



**UNICEF and
the Government
of Canada:
Accelerating the
Movement to End
Child, Early and
Forced Marriage
FINAL DONOR REPORT 2017**

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List of Acronyms

DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESARO	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, UNICEF
FGM/C	female genital mutilation/cutting
ICRW	International Centre for Research on Women
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GAP	Gender Action Plan
MENA	Middle East and Northern Africa

MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
NGO	non-governmental organization
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
SAIEVAC	South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East
WCAR	West and Central Africa Region

Programme Summary

Programme/ project name	Accelerating the Movement to End Child, Early and Forced Marriage Initiative
Donor	Canada
PBA reference	SC140275
Total contribution	20 million Canadian dollars Funds received in US\$18,099,547.52
Programmable amount	US\$17,019,903.31 ¹
Funds used to date	US\$14,575,196.82
Unspent balance	US\$3,524,350.69 ²
Duration of grant	April 2014 – March 2016 (extended until 31 March 2017)
Report type	Final – Global Recipient Offices: ESAR Regional Office, ROSA Regional Office, WCAR Regional Office, Data, Research and Policy, Programme Division, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Yemen and Zambia
Reporting period	April 2014 – March 2016 (extended until 31 March 2017)
Report due date	31 May 2017 to donor
Report prepared on	31 May 2017

Relevant SDG targets and UNICEF Strategic Plan priorities	<p>SDGs 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation</p> <p>UNICEF Strategic Plan: Outcome P6: Increased national capacity to provide access to child protection systems that prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect</p> <p>Output P6.b.4: Countries (of those with child marriage prevalence 25 per cent or higher) with national strategies or plans on child marriage with a budget</p>
Objective	To galvanize stronger programmatic action, political support and resources towards ending child marriage, and to generate consensus, based on evidence, on the best ways to achieve results at scale
Geographic focus area	ESAR Regional Office, ROSA Regional Office, WCAR Regional Office, targeted areas in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Yemen and Zambia
Focus population	<p>Focus population: Adolescent girls (age 10–19) considered at risk of child marriage and their communities, out-of-school girls or girls considered at risk of dropping out, health workers, schools community members in the targeted areas in the six countries: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Yemen and Zambia</p> <p>To galvanize stronger programmatic action, political support and resources towards ending child marriage and to generate consensus, UNICEF works with the relevant ministries in the countries of focus (Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, etc.).</p>

Programme partners	Governments at both national and sub-national levels, regional bodies engaged in relevant initiatives (African Union and the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children), academic institutions, international and national non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, religious communities and faith-based organizations, the private sector and the media in the six countries of focus.
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¹ Funds received minus indirect support cost 8 per cent.

² As of 31 December 2016.

UNICEF is bringing programming to scale to reach more than 268,000 girls and 3.7 million community members, gatekeepers, decision makers and influencers in programme countries.



Executive Summary

In the pursuit of the broad goals of ending violence, exploitation and abuse against girls and empowering them as agents of change for a more gender equitable world, eliminating child marriage is a central strategic goal for international development, as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), under target 5.3 on harmful practices. Recognizing that children are not able to freely and fully consent to marriage, the target underscores that child marriage is a violation of human rights that affects the lives of millions of girls in every region of the world and places a strain on human progress by perpetuating deprivation, inequality and disadvantage across generations. As existing data are increasingly analysed through the lens of adolescence, the dangers posed to girls include gender inequality, especially as presented in child marriage, early pregnancy, discrimination and harmful traditional practices.

UNICEF's aim in addressing child marriage is closely linked to promoting gender equality and fits within its Strategic Plan generally and Gender Action Plan more specifically. In working towards a more equitable world, UNICEF has adopted a rights-based approach to programming. This focus is evident in programming around sexual health and reproductive rights, but also important with regard to promoting good governance to support those rights-based approaches in a way that is sustainable, focusing on normative change in behaviour, attitudes and governance, particularly those pertaining to gender. UNICEF's programming aims to use existing infrastructure, build the capacity of regional partners, increase government commitments, and target whole

communities for attitudinal change to sustainably alter the intergenerational transmission of child marriage behaviours. UNICEF's long-standing presence in countries around the world, strong partnerships with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), regional governing bodies and national governments, and commitment to evidence-based work on improving gender equality mean that it is uniquely positioned to take forward this work to end child marriage.

Against this background, UNICEF gratefully received a three-year contribution from the Government of Canada to work in six countries (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Yemen and Zambia) with policy, communities and evidence generation around ending child marriage. This report summarizes the headline results and programmatic activities covering the activities undertaken by UNICEF in 2014–2017.

Results overview

POLICY

Over the time period of the grant, UNICEF increased its engagement with global, regional and national policy actors to reach consensus on how to increase efforts to end child marriage. The headline result in this area is the inclusion of reducing child marriage as part of the post-2015 development framework, as seen in Sustainable Development Goal 5.3 on harmful practices. Additionally, UNICEF worked with regional actors South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic

Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the African Union to develop Regional Action Plans.

COMMUNICATIONS AND SYSTEMS

At the national level, at the end of 2016 five of the six countries had drafted national action plans; three had launched their strategies, one (Burkina Faso) was already costed and costing was in progress for four of the other five countries. National-level governments and leaders have aligned themselves to UNICEF's goals to reduce child marriage in public and meaningful ways. National leaders have taken part in Girl Summit, African Girl Summit, and International Day of the Girl events, but also followed their public declarations with financial support for direct-to-girl programming as well as sectoral strengthening.

UNICEF has worked to bring girl-level programming to scale, reaching more than 268,000 girls through girls' clubs, vocational and life skills training, legal training, and more. UNICEF has also actively engaged local actors and community members to sensitize gatekeepers and decision makers on the dangers of child marriage and to encourage them to speak out against the practice. These programmes have reached 3.7 million community members through legal training, sensitization, mass media campaigns and community dialogues in an effort to create long-term sustainable change in social norms around gender equality and marriage.

DATA AND EVIDENCE

UNICEF has actively supported several projects to understand the gaps in knowledge and evidence and to ultimately generate better evidence around child marriage programming and policy. Publications on the evidence include 'A Profile of Child Marriage in Africa' in 2015, a mapping of child marriage initiatives in South Asia, and collaborative research with the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) and

the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), culminating in publications. UNICEF continues to support governments and local actors to use evidence in advocating for funding and resources, as well as supporting community-level dialogues and public declarations to end child marriage.

Impact and thanks

Funding from the Government of Canada has been a catalyst for accelerated action and change in programming and policy around child marriage. Lessons learned from programme implementation and partnerships in the six Canada-funded countries contributed to the creation of a Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage. Along with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Global Programme seeks to deepen and improve its programmatic and policy work to improve gender equality through ending child marriage. Without the funds from the Government of Canada, this work would have been significantly delayed, if even possible.

In addition, large gains have been made and adjustments made in implementation to ensure that future programming will reach the full intended scale. Thus, the end of Canadian funding comes at a critical milestone when systems and structures are being streamlined and programme implementation is in momentum. UNICEF is consolidating lessons from implementation success and challenges. Programming tools and guidelines have been developed and results tracking and measurement capacity are being strengthened. As such, the six Canadian-funded countries will benefit from review and analysis of models that can contribute to generating a critical mass and scale beyond 2019.

Background

In the pursuit of the broad goals of ending violence, exploitation and abuse against girls and empowering them as agents of change for a more gender-equitable world, eliminating child marriage is a central strategic goal for international development as outlined in the SDGs, under target 5.3 on harmful practices. Recognizing that children are not able to freely and fully consent to marriage, the target underscores that child marriage is a violation of human rights that affects the lives of millions of girls in every region of the world and places a strain on human progress by perpetuating deprivation, inequality and disadvantage across generations. As existing data are increasingly analysed through the lens of adolescence, the dangers posed to girls include gender inequality, especially as presented in child marriage, early pregnancy, discrimination and harmful traditional practices.

Following almost a decade of work on child marriage, a better understanding of persistently high rates of child marriage prompted UNICEF and other partners to move to bring child marriage to the forefront of the global development agenda. Their advocacy resulted in the inclusion of target 5.3 in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), relating to the percentage of women aged 20–24 married or in union by age 18. This target, agreed upon by participants, was seen as ambitious, but key to bringing greater credibility to the gender goal, and greater accountability in the monitoring of gender equality within the post-2015 development framework. Reducing child marriage rates fits squarely in UNICEF's strategic plan for leadership in the issue of gender equality, its Gender Action Plan (GAP), and in support of other SDGs,

including Goal 3 on health (reducing maternal mortality, addressing sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS), Goal 4 on education (elimination of gender disparities at secondary and higher levels of schooling and Goal 6 on water sanitation and hygiene (with specific mention of the needs of women and girls).

Alongside advocacy for greater inclusion of girls' issues and gender equality in the international development agenda, UNICEF gratefully received funding from the Government of Canada and other donors to make a big push to accelerate action to end child marriage through advocacy, better data and evidence, and empowering girls and communities to take a stand for gender equality. In the intervening years, UNICEF has worked to reach more girls; fine-tune programming; communicate with parents and leaders; and bring more national and regional governing bodies on board for this important agenda.

Underlying structural gaps and harmful norms and practices remain key challenges for the participation of girls in community-based programmes. This is being tackled through multiple strategies, including organized activities to increase the participation of girls both in and out of school; engaging with adolescent boys and promoting gender awareness; and promoting a 'scaled-up' model of community mobilization and empowerment with a focus on raising the value of girls, gender awareness and promoting better outcomes.

Gender discrimination limits the educational and employment opportunities of girls and young women. Girls are more likely to drop out of school than boys and are less likely to have access to vocational training and to financial services. Unequal gender relations and financial dependence on male partners, who are often significantly older, make it difficult for adolescent girls to make choices about sex and to negotiate safe sex. This is exacerbated by a lack of knowledge about sexual and reproductive health and low uptake of health services. Social norms and cultural practices perpetuate discrimination against girls and limit their ability to attain life's full potentials.

In communities where child marriage prevalence is very high, there is often strict social pressure on families and adolescent girls to conform. Invariably, local perceptions on the ideal age of marriage, extended family patterns and bride price, etc., are all enshrined in local social norms. In these cases, the reality for many girls is that their daily lives are more often dictated by customary laws or social norms than by statutory legislation which prohibits marriage below a certain age.

Transforming these unequal gender relations that are reinforced during adolescence and promoting equal opportunities and outcomes for boys and girls would help pave the way for a social transformation that enables adolescent girls to know and enjoy their rights, participate in public life, and have the agency to use their capabilities, resources and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions about the course of their lives.

What follows is a final report on UNICEF's activities from 2014 to 2017 funded by the Government of Canada on preventing, delaying and ultimately working to end child marriage through multi-sectoral programming and advocacy

in six countries: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Ethiopia, Yemen and Zambia. The report recalls accomplishments in three anticipated result areas at the political/policy, systems and community levels to address child marriage. The report also highlights UNICEF's achievements at strengthening evidence for improved programming and advocacy through a gendered lens.

The global state of affairs

Child marriage is a global challenge, spanning continents and cultures. While 88 per cent of countries have laws prohibiting marriage of girls under age 18, many also allow child marriages to take place with parental consent (World Policy Analysis Center 2015). Although child marriage is not exclusive to girls, many more girls are affected than are boys, highlighting the gendered nature of the problem, and informing potential solutions. Worldwide, almost 750 million women and girls alive today and 156 million men were married before their eighteenth birthday (UNICEF State of the World's Children 2016). Child marriage is most common in West and Central Africa, where more than 4 in 10 girls were married before age 18; about 1 in 7 were married or in union before age 15. Globally, child marriage has been slowly declining, with around one in four young women alive today married in childhood versus around one in three in 1990, and the fastest progress has been recorded in the Middle East and North Africa (Nguyen and Wodon 2014). Moreover, the marriage of girls under 15 years of age has declined, from 10 per cent in 1990 to 6 per cent today. Increased focus on the practice in the post-2015 development framework through the SDGs has illuminated these gains, but rates remain high in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, and a large number of girls and boys around the world are still at significant risk for child marriage.

If there is no reduction in the practice of child marriage, up to 280 million more girls alive today are at risk of becoming brides before they turn 18. The effects of population growth mean that this number will approach 320 million by 2050. The total number of women married in childhood will grow from the almost 750 million today to approximately 950 million by 2030 and nearly 1.2 billion by 2050. The number of girls under 18 married each year will grow from 15 million today to 16.5 million in 2030 to more than 18 million in 2050. In the six programme countries, at least one in five girls is married by age 18, more in many of the countries. If current trends continue, a third of child brides in 2030 will be African.

Donor governments and international organizations, along with regional and national governing bodies around the world, have recognized that child marriage is a violation of human rights and deprives girls of their education, health and long-term prospects, and requires immediate and sustained action to combat it.

UNICEF

UNICEF's commitment to accelerate action to end child marriage aligns closely with and complements the work of other global organizations, including UNFPA, Girls Not Brides, CARE, Plan International, Save the Children, and many others. A growing awareness and agreement that rights-based approaches to sustainably support governments and in-country partners in ending child marriage has resulted in a concentrated movement to address the practice worldwide and yielded results. UNICEF is committed to sharing best practices and supporting the building of better evidence among these groups. This alignment of goals also allows for leveraging of complementary investments to

effect greater change in desired indicators and decreasing harmful practices.

On the funding side, a growing number of donor countries has committed resources to support UNICEF's work. This support is necessary due to the scale of the challenge, but has also resulted in money being better directed and more effectively spent. The Government of the United Kingdom/Department for International Development (DFID) has committed to make a contribution up to 25 million pounds over four years to UNICEF and UNFPA in support of their joint work in the Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage. The European Union (EU) has committed to fund the Global Programme for 6 million euros. The Government of the Netherlands has committed to make a contribution of 20 million euros to UNICEF over four years.

Key markers of global momentum:

- 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;
- The United Nations General Assembly resolution 71/175 on child marriage adopted in December 2016 and co-sponsored by Canada and Zambia; and
- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal target 5.3 on eliminating child marriage adopted in 2015.

The Government of Canada was the first major donor to UNICEF on child marriage, providing 20 million Canadian dollars in 2014 for work in six countries over three years, helping UNICEF to leverage other partnerships and investments at national and sub-national levels, by allowing for adequate visibility and emphasis on the issue of child marriage. Global Affairs Canada (GAC) also funded UNFPA

for the same amount in 2015, and with support also from DFID, the Netherlands and the EU, as of 2016, there is now a joint UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme on child marriage. Canada has taken on a leadership role in the Global Programme on child marriage as a donor, but also as a Steering Committee member. It also convenes an annual donor meeting, and regularly leads the work on United Nations General Assembly and Human Rights Council child marriage-related resolutions.

UNICEF commends the Government of Canada's strong commitment to place gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at the heart of its international development work. UNICEF has been a key partner with GAC in defining key priorities for advancing a more gender-equitable world through international development assistance. This partnership has been important in mutually shaping GAC's approach to gender and UNICEF's Gender Action Plan (GAP), including the upcoming GAP 2.0 for 2018–2021. The GAP outlines innovative, evidence-based and scalable strategies and offers an analytical and programmatic framework for country offices to assess how gender inequality impedes their efforts to advance women's and children's rights and well-being, and to plan and implement effective responses. The GAP specifies three programme areas for UNICEF's work on gender equality: 1) targeted gender priorities with a focus on adolescent girls' empowerment; 2) mainstreaming priorities on gender across UNICEF's seven programmatic sectors; and 3) strengthening UNICEF's institutional capacity and systems to deliver gender results.

The promotion of gender equality is a central principle of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action adopted in 1994. UNICEF's gender

programming places a key emphasis on investment in and empowerment of adolescent girls, addressing priority areas at the heart of Canada's development policy. Canada has been a critical strategic, technical and resource partner in UNICEF's intensified and expanded efforts across sectors to empower adolescent girls with the information, skills, services and opportunities that enable them to realize their rights and protect themselves from abuse, exploitation and harmful practices.

Child marriage is inextricably linked to gender inequality. The initiative prioritizes investments in adolescent girls recognizing their age- and gender-specific vulnerabilities – for example, while in some parts of the world, boys are married as children, it occurs at a far lower frequency than it does among girls. The Canadian Government's strong commitment to ending child marriage and associated funding underlines the importance of recognizing and addressing child marriage as a manifestation of gendered power relations. The ensuing report follows that overarching ethos, focusing on the roles of gender equality and gendered power relations in the push to ending child marriage and how UNICEF's work in the programme countries has sought to address them.

That said, the adolescent girls' empowerment agenda is nascent, and will require sustained commitment, resources, advocacy, capacity and partnerships to translate into tangible results for the largest generation of adolescent girls the world has ever seen. UNICEF looks forward to continuing and strengthening its partnership with Canada along all these dimensions on critical areas for adolescent girls, including addressing child marriage. In this context, UNICEF would strongly encourage Canada to champion the rights of adolescent girls as a potential theme for the 2018 G7 Summit.

Overview of child marriage in programme countries

Progress in delaying marriage for adolescents and ending child marriage is variable depending on the region. Rates of child marriage are the highest in sub-Saharan Africa and in South Asia, but a large number of girls and boys around the world are at risk of child marriage.

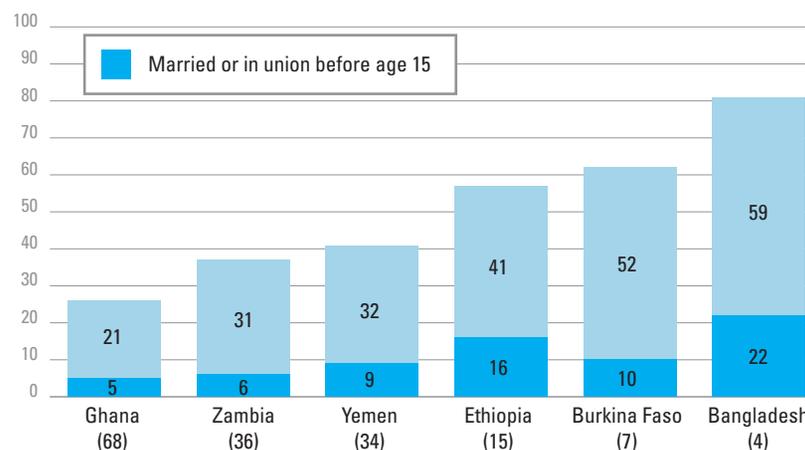
Within each of the programme countries, there appears to be significant regional variation in the practice of child marriage (Figure 2). For example, in Ethiopia, child marriage is low in the capital of Addis Ababa, at 12 per cent of women married before 18, but as high as 58 per cent in Benishangul-Gumuz.

Marriage of girls under age 15 has seen some of the largest declines and represents much of the rise in median age of marriage around the world. In the six countries covered by this grant, Ethiopia has seen the greatest absolute declines in per cent of women aged 25–49 married by age 18 (Figure 3).

GRANT PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

UNICEF is investing the resources to improve the situation of girls while creating the plans, platforms and favourable conditions for going to scale in ending child marriage, working at global, regional, national and sub-national levels. UNICEF graciously received funding from the Government of Canada with the intent to catalyse demonstrated commitments and action by governmental and non-governmental actors, strengthened capacity and action in six countries – Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Yemen and Zambia – and a strengthened evidence base for improved programmes and policies. Through systems strengthening and a push for normative change at the local level via

FIGURE 1. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN 20-24 YEARS OLD WHO WERE FIRST MARRIED OR IN UNION BEFORE AGE 15 AND BEFORE AGE 18, AND GLOBAL RANKING

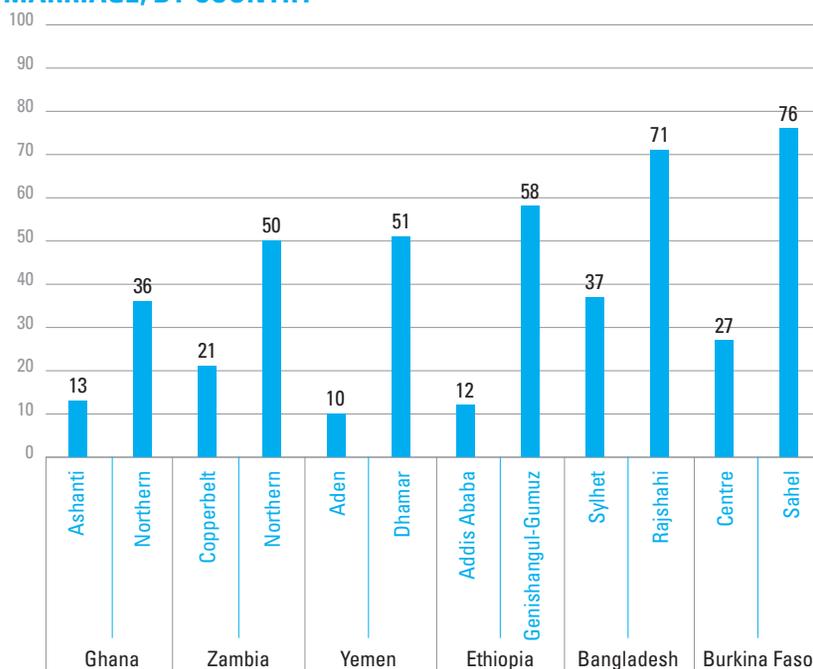


Source: UNICEF global databases, 2017, based on Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS). For source information by country, see <data.unicef.org>.

programming and the national and regional level through advocacy and legal change, support from the Government of Canada has helped UNICEF to work to promote changes in government policy at all levels to better support work to end child marriage.

While the three-year time frame of the grant was not designed to lead to measurable reductions in child marriage, the grant has proved to be an important catalyst to create the conditions for ending the practice in a number of countries and set the stage for further engagement from partners in country as well as multilateral and regional government bodies. In 2014, UNICEF reported that the short time frame

FIGURE 2. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN 20–24 YEARS OLD WHO WERE FIRST MARRIED OR IN UNION BEFORE AGE 18 IN THE REGIONS WITH THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST PREVALENCE OF CHILD MARRIAGE, BY COUNTRY



Source: UNICEF global databases, 2017, based on MICS and DHS. For source information by country, see <data.unicef.org>.

for implementation between the receipt of funds and this report limited UNICEF’s ability to deploy plans at the full scale intended. Since that report, significant gains have been made and adjustments made to the programme to better ensure that future programming will reach the full, intended scale, namely, locally and nationally contextualized programming under the umbrella of the grant. Thus, the end of Canadian funding comes at a critical milestone when systems and structures are being streamlined and programme implementation is in momentum. UNICEF is consolidating lessons from implementation success and challenges.

Programming tools and guidelines have been developed and results tracking and measurement capacity are being strengthened. As such, the six Canadian-funded countries will benefit from review and analysis of models that can contribute to generating a critical mass and scale beyond 2019.

The selection of countries and regions followed an analysis of criteria, including:

1. Prevalence of child marriage;
2. History of commitments and programming to end child marriage by Government and UNICEF offices;
3. Priority countries of the Government of Canada; and
4. Potential for scaling up programming to reach additional populations at risk of child marriage.

Government of Canada grant objective and expected outcomes

The objective of this grant from the Government of Canada³ was to galvanize stronger programmatic action, political support and resources towards ending child marriage and to generate consensus, based on evidence, on best ways to achieve results at scale. The specific outcomes UNICEF set out to achieve, and which are subsequently reported on here, are:

1. Increased political will and appropriate resources committed to address child marriage in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Yemen and Zambia;
2. Improved coordinated and multi-sectoral programming by governments and civil society actors at national, sub-national and community levels in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Yemen and Zambia; and
3. Strengthened use of an evidence base for programming,

³ The original grant was slated for two years and UNICEF requested and received a one-year no-cost extension. The goals were set out with two years in mind, but the report covers all three years of activities.

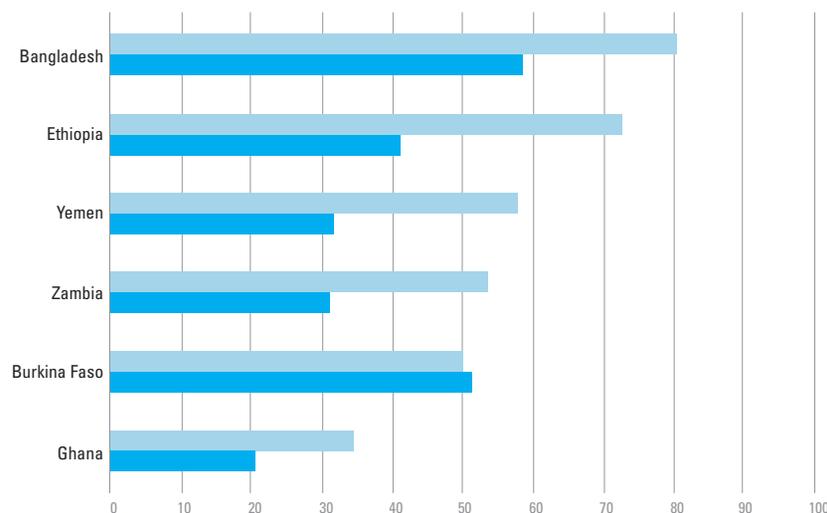
advocacy and South-South cooperation on effective approaches for ending child marriage, by governments and civil society actors at national, regional/continental and global levels.

Catalytic role of the Government of Canada grant in launching the Global Programme

The grant from the Government of Canada to UNICEF served to help UNICEF clarify its goals and methodology for the Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, a joint UNICEF-UNFPA programme. The allocation of funds from UNICEF’s core resources and generous support from the Governments of Canada and the Netherlands set in motion initial activities at country, regional and global levels. These included consultations on expanded work to end child marriage with government and civil society at the country level. The programme is now in its initial phase, consisting of four years dedicated to strengthening critical institutions and systems in select localities and countries to delivering quality services and opportunities for a significant number of girls. 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.

The Global Programme has been developed and refined since the beginning of the Canada grant, with a global results framework, an indicators index being rolled out and a programme guidance developed to ensure 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 childbearing’.

FIGURE 3. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN 20–24 YEARS OLD AND WOMEN 45–49 YEARS OLD WHO WERE FIRST MARRIED OR IN UNION BEFORE AGE 18



Source: UNICEF global databases, 2017, based on MICS and DHS. For source information by country, see <data.unicef.org>.

TABLE 1. GRANT RECIPIENT COUNTRIES AND REGIONAL OFFICES

West and Central Africa	Eastern and Southern Africa	Middle East and North Africa	South Asia
Regional Office of West and Central Africa (WCARO), Burkina Faso, Ghana	Regional Office of Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO), Ethiopia, Zambia	Yemen	Regional Office of South Asia (ROSA), Bangladesh



UNICEF's gender programming places a key emphasis on investment in and empowerment of adolescent girls, addressing priority areas at the heart of Canada's development policy.

Results

Global outcomes

UNICEF's efforts in six countries over the grant reporting period from April 2014 to April 2017 have resulted in five headline results in three result areas: policy, community and systems, and evidence. It is important to note that while outcomes and outputs were established by the Government of Canada and UNICEF at the outset of this grant, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was not emphasized and baselines were absent. Therefore, measuring concrete progress over the life of the grant has been a challenge. With the advent of the Global Programme, UNICEF and partners have learned much from this lesson and have worked to better understand baselines for outcomes, establish clear targets and ensure that monitoring is established and consistent for all new indicators.

The Government of Canada resources have been an important catalyst for planning and implementation of activities to reach more girls in the aim to end child marriage. The contribution facilitated multi-sectoral actions with an analysis of what it will take to reach millions of girls at risk as well as girls and women who have already experienced child marriage and its consequences. In 2016 alone, UNICEF programmes, with the support of this grant and others, reached more than 217,000 girls. Continuing to reach girls at scale is an important goal of UNICEF's work going forward. To that end, ongoing and future efforts have taken an important lesson from this work with funds from the Government of Canada – to improve baseline assessments and M&E in order to be able to better measure results.

UNICEF's aim in addressing child marriage is closely linked to promoting gender equality and fits within its Strategic Plan generally and Gender Action Plan more specifically. In working towards a more equitable world, UNICEF has adopted a rights-based approach to programming.

UNICEF's efforts in six countries over the grant reporting period from April 2014 to April 2017 have resulted in five headline results in three result areas: policy, community and systems, and evidence.

1. **POLICY:** Global and regional policy consensus on measures to be taken by the global community and regional actors, including:
 - a. Inclusion of child marriage targets in the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, United Nations Human

Bringing a gender lens to adolescent programming

UNICEF has focused its activities under the Government of Canada funds in areas such as disaggregated gender data, increased focus on sexual reproductive health and rights, and programmes that specifically target gender norms and power dynamics. For instance, in Burkina Faso, a pilot initiative in menstrual hygiene management was implemented in 15 schools in two regions. A formative research on social and cultural barriers to menstrual hygiene management fed into the project design and tools. A total of 180 pupils (160 girls) participated in the project in 2017, promoting favourable behavioural change for menstrual hygiene management.

TABLE 2. COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant success in engaging with the Government. • National Action Plan and a Mass Media Strategy on Ending Child Marriage launched in 2016. • Government commitment to support 5,000 new adolescent girls' clubs around the country. • UNICEF supported nearly 150,000 girls with at least one intervention related to adolescent empowerment. • Mapping of programmes and Expert Group Meeting to share evidence and best practices in South Asia. • Recognition of exemplary advocacy and work by government officials with support from the Canadian Embassy.
Burkina Faso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Action Plan launched in 2015, costed, and budgeted. • 1,687 children at risk of child marriage received schooling support in 2016. • 672 front-line workers trained in 2016 on FGM/C and child marriage case management. • Government has committed to a contribution of almost US\$347,750 over the years 2016–2018 to fund activities to end child marriage in the country.
Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Action Plan launched in 2013. • Research with ODI on girls' education as a method of preventing child marriage: 'One Size Does Not Fit All: The patterns and drivers of child marriage in Ethiopia's hotspot districts' 2016. • 101,116 children in legal literacy classes. • 40,000 people at public events in 2016. • More cases of child marriage referred to the legal system over time; 565 in 2015 and 1,115 in 2016. • Funds contributed under the global child marriage programme (specifically from the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the EU) have allowed for the results achieved through the Canadian funds to be continued and sustained. Investments in FGM/C have been leveraged by adapting community dialogue manuals already in place, and programme design benefited from partnerships with programmes with a long history in Ethiopia, such as Berhane Hewan. • Political unrest prevented some programming.
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Action Plan drafted by the end of 2016, launched and costed in 2017. • Sustained engagement with the Government to create national policies, guidelines and standards for gender-sensitive and child-friendly services. • Platforms for learning and sharing supported. • 2.4 million individuals reached through community dialogue and 7 million through mass media campaigns.
Yemen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment in six districts to understand community attitudes/beliefs and identify vulnerable girls. • 18,338 community members participated in community dialogues or awareness raising on child marriage and its consequences. • Ongoing emergency prevented some programming. No National Action Plan is in place.
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Action Plan drafted and launched in 2016. • Data analysis of DHS/MICS to support education ministry planning and illuminate relationship between school dropout and child marriage. • Engagement with religious leaders partnered with the Ministry of Gender.

Rights Council and General Assembly resolutions adopted in 2014.

- b. Increased engagement with regional actors, such as SAEIVAC in South Asia and Kathmandu Call to Action in 2014, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the African Union, and development of Regional Action Plans.
- c. Increased coordination by UNICEF regional and country offices through Gender Action Plans, global joint meetings in Kathmandu in 2014, Addis Ababa in 2015, and Dhaka in 2015; regional joint meetings in Bangkok in 2016 and Uganda in 2017; and joint regional reports on child marriage in Africa (2015) and South Asia (2017).

2. COMMUNITY AND SYSTEMS: Increased engagement with local actors to facilitate greater community-based action and long-term sustainable change in social norms around gender equality and marriage.

3. COMMUNITY AND SYSTEMS: Increased resources mobilized to support country, regional and global efforts to end child marriage following a harmonized, comprehensive and multi-sectoral framework, including:

- a. Five of six countries covered under the grant (Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana and Zambia) have drafted national strategies on action to end child marriage; three countries have launched these strategies. One country has a costed plan; costing is in progress for the others.
- b. Public support in the Girl Summit, African Girl Summit in Zambia, Day of the Girl and other celebrations by local and national political figures followed by monetary resources directed to programming and sectoral strengthening.
- c. Strengthened national and decentralized capacity and coordination for addressing child marriage, girls' education, and social acceptability of alternatives to marriage for girls.

4. COMMUNITY AND SYSTEMS: Bringing programming to scale to reach more than 268,000 girls and 3.7 million community members, gatekeepers, decision makers and influencers in programme countries.

5. DATA AND EVIDENCE:

- a. Better use of data and evidence to support child marriage programming and initiatives through analysis of existing data (DHS, MICS, etc.) in partnership with national governments.
- b. Better understanding of gaps in knowledge with a commitment to continue to work towards improving the evidence base from NGO and government partners.
- c. High-impact research and publications on the evidence base in conjunction with ODI and ICRW (Child Marriage, Adolescent Pregnancy and Family Formation in West and Central Africa), as well as the UNICEF flagship reports ‘A Profile of Child Marriage in Africa’, and a mapping of child marriage initiatives in South Asia.

OC1: Increased political will and appropriate resources committed to address child marriage in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Yemen and Zambia

Results under this outcome correspond to national

capacities strengthened to influence framing of legal and policy frameworks and allocation of resources to address child marriage. UNICEF recognizes the catalytic role of Canadian funding in supporting key milestones in support to capacities, influencing, negotiation and advocacy work under this outcome. Cognizant of the medium- and long-term time frames for fruition, efforts by UNICEF have been moderately successful over the reporting period. Prior to 2014, none of the countries under this grant had a national action plan on child marriage to increase awareness or to create and strengthen legislative and policy frameworks. Each country office has focused on specific, contextual engagements where potential for success in advocacy and support was considered high. This focus was different for each country and accomplishments listed below reflect areas of concentration and focus for each country.

The scale of child marriage necessitates a coordinated response involving actors at all levels from community members and traditional or religious leaders to the highest level of national and regional governments. Beginning with the work started in 2014, all six of the countries (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Yemen and Zambia) signed the Girl Summit charter. In signing, the countries agreed to a set of guiding principles around girls’ rights to live free from

TABLE 3. RESULTS FRAMEWORK ON INCREASED POLITICAL WILL AND RESOURCES TO ADDRESS CHILD MARRIAGE

Outputs	OP1.1. Legislative and policy frameworks on ending child marriage and related adverse gender norms strengthened	OP1.2. Budgeted national action plans for the elimination of child marriage developed	OP1.3. Increased knowledge and awareness of child marriage as a priority national concern
Output indicators	OP1.1.a. Number of child marriage laws under review or revision	OP1.2.a. Number of action plans to end child marriage endorsed by government and civil society stakeholders	OP1.2.b. Number of advocacy events during which political leaders articulate commitments in line with international standards to end child marriage and ensure gender equality
	OP1.1.b. Number of policies on girls education, empowerment and gender norms that have a direct relationship to child marriage under review or revision	OP1.2.b. Amount/ existence of donor and government budget line dedicated to addressing child marriage and related adverse gender norms	OP1.3.b. Number of statements of public support for ending child marriage and related adverse gender norms by influential leaders and communicators (traditional, religious, political)

TABLE 4. MILESTONES AND PROGRESS OF GRANT RECIPIENT COUNTRIES TO ADDRESS CHILD MARRIAGE

2016	Draft national strategy on child marriage exists	National strategy launched/ endorsed	Action plan exists	Strategy or action plan is costed	Budget allocated to strategy or action plan	Remarks
Bangladesh						National action plan will have an M&E framework and is being costed. Bangladesh is also undertaking costing of the Adolescent Health Strategy, which has components on child marriage and teenage pregnancy. Both UNICEF and UNFPA have provided technical support and supported national and sub-national consultations.
Yemen						No plans to develop given conflict situation.
Burkina Faso		2015				A 'national strategy and action plan' exists and budgets have been allocated at the national level, including donations by parliament. A multi-sectoral partnership forum, through the support of both agencies, was launched in 2016. Besides facilitating coordination, it is expected that resource mobilization objectives will be addressed.
Ghana		2017				The National Strategic Framework was launched in 2017, including the budget. UNICEF and UNFPA have provided support through technical support on data and adolescent sexual reproductive health research and analysis.
Ethiopia		2013				National Strategy and Action Plan a single document. Costing of strategy planned in 2017. The costing work will also involve a retrospective medium-term expenditure review across relevant ministries that will be a baseline for the next review.
Zambia		2016				National Strategy launched, Action Plan to be costed in 2017. The costed strategy will also have an M&E framework. UNICEF's qualitative research and UNFPAs support to secondary analysis of the DHS supported the drafting of the strategy.

KEY	
	Progressing
	Completed key milestones across columns

marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and made commitments to gender equality and an increased focus on adolescent girls on behalf of their governments.⁴ These commitments have been translated into both funding and action, with three of the six countries creating national action plans and two more in progress. Burkina Faso's plan has additionally been costed and in Ethiopia and Bangladesh, government commitment is noted as high by country teams.

South Asia

At the regional level, the South Asia region has had significant success in engaging governments and regional actors and continues to focus on these engagements. In 2014, the Kathmandu Call to Action was signed by all South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) member states, indicating their willingness to appropriate resources to end child marriage and promote legal and normative change. Regional governing bodies SAIEVAC and SAARC continue to be important partners in this effort with UNICEF, which has provided support, advocacy and technical assistance to the groups.

Efforts to engage the Government of Bangladesh have been very successful, culminating in a national action plan, a Mass Media Strategy on Ending Child Marriage, and the Government's commitment to support 5,000 new adolescent girls' clubs around the country. UNICEF has offered technical assistance and financial support to the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs and has a strong relationship with the Ministry of Information to build national momentum in these initiatives to support adolescent girls, provide them with access to quality services, build their assets and thereby contribute to delaying the age

of marriage. UNICEF, along with UNFPA, also supported the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs to conduct a series of national and sub-national consultations/workshops with a range of government, donor, NGO, international NGO and civil society partners. These workshops and consultations served to strengthen the National Action Plan to End Child Marriage and ensure broad-based support and engagement from a range of local, non-government and government actors.

Canadian funds were instrumental in helping the Bangladesh country office to bring adequate awareness and funding to the issue of child marriage. At the national level, funds were used to support the National Plan of Action process, but in doing so, by taking the lead coordination and technical support role, the country office was able to bring partners like GNB on board. GNB also took part in the technical review committee and took on other key roles during the NPA drafting process. Developing partnership with an alliance like GNB meant a stronger voice on advocacy – particularly through the child marriage law and rules drafting process.

In addition, prior to UNICEF engagement with local government officials and the PM's office, there was no incentive nor recognition for local government officers who were proactive in addressing child marriage through their prevention and prosecution efforts. The annual recognition and awards event supported by the Canadian Embassy also helped the Bangladesh country office leverage important partnerships within the government, which in turn has helped in the community mobilization efforts.

Eastern and Southern Africa

In **Ethiopia**, the country office is working with the government agencies to improve targeting and identify vulnerable girls. The

⁴ <http://www.girlsummit2014.org/Content/docs/CharterEnglish.pdf>

Productive Safety Net Programme is being strengthened to better target girls from vulnerable families and name them as recipients of the scheme. Additionally, although it will take time to bring about universal birth registration in Ethiopia, a national programme for free and universal civil registration, including births, was launched in August 2016. This programme has the potential to contribute to efforts to end child marriage over the medium and long terms.

In **Zambia**, the National End Child Marriage Strategy was finalized and launched in April 2016 by the Minister of Gender. The National Plan of Action on Ending Child Marriage was drafted and is being finalized. The Strategy and National Plan of Action are multi-sectoral and address vulnerabilities of children that can lead to child marriage, as identified by the research on child marriage (2015). With UNICEF support, a pilot project was conducted in six districts to develop a draft Theory of Change and visual representations of the drivers of child marriage in their districts. The pilot project highlighted the socio-economic and socio-cultural

In Burkina Faso, the joint team has successfully advocated for a national contribution to the three-year plan (2016–2018) of US\$347,750 (208,650,000 CFA Franc (XFO)) out of a total budget of US\$5,991,326 (3,594,796,000 XFO). This national contribution does not take into account a specific donation of the Burkina Faso Parliament of US\$83,300 (50 million XFO).

dimensions of the drivers of child marriage. In discussions with the lead ministry, the Ministry of Gender, it helped to develop the different narrative around child marriage as a result of socio-economic disparities. The National Strategy is a multi-sectoral approach to addressing child marriage, reflecting the particular dynamics of Zambia. However, this has sparked interesting debates both within and out of Zambia about how to address child marriage. The approach in Zambia is to address the drivers of child marriage, supporting the life cycle approach and focusing on social welfare systems strengthening, with the aim of addressing all the needs of vulnerable children and adolescents. The Canadian funding provided an opportunity to start this process; other subsequent funding is supporting the engagement with test districts to implement the pilot project on multi-sectoral action planning – in essence, to implement the National Plan of Action at the local level.

West and Central Africa

The Government of **Ghana**, under the leadership of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, continued to demonstrate in 2016 its highest commitment to ending child marriage in Ghana. In February 2016, the President of Ghana attended and supported the National Launch of the End Child Marriage campaign. In addition, the Ministry finalized the first cross-sectoral National Strategic Framework and Operational/M&E Plan to End Child Marriage (2017–2026). The National Strategic Framework, which highlights interlinkages among child protection, education, health, gender and social protection sectors, is expected to provide a vision and strategic guidance to all key stakeholders involved in efforts to end child marriage. In addition, the development of a cross-sectoral strategy aimed at reducing adolescent pregnancies has commenced. Issues affecting vulnerable

TABLE 5. RESULTS FRAMEWORK ON IMPROVED COORDINATED AND MULTI-SECTORAL PROGRAMMING

Outputs	OP2.1. Increased knowledge on the benefits of delaying marriage and support for keeping girls in school during adolescence	OP2.2 Increased accessibility and quality of educational and other prevention, protection and care services relevant to ending child marriage and forging more equitable gender norms	OP2.3. Strengthened national and decentralized capacity and coordination for addressing child marriage, girls' education, and social acceptability of alternatives to marriage for girls
Output indicators	OP2.1.a. Number of outreach and awareness-raising events in targeted areas organized to encourage support for girls' schooling and alternatives during adolescence to end child marriage	OP2.2.a. Number of programming designs to address child marriage, underlying structural determinants and gender norms, completed or enhanced across sectors	OP2.3.a. Number of sub-national structures (e.g., community committees) that systematically address child marriage across sectors
	OP2.1.b. Number of young people (especially girls) taking part in activities to increase their voice on child marriage using modern technology	OP2.2.b. Number of programming designs to address child marriage at scale completed or enhanced	OP2.3.b. Number of coordination meetings, trainings and workshops undertaken on programming design to prevent child marriage that advances girls' empowerment and addresses gender norms

adolescent girls, including child marriage, were also profiled at the national level as part of the Chief Justice Annual Mentoring Programme in 2016.

In **Burkina Faso**, the partnership between the Government, UNICEF, UNFPA and the Children's Parliament led to a renewed commitment of the highest authorities to end child marriage under the leadership of the First Lady. At the local level, leaders have been engaged effectively in the fight against child marriage, resulting in 242 public declarations of abandonment of children's marriages in 2016. At the national level, the Government has committed to a contribution of almost US\$347,750 over the years 2016–2018 to fund such activities in the country.

Middle East and North Africa

In **Yemen**, UNICEF is working with local government actors and social services provision where available, but the ongoing emergency situation has precluded significant progress at the national level. At the outset of this grant, UNICEF worked closely with the constitutional drafting committee, providing technical assistance, presentations, concept notes and

advocacy to ensure that child marriage and other child rights issues were discussed and addressed at the final outcomes. The new draft Constitution was to be finalized and adopted by Parliament first and then through a national referendum in 2015. Legislative members representing different factions in the country refused to vote on it and as of this writing, there has not yet been a referendum, and consequently, process is stalled on a national action plan as well.

OC2: Improved coordinated and multi-sectoral programming to address child marriage by governments and civil society actors at national, sub-national and community levels in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Yemen and Zambia

Results under this outcome capture two levels: strengthening of capacity at the sectoral level for delivery of gender equitable services and influencing gender norm change at the community level. UNICEF efforts at these two levels have been positive and have laid the foundations for strengthening sustained services. Like outcomes one and two, consistent baseline data were not available across the countries, so results highlighted are on areas where country offices focused efforts.

At the regional level, UNICEF has placed child marriage and adolescent pregnancy as key strategic priorities on the agenda of regional institutions such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). UNICEF has also been instrumental in the establishment of a sub-regional working group of United Nations agencies and NGOs working on child marriage in West and Central Africa in 2016 with the aim to strengthen regional responses and synergies in addressing child marriage. This group also aims to build on momentum and promising progress in the

Bhola is a riverine island and, being difficult to reach, girls there lack knowledge and resources regarding menstrual hygiene management. To address knowledge gaps of young girls in the target upazilas, 13,500 adolescents (7,621 adolescent girls) were sensitized on sanitation and hygiene promotion, including on menstrual hygiene management. Additionally, sex-segregated water, sanitation and hygiene blocks with menstrual hygiene facilities were provided in 20 schools to facilitate easy access to improved sanitation facilities, especially during menstruation. These processes helped the community and adolescent girls and boys to develop their agency by overcoming stigma and silence around issues such as menstrual hygiene management, and also engage at the school level in managing their sanitation requirements.

region in 2015–2016. These include the development of a Strategic Plan on Ending Child Marriage in Burkina Faso as well as the development of policies to end child marriage in Ghana. In the Middle East, the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office renewed and strengthened its engagement with UNFPA at the regional level as well as with other strategic partners including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

South Asia

In **Bangladesh**, UNICEF has undertaken significant programming on community engagement and gender norms in collaboration with the Government. In 2016 alone, UNICEF supported nearly 150,000 girls with at least one intervention related to adolescent empowerment. Efforts to show causal and direct influence of such programming on girls' agency and outcomes were successful and used to advocate for increased commitment from the Government. UNICEF has a strong partnership with the Government of Bangladesh at various levels, which has agreed to roll out 5,000 new adolescent clubs throughout the country, utilizing its revenue budget, following the lessons learned from the adolescent empowerment project developed by UNICEF. Through the partnership with the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs and the Ministry of Information, community engagement initiatives (such as interpersonal communication, community dialogues and multimedia including fold and local media) focusing on gender norms and key household practices reached 259,276 adolescent girls in the Ending Child Marriage districts.

This important work has continued into 2017, with greater investments from the Government and a more pointed focus

on gender. During the first three months of 2017, UNICEF facilitated the convergence between various ministries (Health, Women and Children's Affairs, and Education) to design, implement and monitor the roll-out of the multi-sectoral, gender-responsive Adolescent Friendly Health Services under the broader Ending Child Marriage initiative. A total of 6,951 adolescents (4,341 adolescent girls and 2,610 adolescent boys) received counselling services related to sexual and reproductive health, adolescent nutrition and menstrual hygiene management from 19 Union Health and Family Welfare Centers (UH&FWCs) in Jamalpur. About 2,003 adolescent girls and 1,211 adolescent boys received services through the Adolescent Friendly Health Services centres in Nilphamari. In addition, 280 hard-to-reach adolescents (70 per cent girls) were reached through mobile medical camps at adolescent clubs and schools, and 710 adolescent gatekeepers were oriented through 30 meetings, which helped to build the understanding of parents and gatekeepers on the importance of adolescent health, thereby allowing their young children to avail of these services, through the meetings with community groups at the community clinics.

Canadian funds were important at the sub-national level to leverage partnerships with the local government in Bangladesh. With the funding that UNICEF Bangladesh received, not only did it roll out the adolescent clubs, community engagement and Adolescent Friendly Health Services, but this strong focus on ending child marriage led the district and divisional government offices to tackle the issue as a key development and governance priority. This meant that local governments also invested financial and staff time in mobilizing communities for ending child marriage and raising awareness, by bringing together civil society, young people and the media.

East and Southern Africa

In **Ethiopia**, efforts at the community level have mobilized faith-based organizations, international NGOs and community members to put resources towards child marriage initiatives and FGM/C, leveraging investments by the joint global programme on FGM/C and learnings from programmes already in place in the region. Religious leaders were mobilized in the target regions to support efforts towards ending both child marriage and FGM/C. To achieve this, UNICEF partnered with the Norwegian Church Aid and 14 local faith-based organizations with the objective of strengthening the capacity of religious leaders and the faith-based organizations to be champions for ending harmful traditional practices and to support monitoring and documentation of progress made. This new partnership connects UNICEF to the spiritual arm of these organizations, which will help to ensure integration of key messages into spiritual teachings and further facilitate wider access to households that belong to the faith community to disseminate messages and impact attitudes towards adolescent girls.

In Ethiopia, community dialogue is being used to influence social and behaviour change in gender norms. This is a tested tool with demonstrated results in preventive strategies on HIV and AIDS in Ethiopia. Dialogues are conducted on a bi-monthly basis through structured and participatory discussions with a cross section of gatekeepers, men, women, girls and boys.

In addition, a focus on the legal system as an important lynchpin in stopping child marriage in Ethiopia led UNICEF to develop programming to encourage better use of existing laws and legal support structures. UNICEF-led legal literacy classes targeted adolescent boys and girls in schools – reaching 101,116 children – as well as targeted community members in public events – reaching 40,000 people in 2016. Over time, the number of reported cases has increased in Amhara region, 565 in 2015 and 1,115 in 2016, possibly due to the legal literacy classes. In 2016, 232 marriages were called off and 457 marriages were later annulled. Here, child marriage programming has leveraged the contributions of other donors such as DFID’s contribution to child-friendly justice and special units in Police and Protection by adding the dimension of child marriage.

In **Zambia**, UNICEF supported, through the Ministry of Gender and the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, engagement with traditional leaders from 10 districts and religious leaders, including all the church mother bodies and the Islamic society. In these meetings, orientations were conducted on the findings from the qualitative research on child marriage in Zambia, the implications of the findings for policy, programmes and interventions, and the development of the Ending Child Marriage Strategy and National Plan of Action. Both groups discussed their roles and responsibilities regarding ending child marriage in light of the research findings. They all acknowledged the need to address drivers of child marriage and support education, adolescent sexual reproductive health and protection initiatives. Following the workshop, religious leaders have developed a draft common position to guide their work and engaged the Ministry of Gender to establish more regular interaction on ending child marriage.

West and Central Africa

In **Ghana**, programming to address child marriage continued to be embedded in the ongoing and wider system-strengthening efforts, through the child protection, gender, education and health sectors. Focus was on the development of national policies, guidelines and standards for more gender-sensitive and child-sensitive services, as well as capacity building at both national and sub-national levels, including for health and child protection service providers. Platforms for learning and sharing continued to be supported, with the National Advisory Committee on Ending Child Marriage, the National Stakeholders Forum, and the newly formed Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection online platform for child marriage stakeholders providing good opportunities for coordination, sharing, learning and providing visibility to efforts on the ground.

Through broad partnerships with the Government and NGO/ international NGO partners, UNICEF, in collaboration with UNFPA, continued to invest in community-based sensitization, reflections and dialogues to challenge harmful traditional practices and progressively reduce the acceptability of child marriage, reaching 2.4 million individuals through community work and 7 million through mass media campaigns. As a result, reports are showing that silence is being broken around sensitive child protection issues and gendered norms including child marriage and teen pregnancy. Reports are also showing that there is increased awareness and willingness to address such issues within targeted communities, with girls themselves and adolescents becoming agents of change within their school and community environments. In 2016, several collective actions were triggered, leading to the development of community action plans, declarations and community by-laws aimed at creating a protective environment for children in programme areas. A major constituency that was

The Story of Aba Assefuaba

My name is Aba Assefuaba. I am a mother of six.

I was impregnated at the age of fourteen (14) by an elderly man. When I told him that I was pregnant, he insisted that I abort the baby. I was afraid and tried my best to negotiate with him for my life. I realized that if my mother had aborted me, I would not be alive.

The man refused to see reason and abandoned me and my pregnancy. I come from a poor family and the parental and family support was not forthcoming. I nearly passed out one day at a building site where I had gone to seek a labourer's fare for the day.

My current husband, Isaac Dentu, was the benefactor who saved my life and gave me food and water to sustain me. He took me under his care until I delivered on my fifteenth birthday.

He was twenty (20) years old at the time that we met. Today we have five children. My first child adds up to make us a family of eight. He has added and integrated my child into the family and cares for him. My child was born

deaf and dumb. His situation placed constraints on our unhealthy finances. My child is at the deaf and dumb school currently. The five other children I have with my husband are all with us. Only three of them attend school.

Life is hard. We depend on the cassava from the farm. My husband is hardworking and has to go on trek to other building sites for months. During those times when our food stock of mainly gari (which I made out of cassava) is finished, the children and I are left with only water to consume.

This awakened in me the desire to have multiple income sources. The first alternative was the land. Planting other crops apart from cassava. My husband and I found that an uphill task due to our low financial state. Raising money demanded months of no food. Since the children were too young, we abandoned it.

By the Grace of God, an NGO called ATCWAR (Advocates and Trainers for children and women advancement and rights) came to our community to educate the community on child marriage and its effect on families and

communities. They called all who had gone through such experience and grouped us according to our income earning skills.

I joined the Gari Makers and they assisted us to produce gari. I invested my energy into the programme. Now I do not have to rely on the cassava from my farm only. I buy cassava from other women and now I can produce up to two bags of gari per week. I have some money left to keep the family moving. This was a major breakthrough.

The same organization also sent a trainer to our community to train the women and girls on how to use beads to make dress accessories. I enrolled and now I have the skill to turn common beads into beautiful jewelry. This also has a potential of bringing added income in the range I could never imagine. I believe my family and I will gradually move to where all my children will be in school in a sustained state.

ATCWAR is one of the NGOs supported by UNICEF Ghana to address child marriage and teenage pregnancy issues in communities of the Western Region of Ghana.

engaged in these processes of behavioural and social change was traditional and religious leaders including chiefs, queen mothers, imams and magajias.

In **Burkina Faso**, UNICEF continues to support relevant sectoral systems in order to scale up quality and cost-effective services to meet the needs of adolescent girls at risk or affected by child marriage, taking into account gendered structures. A total of 672 front-line social workers and teachers were trained on FGM/C and child marriage case management, social norms and change, and sexual and reproductive health. On top of the major social mobilization campaign to encourage parents to send their children to schools, UNICEF has reached a total of 853 schools in the target zones, covering 183,027 children (85,688 girls) who now have access to the improved quality education.

In total, 1,687 children at risk of child marriage (20 boys and 1,667 girls) have received support for their schooling and skills training (culinary arts, food, dye, hairdressing, sewing) in five targeted regions (Central, East Central, Eastern, North Central, Sahel and South Central) in Burkina Faso. This keeps adolescents in school while avoiding their marriage before the age of 18.

Middle East and North Africa

In **Yemen**, a national child marriage assessment also focused on identifying available services and which, if any, response mechanisms are available, and on developing an adequate response to the needs of the identified married girls and girls at risk. This assessment led to the strengthening the social work and case management system, which was expanded and made functional in six governorates (Amran, Aden, Hajjah, Hodeidah, Ibb and Taiz) to prevent and respond to

abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence against children. Case management is an integral component of the social work system to identify individual children and families in need of particular assistance and provide the adequate assistance to prevent and respond to their vulnerabilities.

The case management system in Yemen has also been linked to the community-based Child Friendly Spaces, where the majority of vulnerable children are identified through trained social workers. The social work and case management system is currently functioning in 6 out of 10 targeted governorates, providing a coverage of 45 per cent of children and their families in those governorates in order to identify and respond to cases of child marriage and children at risk of child marriage. This system has identified 35 cases of child marriage (3 boys; 32 girls) and provided services to 22 children (1 boy; 21 girls). While UNICEF is committed to continuing programming in action despite the ongoing conflict and emergency situation, the country office was forced to re-focus its programme due to the situation and returned some money, which resulted in smaller-than-expected outputs and numbers reached, particularly in case management. Significant efforts were made in establishing strategic partnerships with civil society organizations and engaging with communities to design a multi-sectoral package of service made available and accessible to both married girls and girls at risk, with a focus on adolescents. The partnerships aim at targeting 3,350 married girls, 16,000 adolescent children at risk of child marriage, and 750 adolescent girls with life skills through the peer education approach.

Due to the deteriorating economic conditions and widespread poverty as a result of conflict, children and particularly girls in Yemen are increasingly exposed to the risk of getting married at a very young age. However, social and gender norms that de-value girls and their role in the community compounded with fear to secure girls' chastity and protect

their purity, particularly in times of widespread violence, are additional factors that drive girls to marriage, where they may experience violence. These factors have become stronger during this conflict, as indicated in the knowledge, attitude and practices (KAPs) assessment conducted in 30 communities in September 2016. UNICEF has provided a package of economic empowerment, and legal, psychosocial and health information and services to married girls to protect, end and mitigate the effect of violence that might have been experienced in the marital relationship.

Girls at risk of marriage are further empowered by having access to skills and information that provide them with the awareness, confidence and capacity to make their own decisions and, ultimately, protect themselves from potential gender-based violence experiences. UNICEF has engaged community facilitators, including community and religious leaders and peer educators, and adolescent-led initiatives are targeting girls, boys, duty bearers, community members and service providers in an effort to change attitudes and behaviours towards the role of women and girls within the community and society. Community facilitators also engage in dialogue, group sessions and advocacy initiatives to promote positive attitudes to change the perception of the community and give more value to girls, their rights and roles.

In 2017 in Yemen, an additional 18,338 duty bearers, parents, caregivers and community and religious leaders were equipped with knowledge and information on the adverse consequences of child marriage, the importance for girls to delay marriage and stay in schools in order to fulfil their own potential, and how to seek services, if needed. The community engagement and outreach activities were conducted by trained facilitators – through community dialogues and awareness raising – and trained life skills peer educators.

OC3: Strengthened use of an evidence base for programming, advocacy and South-South cooperation on effective approaches for ending child marriage, by governments and civil society actors at national, regional/continental and global levels

Outcome 3 of the UNICEF's activities under the Government of Canada grant calls for better data and seeks to improve the quality and quantity of evidence around ending child marriage and to support governments in continuing to work in the areas of child marriage. Although there are specific targets associated with this goal, lack of baseline data and rigorous monitoring complicate evaluating progress in a quantitative way. All the same, outcome 3 is summarily important to pushing forward UNICEF's agenda to work to end child marriage due to the dearth of good data and widespread evidence that policymakers find using data and generalized statistics difficult.

Assessing the soft goal of better data and use of the data is somewhat subjective, but complemented by solid achievements over the duration of the grant. These include: mapping drivers of child marriage, funding research to better understand prevalence, and building and maintaining relationships with policymakers to ensure their support, buy-in and ability to propose and implement programming that reflects the urgency of ending child marriage. Specifically, the Canadian contribution in 2016 resourced the initial stages of analyses on the drivers of child marriage by region. This is a critical first step in the process of establishing baselines, evidence-informed programmes, and harmonized M&E mechanisms. Building on that momentum, UNICEF has worked to improve the evidence base and to support partners in collecting better data and evaluating existing programmes.

An important aspect of data and evidence on child marriage is to have reliable prevalence estimates. Long gaps between surveys pose a challenge in measuring progress in many domains, including child marriage. UNICEF has worked with governments and other United Nations agencies to improve the quality and frequency of administrative data collection around social indicators, such as age at first marriage, poverty, and sexual and reproductive health.

UNICEF supported a number of research studies and evaluations to strengthen the effectiveness and evidence base of their programme to end child marriage. In some countries, a significant development has been the strengthening of capacity to support a gradual shift from interventions that are discrete and small in scope to larger-scale models linked to systems and national schemes. This approach is particularly relevant to larger countries that have government ownership and resources. In order to best achieve this significant programme shift, UNICEF is working with large government programmes in order to effectively implement these goals, including reaching millions of adolescents, ensuring quality and cost-effectiveness. UNICEF has adopted the approach of leveraging

large-scale government programmes to demonstrate effective programme initiatives with girls that can then be used for evidence-based policy advocacy for strengthening the design and roll-out of government programmes. Also, UNICEF is working on tracking intermediate indicators that will support identification of models for scale-up.

South Asia

To assess the evidence base in South Asia, UNFPA and UNICEF undertook a joint mapping of child marriage initiatives in the region,⁵ a product which was used to support a background paper on the evidence base and an expert group meeting for South-South exchange of best practices, challenges and ideas among practitioners in the region.⁶ In Bangladesh in particular, an evaluation of adolescent girls' clubs was used to



5 <http://asiapacific.unfpa.org/en/publications/mapping-child-marriage-initiatives-south-asia>
 6 <http://asiapacific.unfpa.org/en/publications/expert-group-meeting-evidence-base-accelerated-action-end-child-marriage-south-asia>

TABLE 6. RESULTS FRAMEWORK ON STRENGTHENED USE OF THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR PROGRAMMING, ADVOCACY AND SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

Outputs	OP3.1. Strengthened dissemination and visibility of the evidence base on child marriage, gender norms and girls' empowerment by sub-national, national, regional and global stakeholders and champions	OP3.2. Improved sub-national, national and regional-level capacity and connectivity in using the evidence base on child marriage and underlying structural determinants and gender norms for programming, advocacy and communications	OP3.3. Enhanced sub-national, national, regional/continental and global measures and data on child marriage gender norms and girls' empowerment
Output indicators	OP3.1.a. Number of influential outlets through which quality, evidence based products on child marriage, gender norms and girls empowerment are disseminated	OP3.2.a. Number of workshops and meetings held to promote South-South collaboration and exchange on data, analysis, programming and advocacy on child marriage, gender norms and girls' empowerment	OP3.3a. Number of national and sub-national capacity-building workshops and webinars held on effective analysis, presentation and use of evidence, measures and programme assessments on child marriage
	OP3.1.b. Number of evidence products developed with quality data analysis and programmatic insights on child marriage, gender norms and girls' empowerment	OP3.2.b. Availability of mechanisms for South-South sharing and exchange of assessments and results towards ending child marriage	OP3.3.b. Number of feasible and measurable intermediate indicators of success on ending child marriage, girls' empowerment and gender norms identified through a collaborative process including global, regional and national experts

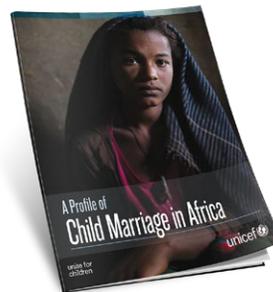


promote the design and roll-out of 5,000 more adolescent girls' clubs, now supported by the Government. UNICEF continues to support SAEIVAC in its advocacy to national governments to design and implement their national action plans to end child marriage. In 2014, SAEIVAC was instrumental in that it led to the Kathmandu Call for Action to End Child Marriage in Asia on 20 November 2014, which further illustrated the support from all governments in the region to end this practice.⁷

In 2015, ROSA produced the first Progress Report on Ending Child Marriage. The report looked at strategic multi-sectoral approaches in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and highlighted the latest research, knowledge and evaluations. The report, available in both hard copy and digitally, was disseminated to policymakers, partners, donors and senior government officials to foster productive collaboration, and to highlight the contribution of UNICEF across the region. In 2016, ROSA, in conjunction with UNFPA, commissioned a background paper and convened an Expert Group Meeting to further engage with and summarize the evidence on child marriage.

Eastern and Southern Africa/ West and Central Africa

UNICEF continues to support strengthening the evidence of what works to end child marriage at global, regional and national levels. UNICEF's report, 'A Profile of Child Marriage in Africa', was launched on 26 November 2015, when the African Union hosted the First African Girls' Summit in Zambia.⁸ UNICEF ESARO



⁷ [https://www.reproductiverights.org/sites/crr.civicactions.net/files/documents/SA%20End%20Child%20Marriage%20Brochure_20Nov14\(final\)-2%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.reproductiverights.org/sites/crr.civicactions.net/files/documents/SA%20End%20Child%20Marriage%20Brochure_20Nov14(final)-2%20(1).pdf)

⁸ [https://www.unicef.org/media/files/UNICEF-Child-Marriage-Brochure-low-Single\(1\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/media/files/UNICEF-Child-Marriage-Brochure-low-Single(1).pdf).

collaborated on a literature review of the determinants and consequences of child marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa. The summary report was launched at the Girls' Summit in Lusaka and the comprehensive report was launched in early 2016. UNICEF also commissioned a study entitled 'Child Marriage, Adolescent Pregnancy and Family Formation in West and Central Africa' in partnership with the International Center for Research on Women. It aimed to build knowledge for evidence-based programming specific to the context and challenges of West and Central Africa, given that most previous research on the subject had been conducted in South Asia. Lastly, a baseline study was commissioned to estimate the number of children married or in union in 2014 and the projected number of children married or in union in 2017 in South Asia. In Burkina Faso, a research on social norms programming was conducted in March 2017, with technical assistance from the UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional office aiming at better adapting community-based strategies to the results and lessons learned from the sociological study on child marriage conducted in the Sahel region in 2016.

At the country level, UNICEF country offices have worked with national counterparts on analysis of DHS and MICS data, the incorporation of adolescent health-related indicators in the Education Management Information System and with vital registration systems to improve the overall collection of data relating to the well-being of adolescent girls. Moving forward, this effort will be complemented by further evidence generated by this programme on what works to eliminate child marriage at scale.

In **Ethiopia**, a number of research endeavours have helped UNICEF and its partners create and contextualize localized programming. UNICEF supported a 2016 Overseas Development Institute (ODI) study, which showed that

support to girls' education is a key strategy to curb the practice of child marriage.⁹

As a result of these studies, 51,239 girls were reached in 2016 through strengthening girls' clubs, strengthening school guidance and counselling, teachers' training on sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence – including on child marriage to provide support to girls at risk – and direct material support (such as school supplies and materials to support menstrual hygiene management). In conjunction, parents and the community were also sensitized on the benefit of girls' education and the need to support them to ensure continuity and performance.

In **Zambia**, technical assistance to the education line ministries with the aim of supporting linkages and a holistic approach to dealing with out-of-school children, girls and those vulnerable to child marriage, has been established. UNICEF continues to build on the strong links with the relevant directorates of the Ministry of General Education and has also strengthened the linkages between civil society partners and the Ministry to ensure a more harmonized and cohesive approach to the issues of child marriage. UNICEF has supported the Ministry of General Education and the Ministry of Higher Education in the development of an education sector plan and an implementation plan for each Ministry. To inform the education sector plan, data analysis specifically focusing on girls and including the issue of child marriage is being carried out in 2016 and the early part of 2017. The analysis will consider how and to what extent child marriage, among other issues, acts as a barrier to schooling and as an impediment to girls' secondary school completion. The use of safe spaces and sustained participation of boys and girls in the safe spaces

⁹ Overseas Development Institute, 'One Size Does Not Fit All: The patterns and drivers of child marriage in Ethiopia's hotspot districts', ODI, London, 2016.

Strategic support to governments and regional partners

UNICEF's strategic support to the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage includes:

- high-level advocacy with Member States through eight national campaigns to end child marriage launched in 2016;
- strengthening the monitoring and evaluation framework of the interventions related to the campaign; and
- African Union-led review meeting in October highlighted significant progress on accelerating actions to end child marriage in the region through policy development, legislative change, increased investments in partnerships, monitoring, evaluation and operational research and implementing programmes at scale that have a direct impact on adolescent girls who are already married or at risk of child marriage.

will subsequently improve their ability to build their individual social, economic and health assets.

Middle East and North Africa

In **Yemen**, an assessment was conducted in six targeted governorates to identify the attitudes of local communities towards child/early marriage, assess the knowledge level of the impact of early marriage among adolescents, assess available services and what, if any, response mechanisms are available, and develop an adequate response to the needs of the identified married girls and girls at risk. This assessment has also contributed to the identification of 3,682 married girls, as well as girls at risk of child marriage, out of which 15 girls started to receive a multi-sectorial package of services (health, legal, psychosocial, education and empowerment) on a case-by-case basis.



Visibility and communications

Enhancing the visibility of child marriage around the globe is part and parcel to ending it, and so UNICEF has undertaken a communications and visibility strategy to better disseminate results, evidence and awareness. This process aims to make UNICEF's efforts visible at every level, from local communities to governments, to help support norms change sustainably and to encourage conscientiousness around the issue of child marriage. This section highlights specific communications initiatives undertaken by country and regional offices, as well as global and regional events supported by UNICEF.

UNICEF is actively engaged on Twitter and other social media to ensure a consistent message of gender equality in Eastern and Southern Africa. The UNICEF ESARO Communications section produced public service announcements on child marriage, which are highlighted on social media platforms by UNICEF offices in Africa. The public service announcements were viewed by almost 280,000 people, at least 10 times more viewers than average for UNICEF public service announcements. Communications public service announcements have also been developed for South Asia and have been widely disseminated via social media.

For more lengthy reports and endeavours, UNICEF seeks to increase and improve its communications practices, to publish new findings on the evidence via its website, and to launch these initiatives where possible. In 2017, the Communications Strategy and Briefing Book will be finalized and rolled out, which will better guide country offices and regional offices in launching publicity and communications efforts to reach more girls, influencers and decision makers and to have better tools for advocacy. In West Africa, there is ongoing research by UNICEF on social norms related to gender norms and child protection with a focus on measuring social norms, including child marriage and adolescent pregnancy in the region. Publications on this research will be finalized and launched in 2017.

In local communities and at the national level, UNICEF has worked to support and publicize events such as International Day of the Girl celebrations and community declarations to rescind child marriage and other harmful practices.



Value for money

The United Nations is committed to the best use of resources to attain desired results for children. Value for money is embedded in all key processes and it is ensured that key decisions have consciously taken value for money into account. The United Nations' Value for Money proposition has four pillars – economy, effectiveness, programme and budget development, and equity – which have been consciously and carefully integrated into child marriage activities and supported programmes covered under this grant from the Government of Canada over the past three years in the programme countries.

ECONOMY: The United Nations takes all necessary steps to ensure that inputs procured are of a high quality at the best cost over a longer term (5+ years) by requiring at least three quotes with defined quality standards, and employing specialized supply professionals in the country offices. Within UNICEF, a Copenhagen supply division works to obtain high-quality supplies sourced overseas.

Additionally, UNICEF has deliberately built the capacity of national staff to increasingly take on more senior responsibilities, thus gradually taking up positions that were previously held by international professionals.

EFFECTIVENESS: The United Nations focuses on changing the situation of the most vulnerable children by demonstrating results that are attributable to its interventions. For example, UNICEF has rolled out a Results-Based Management Training to its staff to further enhance results-based programming and ensure that the organization's outputs are linked to its intended outcomes.

UNICEF endeavours to engage partners with a successful track record in delivering results and effectively managing its resources. The organization ensures this by undertaking a pre-assessment (micro-assessment for those it intends to contract above US\$100,000 and simplified financial assessments for those below this amount) before engagement, and also carries out other assurance activities including joint programme monitoring and financial reviews in the course of implementation. Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers procedures are fully complied with to engage and manage UNICEF partners.

Programme budget development and value for money ratios

We jointly develop projects and their corresponding budgets with partners to ensure full ownership and facilitate joint monitoring.

For example, UNICEF Uganda has set standard costs for key inputs that guide UNICEF in reviewing and approving budgets for its partners when developing partner Programme Cooperation Agreements. This enables the country office to ensure that budgeted costs are reasonable.

In addition, UNICEF Uganda has developed value for money ratios that enable them to assess three key parameters for

budgets for Programme Cooperation Agreements, including:

1. Partner contribution to direct programme costs – for a meaningful partnership, they require partners to make a minimum 15 per cent contribution to direct programme costs;
2. UNICEF contribution to support costs – a maximum of 25 per cent has been set; and
3. Proportion of support costs to direct programme costs – a maximum of 25 per cent has been set.

EQUITY: The United Nations ensures that UNICEF programmes are targeted to reach the most marginalized children and women; an equity analysis is undertaken at the beginning of the country programme through the Situation Analysis, the results of which inform UNICEF of the most marginalized areas.

Alongside this focus on value for money, UNICEF is committed to evidence-based programming and engaging in activities that use donor funds effectively for change. UNICEF is uniquely situated in programme countries for this role. In designing and implementing programmes, UNICEF aims to work with existing infrastructure and to encourage governments to take on pieces of, or entire, programmes in order to ensure that UNICEF funds are used where they have a comparative advantage, such as in advocacy and partnership building and direct-to-girl programming.

Results from the past year of programming show that value for money is evident. For instance, UNICEF's progress towards working at scale has been particularly evident in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, where programming reached more than 150,000 girls and community members in each country. Working with on-the-ground partners – both governments and NGOs – ensures that existing support structures are reinforced and local knowledge is incorporated into programming to maximize results.

Constraints, challenges and limitations

Ongoing conflict in Yemen

In Yemen, ongoing political conflict and the emergency situation makes it extremely difficult to reach girls throughout the country, but particularly in the most extreme conflict-affected areas. While programming has thus far been successful, country and regional offices will need to be nimble and prepared while trying to reach more girls with better, more effective programming.

As discussed above, the emergency situation in Yemen led to gaps in implementation and difficulty of follow-through by the national government and partners. As a result, a smaller number of girls were reached and fewer social services cases were addressed than targeted.

Political stability and buy-in

Political advocacy and engaging with governments necessitates flexibility and willingness to work within the system, including developments that impinge on programming or could be considered setbacks. UNICEF continues to engage with governments to leverage long-standing commitments on the part of individuals and legislative bodies even in the face of adversity or challenges to the End Child Marriage agenda. A notable example of UNICEF's ability to engage governments and unique positioning to implement this work came in Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh's decision to change its child marriage law in late 2016 was a disappointing setback, but UNICEF continues to work on an

active programme with the Supreme Court to find the best way to articulate the implementation of the article, so that even given this legal setback, there are still significant barriers to marrying as a child.

In Ethiopia as well, the state of emergency declared in 2016 and civil unrest inhibited implementation in all regions. The delay of the start of the school year in particular impinged on programming to reach girls directly, but UNICEF continued to work with relevant ministries to move forward the national action strategy and planning for future implementation.

Scale

Given the urgent nature and large number of children at risk of child marriage, programme scale-up has been an important focus for UNICEF and in-country partners around the world, and necessitates sustained, large-scale involvement with at-risk populations over the long term. From Bangladesh, where large populations correlate with large numbers of child brides, to West Africa, which has the highest rate of girls married before 18, increasing the number of girls who are reached is key to making headway on global goals to reduce incidences of child marriage. Scaling up programming opens the possibility for larger social norms change, which will likely be more sustainable as funds for child marriage programming become less available. In this scaling-up goal, UNICEF has been enormously successful. In 2016 alone, programmes reached more than 217,000 girls.

However, continuing to reach girls at scale is a challenge, and the problem of child marriage is likely to keep growing. Rates of child marriage remain high among girls in the focus countries. As populations grow, so too does the number of girls at risk of child marriage. Figure 4 shows projections for child marriage prevalence in Africa. As UNICEF continues to focus on child marriage through the Global Programme with UNPFA, the agencies aim to directly reach more than 2.5 million girls and should impact the lives of millions of other girls, their families and communities, but more work is needed to reach girls at scale.

Funding

Canada was an early and consistent supporter of UNICEF's work on child marriage and was instrumental in enabling the launch of the Global Programme that has had positive impact and received favourable publicity. However, for internal reasons, Canada's contribution remains outside the overall framework of the Global Programme. This has created a dual reporting line for the involved countries where related activities are planned and reported against different results frameworks. Moving forward, it will be increasingly challenging to specifically attribute results to support from the Government of Canada. As a result, UNICEF will work with the Government of Canada to ensure that potential additional support for efforts to end child marriage will be channelled through the Global Programme, allowing Canada to continue its global leadership role in ending child marriage.

Furthermore, the short time frame for future funding commitments complicates long-term commitments and thus the ability to effectively leverage concurrent investments to end child marriage. The Theory of Change for Child Marriage views social change as a long-term process and requires an

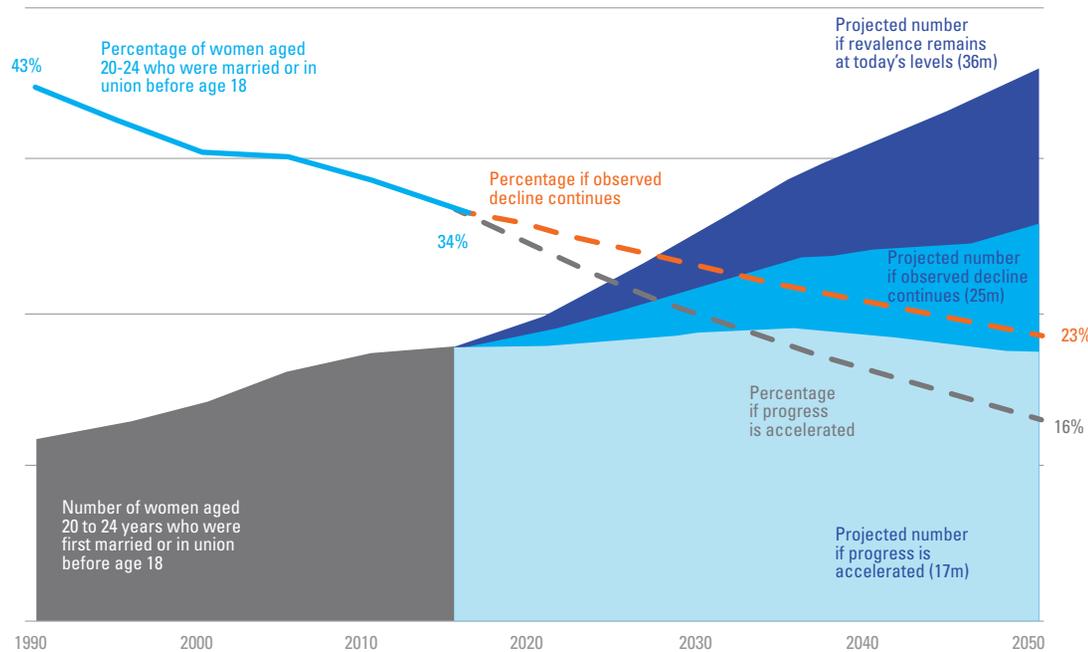


in-depth process engaging communities in a face-to-face dialogue to have an impact. That funding allocations are made on an annual basis makes it difficult to plan activities with implementing partners and ensure that all funds are spent by the reporting deadlines. Continued support in this arena ensures progress in results, continuity of programming and systems streamlining for better, more effective work.

Data, M&E and knowledge management

Despite significant monitoring efforts by UNICEF through the Global Programme, monitoring and evaluation data are scarce

FIGURE 4: PROJECTIONS ON THE NUMBER OF WOMEN 20–24 YEARS OLD TO BE MARRIED OR IN UNION BEFORE AGE 18 UNDER VARIOUS POPULATION GROWTH AND PREVALENCE SCENARIOS IN AFRICA



Source: UNICEF global databases, 2017, based on MICS and DHS. For source information by country, see <data.unicef.org>.

and practices need additional support. The lack of resources in this arena made reporting for this grant difficult. Resources to support regional bodies in the monitoring of their regional action plans are necessary to ensure that governments continue to use the best available evidence and engage in best practices. Resources will also be required to establish a useful knowledge management platform for the regions and corresponding monitoring missions.

Fostering increased engagement with men and boys

Mounting evidence shows that a singular focus on girls, while important to girls' attitudes and ability to speak up, does not fully address the structural and normative challenges faced by girls in exercising their rights. To date, the focus of UNICEF programming on child marriage has been girl-centred programming. Evidence-based programming to engage with men and boys and challenge social norms is an area of interest for many programme countries in the quest for sustainable change. Communications and community-level dialogues implemented with support from UNICEF and the Government of Canada have focused on engaging at the local level with community members, gatekeepers and decision makers to sensitize them to the risks of child marriage and encourage public declarations rescinding the practice. Moving forward, UNICEF aims to incorporate the ever more robust evidence base on engaging with men and boys to transform larger social norms around child marriage and adolescent rights.

Lessons learned

Data, M&E and knowledge management

Implementation of the Canada grant and attempts to measure progress and write this report have highlighted an important lesson learned around monitoring and evaluation. The Canada grant did not have a proper monitoring results framework per se. Baseline assessments for the targets that were eventually sent for this grant were not available at the outset, making reporting on indicators somewhat difficult. This difficulty is magnified with respect to Outcome 3. With the advent of the Global Programme, more focus has been put on establishing targets and measurable results. Despite this commitment, lack of reliable data and indicators on child marriage and violence against children remains a major challenge for programming and reporting. Large-scale national household surveys are infrequent due to both the monetary costs to programmes and governments and the time burden put on participants.

UNICEF continues to work with national governments, local agencies and statistics bureaus to implement better in-house monitoring and evaluation practices to ensure that programming is reflective of and responsive to actual situations on the ground, as well as to provide accurate baselines from which to measure progress. One area of particular need given its nascent importance in the literature and programming is measuring social norms and community attitudes. Tracking these changes as well as harder metrics, such as the number of girls married over time, will continue to be a key, evolving part of the soon-to-be-released Indicator Index and measurement frameworks.

Legal reform and systems

Moderate successes in legal reform and strengthening legal responses to child marriage have led UNICEF to desire greater engagement with this sector. To now, gains have been capped by lack of focus and resources devoted to systems and legal reform, but have provided important models for moving forward to improve engagement with legal systems.

For instance, in Yemen, the social services system has identified child marriages and stopped them from happening (albeit a small number, but given the emergency situation, laudable). In Ethiopia, 232 marriages were not permitted to go forward and more than 400 were annulled after following up on the bride's age in the year following the implementation of legal literacy classes in schools and community marketplaces, health facilities and other public areas. The community surveillance mechanisms established in Afar Region to raise public awareness and track cases of child marriage and FGM/C also appear to improve enforcement of the law by identifying suspected cases and reporting them to the police.

In 2017, the results of interventions through law enforcement and surveillance mechanisms will be closely examined to inform further scale-up. In Bangladesh, setbacks in legal reform have not prevented UNICEF from continuing to work with the Government and relevant ministries to reduce the potential harm to girls that may come about.

Harmonization of laws and norms around child marriage has been highlighted as an important area of focus going forward. Conflicts between statutory law, customary law and social norms around marriage may complicate efforts at programming in information dissemination. Zambia's work in 2014 to harmonize laws is an important case study. While the current legal age of marriage is 21 under statutory law, customary law allows for marriage as of the child's attainment of puberty. During 2014, the Government reviewed the Marriage Act, and other related acts so as to harmonize customary and statutory legislation and set a consistent legal age of marriage at age 18. UNICEF continues to support these efforts and look to advocacy work with the Zambian Government as a model.

Legal reform continues to be an active area of engagement for UNICEF at the regional, national and local levels. Over the life of this grant, the Government of Canada has allowed UNICEF ample resources to create and find active, contextualized ways to engage ministries, public officials and traditional leaders in the fight for gender equality.

Engaging the local context

Alongside the goal to reach girls at scale is the fact that programming and interventions must be context-specific and give due cognizance to local culture and practices in order to be effective. For example, in Ethiopia, UNICEF has more experience with designing programmes for particular geographical areas (notably the highlands), but significantly

less experience with programmes targeting lowlanders, despite significant differences between these two groups. Programmes geared towards the socio-cultural and religious context of highlanders applied to lowland communities may not yield the desired results, and so bringing programmes to scale in Ethiopia will be complicated by this challenge. This lesson is applicable to all countries, although it is particularly pronounced in Ethiopia, and will need to be balanced with the push for scale.

Systems strengthening and sustainability

Alongside legal systems, leveraging the strengthening of systems to inform programming and outcomes has been key to success in some countries. For instance, in Bangladesh, in order to address the challenge of access to sexual and reproductive health-related information and services, in UNICEF-targeted upazilas, Adolescent Friendly Health Services plans were developed and implemented (health services were provided to 48,665 adolescents – 36,975 adolescent girls and 11,690 adolescent boys), and are being monitored by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP). The experience and lessons learned from these interventions have been utilized as inputs for the National Adolescent Health Strategy and costed action plan where national-level investments on gender-responsive Adolescent Friendly Health Services has been recognized as a key priority and a specific component on ending child marriage has been included within the same strategy.

Annex 1: Global Programme Theory of Change

The Global Programme Theory of Change focuses on five main strategies to effect meaningful and lasting change through evidence-based programming and advocacy. These include:

1. Empowering girls with information, skills and support networks;
2. Educating and mobilizing parents and community members;
3. Offering economic support and incentives for girls and their families;
4. Enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling and health services for girls; and
5. Fostering an enabling legal and policy framework and improving the knowledge and evidence base.

GLOBAL PROGRAMME THEORY OF CHANGE

Impact	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 childbearing				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		
Outcomes	Adolescent girls at risk of and affected by child marriage are better able to express and exercise their choices	Households demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours regarding gender equality and equity	Relevant sectoral systems deliver quality and cost-effective services to meet the needs of adolescent girls	National laws, policy frameworks and mechanisms to protect and promote adolescent girls' rights are in line with international standards and properly resourced	Government(s) support and promote the generation and use of robust data and evidence to inform programme design, track progress and document lessons		
Strategies	Empowering girls with information, skills, and support networks	Education and mobilizing parents and community members	Offering economic support and incentives for girls and their families	Enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling and health services for girls	Fostering an enabling legal and policy framework and improving the knowledge and evidence base		
Drivers and causes	Discrimination against girls and women	Gender roles that restrict girls and women to family and household roles	Economic opportunities/structure of the economy	Inaccessible and/or low-quality services such as schools or health facilities	Legal and policy frameworks that do not protect adolescents	Poverty	Conflicts and natural disasters
Problem	Marrying girls as children persists as a common practice in many societies and is associated with a combination of structural and socio-cultural factors. Currently, around 750 million girls are married before the age of 18.						

Annex 2: Human interest story from Bangladesh

Rising against all odds

By Akram Hosen Mamun

When Sonia Akhter was in Grade III, being the top student in her class was her only dream. The girl from Rasulpur village of Barisal was on the road to her dream, studying hard amid her family's hardships.

One morning as she was getting ready for school, her parents asked her not to go. And what they told her was beyond her wildest imagination. They asked her to get ready for her wedding instead. It was something that she was not ready to grasp as she was only 10 years old.

"I was flabbergasted. I couldn't believe my ears," says Sonia, now 13.

"I was the best in my class and that's all I ever wanted. But everything had changed after that day," she adds.

Helping prevent child marriage

Sonia's parents were about to marry her off to a man almost three times her

age. But thanks to the prompt response of the staff of a Child-Friendly Space (CFS), run by a UNICEF partner NGO Aparajeyo-Bangladesh at Rosulpur village of Barisal City, the marriage was averted. She, however, could not continue school for the next one year, which badly affected her learning.

Three years into the incident, Sonia is now in Grade V at a primary school near her village. She was able to catch up with what she had missed out after attending a UNICEF-supported Ability Based Accelerated Learning programme for out-of-school children at the CFS.

Apart from making a comeback to her studies, she receives life skills training at the CFS in her village, where she learns about adolescent hygiene, perils of child marriage, child labour and basic communication skills.

She now dreams of doing something to end child marriage, a social menace that still thrives in rural Bangladesh.

"I want to be a social worker. I want to fight against child marriage and I guess I will succeed as I almost became a victim and have seen how the social workers can save lives," she says with conviction.

Dramatic rescue

On the day they were preparing for her marriage, a peer educator of the CFS, Pinky Akhter, 15, went to her house to pick her up on the way to the CFS.

"Sonia's younger brother Ibrahim, who also went to the CFS, answered the door and he told me that they were expecting some guests and she could not go to school," says Pinky, who played a key role in preventing the child marriage.

"As I've grown up in the village, and knew how child marriages are organized, I realized what was going on, and immediately informed the CFS

teacher and social worker, who rushed to Sonia's house," she continued.

They tried to convince Sonia's parents in every possible way. But they were unmoved.

"The girl has grown up. She needs to be married. Would you feed her? Take her and feed her," her mother told the Aparajeyo-Bangladesh staff.

As nothing could make Sonia's parents change their mind, the NGO staff called the police who came and took her away.

Fearing that her parents or the man who tried to marry her would try to punish Sonia for this, the executive director of Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) Salma Ali, who was visiting Barisal at the time, took her to Dhaka where she stayed for several weeks.

Sonia says her parents were very upset that the wedding didn't take place. After that incident, she couldn't go to school as people in the neighbourhood would taunt and insult her.

Sonia's teacher at the CFS, Dipali Mandal, says the legal basis for preventing her marriage was her birth registration certificate.

"Her parents are still angry that we made her register her birth," Dipali says.

Pinky becomes anti-child marriage advocate

The story of Pinky Akhter is also encouraging.

Youngest among six siblings, she saw how child marriage ruined the lives of her sisters. Her two sisters were married off before they were 18 while the oldest one, Nurun Nahar, was only 10 when she was married off. She was divorced within a few days of her wedding. It has been 18 years since she was divorced. And she could never get married because she was married previously.

"I have seen how child marriage ruins lives and that's why I want to fight it all my life," she says.



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Pinky got an A+ in JSC examination and hopes to get good grades in the Secondary School Certificate exam as well.

"I want to be a schoolteacher. I want to do something for people," she said with her face lighting up with joy.

For more on this story, visit: <http://www.unicefrosa-progressreport.org/childmarriage.html>

Thirteen year-old Sonia Akhter (right) talking with her peer educator Pinky Akhter (left) in a child-friendly space in Rasalpur, BCC, Barisal.



Funding from the Government of Canada has been a catalyst for accelerated action and change in programming and policy around child marriage. Lessons learned from programme implementation and partnerships in the six Canada-funded countries contributed to the creation of a Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage.