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ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE AND REWRITING THE FUTURE OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS

BURKINA FASO, ETHIOPIA, AND MOZAMBIQUE

REPORT TO THE ITALIAN AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FOR THEIR 2014–17 GRANT TO UNFPA



Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

NAME OF PROGRAMME	Ending Child Marriage and Rewriting the Future for Adolescent Girls in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Mozambique
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RELEVANT SDG TARGETS	<p>Target 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation</p> <p>Target 5.6: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences</p> <p>Target 3.7: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes</p>
KEY UNFPA STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES	<p>Outcome 2: Increased priority on adolescents, especially on very young adolescent girls, in national development policies and programmes, particularly increased availability of comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health</p> <p>Output 8: Increased capacity of partners to design and implement comprehensive programmes to reach marginalized adolescent girls including those at risk of child marriage</p>
GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS AREA	Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Global
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1

BACKGROUND ON ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE AND UNFPA'S EFFORTS

Background on child marriage

Child marriage, defined as a formal marriage or informal union before age 18, is a global issue impacting the lives of millions of girls each year and hindering progress towards development the world over. Globally, more than 700 million girls and women alive today were married as children. More than one in three of these (about 250 million) entered into union before age 15. There is significant variation in the prevalence of child marriage between regions and countries, and within countries. Child marriage is most common among girls in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, and the 10 countries with the highest rates are found in these two regions. However, certain countries in the Middle East and in Latin America also have significant rates of child marriage.

- Globally 21 percent of women aged 20-24 were married by the age of 18, and 5 percent were married by the age of 15.
- The total number of girls married in childhood is now estimated at 12 million a year.
- The prevalence of child marriage has declined by 15 per

cent in the past decade. The new figures point to an accumulated global reduction of 25 million fewer marriages than would have been anticipated under global levels 10 years ago.

- However, to end the practice by 2030 – the target set out in the Sustainable Development Goals – progress must be significantly accelerated. Without further acceleration, more than 150 million additional girls will marry before their 18th birthday by 2030.
- Worldwide, an estimated 650 million girls and women alive today were married as children.
- South Asia has led the way on reducing the prevalence of child marriage over the last decade, from nearly 50 per cent to 30 per cent. The global burden of child marriage is now shifting to sub-Saharan Africa, which now has the highest prevalence of child marriage and has seen only modest declines in the past decade. Rates of progress need to be scaled up dramatically to offset population growth.
- Of the most recently married child brides, close to 1 in 3 are now in sub-Saharan Africa, compared to 1 in 5 ten years ago.

The world has recognized that child marriage is a violation of human rights and robs girls of their education, health and long-term prospects. Key markers of global momentum on this issue include the creation of Girls Not Brides in 2011, the first International Day of The Girl Child in 2012, the 2013 United Nations Human Rights Council resolution and the 2014 General Assembly resolution, commitments made at the 2014 Girl Summit, and the UN Sustainable Development Goal target 5.3 on eliminating child marriage adopted in 2015.

UNFPA's efforts on ending child marriage

UNFPA has been championing the end of child marriage since it was articulated in the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, and has been actively supporting programmatic and policy interventions on child marriage since the mid-2000s. On the first International Day of the Girl Child in 2012 focused on child marriage, UNFPA and partners organized a high-level panel at the UN featuring Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, Elder Desmond Tutu, and others (<http://www.unfpa.org/events/international-day-girl-child-0>). On the same day, Stephanie Sinclair's photo exhibit *Too Young to Wed* supported by UNFPA/VII was unveiled. UNFPA also released the first comprehensive data report on child marriage coming from the UN System. This was also the occasion for the launch of UNFPA's *Action for Adolescent Girls*, a multi-country, multi-year initiative.

UNFPA's Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, identified child marriage as a priority at the impact level, and under Output 8, which is dedicated to building the health, social and economic assets of adolescent girls, particularly those at risk of and affected by child marriage. The programmatic implications are further elaborated in the 2013 Strategy on Adolescents and Youth, which are operationalized in *Action for Adolescent Girls*. The initiative has focused on: using disaggregated data on adolescents to identify geographic hotspots of child marriage and adolescent pregnancy, while working with partners to invest in these hotspots; ensuring adolescent girls' access to life skills, age-appropriate sexuality education and a package of health services including sexual and reproductive health services; giving girls opportunities for participation; and documenting and evaluating this body of work across countries. UNFPA's sectoral efforts on child marriage bring together an understanding of population dynamics, and age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health information and services including those for family planning, maternal health and HIV, while accounting for gender dynamics and cultural context.

A robust theory of change underlies UNFPA's evidence-based approach to ending child marriage and supporting married girls. Supporting governments and other partners in building the knowledge, skills, and assets of large numbers of girls at risk of marriage and pregnancy, in sub-national areas where child marriage and adolescent pregnancy are concentrated, can over time effect an increase in the age at marriage and pregnancy in those areas. Focusing on adolescent girls at risk in sub-national areas not only allows governments to reach a critical mass of girls, unmarried and married, but also presents significant cost efficiencies. This concentration of investment in itself helps elevate the status of all adolescent girls, changes norms by changing what is normal, and catalyzes a reduction in child marriage and adolescent pregnancy not only in those geographic areas but nationally as well. Complementarily, national and global advocacy help to build both political will and financing for programs that invest in girls and their families.

UNFPA strategy and workplans follow an ecological model, beginning by working at the level of the adolescent girl, expanding tactically to encompass her social and economic environment, strengthening service delivery systems, and facilitating the right investments at the national, regional and global levels. The programme interventions and strategies at all levels are designed with the needs of the core client in mind i.e. girls at risk of and affected by child marriage.

This report covers the period of 2015 to 2017 during which UNFPA received bilateral support from Italy (EUR750,000) for child marriage programming. Also in 2015, the UK Department for International Development began supporting UNFPA's work on child marriage. In 2016, with the support of Canada, the EU, Italy, Netherlands, and the UK, UNFPA and UNICEF came together to formally establish and launch the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage. This programme covers 12 countries (including Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Mozambique), and is now the flagship child marriage initiative for both institutions. The Italian support to UNFPA was critical for the Global Programme, supporting country-level programming in 2015 and 2016, and technical support from headquarters in 2015 and 2017 (at project inception and closing). This report should thus be read in conjunction with the Phase 1 report of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage for a complete picture of the results of the programme.



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RESULTS

This chapter presents results achieved in the three programme countries, primarily in 2015 and 2016. Where relevant it also discusses results from complementary investments from the Global Programme to End Child Marriage.

OUTCOME 1: EMPOWERING GIRLS

Key activities and results in ensuring increased agency and resources for adolescent girls at risk of and affected by child marriage

- ✓ Enhanced government and CSO capacity for evidence-based programming for adolescent girls
- ✓ Developed and applied strategies and tools for identification of/outreach to girls at risk
- ✓ Developed and contextualized content and curricula
- ✓ Created girl groups and networks to build their social capital
- ✓ Provided opportunities for adolescent girls leadership and civic participation

At the heart of UNFPA's programming on child marriage is the evidence-based assumption that empowering girls — enhancing their voices and increasing their access to information, services, and resources — with secondary/linked interventions on community engagement, and policy and legal change can help girls and families delay age at marriage and improve girls' well-being. In the cadre of this grant, UNFPA Country Offices worked through several partners to support the formation of girl groups or clubs that met regularly in a safe space (identified by the girls and validated by the community) in order to build girls' health, social, economic, and cognitive assets. In these groups, girls learn life skills, SRH information, financial literacy, their rights, and more from older female mentors. These girl-centered interventions provided opportunities for 13,555 girls to access health services, and social participation and leadership in the three programme countries (and a total of over 65,000 adolescent girls in 12

countries, as part of UNFPA’s efforts in the inception phase of the Global Programme).

Many civil society organizations - including women’s organizations, youth-led organizations, and faith-based organizations - as well as government agencies are implementing such programmes, and UNFPA’s support to them has a distinct value added.

- Relatively few countries (and sub-national areas within countries) have evidence-informed, girl-centered programmes for child marriage underway. Institutions implementing such programmes have variable capacity to implement with fidelity to evidence-based models (reaching girls, reaching the right girls, having appropriate content, recruiting the right staff, payments/salaries etc). UNFPA has been working intensively with several partners in order to improve multiple aspects of programme design and implementation.
- Secondly, as detailed in the chapter on Data and Evidence, UNFPA is supporting efforts to use data in this programming process, to improve monitoring data and systems, and enrich the evidence base around this work.
- Finally, and critically, UNFPA has been taking the learnings from these programmes and connecting it to the larger policy discourse on child marriage and gender equality, and to large scale programmatic investments (as described in the chapter on national momentum and systems).

In *Burkina Faso*, the girls’ programme was implemented in one health district in the East region. Training manuals and curriculum for girls’ clubs were adapted on the basis of local and regional experiences, including from the UNFPA Niger Country Office, Population Council, and the experience of Mwangaza, the NGO implementing partner. Seven skilled community workers were intensively trained who in turn supported 70 female mentors in conducting girls’ clubs in safe spaces, as well as community sensitizations. The mentors identified were trusted resource persons in each community, and were chosen by the participant girls themselves. They were trained on the topics in the facilitation manual and equipped with skills to facilitate group work in the clubs that met twice a month. The themes covered were: early marriage, female genital mutilation, legal rights, and reproductive health, STIs/HIV and AIDS, and family planning.



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In *Ethiopia*, the programme supported the Office of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (at the district level) under the overall coordination of the Bureau of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (at regional level) to reach adolescent girls in three districts of Afar Regional State (Mille, Adaar and Chifra). Girls (half of them married, the other half unmarried) were reached through girls’ clubs that met every other week, led by 60 female mentors. The clubs provided a space for adolescent girls to discuss, learn and share information on issues related to child marriage, FGM, HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health and communication skills. Adolescent girls attending formal school were also provided with educational and dignity/sanitary materials to reduce barriers to their educational attendance and attainment. The programme also conducted school level sensitization on girls’ rights to help create a conducive and safe school environment for adolescent girls. The Joint Programme on FGM was also operational in the same project districts with focus on community mobilization, law enforcement, health education and service provision and advocacy. Both projects thus reinforced each other’s messaging and approaches.

In *Mozambique*, adolescent girls were reached through Girl Biz, a version of a popular and successful programme known as Geração Biz. This programme was developed by UNFPA as a direct response to the evaluation of Programa Geração Biz (PGB) - meaning 'Busy Generation' - which showed that the poorest girls had been relatively left behind by this national programme. Girl Biz brings together one of the biggest strengths of the Geração Biz programme i.e. ASRH service provision at scale (covering 90% of the country), with the girls groups model which has been showing impacts in many contexts on girls' outcomes such as age at marriage and pregnancy, and experience of violence. The vision for this programme, operational since 2013, is for it to follow on and improve upon the trajectory of PGB. By the end of the programme cycle, approximately 50% of the girls had visited the youth-friendly services or a health facility for sexual and reproductive health, such as HIV counselling and testing, family planning, and general health issues. Monitoring data show that only 1.5% of these girls became pregnant at follow-up.

OUTCOME 2: PROMOTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMITMENT

Key activities and results in increasing social action, acceptance, and visibility around investing in and supporting girls, and generating shifts in social expectations relating to girls

- ✓ Identification of communities of intervention based on data, national priorities, and agency presence
- ✓ Recruitment of local staff and establishing operations
- ✓ Familiarizing communities with the girls' programmes
- ✓ Advocating with key stakeholders
- ✓ Large audience behavior change communication approaches

Engaging communities is widely recognized as an essential aspect of programming in many areas of development, including in the field of child marriage. The community elements are designed to be complementary to investments in girls' health, education, and life skills etc. In 2015-16, communities, including parents, families, traditional and religious leaders were sensitized on issues affecting girls (including the legal age at marriage). They were also made aware of what was being planned in the girls' programmes in order to ensure their support and buy-in. The objective for subsequent years is to progress to a stage where communities understand their accountability towards girls and

deliver on commitments to girls. This is of course conditional on other actors, including governments, doing their part. Measuring changes in community members' support for girls, not just in terms of changes in attitudes but in terms of their behaviours, means that the community commits to allowing girls to enroll in school and in other programmes, releasing them from some part of their household chores so that they have the time to participate, providing physical spaces for girls' programmes, allowing girls to be connected to health and banking services, etc.

The selection of regions and communities of intervention was primarily based on analysis of data in terms of prevalence of child marriage and other poor outcomes for girls, as well as absolute numbers of girls. Other determining factors include national priorities, and agency and partner presence. Once communities were chosen and local staff were recruited and trained by implementing partners, advocacy and sensitization programmes began to be rolled out.

Engaging community leaders, faith-based leaders, and other key local gatekeepers is generally an important first step, followed by wider community engagement. In *Burkina Faso*, advocacy meetings were organized with communities in the Eastern region to promote girls' rights, delay the age of marriage, and



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make communities aware of the benefits of keeping girls in school. Notably, these advocacy meetings and home visits were conducted by adolescent girls who were trained as community liaison agents to support mentors. The same girls also held educational sessions in schools over three months, communicating the same messages to children and teachers.

In *Ethiopia*, community sensitization on child marriage was conducted by dedicated staff as part of the FGM programme, in an example of improving efficiency in programming.

Mozambique initially faced several challenges in securing the active involvement of community leaders. However during the course of 2015, specific programmatic emphasis on engaging them resulted in a total of 123 community gatherings - led by mentors and adolescent girls - across the four provinces.

In addition to working with families and leaders in the communities, Country Offices employed mass media behavioral change communications strategies. The strategies were diverse providing opportunities for learning on what works - a cartoon miniseries for TV, a documentary, radio emissions, and an adolescent girl's brand. In *Burkina Faso*, the Buayaba community radio station transmitted 12 audio programmes to mobilize communities against child marriage. The radio messages were supplemented by theater-forums and debates at health centers to enable interpersonal communication, and informal talks and family visits to raise awareness and get public commitments to promote the rights of girls in the region.

TABLE 1: Programme reach

The table below presents the number of girls that were reached through empowerment approaches, and community members that were reached through social and behavioral change communication efforts.

	GIRLS REACHED	COMMUNITY MEMBERS REACHED	TOTAL
Burkina Faso	2,637	10,000	12,637
Ethiopia	3,600		3,600
Mozambique	7,318	6,945	14,263
Total	13,555	16,945	24,263

OUTCOME 3: STRENGTHENING SECTORAL SYSTEMS

Key activities and results in enhancing systems and services across sectors that are responsive to the needs of adolescent girls at risk of or affected by child marriage, reaching them at scale

- ✓ Making health systems more adolescent-girl friendly
- ✓ Connecting the investments in girls clubs and health services to ensure access and utilization

UNFPA has expertise in supporting governments in the provision of sexual and reproductive health information and services covering contraceptives, STI/HIV, maternal health, and gender-based violence response. UNFPA also has expertise in the areas of adolescent-friendly health services, which complement the provision of sexuality education. UNFPA's support to governments and other partners covers a range of activities, from sectoral policy development and governance, to health workforce training, equipment and commodities, and health information systems. In the context of ending child marriage, this expertise translates to ensuring quality SRH information and services are reaching adolescent girls, as a part of integrated health services.

In *Burkina Faso*, an integrated model of health services tailored to adolescents was offered in 10 primary health centers. Health workers (nurses and midwives) received capacity building training to offer health services adapted to adolescents, and act as focal points of the project. Specific time slots were allocated for girls to access services. Awareness raising sessions on reproductive health and family planning were carried out by health agents. Girls in clubs were informed of the special hours for services and the kinds of services available. An end of the year evaluation carried out by the IP and UNFPA staff with all stakeholders showed that attendance of health centers was relatively low in comparison to what was expected with the numbers in the girls' clubs. Health workers identified different factors, from low motivation to lack of travel means to go to the health center as barriers.

Similarly in *Ethiopia*, the programme supported the establishment of an integrated service delivery model targeting adolescent girls within 10 government health facilities. During the reporting period, the process was initiated by conducting a

consultative and dialogue session with a total of 38 health staff from the health facilities. The sessions aimed at enhancing the readiness of health staff to address the broader sexual and reproductive health issues affecting adolescent girls, and their d expectations from the health sector.

In *Mozambique*, nearly half of the girls from the girls' clubs visited youth-friendly services or a health facility for services related to sexual and reproductive health, such as HIV counselling and testing, family planning, and general health issues.

OUTCOME 4: CREATING AN ENABLING LEGAL AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Key activities and results in enhancing legal and development policy frameworks for an enabling environment that protects the rights of adolescent girls

- ✓ Global and regional momentum translated into national momentum and political will
- ✓ Relationships with government partners strengthened
- ✓ National plans and strategies on child marriage developed and implementation supported
- ✓ African Union Campaign launches supported
- ✓ Legal reform supported

The global momentum on child marriage has both been a result of and has contributed to national momentum on child marriage in several countries. The UN plays a critical role in supporting governments to design policies and programmes based on the latest national and international data and evidence. In the domain of adolescent girls and child marriage, UNFPA worked with the Ministries of Health, Education, Gender, and Youth to advance policies and accompanying programmes that affect girls. UNFPA was seen as a critical partner in many issues relevant to adolescent girls and child marriage due to its national expertise on data (including census and DHS), as well as on sexual and reproductive health and rights including adolescent pregnancy, family planning, maternal health, HIV, and gender-based violence. All of these SRH issues are central to policy and programming to prevent child marriage and support married girls.

National strategies and action plans

UNFPA strengthened its relationships with the various ministries and began a much more intensive process of support - with other agencies and NGO partners - to



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government policy processes related to child marriage. The most obvious manifestation of this technical and financial support was the national strategies and action plans that were released between 2015-17. *Burkina Faso*¹ and *Mozambique*² developed costed National Action Plans demonstrating commitment to action to end child marriage by national governments. This is critical to the sustainability of the movement and to fostering a policy and legislative environment that enables girls' empowerment and targets action towards ending child marriage. In Ethiopia, UNFPA was the vice-chair of the National Alliance to End Child Marriage and FGM.

Many countries with high prevalence of child marriage have chosen to pursue national strategies and plans to address child marriage since it is a multifaceted problem, requires investments across sectors, and so that efforts are coordinated across actors (governmental and non-governmental). The development of these strategies usually involved a tremendous amount of coordination and consultation, and the technical expertise to ensure that as far as possible, the plans were evidence-based and actionable. UNFPA partnered with Girls Not Brides and UNICEF in the development of a checklist for national action plans that will help assess whether these plans meet certain quality standards³

1 Burkina Faso national strategy: <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Burkina-Faso-National-Strategy-2016-2025-Nov-2015.pdf>

2 Mozambique national strategy coverage: <http://esaro.unfpa.org/news/preventing-child-marriage-mozambique>
<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mozambique-children-marriage-idUKKCNOX826T>

3 Girls Not Brides National Strategies Checklist http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2016_03-GNB-Check-list-for-National-Strategies.pdf

AU Campaign in country

UNFPA provided technical and financial support to national-level activities of the AU Campaign as well. During the programme period, Burkina Faso⁴ launched the AU Campaign (Ethiopia and Niger previously). The campaign launches were a critical opportunity to engage the government in deepening their support to the issue of child marriage as well as the evidence-based approaches promoted by this programme.

Legal reform

Political momentum, national campaigns and strategies are often an important basis for driving fundamental legal and legislative changes in countries. The strategies from the African continent discussed above usually contain a pillar on legal reform. UNFPA country offices have taken additional measures to help governments strengthen legal provisions, and harmonize statutory and customary law.

OUTCOME 5: GENERATING DATA AND EVIDENCE

Key activities and results in increasing generation and use of a robust data and evidence base on adolescent girls for advocacy,

- ✓ Deepening understanding of the data and evidence gaps
- ✓ Surveys and baselines
- ✓ Situation analyses
- ✓ Desk reviews
- ✓ Impact evaluations

UNFPA has a mandate to support national population data collection and dissemination activities, and has traditionally had strengths in support to census and Demographic and Health Surveys. UNFPA's Strategic Plan 2014-2017 Output 6 sets as an organizational priority increased national capacity to conduct evidence-based advocacy for incorporating adolescents and youth and their human rights/needs in national laws, policies and programmes as an organizational priority. Output 8 focused on evidence-based programming for adolescent girls has in turn been generating evidence since at least 2006.

Following a technical consultation workshop on child marriage with global, regional and country offices in Addis Ababa in 2015, several UNFPA offices chose to strategically focus on filling gaps in data and evidence vis-a-vis prevalence, determinants, and what works.

4 Burkina Faso AU Campaign launch: <https://au.int/pt/node/27020>



To ensure that investments reach adolescent girls most in need, we start with a process of mapping the internal diversity of adolescents' lives within countries. It involves the disaggregation of data to identify high concentrations of adolescent girls at high risk of events such as child marriage, early and unwanted pregnancy. *Burkina Faso* used census data and a baseline mapping of 4300 adolescents to inform interventions, and is planning further surveys and mapping exercises in other regions.

Reliable prevalence estimates of child marriage underpin efforts to end child marriage. Long gaps between surveys pose a challenge in measuring progress in many domains, including in child marriage. In Ethiopia for example, the last MICS was in 1995, the last census was in 2007, and last DHS in 2011. The National Alliance to End Harmful Practices made the decision to not conduct its own survey and instead work with technical partners such as UNFPA to ensure all requisite questions were included in the 2016 DHS. UNFPA *Ethiopia* thus provided both technical and financial support to the survey.

While simple estimates of the prevalence of child marriage exist for all countries in the Global Programme, more nuanced data analyses that provide insight into the drivers of child marriage and potentials levers of action are less common. UNFPA (and UNICEF) *Mozambique* provided technical and financial support to a similar analysis in 2015. The study⁵ and the policy brief⁶ formed an important basis for the national strategy on child marriage.

5 Mozambique study: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/9401/pdf/en_statistical_analysis_child_marriage_adolescent_pregnancy_aw-low-res.pdf

6 Mozambique policy brief: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/9401/pdf/en_moz_child_marriage_aw-low-res.pdf



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3

FURTHERING GLOBAL AND REGIONAL MOMENTUM, AND BUILDING NATIONAL CAPACITY

Key activities and results

- ✓ Supporting countries in developing strategies and policies to address child marriage
- ✓ Building global and regional momentum with partners
- ✓ Strengthening the architecture of UN action on child marriage

In the lead-up to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Agenda, UNFPA and UNICEF, along with partners such as Italy and other donors to the Global Programme, have been striving to build a global movement to end child marriage, and a body of work across countries. Between 2015 and 2017, UNFPA headquarters efforts were concentrated on three

elements, (1) technical assistance to countries (2) global advocacy, and (3) programme management and coordination. Regional efforts similarly focused on technical assistance and regional advocacy.

Technical assistance

In order to build a coherent programme across countries, the vision and strategies for the programme are centrally crafted, with regional and in-country activities determined by the expertise of field staff based on the context. The programme was shaped at the first technical workshop organized in Addis Ababa in March 2015⁷ (which was in part

⁷ Technical workshop report: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aXJV9ZBTFrhJWc6qO CKtklsgu39oIUfs/view?usp=sharing>

supported by the Italian grant). In October 2015, with support from complementary resources, the West and Central Africa regional office also brought together all the country office staff working on the Joint Programmes on Child Marriage and FGM to increase knowledge and use of the latest evidence, existing evaluated models, and good practices for planning and programming for 2016 and beyond, and to strengthen capacities of staff members on results-based management principles. The first joint workshop of UNFPA and UNICEF was also organized during this grant period, and was focused on the Eastern and Southern African region (Ethiopia, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia). Finally, an expert group meeting on promoting evidence-based programming for adolescent girls was organized looking at what works for girls' education, health, economic empowerment, child marriage, social norms, and communications. An accessible report from the meeting as well as presentations were disseminated to Country Offices⁸.

Global advocacy

UNFPA advocated with partners in a variety of fora for the importance of investing in girls to ensure gender equality, reduce child marriage, adolescent pregnancy, gender-based violence, and sexually transmitted infections. Consistent institutional advocacy contributed to the inclusion of the issue in the SDGs⁹. Following this important milestone, the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme was launched, positioning it as the flagship UN programme on this issue¹⁰. Keeping the focus on this population, the celebration of the International Day of the Girl bore the theme of "The Power of the Adolescent Girl, Vision for 2030"¹¹. Further high-level engagement¹² included a UN forum on adolescent girls organized by UNFPA, and a visit with the Secretary General to a partner's girls' programme currently being scaled up by UNFPA Nigeria with the government. Partnership with civil society alliances such as Girls Not Brides allowed for joint advocacy with magnified

impact¹³. This was reinforced by mass media activities such as the I DON'T Valentine's Day campaign¹⁴.

Programme management and coordination

Programme management involved helping formulate, reviewing and approving Country Office and Regional Office Annual Work Plans in line with overall programme priorities; financial management; financial and results reporting; as well as fundraising. In 2015-16, UNFPA secured grants from Canada¹⁵, UK¹⁶ and the UN Foundation¹⁷. Constant and consistent communication with Country Offices to update them on the status of the programme and overall expectations helped build an important community of practice across Country Offices.

TABLE 2: Financial reporting

The below table shows utilization by Country Offices and headquarters against allocations as per approved annual work plans. The grant was completely implemented (unspent balance below USD5000). As per the grant arrangement, certified financial statements were provided for 2015, 2016 and 2017, showing expenses by UNDG-approved categories.

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Balance forwarded	929,368	405,873	107,051	4,992
UTILIZATION				
Burkina Faso	171,095	66,948	-59	
Ethiopia	47,189	230,688	0	
Mozambique	264,519	1,188	0	
Headquarters	40,692	-2	102,118	
Total utilized	523,495	298,822	102,059	924,376

8 Report from expert meeting on evidence-based programming for adolescent girls: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxmHys-JG2DNbVBxM2dKYnA0R1k/view?usp=sharing>

9 Sustainable Development Goals <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>

10 Global Programme launch <http://nytlive.nytimes.com/womenintheworld/2016/03/08/u-n-launches-initiative-to-end-child-marriage-for-millions-of-girls/>

11 International Day of the Girl Child <http://www.unfpa.org/press/power-adolescent-girl-vision-2030>

12 High-level forum <http://www.unfpa.org/events/high-level-forum-adolescent-girls-and-agenda-2030>
Secretary General visit <http://www.unfpa.org/news/girls-rights-are-priority-say-un-chief-and-unfpa-executive-director>

13 Refer to Global Programme's note on civil society engagement, available upon request.

14 I DON'T campaign
2015 <http://www.unfpa.org/news/valentine%E2%80%99s-day-young-people-around-world-say-idont-child-marriage>
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-babatunde-osotimehin/its-time-to-say-idont-let_b_6680826.html
2016 <http://www.unfpa.org/news/say-idont-fight-child-marriage-valentines-day>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOYqm7n0WE>

15 Global Affairs Canada Project Browser: <https://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/project-projet/details/D002465001>

16 DFID DevTracker: <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-204496>

17 UN Foundation Press release: <https://girlup.org/about/press-releases/girl-up-announces-new-funding-initiative-support-adolescent-girls-india/>



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4

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The Italian grant to UNFPA supported the institution's first major multicountry programme on adolescent girls and child marriage at UNFPA. It provided the opportunity to lay the foundations for long-term advocacy, policy reform, and programmatic action but also for valuable learning and growth. The organization and staff encountered challenges and successes at all levels (global, regional, and national) which provided useful lessons for the programme going forward.

Political will

Where the political climate was favorable and leadership was willing, there were tremendous opportunities for developing national strategies and action plans to end child marriage, and coming together with partners to support their implementation in a coordinated, coherent manner. In addition to the child marriage specific policy products, the programme also supported the development and implementation of sectoral

policies in health, youth, gender, and education. Particularly where the political climate didn't permit direct action on child marriage, the sectoral policies provided an opportunity to advance relevant interventions that directly or indirectly contribute to reductions in child marriage.

Capacity to implement

Even where political will was present, limited ownership and/or capacity of the focal ministries in charge of developing and implementing these national plans and sectoral strategies presented challenges. This will need to be addressed through continuous capacity building efforts and technical support. These efforts will involve improving understanding among country-level actors on the national and international evidence base on what works to end child marriage, using data in a programmatically relevant way, encouraging innovation in approaches, and designing programmes for scale.



Coordination

Coordination and synergies between stakeholders including ministries, development partners and civil society is not straightforward. UNFPA and UNICEF came together to convene actors usually at the behest of the government who is in the lead, to support governments and CSOs in improving coordination. The programme will continue to work to achieve more unified plans at country level between stakeholders (such as optimizing geographic presence, promoting complementary and effective interventions, etc.)

Community-level programming

Community-level programming has to date rarely been rigorously evaluated and when it has been, it has shown limited effects unless it is implemented in tandem with (and secondary to) programmes that are able to alter girl-level outcomes such as girls' education. Programming directly reaching girls comes with its own set of obstacles. However, health and education systems do offer some possibility of scale and also offer economies of scale. UNFPA will be increasingly working with government to ensure more effective targeting in their programmes, and improved service quality (supply side interventions)

Impact measurement

The programme's focus on data and evidence is a vehicle to build the evidence on what works to end child marriage but is also a way to evaluate the programme's own effectiveness.

While many organizations working on child marriage are focused on rigorous impact evaluations, randomized trials do not necessarily lend themselves to answering all questions, and cannot offer insights into what works across contexts or across heterogeneous types of beneficiaries. This is especially true of the upstream work on advocacy and policy support on child marriage and sectoral work in health, education, child protection, social protection and more. So in order to deliver useful evidence as well as be evaluable as a programme, going forward, efforts will be made to better define the kinds of research that should be supported through the programme - for example, defining the types of individual programmatic elements and innovations that are scalable through government systems.

CONCLUSION

Despite these challenges, 2015-17 was a time of tremendous progress towards ending child marriage for many countries, many partners, UNFPA, and most importantly for girls that continue to be at risk of child marriage, adolescent pregnancy, and other violations of their rights. UNFPA recognizes that child marriage is an important determinant and thus an integral part of sexual and reproductive health and rights. The 2018-21 Strategic Plan recognizes this and elevates the issue to being one of the three transformative results we aim for, zero gender-based violence and harmful practices by 2030. With the support of global, regional, and national actors, we continue to march relentlessly towards this goal.



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**BURKINA FASO, ETHIOPIA,
AND MOZAMBIQUE**

REPORT TO THE ITALIAN AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FOR THEIR 2014–17 GRANT TO UNFPA



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and International Cooperation