ETHIOPIA

COUNTRY PROFILE

UNFPA–UNICEF
Global Programme to
End Child Marriage

Belgium
partner in development

Canada

Co-funded by
the European Union

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and International Cooperation

Government of the Netherlands

Norad

UKaid
from the British people

ZONTA
INTERNATIONAL
EMPOWERING WOMEN
THROUGH SERVICE & ADVOCACY

end
child
marriage
A voice. A chance. A future.

UNFPA

unicef
for every child

ETHIOPIA
COUNTRY PROFILE

Ethiopia is home to 15 million child brides. Of these, 6 million married before age 15.

Source: UNICEF global databases, 2020. Demographic data are from United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019, Online Edition. Rev. 1.

Notes: For details on the calculation of girls and women married in childhood, see: United Nations Children's Fund, Child Marriage: Latest trends and future prospects, UNICEF, New York, 2018. Estimates refer to population year 2016 to align with burden numbers recently published in a country-specific analysis. Values above 2 million are rounded to the nearest million.
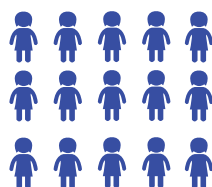
15 million
Married before age 18

6 million
Married before age 15
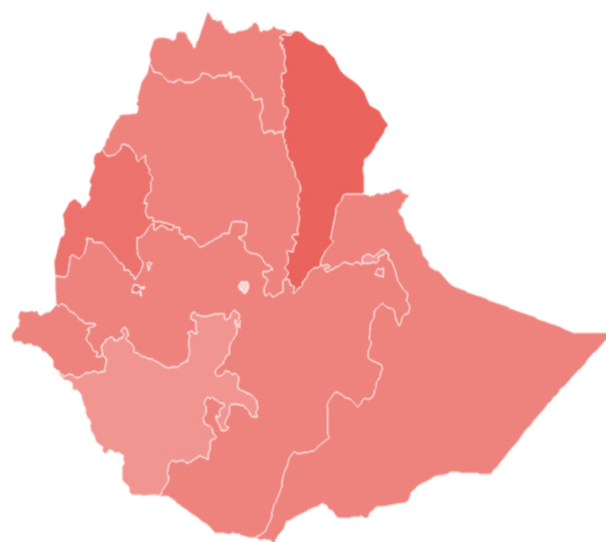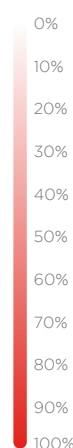
Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

Note: This map is stylized and not to scale. It does not reflect a position by UNFPA or UNICEF on the legal status of any country or area or the delimitation of any frontiers. Source for child marriage prevalence data is the Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2016.

Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 15 and before age 18

Source: UNICEF analysis based on Demographic and Health Survey, as published in: United Nations Children's Fund, Ending Child Marriage: A profile of progress in Ethiopia, UNICEF, New York, 2018.

Notes: This trend analysis is based on the prevalence of child marriage across age cohorts, as measured in the Demographic and Health Surveys 2000, 2005, 2011 and 2016. See publication noted above for additional details.

Before age 15 — Before age 18
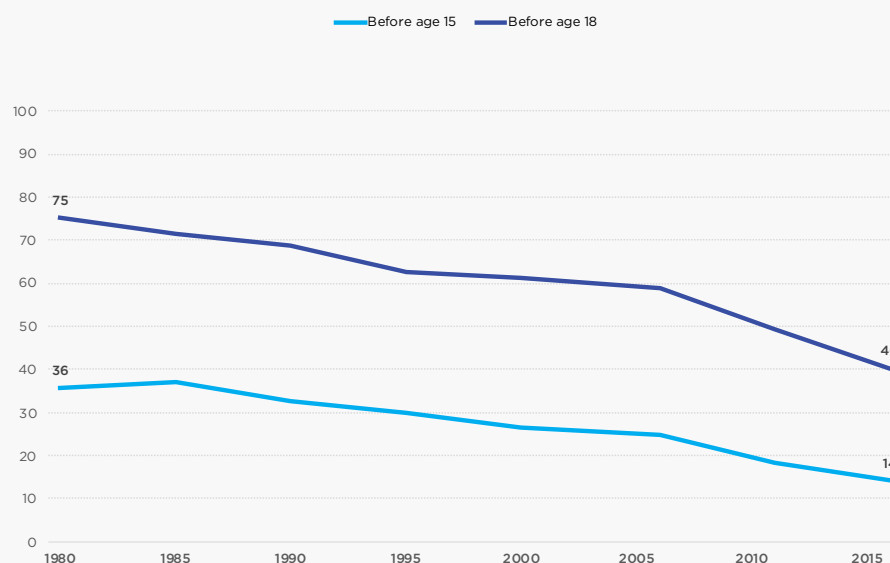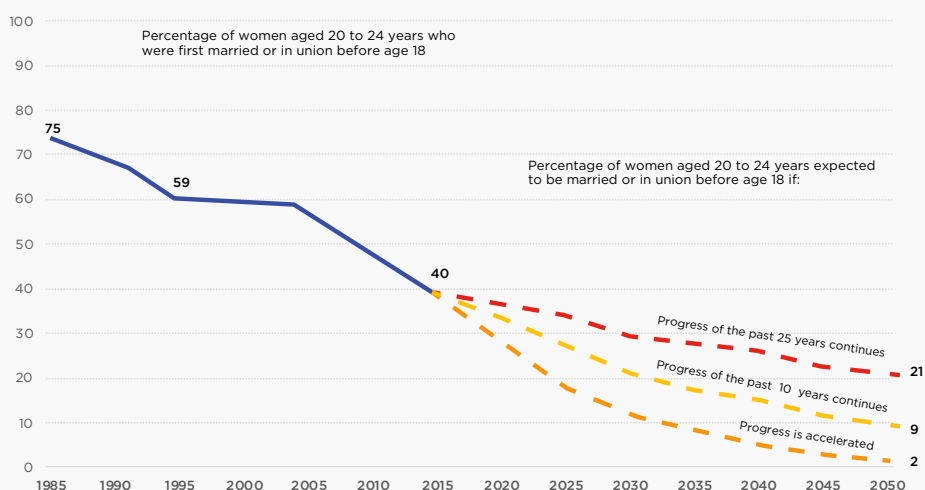
Projections of the prevalence of child marriage

Source: UNICEF analysis based on Demographic and Health Surveys, as published in: United Nations Children's Fund, Ending Child Marriage: A profile of progress in Ethiopia, UNICEF, New York, 2018.

Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years expected to be married or in union before age 18 if:

Progress of the past 25 years continues — 21

Progress of the past 10 years continues — 9

Progress is accelerated — 2

Message from UNFPA and UNICEF Ethiopia country representatives

Bettina Maas
UNFPA Ethiopia country representative

Adele Khodr
UNICEF Ethiopia country representative

UNFPA and UNICEF express our deep gratitude for the generous support of the donors to the Global Programme to End Child Marriage. Their contributions have ensured technical and financial support is provided to build and strengthen a national movement to end child marriage. The programme is critical to promoting the rights of girls and women in Ethiopia and to accelerating support to the country to achieve its commitment to end child marriage by 2030 in line with the Sustainable Development Goals target 5.3. The achievements documented in this report would not have been possible without the strong leadership of the Government of Ethiopia. This has been illustrated in several ways, notably through the National Costed Roadmap to End Child Marriage and FGM/C, launched in August 2019, by H.E. President Sahle-Work Zewde. This costed plan outlines the key strategies, interventions, results, targets and milestones that Ethiopia has adopted towards eliminating both practices in all contexts, including in humanitarian settings. The National Alliance to End FGM and Child Marriage, led by the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth and whose steering committee involves various stakeholders, including UNFPA and UNICEF, is another example of a partnership to build a movement. The first of its kind globally, the Alliance brings together representatives from government ministries, non-governmental and civil society organizations and faith-based communities. Efforts at the national level are replicated at the regional and sub-regional levels through the Anti-Harmful Traditional Practices committees which engage influential community members. While we are proud of these achievements, we note challenges that we are also addressing in the partnership. These include securing budgets from across the key sectors to implement the Roadmap, particularly education, health and justice. Findings from various evaluations also impress upon us the need to be more gender transformative in our approaches. We are working to incorporate this approach across all our interactions at various levels, while also recognizing that the structural dimensions of gender inequity take time to change. Finally, COVID-19 has challenged existing ways of working. We are taking the initiative to find and test alternative ways to operate in the immediate and longer-term. UNFPA and UNICEF are proud to have contributed to the achievement of the results contained in this report. We are committed to addressing the remaining challenges and to empowering girls in Ethiopia to fully realize their rights and potential.

Country movement to accelerate action to end child marriage: Key moments and achievements of Phase I

In Phase I, the Global Programme in Ethiopia deepened partnership with the government to accelerate action to end child marriage and provided data and evidence with advocacy to promote policy change and legal reform at various levels.

Significant achievements in Ethiopia since the inception of the Global Programme include:

486,140 adolescent girls aged 10–19

have participated in at least one programme intervention aimed at empowering them with skills and information to delay child marriage.

Over **50,000 boys** have also benefitted from life-skills interventions.

The UNICEF statistical brochure 'Ending child marriage: a profile of progress in Ethiopia' and the study on gender equality, women's empowerment and child well-being, contributed to knowledge that informed key national planning processes, policy dialogues and advocacy efforts.

140,878 adolescent girls aged 10–19

have been supported by the programme to enrol and continue with their education in order to delay child marriage.

839,719 individuals in the community

were engaged and regularly participated in dialogues promoting gender-equitable norms including delaying child marriage.

Over **2 million people** in programme areas and more than

13 million nationwide were reached with mass media campaigns to end child marriage.

A total of **24,785 child marriages** have been cancelled or annulled following the interventions of gender clubs directly resisting arranged marriages for their peers.

A total of **3,094** health and protection service delivery points were capacitated through provision of needs-based technical and material support to provide adolescent girl-friendly services.

In August 2019, the national costed road map to end child marriage and female genital mutilation (2020–2024) was launched by the President of Ethiopia, together with the Ministry of Women and with support from UNFPA and UNICEF.

Phase I Country Programme Strategies

UNFPA and UNICEF employed a mix of globally tested strategies and interventions to achieve the five key objectives of the programme in Ethiopia during Phase I.

The programme followed a comprehensive girls' empowerment framework aimed at increasing girls' "power-within, power-with, power-over and power to act". Skills-building training on topics such as life skills, legal frameworks, sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender and services available to girls (such as health, psychosocial and legal services) has equipped girls with the knowledge and skills to access services and influence decisions. The programme has improved the functionality of platforms such as gender clubs to enhance learning, create peer support mechanisms and amplify the collective voice of girls. Clubs for girls, both in-school and out-of-school, have carried out educational outreach and family visits enabling discussions and negotiations with families whose girls were at risk of child marriage and/or dropping out of school. Additionally, direct financial and material support was provided by UNFPA to vulnerable adolescent girls and their families to ensure continued enrolment in primary school and to improve educational performance. Capacitating preventive and response services, such as guidance and counselling, and improving access to those services within schools and at community level contributed to the resilience of girls.

The social mobilization strategy increased knowledge and contributed to changing attitudes and practices around gender. This was achieved through community conversations, religious leader engagement, capacitating and mobilizing Women Development Groups, media engagement and various educational interventions that facilitate critical reflection, examination of beliefs, influence attitudes and galvanize collective action to end child marriage. Each approach was culturally sensitive, participatory and empowering and encouraged individual and collective reflection and learning. An asset-based approach was used, which acknowledges the existing capacity and resources within communities to lead the change process.

Further, the programme employed a capacity-building/system-strengthening approach to improve identified prevention, protection and response services. This focused on four areas: technical capacity-building for education, legal and Bureau of Women and Children Affairs staff who provide services to girls; support to develop or use guides, tools and manuals for service provider staff and community facilitator training; small-scale basic supplies for community-level structures; and strengthening of systems for progress tracking and improved monitoring and evaluation function. Comprehensive capacity-building was targeted for prevention and protection service providers such as the police, officials from the Attorney General and the Bureau of Women and Children Affairs and non-formal structures established by the respective agencies to facilitate linkages at the community level.

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Country programme strategies
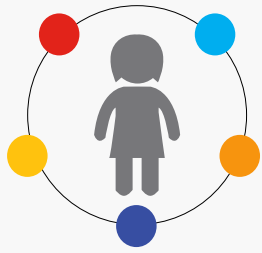
EMPOWER ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Mobilizing and training girls on life skills and sexual and reproductive health using adolescent peer clubs

Integrating life skills and sexual and reproductive health education into national education curriculum

ENHANCE THE ACCESSIBILITY AND QUALITY OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND PROTECTION SERVICES

Implementing guidelines for training on gender-responsive adolescent-friendly services

Capacity-building of education officers

Strengthening systems for handling school-related gender-based violence

Capacity-building of child protection officers

Training of teachers on gender-responsive pedagogy and learning outcome analysis

FOSTER AN ENABLING LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Providing data and evidence with advocacy to promote policy change and legal reform

Supporting development of national plan of action to end child marriage

OFFER ECONOMIC SUPPORT AND INCENTIVES FOR GIRLS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Leveraging other funding streams to support education

In-kind support for girls' education

EDUCATE AND MOBILIZE PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Participatory dialogues with religious and traditional leaders

Supporting women's rights groups

Multimedia campaigns

Making public declarations expressing the need to end child marriage

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Girls were supported to start and keep regular attendance at primary school (with a focus on upper primary which in Ethiopia covers grades 5–8, ages 10–14) through various approaches. School system-strengthening, which took into account the needs of girls in school, was carried out, with teachers receiving capacity-building on gender-responsive pedagogy. The rights and needs of adolescent girls in school were promoted, with a focus on addressing school-related gender-based violence and child marriage. Initiatives, such as consultations with girls prior to the provision of training and services, the delivery of age-appropriate life-skills training, creation of girl-friendly venues/safe spaces (for sharing information and reporting possible cases of child marriage) and strengthening the tutorial system for girls, were supported. The programme built the capacity of family-school forums and the ability of education officers to plan, monitor and evaluate child marriage programmes.

Partnerships between schools and other sectors such as health and justice were established or strengthened. For example, when school staff are not able to prevent a case of child marriage and parents are keen to continue with their plans, schools refer to justice services and to health centres for age estimation. School mini-media centres were capacitated to broadcast bi-weekly information about child marriage and gender-based violence. Life-skills education was provided through mobilizing trainers from colleges of teacher education. Media communication was outsourced to regional radio, TV and education media centres.

Finally, monitoring and evaluation and data systems were established or strengthened, with incidents of child marriage documented using the school-related gender-based violence data system. The detailed documentation of those participating in activities improved and cases of child marriage and cancelled child marriages were reported through the annual education census (EMIS). Quarterly monitoring and evaluation reviews were held at woreda (district) level and bi-annual reviews at regional levels.

Strategies used to ensure that legal and policy frameworks are aligned with standards and resourced included supporting the government to develop its national road map to end child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) (2020–2024). The road map (which is evidence-based, comprehensive and costed) includes a narrative component, an evidence review on what works to end child marriage and FGM, the current situation and patterns of the practices. The second part of the road map details the regional, federal and national plan, articulating the strategic interventions and mechanisms for funding and accountability. The third part covers a results framework, a performance monitoring plan and theory of change. The road map was developed through a participatory process involving key sectors and non-governmental actors. UNFPA and UNICEF strengthened the National Alliance to End FGM and Child Marriage to lead this and other national initiatives, which contributed to endorsement and launching of the costed road map in August 2019. To ensure the successful roll-out of the road map, support is currently being provided to develop an advocacy, communication and resource mobilization strategy. Capacity-building support is being provided to the coordination mechanisms at regional, woreda and community levels to facilitate exchange, learning, avoid duplication and synergize efforts at different levels.

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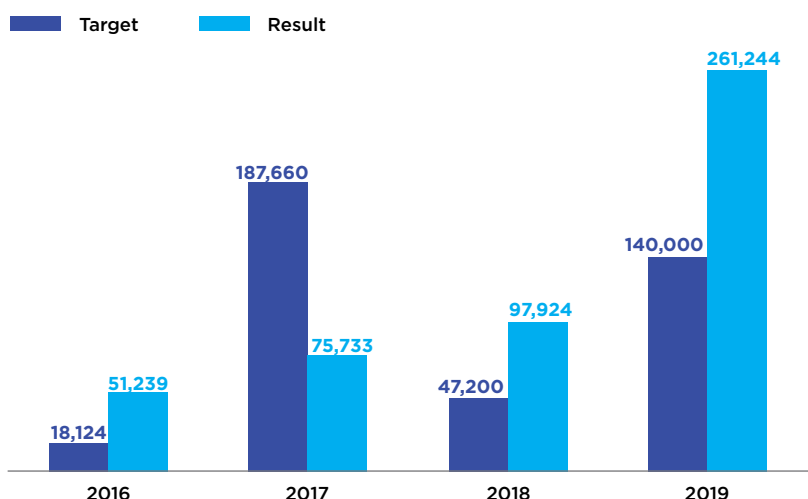# EMPOWERING ADOLESCENT GIRLS WITH SKILLS AND INFORMATION

Results from 2016–2019 programme implementation

Supporting girls with mentors has been a successful way to empower girls with information and skills. Girls were grouped and assigned a trained mentor based on where they lived. There are 440 trained mentors providing services for adolescent girls. The mentorship approach also serves as a vehicle to disseminate information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, services available and health and legal issues including the legal age for marriage. In Phase I, a total of 486,140 adolescent girls in programme areas actively participated in at least one targeted intervention facilitated by the trained mentors.

Girls involved in the skills development interventions were able to challenge their families on child marriage arrangements. In cases where girls could not convince their families to cancel these arrangements, they were able to report them to schools and law enforcement bodies. Families are now aware that they will face resistance or refusal from girls themselves if they plan a marriage without the girl's consent. In total, 24,785 child marriages have been cancelled or annulled over the course of Phase I.

In Bale Zone of Oromia, child marriage is much prevalent. In 2018, Anifa, a 14-year-old seventh-grader was told by her family that they had a plan to 'sell her' (the terminology used) to a man she did not know. She responded by yelling, "Sell me? No, sell yourself!" and she ran out of the house to the one place she knew she could get help, her school. Similar refusals from girls to family demands to marry have been widely reported in target districts and schools across the country during the programme period. The baseline survey to be undertaken in 2020 as part of the second phase of the programme is expected to generate concrete evidence to show the specific contribution of the programme in such results. Similarly, the increased number of cases of child marriage arrangements reported and increased access to various services reflect the level of knowledge increased and skills enhanced.

In 2019:

261,244

adolescent girls aged 10-19

in programme areas actively participated in at least one targeted intervention

The number of girls reached increased by 63 per cent from 2018 to 2019: In 2019, 261,244 adolescent girls were reached exceeding the target of 140,000. This was achieved as a result of the priority that implementing partners placed on reaching adolescent girls with comprehensive capacity-building during the year. It is also reflected in the increased budget allocation for this activity across the duration of the programme and in particular 2019.

4,991

child marriages

cancelled or annulled

Number of adolescent girls (aged 10–19) in programme areas actively participating in at least one targeted intervention

Legend: ■ Target ■ Result

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Target	18,124	187,660	47,200	140,000
Result	51,239	75,733	97,924	261,244

Since 2016:

486,140

adolescent girls
aged 10-19

in programme areas actively
participated in at least one
targeted intervention

Over 85,000 boys aged 10–19 in programme areas have also actively participated in at least one targeted intervention

Challenges

The programme faced a challenge reaching out-of-school girls with evidence-based comprehensive empowerment and capacity-building interventions that can be taken to scale. This was because of the lack of strong and friendly platforms to proactively target this group. Girls who are not in school have different life trajectories, including child marriage, migration for work (that could involve in trafficking), engagement in exploitative labour or low-paid work, making out-of-school girls difficult to identify and engage regularly. This is reflected in the low reach for this group. Implementing partners (as well as other actors in this area) are raising persistent challenges in engaging out-of-school adolescent girls, from difficulty in identifying them to the lack of knowledge and life-skills content that is specifically designed and adapted to them. The fact that in rural areas, at the community level, there are no existing delivery platforms nor representatives from the line ministries (staff are at woreda level but not at the lowest kebele level), are additional challenges in terms of delivering the life-skills content outside of structured school settings which operate within formal gender clubs and with a dedicated workforce (teachers).

There is a lack of information about the situation of out-of-school girls, their capacity development needs, and the platforms that would have the potential to reach girls at scale across the country. This has resulted in limited customization of the interventions for out-of-school girls. For instance, there are no tailored engagement tools for out-of-school girls (such as manuals or implementation guides) that address the issues and priorities specific to out-of-school girls. As a result of those inter-related gaps, the programme has been using the manual developed for in-school children with little customization by the trainers facilitating the sessions. To address the challenge of engaging and ensuring the participation

of out-of-school girls, a one-off training lasting five to seven days was provided by the Bureau of Women and Children Affairs in collaboration with experts in the Bureau of Education for this group. This approach is not ideal, however, as it provides girls with content and information rather than supporting and enabling them to practice and build the skills they acquire from the training; girls gain knowledge but are not fully equipped and empowered with increased agency and confidence which would support them to reach out to other peers in their communities and truly be change-agents. Those who are in school receive a longer time to fully cover the life-skills training module. To strengthen the approach for empowerment of out-of-school adolescent girls, UNICEF has initiated the development of a partnership with an international non-governmental organization which will support the work of the Bureau of Women and Children Affairs.

For in-school girls, gender clubs follow a structured manual. The clubs bring students together to share experiences and support each other, although the manuals (developed in 2014) do not cover essential recent developments and emerging issues. However, as sessions are only provided through gender clubs, reach has been limited because clubs have a limit of 30 students. The school setting is favourable and holds huge potential. More girls could be reached by using the content in other school clubs. Guidelines for gender clubs (previously called girls clubs) were reviewed at the end of 2018, and currently the Ministry of Education, with support from UNICEF, is reviewing the life-skills content to be delivered by the gender clubs.

There have been some irregularities in facilitating sessions because of limited mechanisms to hold facilitators responsible for systematically following the manual. This has affected the tracking and monitoring of enrolment and completion of students as required in the manual. In addition, lack of engagement and support of parents in extra-curricular skills-building activities has impacted on the time students are able to dedicate beyond regular school hours. This has forced some schools to cover modules within short school breaks, affecting quality and changing the delivery to lecturing rather than an activity-based, empowering process.

There is variation among schools in exposing targeted girls to the full course and completion of the life-skills education sessions. In some cases, girls attending a few sessions were reported to have completed the whole course. Varied capacity of the facilitators to deliver life-skills education has also been observed.

In some instances, adolescent girls exposed to subject material about claiming their rights, interpreted this a right to get married without the need to seek advice or support.

Lessons learned

Out-of-school adolescent girls do not have strong platforms that provide ongoing technical support, close follow-up and continuous engagement. The need to link the out-of-school girls' training with existing or new platforms to sustain their engagement is acknowledged by partners leading the interventions aimed at empowering girls.

Investing in advocacy efforts is needed to integrate life skills into the teacher training curriculum, institutions and accountability structure.

There is a need to explore the potential of other school clubs for cascading life-skills training to reach more students at scale. The need to tailor the manual and its delivery mechanism for out-of-school girls as well as disaggregating the manual for the in-school students based on age as well as developmental stage is acknowledged, as well as developing a new manual for out-of-school and revisions for the in-school manual based on the lessons identified. Accordingly, the following key actions are under way:

■ Clear guidelines for schools to carry out life skills to be implemented in Phase II: Boys will be part of the life-skills enrolment as stated in gender club guidelines and life-skills facilitators' manual revisions.

■ Age-appropriate life skills manuals are under development, dividing children into different age groups (10–12, 13–14, 15–16 and 17–18).

■ Comprehensiveness of content, including current transferrable skills, pressing issues and thematic agendas including adolescent nutrition, FGM, gender-based violence, child rights, gender, participation and civic engagement.

■ Engaging families in some life-skills sessions, as piloted in Phase I.

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Another lesson is that some families are not willing to send girls to the safe spaces, resulting in a lack of regular participation among some girls. Safe spaces need to be accessible and in convenient locations to avoid girls having to travel far. These things will be taken into consideration, and in consultation with communities, options will be looked at to better reach girls in the next phase.

Shifts in Phase II

UNICEF plans to systematically address the gaps observed by working with government and non-governmental organizations to develop the engagement framework including manuals, guidelines, and monitoring and accountability mechanisms for both out-of-school and in-school interventions. The one-off training for out-of-school girls will be shifted to a systematic and longer engagement with a minimum of four months of regular sessions, a mix of life-skills training and/or mentorship using a structured and tailored comprehensive module. Different implementation modes will be used, including a self-help group approach to sustain the

intervention. To this end, the Global Programme has initiated the process of developing a programme cooperation agreement with a non-governmental organization partner aimed at developing an evidence-based comprehensive empowerment package tailored to out-of-school girls in 2020. The key focus will be consolidating evidence through a secondary data review as well as supplementing it with primary data which will be gathered through consultations with key stakeholders, girls themselves and community members. For UNFPA, creating and strengthening the linkages between the development and humanitarian continuum will be one of the focus areas noting the humanitarian context including internally displaced persons (IDPs) across various areas of the country. These situations increase girls' vulnerability to child marriage as a result of the breakdown of social networks, the lack of other protection systems and the risks of violence. Therefore, establishment of safe spaces and increased access to health and sexual and reproductive health services for affected adolescent girls will be carried out at scale.

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EMPOWERING GIRLS THROUGH EDUCATION SUPPORT

In 2019:

58,580
adolescent girls
in programme areas supported to enrol and/or remain in primary, lower secondary or non-formal education

Since 2016:

140,878
adolescent girls
in programme areas supported to access and remain in primary or lower secondary school or non-formal education

This includes 10,372 out-of-school girls from urban slums supported to enrol and remain in school and 5,305 girls who were successfully mainstreamed back to formal primary schools
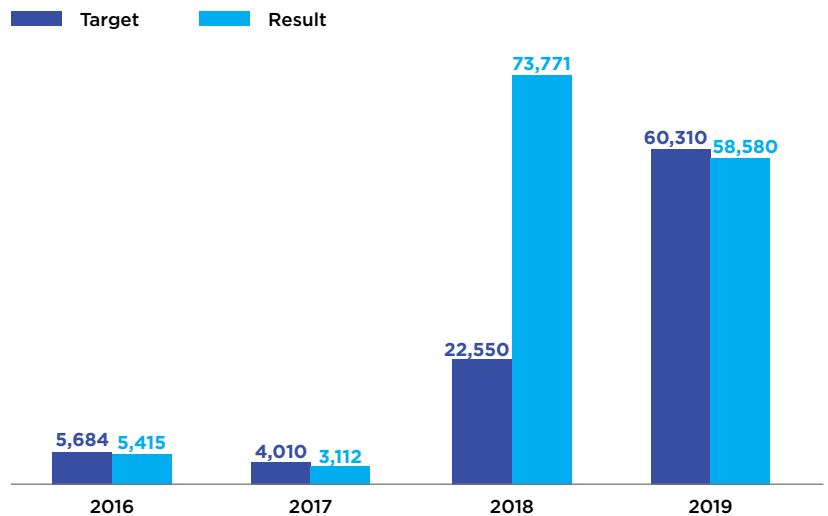
Results from 2016–2019 programme implementation

The programme contributed to enabling adolescent girls to continue their education in the targeted schools, as well as reducing irregular attendance. The result has been an increase in the number of adolescent girls reporting child marriage arrangements and girls being supported to stop the marriage. There has been a decrease in the dropout from school as a result.

There was a focus on the back-to-school campaign to retain adolescent girls rather than provision of direct economic support. The results now capture efforts beyond provision of economic support and include those who benefitted from the campaign and house-to-house visits for girls at risk by members of school gender clubs.

After two years of implementation, the interventions aimed at supporting girls to remain or re-enrol in school have gone through a strategic shift within UNICEF. Initially, the support included a stipend paid to girls in pastoralist and agrarian parts of the target regions, provision of school materials and support to families of vulnerable girls to engage in income-generating activities to cover costs related to education and beyond. The implementation of those activities was costly, resulting in limited coverage and limited potential to reach vulnerable girls at scale. Following critical reflection at country level (that took into account the high number of girls in need of support, the limited resources, costliness of the intervention and the limited capacity of the government to take up the intervention at scale), UNICEF phased out the interventions. Instead, the effort and resources to keep girls in school and encourage those who had already dropped out, focused on three areas: first, to identify and address the underlying factors within the school environment that discourage or stop girls from attending school. Second, to create a family and community environment that supports girls' education. Third, to explore the potential to target families through the national social protection programme, the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) which targets households that are most vulnerable to food insecurity, led and implemented at scale by the government reaching 8 million people and more than 900,000 adolescent girls. In the UNFPA-supported interventions, noting that costs associated with attending school continue to negatively impact enrolment and attendance for adolescent girls from poor families, UNFPA provided educational resources, school uniforms and sanitary items for 10,875 students. This reduced absenteeism and helped girls to feel good about their bodies and themselves.

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Number of adolescent girls in programme areas supported to access and remain in primary or lower secondary school or non-formal education

■ Target   ■ Result

Year	Target	Result
2016	5,684	5,415
2017	4,010	3,112
2018	22,550	73,771
2019	60,310	58,580

Challenges

The programme was not able to sustain the direct economic support to girls in need of financial and material assistance. Direct support was phased out by UNICEF because resources could not cover the numbers of girls needing support, in terms of costliness and inability to be taken to scale. Although the intervention was discontinued, UNICEF Ethiopia acknowledges the need for economic support in particular for girls and their families living in drought-prone and economically vulnerable areas. Based on research findings that suggested a link between social protection, girls' continuation in school and delayed marriage, it was decided, together with UNICEF's Office of Research, Innocenti, to explore the risks and protective factors further in the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). Evidence generation and other efforts are under way to influence the design of the next (fifth) phase of the PSNP. The aim is to use the evidence to leverage this large-scale social protection programme to reach vulnerable households and, in turn, seek to promote girls' education and delayed marriage.

Lessons learned

The comprehensive capacity-building initiatives include a mix of interventions focusing on enhancing girls' agency, building the capacity of girls' platforms (to improve girls' empowerment and social assets through partnering with other girls) and strengthening the school system from a gender perspective. These are contributing to improved retention and re-enrolment of girls in school. Parents' involvement, mobilizing families and gender club members also contributed to keeping girls in school. Although not explicitly an objective of the PSNP, with its reach of 8 million people, of which more than 900,000 are girls, this presents a significant opportunity to influence parents/caregivers and children themselves for girls (and boys) to remain and progress in school, a protective factor for girls against child marriage.

Shifts in Phase II

The programme will further explore and consolidate evidence on the contribution that PSNP can make to keeping girls in school and reducing their vulnerability to child marriage, and its result path as well as the entry points. Based on the evidence, efforts are under way to influence the existing and next phase of the PSNP, including through the Development Assistance Group. Another priority for Phase II is to revise the social and behavior change materials and sessions of the PSNP to adequately include issues around child marriage and supporting girls' education.

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION TO INFLUENCE SOCIAL AND GENDER NORMS

In 2019:

471,890
individuals

(234,780 males) in programme areas regularly participated in dialogues promoting gender-equitable norms including delaying child marriage

About
1.1 million
individuals

within programme areas were reached with media campaigns

In 2019, the programme continued to support multimedia campaigns. This enabled the programme to reach about 1.1 million people in the programme target areas and more than 13 million people at national level

Results from 2016–2019 programme implementation

The programme capacitated and mobilized more than 2,000 religious and community leaders over Phase I. The leaders who received the training, reached out to community members with educational messages. During the sessions, religious leaders used the inter-religious teaching manual developed for the purpose as well as the theological reflection on child marriage by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Anecdotal evidence (such as from human interest stories) and field-level monitoring results, show that the communities in the target areas have significantly changed their attitudes towards child marriage and providing support to girls' education. There has also been increased reporting of cases of child marriage.

The programme built the capacity of women development groups in the target areas, resulting in wider community reach and tailored messages. This enabled the expression and public declarations of abandonment of child marriage by group members. There were also commitments to undertake ongoing surveillance to track and follow-up hidden attempts to marry girls at an early age, as well as end impunity towards identified cases of child marriage arrangements (through negotiation with families or when families refuse to stop the arrangement, reporting to law enforcement bodies). Women development groups interventions stopped more than 1,885 cases of child marriage arrangements in 2019, and 9,430 since programme inception.

The programme used radio at national and regional level, using official languages to reach a broader audience as well as local languages in the respective regions. This enabled the programme to reach about 1.1 million people in the programme target areas and more than 13 million people at national level in 2019.

To supplement these interventions, legal literacy sessions from law enforcement bodies were held for people in the target areas to increase their knowledge of existing legal frameworks and legal services available in the target areas. The programme reached 471,890 people during 2019 compared to 170,548 in 2018. This increase has contributed to increased reporting of child marriage cases with an increasing number of cases dealt with by law enforcement bodies – supported by evidence on girls' ages from health facility age examinations.

The programme made different efforts to enhance the gender-transformative approaches of the programme. This included ensuring that men, boys, women and girls were represented in dialogues, literacy sessions and other educational interventions. Although they need further strengthening, the dialogue manuals for community conversations also address gender and social norms.
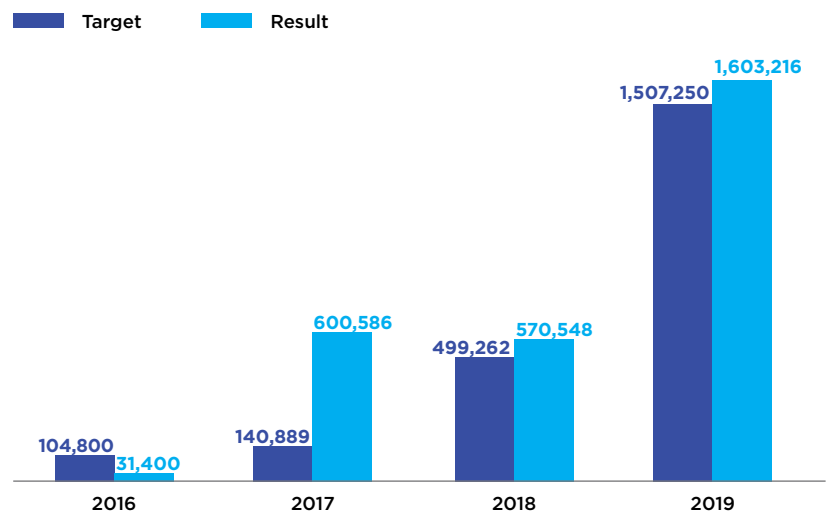
Since 2016:

839,719

individuals

in programme areas regularly participated in dialogues promoting gender-equitable norms including delaying child marriage

Number of individuals in programme areas who regularly participate in dialogues and/or were reached by media campaigns promoting gender-equitable norms including delaying child marriage

■ Target   ■ Result

Year	Target	Result
2016	104,800	31,400
2017	140,889	600,586
2018	499,262	570,548
2019	1,507,250	1,603,216

Challenges

The key challenge is limited contextualization of the community conversation manual and its implementation guide as well as lack of robust monitoring and progress tracking mechanisms. This was particularly felt in pastoralist settings where the manual and guide are not always relevant to the socioeconomic and cultural context. The evidence and data included in the manual and guide require updating, and these do not adequately employ a gender-transformative approach, in content or delivery, although there is some attempt to consider gender issues. Hence, the initiative that has started on the revision of the community conversation manual will address those identified challenges.

Another challenge is the quality and effectiveness of the interventions dependent on the capacity and commitment of facilitators leading the dialogue. There is no standardized capacity-building manual for facilitators or supplementary audio/video communication aids. The reach of the intervention is also limited as it requires trained facilitators and regular engagement, which makes it costly compared to other educational interventions.

There is a lack of clear guidance around the process (including determination of group readiness) of making a public declaration of abandonment, even though such a declaration is acknowledged as a key milestone. The Ministry of Women, Children and Youth has attempted to develop a verification tool and criteria but it is not yet robust enough to serve this purpose.

There is a lack of a phaseout strategy or guide based on holistic assessment of particular groups assessing the level of change achieved as per the milestone set for the programme. This includes lack of minimum indicators/criteria on the delivery of interventions and the consensus reached, duration and maturity level of each target group so that each dialogue group may be classified in accordance with their level. A tool is being developed to address this challenge and to inform targeting decisions with evidence.

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Lessons learned

A lesson for UNFPA and UNICEF and a recommendation from the global evaluation of Phase I of the programme, is the need to further strengthen the gender-transformative approach of the communication interventions and minimize message fatigue through broadening the content and approach beyond child marriage.

The need to strengthen tracking mechanisms – within each intervention as well as the overall programme – is another lesson which UNFPA and UNICEF will be taking concrete steps to address.

In addition, the programme will ensure the quality of each intervention, with a focus on selected target areas for meaningful results, while supporting government partners to mobilize their own resources and grass-roots-level structures to implement the intervention at scale.

Shifts in Phase II

The programme will shift from a gender-responsive approach to a gender-transformative approach. Structural causes of child marriage (gender inequality and power imbalance) will be addressed across the different communication interventions. This will go beyond changing the situation for women and girls and will aspire to also benefit men and boys through promoting positive masculinity in a more targeted and empowering approach.

UNICEF has prioritized the revision and roll-out of the community conversation manual and implementation guide. This is to be developed and framed within

a broader view of gender equality and promoting girls' and women's empowerment. The content of the manual will be developed while embracing a gender-transformative approach, considering the value verification exercise, using tools such as social analysis and action developed by CARE International and ensuring its specificity to each context. Continuous capacity-building opportunities for facilitators will be provided.

In addition, packages of interventions for the engagement of boys and men are to be developed and rolled out in the target areas through partnership with non-governmental organizations that have organizational competency and experience in implementing such strategic interventions. This will engage and mobilize boys and men to bring change for women and girls, as well as enable them to challenge the gender inequality entrenched in their communities.

To address the issue of scale and magnify the contributions of the programme, community-level platforms of men, youth and women will be further mapped and mobilized to reach their constituency and influence their practice.

Moreover, addressing the progress tracking and measurement gap will be prioritized in the second phase of the programme. Strengthening implementation of partners' systems for regular tracking and also undertaking a comprehensive baseline and end-line survey (to track progress in changing social norms) are included in the plan.

STRENGTHENING PREVENTION AND PROTECTION SYSTEMS

In 2019:

529
service delivery points

in programme areas implement guidelines for adolescent girl-friendly health and protection services

In 2019, increased commitment from partners to enhance accessibility of services (the performance indicator has institutionalized the reporting and accountability mechanisms), and the demand for services, including legal counselling and legal aid (reflected in the increased number of child marriage cases prevented), has pushed service providers to improve responsiveness, and enabled the exceeding of performance targets

228,711
adolescent girls

in programme areas have utilized health or protection services

320
non-formal, primary or secondary schools

implement interventions to improve the quality of education for adolescent girls

Results from 2016–2019 programme implementation

The programme has shown significant progress in reaching girls with adolescent-friendly services. A total of 3,094 health and protection service delivery points were capacitated through provision of needs-based technical and material support, which included training on adolescent- and youth-friendly service provision, on-site technical support, provision of supplies, establishing and strengthening of youth-friendly corners within health facilities, and strengthening the referral linkage between schools, associations and facilities. The programme has created linkages with other adolescent and youth programmes for comprehensive services for adolescent girls and youth. For example, the programme is benefitting from existing structures for the participation and delivery of comprehensive services for in-school and out-of-school settings that include peer networks, sexual and reproductive health clubs, school mini-media, heath facilities that are providing standard youth-friendly services, student counselling units and one-to-five student networks.

Local institutions such as the *kebeles* structures are provided with the necessary orientation to create linkages with adolescent and youth programmes for comprehensive services including access to libraries and to schools' dignity rooms with sanitary pads, and for older sexually active adolescent's referrals to nearby public health facilities through peer educators to get counselling, preventive services and sexual and reproductive health commodities. A total of 412,186 adolescent girls have benefitted from the health and protection girl-friendly services.

School monitoring reports show that many classroom sessions did not respond to girls' needs. To address this challenge, UNICEF embarked on building the capacity of teachers on gender-responsive pedagogy. 505 upper primary school teachers were trained on gender-responsive pedagogy to improve lessons and respond to the needs of girls. 25,250 girls have benefited from this intervention, contributing to retention and improved quality of learning. In addition, UNFPA trained 107 school principals and 78 teachers (29 female within both groups) on child marriage, sexual and reproductive health and rights referral pathways and different available services.

Since 2016:

3,094

service delivery points

in programme areas implement guidelines for adolescent girl-friendly health and protection services

2,222

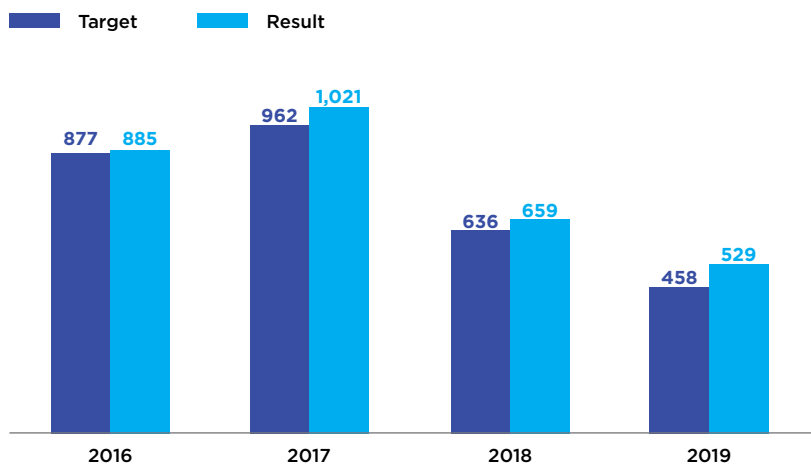### non-formal, primary or secondary schools

implement interventions to improve the quality of education for adolescent girls

Number of service delivery points in programme areas implementing guidelines for adolescent girl-friendly health and protection services

Challenges

One of the challenges in the delivery of protection services is the lack of/gaps in the social service workforce for child protection, including management of child marriage cases. As a result, the level of follow-up when cases pass to different services is limited. The other challenge is the limited quality of services provided at community level. The in-service capacity-building initiatives of the workforce are not yet institutionalized in professional training institutions Also, the personal attitudes of service providers have implications for the way each case of child marriage is dealt with.

In addition, the level of emphasis on the enforcement of the law, including prosecution and imprisonment of parents, is not clear. The number of cases where parents have been imprisoned is small but the threat of punishment may deter girls from reporting marriage arrangements for fear of stigmatization and harming family relationships or question who will take care of them or the rest of the family when parents or guardians are imprisoned. Despite improvement, the number of cases reported is still small compared to the magnitude of the problem.

Lack of confidentiality and judgmental attitudes of health-care providers towards adolescents and youth seeking reproductive health services has been

a major barrier to sexual and reproductive health service utilization among adolescent girls and youth. Establishment of and linkages to youth-friendly services and training of health-care providers on adolescent and youth health has helped in addressing these barriers.

A 2018 UNICEF study covering the programme sites was conducted on 'The Code of Conduct on Prevention of School-Related Gender-Based Violence: A study of policy enactment in Ethiopia'. The study found that lack of referral pathways and the low capacity of schools to deal with psychosocial and protection needs of violence survivors (particularly of girls) were bottlenecks preventing survivors from speaking out against school-related gender-based violence. Addressing this kind of violence requires the concerted efforts of different sectors including partners in child protection. Survivors of violence need psychosocial support services and social protection programmes. Strengthening collaboration with other sectors, especially in the response to gender-based violence (both in school and the routes along which girls travel to and from school) is essential. This is, therefore, an area for continued partnership between the education and the child protection sectors.

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Number of non-formal/primary/secondary schools implementing interventions to improve the quality of education for adolescent girls

■ Target ■ Result

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Target	713	725	422	295
Result	455	460	987	320
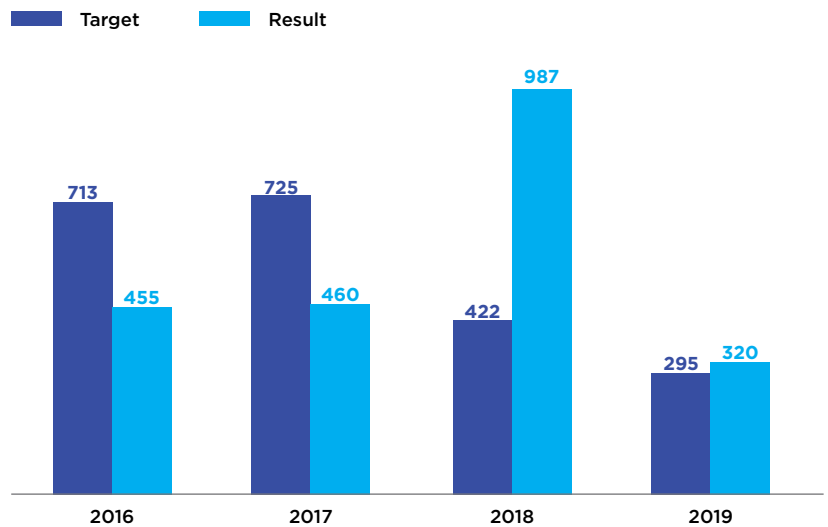
Lessons learned

One need identified was to focus more on institutionalizing capacity-building to ensure a sustainable workforce. This will be developed with professional training institutions. In addition, caution is required when rigorously enforcing the law, as it may have repercussion for the well-being of the girls themselves as well as contributing to the practice of child marriage going underground.

Mainstreaming school-related gender-based violence training that includes child marriage and other harmful practices across all relevant sectors (including education, health, justice and other sectors) to accelerate efforts on prevention, protection and response requires collaboration and commitment. Improving the quality of education for adolescent girls requires multidimensional efforts and cannot be addressed solely through the few child marriage-supported activities.

Improving the quality of education entails leveraging programmes through other educational interventions.

Clubs established for out-of-school girls are a good platform and avenue for girls to discuss and raise their concerns with peers and make decisions around going back to school.

Shifts in Phase II

The key shifts in the second phase of the programme will be to institutionalize and standardize in-service training, integrate a value clarification exercise as part of the capacity development initiatives and test the contributions of community service workers, health workers, teachers and other trainers, community dialogue facilitators and change-influencers such as religious, clan and other community leaders involved in the programme implementation. In addition, leveraging the potential of the country's social protection programme, the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and the roll-out of the child protection National Case Management Framework in the target areas will be major priority areas.

The plan will include supporting the review and standardization of the justice professionals' in-service training manual and its roll-out, the training and deployment of community service workers, further strengthening data tracking and monitoring and evaluation systems of partners, and an advocacy effort related to the design and targeting of PSNP.

Gender-responsive pedagogy will be galvanized by scaling up to all schools in the target districts and carrying out pre-service and in-service teacher training. The existing gender-responsive pedagogy module will be revitalized to include pedagogy, concept of gender, gender-based violence and child marriage.

STRENGTHENING LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

The country **has a national strategy and costed national action plan on** **ending child marriage**

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Results from 2016–2019 programme implementation

Over the last two years, UNFPA and UNICEF have been supporting the government to develop a new road map to end child marriage and FGM. In August 2019, the national costed road map to address both issues (2020–2024) was launched by the President of Ethiopia, together with the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth. The next step will be developing a tracking mechanism to assess the budget allocation and expenditure over the period 2020–2024. On the other hand, although not explicitly within the road map budget, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Federal Attorney General and the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth allocated budgets for interventions which contributed towards ending child marriage.

UNICEF, in collaboration with partners, continued to provide strategic and technical support to influence the finalization and endorsement of the draft family laws in Afar and Somali regions, which align with the national law. The laws set the minimum legal age of marriage as 18 and set consent as a condition for conclusion of marriage, consistent with international standards. The programme contributed both financially and technically, through supporting the convening of consultations on the exiting draft among justice professionals, community leaders and other members of the community. Advocacy (directly engaging the attorney general at federal level, the regional presidents in the two regions, and standing committees of the national and regional parliaments) resulted in a commitment from those engaged to take forward and conclude the extended effort for the endorsement of the laws. To date the advocacy continues, as the two regions have not adopted the family laws.

Under the leadership of the UNICEF Social Policy and Evidence for Social Inclusion section, the revision of the National Women's Policy has been initiated. This will help ensure that adequate emphasis is given to the effort to end child marriage and FGM in the country.

The programme contributed to an assessment of the contested articles included in the Family Law (such as those related to the rights of adopted children, irregular unions between men and women when living together without being formally married, banning of polygamy, minimum age of marriage and use of DNA testing to determine parenthood), its relevance and how it can be reframed in a way to address the concerns of the communities in the two regions, yet aligned to national and international standards. The findings were shared at different levels and triggered discussions among key stakeholders supporting the effort towards the endorsement of the law. Other support provided was the convening of capacity-building sessions for law enforcement bodies, as well as consultations at different levels. Advocacy efforts to engage policymakers, including parliamentarians, were both technically and financially supported from the programme.

Challenges

One of the challenges faced during the development of the national costed road map was the lack of a system for expenditure tracking. This was clearly expressed as a limitation of the road map. Because of this, it was not possible to set a baseline for each sector except for the Ministry/Bureaus for Women, Children and Youth, although there is a government commitment to increase the budget allocation on the national effort by 10 per cent, which was put in place in 2014. Another challenge was that the road map development took longer than expected. There were various reasons for this, including changes to the leadership in key ministries and limited in-country technical expertise and experience as this initiative is the first in the sector. The use of experts from outside the country (in both public finance and planning) was required.

Lessons learned

In the effort to support budget and expenditure tracking and advocacy initiatives, there will be a need to work and align with the budget cycle and national framework of the country. Similarly, strengthening the accountability mechanism at a higher level such as the Ministry of Finance and office of the deputy prime minister, beyond the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth, the lead ministry, is anticipated to give them more influence over the key sectors to deliver on their commitments.

Shifts in Phase II

The road map was endorsed and officially launched in August 2019 in the presence of higher officials including the president, ministers, state ministers, bureau heads, members of parliament, development partners, civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, media and adolescent girls. A major focus of the second phase of the programme will be to support the government to roll out the road map – through allocating adequate resources, mobilizing and coordinating support from all actors, putting in place strong accountability mechanisms and tracking progress made towards the achievement of a national target to end child marriage by 2025 and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

Supporting the development of an advocacy and communication strategy, and a resource mobilization strategy, establishing a budget and expenditure tracking mechanism and supporting ongoing tracking exercises and follow-up with key ministries to hold them accountable, are among the key interventions included in the second phase of the plan.

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STRENGTHENING DATA AND EVIDENCE

Results from 2016–2019 programme implementation

The programme has filled a critical gap on evidence, which now informs programme and policy dialogues – both in terms of generating evidence on what works to end child marriage – as well as status, trends, patterns and levels of effort required to bring meaningful results at different levels. UNICEF has contributed to knowledge products which informed key national planning processes, policy dialogues and advocacy efforts. In particular, the national costed road map has been informed with the evidence generated with support from the Global Programme.

The different public advocacy and sensitization efforts, aimed at making the issue an agenda for all, have benefitted from the data which showed the status of the country in reducing child marriage, the rate of change recorded for the last 10 and 25 years and the rate of change needed to reach the national target of elimination by 2025 and the SDG by 2030. Demonstrating the magnitude of the issue, Ethiopia ranks fifth-worst (according to Girls Not Brides) among countries with the absolute number of child brides and women married before age 18, which number 15 million.

This has contributed to key actors acknowledging the urgency to act on the issue and fully roll out the road map at scale. That evidence has been shared with presidents both at national and regional levels, ministers and bureau heads, civil society organizations, faith-based organizations and other development partners. Acknowledging the important role the knowledge products contributed, Mr Seleshi Tadesse, the Director of Women Mobilization and Participation Directorate at the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth, said that the statistical brochure developed based on Demographic and Health Survey data further titled 'Ending Child Marriage: A profile of progress in Ethiopia', played a pivotal role in showing the urgency and coordinated effort required to reduce child marriage and convince policymakers to give priority to the issue.

In 2019, three studies aimed at informing ongoing interventions were planned. The first has been completed and the others are in progress. The first was an analysis to generate evidence on the potential of the PSNP programme to keep girls in school and delay child marriage (carried out by Innocenti in Amhara region). As the PSNP Phase V is under development, the research provides several recommendations for further research as well as interventions that may be taken up at scale to further protect girls – such as revision of the social and behavioural change communication component to integrate messages on gender inequality and child marriage and to more systematically track how PSNP, through girls' increased retention in school and the social and behavior change communication component, may be an effective means to protect vulnerable girls from marriage. Given the scale of the programme (approximately 8 million vulnerable people reached), this has the potential to be an effective prevention mechanism should there be political will to incorporate this element into the design. The second study, for which an institution has been contracted to carry it out, is examining the barriers to help-seeking behaviours of children and women for protection from violence, exploitation and harmful practices among refugee and host communities in three regions of refugee and host communities (Benishangul Gumuz, Somali and Tigray) and the design of communication and other interventions to help address the barriers. The third study is aimed at consolidating evidence – both from secondary data and primary data – which will inform the revision of the community conversation manuals of the six regional targets and at national level.

In August 2019, the National Costed Road Map to End Child Marriage and FGM/C (2020-2024) was launched by the President of Ethiopia, with the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth.

In addition, UNICEF in collaboration with Gender and Adolescents: Global Evidence (GAGE), is supporting the refinement of the tool developed by the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth to verify the readiness of communities to publicly declare adornment of the practice. The support includes developing a concept note, mobilizing experts to provide inputs and guidance as well as financial support to convene a consultation on the tool and its testing.

Data generated by the Global Programme (such as the mapping done through the Overseas Development Institute [ODI] on child marriage in 2016 and the UNICEF statistical brochure 'Ending Child Marriage: A profile of progress in Ethiopia' from 2018) was used to inform the national costed road map on child marriage. During the launch event in August 2019, the Minister of Women, Children and Youth used the data on trends, patterns and the rate of change to-date and required to gain the attention and commitment of all actors including the president, office of the deputy prime minister, representatives of the parliament, regional presidents and development partners. In addition, the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth used the evidence generated and the draft road map in April 2019 for budget discussion with the Ministry of Finance, which resulted in clear understanding of the investment required to meet the national target to end child marriage and FGM by 2025. Similarly, the evidence was used in the road map launch and familiarization events held at regional level and during discussions with donors. The evidence generated is further informing the resource mobilization and advocacy and communication strategies under development to support the roll-out of the road map.

The baseline survey completed for the Global Programme in Amhara region helped to inform and refine the interventions. However, the follow-up, mid-term and final evaluation were not carried out because of a shortage of resources.

Challenges

The planned evidence generation efforts related to indicators on social norms change have been delayed because of a challenge beyond the control of the two agencies and the Global Programme. In addition, the evidence generated gives adequate data at knowledge, attitudes and practices level, but not on the level of change in social and gender norms – the underlying causes perpetuating the practice. This was because of a lack of a framework and in-country capacity to undertake this kind of assessment.

The key support during 2019 was the recruitment of an institutional firm for the revision of the community conversation manual and approach, although eventually the contract had to be amended and terminated given concerns as to the capacities to deliver the assignment to the expected standards and quality including in terms of operationalizing a gender-transformative approach and defining a pathway to change with monitoring framework.

Lessons learned

One of the key lessons learned is the need for a robust mechanism to track change at community level expressed in norms. Knowledge, attitudes and practices surveys do not replace such processes. Building the capacity of partners on monitoring and evaluation is a key lesson as they are expected to monitor the progress of the road map as per its result framework, theory of change and monitoring and evluation framework.

Shifts in Phase II

Key priorities for Phase II are:

- Investing in a baseline and end-line survey, aimed at tracking progress on the social and gender norms in the target areas. The plan is to build on the opportunity provided by the Social Norms Programming and Measurement on Harmful Practices (FGM, child marriage and child discipline) framework developed by UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office which is currently used in countries in the Middle East, and North, Eastern and Southern Africa regions.

- Ongoing technical support to ensure that the module on child marriage in the upcoming Demographic and Health Survey is kept and strengthened.

- Strengthening implementing partners' capacities and systems to gather and use administrative data.

COMMUNICATIONS TO END CHILD MARRIAGE

Stories and videos

- Child marriage is a global scourge. Here's how Ethiopia is fighting it
- Ethiopia's gender revolution – the road towards equality
- Family members arrested for planning child marriage for 15-year-old girl in Ethiopia
- Five brave girls say 'no' to child marriage
- "We are working against all odds": Despite progress, FGM and child marriage numbers cause alarm

Social media posts

- Meet #Hero Habtam Melke, a health worker, who is fighting to #EndChildMarriage by teaching mothers in her community on the effects of child marriage in Libo Kemkem woreda, Amhara Region
- Meeting the State Minister for Women & Child Affairs in #Ethiopia, I reiterated @UNICEFEthiopia commitment to accompany in addressing child rights and #EndChildMarriage in #Ethiopia

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

NAME OF IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	TYPE OF PARTNER	PARTNER FOCUS AREA	MAIN PARTNER
Norwegian Church Aid	International NGO	Children's rights, youth rights, women's rights	Both
Ministry of Women, Children and Youth	Government body		Both
Federal Attorney General	Government body		UNICEF
Ministry of Education	Government body		UNICEF
Bureau of Women, Children and Youth	Government body		UNFPA
Regional Attorney General	Government body		UNICEF
Regional Bureau of Education	Government body		UNICEF

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AREAS

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	Output 1.1: Life-skills and economic support	Output 1.2: Education support	Output 2.1: Social and behavioural change	Output 3.1: Quality health and protection services	Output 3.2: Quality education
Gambella	■	■	■	■	■
Tigray	■	■	■	■	■
Afar	■	■	■	■	■
Amhara	■	■	■	■	■
Oromia	■	■	■	■	■
SNNP	■	■	■	■	■
Somali	■	■	■	■	■

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