. Esta fase inicial tenía un presupuesto indicativo de cuatro años (2016-2019) estimado en 246,7 millones de dólares. Los fondos reales recibidos para la Fase I representan sólo el 40% de la meta (94,5 millones de dólares<sup>7</sup>).

## OBJETIVOS Y METODOLOGÍA DE LA EVALUACIÓN

La evaluación se realizó entre octubre de 2018 y enero de 2019. El objetivo principal fue proporcionar una valoración independiente del progreso hacia los resultados, la sostenibilidad de las intervenciones y la eficiencia y eficacia de los programas, teniendo en cuenta la complejidad de las operaciones en las cuatro regiones y los 12 países. En la evaluación se destacan las buenas prácticas y las lecciones aprendidas en la primera fase de la ejecución, que servirán de base para la programación futura.

<sup>7</sup> Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas y Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Evaluability Assessment' (Programa Mundial para Acelerar las Medidas Encaminadas a Poner Fin al Matrimonio Infantil), UNFPA y UNICEF, 2017.



La evaluación abarcó los diferentes niveles de los programas (mundial, regional y nacional), y se centró en cuestiones relacionadas con la pertinencia, la capacidad de respuesta, la eficacia, la eficiencia y la sostenibilidad del programa. Los miembros del equipo visitaron tres países para realizar estudios de casos; los otros nueve países y cuatro oficinas regionales se gestionaron mediante exámenes documentales y entrevistas a distancia.

La evaluación utilizó cinco modelos complementarios de recopilación de datos para mejorar la fiabilidad y enriquecer y profundizar las conclusiones: 1) examen documental de los documentos de antecedentes; 2) cuestionario para el examen documental en las oficinas; 3) entrevistas a informantes clave de las partes interesadas; 4) debates de grupos focales con las partes interesadas y los beneficiarios; y 5) observación directa durante las visitas sobre el terreno.

## PRINCIPALES RESULTADOS Y CONCLUSIONES

### Pertinencia y capacidad de respuesta

El GPECM responde al impulso mundial cada vez mayor encaminado a la eliminación del matrimonio infantil y ocupa un espacio muy importante dentro del movimiento mundial para poner fin al matrimonio infantil. El programa está bien alineado con los marcos y compromisos mundiales y regionales para poner fin al matrimonio infantil. El papel clave que el UNFPA y UNICEF han desempeñado a través del GPECM posee un carácter único y de gran importancia, y ambas organizaciones tienen un papel estratégico que desempeñar para mantener el impulso hacia el futuro con el fin de eliminar el matrimonio infantil.

La teoría del cambio que guía al GPECM fue elaborada para abordar los principales determinantes reconocidos que llevan a casar a las niñas cuando son menores de edad, aunque se estableció que había lagunas en la lógica de las intervenciones que exigirán algunos ajustes en la Fase II del programa.

La puesta en práctica del GPECM ha reflejado los contextos locales y ha sido adaptada en cada uno de los países, aunque sólo un número reducido de países ha adaptado oficialmente la teoría del cambio. Las oficinas en los países demostraron una gran capacidad para responder a los cambios estructurales y contextuales que afectaban al entorno operativo.

El reconocimiento generalizado de que el matrimonio infantil tiene repercusiones sobre los derechos y el bienestar de la infancia ofrece una base sólida y una justificación para la agenda dedicada a la eliminación del matrimonio infantil. El GPECM adopta un enfoque de género centrado en las adolescentes. Los varones adolescentes no han participado sistemáticamente en el programa, lo que puede obstaculizar los esfuerzos dedicados a facilitar el empoderamiento de las niñas. Es preciso incorporar a los niños varones, particularmente en aquellos contextos en los que el matrimonio infantil consensual tiene un carácter generalizado.

A pesar de los esfuerzos por concentrarse en las zonas de alta prevalencia y llegar a las personas más vulnerables, en muchos casos las intervenciones todavía no se han aplicado en las zonas más remotas, incluidas muchas de las que se encuentran más atrasadas. Las necesidades de las personas con discapacidad no se han abordado sistemáticamente, aunque se han tomado medidas para mejorar la orientación y la selección de beneficiarios. Tampoco se ha puesto a prueba el impacto y el alcance de las campañas de comunicación para las personas afectadas por múltiples vulnerabilidades.



En la siguiente fase, las estrategias deben centrarse en avanzar hacia las zonas más difíciles, teniendo en cuenta las repercusiones sobre los recursos humanos y financieros.

### Eficacia del programa

El GPECM ha sido bien diseñado para fomentar procesos de cambio con resultados que incluyen intervenciones desde arriba hacia abajo y desde abajo hacia arriba, y otras basadas en el empoderamiento individual. El programa ha comenzado a realizar un seguimiento de los indicadores de más alto nivel, aunque la disponibilidad y fiabilidad de los datos en todos los países, especialmente por lo que se refiere a las mediciones cualitativas, sigue siendo una cuestión que requerirá una atención constante.

El programa está bien encaminado para lograr sus resultados, con un seguimiento general que muestra signos de que el GPECM amplió su alcance y aceleró su enfoque en 2018 en la mayoría de los productos –a pesar de las reducciones significativas en la financiación– debido, en gran medida, al uso estratégico de fondos comunes. El desempeño varía en términos del enfoque en los productos y el alcance entre los países. A medida que el programa muestra signos de que está comenzando a ampliarse, es importante reflexionar sobre la interacción entre los diferentes resultados del programa para garantizar que la demanda creciente se satisfaga mediante oportunidades y servicios de una calidad adecuada.

**Resultado 1** – La capacidad del GPECM para llegar a las adolescentes con actividades en el marco del Resultado 1.1 es cada vez mayor, ya que a mediados de 2018 había llegado a casi 5,5 millones de niñas, superando con creces el objetivo del programa de llegar a 2,5 millones de niñas para fines de 2019. Los datos de la India están influyendo desproporcionadamente en las cifras agregadas. Los datos de los países estudiados indican que las iniciativas

de preparación para la vida activa están contribuyendo de manera positiva al Resultado 1. El programa ha reducido cada año su alcance en el marco del Resultado 1.2, y sólo la mitad de los países están financiando actividades en 2018 para promover el acceso de las niñas a la escuela, aunque la utilización de fondos complementarios para la labor realizada en el marco de este indicador no está adecuadamente reflejada en los sistemas de presentación de informes.

**Resultado 2** – Las oficinas en los países han ampliado considerablemente el alcance a nivel comunitario (Resultado 2.1) y el GPECM muestra signos de que se está expandiendo, ya que en el primer semestre de 2018 llegó a aproximadamente 11,5 millones de personas con información relacionada con la erradicación del matrimonio infantil, una cifra considerablemente más elevada que en 2016 y 2017 juntos. Los datos que evidencian esta ampliación se destacan por la ausencia de una base de pruebas sólidas sobre el impacto de las intervenciones, y esto requiere una atención inmediata. Si bien las actividades de los programas se han dirigido a los niños y los hombres en distintos grados, poco se ha hecho para examinar el matrimonio infantil, a pesar de que los matrimonios consensuales entre niños pueden representar más de un tercio de todos los matrimonios infantiles a escala mundial. Es necesario prestar más atención a la medición de las normas sociales y a la utilización de la teoría de la masa crítica para orientar los enfoques.

**Resultado 3** – En cada año que lleva en marcha el GPECM, las oficinas en los países han intensificado el logro de las metas para el acceso de las niñas a los servicios de salud y protección y han superado colectivamente estas metas (Resultado 3.1). Los datos de mitad de período de 2018 muestran que las tasas colectivas de ejecución son más de seis veces superiores a la meta, lo que sugiere que el programa está avanzando hacia la aceleración de



las intervenciones. El programa pudo ampliar sus actividades en torno a la educación de las niñas en 2018 (Resultado 3.2), al ayudar a más de 8.000 escuelas a mejorar la calidad de la educación de las niñas durante los seis meses primeros del año. Esto equivale al número total de escuelas a las que se ha beneficiado durante los dos primeros años del programa. Los datos agregados del Resultado 3 están dominados por la India. Las pruebas de la eficacia de los enfoques son fundamentales para apoyar la ampliación.

**Resultado 4** – El UNFPA y UNICEF han colaborado al más alto nivel para apoyar a los gobiernos en la elaboración y aplicación de planes de acción nacionales y estatales para poner fin al matrimonio infantil. Esta es una función para la que las Naciones Unidas están especialmente calificadas y que es fundamental para garantizar que continúe el impulso hacia la erradicación del matrimonio infantil. Nueve países han desarrollado planes de acción, cinco de los cuales han asignado recursos gubernamentales a sus planes. En los próximos años del programa es necesario promover una mayor inversión pública, estrategias de cálculo de costos y el seguimiento de las asignaciones presupuestarias, así como seguir centrándose en el fortalecimiento de los marcos jurídicos y otros marcos normativos en apoyo de los derechos de los adolescentes.

**Resultado 5** – Las inversiones del GPECM en investigación y datos han contribuido a crear una base de pruebas más sólida sobre la eliminación del matrimonio infantil, aunque el seguimiento no ha ofrecido hasta la fecha una indicación de la calidad de los datos ni de su utilidad. Existe un riesgo significativo de que el programa esté comenzando a ampliar las intervenciones sin disponer de suficientes pruebas sobre su eficacia, lo que hace que la generación de pruebas sea una prioridad absoluta para el último año de la fase I.

## Sostenibilidad

El GPECM ha fomentado la sostenibilidad a través de la promoción, la institucionalización de las intervenciones, el fortalecimiento de los sistemas, el desarrollo de capacidades y la movilización de fondos complementarios. Las intervenciones a nivel comunitario se diseñaron de tal manera que se puedan esperar cambios duraderos.

El Marco de Resultados Globales (GRF) no realiza el monitoreo de la institucionalización de las intervenciones, ni tampoco existen indicadores específicos para medir la apropiación gubernamental o la capacidad para asumir la responsabilidad de las iniciativas. Los esfuerzos que reciben apoyo del GPECM muestran el potencial para contribuir a mejorar el monitoreo nacional del matrimonio infantil, pero el GRF no ha monitoreado explícitamente el apoyo a la integración de datos en los sistemas nacionales. Es necesario redoblar los esfuerzos para orientar el apoyo a los programas para facilitar un mejor monitoreo nacional, incluido el monitoreo en tiempo real.

Las oficinas en los países que participan en el GPECM han realizado una labor notable en la obtención de resultados de los programas, con fondos limitados que se basan en el uso estratégico de fondos comunes y en el aprovechamiento de recursos complementarios. La falta de seguridad y de fondos suficientes, y la capacidad limitada de los asociados en la ejecución en muchos países, plantean problemas para promover el programa de erradicación del matrimonio infantil. La continuación de los esfuerzos de movilización de recursos, el apoyo a los gobiernos y la promoción entre las partes interesadas será esencial para mantener el programa.

El GPECM ha tenido un efecto catalizador dentro de los países y entre ellos. El programa ha logrado una mayor participación de las partes interesadas en la cuestión del matrimonio



infantil y los derechos de las adolescentes. Queda por ver en qué medida los planes de acción nacionales y estatales se financiarán y pondrán en práctica en los niveles inferiores de la mayoría de los países donde se ejecutan programas.

Las intervenciones que reciben apoyo del GPECM muestran signos prometedores con respecto a la expansión de los modelos y algunas de ellas ya se están replicando, pero las oficinas en los países todavía están trabajando en su perfeccionamiento y en la tarea de proporcionar pruebas sobre el impacto de las intervenciones. No se han realizado suficientes esfuerzos para medir y documentar los resultados y traducir las experiencias en paquetes presupuestados que se puedan llevar a escala.

### Eficacia y eficiencia de la gobernanza y la gestión

El GPECM ha desempeñado un papel facilitador clave al reunir las fuerzas combinadas del UNFPA y UNICEF para contribuir a la aplicación del programa destinado a eliminar el matrimonio infantil. El programa ha contribuido de manera significativa a mejorar la colaboración intersectorial y complementaria en la cuestión del matrimonio infantil en todos los niveles operativos. Se considera que un enfoque multisectorial es un medio más eficaz y eficiente de reducir la vulnerabilidad de las niñas al matrimonio precoz y a otras prácticas nocivas, aunque todavía no se han generado pruebas sólidas que pongan a prueba la teoría en todos los países; esto debe ser una prioridad para la siguiente fase.

La primera fase del programa ha sido un período de crecimiento para diseñar estructuras de gestión eficaces, pero siguen existiendo variaciones en la cohesión entre países y en los diferentes niveles de operaciones. La puesta

en marcha conjunta a nivel subnacional sigue siendo una prioridad y un reto clave para el futuro. Los criterios por los que se define la convergencia requieren una definición más compleja. Mientras que el GPECM ha avanzado hacia la convergencia y la complementariedad, la convergencia geográfica sigue siendo complicada y desigual.

El GPECM ha tomado medidas positivas para mejorar los sistemas de monitoreo y presentación de informes, aunque persisten los puntos débiles y el GRF no refleja adecuadamente el alcance del programa. Medir y estandarizar los indicadores ha consumido mucho tiempo y ha sido un reto a todos los niveles. Si bien los datos generados han contribuido de manera importante a la dirección del programa, algunos estudios se han centrado más directamente en el tema central del programa que otros. La falta de atención a la cuestión del impacto del programa es particularmente evidente. Si bien el programa ha contribuido a fomentar un entorno de aprendizaje en los países, las oportunidades de aprendizaje e intercambio entre países, incluidos los países con alta prevalencia que no están incluidos en el programa, han sido limitadas. Es necesario prestar más atención al fortalecimiento de los sistemas, la generación de datos y la gestión de los conocimientos para la próxima fase del programa.

El UNFPA y UNICEF han aprovechado sus respectivas ventajas comparativas para contribuir a poner fin al matrimonio infantil, centrándose en intervenciones que se ajustan a sus capacidades técnicas y de recursos humanos. La mayor parte de los fondos del programa se han centrado en los resultados 1 y 2. Esta conclusión, combinada con las pruebas de que el alcance del programa comenzó a aumentar en 2018, apunta a la necesidad de que los países donde se ejecutan programas velen por que



haya un equilibrio entre los resultados a fin de reducir el riesgo de que se cree una demanda de servicios que no sea posible satisfacer<sup>8</sup>.

Las dos agencias han realizado ajustes estratégicos a sus enfoques para compensar la restricción de recursos financieros, recurriendo significativamente a los recursos humanos y técnicos disponibles dentro de ambas agencias; sólo una fracción de estos recursos ha sido financiada por el GPECM. La utilización de recursos humanos complementarios por parte de las oficinas en los países demuestra la función catalizadora que ha desempeñado el GPECM, aunque la excesiva dependencia de los recursos humanos que no reciben apoyo del programa puede poner en peligro su enfoque y/o su calidad en el caso de que surjan otros programas que compitan por la atención. Las aportaciones de recursos humanos deben estar más estructuradas para gestionar eficazmente el programa en la próxima fase.

## Recomendaciones

### 1. Dar prioridad al liderazgo normativo

Es necesario utilizar la ventaja comparativa del UNFPA y UNICEF para establecer un papel de liderazgo que permita centrarse en la labor normativa en el plano de los países, dar prioridad a la labor de alto nivel para convocar a las partes interesadas a todos los niveles y apoyar el compromiso y la apropiación, por parte de los gobiernos, del programa para eliminar el matrimonio infantil, todo ello con miras a armonizar las intervenciones y contribuir a los planes de acción nacionales o estatales. Los indicadores de la eficacia de la programación deberían basarse en la forma en que los gobiernos están actuando en relación con sus propias políticas y planes (por ejemplo, el grado en que los gobiernos dedican fondos a las iniciativas;

el grado en que el trabajo se integra operativamente en sectores clave como la salud, la justicia, la educación, la protección social; y el grado en que los gobiernos se centran en las niñas más vulnerables).

### 2. Ampliar el marco para la contextualización en los países (teoría del cambio)

El diseño de los programas para la siguiente fase debería facilitar un mayor grado de flexibilidad específica para cada país dentro de un marco global. Es preciso examinar la teoría general del cambio y rediseñarla sobre la base de la retroalimentación de la evaluación y la evaluación de la evaluabilidad. Los países deben profundizar continuamente en la comprensión de los determinantes subyacentes del matrimonio infantil, aprovechando las experiencias y el aprendizaje de la primera fase para desarrollar sus propias teorías del cambio e integrarlas en un marco global más amplio.

### 3. Consolidar y fortalecer la base de pruebas y la gestión de los conocimientos

Posicionar al UNFPA y a UNICEF de manera más visible dentro del movimiento para poner fin al matrimonio infantil, asegurando que en la siguiente fase del programa se establezcan vínculos oficiales con las principales partes interesadas mediante un diálogo periódico en forma de un grupo asesor de asociados renovado o una estructura alternativa. Aumentar la visibilidad de la agenda para poner fin al matrimonio infantil a través de la participación en los foros existentes, así como el apoyo a un aumento en el número de actividades de aprendizaje e intercambio de conocimientos dentro de los países y entre ellos, incluidos los países que actualmente no forman parte del programa.

<sup>8</sup> El equilibrio en el enfoque entre los resultados no exige necesariamente recursos adicionales del programa, pero se ha demostrado que se debe tener en cuenta para asegurar que las necesidades y los servicios estén en sintonía.



El último año del GPECM exige centrarse más en proporcionar las pruebas empíricas necesarias para apoyar la ampliación e identificar las características de un enfoque conjunto, sus costos y sus resultados. Una base de datos más sólida también servirá de apoyo a la movilización de recursos.

Elaborar una estrategia conjunta y directa de gestión de los conocimientos a nivel mundial, basándose en la estrategia existente, que puede adaptarse a los niveles inferiores. Las nuevas modalidades para compartir información en determinados formatos, como boletines y seminarios web, son buenas prácticas y deberían seguir reconociendo los logros importantes en un formato accesible. Es necesario prestar más atención a las actividades regionales de intercambio, así como a las actividades temáticas específicas sobre cuestiones clave. También deben ampliarse las oportunidades para compartir experiencias a nivel local (provincial, distrital) dentro de los países.

#### 4. Definir y monitorear la “cooperación”, la “convergencia” y la “complementariedad”

Definir más claramente la complementariedad programática y la convergencia geográfica a nivel provincial, distrital y comunitario para facilitar la convergencia operativa en los niveles inferiores. Generar pruebas que ilustren la eficacia de cada enfoque. Los modelos eficaces pueden incluir la complementariedad y/o la convergencia. Los futuros marcos de seguimiento deberían apoyar el enfoque de convergencia multisectorial mediante la definición y medición de la “unificación” con indicadores sobre: 1) diseño y planificación de programas conjuntos; 2) promoción conjunta; 3) ejecución coordinada; y 4) supervisión conjunta, generación de pruebas y presentación de informes sobre los resultados.

#### 5. Fortalecer y contextualizar los sistemas de monitoreo y presentación de informes

Puntos esenciales:

- Desarrollar y difundir medios rentables para monitorear los cambios en los conocimientos, las actitudes y las prácticas, así como los cambios en las normas sociales y de género, incluidos los datos cualitativos y los indicadores intermedios;
- Ofrecer directrices programáticas sobre inversiones financieras óptimas para el seguimiento, la evaluación y el aprendizaje;
- Elaborar indicadores para supervisar la integración del monitoreo del matrimonio infantil en sistemas como los marcos de monitoreo de los programas por países, los sistemas administrativos nacionales y de nivel inferior, y otros mecanismos gubernamentales existentes, incluido el apoyo al seguimiento en tiempo real;
- Incluir documentación sobre las consecuencias no deseadas (negativas y positivas) en los informes anuales.

Como parte de la presentación de informes anuales para 2018, la Unidad de Apoyo Mundial a los Programas (GPSU) puede seguir creando una base de datos con indicadores sobre los resultados y el impacto para hacer un seguimiento de las tendencias a lo largo de la Fase I, reconociendo las limitaciones. Alternativamente, se puede tomar una decisión al más alto nivel de omitir el seguimiento a nivel de resultados e impacto para la Fase I (dada la falta de bases de referencia y la existencia de datos incompletos) y centrar los esfuerzos en el diseño de la Fase II.

Perfeccionar/rediseñar los indicadores y desarrollar indicadores intermedios como parte del diseño de la nueva fase del programa, basándose en los resultados de esta evaluación y en el aprendizaje acumulativo del programa. Los indicadores deben diseñarse en plena consulta



con los expertos en datos técnicos y estadísticas de los organismos, así como con las oficinas regionales y nacionales. En la siguiente fase se puede incorporar una mayor flexibilidad, permitiendo a las oficinas en los países seleccionar entre un conjunto más amplio de indicadores en GRF para diseñar marcos de resultados a nivel de país. Se requerirá orientación específica para respaldar el proceso de formulación de marcos de resultados adaptados a los contextos locales, que podrían combinar indicadores obligatorios y opcionales.

Asegurar que, para la siguiente fase, los sistemas de monitoreo, evaluación y presentación de informes tengan lineamientos estandarizados para diferenciar entre los resultados que pueden ser atribuidos directamente al GPECM y los que son indirectamente o parcialmente atribuidos al programa. Si bien los indicadores de seguimiento de resultados deben limitarse a los indicadores que pueden atribuirse directamente al programa, el monitoreo a nivel de resultados podría abarcar cambios más amplios y permitir la documentación de contribuciones parciales o indirectas al proceso de cambio

## 6. Invertir en recursos humanos

Las necesidades de recursos humanos para la próxima fase del GPECM deberían considerarse de una manera más estructurada que utilice directrices para el porcentaje de fondos asignados a salarios y la asignación estratégica del tiempo del personal en diferentes niveles/sectores. A medida que el programa comience a ampliarse y se dirija a zonas más remotas, será necesario asignar estratégicamente recursos humanos para gestionar los procesos y garantizar el control de calidad. Se debe aumentar la capacidad de la GPSU para asegurar que los conocimientos especializados estén en consonancia con el diseño del programa, incluida la capacidad de abordar la

gestión de los conocimientos, la promoción mundial y otras cuestiones relacionadas con la gestión de los programas. Deberían aclararse las líneas de gestión y apoyo técnico entre las oficinas regionales y la Sede para prestar una mayor asistencia a las oficinas en los países.

## 7. Fortalecer el programa

Hay que tener en consideración lo siguiente en el diseño de la siguiente fase:

- La interacción y el equilibrio entre los diferentes resultados del programa en la selección de objetivos para garantizar que las crecientes demandas se satisfagan con oportunidades y servicios a medida que el programa comience a ampliarse;
- Involucrar sistemáticamente a los niños (incluyendo a los niños varones) y a los hombres a fin de crear un entorno propicio para el empoderamiento de las niñas y fomentar modelos positivos de masculinidad;
- Evaluar la capacidad de los diferentes enfoques (incluyendo el uso de tecnologías e innovaciones) para intensificar los esfuerzos dirigidos a llegar a los más vulnerables y ampliar los enfoques exitosos a zonas más remotas o a individuos más vulnerables;
- Asegurar que los marcos programáticos orienten la priorización de la inversión en el fortalecimiento de los sistemas, con el apoyo del desarrollo de la capacidad;
- Garantizar vínculos para apoyar el empoderamiento económico de las adolescentes y sus familias a fin de mejorar la sostenibilidad de las decisiones de retrasar el matrimonio;
- Aprovechar la teoría de la masa crítica para facilitar la transferencia de información dentro de las comunidades y entre ellas como una estrategia para la ampliación.



Los hallazgos y conclusiones no llevan al equipo de evaluación a recomendar la ampliación del número de países del GPECM sobre la base de los niveles actuales de recursos financieros y humanos. Las conclusiones no indican que ninguno de los países donde se ejecutan programas esté en condiciones de considerar la posibilidad de retirarse en este momento, ya que cada país necesita consolidar su base de datos empíricos y aprovechar los componentes del aprendizaje de la primera fase para profundizar los esfuerzos en la segunda fase. Los países que muestran signos de sostenibilidad pueden ser considerados candidatos para la eliminación gradual en la tercera fase del programa, lo que permite al GPECM incorporar a nuevos países con alta prevalencia. En las fases futuras se debería dar preferencia a la ampliación en la región del Oriente Medio y África septentrional/Estados Árabes, así como en los países que se enfrentan a situaciones de crisis humanitaria, para abordar los puntos críticos y permitir un mayor aprendizaje sinérgico en el marco del programa para poner fin al matrimonio infantil.

## 8. Buscar financiación

Se necesita un mayor compromiso en la próxima fase del programa para garantizar en la medida de lo posible una corriente previsible de financiación, complementada por esfuerzos constantes para movilizar recursos a todos los niveles<sup>9</sup>. Las oficinas en los países deberían seguir empleando estrategias eficaces para maximizar el alcance de los programas, incluido el uso estratégico de los fondos comunes, así como el aprovechamiento de recursos humanos y financieros complementarios. El diseño del programa y el establecimiento de prioridades en la fase siguiente deben tener en cuenta la realidad de los compromisos de los donantes y, en consecuencia, el entorno y la estructura de financiación. Las estrategias pueden basarse en la estrategia de movilización de fondos comunes diseñada para que el programa siga adelante, pero en última instancia, si el programa no puede encontrar fondos, entonces debe establecer un enfoque más limitado (véase la recomendación 1).

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<sup>9</sup> Esto es coherente con las recomendaciones de la evaluación de la evaluabilidad para elaborar y aplicar una estrategia de movilización de recursos y asignar compromisos de financiación bienales a las oficinas en los países, lo que fue acordado por la dirección. La estrategia se finalizó a principios de 2018, pero aún no ha dado resultados en esta etapa. Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia, 'UNICEF Evaluation Management Response – Final' (documento interno), 10 de agosto de 2018.



# 1 INTRODUCTION





## 1.1 BACKGROUND AND STRATEGY OF UNFPA/UNICEF SUPPORT TO END CHILD MARRIAGE

Child marriage, defined as a marriage in which one or both of the spouses are under the age of 18, is a global problem that is estimated to affect one in five girls globally and one in three girls in developing countries.<sup>10</sup> The practice by which girls in particular are married as children is influenced by gender inequality and discrimination that places a lower value on girls/women than boys/men. Though girls are disproportionately affected, boys comprise approximately 18 per cent of those married before the age of 18.<sup>11</sup> While child marriage is a global phenomenon, prevalence rates and patterns vary both between and within countries, driven by a complex mix of factors including social values and norms and cultural and religious beliefs and practices, along with economic, political and contextual influences.<sup>12</sup>

Child marriage is a serious human rights violation<sup>13</sup> that deprives girls (and boys) of their rights to health, safety and education.<sup>14</sup> The impact of child marriage on children is significant and

far-reaching. Child brides often have limited economic opportunities and are less likely to remain in school.<sup>15</sup> They are at elevated risk for domestic violence and face special challenges to negotiate safer sexual practices, make informed choices and access equal opportunities.<sup>16</sup> In addition, child brides are more likely to become pregnant before their bodies are physically mature, increasing the risk of pregnancy-related complications and maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity.<sup>17</sup>

The United Nations has worked with Member States through a series of resolutions over the past five years that further emphasize the threat that child marriage poses to the universal attainment of human rights. In 2014, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on child, early and forced marriage (A/RES/69/156), building on the previous global commitments, including the 2015 Human Rights Council Resolution addressing child marriage.<sup>18</sup> The General Assembly recently passed another resolution on child, early and forced marriage (A/RES/71/175), reaffirming and strengthening past commitments and highlighting the

<sup>10</sup> Girls Not Brides, 'Child Marriage Around the World', <[www.girlsnotbrides.org/where-does-it-happen/](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/where-does-it-happen/)>, accessed 3 April 2019.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Ending Child Marriage: Progress and prospects', UNICEF, New York, 2014.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Population Fund, 'Child Marriage: Frequently Asked Questions', UNFPA, <[www.unfpa.org/child-marriage-frequently-asked-questions](http://www.unfpa.org/child-marriage-frequently-asked-questions)>, accessed 3 April 2019; Girls Not Brides, 'Why Does Child Marriage Happen?', <[www.girlsnotbrides.org/why-does-it-happen/](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/why-does-it-happen/)>, accessed 5 April 2019.; United Nations Children's Fund, 'Harmful practices', UNICEF, <[www.unicef.org/protection/57929\\_58008.html](http://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_58008.html)>, accessed 5 April 2019.

<sup>13</sup> While there is no specific right against child marriage, child marriage is well understood to violate other human rights and is commonly presented as a human rights violation in key programme documents including the programme inception report and the communication and visibility strategy as well as by stakeholders at all levels. The GPECM communication and visibility strategy has as a key message: "Child marriage violates girls' human rights". See United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'GPECM Communication and Visibility Strategy', UNFPA and UNICEF, 19 March 2017; and United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Report of the Inception Phase of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage', UNICEF and UNFPA, October 2015, executive summary.

<sup>14</sup> Girls Not Brides, 'What is the impact of Child Marriage?', <[www.girlsnotbrides.org/what-is-the-impact/](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/what-is-the-impact/)>, accessed 5 April 2019.

<sup>15</sup> International Women's Health Coalition, 'The Facts on Child Marriage', <[iwhc.org/resources/facts-child-marriage/](http://iwhc.org/resources/facts-child-marriage/)>, accessed 5 April 2019.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Harmful practices', UNICEF, <[www.unicef.org/protection/57929\\_58008.html](http://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_58008.html)>, accessed 5 April 2019.

<sup>17</sup> United Nations Population Fund, 'Child Marriage: Frequently Asked Questions', UNFPA, <[www.unfpa.org/child-marriage-frequently-asked-questions](http://www.unfpa.org/child-marriage-frequently-asked-questions)>, accessed 5 April 2019; International Women's Health Coalition, 'The Facts on Child Marriage', <[iwhc.org/resources/facts-child-marriage/](http://iwhc.org/resources/facts-child-marriage/)>, accessed 5 April 2019.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations, 'Child, early and forced marriage', General Assembly Resolution A/RES/69/156, United Nations, New York, 22 January 2015.



required roles and responsibilities for Member States to end child marriage.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the SDGs include a global commitment to end child marriage by 2030 under Target 5.3 of SDG 5, providing a new platform to advocate for and take action to end child marriage around the world.<sup>20</sup>

A number of international and regional agreements further underscore the importance of free, full and informed consent to marriage, including: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa ('The Maputo Protocol'), the African Charter on the Rights and the Welfare of the Child, the American Convention on Human Rights, the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children Action Plan and the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action.<sup>21</sup>

The practice of child marriage is declining around the world. Most recent global data show that 21 per cent of young women (aged 20 to 24) were married as children, down from 25 per cent a decade ago. This reduction marks a small increase in the pace of decline (driven largely by South Asia) but is nowhere near the rate required to eliminate the practice by 2030

in line with SDG targets. Global progress would need to be 12 times over the rates of decline tracked over the past decade in order to eliminate child marriage.<sup>22</sup>

## 1.2 UNFPA AND UNICEF GLOBAL PROGRAMME APPROACH

Ending child marriage is a key priority for both UNFPA and UNICEF, as reflected in their respective strategic plans for 2018–2021.<sup>23</sup> In recognition of the complementarity of the work of each agency towards eradicating child marriage, UNFPA and UNICEF initiated an inception phase in 2015 to develop the GPECM, working jointly within the context of the United Nations reform agenda.

The GPECM is an ambitious and complex programme designed to contribute to the achievement of Target 5.3 of the SDGs by contributing to more detailed knowledge and practice on how to address child marriage effectively and accelerate the end of the practice at scale. The programme is jointly managed by UNFPA and UNICEF, with UNICEF serving as the convener and administrator. The programme is implemented in 12 countries in 4 regions using a range of different strategies and working with multiple partners and stakeholders at the national, regional and global levels. The programme approach and logic is illustrated in the global theory of change, which has informed programme design while allowing for country-level contextualization and adaptation.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations, 'Child, early and forced marriage', General Assembly Resolution, A/RES/71/175, United Nations, New York, 23 January 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Target 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation under Goal 5: Gender Equality. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 'Sustainable Development Goals', United Nations, <[sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sustainabledevelopmentgoals](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sustainabledevelopmentgoals)>, accessed 6 April 2019.

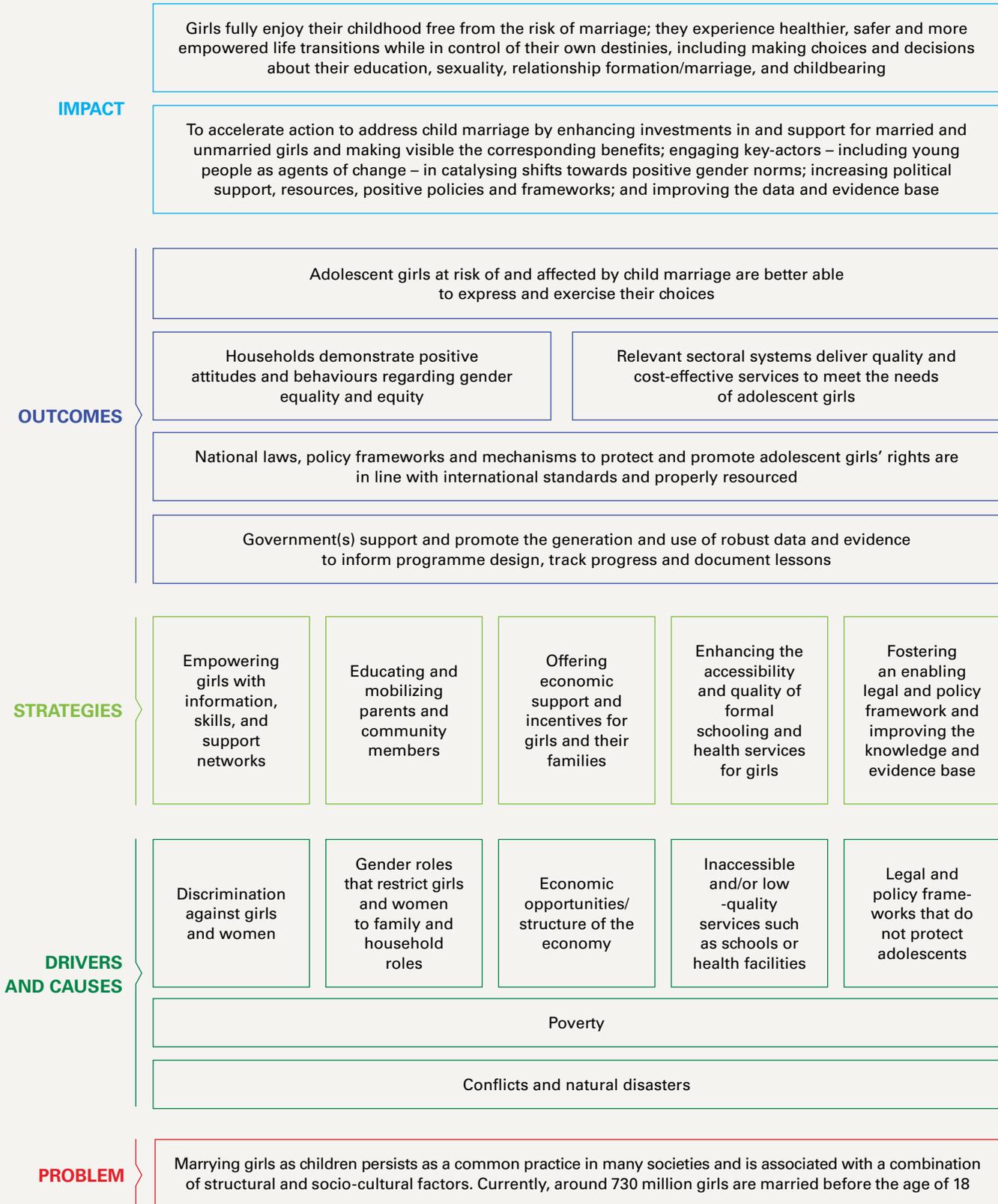
<sup>21</sup> Calimoutou, E., et al., 'Compendium of International and Legal Frameworks on Child Marriage (English)', Working Paper 109260, The World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2016. Girls Not Brides, 'Provisions of International and Regional Instruments Relevant to Protection from Child Marriage', <[www.girlsnotbrides.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Intl-and-Reg-Standards-for-Protection-from-Child-Marriage-By-ACPF-May-2013.pdf](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Intl-and-Reg-Standards-for-Protection-from-Child-Marriage-By-ACPF-May-2013.pdf)>, accessed 6 April 2019.

<sup>22</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Child Marriage: Latest trends and future prospects', UNICEF, New York, 2018.

<sup>23</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Strategic Plan 2014–2017', UNICEF, New York, 2013; United Nations Population Fund, 'UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018–2021', UNFPA, New York, 2017.



**FIGURE 1** Global Programme Theory of Change





The expected impact/goal of the GPECM is that “girls fully enjoy their childhood free from the risk of marriage; they experience healthier, safer and more empowered life transitions while in control of their own destiny, including making choices and decisions about their education, sexuality, relationship formation/marriage and childrearing.”

The strategic objective, as per the theory of change, is “to accelerate action to address child marriage by enhancing investments in and support for married and unmarried girls and making visible the corresponding benefits; engaging key actors – including young people as agents of change – in catalysing shifts towards positive gender norms; increasing political support, resources, positive policies and frameworks; and improving the data and evidence base.”

The GPECM was designed with the understanding that ending child marriage is a long-term goal that requires incremental steps

to address the complex socio-cultural and structural factors that underpin the practice. The design includes three phases:

- Phase I (2016–2019) to strengthen institutions and systems in select localities and countries to deliver quality services and opportunities for child brides or girls at risk of early marriage. It will also lay the foundation for attitudinal change among a “critical mass” of families and communities for a longer-term shift in behaviours and norms.
- Phase II (5–10 years) to use the demonstration and catalytic power of this “critical mass” of strengthened systems, communities and girls to further accelerate progress at a broader scale.
- The long-term phase (10–15 years) wherein larger proportions and numbers of girls are able to enjoy childhood free from the risk of marriage and experience healthier, safer and more empowered life transitions, with



greater decision-making power over their education, sexuality, relationships, marriage and childbearing.

The first phase of the GPECM started on 1 January 2016 and will continue through 31 December 2019. This initial phase had an indicative four-year budget (2016–2019) estimated at US\$246.7 million with contributions expected from Canada, the Netherlands, Italy, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Commission. Actual funds received for Phase I are only 40 per cent of the target (US\$94.5 million).<sup>24</sup>

The first phase targeted adolescent girls (ages 10–19) at risk of child marriage or already in a union in 12 countries within 4 regions. Countries were selected based on: child marriage prevalence rates, projected burden; regional distribution; country readiness and levels of government engagement, with attention paid to a variety of diverse contexts to allow for a broader understanding of what factors work effectively in different settings.

Region	Programme countries
<b>Eastern and Southern Africa</b>	Ethiopia Mozambique Uganda Zambia
<b>West and Central Africa</b>	Burkina Faso Ghana Niger Sierra Leone
<b>Middle East and North Africa</b>	Yemen
<b>South Asia</b>	Bangladesh India Nepal

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Evaluability Assessment’, UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>25</sup> Objectives have been modified slightly from the terms of reference to encompass the key areas of inquiry laid out in the terms of reference and to reflect the availability of data at the time of the evaluation.

### 1.3 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF EVALUATION

The evaluation of the GPECM has been jointly commissioned by the evaluation offices of UNFPA and UNICEF in line with the programme evaluation plan and the findings and recommendations of the GPECM evaluability assessment conducted in 2017. The evaluation is designed to provide an assessment of the progress made against planned results over the first years of implementation (2016–2018) with an emphasis on identifying good practices and lessons learned to inform the direction of future programming.

#### Evaluation objectives

The key objective of the evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of progress towards results, sustainability of interventions and programme efficiency and effectiveness, bearing in mind the complexity of operations across 4 regions and 12 countries. The evaluation highlights good practices and lessons learned from the first phase of implementation to inform future programming.

The specific objectives are as follows:<sup>25</sup>

1. Assess progress towards results against planned outputs and outcomes;
2. Assess the sustainability of the results achieved;
3. Assess the extent to which issues of human rights, cultural sensitivity and gender equality have been taken into consideration in programme implementation;
4. Assess the efficiency of programme implementation arrangements;



5. Assess the effectiveness of the joint UNFPA-UNICEF management modalities at global, regional and national levels;
6. Assess the extent to which coordination with implementing and other partners has been efficient and effective;
7. Assess the extent to which the programme approach has demonstrated value added, especially in terms of demonstrating catalytic effects that may be suitable for scaling up in future phases;
8. Identify lessons and distil good practices from the first years of programme implementation.

### Evaluation scope

The evaluation of the GPECM covers the implementation of the programme from the launch in the first quarter of 2016 through the third and fourth quarters of 2018. Comprehensive data was available for the first two years of programme implementation (2016–2017). Partial data from 2018 was available from mid-year reports and/or generated from primary research conducted for the evaluation including interviews and field visits.

The evaluation encompasses the different programme levels (global, regional and national), focusing on issues related to programme relevance, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. All countries and regions under the programme were covered. Team members visited three countries for case studies; the other nine countries were handled by desk review and remote interviews.

The evaluation builds on the findings and conclusions of the evaluability assessment and other reviews. Primary users of the evaluation include: the GPSU and sectoral managers at UNFPA and UNICEF headquarters; UNFPA and UNICEF GPECM programme managers and implementers at regional and national levels; and the Global Programme Steering Committee, including donors that have funded the programme. Other stakeholders such as regional or programme country governments and other partners, civil society organizations (CSOs) and academia comprise the larger audience for the evaluation findings.



# 2

## METHODOLOGY



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## 2.1 EVALUATION APPROACH

The primary and secondary research for the evaluation was conducted over a three-month period from October to December 2018 by an independent team comprised of three international consultants (team leader, senior thematic expert and research and data analyst). The evaluation was conducted in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations System as well as the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis.<sup>26</sup> The team also followed the guidance on the integration of gender equality and human rights principles in evaluations.<sup>27</sup>

The evaluation approach was evidence-based to assess progress towards targeted results at the output and outcome level, considering

supporting or inhibiting factors that may have had an effect on programme implementation and results. The evaluation team also employed a utilization focus to ensure the exercise went beyond extractive methods of data collection to facilitate stakeholder engagement in assessing programme strengths and weaknesses.

The complexity of contexts (both within and between countries) and the early stages of programme implementation led evaluators to conclude that the GPECM was not amenable to a theory-based approach within the confines of this evaluation.<sup>28</sup> However, evaluators did review the programme logic and strategies to assess the applicability of the model. The team used evidence-based analysis to assess the validity of the programme logic by examining causal links between outputs and outcomes working within the limitations identified in the

### BOX 1

#### Ethical evaluation procedures

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, including protecting the rights and integrity of those consulted and the confidentiality of their statements. They conducted their work in a manner that was respectful of differences relating to culture, religion, age and gender. The methodology ensured that consultants engaged with a range of respondents, especially at the community level (men, women, girls, boys and local and religious leaders). Names of community members were not recorded and participants were informed at the start of each interview or focus group session about the purpose of the discussion and the confidentiality of their information. Information cited or quoted in this report does not identify specific sources.

<sup>26</sup> United Nations Evaluation Group, 'UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation', UNEG, June 2008, <[www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc\\_id=102](http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=102)>, accessed 6 April 2019; United Nations Evaluation Group, 'UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System', UNEG, June 2008, <[www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc\\_id=100](http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=100)>, accessed 6 April 2019.

<sup>27</sup> United Nations Evaluation Group, 'Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance', UNEG, 2011, <[hrbportal.org/resources/integrating-human-rights-and-gender-equality-in-evaluation-towards-uneq-guidance](http://hrbportal.org/resources/integrating-human-rights-and-gender-equality-in-evaluation-towards-uneq-guidance)>, accessed 6 April 2019.

<sup>28</sup> A theory-based approach is understood as a specific evaluation structure that looks beyond results to understand more precisely how and why results were achieved. In the case of the GPECM, a theory-based evaluation would require in-depth individualized field research in all 12 countries that further captures variations within countries. The short timeline for programme implementation has yet to allow many stakeholders to fully understand what works, much less why. The issue is further complicated by the fact that the global theory of change has been deemed unclear and incomplete by the evaluability assessment.



evaluability assessment.<sup>29</sup> The team also analysed the extent to which the theory of change and programme design addressed the assumptions that underpinned the theory of change.<sup>30</sup>

## 2.2 EVALUATION PHASES AND WORK PLAN

The evaluation was conducted over four months from October 2018 to January 2019. The work plan includes responsibilities for four phases of the evaluation as laid out in the terms of reference: 1) preparatory phase; 2) inception phase; 3) data collection and analysis phase; 3) validation and reporting phase. While the phases have been designed to flow consecutively, each feeding logically into the next, the inception phase and data collection phase have been conducted concurrently, presenting some challenges to the flow of the exercise. Refer to Annex D for details.

## 2.3 EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation used five complementary forms of data collection to improve reliability and add richness and depth to findings:

- **Desk review** of background documentation including planning programme documents, annual reports, monitoring data and national plans and commitments;
- **Questionnaire** tailored to country office desk reviews to elaborate on data and fill in gaps;

- **Key informant interviews (semi-structured)** with a range of stakeholders at all levels as identified in the stakeholder analysis including GPSU, UNFPA and UNICEF country office representatives, deputy representatives, technical specialists and national and regional focal points, implementing partners from government and civil society, district and local leaders, donors and steering committee members, advisory group members;
- **Focus group discussions** with stakeholder groups and beneficiaries, including girls, boys, mothers and fathers;
- **Direct observation** during field site visits to add to the evidence base at the local level.

The team conducted interviews with stakeholders at the global and regional levels and during site visits to three programme countries to obtain a deeper view of implementation at the country level. A total of 588 stakeholders participated in the evaluation across all levels (*see Annex H for full listing*). The evaluation team selected field visit countries during the inception meetings in New York in October 2018 in consultation with the Evaluation Management Group (EMG). Selection criteria included diversity in terms of: regional representation, child marriage prevalence patterns, programme scale, human development and status of national action plans (NAPs).<sup>31</sup>

One country was selected for a field visit from each of the three dominant regions covered by the GPECM as follows: Mozambique from Eastern and Southern Africa; the Niger from

<sup>29</sup> The assessment found that the theory of change failed to identify anticipated causality across the factors that contribute to child marriage and the assumptions on which the theory of change is based were not made explicit. Related gaps were identified in the results framework (e.g. lack of outputs/indicators measuring Communication for Development (C4D) and advocacy as well as cross-cutting issues related to programming principles). The reliance on quantitative indicators was noted as a weakness in understanding progress in terms of changes in perceptions, attitudes and behaviours that contribute to the elimination of child marriage.

<sup>30</sup> While the global theory of change did not include assumptions, assumptions were identified in the programme inception report that are understood to have underpinned the global theory of change.

<sup>31</sup> Refer to Annex C for a table that details country visit selection criteria.



West and Central Africa; and Nepal from South Asia.<sup>32</sup> The evaluation team leader and senior expert worked together to conduct the first country visit (the Niger), allowing the team to test the functionality of tools and methodologies and to make adjustments as needed. Each team member then proceeded separately to a second country (Mozambique or Nepal) for the next field visit. Staff from the evaluation offices of UNFPA and UNICEF accompanied the evaluation team on mission, providing support and guidance.

Country visits lasted between 9 and 11 days each depending on the size of the country and the time required to travel to remote sites. Evaluators utilized the full range of methodologies to gather data and open up space for participatory analysis among stakeholders and

beneficiaries. Preliminary findings from country visits were shared with each country team in the form of a PowerPoint debriefing for feedback and open discussion.

Stakeholders interviewed during site visits included direct and indirect implementers (duty bearers) and beneficiaries (rights holders). Specific stakeholders at the country level included governments and non-government implementers, UNFPA and UNICEF staff involved in the planning, management and implementation of the GPECM and/or reducing child marriage; along with the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the programme. Direct beneficiaries were identified as those girls for whom programme activities hold the potential to promote empowerment and reduce early marriage; boys and families in target areas were identified as indirect beneficiaries. Refer to research guidelines in Annex B and a full list of persons consulted in Annex H.

**TABLE 2** Overview of persons consulted for evaluation

	Key informant interview	Focus group discussion participants	Respondents desk review
Global level	25	-	-
Regional level	12	-	-
Country-level desk review		-	36
Country-level Niger case study	57	146	-
Country-level Nepal case study	51	88	-
Country-level Mozambique case study	37	136	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>36</b>

<sup>32</sup> Yemen, the only country in the Middle East and North Africa region covered by the programme, was not considered on the basis that field visits would not be possible due to the current crisis.



## 2.4 EVALUATION MATRIX AND QUESTIONS

The team utilized an evaluation matrix to guide the process and ensure the systematic collection and recording of data and information. The role of the matrix varied throughout the evaluation process:

- During the **inception phase**, the evaluation matrix captured core aspects of the evaluation design including evaluation criteria, questions and assumptions as well as sources of information and methods and tools for data collection.
- During the **data collection phase of the evaluation**, the matrix facilitated a structured approach to data collection and organization.

- During the **analysis and reporting phase**, the matrix allowed the team to conduct the analysis in a systematic way by showing associations between the evidence collected and the findings and conclusions.

The evaluation matrix was structured around four criteria categories based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) criteria of relevance (including responsiveness), effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.<sup>33</sup> The eight evaluation questions that guided the lines of inquiry were formulated as follows:

TABLE 3		Evaluation questions
<b>Relevance and responsiveness</b>		
<b>EQ 1</b>		To what extent is the programme relevant and responsive to contribute towards ending child marriage globally, regionally and nationally?
<b>Effectiveness</b>		
<b>EQ 2</b>		To what extent has the GPECM achieved or is on track to achieving its planned results in all outcome areas?
<b>Sustainability</b>		
<b>EQ 3</b>		To what extent has the programme built sustainability considerations in design and implementation to support national ownership?
<b>EQ 4</b>		To what extent has the programme had a catalytic effect at the different levels (global, regional and national)?
<b>Governance and management efficiency and effectiveness</b>		
<b>EQ 5</b>		To what extent is the joint governance structure and management structure effective at all levels of the GPECM to facilitate results and efficient delivery?
<b>EQ 6</b>		To what extent does the programme's global, regional and national interventions facilitate linkages and synergies to accelerate efforts to end child marriage?
<b>EQ 7</b>		To what extent does the programme have in place adequate planning, monitoring and reporting mechanisms to capture results and learn from interventions?
<b>EQ 8</b>		To what extent has the programme made good use of human, financial and technical resources in pursuing the achievement of results?

<sup>33</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 'DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance', OECD/DAC, <[www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/49756382.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/49756382.pdf)>, accessed 8 April 2019.



The evaluation matrix was supported by the research tools elaborated in Annex B. The evaluation questions, assumptions and indicators contained within the matrix informed the content of key informant interviews, focus group discussions and workshops with stakeholders and beneficiaries. *See Annex A for the detailed matrix.*

## 2.5 ANALYSIS AND VALIDATION

Data analysis was structured according to the evaluation questions identified in the evaluation matrix. All desk review evidence and field visit data was entered into the matrix. The team used a range of analysis techniques including: qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data; quantitative analysis of secondary quantitative data; comparative analysis to identify similarities and differences between country experiences; and contribution analysis to assess programme contributions to expected results to the extent possible.

## 2.6 EVALUATION LIMITATIONS

Limitations identified by the evaluation team included the following:

- Primary research was only conducted in one quarter of the programme countries (3 of 12), limiting the depth of analysis across 12 diverse countries. Limited generation of qualitative data from field visits restricts the evidence to anecdotal/indicative.

- Regional offices were not evaluated in-depth; instead this relied on secondary data and remote interviews.
- Limited data was available for outcome-level tracking combined with attribution issues at the outcome/impact level.<sup>34</sup>
- There were weaknesses in reporting systems, including lack of qualitative data to track changes in social/gender norms and lack of monitoring of data related to programme management and joint operations.
- The availability of 2018 data was limited across countries.
- There were difficulties distinguishing GPECM contributions from other initiatives contributing to ending child marriage within countries.
- There were competing stakeholder demands for target/focus and depth/breadth in deliverables.<sup>35</sup>

Despite these limitations, the evaluation team was able to gather/generate sufficient data to glean a good understanding of the GPECM and to justify findings and conclusions with a sound evidence base. Steps taken to mitigate limitations included: 1) the inclusion of the questionnaire in the desk review to expand the understanding of countries not visited; 2) the exploration of outcome-level results in country case studies; and 3) the inclusion of mid-year 2018 data for output indicators.

<sup>34</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Inventory of baseline surveys and data collection tools v. 2', (internal Excel document), 28 February 2018; and interviews conducted during the inception phase with GPSU and field visit countries.

<sup>35</sup> The terms of reference requires a report of no more than 60 pages (excluding annexes), while stakeholders collectively expect expansive depth and breadth of analysis.



# 3

## MAIN FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS





The main findings are organized under the four evaluation categories and eight evaluation questions outlined in Table 4 and detailed in Annex A. The GPECM is a complex programme designed to accelerate actions to end child marriage by contributing more detailed knowledge and innovative holistic approaches. Findings across 4 regions and 12 countries should be positioned within the global, regional and national context(s) under which the programme is operating, as outlined in the introduction.



### 3.1 GLOBAL PROGRAMME LOGIC

As the first programme that seeks to address child marriage at scale, evidence of the validity of the programme logic and efficacy of approaches is of considerable interest to stakeholders.<sup>36</sup>

#### Global theory of change

The global theory of change identifies seven drivers and causes of early marriage (*see Table 1*). Poverty, conflicts and natural disasters are positioned as cross-cutting causes. Another five drivers are identified and each appears to be associated with a specific strategy to mitigate them.<sup>37</sup> The theory of change does not contain outputs or assumptions. While the programme logic model suggests linkages between drivers and strategies, the flow does not lead clearly to outcomes in all cases, as illustrated in Table 4. Specifically, no outcome is identified that links to lack of economic opportunities as a driver of child marriage. Furthermore, no specific driver or strategy is identified that leads to the outcome on data and evidence generation, nor is there a strategy on capacity development,<sup>38</sup> which is an essential building block to taking strategies to scale.

<sup>36</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Report of the Inception Phase of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage', UNICEF and UNFPA, October 2015, p.15.

<sup>37</sup> The theory of change does not clearly show the linkages between drivers, strategies and outcomes. The evaluation team developed the below table based on the linkages that the theory of change seemed to imply based on the model presented in Table 1. While there seems to be a general understanding by most stakeholders within the programme that drivers are interlinked and intertwined, this was not well represented in either the global theory of change or the GRF.

<sup>38</sup> Reinforcing capacities intervenes across all outcomes of the theory of change and this is not well captured.



**TABLE 4** Theory of change drivers, strategies and outcomes

	Drivers	Strategies	Outcomes
Poverty, conflicts and natural disasters	Discrimination against girls and women	→ Empowering girls with information, skills and support networks	→ Adolescent girls at risk of and affected by child marriage are better able to express and exercise their choices
	Gender roles that restrict girls and women to family and household roles	→ Educating and mobilizing parents and community members	→ Households demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours regarding gender equality and equity
	Economic opportunities/ structure of the economy	→ Offering economic support and incentives for girls and their families	→ None specified
	Inaccessible and/ or low-quality services such as schools or health facilities	→ Enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling and the health service sector for girls	→ Relevant sectoral systems deliver quality and cost-effective services to meet the needs of adolescent girls
	Legal and policy frameworks that do not protect adolescents	→ Fostering and enabling legal policy frameworks and improving the knowledge and evidence base	→ National laws, policy frameworks and mechanisms to protect and promote adolescent girls' rights are in line with international standards and are properly resourced
	Not identified	→ Not identified, but relates to improving the knowledge and evidence base	→ Government(s) support and promote the generation and use of robust data and evidence to inform programme, design, track progress and document lessons

The GPECM aims to empower adolescent girls (rights holders) with information and skills to access resources and services based on the implied assumption that this, together with greater gender equality, will delay marriage. At the same time, the programme aims to create a strong enabling environment (laws, policies,

data and services) by working with duty bearers, including governments and civil society, to support the process of change.

The global theory of change is underpinned by four assumptions identified in the programme inception report:<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Report of the Inception Phase of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage', UNICEF and UNFPA, October 2015, p.17.



1. **Child marriage is influenced by factors beyond the control and mandates of the United Nations system.** The inception report recognizes that child marriage is caused by a large spectrum of determinants. While some drivers can be addressed through long-term strategies that fall within the UNFPA and UNICEF areas of expertise, other drivers such as poverty, conflicts and inequality are beyond the control of the two agencies. Abilities to address structural factors such as poverty and inequality vary a great deal across programme countries. The assumption implies that governments and other development partners will contribute to addressing critical drivers, however these are long-term challenges requiring protracted engagements.
2. **Ending child marriage will require a multi-sectoral approach and geographic convergence.** Lessons learned from experiences in preventing violence against women and girls show that multicomponent, integrated interventions are more effective than single ones.<sup>40</sup> The multi-sectoral element is evidenced in the global theory of change and the results framework and is integral to the programme design. Interventions aiming at empowering adolescent girls, enhancing education opportunities and offering appropriate health and protection services, as well as fostering gender equality more broadly (involving boys, communities and leaders) address a number of drivers at the local level. Adequate inter-sectoral policies and legal frameworks are equally essential to support this process. Geographic convergence whereby various sectors are targeted within the same geographical areas, was not well identified in either the global theory of change or the GRF.
3. **Some momentum for social change is necessary if significant progress is to be achieved.** Achieving social change requires specific strategies to create new shared beliefs leading to new behaviours. This assumption appears to be related to ‘critical mass’ theory that new ideas/behaviours can spread quickly once the tipping point has been reached.<sup>41</sup> While the global theory of change and GRF utilize key entry points to bring about social change, the logic does not well define how momentum is achieved beyond quantitative measures. Strategies require reflection on local dynamics, as well as the identification of change agents and the numbers/percentages of people that need to display changes in order to sustain momentum.
4. **Changing social norms around gender will bring about sustainable change.** Gender discrimination has been identified as one of the important drivers of child marriage in the global theory of change, whereby girls face limited opportunities, are undervalued and are obliged to comply with social expectations. Gender inequality is a pervasive global issue, but child marriage is not prevalent in all societies, pointing to the complexity of the issue. Changing social norms around gender is a long-term goal that must be integrated into all programme components. Tackling root causes of gender inequality was not clearly articulated across programme components in the GRF, though girls’ empowerment was central in the programme approach.

<sup>40</sup> Alexander-Scott, M., E. Bell and J. Holden, ‘Shifting Social Norms to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)’; DFID Guidance Note, VAWG Helpdesk, London, 2016.

<sup>41</sup> Refer to section 3.3.c findings under Outcome 2 for further elaboration on critical mass theory.



The theory of change drew on secondary evidence, primarily from South Asia, as well as both agencies' programming experience. The drivers of child marriage identified in the theory of change are based on evidence and are a combination of structural and socio-cultural factors. The global theory of change identified five drivers that are best understood as threads in a complex fabric, defying simple causal analysis (*see Table 5*). Patterns and practices may look different across regions and countries and even within the same community.

For example, in the Niger, fear of pregnancy outside of marriage drives child marriage and adolescent pregnancy rates outside of marriage are hidden, so it is difficult to know the causal relationship, but addressing both issues is critical. In Bangladesh, India and Nepal, advantages of marrying children young are the material benefits from dowry, decreasing the household size and the transfer of human capital between households. In such cases, the bride's joining the husband's family is seen as additional support for household activities.<sup>42</sup> Child marriage in India is also influenced by factors beyond poverty. For example, in the state of Gujarat, child marriages take place in families largely due to customs based on caste and social norms and family fears for adolescent girls' safety and maintenance of chastity.<sup>43</sup> In Zambia, consensual marriage among adolescents is common<sup>44</sup> and love marriages between peers are on the rise in both India and Nepal.<sup>45</sup>

During the first phase of the GPECM, gaps were identified in the theory of change among stakeholders at different levels and further highlighted in the evaluability assessment as follows:

- The importance of working with boys and men as beneficiaries and decision makers/gatekeepers is not appropriately reflected.
- The relationship between child marriage and adolescent pregnancy is not evidenced, bearing in mind that addressing the risks related to adolescent pregnancies is a less controversial entry point in countries with strong religious and traditional elements.
- Although the theory of change addresses all girls (i.e. both girls who are unmarried and who are affected by child marriage), there is limited focus on mitigating the risks of child marriage for those girls who are already married, such as violence and adolescent pregnancies.
- Considering specific strategies to address child marriage prevalence in conflict, disaster and humanitarian crisis are not sufficiently highlighted.<sup>46</sup>
- Economic empowerment interventions are lacking.
- Strengthening the capacity of the government in order to sustain interventions is insufficiently highlighted.
- Strategies to scale up interventions and accelerate changes are not identified in most country adaptations.

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<sup>42</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia: Working Paper,' UNICEF, Kathmandu, 2018.

<sup>43</sup> UNFAP and UNICEF India country offices feedback on draft evaluation.

<sup>44</sup> Population Council, United Nations Population Fund and Government of the Republic of Zambia, 'Child Marriage in Zambia', UNFPA, Lusaka, 2017.

<sup>45</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia: Working Paper,' UNICEF, Kathmandu, 2018.

<sup>46</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Evaluability Assessment', UNICEF, New York, 2017.



- Identifying macro-level drivers of child marriage outside of the UNFPA/UNICEF sphere of influence (e.g. political-socio-economic environment) beyond the already identified determinants such as poverty and natural disaster would help to paint a comprehensive picture and refine programming at the country level.

While the drivers identified in the global theory of change are valid, they are incomplete and programme outcomes do not always link, as demonstrated in Table 5. The interaction between drivers must be considered as well and this is not well articulated in the theory of change or results framework. To be most meaningful and relevant, the theory of change requires adjustments to reflect variations in each country, thereby enabling country teams to target programming based on the country context.<sup>47</sup>

## Global results framework

The GRF draws on the logic laid out in the global theory of change, with five key outcomes and seven outputs in the November 2017 version, as follows. Gaps in logic flow identified in the global theory of change, therefore, are carried forth in the GRF.

### Outcome 1

Adolescent girls at risk of and affected by child marriage are better able to express and exercise their choices.

**Output 1.1** – Adolescent girls (aged 10–19) are actively participating in a targeted programme (life skills, health information, economic empowerment, social protection).

**Output 1.2** – Adolescent girls are supported to enrol and remain in formal and non-formal education, including through the transition from primary to secondary education.

### Outcome 2

Families and communities demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours towards investing in and supporting adolescent girls.

**Output 2.1** – Families and communities are increasingly aware of the benefits of investing in adolescent girls [and ending child marriage].

### Outcome 3

Relevant sectoral systems are able to scale up quality and cost-effective services to meet the needs of adolescent girls.

**Output 3.1** – Health and protection systems supported to implement guidelines, protocols and standards for adolescent girl-friendly health and protection services.

**Output 3.2** – Non-formal/primary/secondary schools supported to improve quality of education for adolescent girls.

### Outcome 4

National legal and policy frameworks protect the rights of adolescents (in line with international standards).

**Output 4.1** – Country has costed NAP or development plan on ending child marriage across more than one ministry.

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<sup>47</sup> Refer to 3.2.b 'Global programme responsiveness to country contexts' for related information.



## Outcome 5

Government(s) and partners within and across countries support and promote the generation and use of robust data and evidence to inform programme design, track progress and document lessons learned.

**Output 5.1** – Country-specific, high-quality data and evidence generated and shared on what works at scale to accelerate ending child marriage.

The GPECM has been well structured to tackle the issue of child marriage across sectors and at different levels. The programme works from the top down, with policies, legal frameworks and systems (Outcomes 3 and 4). It also works from the bottom up, focusing on families and communities as the nexus of change (Outcome 2). Lastly, the programme works from within, targeting girls themselves (Outcome 1) to challenge gender inequalities and foster empowerment. Work from within also targets cultural gatekeepers such as traditional and religious leaders. This approach is well structured to foster changes to social norms, allowing for a range of voices and perspectives to be heard, thereby helping to build a social movement and limit the risk of backlash.

The programme has made adjustments to the outcomes as originally drafted in the global theory of change. Changes to outcome statements have been reflected in the programme's results framework, but not in the theory of change. Adjustments to outcome statements represent fine-tuning and clarification of the programme vision based on lessons learned in the first years of implementation.<sup>48</sup>

The linkages between outputs and outcomes were implied but were not explicitly mentioned, as outputs were omitted in the theory of change. Linkages are clarified and discussed below:

- The link between Outcome 1 and its related outputs is quite direct. If adolescent girls are educated, have access to information and skills and are empowered, they will be better equipped to exercise their choices and make decisions concerning their lives. However, the link ascribes a degree of decision-making power to girls that is not realistic in many cases and the model does not show linkages between Outcomes 1 and 2, which would position girls within families and communities more holistically.
- The relationship between Outcome 2 and Output 2.1 is incomplete. Although raising awareness may be an important precondition, awareness alone is not sufficient to change attitudes and behaviours. Insufficient creation of a supportive environment for adolescent girls may lead to unintended effects for those girls who underwent an empowerment process (Outcome 1) as they have limited control over changing social/gender norms in their communities.<sup>49</sup>
- Output 3.1 and 3.2 contribute partly to Outcome 3, since support to the implementation of strategies, guidelines, protocols and standards will contribute to the outcome. However, the delivery of services depends on a number of factors beyond the control of the programme. For instance, the availability of national strategies,

<sup>48</sup> Annex E contains a visual representation of the specific changes to outcome statements in the results framework. Outputs have remained largely unchanged with the exception of Output 2.1, which has adjusted its target participants from 'households' to 'families and communities', in line with changes to Outcome 2 and a better articulation of social norm change processes.

<sup>49</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Report on the Expert Group Meeting on the Evidence Base for Accelerated Action to End Child Marriage in South Asia, Bangkok, Thailand September 26 to 28, 2016', UNFPA and UNICEF, Kathmandu and Bangkok, 2016.



sufficient human resource allocation and capacities, as well as funding are essential to scaling up quality services. Working at a system level in relevant sectors requires huge resource investment and therefore is not clearly defined within the scope of the GPECM.

- Output 4.1 directly relates to Outcome 4. However, the focus on plans to end child marriage is narrow and does not offer an indication of coordination mechanisms or funding for action plans. Further, the output does not look at laws and legislation nor other plans and frameworks that may also influence the rights of adolescent (e.g. strategic plans that focus on gender equality, reproductive health and education).<sup>50</sup>
- The link between Output 5.1 and Outcome 5 is clear, as evidence generated on what works at scale to accelerate ending child marriage should contribute to promoting evidence-based programming, tracking progress and documenting lessons learned.

The evaluation reinforces the findings of the evaluability assessment in regard to the GRF, which identified a number of issues. The evaluation further develops these findings as follows:

1. The GRF primarily serves the purpose of reporting progress against desired outputs/outcomes to key stakeholders but does not adequately inform programme

management decisions to clarify what success looks like as a whole and how to guide the programme accordingly.

2. Programme management indicators need to be in place for the management of GPECM interventions in each programme country, as well as regionally and globally.<sup>51</sup>
3. The GRF needs to capture a complex reality; this will likely require more indicators that may be selectively targeted by countries in the next phase. Indicators need to be agreed to between the GPSU, regional offices and programme countries as part of the revision of the GRF for the next phase.
4. There should be a mix of both quantitative and qualitative indicators in the GRF to capture the nuances of change processes.<sup>52</sup>
5. The jump from output to outcome indicators in the current GRF is considerable. Intermediate milestone indicators between output and outcome indicators would help to bridge this gap.<sup>53</sup>

### 3.2 RELEVANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS

OECD/DAC defines relevance as: “The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries’ requirements, country needs, global priorities and partner’s and donor’s policies. Relevance also includes an assessment of the

<sup>50</sup> The programme has moved beyond the initial framing of this output over the early years of implementation to encompass tracking of funding for national action plans as well as supporting and tracking (outside of the GRF) broader policies and legislation related to adolescent rights and ending child marriage.

<sup>51</sup> Burkina Faso and Uganda have developed sub-indicators that measure performance and management for monitoring internal progress.

<sup>52</sup> For example, in India, questions about knowledge, attitudes and practices are being included in monitoring frameworks, which can be used to report against Outcome Indicator 2.1 (e.g. 1) Are there any benefits of marrying off a girl/boy before 18 years of age? What benefits (list of options given). 2) Is there any harm in marrying off a girl/boy before 18 years of age? What kind of harm (list of harms given)). Findings will be expressed in numbers and percentages. In Ethiopia, a similar question is included in the monitoring framework: Percentage of male and female caregivers who were approached for child marriage (under 18) and refused the request.

<sup>53</sup> The desire for intermediate indicators to offer a timelier indication of the direction of complex change processes was expressed by stakeholders at all levels during interviews.



responsiveness (dynamic relevance), that is understood as the ability of the programme/project to respond to: i) changes and/or additional requests from counterparts and ii) shifts caused by external factors in an evolving context.”<sup>54</sup>

For the purposes of this evaluation, the following criteria were assessed:

- Alignment with global and regional frameworks addressing child marriage;
- Contextualization of strategies and interventions;
- Identification and tracking of supporting and constraining factors to progress and ability to adjust.
- Human rights, gender equality and culturally-sensitive approaches; and
- Ability of the programme to reach those most behind in the country.

### 3.2.a GPECM alignment with global and regional priorities to end child marriage

#### ○ KEY FINDING 1:

The GPECM is well aligned with and supportive of global and regional frameworks and commitments to end child marriage. Regional-level efforts have contributed to countries’ alignment with international and regional commitments to end child marriage.

### Alignment at the global level

The GPECM stemmed from increasing global momentum to end child marriage, which can be traced back to international conventions such as the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (1964), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) as well as conferences such as the International Conference on Population and Development (1994) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995).

The agenda to end child marriage became a more prominent global priority after 2011, with the launch of the Girls Not Brides network, the first International Day of the Girl Child on the theme of ending child marriage, the UNFPA ‘Too Young to Wed’ exhibition, the 2014 Global Girls’ Summit, as well as the adoption of the United Nations Human Rights Council<sup>55</sup> and General Assembly<sup>56</sup> resolutions related to child marriage. GPECM advocacy is further aligned with the 2016 United Nations General Assembly Resolution on child, early and forced marriage that calls on states to enact, enforce and uphold laws aimed at preventing and ending child and forced marriages.<sup>57</sup>

The GPECM was initiated by UNFPA and UNICEF headquarters. A one-year inception phase followed to elaborate country-level plans. Both agencies have prioritized child marriage in their

<sup>54</sup> United Nations Population Fund, ‘Evaluation Handbook: How to Design and Conduct a Country Programme Evaluation at UNFPA’, UNFPA, 2013.

<sup>55</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Strengthening efforts to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage: challenges, achievements, best practices and implementation gaps, Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/24/23, United Nations, New York, 9 October 2013.

<sup>56</sup> United Nations, Child, early and forced marriage, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/68/148, 30 January 2014; United Nations, Child, early and forced marriage, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/69/156, United Nations, New York, 22 January 2015; and United Nations, Child, early and forced marriage, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/71/175, United Nations, New York, January 23, 2017.

<sup>57</sup> United Nations, Child, early and forced marriage, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/71/175, United Nations, New York, January 23, 2017, p. 3.



strategic documents for the period 2014–2017 and have further emphasized child marriage as an explicit priority again in their 2018–2021 strategic plans.

UNICEF has identified child marriage as a vulnerability in its 2008 Child Protection Strategy to be addressed through linking and leveraging cross-sectoral synergies under its gender equality component,<sup>58</sup> as well as in its Gender Action Plan 2014–2017. UNICEF’s Strategic Plan 2018–2021 more explicitly includes child marriage prevention and response under child protection and harmful practices with impact and outcome related indicators.<sup>59</sup> The UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2018–2021 articulates the drivers of child marriage in its priorities.<sup>60</sup>



UNFPA’s Strategic Plan 2014–2017 had an impact-level indicator on child marriage and an output indicator for reaching adolescent girls at risk of child marriage.<sup>61</sup> Child, early and forced marriage is given high priority in the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018–2021 and is one of the three

key results under gender-based violence and harmful practices with one impact indicator and two output indicators related to child marriage.

The GPECM is fully in line with the SDG 5 Target 5.3, focusing on eliminating harmful traditional practices, including child, early and forced marriage by 2030. The achievement of SDG Target 5.3 requires substantial acceleration. Despite declining rates of child marriage globally, driven largely by India, no region is on track to eliminate the practice by 2030.<sup>62</sup> The GPECM therefore aims to accelerate efforts in selected high-prevalence and high-burden countries, taking regional specificities into consideration.

### Alignment at the regional level

The efforts of programme countries to end child marriage are aligned to a number of regional initiatives that both followed and drove the global movement to end child marriage.

- The eradication of child marriage is one of the results of Agenda 2063, the African Union (AU) 50-year vision for the development of the continent. The AU Campaign to Accelerate the End of Child Marriage in Africa, supported by UNFPA and UNICEF, was launched in 2014 during the fourth AU Conference of Ministers of Social Development. The alignment to the AU Campaign and the joint support of the GPECM at the country level facilitated common advocacy and coherence of messages.<sup>63</sup> The AU campaign is coherent with the GPECM recognition of child marriage

<sup>58</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Strategic Plan 2014–2017’, UNICEF, New York, 2013.

<sup>59</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Final results framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021’, UNICEF, New York, 2017.

<sup>60</sup> UNICEF is supporting both research and advocacy that helps governments and stakeholders address the close connection between child marriage and early pregnancies, lack of education for girls, child survival rates and stunting. United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Gender Action Plan 2018–2021’, UNICEF, 2018.

<sup>61</sup> United Nations Population Fund, ‘Strategic Plan 2014–2017’, UNFPA, New York, 2013. See Annex 1: Integrated results framework.

<sup>62</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Child Marriage: Latest trends and future prospects’, UNICEF, New York, 2018.

<sup>63</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Review of the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa 2014–2018’, UNICEF, November 2018.



as a harmful practice, the promotion of legal and policy instruments to maintain child rights, the establishment of national strategies, access to services and evidence based programming focusing on women and youth.<sup>64</sup>

- There are strong regional initiatives to end child marriage in South Asia. In 2014, the member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) adopted the Kathmandu Call for Action to End Child Marriage in South Asia, which put a special emphasis on using laws to promote accountability to end child marriage. Ending child marriage is one of five thematic working areas of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC). A Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Asia (2015–2018) was established as a commitment by South Asian governments to end child marriage. Expected outcomes related to the policy and legal levels (including birth and marriage registration), access to education, mobilization of individuals and communities to change discriminatory gender norms, evidence generation and advocacy for support to married adolescent girls.<sup>65</sup> These outcomes are aligned to the GPECM outcomes, though the emphasis on girls who are already married is stronger.
- In 2016, with support from the GPECM, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) adopted the Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage<sup>66</sup> to trigger policy reforms and the development or

revision of laws in member states. It is based on an almost identical theory of change to that of the GPECM but with the additional recognition of the complexity of causality between drivers as outcomes. It also addresses the complex relationship between customary laws and statutory laws in many countries in Africa.

### Alignment at the country level

One of the GPECM's principles is government ownership and alignment with national strategies and plans, as stated in the inception report. Countries have demonstrated a strong commitment to the ending child marriage agenda and most of them have ratified the related international treaties and conventions. Government commitments to the SDGs has brought even more attention to eliminating child marriage as a harmful practice under SDG 5.

In Africa, all programme countries are targeted by the AU campaign.<sup>67</sup> The synergy created by the regional initiatives and GPECM has the potential to reinforce governments' commitment to the agenda to end child marriage.<sup>68</sup> Regional offices reinforced these synergies through advocacy and coordination. In South Asia, the three selected countries' priorities are aligned with the SAIEVAC Regional Action Plan. The development of national strategies to end child marriage in Bangladesh, India and Nepal aligned with the Regional Action Plan. The UNFPA and UNICEF regional offices for South Asia have played an active role in supporting regional initiatives, which has resulted in greater coherence and alignment of the country strategic documents with regional initiatives.

<sup>64</sup> African Union, 'Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa: Call to Action', African Union, 2014.

<sup>65</sup> South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children, 'Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Asia 2015-2018', SAIEVAC, Kathmandu, 2015.

<sup>66</sup> Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum, 'SADC Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage', SADC, 2016.

<sup>67</sup> Between the campaign's two phases. The first phase covered 10 high-burden countries only and the second phase covered 30 high-prevalence countries.

<sup>68</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Review of the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa 2014–2018', UNICEF, November 2018.



### 3.2.b Global programme responsiveness to country context

#### ○ KEY FINDING 2:

Country offices have made GPECM interventions contextually relevant aided by targeted studies and research that have helped to ensure interventions address social/gender norms, beliefs and practices. Less attention was brought to ensuring that all country offices developed country-level theories of change. Country offices have responded to constraining and supporting factors, although this has not been systematically tracked within the programme.

The 12 programme countries were selected according to four criteria: 1) mid to high prevalence of child marriage;<sup>69</sup> 2) large projected burden; 3) government engagement; and 4) regional distribution.<sup>70</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF had already initiated interventions to address child marriage in most selected countries; the programme therefore reinforced national commitments to ending child marriage and supported the development of frameworks for concerted actions in line with commitments.

The importance of programme countries contextualizing their work to the national (and sub-national) situation is emphasized in the inception report, which notes that the GPECM has been designed to provide “a harmonized global vision for the programme, while leaving

sufficient room for diversity and country-level adaptation.”<sup>71</sup> Programme guidance also states that the principle of “cultural contextualization (is) essential to programming aiming to advance the eradication of child marriage.”<sup>72</sup>

#### Adaptation of the global theory of change to country contexts

The global theory of change aimed to provide a roadmap for countries to design interventions to address the interrelated structural, economic and socio-cultural factors driving child marriage. Stakeholders at the regional and country levels found the global theory of change useful in providing guidance for designing interventions during the initial phase of the programme.

The evaluability assessment reported in 2017 that four programme countries had developed country-level theories of change.<sup>73</sup> Ethiopia contextualized the theory of change through internal and external consultation involving staff as well as stakeholders. Among the country case studies, Nepal and the Niger adapted the global theory of change and Mozambique took steps to develop a local theory of change and to map out activities, but it was never completed. The Niger’s theory of change is based on a causal analysis conducted to support drafting the National Strategy to End Child Marriage. It has more targeted and contextualized outcomes than the global theory of change and it also identifies strategies to accelerate change.<sup>74</sup> The Nepal theory of change has been adjusted from the global theory of change and the Girls Not Brides theory of change. It highlights

<sup>69</sup> At least 25 per cent of women aged 20–24 were married before age 18.

<sup>70</sup> Favouring regional and global dynamics and South-South exchange and cooperation.

<sup>71</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund and United Nations Population Fund, ‘Report of the Inception Phase of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage’, UNICEF and UNFPA, October 2015, p.4.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p.65.

<sup>73</sup> These were Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India and the Niger, according to United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Evaluability Assessment’, UNICEF, New York, 2017.

<sup>74</sup> Republique du Niger Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme et de la Protection de l’Enfant, ‘Plan Stratégique National pour Mettre Fin au Mariage des Enfants 2019 –2021’, 2018.



quality education and engaging men and boys as key strategies in addition to global theory of change strategies but does not take data generation into account.<sup>75</sup> The country-level theories of change in both Nepal and the Niger are used as part of the national strategies. The contextualization of global theories of change in each country is an important exercise to aid in identifying local drivers and taking macro-level determinants into account. On the other hand, contextualized theories of change can complicate the monitoring and reporting against a global results framework.

### Contextualizing interventions

GPECM countries have generated new evidence related to child marriage to help contextualize interventions.<sup>76</sup> Regional offices contributed significantly to the efforts to highlight regional trends and shed light on macro-level drivers through research that included secondary analysis of national survey data as well as regional research on child marriage drivers.<sup>77</sup> Gaps remain, however, on the understanding of drivers linked to changing contexts, such as changes in (child) marriage patterns from traditional marriages to cohabitation and informal relationships, economic growth, migration, religious norms, conflicts and disasters. Further focus in these areas would help to fine-tune future interventions.<sup>78</sup>

India has tailored its approach to the local context well. Given the size and diversity of the country, states with high child marriage prevalence that also show commitment have been prioritized. This represents a shift towards larger-scale district models targeting adolescent empowerment and the reduction of child marriage. Through this approach, the GPECM aims to reach a large number of adolescents, seeking convergence across relevant sectors at the national and state levels, moving beyond previous community-based projects that had limited coverage and scope. Specific programme interventions were informed by strong contextual analysis for each state as the causes of child marriage vary considerably.<sup>79</sup>

In Mozambique, the team observed a portion of a community dialogue in a village in Zambezia Province where villagers decided to pilot a counselling centre that could offer advice and support for girls in the community to find alternatives to prostitution as a means of earning income, focusing on farming and other life skills. The counselling centre was not a model that had been tried in other communities. The proximity of this community to a crossroads truck stop posed distinct issues and the dialogue processes conducted within the Rapariga Biz programme involved community members in identifying creative solutions to adapt to the situation.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Government of Nepal Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, 'National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage 2015', 2016.

<sup>76</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage: Publications Catalogue,' UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018.

<sup>77</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia: Working Paper,' UNICEF, Kathmandu, 2018. Key informant interviews, regional offices.

<sup>78</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage: Publications Catalogue,' Note that important findings for the South Asia region were found in United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia: Working Paper,' UNICEF, Kathmandu, 2018.

<sup>79</sup> 2017 India GPECM Annual Work Plan (AWP), narrative section.

<sup>80</sup> Observations made during a field visit to Mozambique.



Economic empowerment is an important aspect of girls' empowerment and can be key to helping to sustain decisions to delay marriage, particularly for older girls. Economic empowerment, as it relates to both the girl and the broader family, must be understood as one element in a complex web of issues that influence decisions about child marriage and must be further positioned within a child protection framework that prioritizes education as a foundation wherever feasible.

While the global theory of change identifies poverty as a driver of child marriage, the GPECM does not have a specific output that measures economic empowerment of adolescent girls or their families. Further, neither agency specializes in economic empowerment, so the programme may be best placed to make the necessary linkages to those actors who have that specialization (e.g. the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and development banks), rather than to branch into new areas for which they lack the mandate, the expertise and sufficient funding to reach girls and families at scale.<sup>81</sup>

Several countries have identified economic empowerment as a critical focus in their contextualized theories of change (e.g. Mozambique and the Niger) and have sought to integrate this into life-skills programmes. Models vary and have included making linkages to state-run training schools, as well as piloting links to economic empowerment models run by other stakeholders (such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or United Nations partners). Some modules also include financial literacy and access to savings groups, however country offices noted funding challenges for some pilot initiatives, when funding levels are insufficient within the programme to take pilot economic empowerment approaches to scale. The UNICEF Yemen team stressed this point: "More financial support is needed as the current conflict requires more support for the economic needs of people, which is costly and the current available funds are not sufficient to address economic needs."<sup>82</sup>

### Country responsiveness to supporting and constraining factors

Country offices do not systematically track and analyse supporting and constraining factors as such, but report on challenges and how they were addressed in annual reporting. Some country offices undertake periodic reviews with partners to analyse progress, review challenges and lessons learned and adjust interventions accordingly. Country offices identify a range of constraining factors, both internal and external to the GPECM.

- Seven of the 12 countries targeted by the GPECM are categorized as low on the Human Development Index, characterized by poor socio-economic indicators often

aggravated by rapid population growth and insecurity. Weak economies offer limited opportunities and limit public investments in social services. The other five countries include socio-economic disparities among different regions that also face similar challenges.

- Most countries identified limited government capacity and weak systems as a challenge and strong technical and financial support is required to implement interventions.
- Many countries also noted the limited number of partners available with capacities that meet the expected requirement for

<sup>81</sup> The addition of UN Women to the programme in the second phase may offer new opportunities to strengthen programme focus on economic empowerment.

<sup>82</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report –Yemen', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 10.



implementing partners' eligibility particularly for documenting their activities and for monitoring and evaluation.

- Many countries highlighted weaknesses such as teachers' availability, quality education and infrastructure within the education sector as strong limitations to offering quality education and maintaining adolescent girls in school.
- A few countries identified discrepancies between legal instruments (at the constitutional, statutory and customary levels) and policies governing the minimum legal age of marriage and/or definitions of consent.
- Restrictive social, gender and religious norms were cited as important factors hindering progress.
- Natural disasters, political changes, humanitarian crises and insecurity also hampered operations, led to government partners' unavailability and diverted resources from social sectors.
- Limited resources and late release of programme funds was a constraint raised by most countries.

Country offices identified high-level government support to end child marriage as an enabling factor, facilitated by a growing number of national frameworks and strengthened multi-sectoral collaboration. The agenda is also supported by growing engagement of civil society and NGOs, the increasing presence of large-scale projects (e.g. Spotlight and UNFPA's Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend) and bilaterally funded programmes that include a focus on girls' empowerment and ending harmful practices.

The growing engagement of media is also identified as an important factor to raise awareness on the detrimental effects of child marriage.

Country offices have demonstrated an ability to adapt to changing contexts, manage challenges and capitalize on opportunities. They have integrated the changes to the GRF well (*see Annex E*) and changes to guidance on indicator measurement introduced after the start of the project. Country offices addressed the issue of low<sup>83</sup> and unpredictable levels of funding by embedding GPECM interventions within existing interventions<sup>84</sup> and leveraging funds from other programmes and sources (*see section 3.4.d on complementary funding*).

Numerous examples of adaptation of community-based interventions to local culture have been documented and/or observed during field visits, as demonstrated in the examples that follow. Adjustments have enhanced effectiveness by ensuring that local culture is respected while targeting specific drivers of child marriage that may vary among implementation areas.

- In Bangladesh's highly conservative areas, trainings on sexual and reproductive health and rights and income generation for adolescents are conducted separately for boys and girls.
- In Mozambique, United Nations and implementing partner practitioners work in a manner that demonstrates respect for local traditions and knowledge and are thus well accepted in the community, even dealing with extremely sensitive issues such as sexual initiation rites.

<sup>83</sup> While the GPECM funds were significantly lower than expected, the programme still brought important new resources to country offices (and countries) to work on child marriage. The GPECM design focused on providing catalytic resources for scalable models or platforms to be complemented by multi-sectoral resources.

<sup>84</sup> For example, child marriage prevention messages were integrated into country offices' health and education interventions.



- In Nepal, traditional healers and religious leaders have been involved as a way to increase the acceptability of the messages related to ending early and forced marriage.
- In Zambia, where customary laws are equally as powerful as statutory laws, communication and advocacy messages for ending child marriage were adapted to the dual nature of the legal system governing marriage. A workshop was organized for national religious leaders from the Christian and Muslim faiths to create a national dialogue platform.<sup>85</sup>
- In the Niger, the programme works at the national level with the Association des Chefs Traditionnels du Niger, which includes political leaders, traditional leaders and religious leaders. Local-level work includes sensitizing traditional leaders utilizing Koranic teachings to make the case against child marriage.<sup>86</sup>
- In Ethiopia, religious leaders were identified as key gatekeepers and influencers and were engaged to undertake theological reflection and consensus-building on ending child marriage.

### 3.2.c GPECM integration of human rights and gender equality

#### ○ KEY FINDING 3:

The GPECM puts human rights at the core of its operations and child marriage is largely understood as a human rights violation among stakeholders at all levels. The programme takes a gender-targeted approach, focusing

on adolescent girls. While women and men have been targeted as parents, leaders and gatekeepers in interventions, the focus on adolescent boys has been less systematic.

Child marriage is a priority for both UNFPA and UNICEF as a violation of human rights and a manifestation of gender discrimination. The GPECM was designed with a human rights-based approach to social change, aiming to influence positive gender norms, while remaining culturally sensitive.<sup>87</sup>

#### Human rights

Key conventions and international and regional commitments position child marriage as a violation of human rights.<sup>88</sup> At the country level, GPECM interventions have incorporated human rights principles into their designs following a human rights-based approach. Both UNFPA and UNICEF have a common message defining child marriage as a harmful practice and a violation of human rights. This was clearly reflected among stakeholders and beneficiaries in the case study countries, which had the same understanding. Building upon their respective comparative advantages, UNICEF focuses on children's rights and UNFPA focuses on women's and adolescents' rights, including sexual and reproductive health rights; however in contexts where child marriage may result from consenting peer relationships, country offices were sensitive to address it under an alternative lens.

<sup>85</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018.

<sup>86</sup> Key informant interviews with implementing partners and UNICEF and UNFPA staff.

<sup>87</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Report of the Inception Phase of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage', UNICEF and UNFPA, October 2015.

<sup>88</sup> Refer to section 3.2.a 'Alignment to global and regional priorities to end child marriage' for further elaboration of conventions and commitments. For instance, the AU Campaign to Accelerate the End of Child Marriage in Africa clearly states that child marriage is a violation of human rights.



In India, UNICEF's focus remains on the protection of children's rights (child marriage is seen as a violation of a child's right to health, education and nutrition), as well as protection from abuse and exploitation. UNFPA adopts a rights-based perspective to addressing harmful practices such as child marriage, recognizing that the problem cannot be targeted in isolation but needs an integrated approach to address the interconnectedness between child marriage and other harmful practices, including dowry and son preference.<sup>89</sup>

The GPECM intervenes at the level of policies and legal frameworks in relation to human rights. For instance, as part of the programme, UNICEF in Burkina Faso supported the adoption of the Code of Child Protection and the Code

of Persons and Family, both of which will contribute to raising the official marriage age for girls from 17 to 18 years. In Nepal, efforts to streamline legal frameworks were undertaken but discrepancies and key issues are still to be addressed, such as some legal instruments that still criminalize children.<sup>90</sup>

At the community level, interventions involving adolescent girls, boys, parents and community members focus strongly on promoting human rights. In Mozambique, the human rights-based approach translated well down to the lower levels, whereby girls and boys demonstrated a better understanding of their rights and parents and community leaders were supportive of upholding girls' rights. In Nepal, the community approach focuses on children's and

<sup>89</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – India', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p.7.

<sup>90</sup> Key informant interview in Nepal.



adolescents' rights, including reproductive health rights. Child marriage is presented as a violation of children's rights and community members demonstrated a good understanding of this.<sup>91</sup> In Zambia, the human rights approach is included in communication and skills trainings, providing girls the information needed to advocate for their rights. The Safe Space curriculum used the concept of human rights as one of its main topics of discussion.<sup>92</sup> In Yemen, interventions are based on human rights and activities seek to empower communities and inform them of their rights, especially the victims of child marriage.<sup>93</sup>

## Gender equality and girls' empowerment

The GPECM addresses child marriage as an issue that is linked closely with gender inequality and discrimination; programme design in countries follows this logic with a focus on adolescent girls. The programme focus on adolescent girls may be classified as a gender equity approach that considers the specific needs of girls in light of social/gender norms that put them in disadvantaged positions. Interventions supporting gender equality and adolescent girls' empowerment are implemented at the local level with a strong focus on life-skills training<sup>94</sup> and

community engagement. Interventions seek to support adolescent girls to stand up against child marriage and determine their own futures, providing them with information on the negative consequences of child marriage and raising awareness of alternatives to early marriage. Work with parents, families and communities to a lesser degree, further aims to support adolescent girls and to challenge harmful gender norms, raising awareness of girls' value and rights.<sup>95</sup>

Case study visits in Mozambique, Nepal and the Niger offered strong evidence from the lowest levels that interventions contributed to increased self-confidence among the adolescent girls who took part in life-skills education.<sup>96</sup> Girls demonstrated confidence and increased knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, desire for education and other aspirations for their futures. Such approaches appear to be on the right track to support adolescent girls' empowerment and reduce child marriage, though lack of educational and economic opportunities remains an issue for many girls. Empowering adolescent girls can also lead to unintended consequences if not accompanied by interventions aiming at creating a supportive environment, particularly in engaging men and boys, including grooms.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Focus group discussions in Mozambique and Nepal.

<sup>92</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Zambia', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>93</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Yemen', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p.7.

<sup>94</sup> Life-skills packages are usually a comprehensive girl-focused life-skills training programme that includes sexual reproductive health, such as comprehensive sexuality education. In the GPECM inception report, life-skills programmes are classified as those that "help young people to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, that build their sense of personal worth and agency and teach them to interact with others constructively and effectively, have transformative potential".

<sup>95</sup> For example, progress in challenging gender norms could be seen in Nepal where community action initiatives helped in ending other harmful practices such as *chaupadi* (isolation of women in sheds during menstruation) (Source: Nepal case study).

<sup>96</sup> Focus group discussions with girls in Mozambique, Nepal and the Niger. See further elaboration and excerpts from focus group discussions under section 3.3.b 'Outcome 1 on programme effectiveness'.

<sup>97</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Report on the Expert Group Meeting on the Evidence Base for Accelerated Action to End Child Marriage in South Asia, Bangkok, Thailand September 26 to 28, 2016', UNFPA and UNICEF, Kathmandu and Bangkok, 2016.



Many forms of child marriage are rooted in gender inequalities and the differential values that cultures ascribe to girls and boys. Though drivers vary considerably, the practice has been largely shaped by desires to control females generally and to control female sexuality in particular.<sup>98</sup> A transformative approach requires interventions that address child marriage within the broader context of gender inequalities, unequal power relations and harmful gender norms across outcomes.

The involvement of families and communities, including men, women and boys, as agents of change for the promotion of girls' rights and transformation of gender relations is an essential component of gender transformation. Stakeholders generally saw the active engagement of men and boys as a strategic priority to shift harmful patriarchal norms that underpin child marriage practices. Involvement of men as fathers, gatekeepers and leaders in community dialogues and similar has helped to create a more supportive environment for adolescent girls to exercise their rights and to challenge gender norms and stereotypes. Involvement of women as mothers and gatekeepers is also critical and has been integrated into many community-level approaches.

While adolescent boys have been involved in community-level activities in a number of countries, boys' involvement has been less systematic. Some country offices have included boys in life-skills training (separately or jointly with girls) while others have focused solely on girls. Case study evidence revealed instances where girls may be empowered with life skills in some communities while entirely different

communities were targeted for dialogues that involve males and females more holistically.<sup>99</sup> Some evidence of frustration emerged in focus group discussions indicating that boys felt excluded and overlooked by programme interventions centred on girls.<sup>100</sup> Ensuring male engagement has not always been fully taken into account as a strategic aspect of a gender transformative approach to facilitate change and avoid possible backlash of empowering girls and to facilitate the acceptance of changes in girls' role and status.<sup>101</sup>

Country programmes have reached boys through different approaches and to different degrees. In Nepal, boys were involved in life-skills training in UNICEF-supported areas only. The UNFPA focus was mainly on adolescent girls as a strategic choice but also due to financial constraints. Differences between the groups of boys who attended the life-skills sessions and the ones who did not were noticeable. The boys who attended the life-skills sessions demonstrated higher aspirations and stronger convictions about girls' equal status and the importance of delaying marriage, while boys involved only in sensitization sessions demonstrated increased knowledge about the negative consequences of early marriage but also expressed frustrations at feeling excluded by the programme focus on girls.<sup>102</sup>

The GPECM has taken a gender-targeted approach that places adolescent girls at the centre of change processes at the local level, recognizing the role of the family and community to an extent. Some case study country offices articulated the underlying determinants of gender inequality well, including unequal

<sup>98</sup> See, for example, Girls Not Brides, 'Why Does Child Marriage Happen?', <[www.girlsnotbrides.org/why-does-it-happen/](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/why-does-it-happen/)>, accessed 5 April 2019.

<sup>99</sup> Key informant interviews and focus group discussions in Mozambique and the Niger.

<sup>100</sup> Focus group discussions with boys in Mozambique and the Niger.

<sup>101</sup> Refer to section 3.3.c Outcome 2 under 'Programme effectiveness' for further elaboration on male engagement.

<sup>102</sup> Focus group discussions with boys in Nepal.



power relations and discrimination as factors that drive child marriage, but still expressed difficulties operationalizing these concepts. The reality remains that appreciable gender norm change is not likely to happen in the lifetime of girls, but over the next generation. National plans to end child marriage acknowledge gender discrimination as a key driver but coherence is needed in some countries to ensure that related legal and policy frameworks for adolescents address inequalities. The addition of UN Women to the next phase of the programme may offer technical expertise to more comprehensively integrate a gender-transformative approach.<sup>103</sup>



It should be noted that the impact-level indicators for UNFPA and UNICEF strategic plans differ. UNICEF measures men and women aged 20–24 married before the age of 18 years, while UNFPA measures women only. Harmonization of these indicators to include a holistic view of

women and men would help to highlight issues related to patterns of child marriage for both girls and boys and would facilitate coherent programming in the future. This may prove especially useful in contexts where consensual marriage between adolescents takes place and/or is on the rise.

### 3.2.d GPECM reaches the most vulnerable

#### ○ KEY FINDING 4:

While the programme has made strategic choices in targeting areas with high child marriage prevalence, interventions supported by the GPECM have yet to reach some of the most vulnerable including those in less accessible and remote areas who are among the furthest behind.

Equity targeting is a key United Nations focus under the principles of ‘leaving no one behind’ and ‘reaching those furthest behind’.<sup>104</sup> UNICEF utilizes a Monitoring Results for Equity System<sup>105</sup> to facilitate an evidence-based equity approach to reaching the most marginalized children. The approach has demonstrated some successes globally, but results depend to a great extent on country context.<sup>106</sup> UNFPA uses population data to conduct age, gender and geographically disaggregated analysis to estimate prevalence and burden. The rationale of both approaches is the identification and targeting of the most vulnerable, holding service providers accountable and creating better access for the most disadvantaged, including girls at risk of and affected by child marriage.

<sup>103</sup> See, for example, UN Women, ‘A Framework to Underpin Action to Prevent Violence Against Women’, UN Women, 2015.

<sup>104</sup> United Nations Population Fund, ‘UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018-2021’, UNFPA, New York, 2017.

<sup>105</sup> The approach aims at strengthening equity-focused planning, programming and monitoring across the entire UNICEF system.

<sup>106</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Formative Evaluation of UNICEF’s Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES)’, UNICEF, New York, 2014.



The equity focus helps shed light on the links between child marriage and issues of poverty, discrimination and exclusion.<sup>107</sup> Recent aggregate evidence from across South Asia shows that women who married as children were overall more likely to be in the poorest quintile.<sup>108</sup> GPECM target beneficiaries are adolescent girls, including the most vulnerable, however reaching those furthest behind is extremely challenging and this cannot be overstated.

Country offices have generally targeted geographic areas with the highest prevalence of child marriage, sometimes combined with other indicators of vulnerability such as socio-economic indicators, high rates of teenage pregnancy and out-of-school girls and poor access to services. This selection process allows country teams to select broad geographical areas of focus, though target areas are also limited in some cases to areas where agencies have pre-existing operations. Country programmes have developed different approaches for selection at lower levels. For instance, in Ghana, a consultative process with local authorities led to the selection of the most deprived communities.<sup>109</sup> In India, scheduled castes, tribes and religious minorities were identified as marginalized communities and selected for programme implementation.<sup>110</sup> Mapping exercises in Ethiopia and Sierra Leone proved to be valuable for the identification and targeting of interventions.

At the lowest levels, within communities, additional criteria were set to identify the adolescent girls who were to participate in interventions such as life-skills education. Selection criteria differ by country, but common ones included out-of-school girls, those most at risk of child marriage, pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers. Some countries, such as the Niger and Sierra Leone, prioritized orphaned girls or those living with one parent. Reaching out-of-school adolescent girls remains a challenge as it requires costly strategies and the involvement of different sectors and partners. Reaching girls who are already married has also been challenging for the programme, as they are often confined to the home, may have small children, cannot attend activities or do not attend school and are therefore missed by many programme interventions. Already, married girls face many vulnerabilities, including risk of early pregnancy and risk of violence. Improving their access to adolescent-friendly health services and protection services would contribute to ensuring that the most vulnerable are reached.

Despite efforts to reach the most vulnerable, programme coverage is limited due to financial constraints and accessibility issues. Interventions, even implemented through grassroots organizations, have not yet reached the most remote areas in many instances, including many of those that are furthest behind in the country based on multiple vulnerabilities, including constrained access to services. Stakeholders, especially those working at the lowest levels, demonstrated a strong awareness

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<sup>107</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Report of the Inception Phase of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage', UNICEF and UNFPA, October 2015, p.2.

<sup>108</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia: Working Paper', UNICEF, Kathmandu, 2018.

<sup>109</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF Ghana Country offices feedback on United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: UNFPA and UNICEF Ghana Country offices 2017 results report.

<sup>110</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, '2017 Annual Report Country Profiles: UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage', UNFPA and UNICEF, August 2018, p.20.



of this issue based on country case studies,<sup>111</sup> but it has not been systematically addressed within the programme.

Although not explicitly stated as a strategy, evaluators identify a certain logic to targeting less challenging areas in the first phase of the GPECM as a testing ground to develop and refine new approaches in accessible settings. Once models have been developed and systems strengthened, agencies and implementing partners will be able to design a strategy that moves into more challenging areas in the next phase of the programme bearing in mind that working in more challenging contexts will have implications for human and financial resource needs.<sup>112</sup>

Although disability is identified as a factor of high vulnerability, it seems to be addressed incidentally. Evaluators found limited anecdotal examples of inclusion of disabled girls in interventions and stakeholders generally did not see it as a significant issue. Despite guidance and tools<sup>113</sup> on including disability as a criterion of vulnerability, there is no disaggregation of data in annual reports in 2016 and 2017 nor evidence of strategies to address disabled children vulnerable to child marriage across the 12 programme countries. This may be explained by the fact that disability was not highlighted in the initial programme design but was taken into consideration at a later stage based on United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) recommendations in 2017.<sup>114</sup>

Mass interventions such as communication campaigns through television or radio were utilized broadly as a cost-effective way to reach larger numbers of community members with social behaviour change messages.<sup>115</sup> Social media approaches (e.g. SMS Biz in Mozambique or U-Report in Nepal, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia) also have broad reach, but are unlikely to reach the most vulnerable groups due to issues around literacy and access to mobile phones. It is unclear whether the impact of these approaches has been assessed, but it is expected that they have different outcomes than facilitated interactive group processes such as community dialogue or life-skills packages. There is limited evidence of research undertaken to assess media messaging in terms of impact, scalability, transference and reaching those most behind.

### 3.3 PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS

Programme effectiveness is defined as the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved.<sup>116</sup> This evaluation assessed progress against planned outcomes and outputs using the below indicators, as detailed in the evaluation matrix, which were drawn from the results framework and the global theory of change:

#### Outcome 1

- Adolescent girls actively participate in a targeted intervention.

<sup>111</sup> Key informant interviews and focus group discussions in Mozambique, Nepal and the Niger.

<sup>112</sup> Insufficient paid human resources dedicated to the programme was an issue in the first phase. Refer to section 3.5.d 'Human, Financial and Technical Resources'.

<sup>113</sup> Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluating Interventions on Harmful Practices - An Annotated Reference Guide for GPECM (draft), 2018.

<sup>114</sup> Department for International Development, 'Annual Review: Accelerating Action Against Child Marriage', DFID, 2017.

<sup>115</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018.

<sup>116</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 'Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management', OECD, 2010.



- Adolescent girls are supported to enrol and remain in formal and non-formal education.
- Adolescent girls in programme areas display increased knowledge and skills (case study qualitative data).

### Outcome 2

- Individuals in programme areas participate in programme community initiatives promoting gender-equitable norms, including delaying child marriage.
- Men and boys participate in male engagement interventions aimed at changing social norms.
- Families demonstrate awareness of the benefits of investing in adolescent girls and ending child marriage (case study qualitative).

### Outcome 3

- Health and protection systems supported to implement guidelines, protocols and standards for adolescent girl-friendly health and protection services.
- Number and proportion of service delivery points in programme areas implementing guidelines for adolescent girl friendly health services.
- Formal and non-formal schools supported to improve quality of education for adolescent girls.

### Outcome 4

- Programme contributed to country costed NAP or other policies and strategies on ending child marriage across more than one ministry.

- Government displays ownership for coordination and implementation including budgetary allocation to eradicate child marriage.

### Outcome 5

- Country-specific, high-quality data and evidence generated and shared on what works at scale to accelerate ending child marriage.

### ○ KEY FINDING 5:

The GPECM is on track overall to achieve planned results at the output level, showing signs of scaling up for some outputs. The programme has not included comprehensive tracking of higher-level indicators in annual reporting. There has been uneven consideration across countries of the interaction between different programme outcomes to ensure rising demands are met with opportunities and services.

The following section provides an overview of the status of outcome-level tracking with a detailed analysis of output indicators in relation to the original baseline, comparing planned versus actual results for 2016, 2017 and the mid-point for 2018 (the latest period for which figures were available at the time of the evaluation).

Despite good results at the output level, as detailed below, the evidence base for achievements at the outcome and impact levels remains incomplete, though the GPSU has taken steps to finalize outcome results measures in line with the evaluability assessment's recommendations.<sup>117</sup> The GPSU (with input from country and regional offices) has the responsibility to

<sup>117</sup> The evaluability assessment recommended the finalization of outcome results measures as part of efforts to strengthen the global theory of change. The GPSU worked with stakeholders to finalize outcomes and undertook a review of country monitoring systems to establish baselines and data availability as detailed in Annex F: 'Inventory of Outcome Indicator Data'.



monitor impact and outcome-level data according to the programme guidance.<sup>118</sup> Data is based on standardized United Nations Statistical Group indicators in national household surveys, including demographic health surveys, multiple indicator cluster surveys and reproductive health surveys.<sup>119</sup>

The GPECM has identified six impact-level indicators:

- Percentage of women 20–24 married/in-union before age 18;
- Percentage of women 20–24 married/in-union before age 15;
- Among all women 20–24 married/in-union before age 18, percentage who gave birth before age 20;
- Among all women 20–24 married/in-union before age 15, percentage who gave birth before age 18;
- Percentage of births to girls 15–19 attended by skilled health personnel; and
- Percentage of adolescent girls of lower secondary school age that are out of school.

Data at the impact/outcome level has not been monitored across the 12 programme countries as part of annual reporting, though steps have been taken to collate available data. Issues with higher-level monitoring include the availability of data and the limited usefulness of tracking

long-term trends over short timeframes.<sup>120</sup> The GPSU undertook an inventory of baseline surveys and data collection tools (not dated, estimated 2017) that maps out the availability and quality of outcome indicator data. This review highlights challenges with: a) securing/generating quality data; and b) collating data from different instruments across 12 countries. A synopsis of available data for each outcome indicator is included in the relevant sections below and further details are contained in Annex F.

Understanding of outcome targets must be firmly positioned within the broader global context, recognizing that progress towards outcomes is the result of several factors, many of which are outside UNICEF/UNFPA control. Opportunities for acceleration vary by country. In some countries, the GPECM may play a kick-starter role to spur action to end child marriage while in others, it may have a multiplier effect.

By design, outcome indicators can only measure the contributions of interventions to results as detailed in the output indicators. A sense of frustration was evidenced by various stakeholders at all levels in response to queries about documenting outcome-level change; many pointed to the need to identify intermediate indicators.<sup>121</sup> “Outcome indicators on child marriage are slow-changing by nature, so we need to document what is happening underneath. Many of these are generational

<sup>118</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘GPECM Programme and M&E Guidance’ (internal document available on GPECM Team Site), 2017, p. 56.

<sup>119</sup> The guidance further states that UNICEF and UNFPA at Headquarters will establish the baselines for the four-year GPECM on the basis of the most recent year of available data (2011 or later), update these indicators when new data become available and submit regular progress for the impact and outcome indicators to donors as part of regular reporting.

<sup>120</sup> Impact-level indicators that focus on girls aged 20–24 are capturing marriages that occurred years before the start of the GPECM. If the marriage occurred when a girl was 10 years old, it would take another 10 years before she ‘appeared’ in the statistical data set.

<sup>121</sup> Intermediate indicators are sub-indicators that may be useful to monitor progress towards long-term change that may not be easily evidenced in short timeframes. Intermediate indicators can help signal whether expected preconditions are met and/or show whether signs of movement are in the intended direction of change. Some definitions of intermediate indicators suggest that they are prerequisites to meet outcomes, but this is not necessarily the case.



changes that will be seen over time. How can we measure and document these kinds of changes after one or two years?"<sup>122</sup>

Country programmes have generally worked across outcomes, with some variation between countries in terms of emphasis and prioritization. There is no consensus within the GPECM on the relative merits of prioritizing one outcome over another and different countries have different views.<sup>123</sup> Stakeholders across levels expressed some concern that a strong programme focus on community-level interventions may detract attention from other crucial efforts such as systems strengthening, capacity development and normative work.

While country-level rationales behind differential investments across outcomes have generally been based on sound logic grounded in diverse field-level realities, the programme has faced significant financial shortfalls and there remains a need to strategize collectively at the start of the next phase on the most strategic use of funds building on the United Nations' comparative advantage. At the country level, decisions on investments of GPECM funds have largely been driven by funding availability (i.e. outcomes that could secure complementary funding were not prioritized in some countries), as well as the existence of operational programmes that could integrate child marriage.

As the GPECM enters a stage of scaling up, it is important to more strategically consider the interaction between different programme outcomes and outputs. In particular, systems strengthening (Outcome 3) must keep pace with achievements in Outcomes 1 and 2. Girls'

empowerment and life-skills initiatives, or traditional leaders' and communities' support for (re)integration of girls into schools, lead to rising demand for services including social protection, health and education. Government systems in many countries, particularly less developed countries, are not equipped to deal with these demands. Programme focus in the next phase must look critically at how demands are balanced with commensurate opportunities including sustainable service delivery and economic opportunities with a view to ensuring opportunities for this generation and future generations of girls.

### 3.3.a Summary of output indicators data

Table 5 provides a summary of the targets, results and percentages achieved against planned targets since 2016 up to the mid-term point for 2018<sup>124</sup> for each of the seven output indicators of the global results framework. The table shows that the programme has met or exceeded the majority of its targets and has well surpassed targets for many indicators. All of the targets for 2018, with the exception of the NAP, have been surpassed significantly by the mid-term, suggesting that some country programmes are beginning to move beyond systems set-up and piloting to expand their reach and accelerate actions to end child marriage. An excessively high achievement rate at the mid-point of 2018 for a number of output indicators also raises questions about the accuracy of targeting and compliance with programme guidance and indicator reference sheets.

<sup>122</sup> Key informant interview with United Nations staff in a case study country.

<sup>123</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF in India consider that strengthening a systems and services approach (Outcome 3) should be prioritized to achieve scale and sustainability and play a catalytic role in countries such as India and that focusing on numbers reached through implementing Outcomes 1 and 2 will not produce the desired results. This view has not been held by all programme countries and the majority of programme resources have been invested in Outcome 1.

<sup>124</sup> 2016 and 2017 data has been validated as part of the GPECM annual reporting. 2018 mid-term results are subject to change following a verification and validation process by the GPSU with the country offices.



**TABLE 5** Summary of targets, results and percentage achieved against planned targets

Output indicators	2016 target / result	2016 percentage achieved	2017 target / result	2017 percentage achieved	2018 target / result	2018 mid-term percentage achieved
<b>1.1 Life skills:</b> Adolescent girls are actively participating in a targeted programme.	T: 411,121 R: 35,540	130%	T: 1,122,495 R: 1,050,193	93%	T: 1,120,159 R: 3,859,717	345%
<b>1.2 Education:</b> Adolescent girls are supported to enrol and remain in formal and non-formal education.	T: 199,249 R: 218,565	110%	T: 65,137 R: 67,216	103%	T: 52,165 R: 76,812	147%
<b>2.1 Community dialogue:</b> Households are increasingly aware of the benefits of investing in adolescent girls and ending child marriage.	T: 1,641,623 R: 4,120,434	251%	T: 4,051,121 R: 4,780,912	118%	T: 2,418,448 R: 11,491,960	475%
<b>3.1 Health and protection systems:</b> supported to implement guidelines, protocols and standards for adolescent girl-friendly health and protection services.	T: 1,414 R: 5,329	377%	T: 3,858 R: 4,452	115%	T: 5,363 R: 30,664	572%
<b>3.2 Education system:</b> Non-formal/primary/secondary schools supported to improve quality of education for adolescent girls.	T: 1,910 R: 4,940	259%	T: 2,897 R: 2,799	97%	T: 4,437 R: 8,028	181%
<b>4.1 National Plan of Action:</b> Country has a costed NAP or development plan on ending child marriage across more than one ministry.	T: 7 R: 3	43%	T: 11 R: 9	82%	T: 11 R: 9	82%
<b>5.1 Evidence on scale models:</b> Country-specific, high-quality data and evidence generated and shared on what works at scale to accelerate ending child marriage.	T: 10 R: 8	80%	T: 8 R: 8	100%	T: 7 R: 20	286%

Available details for each outcome and its associated outputs are provided in the following sections along with a scorecard for each output indicator that demonstrates results by country.



### 3.3.b Outcome 1

Adolescent girls at risk of and affected by child marriage are better able to express and exercise their choices.

#### ○ KEY FINDING 6:

The GPECM is increasingly able to reach adolescent girls in the third year of the programme. Activities under Output 1.1 have reached close to 5.5 million girls, far exceeding the programme’s objective to reach 2.5 million girls by end of 2019.<sup>125</sup> Case study evidence shows that girls involved in life-skills interventions demonstrate signs of empowerment. The programme has reduced its reach under Output 1.2 over each year of the programme and only half of the programme countries funded activities in 2018 to promote girls’ school access, though complementary funding has been utilized for work under this indicator that is not well captured by reporting systems.



#### **Outcome Indicator 1.1: Number and proportion of adolescent girls in programme areas demonstrating increased knowledge and skills.**

Seven countries (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, Nepal, the Niger and Uganda) are collecting some data for this indicator. Questionnaire content is not consistent across countries. Only four of the seven countries scored well for the quality and scope of the questions.<sup>126</sup>

#### **Output 1.1: Adolescent girls are actively participating in key programme components that provide valuable information (on life skills, sexual and reproductive health and personal hygiene) and foster their empowerment.**

Output 1.1 monitors the number of adolescent girls in programme interventions such as training on life skills, sexual and reproductive health, menstrual health, personal hygiene, gender-based violence and functional and financial literacy. These are important interventions to raise awareness and knowledge and to foster empowerment.

<sup>125</sup> This figure was scaled back from the original target during the inception phase of 6 million direct beneficiaries in light of reduced funding. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage: Progress Report 2016’, UNFPA and UNICEF, June 2017, p. 66.

<sup>126</sup> Assessment used a 0–5 rating for the quality of the questionnaire. Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India and Nepal scored a 3–4 on the scale, while the other three countries scored below a 3 (see Annex F).

**TABLE 6** Output Indicator 1.1 milestones

Output Indicator 1.1: Number of adolescent girls (aged 10-19) in programme areas actively participating in at least one targeted intervention							
Countries	Milestones						
	Baseline	2016		2017		2018 mid-term	
	2015	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Mid-term
Bangladesh	16,169	100,000	93,166	101,500	87,024	68,230	67,111
Burkina Faso	7,637	11,250	14,977	35,080	34,907	38,200	34,695
Ethiopia	82,400	18,124	51,239	187,660	75,733	47,200	57,243
Ghana	27,479	39,650	85,990	28,560	16,931	6,450	9,935
India	15,000	155,900	161,789	570,000	628,902	1,000,000	3,476,900
Mozambique	7,318	2,682	16,200	150,000	127,714	62,469	91,288
Nepal	6,047	5,050	7,566	3,840	9,666	8,840	5,424
Niger	11,642	23,702	21,885	13,500	17,000	11,600	61,967
Sierra Leone	23,331	3,000	4,398	4,200	12,381	7,000	7,152
Uganda	2,516	28,733	71,892	16,865	24,515	74,245	43,000
Yemen	N/A	19,350	3,660	5,500	5,569	320	1,427
Zambia	4,299	3,680	2,778	5,790	9,851	3,990	3,575
<b>Total</b>	<b>203,838</b>	<b>411,121</b>	<b>535,540</b>	<b>1,122,495</b>	<b>1,050,193</b>	<b>1,328,544</b>	<b>3,859,717</b>

The data shows that the GPECM is increasingly able to expand its reach in the third year of implementation, having developed systems over the first two years. Almost 4 million girls were reached at the mid-point of 2018, nearly three times more than the combined reach for 2016 and 2017 (approximately 1.5 million). Activities in this intervention alone have reached close to 5.5 million girls, far exceeding the programme's objective to reach 2.5 million girls by the end of 2019.<sup>127</sup>

While the aggregate figures demonstrate expanded global reach, it is important to note that the numbers have been driven disproportionately by India (almost 3.5 million of the 3.9 million girls reached at the 2018 mid-term are in India). Some countries have also expanded their reach, while others have held steady and still others have reduced their targets. Reasons for variations are linked to country-specific contexts and are also likely influenced by funding declines in 2018.

<sup>127</sup> This figure was scaled back from the original target during the inception phase of 6 million direct beneficiaries in light of reduced funding. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage: Progress Report 2016', UNFPA and UNICEF, June 2017 p. 66.



**TABLE 7** Output Indicator 1.1 performance against planned targets

Output Indicator 1.1: Number of adolescent girls (aged 10–19) in programme areas actively participating in at least one targeted intervention						
Countries	Performance against planned targets					
	2016		2017		2018 (mid-term)	
	Percentage achieved <sup>122</sup>	Score	Percentage achieved	Score	Percentage achieved	Score
Bangladesh	93		86		98	
Burkina Faso	133		100		91	
Ethiopia	283		40		121	
Ghana	217		59		154	
India	104		110		348	
Mozambique	604		85		146	
Nepal	150		252		61	
Niger	92		126		534	
Sierra Leone	147		295		102	
Uganda	250		145		58	
Yemen	19		101		446	
Zambia	75		170		90	
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>		<b>94</b>		<b>291</b>	

<b>Legend 2016/17</b>	Above 90%	70–90%	Below 70%
<b>Legend 2018 mid-term</b>	Above 50%	25–50%	Below 25%

Data on country performance against planned targets shows that country offices are generally achieving or exceeding their targets with some exceptions in 2016 and 2017. Yemen fell short of its target in 2016, but has since worked closely with support from the regional and global levels to tailor its approaches and targets to the local context, to meet targets in 2017 and to well exceed targets in 2018. Ethiopia faced challenges to meeting targets in 2017 due to new guidance on measuring this indicator that required a minimum of 31 hours of exposure in life-skills programmes.<sup>129</sup> Ghana was able to

secure complementary funding for life-skills training in GPECM areas and therefore opted to redirect programme funds to other components after setting targets.<sup>130</sup>

The above data suggests that country offices have improved their capacity over the early years of the GPECM to set and meet or exceed targets. Countries such as Mozambique, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia used a cost-effective U-Report digital platform to provide health information to reach a greater target population of adolescent girls (and boys) based

<sup>128</sup> Percentage achieved is calculated by dividing the planned target by the actual achievement to show the percentage achieved against plans. All figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

<sup>129</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage Progress Report 2017' (draft), UNFPA and UNICEF, 15 May 2018.

<sup>130</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, '2017 Annual Report Country Profiles: UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage,' UNFPA and UNICEF, August 2018, p. 15.



on the comprehensive sexuality education curriculum.<sup>131</sup> Technical assistance in setting targets and tracking results from the GPSU and regional offices, including guidance on programme and monitoring and evaluation, had a positive impact in 2017 and 2018, though challenges remain.<sup>132</sup> All countries are on track to achieve their targets for Output 1.1 in 2018 and many have already well exceeded their targets by the mid-point. Collectively, countries have reached over three times as many girls as targeted in 2018 by halfway through the year.

**Outcome Indicator 1.2:  
Girls' retention rate at primary or  
lower-secondary school/girls' transition  
rate from primary to lower-secondary  
school in programme areas.**

All countries have sub-national administrative data, but three countries do not have data at the district or lower levels. Seven countries (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, Nepal, the Niger and Uganda) have access to survey data, while the remaining five do not. Data has not been tracked under the GPECM.

**Output 1.2:  
Adolescent girls are supported to remain  
in formal and non-formal education.**

It is generally recognized that continued education, whether formal or non-formal, is a key driver in reducing child marriage. In particular,

secondary or tertiary education, as well as the education of the mother, are generally associated with a decreased risk of child marriage.<sup>133</sup> While country teams well recognize the importance of girls' education, relatively few countries have used GPECM funds for work in this indicator area. While targets have been met collectively for this indicator each year, the data for Output 1.2 reveals that programme activities are scaling back, rather than up. The programme has reduced its targets over each year of the programme and fewer country offices are funding activities under this output over time (nine countries in 2016, seven countries in 2017 and six in 2018). The primary reason for limited funding for education initiatives under the GPECM appears to be informed by strategic investment of limited resources that can reach more vulnerable girls. In many countries, the convergence approach across joint programmes allowed for complementary funds to be utilized for girls' education.<sup>134</sup>

The GPECM structure has enabled country teams to target education initiatives in line with local needs and priorities, including focusing on informal educational models. Ethiopia and Sierra Leone provided incentives to families in the form of direct material support to girls in lieu of scholarships and bursaries due to challenges related to keeping girls in schools.<sup>135</sup> Nepal and the Niger reached adolescent girls through programmes incorporating numeracy

<sup>131</sup> The 2017 indicator index provided clarity on including girls provided with health information through U-Report as part of the indicator computation. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage Progress Report 2017' (draft), UNFPA and UNICEF, 15 May 2018; United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018.

<sup>132</sup> For example, UNICEF India feedback to the draft evaluation noted that the country's reported numbers for Output 1.1 do not meet the criterion, raising concerns about the standards applied across countries.

<sup>133</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia: Working Paper', UNICEF, Kathmandu, 2018.

<sup>134</sup> For example, in Uganda, complementary funding for support to girls' education in GPECM areas was secured via the Better Life for Girls programme, funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, '2017 Annual Report Country Profiles: UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage', UNFPA and UNICEF, August 2018, p. 42.

<sup>135</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage Progress Report 2017' (draft), UNFPA and UNICEF, 15 May 2018; United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018.



and literacy skills development in informal schools or non-formal classes.<sup>136</sup> India has also moved increasingly towards recognizing the importance of alternative education, especially for the most vulnerable groups. In 2018, the India programme worked on mapping and providing referrals and linkages to alternative education programmes in five states.<sup>137</sup>

Despite a low number of countries targeting activities in this indicator area, the structure of the GPECM at the country level was seen by those countries visited for field review as a critical catalyst in facilitating holistic dialogue at the

country level that brings together the education sector with other stakeholders within the United Nations system to address child marriage. In Mozambique and the Niger, education experts were part of the technical teams and results on the educational component of child marriage programming were reported to the GPECM in an integrated fashion, regardless of funding source. Both technical teams felt strongly that this was a critical added value of the GPECM approach and it would not have been possible without the impetus of the GPECM to serve as a catalyst to more holistic planning and programming at the country level.

**TABLE 8** Output Indicator 1.2 milestones

Output Indicator 1.2: Number of adolescent girls in programme areas supported to access and remain in primary or lower secondary school or non-formal education.							
Countries	Milestones						
	Baseline	2016		2017		2018 mid-term	
	2015	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Mid-term
Bangladesh	16,169	9,000	37,371	N/A*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Burkina Faso	937	1,100	1,105	12,297	12,124	13,200	6,464
Ethiopia	4,460	5,684	5,415	4,010	3,112 <sup>132</sup>	22,550	1,350
Ghana	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
India	3,800	3,800	125,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mozambique	264	264	N/A	2,350	2,358	2,358	0
Nepal	N/A	N/A	9,804	1,500	2,621	1,825	7,556
Niger	714	45,465	19,088	38,300	43,245	N/A	N/A
Sierra Leone	7,011	4,000	7,608	1,500	1,188	5,100	160
Uganda	N/A	8,100	6,286	5,180	2,568	11,115	61,282
Yemen	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Zambia	N/A	900	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,355</b>	<b>78,313</b>	<b>211,677</b>	<b>65,137</b>	<b>67,216</b>	<b>56,148</b>	<b>76,812</b>

\* N/A indicates 'not applicable'

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> UNICEF India response to desk review questions, 26 November 2018.

<sup>138</sup> UNICEF Ethiopia provided feedback to draft evaluation notes that the actual figure for Output 2.1 in 2017 was 3,460 (3,112 unmarried and 348 married girls), though this report utilizes data from the 2017 consolidated annual report. Moreover, feedback elaborates that UNICEF Ethiopia has decided not to provide direct economic support due to the costliness of the intervention and its limited potential to reach girls and will rather explore opportunities to leverage other programmes such as the Productive Safety Net Programme, which reaches vulnerable families at scale.



The data on performance against planned targets shows uneven achievements in 2018 for this indicator, with only Nepal and Uganda on track to achieve planned results at the mid-term. Limited investment by the GPECM in this indicator area is largely a function of the ability of the programme to leverage complementary funding to address girls' education and there

fore to funnel limited programme funds into other sector areas. The declining focus on funding interventions under this indicator combined with inconsistencies in achievement across countries suggests that this indicator should be thoroughly reviewed in the design of the next phase of the programme.

**TABLE 9** Output Indicator 1.2 performance against planned targets

Output Indicator 1.2: Number of adolescent girls in programme areas supported to access and remain in primary or lower secondary school or non-formal education						
Countries	Performance against planned targets					
	2016		2017		2018 (mid-term)	
	Percentage achieved <sup>133</sup>	Score	Percentage achieved	Score	Percentage achieved	Score
Bangladesh	415		N/A		N/A	
Burkina Faso	100		99		49	
Ethiopia	95		78		6	
Ghana	N/A		N/A		N/A	
India	3,289		N/A		N/A	
Mozambique	N/A		100		0	
Nepal	N/A		175		414	
Niger	190		113		N/A	
Sierra Leone	42		79		3	
Uganda	78		50		551	
Yemen	N/A		N/A		N/A	
Zambia	N/A		N/A		N/A	
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		<b>103</b>		<b>137</b>	
<b>Legend 2016/17</b>	Above 90%		70–90%		Below 70%	
<b>Legend 2018 mid-term</b>	Above 50%		25–50%		Below 25%	

<sup>133</sup> Percentage achieved is calculated by dividing the planned target by the actual achievement to show the percentage achieved against plans. All figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.



## Adolescent girls in programme areas display increased knowledge and skills

There is strong evidence from case study countries that community-level initiatives focused on community dialogues and girls' empowerment are having an impact and girls in targeted communities have a growing ability to understand their rights and influence family decisions regarding early marriage. These changes are complemented by and reinforced through work with parents, leaders and other gatekeepers at local levels. Female mentors and role models have also provided important alternatives for girls.

Increased access to information provides an important foundation for changes to practice. While information alone is not enough, it is part of a longer-term change process. In Ghana, an analysis of over 200 stories collected from targeted communities that were provided with the Child Marriage Advocacy Toolkit was completed in 2017 using the Most Significant Change technique. Results indicate an increase in the knowledge of communities on child protection issues, particularly issues of teenage pregnancy and child marriage. Attitudes and practices, however, have not seen the same level of change.<sup>140</sup>

Adolescent girls in Mozambique who have been trained as mentors under Rapariga Biz demonstrate the effectiveness of the empowerment approach well. Mentors reported significant changes to their own lives as a result of their participation in the programme:

- "I learned about my body and sexual reproductive health and how to access family planning services."
- "I know my rights as a girl; I can say no to early marriage and early pregnancy."

- "I can take a decision of what I want to do in life and fight for my dreams."
- "I know how to protect myself from sexual harassment and violence; I know what to do and how to report."
- "The programme helped me to be able to see what I want to be as a woman. I learned how to dream bigger."
- "Before training, my life dream was to marry and have my husband support me; but I saw it's not necessary to marry now; I can study and marry later."
- "Before I thought it was normal for a girl to get pregnant at age 13-15, but I learned early pregnancy has health risks such as fistula or death."

Adolescent girls interviewed in Nepal also displayed a growing understanding of their rights and alternative options:

- "If I do not want to get married, I can say no to my parents."
- "I want to find a job before getting married."
- "We go back in our village and talk to our friends on the importance to delay marriage for their health."
- "Marriage is a girl and boy decision. Before it was arranged in most of the families. Girls can explain to their parents and their grandparents that they want to finish their studies and to marry when they can stand on their feet."

Focus groups in the Niger with girls, boys, mothers and fathers painted a picture of effective change processes that were underway at the lower levels. Community members expressed a sense of optimism that the future would be better for their daughters. Changes

<sup>140</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, '2017 Annual Report Country Profiles: UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage,' UNFPA and UNICEF, August 2018, p. 18.



identified as the most important included: more people going to health centres; improved menstrual health and behaviours around sexual and reproductive health; reduced forced and early marriage; improved family harmony; and improved literacy and skills among girls. Mothers highlighted the importance of female role models in the form of programme staff, teachers and health workers. “When we see these women in cars and on bikes, we want our daughters educated. Before we pushed for marriage and now we push for education.”<sup>141</sup> Girls who had not been selected for the life-skills programme were eager to learn from others and expressed a strong desire to participate. “We meet in town and we observe how they dress, look and they inform us and we see how they make their lives and we are happy for that and we want that for ourselves.”<sup>142</sup>

While the village-level data observed in case study countries was compelling and certainly suggests that a change process is well underway, the GPECM needs to more systematically collect and compile data that shows how the programme improves knowledge and skills and leads to greater empowerment among adolescent girls in particular and how this impacts the prevalence of child marriage. The seven countries<sup>143</sup> that have incorporated surveys on girls’ empowerment can serve as resources for other countries and share lessons learned, leading towards a more standardized tool that may set the standard for country-level adaptation across the GPECM.

### 3.3.c Outcome 2:

**Families and communities demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours towards investing in and supporting adolescent girls.**

#### ○ KEY FINDING 7:

Country offices have significantly expanded community outreach significantly and the GPECM shows signs of scaling up. In the first half of 2018, the programme provided approximately 11.5 million individuals with information related to ending child marriage, significantly more than in 2016 and 2017 combined. Measuring of social/gender norms has progressed in some countries but remains a challenge. Critical mass theory has not been well utilized to target approaches. While boys and men have been targeted by programme activities to varying degrees, little work has been done to look at early marriage among boys.

#### Outcome Indicator 2: Number and proportion of individuals in programme areas that hold gender equitable attitudes.

Seven countries (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, Nepal, the Niger and Uganda) have generated some data against this indicator, but the information gathered was inconsistent across countries and only four of the seven countries scored well on the quality and scope of survey instruments.<sup>144</sup> The links between the outcome and its associated indicators are tenuous.

<sup>141</sup> Focus group discussion with mothers in the Niger.

<sup>142</sup> Focus group discussion with adolescent girls in the Niger.

<sup>143</sup> Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, Nepal, the Niger and Uganda.

<sup>144</sup> Refer to Annex F for details.



## Output 2.1: Participation in community dialogues promoting gender equitable norms including delaying child marriage.

Country offices have significantly expanded community mobilization and outreach over the first years of the GPECM. Compared to a baseline of just over 1 million individuals participating in community initiatives promoting delaying child marriage and gender equality,<sup>145</sup> the programme reach has grown to over 4 million in 2016, almost 5 million in 2017 and 11.5 million halfway through 2018. In other words, in the first half of 2018 alone, the programme provided approximately 11.5 million individuals with information related to ending child marriage, significantly more than 2016 and 2017 combined (approximately 9 million individuals in 2016 and 2017).<sup>146</sup>

Media activities are a key strategy for behaviour change communication to end child marriage that has enabled the GPECM to have greater reach. A number of countries, including Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Mozambique, Nepal, the Niger and Uganda, utilize cost-effective methods that include media campaigns through radio, television and theatre, as well as innovative social media platforms and toolkits to reach more community members with social behaviour change messaging.<sup>147</sup>



Countries such as Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique and the Niger are also supporting community-focused dialogues that include an emphasis on understanding the risks of child marriage. Community dialogue formats vary across countries, but typically involve women, men, girls and boys. Community training and advocacy were also utilized to expand the reach of the programme. Many countries sought to involve traditional and religious leaders as key influencers and champions at the community level, as well as at higher levels with national-level councils such as in Mozambique, the Niger and Sierra Leone, thereby reaching larger numbers of people.<sup>148</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Case study focus groups in three countries showed variability in the extent to which gender equality was promoted within the community. Some initiatives focused more squarely on promoting legal literacy and highlighting the risks of early marriage. While girls' empowerment was a common focus, it was not always fully situated within a broader framework of promoting gender equitable norms.

<sup>146</sup> Country office reporting is not consistent for this indicator. Some countries have reported only direct programme intervention numbers while others have included the reach achieved through media (see Mozambique). India's mass media reach in 2018 (not reported) is about 121 million through television; 5 million through community radio; and 30 million through social media, based on UNICEF India feedback on the evaluation report draft.

<sup>147</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage Progress Report 2017' (draft), UNFPA and UNICEF, 15 May 2018; United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018.

<sup>148</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018, p. 19.



**TABLE 10** Output Indicator 2.1 milestones

Output Indicator 2.1: Number of individuals in programme areas who regularly participate in dialogues promoting gender equitable norms including delaying child marriage							
Countries	Baseline 2015	Milestones					
		2016		2017		2018	
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Mid-term
Bangladesh	722,491	1,003,000	1,013,419	165,400	429,420	1,000,600	1,060,334
Burkina Faso	19,600	28,000	28,400	760,900	822,337	72,337	66,770
Ethiopia	14,400	104,800	31,400	140,889	600,586	38,983	1,001,342
Ghana	72,569	151,270	2,401,120	51,049	51,329	1,070	710
India	87,000	140,000	140,000	200,000	1,466,077	900,000	3,204,353
Mozambique	21,945	80,000	73,759	2,292,000	822,522	254,800 <sup>143</sup>	5,855,763 <sup>144</sup>
Nepal	12,955	20,520	20,032	8,787	208,083	10,000	3,416
Niger	52,250	75,645	95,623	127,840	193,020	190,776	194,946
Sierra Leone	18,000	12,000	13,485	5,000	15,963	5,500	8,238
Uganda	2,250	8,435	24,206	20,180	104,797	219,658	75,346
Yemen	N/A	15,500	278,080	276,000	65,804	21,000	4,349
Zambia	2,454	2,453	910	3,076	974	2,000	16,393
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,025,914</b>	<b>1,641,623</b>	<b>4,120,434</b>	<b>4,051,121</b>	<b>4,780,912</b>	<b>2,716,724</b>	<b>11,491,960</b>

Country performance against targets has been generally strong for this indicator, with a few exceptions. Civil unrest and a state of emergency led to delays in programme implementation in Ethiopia in 2016, while Zambia delayed wider outreach plans in 2016 to focus on training traditional leaders to serve as champions for ending

child marriage as a foundation for wider behavioural change.<sup>151</sup> Performance rates in Yemen and Zambia were negatively impacted in 2017 by delays with implementing partners on the planned start of activities.<sup>152</sup> With the exception of Yemen, all countries were on track to meet or exceed planned targets in 2018.

<sup>149</sup> This includes 4,800 reached through community dialogues and 250,000 reached through media campaigns.

<sup>150</sup> This includes 8,092 reached through community dialogues and 5,847,671 reached through media campaigns.

<sup>151</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage: Progress Report 2016', UNFPA and UNICEF, June 2017.

<sup>152</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018, p. 39.



**TABLE 11** Output Indicator 2.1 performance against planned targets

Output Indicator 2.1: Number of individuals in programme areas who regularly participate in dialogues promoting gender equitable norms including delaying child marriage						
Countries	Performance against planned targets					
	2016		2017		2018 (mid-term)	
	Percentage achieved <sup>147</sup>	Score	Percentage achieved	Score	Percentage achieved	Score
Bangladesh	101		260		106	
Burkina Faso	101		108		92	
Ethiopia	30		426		2,569	
Ghana	1,587		101		66	
India	100		733		356	
Mozambique	92		36		169	
					2,339	
Nepal	98		2,368		34	
Niger	126		151		102	
Sierra Leone	112		319		150	
Uganda	287		519		34	
Yemen	1,794		24		21	
Zambia	37		32		820	
<b>Total</b>	<b>251</b>		<b>118</b>		<b>423</b>	
<b>Legend 2016/17</b>	Above 90%		70–90%		Below 70%	
<b>Legend 2018 mid-term</b>	Above 50%		25–50%		Below 25%	

Collectively, countries had already achieved over four times their annual target by the middle of 2018, significantly higher than previous annual achievement rates. Higher-than-expected outreach rates were positively influenced by adaptations to the U-Report health information campaign to include a comprehensive set of sexuality education topics.

New indicator guidance released in 2017 (after targets had been set) allowed for the inclusion of adolescent girls reached through U-Report in several countries, including Mozambique, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Uganda.<sup>154</sup> Aggregate data for 2018 is driven disproportionately by India and Mozambique. Issues persist with indicator definition and measurements.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Percentage achieved is calculated by dividing the planned target by the actual achievement to show the percentage achieved against plans. All figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

<sup>154</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018, p. 39.

<sup>155</sup> Country offices displayed different levels of understanding of reporting requirements (key informant interviews with United Nations stakeholders in case study countries; country office feedback to evaluation report). See, for example, Mozambique's disaggregation of media and community dialogues in reporting.



## Male engagement in interventions aimed at changing social norms

The global theory of change and the results framework put adolescent girls at the centre, using a gender-targeted approach. There is no specific mention of men or boys in the global theory of change (though this is inferred by “families” and “communities”) and outcome and output indicators do not measure male engagement in interventions (though some indicators are disaggregated). The narrative report, however, does include fields of inquiry to capture information on the extent to which the GPECM has engaged men and boys.

The importance of engaging men and boys to foster gender equality and empower women and girls is well understood, but the evidence base on male engagement in ending child marriage is limited.<sup>156</sup> The importance of male involvement in the programme is well articulated by country office stakeholders:

“Boys (in India) are also reached as key stakeholders in transforming gender norms and stereotypical gender roles. Boys play a significant role in curbing child marriage and thus their involvement is critical for bringing down the prevalence of child marriage. Furthermore, boys, in their role as decision makers and gatekeepers in the family and community, are also an important stakeholder group and need to be sensitized to play their role as equal partners in advocating against harmful practices.”<sup>157</sup>

“Uganda is a patriarchal society, where boys are taught from a young age and socialized to assume the role of breadwinner, to be dominant and to make most, if not

all, family decisions and that they can act freely upon their sexual desires; while girls are taught to run the household, be chaste, expect and submissively adhere to men’s sexual preferences. Socially and culturally defined notions of masculinity, femininity and sexuality shape relationship and marriage practices.... As such, to change the status quo and end child marriage, boys and men must be involved and targeted if the effort is to progress and continue beyond the duration of the programme. During the 2017 reporting period, 47,565 adolescent boys were reached with messages and other related programmes.”<sup>158</sup>

The GPECM has targeted men – fathers, elders and religious and local leaders – as key decision makers regarding child marriage. Country offices generally recognize the important role that men must play in changing social/gender norms; however masculinity did not feature strongly as part of discussions on social norms around gender equality and child marriage. Burkina Faso, Ghana, the Niger and Zambia have supported high-level policy dialogues with religious and traditional leaders at the national level and men have been well integrated into community dialogues. Case study research revealed little evidence of backlash due in large part to the culturally appropriate way in which interventions have been implemented, though unintended consequences are always a risk where there is discordance between girls’ empowerment and family/community expectations.

Country offices have included boys in programme activities such as community dialogues, U-Report, life skills and legal literacy and

<sup>156</sup> Girls Not Brides, ‘Male Engagement in Ending Child Marriage’, Girls Not Brides, London, November 2018.

<sup>157</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – India’, UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>158</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Uganda’, UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.



also through sexual and reproductive health and Communication for Development (C4D) activities. In Burkina Faso, activities involving boys are seen as opportunities to promote gender equality, including responsible masculinity. In Ethiopia, during the 2017 reporting period, the programme engaged 23,884 boys through legal awareness sessions and life-skills training conducted in schools. In Bangladesh, the programme facilitated interactive sharing between boys and girls through mixed adolescent safe spaces that provide life skills to both sexes (including 21,756 boys in 2017).<sup>159</sup>

The importance of including boys was well recognized by the adolescent girls who worked as mentors under Rapariga Biz in Mozambique. This was seen as critical for the next stage and failure to do so ran the risk of negatively impacting programme results since girls do not make decisions about sexual and reproductive health in isolation. Mentors expressed during focus group discussions that the inclusion of boys would complement their work on girls' empowerment and lead to a greater impact, though a few felt that it was okay to exclude boys on the basis that they have other means of accessing information.

While boys have been targeted by some programme activities as change agents for social/gender norms in the context of child marriage, little work has been done to look at early marriage among boys. Global data suggests that

boys comprise 18 per cent of those married early, yet there is limited understanding on how child marriage affects boys.<sup>160</sup> UNFPA Yemen has identified some child marriage among boys in the governorate of Amran in the course of their work.<sup>161</sup> Research from Uganda suggests that child marriage has a negative impact on boys' education, health and livelihood potential.<sup>162</sup>

Assuming that boys who are married as children are also marrying girl children, consensual adolescent marriages may comprise over one third of all children globally who are married young.<sup>163</sup> While continuing to recognize that child marriage disproportionately affects girls, the GPECM should expand its focus to include boys at risk of early marriage and address consensual adolescent marriage (involving girls and boys) to address child marriage holistically. More studies are needed to better understand and address child-to-child marriages (consensual or not) and explore drivers and the impact of child marriage on boys.

### Social norms change

The GPECM seeks to define the appropriate mix of interventions in various contexts to fuel broad social change.<sup>164</sup> The programme has grappled with targeting and measuring social norms change throughout the first phase; community-based surveys are utilized in some countries to capture changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices around child marriage as

<sup>159</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage Progress Report 2017' (draft), UNFPA and UNICEF, 15 May 2018; United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018.

<sup>160</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Ending Child Marriage: Progress and prospects', UNICEF, New York, 2014.

<sup>161</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Uganda', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 12.

<sup>162</sup> Republic of Uganda, 'The National Action Plan to End Child Marriage and Early Teenage Pregnancy, 2014/15-2019/2020', Republic of Uganda, June 2015, pp. 18-19.

<sup>163</sup> Calculation assumes that 18 per cent of boys globally marry another 18 per cent of girls globally to total 36 per cent of all child brides/grooms. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Ending Child Marriage: Progress and prospects', UNICEF, New York, 2014.

<sup>164</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Report of the Inception Phase of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage', UNICEF and UNFPA, October 2015.



detailed in Annex F. While models of measuring social norms change are being developed by the programme at both the country and regional levels,<sup>165</sup> it is important to position social norms change as central to the overarching programme approach. Targeting norms change is not a distinct aspect of programming linked to a specific output or outcome, but integral to the overall approach that targets changes at all key levels (top-down, bottom-up and within). Each component of the programme makes some contribution to changing social norms, not just activities that fall under Outcome 2.

There is good evidence to suggest that the GPECM is making a positive contribution to social norms change that will help to reduce rates of child marriage and this can be felt within the communities where the programme is implemented as well as at the higher levels of government, where new space has been opened up to discuss what was once a taboo issue. “Behaviour change is a process and we are in the first phase. Now we can talk about it openly and this has been accepted and we could not do this before, but there is no measure of this. Then you come to the adoption and the practice changes and then the norm has changed. It has to be understood in the cycle of behaviour change.”<sup>166</sup>

The bottom line is that changes to social norms are not easy to measure and are particularly difficult to measure in the short term. The GPECM would ultimately like to show a contribution

to change that is significant and sustainable, but norms change takes time and is slow and uneven by its very nature, varying from one family/community/district/country to the other. As one stakeholder cautioned, “Be aware of the fact that the immeasurable cannot be measured.”<sup>167</sup>

### Unpacking critical mass theory

Creating a ‘critical mass’ of change agents who can propel change is a key approach of the GPECM that is elaborated in the design. Outcomes 1 and 2 focus on creating the critical mass and considerable work has been done in these outcome areas, as demonstrated by the output-level tracking. However, while the critical mass theory is referenced, it has not been fully unpacked at the country level.

The principle of critical mass rests on the tendency of people to not want to stand out as different from others. The change process can be driven by a fear of negative consequences or by a desire to reap benefits. When a change in norms is introduced, people tend to be slow to change until they are persuaded that others are changing. Once a critical mass is reached, adoption takes place quickly. The point where critical mass is achieved, and the change becomes self-sustaining is called the tipping point. The tipping point is not fixed but is well under 50 per cent of the population and is commonly identified as 25 per cent.<sup>168</sup> Factors that influence the pace of change include whether

<sup>165</sup> Work is underway in the regional offices of West and Central Africa (WCARO), Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO), the Middle East and North Africa (MENARO) and South Asia (ROSA) to develop simplified guides on social norms measurement tailored to regional contexts. Work has involved cross-regional sharing of frameworks, especially drawing on the work developed by WCARO. Key informant interviews in regional offices.

<sup>166</sup> Key informant interview, United Nations staff, the Niger.

<sup>167</sup> Donor stakeholder written feedback on the draft evaluation inception report, January 2019.

<sup>168</sup> Research has shown that a small group can change social norms if they reach a tipping point of 25 per cent. See, for example, Yong, Ed, ‘The Tipping Point When Minority Views Take Over’, *The Atlantic*, 7 June 2018, <[www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/06/the-tipping-point-when-minority-views-take-over/562307/](http://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/06/the-tipping-point-when-minority-views-take-over/562307/)>, accessed 17 April 2019. Other research identifies the tipping point for social change as between 10-30 per cent. See, for example Xie, J, et al., ‘Social Consensus through the Influence of Committed Minorities’, *Physical Review E*, vol. 84, no. 1, 22 July 2011. Findings indicate that only 10 per cent of a population who hold committed beliefs can change the views of the majority.



the idea is easy to understand, how clear the benefits/risks are, behaviours of leaders, community size and social cohesiveness.

Evidence from case studies suggests that key role models and influencers at the local level are considered in terms of changing behaviours (such as religious or community leaders), but country offices have not applied critical mass theory in terms of establishing a tipping point for the percentage of members within a community that need to demonstrate new beliefs/behaviours. Targeting has also sought to ensure information transference from person to person and village to village, but it has not been directly informed by a quantitative critical mass approach. Further research and focus in the next phase on applying critical mass theory can aid efforts to accelerate change.

### 3.3.d Outcome 3

Relevant sectoral systems are able to scale up quality and cost-effective services to meet the needs of adolescent girls.

#### ○ KEY FINDING 8:

Country offices have increased targets in each year of the GPECM and have collectively exceeded targets. Almost every country has delivered results as planned for Output 3.1 in 2017 and 2018. Mid-term 2018 data shows collective delivery rates over six times the target for service delivery points for adolescent-friendly health services or protection services, suggesting that the programme is moving towards accelerating interventions. The programme was able to scale up activities

around girls' education in 2018 (Output 3.2), assisting over 8,000 schools to improve the quality of girls' education over the first six months of the year, which is equivalent to the total number of schools reached over the first two years of the programme.

#### Outcome Indicator 3.1 Number/proportion of adolescent girls who are able to access (health, social welfare) services.

All countries are able to generate data at either district or lower levels from administrative or survey data. While service delivery points have been tracked under Output 3.1 (*see below*), the number/proportion of girls who access different services related to ending child marriage has yet to be established and tracked.

#### Output 3.1 Number of service delivery points in programme areas implementing guidelines for adolescent girl-friendly health or protection services

Baseline data show only 968 service delivery points in 2015 across six countries were supported to implement guidelines, protocols and standards for adolescent girl-friendly health and protection services. More than 30,000 centres have been improved at the mid-point of 2018, compared with approximately 10,000 centres for the first two years of the GPECM combined. In total, over 40,000 centres have been supported over the first years of the programme from a low baseline of less than 1,000. The data demonstrate that the ability of the GPECM to facilitate girl-friendly health and protection services has grown over the life of the programme.

**TABLE 12** Output Indicator 3.1 milestones

Output Indicator 3.1: Number of service delivery points in programme areas implementing guidelines for adolescent girl-friendly health or protection services							
Countries	Baseline	Milestones					
		2016		2017		2018	
	2015	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual mid-term
Bangladesh	N/A	100	89	50	134	5	2
Burkina Faso	47	54	54	54	54	60	79
Ethiopia	242	877	885	962	1,021	636	409
Ghana	N/A	30	45	200	322	275	122
India	N/A	5	3,673	750	785	2,500	28,439
Mozambique	655	NA	102	610	705	134	156
Nepal	4	6	317	127	89	68	36
Niger	N/A	222	116	278	324	179	236
Sierra Leone	N/A	NA	21	12	11	N/A	N/A
Uganda	15	40	NA	741	943	989	1,172
Yemen	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	66	0
Zambia	5	80	27	74	64	4	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>1,414</b>	<b>5,329</b>	<b>3,858</b>	<b>4,452</b>	<b>4,916</b>	<b>30,664</b>

A review of performance against planned results by country shows that country offices are increasingly delivering on this indicator, with more countries reaching an expanded number of centres and service providers. After some start-up delays in 2016, every country

except Yemen delivered results as planned in 2017 and 2018. Mid-term 2018 data show collective delivery rates at over six times the target, largely driven by India,<sup>169</sup> showing that the programme is moving towards accelerating interventions.

<sup>169</sup> Reasons for India's achievement rate far surpassing targets in 2016 and 2018 are linked to leveraging of government systems.



**TABLE 13** Output Indicator 3.1 performance against planned targets

Output Indicator 3.1: Number of service delivery points in programme areas implementing guidelines for adolescent girl-friendly health or protection services						
Countries	Performance against planned targets					
	2016		2017		2018 (mid-term)	
	Percentage achieved <sup>164</sup>	Score	Percentage achieved	Score	Percentage achieved	Score
Bangladesh	89		268		40	
Burkina Faso	100		100		92	
Ethiopia	101		106		64	
Ghana	150		161		44	
India	73,460		105		1,138	
Mozambique	N/A		116		116	
Nepal	5,283		70		53	
Niger	52		117		132	
Sierra Leone	N/A		92		N/A	
Uganda	N/A		127		119	
Yemen	N/A		N/A		0	
Zambia	34		86		325	
<b>Total</b>	<b>377</b>		<b>115</b>		<b>624</b>	

<b>Legend 2016/17</b>	Above 90%	70–90%	Below 70%
<b>Legend 2018 mid-term</b>	Above 50%	25–50%	Below 25%

Several countries, including Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Mozambique, the Niger and Sierra Leone, have included a focus on training trainers to build the capacities of service providers in adolescent-friendly services. The GPECM trained over 15,000 service providers as trainers in 2017, allowing programmes to scale up the implementation of guidelines for adolescent girl-friendly health or protection services in the targeted service delivery points in a cost-efficient manner.<sup>171</sup>

### Outcome Indicator 3.2 Percentage point difference in exam pass rates between boys and girls in programme areas

All countries except Yemen are able to generate data at the national or sub-national levels from administrative or survey data. Nine countries can generate district-level data. Countries can also generate gender parity index at completion. Data tracking has not been reflected in 2016 or 2017 annual reports, though it is planned for the 2018 report.

<sup>170</sup> Percentage achieved is calculated by dividing the planned target by the actual achievement to show the percentage achieved against plans. All figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

<sup>171</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage Progress Report 2017' (draft), UNFPA and UNICEF, 15 May 2018; United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018, pp. 42-43.



### Output 3.2 Number of formal and non-formal schools supported to improve quality of education for adolescent girls

Engagement in this indicator area varied by country, with only 8 of the 12 programme countries planning activities funded by the GPECM in 2018. Variations in focus were influenced by local contexts and the availability of comple-

mentary funding for girl-friendly schools. The data show that the programme was able to scale up its activities around girls' education in 2018, assisting over 8,000 schools to improve the quality of education for adolescent girls over the first six months of the year, which is equivalent to the number of schools reached during the first two years (24 months) of the programme from 2016–2017.

**TABLE 14** Output Indicator 3.1 milestones

Output Indicator 3.2: Number of non-formal, primary or secondary schools implementing interventions to improve the quality of education for adolescent girls							
Countries	Baseline	Milestones					
		2016		2017		2018	
	2015	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual mid-term
Bangladesh	7	47	620	70	72	396	74
Burkina Faso	151	300	301	370	386	400	1,200
Ethiopia	200	713	455	725	460	422	280
Ghana	N/A	2	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
India	N/A	N/A	1,627	750	1,185	2,000	5,720
Mozambique	N/A	100	100	117	191	247	171
Nepal	N/A	N/A	257	140	360	360	550
Niger	N/A	148	148	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sierra Leone	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Uganda	N/A	100	687	625	32	789	0
Yemen	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Zambia	424	500	714	100	133	13	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>1,910</b>	<b>4,940</b>	<b>2,897</b>	<b>2,799</b>	<b>4,627</b>	<b>8,028</b>



**TABLE 15** Output Indicator 3.2 performance against planned targets

Output Indicator 3.2: Number of non-formal, primary or secondary schools implementing interventions to improve the quality of education for adolescent girls						
Countries	Performance against planned targets					
	2016		2017		2018 (mid-term)	
	Percentage achieved <sup>166</sup>	Score	Percentage achieved	Score	Percentage achieved	Score
Bangladesh	1,338		103		19	
Burkina Faso	100		104		300	
Ethiopia	64		63		66	
Ghana	50		N/A		N/A	
India	N/A		158		286	
Mozambique	100		163		69	
Nepal	N/A		257		153	
Niger	100		N/A		N/A	
Sierra Leone	N/A		N/A		N/A	
Uganda	687		5		0	
Yemen	N/A		N/A		N/A	
Zambia	143		133		254	
<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>		<b>97</b>		<b>193</b>	
<b>Legend 2016/17</b>	Above 90%		70–90%		Below 70%	
<b>Legend 2018 mid-term</b>	Above 50%		25–50%		Below 25%	

Country offices have generally met targets in this indicator area with a few exceptions. Ethiopia did not meet targets in 2016 or 2017 due to decisions to prioritize investments in institutional capacity building of district-level education offices to help sustain the provision of quality and timely support to every school. The GPECM strengthened capacities at all levels of schooling with training of teachers on gender-responsive pedagogy and gender analysis of learning outcomes, as well as strengthening school-related gender-based violence systems in targeted regions.<sup>173</sup> Ghana chose to track an intermediate

indicator in 2016, ‘Availability of gender-responsive frameworks, guidelines and manuals to support girls’ education and gender equality in basic education,’ contributing to the long-term indicator goal.<sup>174</sup> Uganda was able to secure complementary funding from Irish Aid and the Global Partnership for Education to improve the quality of education for adolescent girls.

Programming in this indicator area illustrates the responsiveness of the programme to local contexts and the ability of stakeholders to innovate and adapt programming

<sup>172</sup> Percentage achieved is calculated by dividing the planned target by the actual achievement to show the percentage achieved against plans. All figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

<sup>173</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘2017 Annual Report Country Profiles: UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage,’ UNFPA and UNICEF, August 2018, p. 13.

<sup>174</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage: Progress Report 2016’, UNFPA and UNICEF, June 2017, p. 42.



for greater convergence, integrating the education component with social protection, gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health initiatives:

- In Nepal, the programme supported the strengthening of gender focal points at district education offices, who subsequently leveraged support and engaged schools in implementing adolescent-friendly environments. In addition to the implementation of the guidelines and gender-based violence referral and response mechanisms, schools were mobilized to set up suggestion boxes to address gender-based violence and bullying.
- In Mozambique, advocacy efforts contributed to the review of Decree 39 on the protection of girls against violence in schools. The programme collaborated with the Ministry of Education and the Police Department to scale up the implementation of adolescent-friendly guidelines in schools. In 2018, the programme also piloted a new approach to working through social committees on school councils to address issues related to girls' education with a focus on early marriage and adolescent pregnancy.

### 3.3.e Outcome 4

National legal and policy frameworks protect the rights of adolescents [in line with international standards].

#### ○ KEY FINDING 9:

UNFPA and UNICEF have worked collaboratively at the highest levels to support governments to develop national/state

action plans to end child marriage. Nine countries have developed action plans with multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms and five countries have allocated government resources to decreasing child marriage.

#### Outcome Indicator 4:

**Whether country has resources allocated to decreasing child marriage in at least two ministries within an NAP or another clearly defined policy/planning mechanism.**

#### Output 4.1:

**Country has costed NAP or development plan<sup>175</sup> on ending child marriage across more than one ministry.**

Table 16 shows the status of the NAPs for the 12 programme countries. The GPECM is on track to support these countries in developing and implementing NAPs. Nine countries have now developed and approved their NAPs and the other two (India and the Niger) are in the last stages of finalization.<sup>176</sup>

Seven countries have costed financial frameworks to operationalize plans and the remaining four countries (Bangladesh, India, Nepal and the Niger) are in the final stages of budget drafting. In terms of actual financial resources allocated by governments for implementation of the NAP, only five countries have allocated resources to implementing their NAPs: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia.

<sup>175</sup> In India, state action plans may be the more relevant unit of analysis since each state has a different context and the planning and costing needs to be developed as per state-specific needs. Country contextualization should allow for adaptation of this indicator as needed but should still look at coverage for the whole of the country (states and territories).

<sup>176</sup> Yemen is excluded at this point in time due to absence of legislative structures.



**TABLE 16** GPECM countries' national action plan status (2018)

Countries	NAP	Costing and financial framework	Financial resources allocated by government	Comments
<b>Middle East and North Africa</b>				
Yemen	N/A	N/A	N/A	Given the lack of legislative structures in Yemen, the programme has not made any progress regarding legal reforms or national policies in favour of the reduction of child marriage and it is not a focus for the country programme, thus non-applicable.
<b>Eastern and Southern Africa</b>				
Ethiopia	√	√		The Ethiopia programme provided financial and technical support to the development of the country's costed roadmap to end child marriage. The development of a costed roadmap to end child marriage progressed significantly in 2017 as the core package of interventions to be included and costed was developed and endorsed after a review carried out by UNICEF. The initiative is expected to serve as a baseline for tracking the Government's commitment to increase budget allocations by 10 per cent in relevant sectors. <sup>177</sup> New guidance is given to revise the costed NAP and a task force is assigned to lead the revision. It will be completed before the end of 2018. Endorsement is targeted for the first quarter of 2019. The process has been participatory and consultative and key ministries have fully participated in the development of the draft plan. <sup>178</sup> The Government has allocated a 10 per cent financial benchmark for the NAP.
Mozambique	√	√	√	A national strategy on child marriage and a costed, multi-sectoral action plan (2016–2019) was approved by the Council of Ministers in December 2015 and launched in 2016. The strategy includes communications and social mobilization, girls' access to education, sexual and reproductive health services and reform of the legal framework. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action is responsible for coordination and implementation of the strategy. The coordination mechanism includes five government agencies and is operational at the national, provincial and district levels. GPECM work in 2018 provided support to the Government for dissemination, monitoring and coordination of the strategy.

<sup>177</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, '2017 Annual Report Country Profiles: UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage,' UNFPA and UNICEF, August 2018, p. 13.

<sup>178</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF Ethiopia country offices' responses to desk review questions, 15 November 2018.



**Table 16** (cont'd)

Countries	NAP	Costing and financial framework	Financial resources allocated by government	Comments
<b>Uganda</b>	√	√	√	The NAP was established in 2015 including a costed financial framework and action plan disaggregated by responsible government ministry. Implementation of the strategy is estimated to cost UGX15.128 billion or US\$4.03 million over a period of five years. Fifty per cent of the budget shall be from the Government of Uganda to ensure sustainability of funding for the interventions. Detailed annual budget targets shall be developed by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to facilitate the implementation of this strategy. <sup>179</sup> According to UNICEF Uganda, there is no direct way to trace budgetary allocations to the work on ending child marriage specifically at the national level, however the Government contributes to the implementation of the national strategy to end child marriage through budget allocations to various social protection and poverty alleviation programmes and projects that tackle some of the major drivers of child marriage. These include legal and policy reforms, youth livelihood programmes, the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme and universal primary and secondary education policies among others. For the financial year 2018/19, the Social Protection Programme received an increase of US \$15.385b. <sup>180</sup>
<b>Zambia</b>	√	√	√	UNFPA and UNICEF have successfully supported the Ministry of Gender with the implementation of the costed NAP, clearly defining multi-sector implementation activities as well as funding allocation until 2021, with commitments from several government ministries.
<b>West and Central Africa</b>				
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	√	√	√	The three-year NAP is already costed at an estimated cost of US\$12.7 million. The Government is contributing to the financing of the NAP. The Government annually allocates about US\$100,000 for implementation of the NAP.

<sup>179</sup> Republic of Uganda, 'The National Action Plan to End Child Marriage and Early Teenage Pregnancy, 2014/15–2019/2020', Republic of Uganda, June 2015, pp. 58–62.

<sup>180</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF Uganda country offices' response to desk review questions, 14 November 2018.



**Table 16** (cont'd)

Countries	NAP	Costing and financial framework	Financial resources allocated by government	Comments
<b>Ghana</b>	√	√	√	After extensive advocacy, for the first time in 2018 the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, custodian of the national strategic framework on ending child marriage, has allocated 3 per cent of its total goods and service allocation for 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. Other sectors (e.g. health, education, justice, police, child and family welfare, gender/gender-based violence) are progressively prioritizing and allocating resources towards the implementation of strategies under the national framework. This equals approximately US\$100,000. The financial support of bilateral and multi-lateral development partners remains the main source to support framework implementation. <sup>181</sup>
<b>Niger</b>	√ Strategy			A multi-sector child marriage coordination national committee was established and engaged in the development of a 2019–2021 NAP to end child marriage, including a budget. It was endorsed in August 2018. The NAP was developed with GPECM support. Two consultants were hired to do the situation analysis and facilitate the drafting of the strategy (international by UNICEF and national by UNFPA). Government support for the plan is currently in the form of human resources. External funding support is critical to implementation.
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	√	√		The NAP on ending child marriage (2019–2021) and a costed financial framework was approved in October 2018 with support from the GPECM. A multi-sector child marriage coordination national committee was established and engaged in the development of an NAP. The plan was preceded by a draft and several memoranda of understanding with paramount chiefs, which helped to establish a basis for national and local government leaders to move forward and tackle child marriage.
<b>South Asia</b>				
<b>Bangladesh</b>	√			The Government of Bangladesh released its NAP to end child marriage in 2018. The GPECM provided substantial support to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs with the development of the monitoring and evaluation framework. In addition, both UNFPA and UNICEF provided support to several strategies and national plans supporting the goal to end child marriage. The final version of the national plan of action to end child marriage was approved in August 2018 (Bengali version only), but costing is still ongoing. The Government has been allocating resources to activities to end child marriage prior to the development of the plan, but not within the context of a national framework.

<sup>181</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF Ghana country offices' response to desk review questions, 30 November 2018.



**Table 16** (cont'd)

Countries	NAP	Costing and financial framework	Financial resources allocated by government	Comments
<b>India</b>				India has developed a draft NAP for the Central Government. The GPECM has provided technical support to states for the development of state-level action plans. Four of the country's 29 states (Bihar, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and West Bengal) targeted by the programme have a budgeted state action plan. For example, in West Bengal, the Government has a state plan of action for children, which includes child marriage and a scheme on preventing child marriage that is fully budgeted by the Government. It has reached out to 4.3 million girls so far through conditional cash transfers. In response to state requests, technical assistance from the programme has also been extended to four other states to assist with the development of state action plans.
<b>Nepal</b>	√			The national strategy on ending child marriage was developed and launched in 2016 with technical support from UNFPA and UNICEF. It has provided a platform to influence the sectoral strategies and plans for ensuring multi-sectoral response to addressing child marriage. The action plan (with costing and monitoring and evaluation framework) of the national strategy is awaiting final government endorsement. There are some examples of local government budget allocation for social development interventions including child marriage; however, final costing still requires approval. UNFPA and UNICEF supported the organization of workshops involving stakeholders in order to develop and finalize the national strategy and action plan under the GPECM. The Multisector Nutrition Plan II (2018–2022) emphasized the need to address child marriage to improve the nutrition status of women and children in Nepal with a specific output and activities with earmarked resources to address harmful practices.

● **Green:** Completed  
 ● **Yellow:** Drafted, not yet approved

● **Orange:** Progressing with draft development  
 ● **Red:** Not started  
 ○ **Blank:** Not applicable

UNFPA and UNICEF have worked together effectively to contribute to the formulation of NAPs to end child marriage, providing coordinated advocacy, technical expertise and facilitating multi-sectoral stakeholder engagement. Progress across countries with NAPs is a critical foundational element for accelerating

action to end child marriage as well as a strong indication of growing government ownership of the child marriage agenda. Country offices are now moving towards a greater focus on costing, budget allocations and implementation to help enable the implementation of national programmes. Review and evaluation



of costing methodologies and advocacy for greater government investment and tracking of budget allocations and outcomes will need to follow over the next years of the programme to foster sustainability and support the operationalization of plans.

UNFPA and UNICEF have played a critical role in holding governments accountable to commitments made to ending child marriage. This is a role for which the United Nations is uniquely positioned and the United Nations is an integral part of ensuring that momentum towards ending child marriage continues. The GPSU tracks wider laws and policies related to child marriage globally, maintaining a database on legal age of marriage and legal exemptions that compares data from three resources (UNICEF, the World Bank and Pew Research).<sup>182</sup> Examples of country offices that have provided support to strengthen legislative frameworks include:

- In Bangladesh, advocacy with legislators and mass media campaigns to support enactment of the Child Marriage Restraint Act;<sup>183</sup>
- Advocacy with political leaders and engagement with traditional leaders in Zambia to ban child marriage (not yet enacted into law);<sup>184</sup>
- Advocacy in Uganda with legislators to pass the Children Act that offers protection from all forms of violence including marriage.<sup>185</sup>

### 3.3.f Outcome 5

Government(s) and partners within and across countries support and promote the generation and use of robust data and evidence to inform programme design, track progress and document lessons.

#### ○ KEY FINDING 10:

GPECM investments in research and data have contributed to building a stronger evidence base on child marriage. Tracking has not offered an indication on the quality and applicability of data generated; some research has been more strategic than other research. Few studies have offered any indication on the impact of interventions.

#### Outcome Indicator 5:

**Whether country uses robust data and evidence on child marriage to inform policy and programming.**

The outcome indicator monitors the quality of the data generated (i.e. robust) as well as the applicability (i.e. used to inform). The indicator has not been tracked to date. The GPSU has developed a new checklist for assessing the quality of data and evidence that has been designed for reporting against Outcome 5 and which will enable more comprehensive, qualitative tracking.<sup>186</sup> The team plans to roll out the new tool in 2019.

<sup>182</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'NAP and Legal Age Monitoring Dashboard'; United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Yemen', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>183</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Bangladesh', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>184</sup> Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Zambia', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>185</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Uganda', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>186</sup> Global Programme Support Unit, 'Checklist for Assessing Quality of Evidence Used to Inform Policy and Programming' (draft internal document available on the GPECM Team Site), 2018.



**Output 5.1:**  
**Country-specific, high-quality data and evidence generated and shared on what works at scale to accelerate ending child marriage.**

GPECM investments in research and data have contributed to supporting national agendas to end child marriage. Country offices completed 32 studies in 2016; 40 in 2017; and 20 at the mid-point of 2018. Regional offices completed four studies in 2016 and 12 in 2017.

**TABLE 17** Output 5.1 – number of GPECM funded studies/data or publications on ending child marriage

Countries/regions	2016		2017		2018	
	Target	Results	Target	Results	Target	Mid-year results
Bangladesh	2	2	1	3	4	6
Burkina Faso	1	5	1	3	2	-
Ethiopia	3	5	1	2	3	3
Ghana	-	2	1	5	4	2
India	1	5	5	9	6	2
Mozambique	1	4	1	3	2	1
Nepal	1	4	1	5	2	1
Niger	1	2	1	2	2	-
Sierra Leone	-	-	-	1	2	2
Uganda	2	2	1	3	3	2
Yemen	-	-	-	1	1	-
Zambia	1	1	1	3	-	1
<b>Country total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO)</b>	-	-	-	2		
<b>Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (MENARO)/Arab States Regional Office (ASRO)</b>	-	-	2	2		
<b>Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA)/Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO)</b>	2	3	2	4		
<b>West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO)</b>	1	1	1	4		
<b>Regional total<sup>187</sup></b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>		

Source: United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Targets and Results by Indicator Consolidated’ (internal document), UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018.

<sup>187</sup> Regional mid-year results data for 2018 were not included this table but will be available in the 2018 Annual Report.



Tracking for the output indicator has used a simple yes/no format that offered no indication of key criteria of the indicator as written (e.g. quality of data, whether they have been shared, whether they focus on what works at scale). Future tracking at the output level can draw from the framework designed to track the outcome indicator.

The evaluation drew on more extensive data collected by the GPSU that tracks the number of studies and includes an overview of the types of studies; however, quantitative tracking of studies offers no indication on the quality and usability of data. It is clear from a review of publications that some research has been particularly strategic and instrumental in guiding programme approaches, while other work seems less focused. Very few studies have offered any indication on the impact of interventions, posing a very significant risk that the GPECM is beginning to scale up interventions (particularly under Outputs 1.1, 2.1, 3.1 and 3.2) without sufficient proof of efficacy.<sup>188</sup> Section 3.5.c, 'Planning, monitoring and reporting mechanisms,' provides further elaboration on research and data generated by the programme.

While valuable research has been undertaken by the GPECM, better focus is required to generate the necessary evidence for scaling up. Country programmes will need to generate and apply data that demonstrate the impact of the convergence approach and provide an evidence base for taking strategies to scale in order to position programmes properly for the next phase. Headquarters and regional offices will need to provide more structure to country offices in designing studies and to invest more in documenting and sharing evidence, good practices and lessons learned, including facilitating more opportunities for cross-country and regional

learning. Evidence sharing should include an expanded focus on South-to-South learning that brings together programme and non-programme countries with high prevalence to benefit from new research and approaches. The regional offices and the GPSU should not only provide guidance and support on assessing the quality of evidence (as per the draft checklist), but also on quality assurance at the design stage of the research. This will require more stringent guidelines and technical support for data generation in the next phase.

### 3.4 SUSTAINABILITY

According to the OECD/DAC definition, sustainability is "the continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed; the probability of continued long-term benefits; the resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time."

This evaluation reviewed the following criteria to assess programme sustainability:

- Sustainability in design and implementation to promote national ownership;
- Capacity strengthening initiatives of key stakeholders;
- Programme support to integrate child marriage data into national data collection systems;
- Complementary funding secured to facilitate initiatives/interventions;
- Components that are replicable and/or scalable;
- Increased engagement from other stakeholders.

<sup>188</sup> Only 4 out of 74 studies produced in the first two years of the GPECM assessed impact. Subrahmanian, Ramya, 'Insights from Global Research: A Summary of Key Issues', UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, 2018. See also section 3.5c 'Research and data generated.'



### 3.4.a Sustainability in design and implementation to promote national ownership

#### ○ KEY FINDING 11:

The GPECM has fostered sustainability through institutionalization and systems and capacity strengthening, however country-level abilities to further the agenda to end child marriage vary. Institutionalization of outcomes is not monitored in the GRF and there are no specific indicators that measure ownership and capacity of government to take up interventions. Insecure and insufficient funding streams pose further challenges. GPECM advocacy at the country level around ending child marriage has played a key role in mobilizing governments and fostering ownership. Community-based approaches observed in case study countries demonstrated good potential for sustained impacts.

Sustainability is 1 of the 11 principles of the GPECM identified in the inception report. “The Global Programme recognizes that ending child marriage is a long-term endeavour requiring significant investment to accelerate current rates of decline. The first five years of programming will lay the groundwork for sustainability with the intensive investment of UNFPA and UNICEF.”<sup>189</sup>

While the GPECM brought important new funding for efforts to end child marriage in programme countries, limited and unpredictable programme funds have impacted programme

sustainability in complex ways. On the one hand, unpredictable funding disrupted financial commitments with partners and negatively impacted the programme’s ability to plan for sustainable, long-term interventions.<sup>190</sup> Limited funding has also impacted the availability of human resources dedicated to the GPECM, requiring country offices to facilitate the programme with technical staff, a strategy that may not be sustainable in the long term.<sup>191</sup> On the other hand, limited funding supported sustainability inasmuch as interventions at lower levels have been largely built on activities funded from other sources (*see sections 3.4.d and 3.5.d*). While this pool funding strategy poses significant difficulties with measuring programme results, it also helps to ensure that the focus on ending child marriage is maintained in country programmes beyond the scope/duration of the GPECM.

#### The national level

##### Government ownership/institutionalization

The elaboration of national strategies and action plans is an indication of governments’ commitments to end child marriage, which bodes well for sustainability. Governments have demonstrated strong ownership of the child marriage agenda following the elaboration of action plans, but institutionalization of GPECM initiatives is evidenced in only some countries. Limited government capacities combined with a lack of experience in the coordination and implementation of multi-sectoral action plans is a challenge for most governments.<sup>192</sup>

<sup>189</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund and United Nations Population Fund, ‘Report of the Inception Phase of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage’, UNICEF and UNFPA, October 2015.

<sup>190</sup> Key informant interview with country offices; United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Evaluability Assessment’, UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 53.

<sup>191</sup> Refer to section 3.5.d and Annex G for elaboration on human resource issues.

<sup>192</sup> This pattern was observed during country case studies in Mozambique and the Niger.



The institutionalization of outcomes is not monitored in the GRF and there are no specific indicators that measure ownership and capacity of government to take up interventions. Despite this, some countries have designed strategic and durable actions to roll out action plans at subnational levels, as per the two examples below. Stringent monitoring and evaluation of the impact of these approaches can help inform guidance on capacitating governments to take increasing responsibilities around child marriage. Lessons may also be drawn from other multi-sectoral development approaches such as programmes aimed at ending violence against women and children, gender action plans or national multi-sectoral nutrition programmes.

An institutionalization approach in India involves a review of state-specific models for systems strengthening that can be scaled up by ensuring: a) the commitment of state governments and key influencers through costed and resourced state plans<sup>193</sup> with advocacy, robust monitoring and evaluation systems and implementation at the district level involving adolescent participation; b) adequate capacity and skills of the Government and key stakeholders to promote and deliver quality services and prevention programmes; and c) adequate capacity and skills of community structures to engage adolescent girls, boys, parents and community influencers for ending child marriage.<sup>194</sup>

In Uganda, support from the GPECM and other sources was provided to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and local district governments to disseminate and implement the National Strategy to End Child

Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy in 25 districts with high prevalence of child marriage and teenage pregnancy. Local governments in 40 districts have further rolled out the strategy to sub-counties to develop action plans and implement community-led initiatives. Through this process, there is sustained momentum to disseminate information against harmful social norms and traditions that drive child marriage and there is growing demonstrated consensus among custodians of these traditions and norms to stop child marriage.<sup>195</sup>

### Advocacy

The GPECM advocacy at the country level around ending child marriage has been crucial for mobilizing governments and fostering ownership. Advocacy work has generally been undertaken in close collaboration with key development partners and NGOs (national and international).

Under the GPECM, high-level advocacy was undertaken with parliamentarians in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and India on ending child marriage, as well as on gender and children's rights. In Bangladesh, UNFPA has supported the Parliament Secretariat and members of Parliament to advocate on child marriage through the sub-committee on 'Eliminating Child Marriage'. UNFPA provided support for national workshops as well as local-level consultations organized by the Bangladesh Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development. UNICEF and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs co-chaired the local consultative group on Women's Advancement

<sup>193</sup> The states of Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat and Telangana have established state action plans to end child marriage.

<sup>194</sup> 2017 India GPECM AWP

<sup>195</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Uganda', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 4.



and Gender Equality Forum and provided additional support for development partners to advocate with the Government on issues related to ending child marriage.<sup>196</sup>



High-level events supported by the GPECM such as girl summits, the celebration of the International Day of the Girl Child, as well as the development of relationships between the programme and the Special Rapporteur and Goodwill Ambassador for the AU campaign, the

President of Zambia as the champion of the AU Campaign and the First Ladies in Africa have provided good opportunities to reinforce and sustain momentum in countries. Renewed advocacy efforts are especially important following changes in political and administrative settings that impact the efficiency of governance management, as was experienced in India and Nepal.<sup>197</sup>

Regional offices have played an important advocacy role in reinforcing regional commitments and triggering country buy-in as part of regional movements. In South Asia, UNICEF ROSA and UNFPA APRO have been using the SAIEVAC initiative to raise the profile of issues related to early and forced marriage. Similarly, in Africa, WCARO and ESARO have supported country launches of the AU campaign events to raise awareness about the harmful consequences of child marriage and to encourage action.<sup>198</sup> UNICEF MENARO and UNFPA ASRO have also used the GPECM to further advocacy efforts. “Though the fund is small, the GPECM is of great added value to raise the profile of child marriage in Yemen, as the prevalence is very high. It helps with advocacy at both the regional and global levels and also to strengthen the argument for bilateral funding.”<sup>199</sup>

<sup>196</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Bangladesh’, UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>197</sup> Key informant interview with United Nations staff in Nepal; UNFPA and UNICEF India country offices’ responses to desk review questions, 26 November 2018.

<sup>198</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Review of the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa 2014–2018’, UNICEF, November 2018.

<sup>199</sup> Key informant interview with UNICEF MENARO and UNFPA ASRO staff.



Evaluators identified a predominant focus in case study countries on highlighting the risks of child marriage over the benefits of ending child marriage. High-level advocacy may consider integrating a stronger focus on the economic benefits of reducing child marriage.<sup>194</sup> Ending child marriage and ensuring adolescent access to education, information and services would decrease fertility rates and increase educational attainment and productivity thereby enabling countries to better alleviate poverty and benefit from economic growth. This may motivate some stakeholders and encourage greater investment in NAPs.

Recent data from a three-year research project conducted by the World Bank and the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) estimates that the cumulative costs of child marriage between 2014 and 2030 are above US\$5 trillion globally.<sup>195</sup> Key messages relevant for governments, including policy makers and finance ministries, include:

- Ending child marriage could contribute to national welfare gains that add up to over US\$500 billion per year globally by the year 2030, solely from the benefits of lower population growth.
- In the Niger, ending child marriage and early childbearing would slow the country's population growth by more than 5 per cent by the year 2030. This, in turn, would relieve pressure on the country's budget, with potential welfare gains of up to US\$1.7 billion per year by the year 2030.
- Nepal would gain up to US\$1 billion per year and Ethiopia up to US\$4.8 billion because of lower fertility.
- Ending child marriage globally would result in benefits of up to US\$98 billion per year by 2030 as a result of reducing under-five mortality and childhood stunting among children born to girls under 18.<sup>196</sup>

### The community level

Community-level initiatives aimed at empowering adolescent girls show strong signs of increasing girls' knowledge and skills and improving their confidence. Once acquired, these gains will in all probability be sustained among the target groups and their empowerment is likely to further positively impact their own children. The support of mentors, usually women from the same or nearby communities, offers ongoing support to adolescent girls

in their villages. This mentorship strategy has been adopted in countries such as Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mozambique, the Niger, Sierra Leone and Uganda. Remaining in or returning to school will also have durable effects on girls' aspirations and how they structure their futures and the lives of their children.

Community dialogues in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique and the Niger are further reinforcing changes in attitude towards child marriage that are likely to be sustained

<sup>200</sup> UNICEF MENARO and UNFPA ASRO are moving towards a greater focus on documenting the costs of child marriage. Focal points for the GPECM are developing a concept note with other stakeholders on conducting costing research into child marriage drawing on the World Bank/ICRW study that should generate valuable context-specific data for the region. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Concept Note: Identifying and costing solutions to end child, early and forced marriage – A costing of child marriage in the Middle East and North Africa/Arab States' (draft internal document not for distribution), UNFPA and UNICEF, 10 October 2018.

<sup>201</sup> The research looked at existing and newly collected data. The quantitative analysis focused mainly on data for 15 core countries: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, the Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Congo, Uganda and Zambia. The main sources were demographic and health studies, living standards measurement studies and national surveys. For some topics where solid data existed, additional countries were also included. For several topics, global estimates were estimated based on both actual data and extrapolations. New quantitative data were collected from Ethiopia and the Niger and new qualitative data were collected from Ethiopia, Nepal and the Niger.

<sup>202</sup> Girls Not Brides, 'Economic Impact of Child Marriage: An information sheet', Girls Not Brides, London, 2018.



within those targeted communities, however involving adolescent boys to address masculinities and support girls' rights is critical to long term sustainability.

Local committees formed in several countries typically include influential persons in the community and therefore have the possibility to influence the community members on a range of social issues over the long term. Village-level committees in Burkina Faso and the Niger took on the important role of monitoring child marriage and mediating with families, often leading to village public declarations for the abandonment of child marriage. Sound evidence of ownership/sustainability was voiced from within communities during case study visits. "These community changes will continue because they are good for us. Now that we know they are good, we can continue in this way."<sup>203</sup>

Initial indications suggest a great potential to work with local governments to sustainably integrate ending child marriage into operations, but it will require ongoing advocacy and capacity development. In Uganda, the capacity of local district governments to advocate and lobby for budget allocations for prevention of violence against children including child marriage was reinforced as was the capacity to ensure that activities to end child marriage are integrated in the district development plans. In Nepal, early experiences with the newly elected local governments showed signs of engagement including budget allocation for social issues in their action plans at times specifically for eliminating child marriage.

Economic empowerment for girls is a critical component, enabling them to sustain their decisions to delay marriage and pregnancy, reduce

their dependency on their families and afford greater opportunities to delay marriage.<sup>204</sup> The lack of opportunities following completion of school or vocational training presents risks for girls and families to maintain decisions to delay marriage. UNFPA support for vocational training for Illimin ("knowledge for dignity") girls in the Niger led to some employment opportunities but some girls returned home to face few viable alternatives, as NGOs involved in implementations voiced. "You need to provide an alternative to families to marrying the daughter. You need to show a choice. When there is no choice, they will go for early marriage."<sup>205</sup>

Evaluators observed a strong focus in case study countries on communication campaigns that highlight the risks of early marriage (e.g. reproductive health risks, fistula, maternal and infant mortality). Benefits of delaying marriage were given less attention. This may be linked to the lack of opportunities for girls in many settings, particularly for education, employment or income-earning. Further focus on positive messaging around viable options to early marriage will likely positively impact the sustainability of decisions made to delay marriage.

### 3.4.b Capacity strengthening initiatives of key stakeholders

#### ○ KEY FINDING 12:

The GPECM contributed to strengthening the capacity of governments and other implementing partners so that services are better equipped to respond to the needs of adolescent girls, however efforts have been hindered by human resource shortages and limited budgets to roll out capacity building initiatives.

<sup>203</sup> Focus group discussion among men in the Niger.

<sup>204</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia: Working Paper,' UNICEF, Kathmandu, 2018.

<sup>205</sup> Focus group discussion with NGOs implementing Illimin in the Niger.



UNFPA and UNICEF place a strong emphasis on developing the capacity of governmental and non-governmental partners. Capacity strengthening is an important component of the GPECM, though the GRF does not measure capacity development results. The programme has built on existing interventions in the education and child protection sectors for UNICEF and health for UNFPA as well as with gender/women ministries and judiciaries.

## Government

Initiatives aimed at strengthening partner capacities included training, the development of tools and guidelines and technical assistance for programming, implementation and monitoring.

In Burkina Faso, a national training package was developed to harmonize the community empowerment approaches based on social norms change for ending both female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage. With the support of the GPECM, the Ministry of Education introduced three teacher training modules on reproductive health, child marriage and female genital mutilation as part of the curriculum reform. In Nepal, technical support was provided to the Central Child Welfare Board in developing a programming guide on legal child protection highlighting key interventions to address child marriage at the local government level within the framework of the National Strategy to End Child Marriage.<sup>206</sup>

The GPECM initiated or integrated child marriage components in training elements in different sectors. Training ranged from increasing awareness or knowledge on child

marriage issues such as violence, child protection, gender discrimination, legal frameworks and service provision, including:

- Training to build the capacity of service providers to provide adolescent-friendly services in Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Nepal and the Niger, in order to scale up the implementation of guidelines for adolescent girl-friendly health and protection services in targeted service delivery points;
- Training of teachers on gender-responsive pedagogy and analysis of learning outcomes using the gender perspective in Ethiopia;
- In-service training for justice professionals in collaboration with the Supreme Court and Federal Attorney General in Ethiopia; and training for police and judiciary system personnel, prosecutors and legal aid providers in Mozambique;
- Training for child protection services providers in Burkina Faso, Ghana, India, the Niger and Uganda;
- Training of women and children officers in Nepal on legal awareness and early interventions on child marriage through the mobilization of women's cooperatives and gender-based violence watch groups; and
- Training of social workers from child-friendly spaces in Yemen to identify cases of child marriage or those at risk of child marriage and refer them to services.<sup>207</sup>

Ongoing formal and informal technical support from both UNFPA and UNICEF under the GPECM is recognized as a valuable input to support governments to end child marriage. In the Niger, national level collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child

<sup>206</sup> Key informant interviews with implementing partners and United Nations stakeholders in Nepal.

<sup>207</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018, p. 11.



Protection and technical assistance provided for the elaboration of the strategic plan was recognized as a good practice to build capacities and enable government stakeholders to take the lead for coordination. In convergence areas, the regional directors of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection are the main implementation partners. While support to implementation requires additional time and effort, it provides important capacity building for government partners.<sup>208</sup>

Implementing partners from various sectors who visited as part of the Nepal case study had received training and could therefore bring a coordinated response to violence, including child marriage. Personnel demonstrated a strong motivation and ownership of the different programme components (i.e. adolescent empowerment, protection against violence including the child marriage agenda). While strengthening the capacities of different sectors contributes to ensuring the durability of the services, several constraints hamper progress such as high staff turnover or staff scarcity,<sup>209</sup> poor governance and limited budgets. A harmonized response still needs reinforcement.

Support to the revision of adolescent health strategies, such as in Bangladesh and Nepal, also contributed to strengthening capacities. Efforts to reinforce the capacity of governments contributed to systems strengthening and are critical to ensuring that systems are in place and scaled up to address the needs of target populations in a sustained way.

### Implementing partners (civil society organizations)

Capacity building of national stakeholders increases knowledge and skills and is critical in bringing about sustainable change to attitudes,

behaviours and practices related to ending child marriage. Both United Nations agencies provide formal training as well as mentorship and coaching to their implementing partners with a particular focus on data management and results monitoring. While local the competencies of NGOs and CSOs are high as far as implementation is concerned, managing data and monitoring activities are much weaker and require a higher level of effort.

Country offices have supported content-specific training for CSOs for developing and implementing life-skills modules such as Rapariga Biz in Mozambique, Illimin in the Niger and Rupantaran in Nepal. In India, country offices work with CSOs, not only as implementing partners, but also to provide technical support together with UNFPA, UNICEF and the Government to enhance capacities and skills and ensure quality in programme delivery as initiatives are taken to scale. Journalists are also targeted by the GPECM for capacity building in several countries, including Burkina Faso, Mozambique and the Niger. Journalist training is considered an investment to facilitate appropriate messaging that can reach a larger audience, but the precise outcomes of this intervention have yet to give a clear indication of its potential for long-term effects. The GPECM does not formally track numbers nor the effectiveness of capacity building initiatives.

### 3.4.c Child marriage data integrated into national data collection systems

- **KEY FINDING 13:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Although the GPECM strove to ensure that data related to child marriage are integrated into national information systems (e.g. administrative data, national surveys and SDG monitoring

<sup>208</sup> Key informant interviews with Government, United Nations and CSO stakeholders; and country case study in the Niger.

<sup>209</sup> For example, in the Niger, health care providers were not always present in local health facilities.



systems), success varies between countries. The GRF does not monitor support for data integration into national tracking systems.

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Given the focus on scale and sustainability, countries have been encouraged to utilize routine administrative data where developed systems are available, such as in health and education. While the quality of data needs to be improved, there are two main advantages to this approach: a) it helps promote government ownership of the data and evidence; and b) it provides an entry point to work with national statistical offices to mainstream the collection of data related to adolescent well-being in general and child marriage in particular.<sup>210</sup>

The evaluability assessment noted that according to the GPECM guidance, wherever appropriate, national administrative data are being used to report progress on GPECM interventions.<sup>211</sup> In Ethiopia, support was provided to the Ministry of Women to include data on child marriage and female genital mutilation in the development of data management systems. In Ghana, UNFPA and UNICEF supported the Ghana Police Service to include child marriage within its database of crime statistics and the inclusion of child marriage in the national child protection/gender-based violence information management system. In Uganda, child marriage was integrated into national data collection tools on gender-based violence, which feed into the national gender-based violence database. This ensures that data on child marriage incidences and trends are collected and

reported on by the designated government officials, though case reporting has not generally been systematized across countries.

Country offices in the case study countries could not always rely on routine data for tracking adolescent girls (e.g. the health management information system does not provide adequate disaggregation to obtain relevant data on access to adolescent-friendly health services in Nepal and in the Niger). In contrast, Uganda health management information system tools were updated to disaggregate data for adolescent girls aged 10–14 and 15–19 years, providing an important indication of married adolescents' access to services.<sup>212</sup> The use of routine data presents challenges with data quality, depending on the reliability of national data collection and analysis systems, but has the advantage of supporting institutionalization and coherence.

Recognition of the importance of birth and marriage registration to contribute to strategies to end child marriage led the GPECM to work on civil registration through the Asia-Pacific plan of action to improve civil registration. The plan was endorsed by the three programme countries in South Asia, as well as in West Africa, in partnership with the Economic Community of West African States to develop a strategic framework for strengthening national child protection systems to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation against children. The GPECM supported civil registration in target areas and through legal frameworks in countries such as Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Uganda.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Report of the Inception Phase of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage', UNICEF and UNFPA, October 2015, p. 32.

<sup>211</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Evaluability Assessment', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 45.

<sup>212</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF Uganda country offices' responses to desk review questions.

<sup>213</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018.



The evaluability assessment indicated that Bangladesh is one of the few countries developing a more sophisticated monitoring and evaluation and data collection system. The GPECM is working with the Ministry of Planning and Bureau of Statistics on this matter.<sup>214</sup> Since monitoring and evaluation systems at the country level have been developed in partnership with national or local governments, it is expected that they will serve to strengthen national data sources and capacities. UNICEF, under the GPECM, also piloted a module within its real-time monitoring system to track changes in the normative dimensions of child marriage practices over time. In India, 12 states were supported to enhance information management systems to monitor the performance of child protection services, including the tracking of violence against children, child marriage and child labour.<sup>215</sup>

The GPECM contributed to enriching demographic health surveys for improved child marriage data, including by reinforcing the module on child marriage (and female genital mutilation) in Ethiopia and Nepal and adjusting sampling for better representation on child marriage in Ghana. Further analysis of the data of the demographic health survey and the census and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey were also undertaken to provide more in-depth information on local trends in prevalence of child marriage and on some drivers of child marriage in Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia.

SDG Indicator 5.3 offers an entry point for improved national monitoring in several countries. In Nepal, the National Planning Commission, following advocacy from United Nations agencies, has prepared a monitoring

and evaluation framework on the SDGs that includes baselines and targets for the indicators related to SDG 5.3. The Niger has also sought to measure the SDG 5.3 indicator, but the quality of the data collected for the 2017 demographic health survey was very poor and the publication was cancelled, pointing to some of the challenges countries face in obtaining reliable national data.

Efforts supported by the GPECM show good potential to contribute to enhanced programming in countries through improved national data systems, but support for data integration into national systems has not been explicitly monitored by the GRF. Additional efforts are needed to focus programme support towards better national tracking, including real-time tracking.

#### 3.4.d Complementary funding secured to facilitate initiatives/interventions.

##### ○ KEY FINDING 14:

In most countries, UNFPA and UNICEF have managed to secure complementary funding for ending child marriage through innovative partnerships and linkages. The tracking of complementary funding is incomplete, but early evidence suggests that the ability of country offices to leverage funds is significant.

From inception, the GPECM was expected to secure complementary resources for child marriage prevention.<sup>216</sup> Budgeting for the first phase took into consideration the resources expected to be leveraged by UNFPA and UNICEF from regular and other funding sources at

<sup>214</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Evaluability Assessment', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 48.

<sup>215</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF India country offices' responses to draft evaluation.

<sup>216</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Report of the Inception Phase of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage', UNICEF and UNFPA, October 2015, p. 32.



country levels in addition to GPECM funding.<sup>217</sup> However, programme funding fell far short of initial projections for the inception and Phase I, with a gap of approximately US\$145 million. Funding peaked in 2017 and subsequently fell significantly in 2018 and 2019 (projected).<sup>218</sup> Country and regional offices have responded with increased efforts to secure complementary funds and leverage resources and capacities to deliver results. These efforts have helped to create an atmosphere of openness around the subject that has encouraged actors to commit financial and technical resources for interventions aimed at ending child marriage, attracting additional funds.<sup>219</sup>

The GPECM has also generated new research and frameworks designed to identify and develop opportunities for leveraging or scaling up initiatives to end child marriage. Bangladesh undertook a scoping study with the objective to identify and analyse budget commitments and releases that have been potentially relevant for ending child marriage.<sup>220</sup> At the regional level, the Regional Accountability Framework of Action to End Child Marriage developed with GPECM support is intended to leverage partnerships and resources in the Middle East and

North Africa/Arab States region and mobilize further support to accelerate the work on child marriage in targeted countries.<sup>221</sup>

UNFPA and UNICEF have successfully collaborated with other development partners to leverage funds outside of the GPECM for child marriage programming.<sup>222</sup> Successes on this front have been born out of necessity to some degree as country offices have increased efforts to leverage resources to compensate for funding shortfalls. Funding constraints and unpredictability may have had the unanticipated impact of forcing creativity, efficiency and collaboration at the national level, which may positively impact effectiveness and sustainability in the long run.

The GPECM began formally tracking other funds used by UNFPA and UNICEF to contribute to ending child marriage in 2018 and only two countries had submitted information at the time of the evaluation.<sup>223</sup> Initial results suggest that country offices may be leveraging funds equal to or greater than those provided by the GPECM. More comprehensive data will be important in the future for tracking the impact of the programme in terms of generating a broader stakeholder base for accelerating and scaling up.

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>218</sup> Merola, Elizabeth S., 'GPECM Resource Mobilization Strategy and Action Plan' (internal document available on GPECM Team Site), 2018, p. 5.

<sup>219</sup> The 2016 Nepal Girl Summit was organized with UNICEF support, was inaugurated by the President of Nepal Bidhya Devi Bhandhari and attended by Prince Harry of the United Kingdom. As a result of the summit, the President allocated US\$500,000 to the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare from the President's Fund to implement interventions on ending child marriage and on adolescent girls' empowerment in line with the National Strategy. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2016 Results Report – Nepal', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2016.

<sup>220</sup> The Bureau of Statistics, in coordination with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and UNICEF, developed the report, 'Scoping Analysis of Budget Allocations for Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh 2017' in order to identify all budget allocations and expenditures directly contributing to efforts to end child marriage in Bangladesh.

<sup>221</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – MENARO and ASRO', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>222</sup> The evaluability assessment illustrates the impact of low funding, stating that, "All programme countries planned against more funding than they have received. This has meant revision of planned interventions in all countries. A programme principle of the GPECM is that resources allocated should be used to leverage more resources. Even so, however, the gap between funding sought and received for Phase I has resulted in some planned activities not being conducted." United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Evaluability Assessment', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 53.

<sup>223</sup> UNICEF and UNFPA in Burkina Faso leveraged an additional US\$870,083 for child marriage programming in 2018, while Bangladesh accessed US\$1,532,514 from other funds to contribute to the child marriage agenda, based on 'Compiled 2018 GP Results for Evaluation' (internal document), 11 November 2018.



Available evidence across programme documentation shows how both agencies are able to leverage funding sources outside of the GPECM to end child marriage, drawing on resources within and outside of the United Nations system. For example:

- Reduced funding allocations in 2016 spurred UNICEF Sierra Leone to integrate child marriage-related activities within its broader child protection programmes through partnership cooperation agreements with a number of NGOs, allowing for the expansion of child marriage programme coverage and an increase in the number of adolescent girls reached through life-skills education.<sup>224</sup> Further complementary funds in the education sector were secured through the Girls Access to Education initiative funded by DFID, which targets junior secondary schools and community learning centres, catering to over 34,000 vulnerable girls.<sup>225</sup>
- Some interventions initially planned for the GPECM in Ghana were able to secure complementary funding, allowing the limited resources of the GPECM to be dedicated to other needed areas. UNICEF Ghana's education programme benefited from complementary thematic, non-grant and Dutch bilateral funding to achieve results under Output 3.2 of the GPECM.<sup>226</sup>

- In the Niger, all of the relevant intra-agency sectors, including health, C4D, education and child protection, participate in GPECM planning processes even if the programme does not directly fund them. In this way, the programme expands its focus and reach beyond its actual funding capabilities and complementary collaboration is enhanced across sectors.<sup>227</sup>
- Evidence from Ethiopia shows that education is a key driver in delaying marriage, but available programme resources do not enable UNICEF to invest to the level required to help strengthen this intervention area. Leveraging a greater understanding of the links between girls' education and delaying marriage, UNICEF seeks to address this investment gap through additional resource mobilization.<sup>228</sup>

Country offices use GPECM resources for standalone interventions, but they also commonly use GPECM funds to integrate child marriage components into existing, more comprehensive programmes, many of which are considerably larger than GPECM interventions in-country and which were already well established when the GPECM was launched.<sup>229</sup> This approach, known as pool funding, has been both strategic and effective in extending the reach of the GPECM in the context of limited funding.<sup>230</sup>

<sup>224</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2016 Results Report – Sierra Leone', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2016, p. 4.

<sup>225</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Sierra Leone', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>226</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Ghana', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 28.

<sup>227</sup> Key informant interviews with United Nations stakeholders during the Niger case study.

<sup>228</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Ethiopia', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, pp. 4-5.

<sup>229</sup> For example, Action for Girls and Young Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights is a government-led, One UN programme, with a budget of US\$14 million funded by the Swedish Government, that is jointly implemented by UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women and UNESCO in Mozambique.

<sup>230</sup> This is in line with programme guidance as per United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Report of the Inception Phase of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage', UNICEF and UNFPA, October 2015, p. 8.

**BOX 4****Integrating child marriage into existing programmes maximizes the impact of small funds**

The programme in Mozambique made strategic use of limited financial resources to deliver results by integrating ending child marriage components into existing UNFPA and UNICEF programmes that had a track record and alternative funding sources.

UNFPA's Rapariga Biz girls' empowerment programme was strengthened in 2016 to include modules that focused heavily on ending child marriage and its consequences. Through this approach, UNFPA was able to utilize small funds from the GPECM to reach adolescent girls with critical information on their rights to refuse early marriage and pregnancy and to consider alternative options. The modules also include community dialogues that reach parents, leaders and other gatekeepers with the same messages. "Rapariga Biz started one year before the GPECM and child marriage was not emphasized. When the GPECM arrived, we could either create a small separate programme or put the ending child marriage component strongly into the Rapariga Biz model and reach more girls. Despite the small [amount of] money, we can do a lot with this approach, so we can move the national agenda further."<sup>225</sup>

In a similar fashion, UNICEF Mozambique's child helpline training was expanded with GPECM funding to include a focus on child marriage. Data from 2018 revealed that child marriage was the single most common subject of calls to the helpline (comprising 16 per cent of all calls), followed by adolescent pregnancy (comprising 11 per cent of calls).<sup>226</sup>

The widespread use of pool funding and the ability of agencies to leverage alternative funding sources for child marriage activities, has, paradoxically, played a role in reducing the visibility of the GPECM as a standalone programme at the country level. In all three case study countries, stakeholders, particularly at the sub-national levels, did not identify the programme as distinct from broader UNICEF/UNFPA work on child marriage. Programme visibility at the national level appeared stronger, though it was still often conflated with wider United Nations work on ending child marriage. The evaluation team did not find the lack of programme visibility at the sub-national levels to be particularly problematic, given that visibility has been reduced on the basis of an effective

multi-sectoral approach and the elevated visibility of the ending child marriage agenda as a whole. However, the low visibility of the programme at the national level may not support efforts to mobilize resources from within countries. Country offices may draw upon the programme's communication and visibility strategy together with the resource mobilization plan to guide future efforts.<sup>233</sup>

### 3.4.e Catalytic effect of the GPECM

Under its principle of global learning, a central aim of the GPECM is to generate new evidence to bring about results at scale by seeking to more precisely define the appropriate mix of interventions that are effective in reducing

<sup>231</sup> Key informant interview with United Nations staff in Mozambique.

<sup>232</sup> Reporting on the child helpline (Linha Fala Crianca) in United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Annual Report 2017 – Mozambique', UNICEF, 2018.

<sup>233</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'GPECM Communication and Visibility Strategy', UNFPA and UNICEF, 19 March 2017; Merola, Elizabeth S., 'GPECM Resource Mobilization Strategy and Action Plan' (internal document available on the GPECM Team Site), 2018, p. 5.



rates of child marriage in various contexts.<sup>234</sup> The GPECM is also expected to catalyse investments from other stakeholders and leverage existing investments in adolescent girls and child marriage prevention, thereby playing an essential role in triggering additional focus on ending child marriage at all levels.<sup>235</sup>

### ○ KEY FINDING 15:

The GPECM has had a catalytic effect at the country, regional and global levels, garnering broader stakeholder engagement and developing interventions that are replicable. The impact of the programme has begun to spread beyond the programme countries. GPECM initiatives hold promise for providing scalable models, but country offices are generally still working on fine-tuning methodologies and translating experiences into proven, costed packages that can be replicated and may be taken to scale.

### The country level

The extent to which GPECM-supported initiatives are scalable and/or replicable varies a great deal between countries. The GPECM focus on supporting components that are scalable requires strict attention to working within systems to demonstrate and support what can work at scale. There are indications that several initiatives have the potential to be replicable (and indeed, some are being replicated), but hard evidence of the efficiency and effectiveness of the interventions together with sufficient

resource mobilization from within the country (including Government-dedicated resources) are essential prerequisites to scaling up.

As discussed, many countries integrated a stronger child marriage focus into existing life-skills packages. While this approach has been a strategic, case study reviews pointed to some challenges with going to scale. In Nepal, Rupantaran is well appreciated and is already being replicated by NGOs, but its effectiveness and potential for change over the long term remain to be measured. Furthermore, the approach is resource- and time-intensive and may not be replicable as such at a very large scale, particularly by the Government with its own resources.<sup>236</sup> In the Niger, the combination of the UNFPA Illimin initiative life-skills package and the UNICEF community dialogues show great promise, but the two approaches have not been sufficiently integrated, costed and assessed as a package so as to be readily replicable. The same issues were observed in Mozambique, though work was underway at the time of the evaluation to generate more evidence to inform plans to scale up.<sup>237</sup>

Some community-based approaches have integrated strategies for formal and informal information transference with exchanges between individuals and groups in the same community as well as dissemination of messages to neighbouring communities. In the Niger, there was evidence of information transference within and between villages as inter-village talks take place once participants have completed all modules, but the extent/impact of dissemination has not yet

<sup>234</sup> United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, 'Report of the Inception Phase of the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage', UNICEF and UNFPA, October 2015, p. 32.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> An assessment is planned in 2019 and there is a plan to review the package to make its implementation more practical. Source: Key informant interviews with stakeholders in the Nepal case study.

<sup>237</sup> Key informant interviews and focus group discussions during case studies in Mozambique and the Niger.



been measured. In Mozambique, the strategy focused on intra-village communication rather than communication between communities. Further reflections regarding changing social/gender norms and the creation of critical mass would help support scaling up.

In Yemen, mentors and peer educators were trained on a rights-based curriculum focusing on life skills, communication and facilitation skills, reproductive health and adolescents' rights. Mentors provided life-skills training to adolescent girls who will in turn develop and conduct action plans to engage with other adolescents in their communities and with influential community members.<sup>238</sup> Elements from the GPECM via Rapariga Biz in Mozambique and Illimin in the Niger are to be replicated in the Spotlight initiative, which was in the planning stages at the time of the evaluation.

Mass media campaigns using traditional media such radio, television, newspapers or more modern platforms (e.g. U-Report, SMS and social media) have the potential to reach much larger populations and remain key behaviour change communication strategies in countries.<sup>239</sup> Nevertheless, impact in terms of behaviour and social norms change is very different compared with community-focused dialogue methodologies aiming to influence social norms. Programme monitoring has improved with better guidance to differentiate between different forms of communication and outreach approaches that target the community level.

## BOX 5

### Scaling up Initiatives in India

In India, scale-up has been achieved by integrating key components of the adolescent empowerment and ending child marriage approaches into successful large-scale government schemes, programmes and policies, such as the Right to Education Act, the Scheme for Adolescent Girls, the National Adolescent Health Strategy, Beti Bachao Beti Padoo, the National Rural Livelihoods Mission, the Panchayati Raj institutions and other State schemes.

UNFPA and UNICEF identified opportunities within existing government programmes to integrate strategies for empowering adolescents and youth by introducing innovations and new models. These approaches were assessed for feasibility and scalability and both agencies extended technical assistance to the Government in collaboration with CSOs to scale tested approaches. UNICEF carried out a systematic review of large-scale government programmes to identify opportunities for integrating key components of the adolescent empowerment programme into existing government programmes.<sup>234</sup>

<sup>238</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2016 Results Report –Yemen', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2016, p. 10.

<sup>239</sup> Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Nepal, the Niger and Uganda.

<sup>240</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF India country offices' responses to desk review questions, 26 November 2018.



Adolescent-friendly health services have been introduced in countries and support has been provided to adapt guidelines to the country context and train trainers to expand their provision. Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Mozambique and the Niger focused on training trainers to build the capacities of service providers and lay the groundwork so that an increasing number of health care delivery points can gradually provide adolescent-friendly health services with trained health care providers. Nonetheless, some governments are not in a position to scale up and training supported by the GPECM is not always replicated as planned due to insufficient resources.<sup>241</sup>

Opportunities for replication have been hindered by limited documentation on what works. Such documentation should have been a primary focus to inform the next phase of the programme to provide the evidence to demonstrate the efficacy of approaches that may be scaled up within systems. Interviews highlighted that there is a need to clarify expectations on the scalability of GPECM interventions. In some contexts, this may mean that small, high-quality interventions should be integrated into district-level plans, rather than at the country level. Some interventions may need to be more specifically targeted to cultural pockets or hot-spots and may not be scalable broadly.<sup>242</sup>

<sup>241</sup> For example, prospects for scalability of the adolescent girls' health package in the Niger are quite uncertain as the Department of Mother and Child Health is not in a position to roll out adolescent-friendly health services to all health facilities. Source: Key informant interview, Ministry of Health Representatives, the Niger.

<sup>242</sup> For instance, in South Asia there is a decrease in the prevalence of child marriage according to the driver study, which is linked to the increase in gross domestic product and to the change in social norms. The other drivers are social sense of security, poverty, perception of economic prospects, instability and gender bias selection (though geographically limited).



It should also be noted that in most countries, issues remain regarding the low capacity of implementing partners that present significant obstacles to going to scale. Even where replicable approaches stemming from GPECM interventions have been identified, many countries have not been prepared to allocate resources for scaling up. In some countries, there has been a need to scale back approaches that moved too swiftly. In Ethiopia, targeted economic support was not found to be feasible once scaled up.<sup>243</sup> In Ghana, a more focused approach and more comprehensive integration was needed to reach the most vulnerable girls at risk of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage.<sup>244</sup>

### Regional and global level

The impact of the GPECM has begun to spread beyond the 12 programme countries and mechanisms are developing for GPECM countries to share their experiences with other countries in their regions.<sup>245</sup> Country commitments to end child marriage appear to be positively influenced by growing regional and global commitments. Governments have demonstrated sound ownership of the commitments made as Member States and have shown high-level engagement in adopting strategies and models promoted within regions, pointing to the continued importance of regional-level coordination to strengthen and expand programme reach.

- In South Asia, non-programme countries have been invited to annual GPECM meetings and took part in webinars. The GPECM focal points (first UNICEF, then UNFPA) chair the South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence in Children and Women under SAARC/SAIEVAC. The group strengthens networking, promotes a coordinated approach in all the SAARC countries and provides technical support to SAIEVAC.
- In West and Central Africa, all countries in the region capitalize on the efforts of the four GPECM-supported countries in terms of tools and lessons learned, particularly in Chad, where child marriage prevalence is high. Regional offices have assisted in generating an approach specific to the region emphasizing girls' education and adolescent pregnancy based on regional trends analysis while developing a community of practice and documenting case studies on interventions in the Sahel.<sup>246</sup>
- In the Middle East and North Africa, the regional office GPECM focal points work to ensure synergies between GPECM and other countries.<sup>247</sup> Regional offices have drawn on the framework of the GPECM and regional research under the programme to develop the Regional Accountability Framework to expand stakeholder engagement and guide interventions throughout the region.<sup>248</sup>

<sup>243</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, '2017 Annual Report Country Profiles: UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage,' UNFPA and UNICEF, August 2018, p. 11.

<sup>244</sup> 2018 Ghana GPECM AWP

<sup>245</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Evaluability Assessment,' UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 56.

<sup>246</sup> Key informant interviews with UNFPA WCARO and UNICEF WCARO staff.

<sup>247</sup> Regional synergies within the GPECM are challenging in the Middle East and North Africa/Arab States region since only a single country within the region is included in the GPECM. Regional offices have identified the added value that GPECM expansion could bring to countries in the region such as Somalia and the Sudan for enhanced programming and policy interventions around child marriage.

<sup>248</sup> Key informant interviews with UNFPA ASRO and UNICEF MENARO staff.



- In Eastern and Southern Africa, ESARO focal points have invested in mapping programmes and partners within the four programme countries and in eight other high-prevalence countries in the region; providing capacity building; and sharing and generating evidence about the drivers and consequences of child marriage to inform adolescent girls and child marriage programming in countries across the region.<sup>249</sup>

### 3.4.f Increased engagement from other stakeholders

#### ○ KEY FINDING 16:

The GPECM has been able to rally a broad range of to strengthen the ending child marriage agenda through strong advocacy and coordination at the national level. Collaborative stakeholder engagement at the sub-national level has been more challenging.

Complementary collaboration has been a distinguishing feature of the GPECM, especially at the country level. There is strong evidence that UNFPA and UNICEF have worked effectively and strategically, through advocacy and support for inter-sectoral platforms and coordinating bodies, to expand the stakeholder base of those working to end child marriage, encompassing governments, donor agencies, NGOs and other civil society stakeholders and thereby expanding the reach of the programme.

- In Burkina Faso, UNFPA and UNICEF have supported the national multi-sector coordination platform for the elimination of child marriage since 2016.<sup>250</sup> Other partnerships established in the second year of the programme include: the First Lady and the Association of Wives of Ministers; the National Coalition for the Elimination of Child Marriage; Association Tin Tua; and Direction Générale de la Promotion de la Famille et du Genre.<sup>251</sup>
- UNFPA and UNICEF in Nepal work closely with development partners and donors to further the child marriage agenda. DFID is a strong supporter of child marriage issues in the country and other donors, including Australia, Finland, Norway, Switzerland, the United States of America and the European Union are also strong allies in advocating for the rights of women and girls and contributing to the overall child marriage dialogue in the country.<sup>252</sup>
- UNICEF Niger identifies three alliances that have been developed over the first years of the GPECM to expand the programme reach. Each drew on pre-existing relationships to develop the child marriage focus within the context of broader networks: 1) working with traditional chiefs to address Koranic interpretations on child marriage with religious leaders; 2) alliances with media networks across the country to develop journalists as advocates and reach remote areas; and 3) formalized alliances with CSOs via the platform supported by the GPECM.

<sup>249</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – ESARO', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>250</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2016 Results Report – Burkina Faso', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2016, p. 4.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>252</sup> Key informant interviews with United Nations staff in Nepal; United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Nepal', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.



While the agencies have played a key role in bringing together stakeholders at the national level, it remains to be seen the extent to which child marriage action plans will be effectively funded and operationalized at the lower levels in most of the programme countries.<sup>253</sup> Countries such as India and Mozambique have developed models that create structures to link government actors at the provincial and district levels to work towards eradicating child marriage. These models may offer valuable lessons to other countries.

The India programme identifies strong coordination mechanisms for line agencies at the State and district levels as vital to addressing child marriage, noting that there remains a need to look more deeply within convergence areas to focus on joint accountability and ownership. In India, the dominant model for coordination and convergence has focused on distribution, budget allocations, key results areas and meetings and is now moving beyond formal work processes and rigid accountability matrices towards creative collaboration, joint design and implementation.<sup>254</sup>

The culture of working together at the lower levels between sectors on child marriage is in its early stages in most of the programme countries, as discussed in section 3.5.a 'Joint governance and management structure.' Growing global decentralization, combined with expanding inter-sectoral strategies within other sectors (such as multi-sectoral nutrition plans or gender action plans), may offer opportunities to build on a growing shift in thinking towards greater convergence at the local levels of governance.

Opportunities for complementary collaboration at the regional level have been facilitated to an extent by regional offices. Opportunities for regional collaboration on the programme between UNICEF MENARO and UNFPA ASRO is particularly challenging since Yemen is the only country in the region included in the GPECM. Nevertheless, regional actors have successfully created new space for regional dialogue and collaboration with the development of the Regional Accountability Framework.

### 3.5 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

The governance and management structure of a programme plays a critical role in facilitating the achievement of results. The GPECM management structure is complicated by the inclusion of two United Nations agencies and the need for coordination at the global, regional and national levels. Management effectiveness is defined as the extent to which management facilitated the achievement of the programme's objectives. Management efficiency is defined as an assessment of how economically resources have been converted into results.<sup>255</sup>

For the purposes of this evaluation, the following criteria were assessed and findings for each are elaborated below:

- Extent to which the joint governance and management structure has been effective at all levels to facilitate efficient delivery of results;

<sup>253</sup> Governments in only 5 of 12 programme countries have allocated national resources to national plans to end child marriage.

<sup>254</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF India country offices' responses to desk review questions, 26 November 2018.

<sup>255</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 'Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management', OECD, 2010.



- Extent to which the programme's interventions have facilitated linkages and synergies to accelerate efforts to end child marriage;
- Efficiency and effectiveness of planning, monitoring and reporting systems; and
- Efficiency and effectiveness of human, financial and technical resources.

### 3.5.a Joint governance and management structure

#### ○ KEY FINDING 17:

The GPECM has played a facilitative role in bringing together the combined forces of UNFPA and UNICEF to end child marriage. The first phase of the programme has been a growth period for designing effective management structures; variations persist in levels of cohesiveness between countries as well as at different levels of operations.

The complementary mandates and expertise of UNFPA and UNICEF make a critical contribution to developing the holistic approaches that are required to accelerate efforts to end child marriage. There is strong evidence that the combined roles of UNFPA and UNICEF are seen by stakeholders at all levels as highly valued and equally important to contributing collectively to the agenda to end child marriage. UNICEF is seen as having a comparative advantage and historical expertise in relation to girls' education, child protection, community mobilization and C4D, whereas UNFPA focuses on gender, youth, girls' empowerment and life skills, as well as service delivery of adolescent sexual and reproductive health.

The benefits of working collaboratively towards ending child marriage are well understood by UNFPA and UNICEF staff at the global, regional and national levels. Key benefits highlighted included:

- Complementarity, i.e. complementing each other's strengths and comparative advantages to make optimal use of different perspectives and experiences;
- Improved holistic programming with more a comprehensive approach covering a wider array of interventions;
- Greater resource efficiency by avoiding duplication of efforts (value for money);
- Elevated leadership/coordination role for the United Nations on child marriage;
- Strengthened advocacy and visibility/prioritization of the child marriage issue when the United Nations works together;
- Greater influence on the national agenda;
- More effective and influential support to partners;
- Greater geographic coverage; and
- Expanded funding opportunities outside of the programme.

Benefits notwithstanding, the joint management structure has experienced some growing pains during the first phase of the programme. Clarity of roles and responsibilities has improved over time at all levels, but further focus is required to support greater collaboration, especially at the lowest levels of operation (community).

#### The global level

The GPECM is managed through an innovative co-led governance structure at UNICEF Headquarters that sits within the sections on child protection and gender, rights and development. The GPSU sits within UNICEF, but reports to both agencies and handles the coordination with regional and country offices as well as the finances for the programme. The GPECM emphasis on a multi-sectoral approach means that, within UNICEF, effective implementation of the programme requires cooperation between the child protection and gender, rights



and development teams and among other sections and teams, including health, education, C4D and social protection. Within UNFPA Headquarters, the GPECM is situated in the technical division, sexual and reproductive health branch, and relevant UNFPA staff members are part of the GPSU.

The Joint Steering Committee includes representatives from UNFPA, UNICEF and the donor community.<sup>256</sup> The Joint Steering Committee meets at least twice per year and provides strategic direction and oversight. The Partners Advisory Group was designed as a format to convene key actors involved in ending child marriage at the global level.<sup>257</sup> Unfortunately, only two meetings were held and further collaboration did not take place despite a strong eagerness among members to contribute to a global-level dialogue.<sup>258</sup>

The GPSU has grown into its role with changes in leadership and additional staff added over time. The general consensus across stakeholders at all levels is that the GPSU is performing well in its role today, but general dissatisfaction with global-level leadership in the first year of the programme was voiced at all levels. The GPSU online client satisfaction survey conducted in 2017 revealed generally high levels of country office and regional office satisfaction across indicators, with the highest

levels of dissatisfaction noted in regard to country office visits and support to knowledge management, evidence generation, monitoring and implementation.<sup>259</sup>

## The regional level

The GPECM engages UNFPA and UNICEF focal points from four regional offices: ASRO/MENARO/, ESARO, WCARO and APRO/ROSA. Regional offices are involved in advocacy and engaging with/supporting regional partners in ending child marriage initiatives in addition to providing technical support to the programme countries.<sup>260</sup> Regional offices also provide platforms for generating regional evidence<sup>261</sup> and research and facilitating sharing of learning on child marriage between countries across their regions.

Coordination between UNFPA and UNICEF at the regional level has played an important intermediary role within the GPECM, though the evaluation identified variations in perceptions among different stakeholders in terms of the importance of the role of the regional level. Country offices highlighted the value of the technical support provided by regional offices, especially in terms of applying guidelines and reporting systems required by the programme. For some, regional offices played an important role in mitigating initial levels of confusion

<sup>256</sup> Donor representatives include DFID, the European Union, Canada and the Netherlands.

<sup>257</sup> Representatives from the AU, Girls Not Brides, the Msichana Initiative, the Population Council, ICRW, UN Women, the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO) and World Vision.

<sup>258</sup> Key informant interviews with Partner Advisory Group members.

<sup>259</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018, p. 75.

<sup>260</sup> WCARO is the lead in supporting the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage, as well as the regional Child Marriage Working Group.

<sup>261</sup> MENARO is conducting a joint (UNFPA/UNICEF) regional, multi-country study (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Sudan and Yemen) to take stock of programming in the region aimed at addressing child marriage. Child marriage is also an issue in other countries in the Middle East and North Africa, for example in the Islamic Republic of Iran and in northern Iraq. UNFPA ESARO commissioned a detailed review of laws and policies related to safeguarding young people in 23 Eastern and Southern Africa countries in 2014–2016. ROSA/APRO undertook multi-country analysis on key drivers of the changing prevalence of child marriage, a mapping of child marriage initiatives in the region and summary of a baseline study to estimate the number of child marriages in South Asia.



about the direction and operationalization of the programme. Some national-level stakeholders reported close relationships and support from regional offices, highlighting the value of UNFPA and UNICEF regional advisors working together to ensure the programme moves in the same direction at the country level. Others, however, felt that interactions with regional offices were minimal and the role of regional offices within the GPECM was less visible.

The regional office role within the programme would be strengthened with clearer definition of roles and responsibilities in relation to

country offices and Headquarters. Protocols and lines of communication should be clearer regarding support to countries (including technical assistance, joint planning, communication, quality assurance, knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation).<sup>262</sup> Better harmonized and more structured human resource guidelines and procedures,<sup>263</sup> as well as the monitoring of regional results in the next phase of the programme, would also support operational efficiency.

#### BOX 6

#### Regional and national collaboration to contextualize the Yemen programme

Yemen is the only country in the Middle East and North Africa/Arab States region included in the GPECM and the only country with an ongoing conflict and large-scale humanitarian crisis. The country team faced challenges in the first years of implementation to fit the programme into the local context. A series of meetings were initiated at the regional and national levels to enhance UNFPA and UNICEF work collaboration.<sup>258</sup> The UNFPA and UNICEF Yemen country offices and UNFPA ASRO and UNICEF MENARO held a technical meeting in Cairo in 2017 to discuss programme directions for 2018–2019. The meeting resulted in a decision to align the GPECM to ongoing humanitarian interventions and a strategic note was developed to guide work planning.<sup>259</sup>

The new annual work plan (AWP) includes relevant elements of the Regional Accountability Framework on Child Marriage developed by MENARO and ASRO in consultation with country offices and other stakeholders in the region. The main objective of the 2018–2019 AWP is to develop and put in place a pilot model in targeted locations that can be tested, refined and scaled up.<sup>260</sup>

The collaborative development of Yemen's 2018–2019 AWP demonstrates that the programme can be well adapted to different contexts, drawing on technical support from the regional and national levels. Increased coordination at the field level is required and both agencies have committed to enhanced coordination in 2019. UNFPA and UNICEF have planned a lessons learned retreat in early 2019 to strategize and consider the results from 2018.<sup>261</sup>

<sup>262</sup> Key informant interviews with regional and country offices.

<sup>263</sup> Regional offices spent between 0 and 43 per cent of their budgets on human resources based on 2018 estimates as detailed in Table 6, section 3.5.d.

<sup>264</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF Yemen country offices' responses to desk review questions, 26 November 2018.

<sup>265</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Yemen', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 9.

<sup>266</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF Yemen GPECM 2018–2019 AWP.

<sup>267</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF Yemen country offices' responses to desk review questions, 26 November 2018.

## The national level

Country-level coordination of the GPECM relies on focal points within UNFPA and UNICEF drawn from the pool of child protection, gender or adolescent/youth specialists depending on existing expertise and/or programming related to ending child marriage in each country. The holistic approach is highly valued by governments and civil society in programme countries and seen as of critical importance to facilitating inter-sectoral collaboration at the national level.

“They are both involved (UNFPA and UNICEF); we are all involved; we all work in a coordinated manner...that helps us meet the target and the goals of the vision.”<sup>268</sup>

“In the past the work was dispersed, with UNICEF separately and UNFPA separately. The cooperation between UNICEF, UNFPA and the Government gave us the advantage of working toward the same vision – converging resources and avoiding duplication. The main benefit is the coordination because we are coordinating everything now for child marriage and this was a contribution of the GPECM.”<sup>269</sup>

UNFPA and UNICEF have performed strongly at the highest levels of national programming, making notable joint contributions to the development and coordination of national policies and action plans (Outcome 4). For example, in Bangladesh, in addition to providing technical and advocacy support to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in the drafting of the NAP to end child marriage, both agencies played an important coordinated role through the national advocacy group, One UN Voice, to draft the Child Marriage Restraint Act and the national plan of action on ending child marriage along with the design of the 2017 national adolescent health strategy. Evaluation field research in



Nepal and the Niger further illustrated how the joint approach under the GPECM played a key role in facilitating the development of national strategies to end child marriage. The work of both agencies is seen by different stakeholders as having been instrumental to the development of respective national strategies, with both agencies closely collaborating with key stakeholders (including CSOs) and providing complementary inputs.

The evaluation found varying degrees of cohesiveness between the two agencies across countries. Coordination between agencies is a not a natural process; it requires careful thought and deliberate facilitation to make it effective at all levels. ‘Jointness’ was supported by

<sup>268</sup> Key informant interview with a government stakeholder in Mozambique.

<sup>269</sup> Key informant interview with government stakeholder in the Niger.



inter-agency, inter-sectoral technical teams that worked collaboratively to plan the programme and deliver interventions. While good evidence was found of collaborative work at the policy level (as noted above), weaknesses were identified in all case study countries at the lower levels of operations, whereby community-level interventions continued to display strong degrees of separateness. “There is a big difference between planning together and delivering together.”<sup>270</sup> This finding was consistent with the observations of diverse stakeholders at the regional and global levels interviewed for this evaluation.

Cohesiveness seems to be influenced by a range of factors, including personalities, histories, programme size and country priorities.

Those teams that work particularly well together demonstrated an ability to function both formally and informally (*see Box 7*). As one staff member offered, “We have a close relationship (between agencies). It has been more than formal mechanisms; there has been informal ongoing collaboration.”<sup>271</sup> Prior experience with joint programming may also positively impact inter-agency collaboration. Burkina Faso has been involved in the UNFPA-UNICEF global programme for the acceleration of the elimination of female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage since 2009. Collaboration between the two agencies under the GPECM was seen as largely an extension of an ongoing collaboration. The quality of the collaboration between the two agencies has been identified as a model that may hold lessons for others.<sup>272</sup>

#### BOX 7

#### Synergies and interdependence in Mozambique

The GPECM inter-sectoral task force in Mozambique includes key stakeholders from across sectors within UNFPA and UNICEF. It has been an effective instrument for bringing together the agencies to consolidate their knowledge and build complementarity within their approaches. Team members in Maputo displayed a high degree of camaraderie and respect for each other’s areas of expertise.

The task force forum created a space for members to reflect jointly and explore linkages between programme components. Members recognize the strength of others and are eager to build on this for stronger programming. For example, discussions around targeting and addressing men and boys were facilitated by the inclusion of a gender specialist within the team, while education discussions were strengthened by the inclusion of the education officer. This has had a positive influence on the dynamic nature of programme components that have been adapted along the way to improve linkages and strengthen impact.

Team members see this synergistic approach to working on child marriage as having been directly facilitated by the GPECM. The two agencies see themselves as interdependent in regard to the child marriage agenda. “The GPECM pushes us to work more jointly because we create activities where we have interdependence. Sometimes one of us can speak about and explain the activities of the other in the field. It’s a reflex now; people don’t forget. There is no indicator in the results framework to measure how we are working better together, but it is a good result of the GPECM.”<sup>273</sup>

<sup>270</sup> Key informant interview with United Nations stakeholder in the Niger.

<sup>271</sup> Key informant interview with United Nations staff in Nepal

<sup>272</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report’, UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018.

<sup>273</sup> Key informant interview with United Nations staff in Mozambique.



### 3.5.b Linkages and synergies to accelerate efforts to end child marriage

The evaluation assessed the following factors:

- Inter-sectoral collaboration to end child marriage at the country level;
- Complementary collaboration with other development actors at global, regional and country levels;
- Work plans and country annual results reports reflect UNFPA and UNICEF efforts in targeted geographic and technical areas appropriate to their respective mandates, capacities and/or experience.

#### ○ KEY FINDING 18:

The GPECM has made a significant contribution to enhanced multi-sectoral and complementary collaboration on child marriage at the country and regional levels, building on existing programming in many cases. Geographic convergence has been complicated and uneven and parallel programming persists at the lower levels.

#### Multi-sectoral collaboration

Child marriage is a complex issue that requires multifaceted interventions. Ensuring adolescent girls' well-being and improving their lives requires broad cross-sector commitment and integrated approaches. UNFPA and UNICEF mandates collectively cover a broad spectrum of issues that influence child marriage, including child protection, adolescent health, education, gender, social protection, social policy and communication for behaviour change.

UNFPA and UNICEF played a key role in the early years of the GPECM at the country and regional levels to establish and support multi-sectoral partnerships and coordination platforms to end child marriage. The extent to which coordination platforms are functional and active beyond the formulation and the launch of the national strategy varies and highlights the importance of continued United Nations support to sustain momentum. In the Niger, the GPECM worked in partnership with 15 national organizations to create a platform, Towards the End of Child Marriage in the Niger, which meets monthly to share information, harmonize messages and advocate collectively for better legislation that protects the rights of adolescents. In Nepal, it appeared that the platform was not functioning on a regular basis following the development of the NAP and NGOs considered that failing to convene all of the organizations involved in ending child marriage was a missed opportunity.<sup>274</sup>



<sup>274</sup> Key informant interviews in Nepal and the Niger.



The inputs of the GPECM have been highly effective in many programme countries to support governments to develop and finalize national action plans to end child marriage. “Being part of a global programme gives legitimacy to the United Nations on the issue of child marriage and facilitates relations with ministries. Working with other countries on a global programme carries weight with the ministries.”<sup>275</sup> A growing number of NAPs across programme countries have played a critical role in formalizing and facilitating government ownership and multi-sectoral collaboration on child marriage.<sup>276</sup>

Both UNFPA and UNICEF have played an important role in convening coordination platforms with government and civil society in programme countries.

- Zambia adopted its five-year NAP to end child marriage in March 2016. The multi-sectoral strategy directly involves 15 ministries, with the Ministry of Gender as the Secretariat of the Consortium of Ministries.<sup>277</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF work under the GPECM supports the Government to implement the plan.

- Cross-sectoral collaboration in Ghana is evidenced in the overall approach aimed at strengthening government systems and collaborative mechanisms between the Government, opinion leaders and CSO partners that focus on adolescent girls.<sup>278</sup> The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection has taken the lead in cross-sectoral coordination and monitoring of the National Strategic Framework launched in May 2017 with GPECM support. The framework has contributed to greater material commitment to the agenda to end child marriage by ministries; and stakeholders are increasingly using the framework to guide programming across sectors to address child marriage and teenage pregnancy.<sup>279</sup>
- There is a strong sense of passion and optimism within the Niger’s Ministry of Women’s Promotion and Child Protection to address the issue of child marriage following the drafting of the country’s first strategic plan to end child marriage (endorsed in August 2018). Joint collaboration between UNFPA and UNICEF provided essential advocacy and technical support to the development of the multi-sectoral plan and its associated coordination mechanisms.<sup>280</sup>

<sup>275</sup> Key informant interview with a United Nations stakeholder in the Niger.

<sup>276</sup> Only 2 of the 12 GPECM countries had national strategies at the start of the programme. By the middle of 2018, nine countries had formal action plans and two were in the process of finalizing plans. The AU has played a key role in campaigning to end child marriage and opening up space for countries to discuss and address the issue at the highest levels. Yemen is exceptional due to the current crisis and work on its NAP is not applicable at this point in time. Refer to section 3.3.e Outcome 4 under ‘Programme effectiveness’ for further information.

<sup>277</sup> Government of the Republic of Zambia Ministry of Gender and Child Development, ‘National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage in Zambia, 2016–2021’, Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2016. Ministries include: Ministry of General Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare, Ministry of Gender, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Child Development, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Local Government and Housing, Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of National Development Planning (Central Statistics Office).

<sup>278</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Ghana’, UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, pp. 9–10.

<sup>279</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Ghana’, UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>280</sup> Key informant interviews and focus group discussions with the Government and United Nations stakeholders in the Niger.



Multi-sectoral collaboration is a cornerstone of the GPECM, and country offices are moving towards greater convergence over time as linkages are expanded and deepened in response to emerging opportunities.<sup>281</sup> AWP are drafted jointly, with activities tied to outputs and outcomes.<sup>282</sup> Country annual reports have well reflected UNFPA and UNICEF efforts in targeted technical areas based on comparative advantage, capacities and experience. Country offices work in creative context-specific ways to design their approach, drawing on existing inter-sectoral work as well as expanding programme linkages across sectors and embedding them in wider structures. For example:

- UNFPA and UNICEF Ethiopia engage adolescent girls in target districts through different interventions. The development of an adolescent girls' strategy brings together multiple sections within UNICEF (child protection; education; nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); health and C4D) to strengthen responses to the needs of adolescent girls, including reducing their vulnerability to child marriage.<sup>283</sup> A new adolescent girls and gender working group was organized in 2018 to address all programmes holistically targeting adolescent girls, including ending child marriage and female genital mutilation.<sup>284</sup>
- Ghana's Safety Net Programme has linkages with the Ghana education, birth registration and social welfare systems. Health service workers link adolescent girls with the above social services to improve birth registration and support girls to continue their education during and after pregnancy in pilot districts.<sup>285</sup>
- In Sierra Leone, UNFPA and UNICEF supported the Government to develop the national standardized life-skills manual under the GPECM and work jointly on empowering adolescents through life-skills sessions through collaboration with six ministries.<sup>286</sup>
- Inter-sectoral collaboration in Nepal has been formalized in the National Strategy and Action Plan and has helped to link health, education and protection services in target areas.<sup>287</sup> Through the programme's advocacy role, sectoral strategies – for example the Multisector Nutrition Plan II for 2018-2022 – have been aligned to the Ending Child Marriage Strategy with earmarked resources to ensure an integrated and multisectoral response to addressing harmful traditional practices including child marriage.<sup>288</sup>

<sup>281</sup> For example, strengthened legal frameworks, changes to local governance structures as well as the introduction of new programmes such as Spotlight have offered new opportunities for child marriage programming that the programme countries have leveraged.

<sup>282</sup> Country offices were required to submit AWP jointly from 2017 onwards. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'GPECM Programme and M&E Guidance', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 17.

<sup>283</sup> 2017 Ethiopia GPECM AWP narrative

<sup>284</sup> Ethiopia response to desk review question, 16 November 2018.

<sup>285</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Ghana', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 26.

<sup>286</sup> Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization, in addition to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, and the National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Sierra Leone', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, pp. 4–5.

<sup>287</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2016 Results Report – Nepal', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2016.

<sup>288</sup> Key informant interviews with health facility personnel and key informant interviews with United Nations staff in Nepal.

**BOX 8****Moving toward greater linkages in convergence areas**

In 2018, UNFPA and UNICEF in Ghana jointly supported the development and piloting of a more comprehensive package for engaging with adolescent girls aged 10–19 years in two regions and four districts. This included, at a minimum, content for 31 hours of engagement across skills around empowerment, gender-based violence, adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, legal and financial literacy, etc. The programme supported advocacy for linkages with existing economic empowerment/apprenticeship programmes whenever possible. Furthermore, the programme provided girls with information and linkages to other services and support available through formal and informal systems (e.g. child and family welfare and justice, health, education, social protection, etc.). Both agencies plan to capitalize on and strengthen synergies between the GPECM and two other adolescent girl-focused programmes (KOICA and Canada ASRH) to maximize cross-sectoral linkages, particularly in convergence areas. Whenever possible, enhanced focus will be on the most vulnerable/marginalized adolescent girls (e.g. girls who are out of school, in rural areas, from the poorest households, living and working in the streets and/or with disabilities), while recognizing that they may also be the hardest to reach and/or retain in sustained programmes.<sup>283</sup>

Government and other development partners are increasingly using NAPs and frameworks to steer programming across sectors to address child marriage, thereby widening the base of stakeholders. A multi-sectoral approach is seen as a more effective and efficient means of reducing girls' vulnerability towards child marriage and other harmful practices, but hard evidence that tests the theory has yet to be generated across countries and must be a priority in the first phase of the programme to prepare for the next phase.

At the regional level in Africa, UNFPA and UNICEF are partnering with Girls Not Brides, World Young Women's Christian Association, Save the Children, Plan International and other CSOs in support of activities implemented under the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage. Collaboration with UN Women (e.g. for the high-level forum in West and Central Africa) as well as regional collaboration with traditional leaders has also been intensified during the

programme period. Multi-sectoral approaches are strongly promoted in the AU campaign document, though it is not sufficiently elaborated for effective linkages.<sup>290</sup> Activities have included regional capacity building training for ministries of health and gender, parliamentarians, traditional leaders and the media as well as the commemoration of the Day of the African Child (with the theme, '25 Years after the Adoption of the African Children's Charter: Accelerating our Collective Efforts to End Child Marriage in Africa') and the first and second African girls summits.<sup>291</sup>

UNICEF MENARO and UNFPA ASRO strengthened regional cross-sectoral links on child marriage by mobilizing regional advisers from various sectors (health, sexual and reproductive health, communications, population and development, education, social policy, gender and human rights, partnerships, monitoring and evaluation, adolescence and youth and the

<sup>289</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Ghana', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 4.

<sup>290</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Review of the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa 2014–2018', UNICEF, November 2018.

<sup>291</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018.



humanitarian sector) for the development and implementation of the Regional Accountability Framework on Child Marriage.<sup>292</sup>

The education team at UNICEF WCARO, in collaboration with the child protection and gender teams, initiated the 'Education Sector Response to Early Pregnancy and to Child Marriage: A Review of Country Policies and Programs in West and Central Africa.' This project aims to fill the gap in understanding of the education sector's response to early pregnancy and child marriage in the region and will focus particularly on the response side, i.e. the opportunities for pregnant teenage girls and married girls to continue their education or access alternative education programmes.

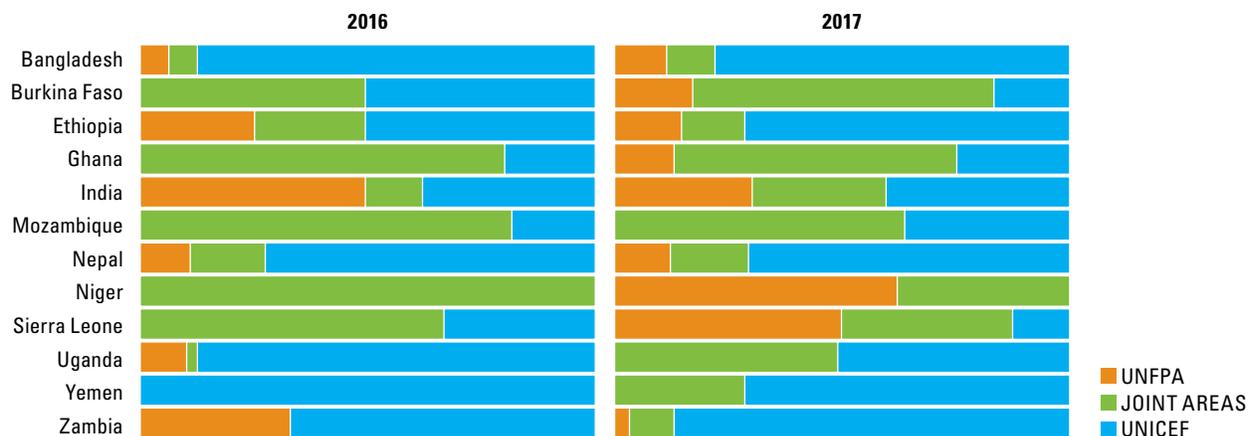
At the global level, the GPSU involves multiple sectors within both agencies. Both UNFPA and UNICEF cross-sectoral teams on ending child marriage meet regularly to discuss progress within each sector and to share learnings and strategies. The creation of the Partner Advisory Group offered a potential vehicle to strengthen partnerships and receive strategic guidance

from the international body of knowledge and experience. Initial involvement was valued by members, as they view the GPECM as making very important contributions to the agenda to end child marriage, however interactions have been limited and regular meetings did not occur past the first year of operation.<sup>293</sup> A Partner Advisory Group or alternative structure should be considered in the next phase as an opportunity for improving the cohesion of global initiatives.<sup>294</sup>

### Geographic convergence

The tracking of geographic convergence between UNFPA and UNICEF at the country level from 2016 to 2017 presents a complex picture. Some countries have increased the number of areas where the agencies are working jointly (Burkina Faso, India, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia) while others have reduced areas of geographic convergence (Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, the Niger and Sierra Leone) and others have remained relatively static (Bangladesh and Nepal).

**FIGURE 2** GPECM implementation areas 2016–2017



<sup>292</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – MENARO and ASRO', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>293</sup> Reasons for limited engagement seemed to hinge on difficulties with the geographic spread and work demands of members that made the virtual meeting modality of the group challenging.

<sup>294</sup> Key informant interviews with Partner Advisory Group members and GPSU.



While country offices increasingly recognize the value of working together in common geographic regions, there are challenges related to financial, operational and historical issues specific to each country that slow the pace of convergence.<sup>295</sup> Agencies must work closely with the government to decide on their geographic focus and many of these decisions were taken long before the advent of the GPECM and cannot be switched with ease. The process of moving towards greater geographic convergence requires negotiations and extensive planning. Field research for this evaluation suggests that in some contexts it may be easier for both agencies to enter a new area for joint

work, rather than for one agency that has long-standing operations in an area to bring in a new agency.<sup>296</sup>

Evaluation findings are further supported by assessments from ESARO: “The extent to which the programme is being implemented jointly by UNFPA and UNICEF varies among countries, in terms of geographical focus, complementarity of interventions ... For example, due to each agency’s different geographical presence in the participating countries, some programmes are spread too thinly in terms of both number of activities and geographic reach. This has precluded full application of the child marriage prevention and response services relative to the global theory of change. As a result, girls and families are not getting the same services in all geographic areas, potentially hampering programme results. In some countries, the overlap/convergence of complementary programming is insufficient or non-existent.”<sup>297</sup>

Joint operationalization at the community level remains a key priority and challenge for the future. The criteria by which convergence is defined for the programme require further definition and guidance in the next phase to ensure a common understanding and rigorous application. “Even when we have geographic convergence on paper, maybe we don’t in practice.”<sup>298</sup> While the GPECM has made strides towards greater geographic convergence in a number of countries and programme component complementarity in all countries, field evidence suggests that agencies still operate

<sup>295</sup> For example, Zambia planned to support the Ministry of Gender to implement the NAP with a pilot project in six districts, but only two district pilot projects were implemented due to funding constraints. The programme faced further challenges with geographical convergence as funding restrictions also led agencies to work in areas with existing programmes, further restricting the geographic scope of the GPECM. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report’, UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018.

<sup>296</sup> Interviews, direct observation and focus group discussions in case study countries.

<sup>297</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – ESARO’, UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>298</sup> Key informant interview with United Nations stakeholder in case study country.



their various components in parallel in many cases, rather than bringing the full model into one community. The situation is further complicated by the fact that geographic convergence at the provincial or district level does not necessarily translate into convergence at the village level, as was noted in all three country visits for the evaluation. *See elaboration regarding each case study country below.*

In Mozambique, convergence was considered at the district level, but not at the village level, so there was no clear strategy at the time of the evaluation that dictated which agency conducted which programme element in which village. The result was a mosaic of initiatives throughout the district, with some villages benefiting from multiple components while other villages may have only had UNFPA or UNICEF components. Linkages between components were increasingly identified and capitalized on, but had yet to be formally mapped and integrated into operational approaches. Furthermore, some of the programme elements run by each agency work with similar community stakeholders (parents and leaders) with similar messaging, yet the models had not yet been adapted to streamline the approach and avoid duplication (though discussions were underway to take steps towards this at the time of the evaluation).

In Nepal, UNFPA and UNICEF interventions do not overlap at the village level. Each agency implements the programme in different ways in different areas (wards) within common districts. This was a strategic decision for increased coverage in remote areas, therefore delivery is not done jointly, with the exception of some common advocacy at the district level where agencies work within their respective sectors. Recent changes in administrative structures give less power to the district level and new ways of working with municipalities were being explored at the time of the evaluation.

At the local level in the Niger, the evaluation found that the two agencies are running parallel components within convergence areas. Community-level programme components conducted by each agency are well designed and seem to be addressing key drivers of child marriage, but there are some areas of overlap within the two approaches and there is a need to avoid duplication. Discussions were underway internally and a forum was held in 2018 with the key ministry to harmonize the work. Evidence from key informant interviews and focus group discussions at the field level reinforced the need for harmonizing and streamlining the approaches to optimize effectiveness and efficiency.

There is an implicit assumption that the geographic convergence of interventions will lead to a stronger result in terms of breaking the cycle of early marriage. But research has not yet been conducted to test this theory and demonstrate the efficacy of this approach. There is another implicit assumption that a joint geographic approach will be more efficient by eliminating duplication and combining efforts for implementation and monitoring, etc. This also has not been tested. It is imperative in the last stage of the first phase of the programme that country offices generate evidence of the efficacy of this approach if it is to go to scale. This will require conducting qualitative and quantitative research that compares communities that have had a joint approach, ones that have had only a single intervention and ones that have had no intervention. There is huge potential to build greater synergies through improving linkages between different actors within geographic locales, but these opportunities have not been fully exploited and require further thinking to develop models that can be sustained over time.

**BOX 9****Convergence is complicated**

There are 122 districts in Uganda, many of which are highly burdened by child marriage. Geographic locations were initially selected based on the prevalence of child marriage and teenage pregnancy, the population of at-risk girls as indicated by the census and the Adolescent Girls' Vulnerability Index Report as well as districts of natural convergence between UNFPA and UNICEF. With support from the GPECM, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development has rolled out the national strategy to end child marriage and teenage pregnancy in 55 districts. UNICEF/UNFPA worked on child marriage in the same geographic location for 11 districts in 2017 and plans to work in 18 convergence districts in 2018–2019. The programme aims to maintain the selection criteria for districts as follows: 1) districts of convergence between UNFPA and UNICEF; 2) districts in which the national strategy has already been rolled out; 3) district is prioritized for overall adolescent girls programming by country offices; 4) districts show potential (e.g. have incorporated the national strategy into their district development plans, leadership is forthcoming and/or attempts have been made to mobilize local resources); and 5) districts with large numbers of girls who are married.<sup>293</sup>

### 3.5.c Planning, monitoring and reporting mechanisms

The evaluation looked at the following criteria:

- Learning environment to learn within and across country sectors as well as across countries;
- Research and data generated directly informed programme work and national efforts to end child marriage; and
- Monitoring and reporting systems.

#### ○ KEY FINDING 19:

The GPECM has taken positive steps to create a learning environment and improve monitoring and reporting systems, but weaknesses persist. While the data generated have made some important contributions to programme directions, a review of studies suggests that some studies appeared to have been more directly targeted to the programme focus than others and there is a lack of focus on impact assessments. At the start of the programme, the GRF

pushed teams to report against targets without facilitating teams to work towards tying the approaches together into a package.

#### Learning environment

The GPECM has fostered a learning environment within the country that brings together various stakeholders from different sectors. The joint working group formed in each country to guide the programme constitutes a nexus of collaboration and cross-fertilization of ideas within the United Nations system. Learning is deepened, particularly in those countries that have moved beyond the planning focus to employ a collaborative operationalization strategy, including joint monitoring missions and sharing of experiences at lower levels across states or districts.

In India, there is a joint working group involving UNFPA and UNICEF at the national level that meets at regular intervals to discuss progress, challenges/bottlenecks and new initiatives etc. The country office teams of UNFPA and UNICEF, based in Delhi, undertake periodic visits (some jointly) to programme states to provide

<sup>293</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Uganda', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.



technical support, review progress and jointly plan for activities. The team ensures that experiences and learnings are shared across states. Programme states also undertake cross-visits to learn from good practices in other states. For example, the team in Uttar Pradesh benefited from a visit to Bihar to learn how to leverage the Government's support for a large-scale programme.<sup>300</sup>

In Ethiopia, UNFPA and UNICEF share and exchange learnings as members of the National Alliance Steering Committee to inform programming and policy-related work with the Committee. Implementing partners in target regions have a technical working group composed of the Bureau of Women and Children's Affairs, the Board of Investment and the Bureau of Education to coordinate efforts during planning and implementation and undertake joint monitoring and programme review at the sub-national and district levels.<sup>301</sup>

The leadership, participation and support of UNFPA and UNICEF within various steering committees, coordination platforms and other forums on child marriage offer broader avenues for formal and informal information sharing within the country, as discussed in section 3.4.f: 'Increased engagement from other stakeholders'. For example, in Ghana, new evidence is regularly shared with the Ministry of Gender and other national cross-sectoral partners through: 1) a national child marriage stakeholders online platform managed by the Ministry; 2) a biannual stakeholders forum

on ending child marriage coordinated by the Ministry; 3) sectoral platforms; 4) joint annual review meetings with implementing partners; 5) the Girls Not Brides network in Ghana; and 6) bilateral information sharing with other development partners and donor agencies in country.<sup>302</sup>

While the GPECM has helped to foster a learning environment within countries, opportunities for learning and sharing across countries, including high prevalence countries that are not included in the programme, have been limited. Two global meetings, one for UNICEF and one for UNFPA, were held in 2015 during the inception phase; a second global meeting was held jointly in 2017 in Uganda. The meeting in Uganda, which brought together joint programmes on female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage, was seen as highly valuable to field-level stakeholders, enabling a better understanding of the programme operations and challenges countries were facing. Regional offices have made a significant contribution to facilitating learning between countries within their regions and across regions to a lesser extent.<sup>303</sup> For instance, in South Asia, several mechanisms were initiated such as evidence series, webinars, biannual meetings and cross-country and cross-agency reviews of terms of reference and draft reports. In West Africa, case studies and a leaflet were developed.<sup>304</sup>

There remains an unmet demand at the country level for further exchanges and more information. Country offices that had developed

<sup>300</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF India country offices' desk responses to desk review questions, 26 November 2018.

<sup>301</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Ethiopia', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 19.

<sup>302</sup> UNICEF Ghana and UNFPA Ghana feedback on United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Ghana', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>303</sup> In addition to the examples detailed throughout this document, the drafting and dissemination of the SADC Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage was a successful means of sharing model lessons across regions. Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum, 'SADC Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage', SADC, 2016.

<sup>304</sup> Key informant interviews with UNICEF WCARO and UNFPA WCARO staff.



innovative models with promising early results expressed to the evaluation team a desire to share their experiences and get feedback from others. Other country offices, especially those that had seen little proven progress, expressed a demand and a hunger to learn from others, particularly those with similar contexts. Experience sharing and learning from others is especially important for those countries that are behind in terms of seeing progress. There remains a need for broader sharing between countries on a range of issues related to child marriage, including ensuring that GPECM stakeholders from all levels participate in external global and regional meetings as participants and presenters to share and learn from experiences outside of the GPECM.

Yemen is also the only country in the programme that is engaged in wide-scale conflict, which limits opportunities within the GPECM to share experiences from similar contexts. Regional actors highlight that child marriage has been identified as a negative coping mechanism to protect girls in conflict areas and/or to overcome economic challenges. Given the extent of humanitarian crises in the region, UNFPA and UNICEF highlights the benefits of including other countries in the region to build synergies and provide greater support to end child marriage.<sup>305</sup>

The child marriage information portal (GPECM website) was seen from the lower levels as a useful resource, but most stressed that it was not widely used at the country level, if at all.

A number of United Nations technical staff engaged in the GPECM were not even aware of the website; those who did utilize the website felt it was quite broad in its focus and not particularly user-friendly for their needs. Stakeholders noted that they did not feel they had the time to browse through large volumes of data due to constant competing demands and they sought shorter, more targeted means of accessing information. The new newsletter, launched at the end of 2018, was received positively and provides an effective modality to deliver targeted messaging and share information.<sup>306</sup>

### Research and data generated

Research and data generated under the GPECM have played a role in informing programme work and national efforts to end child marriage in many instances. Approximately 74 studies have been conducted at the regional and national levels in the first years of the programme across a range of topics, including mapping exercises to identify target regions and formative research on drivers of child marriage.<sup>307</sup> (Refer to section 3.3.f on Outcome 5 for further related information.) A publications catalogue, released in September 2018, provides an overview of research that was produced or supported by the GPECM in 2016 and 2017.<sup>308</sup>

While the data generated has made some important contributions to programme directions, a review of studies also suggests that some studies appeared to have been more directly targeted to the programme focus than others, some of which address corollary

<sup>305</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – MENARO and ASRO', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>306</sup> Key informant interviews with United Nations stakeholders in case study countries.

<sup>307</sup> Subrahmanian, Ramya, 'Insights from Global Research: A Summary of Key Issues', UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, 2018.

<sup>308</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Investing in Knowledge to End Child Marriage: Publications Catalogue 2016–2017 – UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018.



concerns.<sup>309</sup> The evaluation finds a degree of variability between countries and regional offices for this outcome, with some making more strategic investments in research and data than others. Some examples of well-targeted research include:

- UNICEF Mozambique’s ‘Formative Research Report’ (2017) to develop the C4D strategy in response to the high prevalence of child marriage in line with the National Strategy to Prevent and Eliminate Child Marriage (2015–2019) contributed directly to the design of the C4D strategy and wider child marriage programming in the country.
- ‘What Works to Tackle Child Marriage in Ethiopia: A Review of Good Practice’ (2016) reviews 54 different programmes targeting child marriage, assesses successful interventions and provides a qualitative analysis of seven of these programmes. The review contributed to identifying the core package of interventions to guide the development of the costed national roadmap.<sup>310</sup>
- Data generation in India has played a key role in advocacy efforts across sectors to take action to end child marriage. For example, in Rajasthan, the analysis of census data on child marriage was used to advocate with the State Government for the launch of the state action plan on ending child marriage. In West Bengal, monitoring data were used to advocate for strengthening institutional mechanisms for the

prevention of child marriage, contributing to district administrations working with social welfare and school education departments to develop a mechanism for schools to track absentee girls and follow up to avert child marriage.<sup>311</sup>

A breakdown of types of studies conducted by year over the first two years of the GPECM shows an emphasis on baseline and activities/mapping studies as well as research on drivers and prevalence in 2016. The focus in 2017 continued to centre on similar subjects, but research also increasingly addressed perceptions and norms (Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Ghana).<sup>312</sup> Plans for 2018–2019 studies based on AWP’s continue in the same vein, but with a greater focus on mid-term/mid-line reviews and end-line reviews/evaluations. Programme countries are also moving into new areas of research, including generating new data on the consequences of child marriage (India, Mozambique and Uganda,) and real-time data analysis (Bangladesh).<sup>313</sup>

A review of 74 research reports conducted during the first years of the GPECM found that the majority (59) focused on prevalence trends and the consequences of early marriage, while only 30 research outputs addressed the strategies to end the practice. Furthermore, many of the research outputs were found to focus on very narrow contexts (approximately one third of the studies focused on a just few communities), limiting the ability to draw meaningful

<sup>309</sup> Included in the publications are studies that focus on the nutritional behaviour of adolescent girls, malaria, immunization and HIV/AIDS, child protection, adolescents and education.

<sup>310</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘2017 Annual Report Country Profiles: UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage,’ UNFPA and UNICEF, August 2018, p. 13.

<sup>311</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – India,’ UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, pp. 41–43.

<sup>312</sup> UNICEF Yemen is in the process of implementing a study in four joint programme sites to identify the key drivers of child marriage. Qualitative data are designed to help establish a baseline and ensure both the programme strategy and social norms/behaviour change strategy addresses root causes. Source: UNFPA and UNICEF Yemen country offices’ response to desk review questions, 26 November 2018.

<sup>313</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Mapping GPECM Studies 2016–2019’ (internal document), UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018.



comparisons on what strategies may work, especially at scale. Only 4 of the 74 studies evaluated impact.<sup>314</sup>

A review of the works included in the Publications Catalogue found that only 1 of the 60 studies produced by country teams was jointly supported by UNFPA and UNICEF (at least formally); the vast majority were supported by one or the other agency.<sup>315</sup> While individual agency-led research is not inherently problematic, data generated against agency-specific interventions will not necessarily shed light on the value of multi-sectoral, collaborative approaches, a key focus of the GPECM.<sup>316</sup>

Regional offices have made valuable contributions with well-targeted regional research such as ‘Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia’ (2017) and ‘Why Addressing Child Marriage and Adolescent Pregnancy is Essential to Achieving the Demographic Dividend in West and Central Africa’ (2017/2018). UNFPA and UNICEF jointly supported 6 of the 14 regional publications included in the catalogue, suggesting a closer degree of collaboration on research at the regional level.

### Knowledge management

The global knowledge management strategy aims to promote a knowledge sharing culture within the programme, providing for learning exchanges through meetings, thematic webinars, a GPECM team website and other social platforms. The strategy identifies the following targets for 2018 and 2019:

#### 2018

- Develop knowledge management strategy and work plan;
- Set up team site/online document storage system;
- Hire Headquarters knowledge management staff;
- Compile ending child marriage staff directory and roster of external experts;
- Compile list of interventions; and
- Conduct programme monitoring and evaluation and share key lessons with programme team.

#### 2019

- External outreach – set up website, social media channels, e-newsletter;
- Share series of human interest stories through media partners;
- Launch monthly webinar series;
- Set up community of practice for ending child marriage;
- Launch lessons learned competition; and
- Global meeting for all ending child marriage programme staff – opportunity to share programme learnings.

Performance against the strategy has been uneven. It was estimated that only 5 per cent of the strategy had been implemented at the time of the evaluability assessment, largely due to capacity constraints.<sup>317</sup> Though there are plans to hire a knowledge management specialist at

<sup>314</sup> Subrahmanian, Ramya, ‘Insights from Global Research: A Summary of Key Issues’, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, 2018.

<sup>315</sup> Of the country-level studies, 33 list UNICEF as author/contributor; 21 list UNFPA and five list neither agency formally.

<sup>316</sup> Findings from one case study country showed that all of the data generated under the GPECM had focused on establishing baselines and analysis of single agency programme interventions that did not in any way reflect the impact of a joint approach. Moreover, stakeholders from within one United Nations agency were not aware of research conducted by the other agency based on group interviews with technical staff.

<sup>317</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Evaluability Assessment’, UNICEF, New York, 2017, p. 9.



the global level, this has yet to take place and capacities remain an issue within the GPSU. Furthermore, the current strategy exists in the form of a PowerPoint presentation and may not be easily accessible/useful at lower levels.

Headquarters and regional offices provide technical support for the GPECM generally including research generation and knowledge management through global meetings, webinars, phone calls and emails. The South Asia regional offices helped develop a knowledge management strategy for the region and also jointly supported a number of webinars including 'Mapping of Income Support, Cash Incentives and Transfers to End Child Marriage' in August 2017<sup>318</sup> as well as the creation of high-quality country-focused brochures for each

programme country in the region on ending child marriage that may be useful for advocacy and to raise the profile of the GPECM.

Country-level knowledge management seems to generally follow pre-existing patterns to share information related to child marriage and/or to fold knowledge management into other available platforms. For example, while UNICEF Ethiopia does not have a knowledge management strategy, the research and evaluation committee, composed of representatives from all sections, systematically shares research initiatives and provides peer review of products.<sup>319</sup> In Ghana, there is no joint knowledge strategy, but individual agencies document learnings within respective programmes on an ongoing basis.<sup>320</sup>

<sup>318</sup> Van der Ree, Marleen, 'Mapping of Income Support, Cash Incentives and Transfers to End Child Marriage' (internal document), 2017.

<sup>319</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Ethiopia', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 19.

<sup>320</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Ghana', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, p. 39.



While the GPECM has invested in research and knowledge management, variability between countries and regions is the norm and some offices are achieving better results than others. Little time was allowed up front for country offices to design approaches around new findings, as there was a strong push for country teams to deliver results against the GRF before they had a chance to generate new evidence and design programmes accordingly. A significant number of findings can be synthesized from the studies that have been carried out over the first years of the programme, but efforts to consolidate and disseminate lessons learned and increase research uptake from across the 12 countries requires further focus.

### Monitoring and reporting systems

Programme countries report annually to the GPSU against the GRF. The GRF follows the logic underlying the global theory of change, so the issues related to weaknesses in the global theory of change as elaborated in section 3.1 'Global programme logic' are replicated in the GRF. The conclusion reached by the evaluability assessment and underscored by the evaluation is that the current GRF is limited given the complexity of factors that influence decisions on child marriage. The restricted scope of indicators focuses reporting on distinct programme areas and does not illuminate the range of

interrelated factors that contribute to ending child marriage. The focus on quantitative monitoring and reporting fails to capture progress in terms of changing perceptions, attitudes and behaviours towards desired results.<sup>321</sup> The framework also fails to incorporate programme management indicators.

Despite these weaknesses, efforts are ongoing to establish stronger reporting systems and ensure consistency in monitoring processes. Monitoring and evaluation systems have been strengthened from 2017 onwards with the hiring of a dedicated monitoring and evaluation officer at Headquarters. This has helped support the roll out of an indicator index and build staff capacity for setting targets, defining and monitoring indicators and monitoring and evaluation overall to improve the quality of reporting at all levels.<sup>322</sup> The GPSU and regional offices have provided technical support to lower levels, though this is an area that country offices continue to identify as an ongoing need.<sup>323</sup>

The GPSU released its programme and monitoring and evaluation guidance, including a new indicator index in 2017,<sup>324</sup> well after the 2017 AWP targets had been set in place. While the guidance is generally clear and was much needed, the release time, more than one year into programme implementation, caused disruption in implementation and reporting at the country level.<sup>325</sup> There remain key

<sup>321</sup> The evaluability assessment cautions against the meticulous gathering of output-level data that, in the end, are meaningless in terms of monitoring the desired impact. Aggregation of attendance at different intervention events across different cultural contexts offers no indication of how different programmes are contributing to changed attitudes/perceptions/behaviours among adolescents and community members in different target areas and between different programme countries.

<sup>322</sup> Webinars were held with each region between February and March 2017 to orient countries on the revised indicators and definitions as part of the indicator index rollout. Calls were made to each country office between November 2017 and January 2018 to provide guidance for 2018–2019 work planning and 2017 annual reporting. Source: Key informant interviews at United Nations Headquarters.

<sup>323</sup> Key informant interviews in case study countries; tracking of technical assistance requests (internal programme document); results from GPSU survey.

<sup>324</sup> The draft indicator guidance produced in July 2015 was further developed into an indicator index that was finalized in August 2017. The index offers definitions and guidelines for output indicators only. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Indicator Reference Sheet (Indicator Index)' (internal document), 2017.

<sup>325</sup> For example, the new indicator guidance recommends a minimum of 31 hours' exposure for life-skills training, requiring countries such as Ethiopia and Ghana to redesign programmes and adjust targets.



differences in understanding across the programme, whether country offices are required to report against all indicator areas, or only those indicator areas in which they are directly investing GPECM funds.<sup>326</sup>

Frameworks designed in 2016 underwent adjustments in 2017 as the programme learned from its first year of operationalization and worked to fine-tune its approach. Adjustments to reporting systems further responded to findings of the evaluability assessment as well as inputs from regional and country offices and the Steering Committee. Notable changes include:

- Templates for 2017 combine the financial and results reporting into a package (2016 formats were separate);
- Templates for 2017 capture new data on funding for work on child marriage outside of the GPECM;
- Timelines for submission of annual reporting data were changed to the end of January to allow country teams to draw from other annual reporting completed in December (improved efficiency);
- Narrative reporting for 2017 captures richer information than the 2016 version including:
  - New descriptive fields on joint work;
  - New fields on human rights, gender and cultural sensitivity;
  - Information on technical assistance;

- Support to regional work;
- Data generation;
- Partner capacities; and
- Value for money;

- AWP templates for 2018–2019 introduce a high degree of disaggregation in targeting outputs.<sup>327</sup>

While revisions to reporting templates and guidance have been challenging to manage at the field level, models of effective programming modalities are limited at this scale. Revision and refinement are necessary parts of the piloting that has characterized the first phase of the programme. 2018 annual results report templates (including results and financials) are presented to country offices in an online format to facilitate input consolidation from multiple users.

Apart from the issue of revisions to reporting frameworks, country teams have found the measurement of output indicators to be time consuming and challenging. Country offices cited issues with the top-down nature of the indicator design, which was not linked into country-level systems so that there was little harmonization between country programmes and the global programme.<sup>328</sup> “It is not easy to fill the template for the global report because we are not implementing our agency programmes through the same indicators that the child marriage programme requires.”<sup>329</sup> Reporting was also exacerbated by limited

<sup>326</sup> As noted, reporting does not well delineate the extent to which results reporting is capturing GPECM activities or broader catalytic/complementary activities.

<sup>327</sup> For example, Output 1.2 (number of adolescent girls in programme areas supported to access and remain in primary or lower-secondary school or non-formal education) now asks for disaggregation by: married/unmarried, primary/secondary/non-formal education and rural/urban. It remains to be seen if this level of disaggregated data is available within countries as 2018 reports were not submitted at the time of the evaluation. Countries have identified issues with implementing partner capacities and reporting systems that will likely stymie disaggregation efforts (see, for example, Ethiopia feedback on country office annual results report UNICEF and UNFPA comments, 2017).

<sup>328</sup> Agencies set their country programme monitoring frameworks every five years. Outcome-level indicators cannot change, but some output-level indicators can be adjusted at the end of year or mid-term review, leaving limited space to align the GRF to the country programme when the programme enters late in the country programme cycle. Country offices have an opportunity to better integrate new outcomes at the design stage of each new country programme cycle, so indicators may become more integrated into standard processes over time.

<sup>329</sup> Key informant interview with a United Nations stakeholder in a case study country.



capacities of implementing partners to provide data accurately, therefore requiring more time from programme facilitators to meet reporting requirements.<sup>330</sup>

Programme countries receiving smaller budgets further highlight that resources are not sufficient to support robust technical and monitoring and evaluation support to the programme, in line with the reporting requirements at all levels throughout the implementation year. Funding is not sufficient to fully cover salaries of core staff working on the programme and therefore does not allow for in-depth monitoring of activity implementation by partners.<sup>331</sup>

Since 2017, the GPECM has emphasized joint planning and reporting of results by country offices. While country teams have taken decisive steps forward to plan jointly, evidence from the desk review and case studies reveal variations in the extent to which teams are working together to implement and monitor programme activities.<sup>332</sup> For example, the South Asia regional offices undertake joint monitoring, including country visits. In Ethiopia, UNFPA and UNICEF agreed to increase the frequency of programme reflection sessions and joint monitoring missions at the national and sub-national levels to better inform the planning, implementation and programme monitoring process. Benefits of this approach include increased efficiency of resources, avoidance of duplication and more

effective support to implementing partners.<sup>333</sup> In Nepal, joint monitoring missions and interactive review processes with field teams and partners are organized yearly. The Niger found that plans to jointly monitor activities did not materialize due to issues with individual agency schedules and funding availability.<sup>334</sup>

Country teams have been supported by the regional and global levels to conduct programme monitoring and evaluation. For example, both UNFPA and UNICEF in Sierra Leone solicited technical support in 2016 from the UNFPA and UNICEF headquarters and regional offices to redefine the monitoring and evaluation frameworks for Sierra Leone (baselines, targets and indicators) and strengthen coordination structures at national level.<sup>335</sup> Remote support and feedback has also been provided by the headquarters and regional offices for work planning, which has led to improved joint work planning and reporting and strengthened national coordination between UNFPA and UNICEF for monitoring and evaluation.<sup>336</sup>

The GRF and other reporting frameworks led teams down a certain path at the start of the programme that focused heavily on reporting against targets without facilitating teams to work towards tying the approaches together into a package that provides evidence of the

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<sup>330</sup> Key informant interviews with United Nations staff in case study countries; United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2016 Results Report – Nepal', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2016.

<sup>331</sup> For example, total programme resources allocated to UNICEF and UNFPA Ghana (US\$625,593.39 in 2018). UNFPA and UNICEF Ghana country offices' response to desk review questions, 30 November 2018.

<sup>332</sup> See page 98 on geographic convergence for related discussion.

<sup>333</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – Ethiopia', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017, pp. 2–3.

<sup>334</sup> Key informant interviews with United Nations stakeholders in Nepal and the Niger.

<sup>335</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2016 Results Report – Sierra Leone', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2016, p. 5.

<sup>336</sup> Country office responses to desk review questions, 26 November 2018.



efficacy of the approach. The pressure to deliver quick results was at odds with a programme that deals with complex, entrenched behaviour patterns.

“The urgency to showcase results and outcome-level impact for interventions that have seen short durations of implementation of two years, has also created pressure and challenged the programme’s ability to allow interventions to grow organically or produce meaningful change in the short term. Child marriage is linked to complex behaviours related to the value and sexuality of girls, expectations around marriage and dowry. For this, it is important to provide sustained and progressive support to programmes that address the underlying drivers of child marriage.”<sup>337</sup>

“The demand for relatively quick results and the programmatic focus on the number of girls reached by the programme, makes it difficult for countries to invest in both interventions and monitoring/research that would showcase to what extent certain interventions or a combination of interventions are efficient and effective to reduce child marriage.”<sup>338</sup>

Impact-level monitoring has been stymied by the infrequency and/or unreliability of national data to track child marriage rates. The broad scope of many of the outcome-level indicators also poses challenges in terms of assessing GPECM contributions at higher levels. Furthermore, linkages between some output and outcome

indicators are incomplete, as discussed in more detail in section 3.1 ‘Global programme logic.’ The nature and pace of social change processes affecting child marriage practices could be captured with intermediate indicators including measures of knowledge, attitudes and practices in programme areas. The lack of intermediate indicators that show progress towards results has led to a sense of frustration within some country teams with submitting extractive data for the GRF (particularly for Outcomes 1, 2 and 3) that does not clearly document progress toward higher-level goals.<sup>339</sup>

Countries that have included child marriage as a focus area in UNICEF or UNFPA country programmes have expanded opportunities to integrate programme and broader monitoring on child marriage into wider agency and system-wide country-level processes. For example, child marriage is one of the two flagship results for the UNICEF India’s Country Programme 2018–2022, which the Country Management Team reviews quarterly for progress. Similarly, UNFPA India includes child marriage as one of the three key transformative result areas in its Country Programme 2018–2022. Progress towards the achievement of this outcome is tracked through a set of common indicators that have been agreed with the programme states. UNFPA has developed reporting and monitoring mechanisms to track progress on the indicators. UNICEF tracks progress through Country Management Team dashboard monitoring.<sup>340</sup>

<sup>337</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Accelerating and Amplifying Change – 2017 Annual Report’, UNFPA and UNICEF, 2018.

<sup>338</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2017 Results Report – ESARO’, UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

<sup>339</sup> This sense of frustration was expressed formally and informally during field visits as well as in some desk review exchanges.

<sup>340</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF India country offices’ responses to desk review questions, 27 November 2018.



Official monitoring data (such as the census and the National Family Health Survey) in India are not totally reliable and are infrequently collected/released. While UNFPA and UNICEF have provided technical support to include questions and indicators related to ending child marriage in official administrative data, the team has moved ahead to develop new monitoring systems. UNICEF India has established a third-party monitoring and learning system for the GPECM in UNICEF programme states. As the at-scale approach gains momentum, the monitoring and learning system is being scaled up. The data generated from household surveys, process monitoring, and qualitative assessment have been used to inform programming, identify gaps and develop strategies.<sup>335</sup>

The framework tracks the coverage and reach of UNICEF-supported activities conducted at the village, Panchayat, block, district and state levels. The monitoring and learning system collects data that augment and complement administrative data, the quality of which is variable. Findings have highlighted that the programme needs to address: a) effective mid-media and interpersonal communication with adolescents; b) more intensive involvement with parents; c) more targeted membership of adolescent girls; d) promoting family planning among married adolescents; and e) capacity building of government systems to deliver services to adolescents.<sup>336</sup>

### 3.5.d Human, financial and technical resources

The evaluation assessed the efficiency and effectiveness of programme use of financial, technical and human resources to deliver results.

#### ○ KEY FINDING 20:

UNFPA and UNICEF have drawn on their respective comparative advantages to contribute to ending child marriage, focusing on interventions that fit within their technical and human resource capabilities. Agencies have made strategic adjustments to their approaches in the face of restricted financial resources and have successfully leveraged funds from within and outside of the United Nations system to expand the programme

reach. The programme has drawn on available human resources within both agencies, only a portion of which have been financed through the GPECM.

#### Financial resources

Funds garnered for the first phase of the GPECM were less than half of the amount expected during the programme design,<sup>343</sup> and country-level allocations have generally declined over the last years of the first phase of the programme. Reductions and unpredictability/delays of funds have required country teams to revise strategies and scale back and/or adjust interventions against plans made during the inception phase of the programme. Financial data from 2017 shows that programme

<sup>341</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF India country offices' responses to desk review questions, 26 November 2018.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid.

<sup>343</sup> US\$94.5 million. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: Evaluability Assessment', UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.

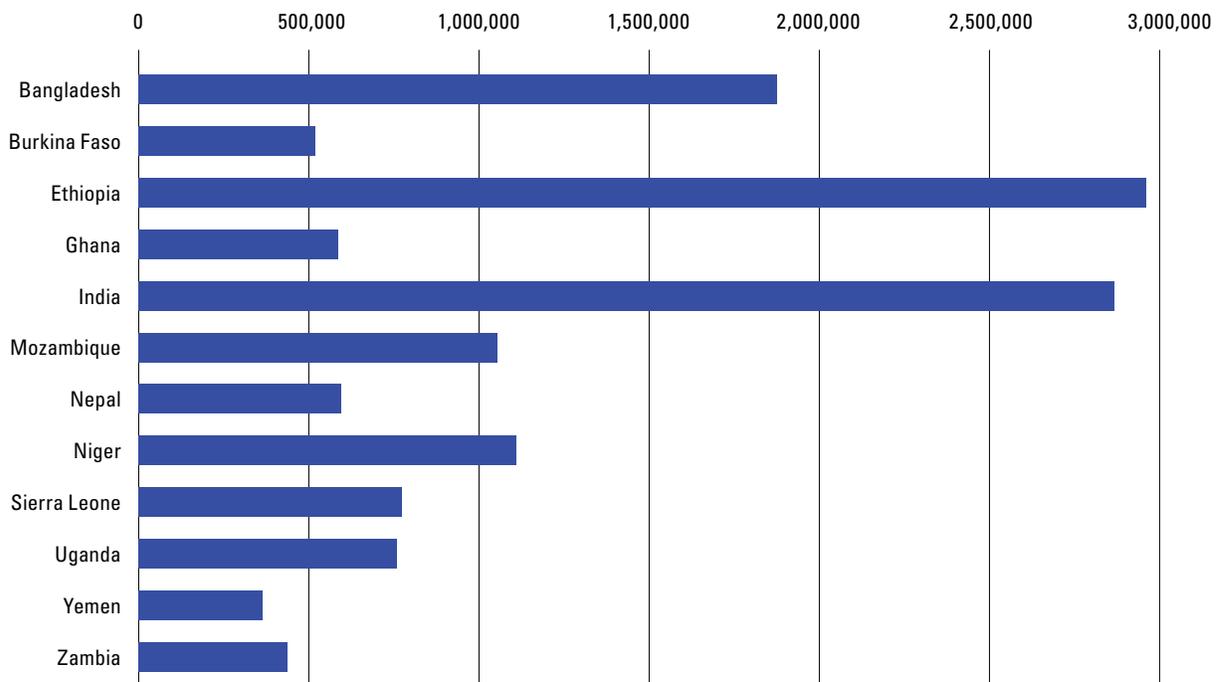


expenditures exceeded allocations collectively as well as individually for most countries and regional offices.<sup>344</sup>

Financial resources have been distributed to countries based on a number of considerations, including geographic and population size, burden, prevalence rates and donor priorities. Data from 2018 illustrate the variations, with two countries (Ethiopia and India) receiving close to US\$3 million for the year, a few countries receiving between US\$1 million and US\$2 million (Bangladesh, Mozambique and the Niger) while other countries were allocated around half a million United States dollars or less.

The desk review highlighted several efficiency issues with the allocation of resources to countries in the first year of the programme that negatively impacted planned programme implementation. These included delayed release of funds, low levels of funds and uncertain timing for release of funds.<sup>345</sup> The implementation period was very short for some countries, with funds distribution in June 2016 and reporting expected in December 2016.<sup>346</sup> There is general agreement among stakeholders that administrative systems improved significantly in the second year of the programme. Support from Headquarters and regional offices played a key role in helping to get things on track for smoother functioning.

**FIGURE 3** 2018 Budget Allocation by Country



<sup>344</sup> Estimated UNICEF/UNFPA programme expenditures in 2017 were US\$23,334,530. Allocations were US\$19,720,328. All countries and regions reported expenditures above allocations except for Bangladesh, Uganda, ESARO and MENARO. Child Marriage Consolidated Template, 2017 (11042018 rev. 3).

<sup>345</sup> 2016 GPECM country results reports from Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India and Nepal highlight similar issues related to funding uncertainties/inefficiencies.

<sup>346</sup> United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage: 2016 Results Report – Nepal’, UNFPA and UNICEF, 2016.



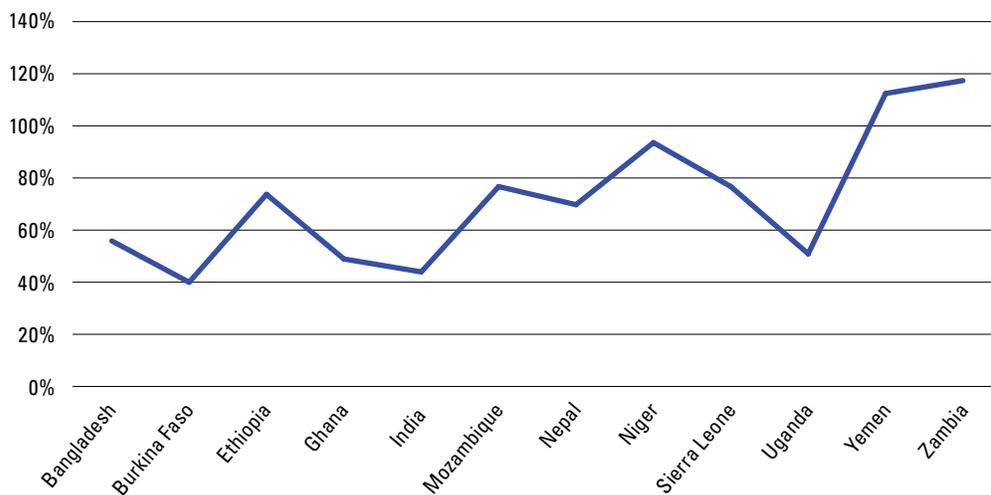
A review of budget expenditures at the 2018 mid-point shows variations in spending levels against allocations, with those countries receiving the smallest funds (Yemen and Zambia) exhausting their resources quickly. Insufficient and uncertain funding levels have been a chronic issue over the first phase of the programme.<sup>347</sup>

A review of expenditures across outcomes over the first two years of the programme shows a high level of consistency over the first years of implementation. The bulk of programme expenditures have gone into Outcome

1, followed by Outcome 2 and then Outcome 3. Relatively small amounts of programme expenditures have been dedicated to Outcomes 4 and 5.

With the bulk of the funding focused on Outcome 1 and 2 and strong evidence that reach is starting to scale up in 2018,<sup>348</sup> programme countries need to ensure that there is a balance in focus across outcomes or run the risk of creating a demand for services that cannot be met in some countries.<sup>349</sup> Anecdotal evidence from case study countries revealed incidents where this was already the case.<sup>350</sup>

**FIGURE 4** Percent of Expenditures by Mid-Point 2018



<sup>347</sup> The programme developed a resource mobilization strategy and action plan in early 2018 to address shortcomings. Merola, Elizabeth S., 'GPECM Resource Mobilization Strategy and Action Plan' (internal document available on GPECM Team Site), 2018.

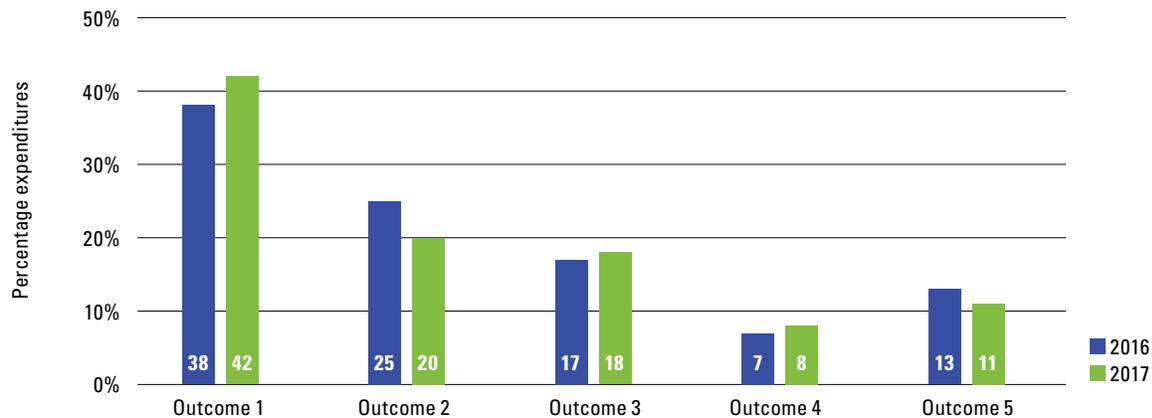
<sup>348</sup> Nearly 4 million girls had participated in at least one intervention under Outcome 1 by the mid-point of 2018, almost three times more than in 2016 and 2017 combined.

<sup>349</sup> Balance in focus across outcomes does not necessarily require additional programme resources to be allocated if programme interventions can be leveraged by other initiatives and services including government resources.

<sup>350</sup> For example, some adolescent-friendly health centres struggled to keep up with demands in programme areas and long waits were reported in one district. Though there is rising demand for girls' education, particularly in remote areas, girls' education faces challenges due to access to schools requiring girls to board or use other living arrangements in towns. Source: Key informant interviews and focus group discussions in case study countries.



**FIGURE 5** Programme expenditures by outcome 2016 and 2017



Source: 2016 and 2017 GPECM annual reports.

A further point to consider in reviewing programme financial investment is the GPECM focus on both prevention and protection of those already married. The scope is very broad in the context of limited funds and poses a risk of dilution of focus. While the programme is, first and foremost, about accelerating an end to child marriage, it also includes a protection/empowerment component for those already married (that has been given a greater or lesser degree of focus depending on the country). Whether this is the most effective use of limited funds warrants further exploration and critical thought in the design of the next phase.

### Challenges monitoring pooled and pulled resources

As elaborated in section 3.4.d, 'Complementary funding secured to facilitate initiatives/interventions,' the programme has used pool funding as

a successful strategy to leverage existing interventions. Pulled funding presents challenges to identifying results by funding source. While efforts have been made to identify funding sources, there is no consistency across countries regarding how to denote financial attributions accurately and country offices are not reporting in the same fashion, thereby undermining the comparability of results across countries.<sup>351</sup> Furthermore, the evaluation team identified a pattern whereby the funding story became murkier with each iteration.<sup>352</sup>

The complex inter-sectoral nature of child marriage programming obscures the impact of any one initiative (such as the GPECM) as distinct from wider efforts. In some programme countries, some of the GPECM outcomes are being addressed with funds entirely outside of the GPECM, but are being tracked under the GPECM. All three case study countries had a

<sup>351</sup> For example, UNFPA and UNICEF Ghana and Mozambique country offices reported all country office results relating to ending child marriage interventions in the 2016 GPECM Annual Report, while UNFPA and UNICEF Uganda country offices reported only GPECM-funded results for Outcome 1.

<sup>352</sup> Case studies in Mozambique and the Niger revealed that country-level financial tables clearly denoted the source of funding, but country-level narrative reporting was less clear and global-level programme reporting was even less clear as to which results were funded fully or partially with GPECM resources and which were funded with external resources.



similar understanding that they had to report against all five outcomes, even if they were not working on each outcome with GPECM funds, while other country offices had a different understanding and only reported against those areas in which the GPECM was actively working. “Everything is so integrated and that is a value for us, but it’s difficult to pull out what makes sense in terms of the GPECM for reporting ... templates are difficult and are requiring us to report outside of the programme. If we are not reporting in all of the outcomes and outputs because these have been identified as the key drivers, so how can we say we are accelerating efforts to end child marriage if we are not addressing all of them? Isn’t that the added value of the Global Programme?”<sup>353</sup>

It was understood by the programme team in the Niger that they could focus funds strategically in certain outcome areas, but that they should report against all outcomes. They therefore included elements in their reporting that are not funded by the GPECM but are influenced by the GPECM. Their reporting also identified the work on ending child marriage done outside of the GPECM, noting that it was not funded by the GPECM, to help to keep track of the big picture and show linkages to their wider work.<sup>354</sup> Better guidance will be needed in Phase II to clarify how to report results that are relevant to reducing rates of child marriage in programme countries, but that are not being achieved solely with GPECM resources.

### Economic efficiency and value for money

A separate evaluation that focuses on value for money was in the process of being commissioned at the time of this evaluation. Value for

money focuses on achieving intended results with the optimal use of resources. DFID’s articulation of value for money uses a 4E Framework:

- Economy: buying inputs (human and material) of the appropriate quality at the right price;
- Efficiency: how well inputs are converted into outputs;
- Effectiveness: how well outputs contribute to outcomes;<sup>355</sup> and
- Equity.

Findings around programme efficiency and effectiveness are covered throughout this evaluation (*see, for example, sections 3.3 and 3.4 on programme effectiveness and sustainability*). This section explores the economic efficiency of joint programme operations in the form of costs savings. Some efficiency advantages to the GPECM identified at the Headquarters level include savings in transaction costs for planning, monitoring, reporting and donor involvement. Specific examples include: a single annual donor report; one theory of change and result framework covering 12 countries; the Joint Steering Committee; and combined donor field visits.<sup>356</sup> While an actual cost-benefit analysis that compares operational models (e.g. single agency versus joint) has not been conducted, it stands to reason that some aspects of joint implementation bring down costs.

Given that programme countries designed their approaches during the inception phase based on more funds than they actually received from the GPECM, resources have largely been used to strategically leverage the fight against child marriage. Country offices drew heavily on existing human and financial resources

<sup>353</sup> Key informant interview with United Nations staff in Mozambique.

<sup>354</sup> Key informant interviews with UNFPA and UNICEF staff in the Niger.

<sup>355</sup> Department for International Development, ‘DFID’s Approach to Value for Money,’ DFID, 2011.

<sup>356</sup> Key informant interview with United Nations staff at Headquarters.



from within UNFPA and UNICEF to extend programme reach. For example, the programme team in the Niger made strategic use of limited financial resources to deliver results by investing limited finances into existing UNFPA and UNICEF programmes that had a proven track record and alternative funding sources. UNFPA's Illimin offered an entry point for girls' empowerment and reproductive health to incorporate stronger focuses on early pregnancy and marriage.<sup>357</sup> UNICEF decided where to dedicate funding based on needs within relevant sectors. Education and health had alternative funding sources, so GPECM funds were invested in communication, C4D and child protection. While not directly funded, the education and health sectors were integrated into the programme working group, facilitating work related to ending child marriage in those sectors without relying on GPECM funds.

Country offices consistently highlight the cost-effectiveness of media campaigns (including radio, community theatre and drama, as well as social media) to reach large numbers of community members with information and social behaviour change messaging.<sup>358</sup> Measures are improving to monitor the impact of media messaging on behaviour change, but better access to information is well documented as one key element in facilitating changes in attitudes and practices.

Other measures taken to lower costs at the field level identified by country offices include:

- Sharing costs of workshops and meetings between both agencies;
- Joint missions;

- Engaging with each other's partners jointly at district levels (convergence);
- Holding training at regional or local levels within countries to minimize travel costs for participants;
- Competitive contracting process as part of both agencies' standard operating procedures;
- Collective negotiation with implementing partners to deliver key elements (such as life-skills training).

While teams have sought efficient means of operation, it should be noted that facilitating joint processes also takes time and resources to establish new practices, particularly during the start-up phase. Each agency uses a different programme management system, including financial tracking, which creates discordance between financial data and requires extra human resource support to collate and process data. Other challenges to efficient operations include agency differences in simple operational functions such as joint electronic meetings and online Dropbox access that have led to complications in timely access across agencies in 12 countries and four regions.

### Human resources

Work on eliminating harmful practices requires sustained and consistent human resource support. A review of human resources committed by UNFPA and UNICEF across the 12 programme countries in 2016, 2017 and 2018 reveals a high degree of variation (*see Annex G*). The review illustrates the large scope and number of actors within both agencies that dedicate a portion of

<sup>357</sup> Illimin reaches one eighth of the girls in the country; modules also include community dialogues that reach parents, leaders and other gatekeepers with the same messages. Source: Key informant interviews and focus group discussions in the Niger.

<sup>358</sup> For example, in 2017, India shifted to more cost-effective dissemination methods that included media campaigns through community theatre that resulted in a seven-fold increase in the number of individuals reached. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, '2017 Annual Report Country Profiles: UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage,' UNFPA and UNICEF, August 2018, p. 21.



their time to work on the programme; relatively few dedicate 100 per cent of their time to the programme.

The review of staff contributions to the GPECM at the country level highlights committed human resources, not human resources that have been supported by the GPECM. There is no tracking system to assess actual time use against paid time, so the extent to which staff members dedicate their time in line with salary investments is not clear. Some staff paid through the programme may give a smaller or larger proportion of their time than that for which they are paid.<sup>359</sup> The evidence shows that a great many actors who are not funded by the GPECM are giving a significant portion of their time to the programme and the wider agenda to end child marriage.<sup>360</sup> Furthermore, employees are supported by broader systems and staff members (e.g. administration, operations, information technology, drivers) and these costs are absorbed by core resources from both United Nations agencies, offering donors value for money.<sup>361</sup>

Country offices have managed programme staffing without standards or guidance that may help structure the percentage of funds that should be dedicated to human resources or the possible structure (such as how to assess the need for a dedicated coordinator or percentage of focal point time that should be dedicated to the GPECM or need for staff at sub-national levels). Total expenditures on human resources

across the programme in 2017 were 17 per cent of estimated programme expenditures. A representation of human resources expenditures by country and region reveals broad variation in human resource investment among countries. Four countries (Burkina Faso, India, Nepal and the Niger) invested less than 10 per cent of expenditures in human resources, while four other countries (Ghana, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia) dedicated between one fourth and one third of expenditures to human resources. Yemen has dedicated the highest proportion of expenditures to human resources in line with the special needs of a crisis country, which differs significantly from stable contexts. Two regions dedicated about 20 per cent to human resources; one over 40 per cent and one did not dedicate any resources to human resources in 2017. The logic behind these variations is unclear and further analysis would be beneficial to inform optimum investment in human resources in the next phase of the programme.

The detailed information provided in Annex G represents, on the one hand, the catalytic role that the GPECM has played whereby country offices utilized complementary human resources to deliver the programme. On the other hand, strong reliance on human resources that are not supported by the programme to deliver results runs a risk that focus and/or quality may be compromised in the face of competing agendas. The provision of sufficient human resources to manage the programme is a challenge identified by many of the country

<sup>359</sup> Case study evidence suggests that countries have calculated human resource investments flexibly with an understanding that fixed assessments of percentage of time dedicated are not possible in such a dynamic programme. For example, in one country, one staff member from UNFPA is paid 100 per cent by the GPECM. Although the staff member is not working full time on the GPECM, it is considered that the unpaid time given by other staff compensate for this difference. Source: Key informant interview with United Nations staff in a case study country.

<sup>360</sup> For example, many of the sectors represented in the GPECM technical working group give increased focus to ending child marriage in their work, though the programme does not fund them, nor does the programme necessarily fund their sectors.

<sup>361</sup> Strong commitment from UNFPA and UNICEF management to support the joint effort, as demonstrated across the programme, is important for the sustainability and effectiveness of joint programme implementation.

**TABLE 18** Human resource expenditures (2017)

Country/region	2017 human resource expenditures (US\$)	Human resource expenditures as a percentage of programme expenditures
Bangladesh	336,045	12.5
Burkina Faso	52,160	4.1
Ethiopia	201,701	10.6
Ghana	199,028	24.3
India	299,979	7.4
Mozambique	186,509	14.1
Nepal	32,298	3
Niger	244,199	9.4
Sierra Leone	208,259	18.1
Uganda	186,261	24.2
Yemen	291,856	32.8
Zambia	298,194	22.5
ESARO	111,211	42.8
WCARO	94,868	20
MENARO/ASRO	0	0
ROSA/APRO	70,460	20.6
Headquarters	1,256,851	61.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,069,808</b>	<b>17.4</b>

Source: Child Marriage Consolidated Template, 2017 (11042018 rev. 3).

offices to support technical work and quality assurance at all levels.<sup>362</sup> Country offices have demonstrated a very strong commitment to the agenda to end child marriage through making available the required human resources, but resources should be considered more systematically and strategically in the next phase to enable country and regional offices to deliver the desired components of the GPECM.<sup>363</sup>

Human resource requirements for the next phase of the programme should be considered in a more structured manner. India observes

that the demand for UNICEF’s and UNFPA’s support to the child marriage agenda is already increasing: “Central and state governments value our work for the ideas and expertise we bring, not our money.”<sup>364</sup> As the programme begins to scale up, additional human resources will be required to manage processes and ensure quality control. Furthermore, expanding work to more remote and challenging areas will require extra human resource demands to build capacities and monitor systems.

<sup>362</sup> This is consistent with evaluability assessment findings as well as the case studies and desk review conducted for this evaluation.

<sup>363</sup> Consistent with the evaluability assessment findings; confirmed by case study research.

<sup>364</sup> UNFPA and UNICEF India country offices’ response to desk review questions, 26 November 2018.



# 4 CONCLUSIONS





## 4.1 RELEVANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS

The GPECM responded to the growing momentum around the importance of ending child marriage and occupies a very important space within the global movement to end child marriage. The GPECM is welcomed by stakeholders at all levels and is valued for its unique contributions to normative frameworks and multi-sectoral collaboration. The key role that UNFPA and UNICEF have played through the GPECM is an important niche; and both agencies have a strategic role to play in maintaining global forward momentum to end child marriage.

The theory of change that guides the GPECM is based on evidence and the previous experiences of both UNFPA and UNICEF. The logic of the theory of change was constructed to address the main recognized determinants that lead to marrying girls as children; however, gaps were identified in the intervention logic that will require some adjustments for Phase II of the programme.

The GPECM is well aligned to global and regional frameworks and commitments to end child marriage. Regional offices have played a facilitative role on this front to ensure coherence including coordination between the AU campaign and the GPECM.

The application of the GPECM has been responsive to local contexts and was adapted in each country during the early years of the programme. Only a few countries have formally adapted the theory of change, while others have utilized the global theory of change as a broad guide. The country and regional-level studies and research have supported the contextualization of the GPECM interventions to ensure interventions are culturally relevant and address social/gender norms, beliefs and practices. Country offices generally demonstrated

strong abilities to respond to structural and contextual changes that affected operating environments.

The widespread acknowledgment that child marriage impinges on children's rights and welfare provides a strong foundation and rationale for the agenda to end child marriage. The programme takes a gender-targeted approach, focusing on adolescent girls. Stakeholders generally saw the active engagement of men and boys as a strategic priority to shift harmful patriarchal norms that underpin child marriage practices, but involvement of adolescent boys has not been systematic, which may hamper efforts to facilitate the supportive environment necessary for girl's empowerment. Child grooms have not been addressed by the programme, but should be incorporated in the future, especially in those contexts where consensual child marriage is prevalent.

Reaching the most vulnerable groups is key for the GPECM from both a human rights perspective as well as an efficiency perspective due to the linkages between vulnerabilities and child marriage. Despite efforts to reach the most vulnerable, interventions have not yet reached the most remote areas in many instances, which would include many of those furthest behind. Disability has not been addressed systematically though steps have been taken for better guidance and targeting. The impact and reach of communication campaigns for those affected by multiple vulnerabilities have not been well tested.

Reaching those furthest behind is exceptionally challenging. Targeting less challenging areas in the first phase of the programme as a testing ground to develop and refine new approaches is logical. However, strategies should focus on moving into more challenging areas in the next phase, bearing in mind the implications on human and financial resources.



## 4.2 PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS

The programme has been well designed to foster change processes with outcomes that include top-down, bottom-up and individual empowerment interventions. The GPECM is on track to achieve programme outputs. Collectively, the GPECM is showing strong signs of extending its reach and accelerating its approach in 2018 under most outputs despite significant reductions in funding, in large part due to the strategic use of pool funding to integrate a child marriage focus into existing programmes. However, aggregate output data belies variations in focus and reach across countries.

As the programme shows signs that it is beginning to scale up, it is critical to consider the interaction between different programme outcomes to ensure rising demands are met with opportunities and services of sufficient quality. The programme has begun to track higher-level indicators, but data availability and reliability across countries, especially for qualitative measurements, remain issues that will require continued focus.

**Outcome 1:** The GPECM is increasingly able to reach adolescent girls with activities under Output 1.1 in the third year of the programme, having developed effective interventions over the first two years. Activities have reached close to 5.5 million girls, far exceeding the GPECM's objective to reach 2.5 million girls by the end of 2019. Aggregate figures are disproportionately driven by India and not all countries have expanded their reach over time. Evidence from case study countries suggests that life-skills initiatives are making a positive contribution to Outcome 1. The programme has reduced its reach under Output 1.2 in each year of the programme and only half of the countries are funding activities in 2018 to promote girls' school access, though complementary funding has been utilized for work under this indicator that is not well captured by reporting systems. The declining focus on funding interventions

under this indicator and inconsistencies in achievements suggest that this indicator should be thoroughly reviewed in the design of the next phase of the programme.

**Outcome 2:** Country offices have significantly expanded community outreach (Output 2.1) and the programme shows signs of scaling up, reaching approximately 11.5 million individuals with information related to ending child marriage in the first half of 2018, significantly more than 2016 and 2017 combined. Evidence of scaling up is occurring in the absence of a sound evidence base on the impact of interventions and this requires immediate attention. While boys and men have been targeted by programme activities to varying degrees, little work has been done to look at child marriage among boys despite the fact that consensual marriages between children may comprise over one third of all child marriages globally. Further focus is needed to measure social norms and utilize critical mass theory to target approaches.

**Outcome 3:** Country offices have increased targets for girls' access to health and protection services in each year of the programme and have collectively exceeded targets each year (Output 3.1). Mid-term 2018 data show collective delivery rates over six times the target, suggesting that the programme is moving towards accelerating interventions. The programme was able to scale up its activities around girls' education in 2018 (Output 3.2), assisting over 8,000 schools to improve the quality of girls' education during the first six months of the year, which is equivalent to the total number of schools reached in the first two years of the programme. Evidence of the efficacy of approaches is critical to supporting scale-up.

**Outcome 4:** UNFPA and UNICEF have worked collaboratively at the highest levels to support governments to develop national/state action plans to end child marriage and support coordination mechanisms. This is a role for which



the United Nations is uniquely positioned and integral to ensuring that momentum towards ending child marriage continues. Nine countries have developed action plans, five of which have allocated government resources to plans. Advocacy for greater government investment, evaluation of costing strategies and tracking of budget allocations and outcomes is required over the next years of the programme to foster sustainability and support operationalization of policies/plans. Focus also needs to continue to involve strengthening legal and legislative efforts to end child marriage and other frameworks to support adolescent rights over the next phase.

**Outcome 5:** GPECM investments in research and data have contributed to building a stronger evidence base on child marriage, though to date, tracking has not offered an indication on the quality and usability of the data generated. There is a significant risk that the programme is beginning to scale up interventions without sufficient proof of efficacy, making evidence generation a top priority for the final year of the first phase. Developing the evidence base for taking strategies that are both effective and efficient to scale requires much stronger focus to position country programmes properly for the next phase.

### 4.3 SUSTAINABILITY

The GPECM has fostered sustainability through ongoing advocacy, institutionalizing approaches, strengthening systems, developing national capacities and mobilizing complementary funding. Community-level interventions were designed in such a way that durable changes can be expected.

GPECM support to strengthening systems has facilitated the expansion of service delivery to adolescent girls, though institutionalization of interventions is not monitored by the GPECM, nor are there specific indicators that measure

government ownership or capacities to take up initiatives. Efforts supported by the GPECM also show good potential to contribute to improved national monitoring systems but support for child marriage data integration into national systems has not been explicitly monitored by the GRF. Additional efforts are needed to focus programme support towards better national tracking, including real-time tracking.

Country offices engaged in the GPECM have done a remarkable job of delivering programme results with limited funds by drawing on the strategic use of pool funding and leveraging complementary resources. However, insecure and insufficient funding, along with limited capacities among implementing partners in many countries, pose challenges to the agenda to end child marriage. Continuous efforts to mobilize resources and support government and convening stakeholders will be necessary to sustain the momentum.

The GPECM has had a catalytic effect within and between countries. The GPECM has been successful in garnering broader stakeholder engagement around ending child marriage and adolescent girls' rights. While the agencies have played a key role in bringing together stakeholders at the national level, it remains to be seen the extent to which national/state action plans will be funded and operationalized at the lower levels in most of the programme countries.

GPECM-supported interventions show promise for providing scalable models and some are already being replicated, but country offices are still working on fine-tuning and providing evidence of the impact of interventions. Insufficient efforts have been put into measuring and documenting results and translating experiences into costed packages that may be taken to scale. This remains a critical need for the last year of the first phase to position the programme to accelerate models in the next phase.



#### 4.4 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

The GPECM has played a key facilitative role in bringing together the combined forces of UNFPA and UNICEF to contribute to the child marriage agenda. The GPECM has made a significant contribution to enhanced inter-sectoral and complementary collaboration on child marriage at all levels of operation. A multi-sectoral approach is seen as a more effective and efficient means of reducing girls' vulnerability to child marriage and other harmful practices but hard evidence that tests the theory has yet to be generated across countries and must be a priority to guide the next phase.

The first phase of the programme has been a growth period for designing effective management structures, yet variations in cohesiveness between countries as well as at different levels of operations remain. Joint operationalization at the sub-national level remains a key priority and challenge for the future. The criteria by which convergence is defined for the programme require further definition and guidance in the next phase to ensure a common understanding and rigorous application. While the GPECM has moved towards greater convergence and complementarity, geographic convergence has been complicated and uneven and requires definition and direction in the next phase.

The GPECM has taken positive steps to improve monitoring and reporting systems, but weaknesses persist and the GRF does not well reflect the scope of the programme. Measuring and standardizing indicators has been time-consuming and challenging at all levels. While the data generated have made some important contributions to programme direction, some

studies have been more directly targeted to the programme focus than others. A lack of focus on impacts is particularly evident. While the programme has helped to foster a learning environment within countries, opportunities for learning and sharing across countries, including high-prevalence countries that are not included in the programme, have been limited. More attention is required to strengthen systems, data generation and knowledge management for the next phase of the programme.

UNFPA and UNICEF have leveraged their respective comparative advantages to contribute to ending child marriage, focusing on interventions that fit within their technical and human resource capabilities. The bulk of programme funds have focused on Outcomes 1 and 2. This finding, combined with the evidence that reach is starting to scale up in 2018, points to the need for programme countries to ensure that there is a balance in focus across outcomes to reduce the risk of creating a demand for services that cannot be met.<sup>365</sup>

Agencies have made strategic adjustments to their approaches in the face of restricted financial resources. The GPECM has drawn heavily from available human and technical resources within both agencies to drive the programme, only a fraction of which have been funded by the GPECM. Country office utilization of complementary human resources demonstrates, on the one hand, the catalytic role that the GPECM has played. At the same time, over-reliance on human resources that are not supported by the programme to deliver results runs the risk that focus and/or quality may be compromised in the future in the face of competing agendas. Human resources inputs need to be more structured to effectively manage the programme in the next phase.

<sup>365</sup> Balance in focus across outcomes does not necessarily require additional programme resources, but demonstrated consideration to ensure needs and services are in sync.



# 5

## RECOMMENDATIONS





## RECOMMENDATION 1: Prioritize normative leadership

UNFPA and UNICEF should leverage their comparative advantage in the convening leadership role to focus on country-level normative work. Both agencies are exceptionally and uniquely well positioned for this role, holding key positions in high-level policy dialogues and sector working groups (e.g. health, social protection and education) at the country level. Operations should prioritize high-level work in convening stakeholders at every level and supporting government commitment to and ownership of the agenda to end child marriage with a view to harmonizing interventions to contribute to national or state action plans. Specifically, for the next phase:

- Strengthen and intensify GPECM focus on multi-sectoral coordination, stakeholder engagement (including CSOs and private sector) and system strengthening support to NAPs (state level, where applicable) including assessing and improving costing methodologies.
  - Continue to support the harmonization and adjustments of legal and policy frameworks in favour of adolescent rights (girls and boys) and gender equality.
  - Continue/strengthen advocacy for greater resource allocations for implementation of NAPs to ensure sustainability and resources for scaling up approaches, including working with finance ministries to this end. Elevate a focus on the economic benefits to countries to ending child marriage to spur greater investments. Monitor and evaluate progress.
- Support effective generation/management of administrative data around child marriage to increase government capacities and provide for better monitoring and targeting.
  - Measure programming effectiveness on the basis of how Governments are performing against their own policies and plans (e.g. the extent to which governments dedicate funds to initiatives; the extent to which work is operationally mainstreamed into key sectors such as health, justice, education, social; and the extent to which governments target the most vulnerable girls).

## RECOMMENDATION 2: Expand framework for country contextualization (theory of change)

Programme design for the next phase should allow for a greater degree of country-specific flexibility embedded within an overarching framework. The global theory of change should be reviewed and redesigned based on feedback from the evaluation and evaluability assessment.<sup>366</sup> Countries should continuously deepen their understanding of the underlying determinants of child marriage, drawing on experiences and learning in the first phase to develop their own theories of change that are embedded within a broader global framework. Country frameworks should define clear, cost-effective strategies for accelerating and sustaining change based on improved conceptualization of social/gender change and putting critical mass theory into practice.

<sup>366</sup> The evaluability assessment recommended detailed revision of the global theory of change following the programme evaluation in preparation for Phase II. This was accepted. The evaluability assessment also recommended an immediate revision of the global theory of change. This was not accepted. Expected completion date per the management response is September 2019. United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Evaluation Management Response – Final' (internal programme document), 10 August 2018.



### RECOMMENDATION 3: Consolidate and strengthen the evidence base and knowledge management

UNFPA and UNICEF should be more visibly positioned within the ending child marriage movement, ensuring formal linkages with key stakeholders through regular dialogue in the form of a reinvigorated Partner Advisory Group or alternative structure in the next phase of the programme. The GPECM should become a hub for elevating the profile of the agenda to end child marriage through visibility in ongoing forums, capitalizing on new evidence and research and supporting more learning events and knowledge sharing within and between countries, including countries that are not currently part of the programme.

Greater guidance is needed for country offices from the global and regional levels to generate research, with a greater focus on collaboration between the agencies for a holistic approach to research. This will require more stringent guidelines and monitoring of data generation in the next phase with a specific focus on targeting and quality assurance.

Greater attention is needed in the final year of the programme to generate the evidence needed to support scaling up. A stronger evidence base will also support resource mobilization (*see recommendation 8*). The end of Phase I should focus on consolidating the learning to date and identifying what defines a joint approach (this may vary by country), what it costs and what it delivers in terms of results. A stronger evidence base is critical to positioning the GPECM for Phase II to identify the necessary resources to support countries to progressively scale up cost-efficient, evidence-based packages.

A straightforward joint knowledge management strategy should be elaborated at the global level, drawing on the existing strategy,

that emphasizes learning and action for the next phase and that can be adapted at lower levels (regional, national). New modalities for sharing in a targeted format such as newsletters and webinars are good practices and should continue to give recognition to best practices in an accessible format that sparks interest among others. More focus is needed on regional sharing events as well as subject-specific events on key issues such as real-time reporting, local governance convergence, social/gender norms, critical mass, masculinities, communication and media, etc. Opportunities should also be expanded for sharing experiences at the local levels (provincial, district) within countries. Findings and evidence should be amplified through various media platforms at the global, regional and country levels.

### RECOMMENDATION 4: Define and monitor 'jointness', 'convergence' and 'complementarity'

The GPECM should define more clearly programmatic complementarity and geographic convergence at the provincial, district and community levels that takes into account the need to move beyond simple measures of geographical locale to assess and facilitate operational convergence at the lowest levels and enable country offices to move away from parallel programming towards synergistic approaches. Based on these definitions, the programme needs to generate clearer evidence that illustrates the efficacy of each approach so that future programming and/or scaling up is based on evidence of what works in each context (*see recommendation 3*).

Effective models may include complementarity and/or convergence (they are not mutually exclusive and may be dictated in many instances by factors beyond the control of the GPECM).



This includes complementarity at the district or provincial levels whereby agencies support key stakeholders but work in different locales.

Geographical convergence must be defined in a way that furthers the development of models of joint implementation targeting girls, boys, families and communities in the same locale and shows the benefits of this approach. Convergence is not for the sake of convergence, but for the sake of effectiveness and efficiency. Future monitoring frameworks should support the multi-sectoral convergence approach by defining and measuring 'jointness' with indicators around: 1) joint programme design and planning; 2) joint advocacy; 3) coordinated implementation; 4) joint monitoring, evidence generation and reporting of results. Whether operating under a model of convergence or complementarity (or a hybrid), monitoring frameworks should set the standards to strengthen how agencies work together beyond planning towards collaborative implementation and monitoring.

### RECOMMENDATION 5: Strengthen and contextualize monitoring and reporting systems

The evaluability assessment made numerous recommendations for improving monitoring systems, many of which have already been addressed and/or committed to by the GPECM. The evaluation supports and highlights the following:

- Develop and disseminate cost-effective means of monitoring changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices, as well as changes in social/gender norms, including qualitative data and intermediate indicators.
- Offer programmatic guidelines on optimum financial investments in monitoring and evaluation and learning.
- Develop new indicators to monitor the integration of child marriage tracking into systems outside of the GRF, such as country programme monitoring frameworks, national and lower-level administrative systems and other existing government mechanisms, including support to real-time tracking.
- Include documentation of unintended consequences (negative and positive) in annual reporting.

As part of 2018 annual reporting, the GPSU may continue to build a database of outcome and impact indicators for tracking trends over Phase I, recognizing that it will be incomplete and of limited value. Alternatively, the decision may be made at the highest level to omit tracking at the outcome and impact levels for Phase I (given lack of baselines and incomplete data) and to focus efforts on design for Phase II.

The design of the new phase of the programme offers an opportunity to refine/redesign indicators and develop intermediate indicators to track progress towards outcomes in the next phase. The GPECM should take this opportunity to design more efficient feedback loops to facilitate faster learning from monitoring and review. Indicator redesign should draw on the findings of this evaluation and cumulative learning across the GPECM. Redesign must be conducted in full consultation with UNICEF-UNFPA technical data/statistics experts as well as regional and country offices.

Review indicator definitions and measurement methods to ensure greater uniformity in the next phase. Flexibility may be built into the next phase by allowing country offices to select from a larger pool of indicators in the GRF to design country-level results frameworks that feed into larger monitoring. Specific guidance would be needed to support the development of locally contextualized results frameworks, potentially combining mandatory and optional indicators.



The next phase of the GPECM must ensure that monitoring and evaluation and reporting systems have standardized guidelines for differentiating between results that can be directly attributed to the GPECM versus those that are indirectly or partially attributed to the programme. While output indicator monitoring should be limited to those indicators that are directly attributed to the GPECM, outcome-level monitoring may capture broader changes and allow space to document partial or indirect contributions to change processes.

### RECOMMENDATION 6: Invest in human resources

Human resource requirements for the next phase of the programme should be considered in a more structured manner that uses guidelines for percentages of funds allocated for salaries and strategic allocation of staff time at different levels/sectors. As the programme begins to scale up and target more remote areas (*see recommendation 5.8 for related item*), human resources will need to be allocated strategically and effectively to manage processes and ensure quality control.

Likewise, the capacity of the GPSU should be augmented in the next phase to ensure expertise is in place in line with the programme design, including the ability to address knowledge management, global advocacy and other issues of programme management. Lines of management and technical support should be clarified between regional offices and Headquarters to provide enhanced assistance to country offices.

### RECOMMENDATION 7: Strengthen the programme

The GPECM should consider the following factors in the design of the next phase based on evaluation findings:

- Consider the interaction and balance between different programme outcomes in targeting to ensure rising demands are met with opportunities and services as the programme begins to scale up.<sup>367</sup>
- Systematically involve adolescent boys (including child grooms) and men in interventions at the community level to create a supportive environment for girls' empowerment and foster positive models of masculinity.
- Assess the ability of different approaches (including use of technologies and innovations) to intensify efforts to reach the most vulnerable, including out-of-school girls, girls who are already married, girls in remote areas, girls with disabilities, etc., to extend successful approaches to more difficult areas/individuals in the next phase, bearing in mind the additional human and financial resources required to reach those most left behind.
- Ensure programme frameworks guide the prioritization of investment in systems strengthening and accountability, supported by capacity development (including capacities to monitor and analyse critical data) to ensure scalability, sustainability and ownership.
- Ensure linkages are in place to support economic empowerment, including skills and employment/income-earning opportunities

<sup>367</sup> This does not require that the GPECM directly funds interventions across all outcomes, but that GPECM targeting demonstrates consideration of the interaction between outcomes to ensure that services and demands are addressed holistically (regardless of funding source or operational modality for different interventions).



for adolescent girls and their families to enhance sustainability of decisions to delay marriage.

- Draw on better monitoring of social/gender norms change as well critical mass theory to facilitate transference within and between communities as a scaling up strategy.

Evaluation findings and conclusions do not lead the team to recommend expanding the number of programme countries based on current levels of financial and human resources. Furthermore, findings do not suggest that any of the programme countries are in a position to consider phasing out at this point in time, as each country needs to consolidate its evidence base and build on the learning components of the first phase to deepen efforts in the second phase. Still, those countries that show signs of sustainability (e.g. established multi-sectoral stakeholder base, secure funding and strong government ownership) may be well considered as candidates for phasing out in the third phase of the GPECM, allowing the programme to bring in new high prevalence countries that should be able to move swiftly based on the cumulative learning of the programme during the first phases. Future phases may consider giving preference to expanding operations in the Middle East and North Africa/Arab States region as well as those countries dealing with humanitarian crisis situations to address hot-spots and allow for greater synergistic learning within the programme on ending child marriage within crisis situations.

## RECOMMENDATION 8: Find funds

Insecure funding ultimately limits the ability of the programme to plan strategically. Greater commitment is needed in the next phase of the programme to ensure predictable funding streams to the extent possible, complemented by continued efforts to mobilize resources at all levels.<sup>368</sup> Country offices should continue to employ successful strategies to maximize programme reach, including the strategic use of pool funding as well as leveraging complementary human and financial resources.

Programme design and prioritization in the next phase must bear in mind the reality of donor commitments and the funding environment and structure accordingly, not based on a wish list. Bilateral donor funding is unpredictable in principle and domestic political contexts are ever changing. Strategies may draw off of the resource mobilization strategy designed for the programme moving forward, but ultimately, if the programme cannot find funds, it must find a narrower focus (*see recommendation 1*).

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<sup>368</sup> Consistent with evaluability assessment recommendations to develop and implement a resource mobilization strategy and allocate two-year funding commitments to country offices, which was agreed to by management. The strategy was finalized in early 2018 but is yet to yield results at this stage. United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Evaluation Management Response – Final' (internal programme document), 10 August 2018.



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