

## **Evaluation of the programme ‘Towards ending child marriage in Serbia’ (2018 - 2020) – Final Report**

<b>Programme to be evaluated:</b>	<b><i>'Towards ending child marriage in Serbia'</i></b> <b>(LRFP-2020-9157976<sup>1</sup>)</b>
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<b>Period of the programme implementation covered by the evaluation:</b>	<b>From January 2018 to September 2020</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Annex 1 of the Final Evaluation Report.

## List of abbreviations

<b>CBGE</b>	Coordination Body for Gender Equality
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization
<b>CSW</b>	Centre for Social Work
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee
<b>EQ</b>	Evaluation Question
<b>ERG</b>	Evaluation Reference Group
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>FOW</b>	Family Outreach Worker
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GEROS</b>	Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System
<b>GIZ</b>	The German Agency for International Cooperation
<b>GREVIO</b>	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources
<b>ICPD</b>	International Conference on Population and Development
<b>IO</b>	International Organization
<b>MICS</b>	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
<b>MoESTD</b>	Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development
<b>MoLEVSA</b>	Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OECD</b>	The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance
<b>RFP</b>	Request for Proposal
<b>RISP</b>	Republic Institute for Social Protection
<b>RSEs</b>	Research, Studies and Evaluations
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SIPRU</b>	Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit
<b>SOPs</b>	UNICEF Standard Operating Procedures
<b>SORS</b>	Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia
<b>SRH</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNGA</b>	United Nations General Assembly
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UN-SWAP</b>	UN System-wide Action Plan
<b>VAWG</b>	Violence Against Women and Girls

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Child marriage is a fundamental violation of human and child rights. It causes numerous devastating consequences for girls, disempowering them within their communities and in their own homes, harming their health, excluding them from education, and denying them the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Recognizing the need for global action, the UN Sustainable Development Agenda has set out the goal of ending child, early, and forced marriage globally by 2030.

This document represents the Evaluation Report of the programme *“Towards ending child marriage in Serbia”* (the Programme), which was **implemented by UNICEF with the great support of the Korean Committee for UNICEF who provided the necessary funds** (The Programme’s total budget was USD 510,099). The implementation of the Programme was helped by many local and national level partnerships, including governmental bodies such as the Coordination Body for Gender Equality (CBGE), the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs (MOLEVSA), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD), and national institutions such as the Institute of Psychology and the Republic Institute for Social Protection; and civil society organizations including the Centre for Education Policy, the Roma CSOs RWC Bibija, Association Ternipe, Association of Roma Novi Bečej, CSO Novi Svet, and the Association of Roma Students. **The Programme was carried out from January 2018 to December 2019**, in three localities in Serbia (Novi Bečej, Belgrade, and Pirot). The evaluation was conducted by the SeConS Development Initiative Group.

**The main purpose** of the evaluation was to determine the extent to which the strategies, approaches, and activities applied during the implementation of the Programme laid the groundwork for promoting and expanding a comprehensive response to factors that maintain the practice of child marriage within Roma settlements in Serbia. In addition, the intention was also to provide recommendations to the Government of Serbia, national and local stakeholders, UNICEF, UN agencies, and donors about the best way forward in further planning and intervention on child marriage.

In this regard, **the main objectives of the evaluation** are twofold:

- To show the extent to which the interventions which were the subject of this evaluation have contributed to:
  - strengthening the knowledge and evidence base on child marriage,
  - strengthening the commitment, ownership, advocacy, and coordination skills of key actors at the national level,
  - strengthening the leadership of the Roma community and addressing general population stereotypes about Roma,
  - empowering Roma girls and mothers through education, health, and protection, together with a strengthened (peer) support network,
  - increasing access to social protection services and to an education system that integrates early risk identification with appropriate support in child marriage cases,
  - long-term, comprehensive efforts to end child marriages in Serbia by 2030.
- To identify gaps, lessons learned and provide feasible recommendations aimed at further improvement of the model and overall programming towards ending child marriage in Serbia.

## Methodology

The evaluation applied a **mixed-method approach**, combining quasi-experimental and comparative methods. **The quasi-experimental method** enabled the evaluation team to assess the impact of the intervention (as an independent variable) on programme beneficiaries in terms of changes in their attitudes and behaviours related to child marriage (as dependent variables). **The comparative method** was used to compare the models, as implemented with slight variations in different communities, across groups of beneficiaries, and between individual cases.

In accordance with the evaluation criteria, specific mixes of different methods were used, including content analysis of programme documents, relevant policies, reports, studies, baseline and end-line surveys implemented for the programme; stakeholder mapping; stakeholder analysis; contextual analysis; analysis of narratives of primary beneficiaries; multi-case study; financial analysis; soft cost-benefit analysis; qualitative analysis of primary data collected through semi-structured interviews and FGDs with primary beneficiaries and other stakeholders; system analysis of current situation in the social protection and education systems in response to child marriage, with an analysis of opportunities and constraints for scale-up; quasi-experimental analysis.

A total of 70 individuals participated in the evaluation: 34 national and local actors were interviewed, and 36 beneficiaries from Roma settlements participated in FGDs (in Pirot, Belgrade, and Novi Bečej).

Being mindful of the sensitivity and confidentiality of the topic, **the evaluation team took all necessary steps to apply the highest ethical norms and standards during the evaluation process** (including participants' informed consent, protection and respect of their anonymity, minimisation of the risk of harm, and the right to withdraw from the interview or FGD). All ethical principles were applied to protect the integrity and rights of participants. In the case of respondents who were minors, parental consent was obtained for every individual. Recruitment of participants who were minors and their preparation for the interview process was carefully organised by local Roma NGOs, ensuring that children felt secure and safe during the process of interviewing. Thanks to excellent coordination provided by local Roma partners, the research team managed to conduct interviews and FGDs in which our informants felt safe.

Furthermore, a **human rights-based and gender-sensitive approach was adopted in all aspects of this evaluation**. The evaluation complied with the UNECE *Policy on Gender Equality Empowerment of Women*. The Evaluation Team also ensured that the evaluation procedure respected UNICEF's *Evaluation Technical Note: Children Participating in Research, Monitoring and Evaluation*.

Additionally, **the fieldwork was organised in accordance with relevant COVID-19 social distancing measures**. The research team followed all measures introduced by the Government of Serbia to prevent the spreading of the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that every single person involved in the fieldwork used face masks, hand sanitizers, and other necessary equipment, maintained social distancing, etc. The data collection, which was conducted using remote, online channels due to restrictions related to COVID-19, was also in accordance with strict ethical standards. The individual and group interviews with various stakeholders were scheduled in advance using the Zoom platform, and the interviewees were asked for their consent to participate in the interview and to be recorded. Their consent for the participation in the interview was secured as evidence prior to the start of the interview.

**Key findings** for each evaluation criterion are presented below.

➤ **Relevance:**

- The design and objectives of the Programme as defined through the ToC are relevant to the depth and scope of the practice of child marriage in Serbia, including the lack of adequate response of relevant institutions.
- The programme was grounded in solid evidence, designed to take care of the needs of targeted groups of primary beneficiaries but also other diverse stakeholders.

➤ **Coherence:**

- The design of the Programme, the Programme's ToC and the method of delivery of the interventions ensured internal coherence and outputs and consequently the results of the individual components fed into and built on each other.
- The Programme is consistent with relevant national and local policies and seeks to further improve and harmonise them, to fully recognise the importance of child marriage.
- The Programme achieved a high level of coherence with other processes related to Roma inclusion, through cooperation with governmental institutions as well as with international and domestic NGOs.

➤ **Effectiveness:**

- The Programme has managed to strengthen data collection and the evidence base in the social sector and to improve statistics on the prevalence of child marriage to a significant extent.
- The Programme interventions have been successful in building on and upgrading a large variety of training activities and social and interpersonal events for girls and boys and mothers and fathers in the communities in which the three local NGOs were already implementing activities.
- The programme has contributed to Roma organizations and individuals being recognized by other local actors as originators of the interventions against child marriage.
- The Programme has significantly contributed to opening a dialogue within Roma settlements on the harmful impact on child marriage.
- The Programme has succeeded to a significant extent in increasing capacities of local stakeholders to identify and address child marriage and enhanced local coordination of key stakeholders.
- The Programme succeeded (at least initially) in strengthening coordination and action in addressing child marriage by establishing the National Coalition for Ending Child Marriage as an important general platform for action which did not exist before, gathering institutions, organisations, and individuals both locally and nationally who have a responsibility to combat, and/or who are active in combating, child marriage.
- The engagement of local organisations and other available mechanisms, such as family outreach workers, Roma health mediators and pedagogical assistants were all crucial for ensuring that the interventions started from the needs of the Roma communities and individuals, and for continuing their work in the prevention of child marriage, supporting families and girls at risk of child marriage, in establishing continuous relationships of trust and support.
- The Programme has had limited success in reaching the most vulnerable families.
- Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic did not hinder the achievement of the planned results, but it did hamper the effective implementation of sustainability measures.



➤ **Efficiency:**

- The steering and management of the Programme were well balanced and result-oriented in practice.
- The monitoring tools allowed for and facilitated changes in the Programme level.
- The design and implementation of the education segment and the Family Outreach Service of the Intervention Model to end child marriage were not the most cost-effective way to obtain the expected results of the Programme.

➤ **Impact:**

- The Programme interventions in Roma settlements had significant impact on the attitudes and behaviours of adolescent girls among whom the proportion of those who left education before completing secondary school was much lower, as was visible in the results of a post-test survey and in interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries of the Programme.
- The impact of the Programme was visible on mothers, male peers, and men in the targeted communities, as well as on professionals in local institutions (schools and centres for social work) engaged in the response to child marriage, as well as on national level stakeholders, particularly those who participated in or cooperated with the National Coalition for Ending Child Marriage.
- Due to limited time and scale, the Programme was not able to introduce profound changes in targeted communities, but the evidence indicates that it has opened a dialogue on child marriage in targeted Roma communities, including broader groups of men and boys, women, and girls, raising the visibility of the issue and providing arguments against child marriage.
- Local systems enhanced their capacity to identify, recognize and react to risks or actual cases of child marriage, particularly in two out of three targeted communities, while at the national level evidence indicates some processes have been initiated (increased focus, mobilized stakeholders, identified legal and policy gaps) however the impact in terms of achieved systemic changes cannot be, and is not, yet visible.  
The Programme has mobilized a number of diverse stakeholders at local and national levels, mainly through the National Coalition for Ending Child Marriage and local programme activities. There is evidence of significant enthusiasm among stakeholders, but at the same time, uncertainty about how these new partnerships and synergies will be maintained in the future.

➤ **Sustainability:**

- Undoubtedly the Programme induced a lot of enthusiasm among different stakeholders to contribute to the ending of child marriage, but how long this mobilization can be maintained after the Programme ends will depend on financial allocations for these types of models in the future as well as on other sustainability factors that will be analysed in the following section.

➤ **Knowledge generation:**

- For mainstreaming the model, it is necessary to improve the national legislative framework, to replicate it in other local communities with Roma settlements, to provide mandatory and regular trainings of professionals in the welfare and education systems and also in other institutions engaged in local multisectoral cooperation (such as police, health system, prosecution services), to enable systematic knowledge transfer and promotion of good practices

in multisectoral cooperation among local communities. At the national level, the role of the National Coalition for Ending Child Marriage is seen as crucial as it can advocate for political commitment and for replicating or upscaling the model with adequate allocation of funds.

The Evaluation has concluded that the Programme has delivered valuable results in terms of:

***Raising the profile of child marriage in policy discourse in Serbia.*** The visibility of the issue of child marriage has significantly increased as a direct result of the Programme.

***Enhancing evidence-based policymaking on child marriage.*** The Programme was highly effective in terms of promoting improved data collection and analysis and strengthening and promoting evidence-based policy and programme design in general.

***Working directly with communities, girls at risk of child marriage, women, boys, and men in changing power dynamics in communities especially in terms of addressing child marriage.*** The community work, which included girls, mothers, boys and fathers, was extremely beneficial and impactful.

***Strengthening cooperation between different stakeholders in addressing child marriage at the local and community levels.*** The Programme was effective in enhancing multisectoral cooperation to address the issue of child marriage, although the scope of interventions varied in terms of effectiveness at the local level.

## Recommendations

Recommendations were proposed having in mind the specific role of UNICEF and with the idea of the possible future UNICEF action that might contribute more to the favourable environment for ending child marriages than through direct support of small-scale projects.

The project has successfully piloted the model for addressing the issue of child marriages. In the following period, the other stakeholders should take over the responsibilities and take control over the roll out of the initiatives. The UNICEF should retain the role of the 'guardian' of the model and the 'supportive force' to others engaged in ending child marriages. Starting from this rationale, the possible streams of actions that UNICEF might take could include:

- Targeted advocacy activities should focus on leveraging or mobilising stakeholders whose actions are essential to provide a more favourable legislative, institutional, policy environment for the effort directed to ending child marriages to provide some specific changes. The advocacy should be particularly focused on legislative changes of the Family Law, Criminal Code and Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence. The advocacy should also focus on effective implementation of policies that entail measures for ending child marriages, particularly Roma inclusion strategy, Strategy on prevention of violence against children, Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2030, and Strategy for prevention and combating violence against women and domestic violence 2021-2025. Targeted advocacy should focus also on mobilising sufficient financial allocations at different levels of the system to fund the model's elements and its rollout in the future.
- Strengthen the partnerships with other UN agencies and international/bilateral organisations (for example, UN Women, GIZ, SIDA, SDC) to accommodate more concerted dialogue with the

Government of Serbia on the need to provide an adequate framework for addressing child marriages. Through this cooperation, UNICEF can transfer abundant knowledge obtained through this project and other projects and programmes on effective ways to address child marriages.

- Supporting the National Coalition for Ending Child Marriages as one of the key stakeholders contributing to the more favourable environment for action against child marriages.
- Supporting cooperation and experience exchange of various stakeholders by (co) organising events for knowledge and experience sharing, promoting good practices.
- Mainstreaming the issue of child marriages in the regular work with relevant stakeholders, such as social protection, judiciary institutions. This does not entail additional or separate activities related to child marriages. However, it means that stakeholders could focus on already planned trainings, workshops, or other capacity-building activities with stronger emphasis and relevance to child marriages.
- To explore new fundraising opportunities for financing action against child marriages that were not previously used, such as IPA funds.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings from the final evaluation of the Programme *“Towards ending child marriage in Serbia”* (henceforth, the Programme), implemented by UNICEF with the financial support of the Korean Committee for UNICEF. The Programme was focused on four intervention areas: (A) improving data collection, strengthening policy and developing evidence-based practices to tackle the social exclusion and poverty that commonly drive child marriage; (B) working with and within Roma communities in order to strengthen their leadership and embrace alternatives to harmful traditional practices; (C) strengthening key system capacities for timely identification of girls at risk of child marriage and for giving quality support (access to improved services), and (D) strengthening intersectoral collaboration at the municipal and national levels.

Under the guidance and with the technical support of UNICEF, the Programme was implemented from January 2018 to December 2019, in cooperation with numerous stakeholders, including governmental bodies such as the Coordination Body for Gender Equality (CBGE), the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs (MOLEVSA), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD), and national institutions such as the Institute of Psychology and the Republic Institute for Social Protection; and civil society organizations including the Centre for Education Policy, the Roma CSOs RWC Bibija, Association Ternipe, Association of Roma Novi Bečej, CSO Novi Svet, and the Association of Roma Students. The Programme also involved communities in three localities (in Novi Bečej, Belgrade, and Pirot).

## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The main purpose of this evaluation is to determine the extent to which the adopted strategies, approaches and activities, applied throughout three years of Programme implementation, set a foundation for promoting and scaling a comprehensive response to a diverse range of factors perpetuating the practice of child marriage within Roma settlements in Serbia. In addition to being a **summative evaluation**, assessing the Programme accountability, results, impact and their sustainability, this is also **formative evaluation**. This means that its purpose is to provide recommendations to the Government of Serbia, national and local stakeholders, UNICEF, UN agencies and donors about the best way forward in further planning and intervention on early child marriage.

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

1. Provide evidence of the extent to which the interventions which are the object of this evaluation contributed to the achievement of the following results:
  - Strengthened knowledge and evidence base on child marriage;
  - Strengthened commitment, ownership, advocacy skillset and coordination of key actors at the national level;
  - Longer-term, comprehensive efforts to end child marriage in Serbia by 2030 are an integral part of the social inclusion of Roma and the promotion of child rights and gender equality;
  - An empowered Roma community leadership together with promoted champions of change play an important role in transforming harmful traditional practice within the affected community and tackling general population stereotypes about Roma;
  - Empowered Roma girls and mothers better express and exercise their choices through increasing knowledge of, and ability to challenge attitudes around, health, education and protection, along with a strengthened (peer) support network;

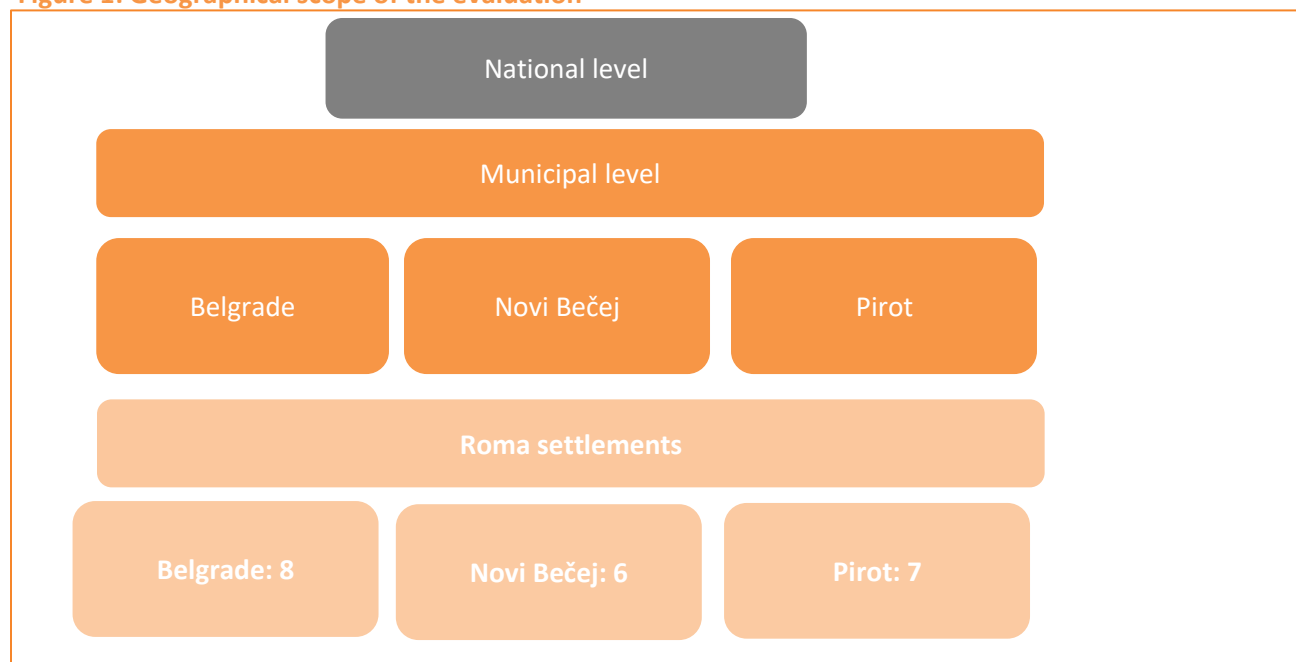
- Increased access to timely, coordinated and quality services, with particular focus on the capacity of social welfare and the education system, that successfully integrates early identification of risk with appropriate support in cases of child marriage.
2. Identify gaps, lessons learned and provide feasible recommendations aimed at further improvement of the model and overall programming towards ending child marriage in Serbia.

#### **THE SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION**

**The scope of the evaluation** is stipulated within the *Request for proposal*<sup>2</sup> in terms of implementation period, priority areas and geographical scope:

- ✓ **Time scope:** The evaluation will cover the implementation period from January 2018 to September 2020.<sup>3</sup>
- ✓ **All four priority areas** (listed above from A to D) will be covered by the evaluation.
- ✓ **The geographical scope:** The Programme has been implemented at three levels: Roma settlements, municipal and national level.

**Figure 1: Geographical scope of the evaluation**



<sup>2</sup> RFP is attached to this report in the Annex 1.

<sup>3</sup> Although this time scope is defined by the RFP, the field work was prolonged due to the pandemic measures to the end of 2020 and beginning of 2021.

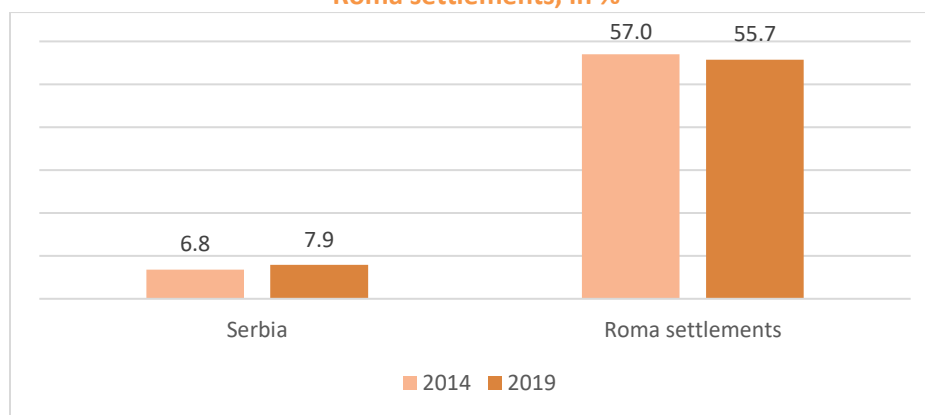
## 2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

### TRENDS IN CHILD MARRIAGE

Child marriage is a fundamental violation of a child's human rights. According to UNICEF estimates, 12 million girls get married annually, and presently there are 650 million girls and women alive who were married before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.<sup>4</sup> Child marriage has devastating consequences for girls, disempowering them within their communities and in their own homes, harming their health, excluding them from education, and denying them the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It also leads to early pregnancy, which can significantly increase the levels of maternal mortality and morbidity. Recognizing the need for global action, in 2013 the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution to strengthen efforts to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage. This was followed up in the UN Sustainable Development Agenda until 2030, which set out the goal of ending child, early and forced marriage globally by 2030 (SDG 5.3).

Prevalence of child marriage in the general population in Serbia is low, but a comparison between the most recent two cycles of the MICS survey (2014-2019) shows a slight increase of 1.1 percentage point overall, an increase from 6.8% to 7.9% (Figure 2). Child marriage is more prevalent in certain groups, such as rural populations (13.8%), women with no or low education (44.1%), and women from the poorest households (24%). This clearly indicates that poverty and social exclusion increase risks from child marriage and suggests that perhaps child marriage could be understood as representing an (inappropriate) strategy to cope with poverty and exclusion. These risks are particularly high among people living in Roma settlements, where child marriage is the most prevalent. Although there are some positive changes in values indicating a decrease in child marriage in Roma settlements between two MICS cycles (from 57% to 55.7%), these changes are very weak and the prevalence of child marriage remains high (Figure 2).<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 2: Percentage of women between 20-49 years old who got married before age 18, Serbia and Roma settlements, in %**



Source: SORS, UNICEF, MICS 2014, and 2019

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/fast-facts-10-facts-illustrating-why-we-must-endchildmarriage>.

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF, MICS 2014, Serbia and Roma settlements, p. vii; MICS 2019, Serbia and Roma settlements, p. 242, 244.

Child marriage among the Roma population in Serbia, as well as in other Balkan countries, is a very complex issue, influenced by a range of different factors, including, in addition to poverty and exclusion, also some cultural factors such as patriarchal social norms and gender stereotypes which assign to women primarily the reproductive role and responsibilities related to the household and family<sup>6</sup>. Some of these factors are manifested through specific practices. For example, arranged marriage within Roma communities often involves the payment of money or livestock to a girl's family. This sometimes incentivises families facing financial difficulties to marry off their daughters at a young age.<sup>7</sup> Since engaging in pre-marital sex can bring shame to Roma families, child marriage is sometimes used to preserve a girl's and the family's 'honour'.<sup>8</sup>

There are many serious consequences of early marriage for all women but particularly for Roma women who face multiple factors of discrimination and exclusion (based on gender, ethnic minority status, severe poverty, and deprivation). Due to early marriage women drop out of school before getting the skills necessary for the labour market. Their employment opportunities are therefore heavily undermined, and they have poor life chances and little hope of getting out of the poverty cycle. This also reflects on the life chances of their children. Without education, economic and social power, Roma women who got married early struggle to provide an adequate environment and support for the development of their children. This continues the vicious circle of poverty and exclusion.

#### INITIATIVES IN COMBATING CHILD MARRIAGE

Until recently, the problem of child marriage was almost invisible in Serbia. According to an analytical report on child marriage published by UNICEF<sup>9</sup>, until 2016 there was no reliable data available in the literature on the prevalence of child marriage, except for UNICEF's MICS and the Bibija Roma Women's Centre's research on virginity from 2006<sup>10</sup>. There have only been a few interventions related to child marriage recently; almost all of them have been undertaken by Roma women's civil society organizations. Regarding the issue of child marriage, UNICEF has had a leading role, working directly to strengthen the ability of Roma communities to tackle the issue of child marriage by providing information on alternatives – through community dialogue, direct support to families and the engagement of successful young Roma role models.

In 2017 UNICEF supported a significant research programme (in cooperation with the Ethnographic Institute and the Roma women's centre "BIBIJA") on child marriage. The results were published in the report *Child marriage among the Roma population in Serbia – Ethnographic research*<sup>11</sup>. In addition, the Coordination Body for Gender Equality and the UNICEF Office in Serbia started a joint initiative in February 2019, establishing the National Coalition for Ending Child Marriage<sup>12</sup> which aims to contribute to ending child marriage in Serbia, particularly among the Roma population. The coalition represents a

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<sup>6</sup> UNICEF. 2016. Child Marriage in Europe and Central Asia. UNICEF's Response: Regional Overview.

<sup>7</sup> UNFPA. 2014. Child Marriage in Serbia (Overview), (accessed October 2020).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> UNICEF. 2016. Child Marriage in Serbia. Analytical Report.

<sup>10</sup> Kurtić, V. 2016. Virginity — Freedom of choice, Belgrade: Bibija Roma Women's Centre.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/serbia/en/child-marriage-among-roma-population-serbia>.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/serbia/medija-centar/vesti/nacionalna-koalicija-protiv-decijih-brakova>.

community of individuals, institutions and organizations that jointly work on strengthening the options for safe choices for girls of Roma nationality, ensuring that women and men of Roma nationality are empowered to change the existing practice of child marriage.<sup>13</sup>

## **INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The Republic of Serbia has ratified many international documents and adopted laws and other acts that directly or indirectly attempt to suppress and punish the practice of child marriage. The most important are the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Freedoms*<sup>14</sup>; *UNGA Resolution 843*<sup>15</sup>; the *Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery* (ratified in 1958)<sup>16</sup>; the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child*<sup>17</sup>; the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW – ratified in 1981)*<sup>18</sup>; the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (ratified in 1990)<sup>19</sup>; the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*<sup>20</sup>; the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography* (ratified in 2002)<sup>21</sup>; the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (ratified in 2003)<sup>22</sup>; and the *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention, ratified in 2013)*<sup>23</sup>. Acts of the Council of Europe ratified by Serbia, or relating to it, are as follows: *Recommendation R (84) 4 on Parental Responsibilities*<sup>24</sup>; the *Framework Convention for the Protection of Minorities*<sup>25</sup>; the *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (ratified in 2003)<sup>26</sup>; and *Resolution 1468 on Forced Marriages and Child Marriage*<sup>27</sup>. Regarding domestic legislation, Serbia has adopted the following acts related to child protection: the *Constitution of the Republic of Serbia*<sup>28</sup>, the *Family Law*<sup>29</sup>, the *Criminal Code*<sup>30</sup>, and the *Law on Prohibition of Discrimination*<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> SIPRU, <http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/en/national-coalition-for-ending-child-marriages-formed/>.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/udhr.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f07d20.html>.

<sup>16</sup> [https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetailsIII.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg\\_no=XVIII-4&chapter=18&Temp=mtmsg3&clang=en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetailsIII.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg_no=XVIII-4&chapter=18&Temp=mtmsg3&clang=en).

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.humanium.org/en/declaration-rights-child-2/>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>.

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing\\_Declaration\\_and\\_Platform\\_for\\_Action.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/opscrc.aspx>.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/protocoltraffickinginpersons.aspx>.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/council-of-europe-convention-on-preventing-and-combating-violence-against-women-and-domestic-violence>.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.cej.mj.pt/cej/recursos/ebooks/GuiaDivorcioRespParent/anexos/anexo48.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/168007cdac>.

<sup>26</sup> [https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/convention\\_eng.pdf](https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/convention_eng.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=17380>.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.ustavni.sud.rs/page/view/en-GB/235-100028/constitution>.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/sites/default/files/2018-11/Porodicni%20zakon.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> [https://www.mpravde.gov.rs/files/Criminal%20%20%20Code\\_2019.pdf](https://www.mpravde.gov.rs/files/Criminal%20%20%20Code_2019.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> <http://azil.rs/en/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/antidiscrimination-law-serbia.pdf>.



In 2021, the Republic of Serbia endorsed the Law on Gender Equality,<sup>32</sup> which provides an overarching normative framework for the promotion and safeguarding gender equality. As a part of its programme to address child marriage, the government of the Republic of Serbia has adopted several legislative and regulatory systems which all address a number of issues related to child marriage. For example, the Family Law of 2005 prescribes that the minimum age for marriage is set at 18 years of age, though it is also prescribed that a court may, for justified reasons, permit a minor who has reached sixteen years of age and who has reached the physical and mental maturity necessary, to conclude a marriage. Furthermore, during the last decade, child marriage has become an integral part of several significant strategies, such as the Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia (2016-2025)<sup>33</sup> and the National Strategy for Gender Equality (2016-2020)<sup>34</sup> which has a specific focus on preventing early and forced marriages, especially of Roma girls and young women, and on supporting young women and mothers to continue their education. Finally, the Strategy for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (2014 - 2018)<sup>35</sup> also deals with the vulnerable position of children of Roma nationality and with their risk of discrimination, as the consequence of the specific status of the overall Roma community in Serbia. In May 2020, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Strategy for the Prevention of and Protection of Children from Violence (2020 – 2023), along with an Action Plan for 2020 and 2021. This Strategy includes definitions of child marriage and of forced and early marriage, all of them recognized as a severe violation of the rights of children and girls in particular. Nevertheless, measures prescribed in many of these strategies, in particular those related to prevention of child marriage in Roma communities, were not systematically implemented and monitored and are therefore have not been entirely effective.

Recent analysis, specifically the analysis of the Strategy for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination and its implementation until 2017, shows that although some steps forward were made with respect to human and minority rights and the fight against discrimination, there has not been a substantial overall change in the position of Roma people within the wider society in Serbia.

The Law on Foundations of the Education System and Strategy for Development of the Education System until 2030 provides important grounds for drop-out measures to be implemented in the Education system. The Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia (2016-2025) sets the overall objective of improving the socio-economic status of the Roma ethnic minority in Serbia, including full enjoyment of minority rights, eliminating discrimination, and achieving greater social inclusion of Roma men and women into all segments of society. However, the adoption of the relevant action plan (2019-2020) has been seriously delayed<sup>36</sup>, and there were no plans for measures or activities specifically addressing child marriage.

The National Strategy for Gender Equality (2016-2020) emphasises the importance of active work in preventing early and forced marriages, particularly related to Roma girls and young women. However, the realisation of the Action plan (2016-2017) was not assessed as satisfactory and measures related to the prevention of child marriage, especially in Roma communities, were assessed as not effective.

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.parlament.gov.rs/upload/archive/files/lat/pdf/zakoni/2021/741-21-lat..pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> <http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/en/roma-inclusion-strategy-adopted/>.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.rodnaravnopravnost.gov.rs/en/node/392>.

<sup>35</sup> [https://ljudskaprava.gov.rs/sites/default/files/dokument\\_file/ad\\_action\\_plan\\_eng\\_pdf.pdf](https://ljudskaprava.gov.rs/sites/default/files/dokument_file/ad_action_plan_eng_pdf.pdf).

<sup>36</sup> European Commission 2020. Serbia 2020 Report.

Overall, although the wider policy framework recognises the importance of social inclusion of Roma and of gender equality, those processes currently in place do not secure a coherent and systematic approach to addressing child marriage as one of the most harmful practices and fundamental violations of children's rights.

### 3. EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME'S THEORY OF CHANGE

The theory of change for this Programme was quite clear, reflecting the Programme's goal and long-term aim to contribute to the creation of an enabling environment where girls fully enjoy their childhood free from the risk of marriage and experience a healthier, safer, and more empowered life including making choices and decisions about their education, sexuality, relationships/marriage, and childbearing.

**Outputs** expected by 2030 were ambitious:

- ⇒ Adolescent girls at risk of and affected by child marriage are better able to express and exercise their choices;
- ⇒ Social norms and harmful beliefs are transformed, and behaviours are changed regarding gender equality and the practices of child marriage and violence against children;
- ⇒ The social, education, health, police and justice sectors deliver quality services to meet the needs of adolescent girls (and boys) at risk, in a coordinated way;
- ⇒ The relevant national laws, strategic cross- sectorial policy frameworks and mechanisms mainstream the issue of child marriage;
- ⇒ The Government supports and promotes evidence-based programming, monitoring, and reporting.

To achieve these objectives the Programme has been leveraging Serbia's commitment to end child marriage by 2030, as per the Sustainable Development Goals, and to this end the interventions focused on:

- ⇒ Working with and within Roma communities to strengthen their leadership and embrace alternatives to harmful practices through the development and implementation of interventions in pilot sites with girls, mothers and fathers, through supporting positive role models/champions of change, through supporting the employability of girls and young mothers, and through raising awareness, networking, and sharing experiences within and outside Roma communities;
- ⇒ Strengthening the capacities of key systems for the timely identification of girls at risk of child marriage and providing quality support (access to improved services) through the development of risk indicators and through the capacity building of social service providers; and supporting schools in pilot localities to upgrade drop-out prevention programmes to provide support to Roma girls at risk;
- ⇒ Improving data collection, strengthening policy, and developing evidence-based practices to tackle the social exclusion and poverty that commonly drive child marriage through the realisation of a baseline and retest study in pilot sites, and through the documentation of good practice examples and evaluation;
- ⇒ Strengthening intersectoral collaboration at the municipal and national levels through facilitating local-level coordination in pilot municipalities and supporting the establishment of a National Coalition to End Child Marriage.

The Programme intervention was operationalised within the structure of the following results framework:

**Table 1: Key Results Framework**

Key Result Areas	Outputs
<i>Key Result Area 1: Strengthened data collection, policy and practice</i>	<i>1.1 Strengthening data collection and evidence on the prevalence and dynamics of child marriage</i>
	<i>1.2 Developing national early warning mechanisms and operational response procedures to child marriage</i>
	<i>1.3 Supporting education system to offer education opportunities for girls at risk and affected by child marriage</i>
<i>Key Result Area 2: Strengthening the role and leadership of local Roma communities in the fight against child marriage</i>	<i>2.1 Fostering Dialogue within Roma settlements on the harmful impact of child marriage</i>
	<i>2.2 Increasing online connectivity and raising awareness on child marriage Programme</i>
<i>Key Result Area 3: Strengthening coordination and action at the national level to end child marriage in Serbia by 2030</i>	<i>3.1. Convening a National Coalition to End Child Marriage in Serbia</i>
	<i>3.2. Integrating measures to end child marriage by 2030 into existing strategies and plans across relevant sectors</i>

Source: Internal document submitted by UNICEF<sup>37</sup>

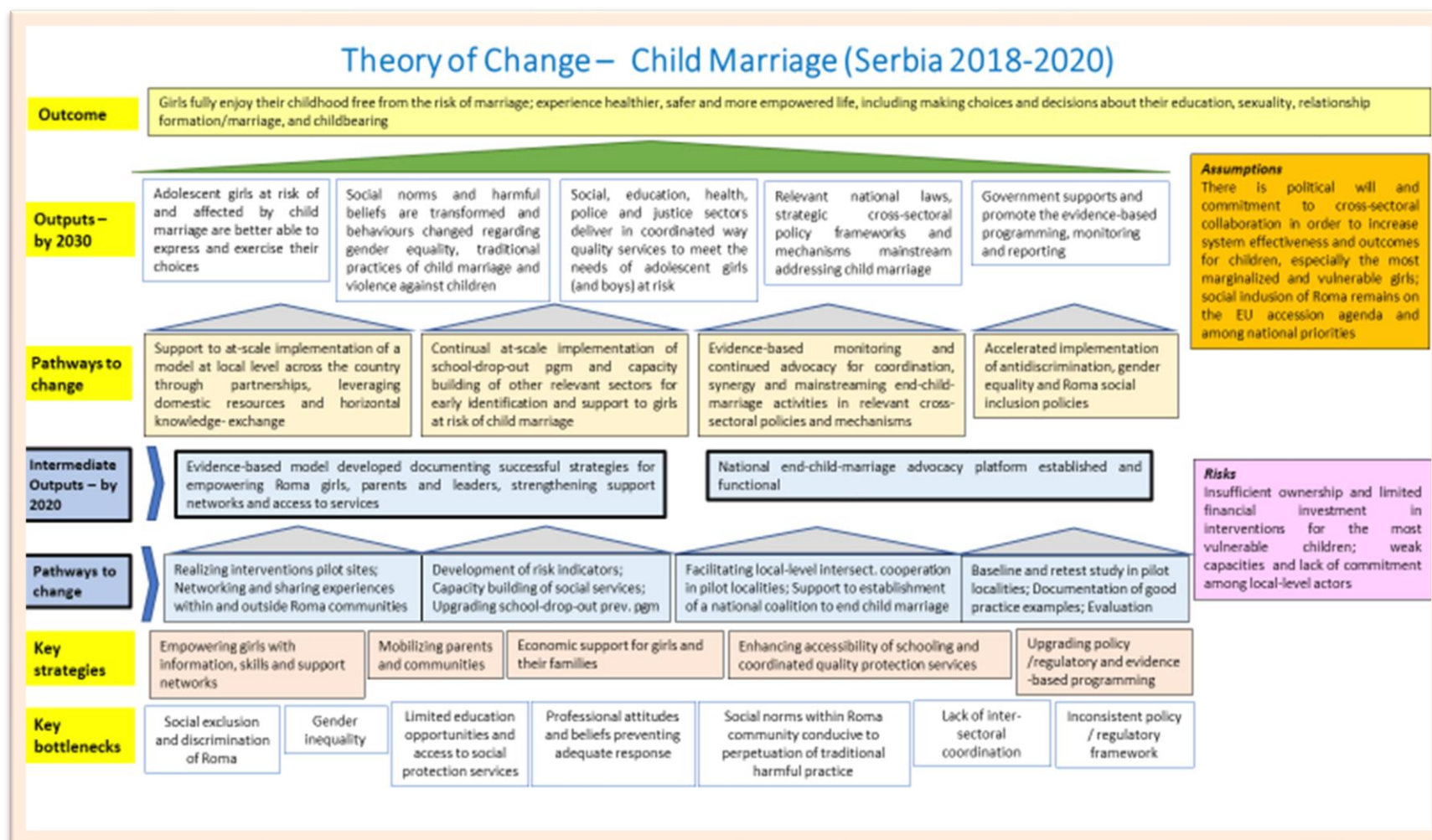
The model promoted through the evaluated Programme was indeed a compilation of good practices and interventions in the child protection, education, social inclusion, and healthcare sectors, as no single intervention is enough by itself, in any given sector, to address this issue comprehensively. The proposed model adopted by the Programme assumed that working on child marriage with central government (the top-down approach) is not sufficient to ensure full implementation of the existing strategies, regulations, or plans on either central and/or local levels. Similarly, working solely with women's organizations towards ending child marriage, by empowering women and girls is not enough to bring a system-wide change. This combination of strategies within one Programme, together with an individualised approach to bring all the stakeholders to sit together at one table, was assessed by all stakeholders and beneficiaries alike as an extremely successful approach.

At the heart of every part of the intervention was a desire to change the way that the problem of child marriage, specifically within Roma communities, was tackled and addressed, by establishing and implementing an evidence-based model that would further empower Roma girls, parents, and leaders, and strengthen support networks and access to services. The idea was to create a model based on already-proven and successful strategies and interventions but focused specifically on addressing the attitudes and behaviours towards the practice of child marriages which are largely driven by poverty and social norms and are deeply rooted in gender inequality. Although the Programme itself did not focus on all system-wide bottlenecks (it did not include direct work with police and justice institutions nor with reproductive rights and health institutions) it did instigate discussions regarding inconsistent

<sup>37</sup> The original results framework matrix is available in Annex 2.

professional practices. These discussions covered the lack of coordination of key systems in early identification of risks and in providing timely and comprehensive response in addressing negative norms and beliefs, including on gender, shared by the general population, and particularly by caregivers and service providers. The proposed model, based on a child-centred approach, presented and established mechanisms that reconcile work with institutions and service providers on the one hand and work with individual girls, women, and men on the other hand: as a way to ensure greater gender and child marriage responsiveness of those services and to address existing gaps in service provision for this target group.

Figure 3: Theory of Change Child Marriage (Serbia 2018-2020)



Source: Internal document submitted by UNICEF

The evaluation team carried out a **critical review of the ToC approach with the key stakeholders** throughout this evaluation report, comparing the ToC with empirical data gathered for each of the evaluation criteria to assess if the major assumptions and the elements of ToC remained valid throughout the duration of the Programme, and to assess the extent to which the expected outcome level changes occurred and if the initial indicators of the Programme's desired change were (and are still) relevant. In order not to repeat those issues discussed under individual evaluation criteria, this section of the report only focuses on the key evaluation questions related to the Programme's ToC, as follows:

- The plausibility of ToC: Assessing the logic of the outcome pathway. Did the current ToC make sense? Were the outcomes in the right sequence? Were the preconditions each necessary and collectively sufficient to reach the long-term outcomes and ultimate impact? Were there any gaps in the logic?
- The feasibility of the ToC: Assessing whether the evidence-based model produced within this Programme can realistically lead to achievement of the long-term outcomes and impact: Did/do the organizations, government, UNICEF, CSOs and local authorities have adequate resources? Do they need additional partners? Were the scope and timeline realistic?
- To assess any need to adjust the ToC for future rollout of the interventions, i.e., replication of the model in other locations in Serbia.

Although the stakeholders were not always familiar with the comprehensive ToC model as presented in Figure 3, many of them validated the overall logic of the outcome pathways and saw the outcomes and the relevant outputs as being firmly established and reflecting Serbian context as well as the complexity of the issue of child marriage. Whilst the evaluation cannot ascertain the impact of the Programme in terms of achieving the overall outcome - girls fully enjoy their childhood free from the risk of marriage and experience a healthier, safer, and more empowered life including making choices and decisions about their education, sexuality, relationship formation/marriage, and childbearing - collected data from the stakeholder interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries pointed to compelling evidence of activities and outcomes at different implementation levels feeding into each other, especially in terms of collective impact on the creation of the enabling environment, and on the conditions and capacities for achieving the overall goal in the future.

The Programme's utilisation of different strategies in securing the engagement of national decision-makers firstly in addressing the issue and garnering their commitment to action as a basis for establishing a broad National Coalition of stakeholders from across relevant sectors (bringing together ministries, independent institutions, civil society organizations, academic bodies, and the Roma community) and secondly in creating a platform for learning and sharing knowledge, advocacy, action and accountability on the issue of child marriage have both proven to be advantageous in terms of putting the issue of child marriage on the policy agenda. Furthermore, Programme interventions focused on enhancing the work of the coalition as well as enriching evidence-based policymaking on child marriage, at both the national and local levels, did lead to the strengthening of supporting mechanisms for collecting reliable data, improved intersectoral cooperation and have contributed to better practices in identifying girls at risk of child marriage. This work was not only focused on enhancement of technical capabilities but has contributed to the creation of improved and more responsive mechanisms, practices, and processes and also to the creation of conditions for establishing firmer and deeper dialogue between institutions and community leaders, role models, and CSOs. Consequently, improvements in individual empowerment and in the norms and values among the Roma



girls and women and in Roma communities can be closely linked to the very pragmatic provision of support at the community levels.

A few stakeholders questioned whether the sequencing of the interventions and approaches, identified under pathway of change in the ToC, could have been planned differently to help achieve the best outcomes and desired changes. Namely, given the legislative frameworks and the pace of changes in terms of harmonisation of relevant laws one could argue that if the regulatory framework was more explicit in referring to child marriage as a separate and specific issues and prescribing specific mandates to certain institutions in addressing this issue, the conditions for working at the local levels would have been easier and more conducive to implementation.

The elements of the model (taken collectively and individually) are sound enough to reach the long-term outcomes and ultimate impact, but only if all the elements are integrated in public finance systems at all levels and only if the practices developed are an integral part of larger public administration reforms (especially in key sectors of health, education, and social protection). Whilst there is no need for any huge adjustments of the existing ToC in terms of individual strategies or pathways to change, for the future rollout of the intervention i.e., for the replication of the model in other locations in Serbia, greater attention in the future should be put on including assumptions and risks related to fiscal frameworks that would improve the future sustainability and resilience of the model and would potentially lead to the achievement of long-term outcomes. In an overall assessment of the ToC, within this evaluation, it is important to restate and recognise that structural bottlenecks in the Programme implementation were not specific for the issue of child marriage alone. Rather it must be recognised that the bottlenecks which the Programme faced in its implementation are also general bottlenecks within wider governance systems<sup>38</sup>, creating obstacles to other social protection and education issues as well. To address these bottlenecks in practice in any future replication of the model would require closer linkage to public finance reform processes so as to ensure the efficiency of the model and the continuity of those results already achieved.

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<sup>38</sup> The social protection sector has been the most underrated, underfunded and “*de-funded*” element of the system, significantly understaffed whilst the number of users is steadily growing. The education sector is in the process of structural reforms, as is the justice sector. The health sector is perceived as the most efficient and best functioning among them but is nevertheless perceived as fairly overburdened.



## 4. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Evaluation approach

The evaluation methodology and the evaluation approach are developed taking into account the evaluation purposes as defined in the ToR and utilising the evaluation criteria defined by OECD DAC<sup>39</sup> and adhering to the *United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation*. The evaluation is designed with UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) indicators<sup>40</sup> in mind, which should ensure that human rights and gender equality values are respected, addressed and promoted throughout the evaluation process in all its components, underpinning the commitment to the principle of 'Leaving no-one behind'. The evaluation also took into account the principles highlighted in the *UN Women Evaluation Handbook*, including fair relations of power, empowerment, participation and inclusion, independence and integrity, transparency, quality, credibility and ethics. This means that:

- ⇒ the principles of human rights and gender equality were integrated into the evaluation scope, and that the evaluation questions were designed in a way that ensures the collection of data on gender equality and human rights,
- ⇒ a gender-sensitive methodology was developed, including methods and tools, as well as data analysis techniques that enable fully gender-disaggregated data, alongside gender-sensitive data collection techniques and processes, and gender-sensitive analysis;
- ⇒ the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect this gender analysis and provide gender-sensitive insights and recommendations that enable future beneficial interventions to target groups in a way that promotes gender equality, human rights and empowers women and girls.

The evaluation approach was based on the following principles:

1. The Steering Committee and Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) were extensively informed of the evaluation methodology. This close cooperation enabled a *Collaborative Outcomes Reporting approach*<sup>41</sup> (an approach to evaluation based around a performance story that presents evidence of how a programme has contributed to outcomes and impacts). Evidence was reviewed by both technical experts and programme stakeholders, including community members. Thus, rather than focusing on general and abstract users and uses, the evaluators were able to make the final recommendations based on detailed discussions with stakeholders and to facilitate decision-making among the exact people who will be using the evaluation findings.
2. In terms of lessons learned and good practice models, the evaluation team utilised *Appreciative Inquiry*<sup>42</sup> and the *Positive Deviances Approach*<sup>43</sup>, focusing on existing strengths but also

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>.

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.uneval.org/document/download/2433#:~:text=The%20UN%2DSWAP%20is%20composed,and%20knowledge%20exchange%20and%20networking>.

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/cort>.

<sup>42</sup> [https://www.betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/appreciative\\_inquiry](https://www.betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/appreciative_inquiry).

<sup>43</sup> [https://www.betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/positive\\_deviance](https://www.betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/positive_deviance).

identifying main weaknesses and challenges to the implementation of the Programme and to the achievement of desired results and impacts.

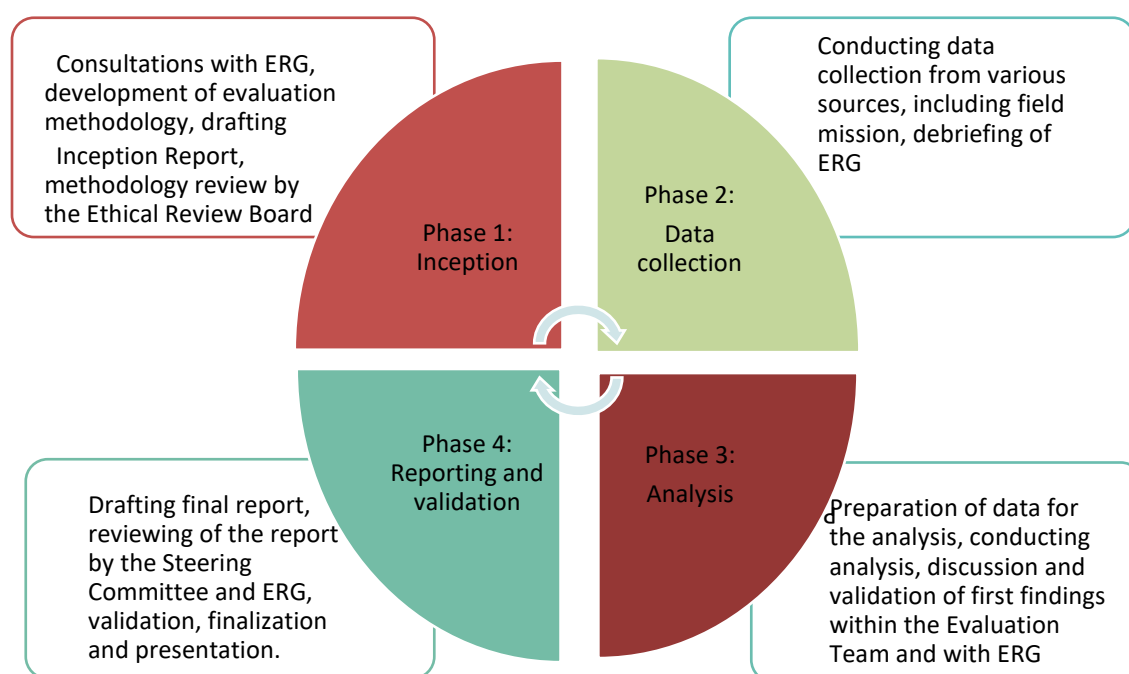
3. Finally, to ensure *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*<sup>44</sup>, evaluation was assessed on the basis of utility for intended users. Thus, evaluation was planned and conducted in a way that encourages the use of results and the decision-making process itself, as well as performance improvement.

The quality assurance of the evaluation was guided by the UNICEF Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS) quality assurance criteria and indicators.<sup>45</sup>

## 4.2 Design of the evaluation process

The evaluation process was organized in four phases: inception, data collection, analysis, and reporting and validation (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Phases of evaluation



### INCEPTION PHASE

During the inception phase the evaluation team designed and developed an overall evaluation methodology, including the design of instruments as well as a detailed work plan. During the inception phase 91 documents were reviewed, including Programme documents and relevant reports and studies (the full list of documents is provided in Annex 3). The overall evaluation methodology together with the

<sup>44</sup> [https://www.betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/utilization\\_focused\\_evaluation](https://www.betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/utilization_focused_evaluation).

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/geros-unicef.pdf>.

evaluation framework (evaluation questions and evaluation matrix, including the definitions of indicators and sources for each evaluation question), also including the data collection instruments, were all presented in detail in the Inception Report. The Ethical Review Board provided comments and suggestions on how to improve the ethical standards, and this enabled optimization of the ethical principles and alignment of the evaluation procedures with the highest ethical standards (see chapter 4.4).

#### **DATA COLLECTION PHASE**

The data collection phase was implemented using mixed methodology, combining secondary sources, interviews with 34 stakeholders, and focus group discussions (FGDs) with 36 beneficiaries. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic regime, which restricted direct contacts during this component of data collection, interviews were mainly conducted online. They took place during January and February 2021. Interviews followed semi-structured interview guides and were led by highly skilled evaluators.

Focus group discussions with beneficiaries from targeted Roma communities were organized in the field and face-to-face, as this was considered to be the optimal approach for groups of beneficiaries who are difficult to access online especially on such a sensitive topic. Separate FGDs were organized for different groups of beneficiaries: girls, mothers, boys and men. In total 9 FGDs were organized during February 2021. Ethical considerations were carefully taken into account during the data collection phase. All interviews and FGDs were recorded with the consent of the participants.

Data collection was implemented in line with ethical standards (see chapter 4.4).

After the completion of the data collection mission, an online debriefing was held with the UNICEF team.

#### **THE ANALYSIS PHASE**

The analysis of the primary data collected during the evaluation was conducted using MAXQDA software for mixed analysis. All interviews and FGDs records were transcribed and inserted into the database. These were coded according to the evaluation questions and sub-questions. In addition, the analysis included evidence from pre-test and post-test surveys. Evidence collected through desk research was also used both in the analysis of key findings but also for the purpose of contextualisation of the evaluation findings.

After the first findings were formulated based on this analysis, a presentation was made to the UNICEF team and based on the feedback provided by them, it was decided to strengthen the formative aspects of the evaluation and elaborate more findings that could be used in the future attempts to upscale the model and progress towards ending child marriage.

#### **REPORTING AND VALIDATION**

The outline of the final evaluation report was proposed to the UNICEF team and approved. The report was developed by the evaluation team in line with the adopted outline.

A quality assurance (QA) review in line with the *UNICEF Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Research Studies and Evaluations (RSEs)*<sup>46</sup> was applied to both the Inception Report and the Final Draft Report. The QA was performed by the Country Office, using an external review facility.

In preparing and finalising the Inception and Final Draft Reports, the Steering Committee and ERG<sup>47</sup> were consulted, and final changes were made on basis of their comments and suggestions.

## 4.3 Design of the evaluation methodology

The ToR<sup>48</sup> requested that the evaluation be conducted applying a methodology that demonstrates impartiality and lack of bias by using a cross-section of information sources (stakeholder groups, including beneficiaries, etc.), and by using a mixed methodology to ensure triangulation of information through a variety of means. In line with this, the methodology designed for this evaluation is a hybrid one, combining **quasi-experimental** and **comparative methods**. This mixed-method approach requires a simultaneous focus on different levels of the analysis:

- 1) Programme focus – as an initiative that included phases of pre-modelling, modelling and model implementation, within a specific contractual framework and obligations;
- 2) Model focus – an evidence-based programme that established a complex set of interventions through which ending child marriage should be achieved, piloted in the targeted communities and among targeted beneficiary groups (girls, mothers, boys and men in Roma communities) with the potential to be scaled up;
- 3) Community focus – based on the targeted areas in which the model of ending child marriage was implemented and where due to the specific modes of implementation and/or contextual characteristics, the main model gets certain distinctive features;
- 4) Individual focus – taking into consideration the targeted girls, mothers, boys and men who were exposed to the Programme interventions and should experience the impact of the Programme/model through the ultimate change of attitudes and behaviours towards child marriage.

The **quasi-experimental method**<sup>49</sup> enabled the evaluation team to assess the impact of the intervention (as an independent variable) on Programme beneficiaries in terms of changes in their attitudes and behaviours related to child marriage (as dependent variables). The type of quasi-experimental method

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<sup>46</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/media/54796/file>.

<sup>47</sup> The ERG was formed at the onset of this evaluation to facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders in the design and scope of the evaluation, raising awareness of the different information needs. This group was chaired by UNICEF and the Coordination Body for Gender Equality, and provided information quality assurance throughout the process, supporting the dissemination of the evaluation results.

<sup>48</sup> Annex 1 of the Final Evaluation Report is attached as a separate document.

<sup>49</sup> "A quasi-experimental method enables observations that are structured similarly to an experiment, but the conditions and experiences of participants lack some control because the study lacks random assignment, includes a preexisting factor (i.e. a variable that is not manipulated), or does not include a comparison/control group. A quasi-independent variable is a preexisting variable that is often a characteristic inherent to an individual, which differentiates the groups or conditions being compared in a research study. Because the levels of the variable are preexisting, it is not possible to randomly assign participants to groups" Privitera G.J., Ahlgrim-Delzell L. (2019) *Research methods for education*, SAGE, London.

that was be applied is a version of the **one-group pre-test-post-test design with a comparison group**<sup>50</sup>. with solid baseline and endline surveys. Both surveys were conducted by the Institute for Psychology, using a robust methodology.

**The comparative method** was used to compare the model, as implemented with slight variation in different communities, across groups of the beneficiaries and between individual cases that demonstrate certain specific features.

In the following table, the data collection and analysis methods are presented alongside the evaluation criteria, indicating the specific mixes of different methods used<sup>51</sup>.

**Table 2: Evaluation methods per evaluation criteria**

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation methods
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content analysis of Programme documents, relevant national policies, reports, studies, baseline and end-line surveys implemented for the programme</li> <li>• Stakeholder mapping and stakeholder analysis</li> <li>• Contextual analysis</li> <li>• Semi-structured interviews with UNICEF team</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content analysis of implementation reports</li> <li>• Analysis of results according to the results framework using internal Programme indicators to measure performance and results</li> <li>• Qualitative analysis of data from primary data sources, collected for the evaluation: semi-structured interviews and FGDs with selected stakeholders</li> <li>• Quasi-experimental (causal) analysis identifying factors that contributed or inhibited Programme effectiveness</li> <li>• Multi-case study</li> </ul>
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content analysis of Programme documents, reports</li> <li>• Financial analysis</li> <li>• Soft cost-benefit analysis</li> <li>• Semi-structured interviews with UNICEF and partners</li> </ul>
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of secondary data from baseline and endline surveys</li> <li>• Analysis of primary data collected through semi-structured interviews and FGDs with primary beneficiaries and other stakeholders</li> <li>• Analysis of narratives of primary beneficiaries</li> <li>• Multi-case analysis, comparative analysis</li> <li>• Quasi-experimental analysis</li> </ul>
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content analysis of relevant documents, policies, reports</li> </ul>

<sup>50</sup> A one-group pretest-posttest design is a design in which the same dependent variable [for example, attitudes towards child marriage] is measured in one group of participants before (pretest) and after (posttest) an intervention is implemented or treatment administrated (Ibid, 454). The version with control group enables more valid insights in what is the change occurred in the targeted group by the intervention.

<sup>51</sup> All evaluation instruments are available upon request.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System analysis of current situation in the social protection and education systems in response to child marriage, with an analysis of opportunities and constraints for scale-up</li> <li>• Semi-structured interviews with the UNICEF team</li> <li>• Semi-structured interviews with other stakeholders, including decision-makers at the national level</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge generation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content analysis of Programme documents, relevant policies and laws</li> <li>• Quasi-experimental analysis of key success and inhibiting factors, as well as on strategies that worked</li> <li>• System analysis, institutional analysis</li> <li>• Organizational analysis</li> <li>• Systematization of knowledge</li> </ul>

### DATA COLLECTION SAMPLE

Individual interviews were conducted with different stakeholders, including:

- ⇒ UNICEF team
- ⇒ Representatives of the Government of Serbia, particularly the ministries involved (MoLEVSA, MoESTD) and CBGE
- ⇒ Representatives of the National Coalition to End Child Marriage
- ⇒ Representatives of the Institute for Social Protection,
- ⇒ Representatives of local institutions, such as Centres for Social Work (CSWs), schools, Roma mediators
- ⇒ Representatives of partner CSOs.

In total 34 stakeholders were interviewed based on a semi-structured interview guide specifically adapted to different types of stakeholders.

FGDs were conducted with 36 beneficiaries from Roma settlements: 8 in Belgrade, 16 in Novi Bečej and 12 in Pirot. They were clustered in four groups: 12 girls, 8 boys, 12 mothers and 4 men. The detailed sample structure is presented in Annex 4.

### METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS, CHALLENGES AND EVALUATION RISKS

The main methodological limitation is related to the timing of the evaluation itself, in terms of measuring the effectiveness and impact of a Programme which is still ongoing, and the fact that the evaluation scope extends beyond the Programme, referring to the model that can potentially be scaled up to address child marriage in general. This risk was mitigated with the extension of the data collection phase into 2021, gathering evidence on all activities which could be implemented during last phase of the Programme despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another risk is related to the communication with beneficiaries, some of whom came from very marginalized communities, who faced language barriers and had limited capacities to understand the programmatic jargon. This risk was mitigated by engaging skilled evaluators who were highly qualified for work with vulnerable groups and had extensive experience in work with Roma communities and on the topic of child marriage.

Some methodological limitations were related to the COVID-19 restrictions in data collection, but this was mitigated by online interviews with those stakeholders for whom this kind of interview was deemed suitable, as described above.

One of the most complex methodological challenges was related to the twofold approach: on the one hand it was important to conduct the evaluation according to standard evaluation criteria, but on the other hand for the formative evaluation purpose it was important to use an approach adapted to the complexity of the Programme model. This challenge was addressed in the following way: within the chapters on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, the model (as adapted to local communities) was evaluated using the standard criteria. While evaluation components structured around previously listed criteria were more focused on programme implementation, in the chapter on knowledge generation, the analysis is fully focused on the model itself with the aim to understand what worked well and what should be changed in order to successfully upscale it or replicate it.

#### 4.4 Ethical considerations and safety of the persons involved in the evaluation process

Child marriage is a highly sensitive topic; it is a form of gender-based violence, which is prohibited by the Istanbul Convention (though not fully prohibited by the domestic law<sup>52</sup>), so ethical considerations were of special significance during the evaluation.

It is important to emphasize that the evaluation was conducted completely independently, all potential conflict of interest of evaluation informants were avoided, as well as a potential conflict of interest of the members of the evaluation team.

The evaluation team took all necessary steps to ensure that the highest ethical norms and standards were applied during the evaluation process. The evaluation was conducted in compliance with the “*do no harm*” principle, i.e. the rights of the individuals involved in the process were completely protected.

Firstly, full anonymity of all participants in the process and the confidentiality of all information shared with the evaluation team were guaranteed. Before the interviews and FGDs, participants were informed about the purpose of data collection, emphasising that the participation of every individual was voluntary. At the beginning of every interview or FGD, informed consent from each individual respondent was obtained (informed consent forms are presented in Annex 5).

In this data collection process, the main social risk was due to the fact that the information may be perceived as sensitive within the social context, which is particularly true for respondents from Roma communities. So there was special emphasis on the protection of the most vulnerable interviewees – Roma girls and women who participated in FGDs. The main social risks included information or

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<sup>52</sup> As indicated earlier, the Family law prescribes that a court may, for justified reasons, permit a minor who has reached sixteen years of age and who has reached the physical and mental maturity necessary, to conclude a marriage.



statements that could be perceived as inappropriate or shameful from the perspective of other members of the community, given the presence of strong social norms related to specific gender roles and marriage in particular. To avoid this, the research team, together with local Roma partners, managed to secure interview locations where our informants felt safe. In most cases, FGDs were organised in one of the participants' households or in the local Roma NGO offices, making sure that only participants and the researcher were present during the interviews. Thanks to excellent coordination provided by local Roma partners, no difficulties were noticed during the face-to-face interviews. Additionally, FGDs were organized in accordance with relevant COVID-19 social distancing measures (face masks and hand sanitizers were provided by the research team).

In the case of respondents who were minors, parental consent was obtained for every individual (see Annex 5). This also included the good practice of involving Roma coordinators in FGDs, taking care of any potential risk and harm boys and girls could be exposed to during the interview process. Recruitment of minor participants and their preparation for the interview process was carefully organised by local Roma NGOs, ensuring that children felt secure and safe during the process of interviewing.

The identities of the respondents were protected and known only to the evaluation team, as mandated in the *UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights*<sup>53</sup>. Furthermore, the evaluation complied with the *Policy on Gender Equality Empowerment of Women*<sup>54</sup>. A human rights-based and gender-sensitive approach was adopted in all aspects of this evaluation. The Evaluation Team also ensured that the evaluation procedure respected UNICEF's Evaluation Technical Note: *Children Participating in Research, Monitoring and Evaluation*.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to the introduction of additional measures to protect both respondents and researchers involved in the evaluation process. In July 2020 SeConS developed an internal protocol for working under these new circumstances: *A Plan for Implementing Measures for Prevention of Spreading Infectious Diseases During Epidemics*<sup>55</sup>. All of the researchers involved in the evaluation were familiar with this protocol and conducted the evaluation in accordance with its principles. The research team followed all measures introduced by the Government of Serbia to prevent spreading COVID-19. This means that while conducting the fieldwork, every single person involved in the evaluation process used face masks and other necessary equipment, maintained social distancing, etc. Also, the evaluation team ensured that the number of people participating in an FGD was not larger than 4, which was the maximum number of people allowed to gather at the same place as per measures stipulated by the Serbian government at the moment of the interviewing process.

### **Ethical and safety considerations related to online data collection**

Since some of the data collection for this evaluation was conducted using remote, online channels due to COVID-19 related restrictions, many safety issues had to be taken into account to maintain strict ethical standards. The individual and group interviews with various stakeholders were scheduled in advance using the Zoom platform, and the interviewees were asked for their consent to participate in

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<sup>53</sup> <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616>.

<sup>54</sup> [https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/publications\\_and\\_papers/UNECE\\_Policy\\_on\\_GEEW\\_Final.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/publications_and_papers/UNECE_Policy_on_GEEW_Final.pdf).

<sup>55</sup> This internal document is prepared in Serbian and is available upon request.



the interview and to be recorded. Their consent for the participation in the interview was secured as evidence prior to the start of the interview.

All of the files and collected data were stored anonymously. Every subject was assigned a unique identifier, and personal information was kept separate from the responses. A database with participants' responses and a separate database containing personal information was secured with a password. Only one researcher in charge of data analysis was allowed to access the databases. The computer containing the hard drive with the collected data is protected to the highest standards including the use of Windows Defender and Malwarebytes.

The evaluation team, and each of its members individually, safeguarded the international evaluation principles of:

- ✓ **Independence:** by setting standards that increase impartiality in the evaluation process and in reporting on findings;
- ✓ **Credibility:** by setting standards that ensure evaluations are evidence-based and follow transparent and systematic processes; and
- ✓ **Utility:** by building milestones into evaluation processes for timeliness and reporting standards to ensure accessibility.

## 5. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation was conducted with respect to the following key evaluation criteria, based on OECD/DAC framework<sup>56</sup>:

- Relevance
- Coherence
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Impact
- Sustainability
- Knowledge generation

For each of the evaluation criteria, a set of evaluation questions was developed which guided the evaluation and served as a framework for the formulation of evaluation findings. The evaluation matrix including evaluation questions, sources of evidence and evaluation criteria/indicators (attached in Annex 6) was agreed with the UNICEF team.

### RELEVANCE

Relevance is a measure of the extent to which the objectives of the intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies. The evaluation was focused on A) the relevance of the Program's intermediate outputs (Outputs by 2020 - ToC) and B) the importance and relevance of the final outputs (Outputs by 2030 - ToC).

### COHERENCE

The compatibility of the interventions under this Programme with other similar interventions in the area, and in the country, were evaluated under this criterion. The evaluation team accordingly tried to specify the extent to which other interventions, particularly, national, and local policies support or undermine the intervention and vice versa. Within this criterion, internal Programme coherence was also evaluated, meaning the assessment of coherence and consistency of activities, outputs, and outcomes.

### EFFECTIVENESS

Effectiveness is a measure of the extent to which a programme attains its objectives/results. This criterion was evaluated against the objectives set out in the programme document and the results framework in accordance with the theory of change. Effectiveness is presented essentially as a qualitative measure of immediate and observable change in the target groups/institutions as a direct result of implemented activities and the delivery of outputs. This also included an assessment of the appropriateness of measurable indicators, appraisal of whether planned benefits have been delivered and received, and the review of the extent of behavioural and organizational change among beneficiary groups and target institutions, including an examination of whether assumptions at the results level

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<sup>56</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>.

were relevant and adequate in explaining the achievement of the programme purpose and whether any unplanned results have affected the benefits received.

The assessment of effectiveness relies on two frameworks: the original results framework, which has indicators for measuring progress in the achievement of results, and the independent evaluation questions. The results framework with indicators is presented in Annex 7; the independent evaluation questions are presented in the following table.

### **EFFICIENCY**

The efficiency criterion refers to the extent to which the programme outputs (results) have been achieved at reasonable cost. It concerns the link between results and the activities or inputs that lead to the achievement of each output or intermediate outcome. For the purpose of this evaluation, this criterion was focused on analysing the extent to which the management of the Programme provided an efficient framework for delivery of services, utilization of resources and accounting for results as well as establishing and promoting partnership throughout the country (from the start to the end of the programme implementation phases). Furthermore, the level and the extent of coordination of resources were assessed to see if they encouraged synergy: leveraging donor/domestic resources and avoidance of overlap.

As part of the Programme was implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation examined whether activities were delayed and the effects those delays have had on the timeliness of the achievement of the results/intermediate outputs<sup>57</sup>.

### **IMPACT**

Impact refers to the changes that can be attributed to a particular programme. It relates specifically to higher-level effects (both intended and unintended). The evaluation team paid specific attention to both intended and unintended results of the intervention and assessed it at different levels of Programme intervention: individual, group, community level, system, and the whole of society.

### **SUSTAINABILITY**

Sustainability refers to whether the positive outcomes of the Programme continue or are likely to continue after the external funding ends. It includes an examination of the financial, economic, social, environmental, and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time and involves analyses of resilience, risks, and potential trade-offs. It also seeks to establish whether any longer-term impact on the wider development process can be sustained at the level of the sector, region, or country.

### **KNOWLEDGE GENERATION**

This is not a typical evaluation criterion, but rather an aspect of the evaluation that enables the evaluation team to systematise the knowledge generated through the Programme to inform future interventions. The knowledge generation criterion in this evaluation was focused on the analysis of

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<sup>57</sup> These and other prevailing contextual factors will be assessed in terms of their influence on the Program results.

preconditions needed to scale up or replicate the model of intervention to end child marriage, deriving from findings on previous criteria.

## 6. EVALUATION FINDINGS

### Relevance

- The design and objectives of the Programme, defined through the ToC were relevant to the depth and scope of the practice of child marriage in Serbia, including the lack of adequate response of relevant institutions.
- The programme was grounded in solid evidence, designed to take care of the needs of targeted groups of primary beneficiaries but also other diverse stakeholders.

### Coherence

- The design of the Programme, the Programme's ToC and the method of delivery of the interventions ensured internal coherence and consequently the results of the individual components fed into and built on each other.
- The Programme was consistent with relevant national and local policies and sought to further improve and harmonise them to fully recognise the importance of child marriage
- The Programme achieved a high level of coherence with other processes related to Roma inclusion, through cooperation with governmental institutions as well as with International and domestic NGOs.

### Effectiveness

- The Programme managed to strengthen data collection and the evidence base at the social sector level and to improve statistics on the prevalence of child marriage to a significant extent.
- The Programme interventions were successful in building on and upgrading a large variety of training activities and social and interpersonal events for girls and boys and mothers and fathers in the communities in which the three local NGOs were already implementing activities.
- The programme contributed to Roma organizations and individuals being recognized by other local actors as originators of the interventions against child marriage.
- The Programme significantly contributed to opening a dialogue within Roma settlements on the harmful impact on child marriage.
- The Programme succeeded to a significant extent in increasing capacities of local stakeholders to identify and address child marriage, and enhanced local coordination of key stakeholders.
- The Programme succeeded (at least initially) in strengthening coordination and action in addressing child marriages by establishing National Coalition for Ending Child Marriage as an important general platform for action which did not exist before, gathering together both locally and nationally institutions, organisations and individuals with a responsibility to combat, and/or active in combating, child marriage.
- The engagement of local organisations and other available mechanisms, such as family outreach workers, Roma health mediators and pedagogical assistants were all crucial for ensuring that the interventions started from the needs of the Roma communities and individuals, and for continuing their work in the prevention of child marriage, supporting families and girls at risk of child marriage, and in establishing continuous relationships of trust and support.
- The Programme intervention has not yet resulted in a systemic response to child marriage.
- The Programme had limited success in reaching the most vulnerable families due to a number of factors, the most important being the usual factors that exclude those families from other community activities.
- Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic did not hinder the achievement of the planned results, but it did hamper the effective implementation of sustainability measures

### Efficiency

- The steering and management of the Programme were well balanced and result-oriented in practice.
- The monitoring tools allowed for and facilitated changes in the Programme level.
- An issue of uneven distribution of financial resources was noted.
- The design and implementation of the education segment and the Family Outreach Service of the Intervention Model to end child marriage were not the most cost-effective way to obtain the expected results of the Programme.

## Impact

- The Programme interventions in Roma settlements had a significant impact on the attitudes and behaviours of adolescent girls, among whom the proportion of those who left education before completing secondary school was much lower, as was visible in the results of the post-test survey and the interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries of the Programme.
- The Programme impact was visible on mothers, male peers and men in the targeted communities, as well as on professionals in local institutions (schools and centres for social work) engaged in the response to child marriage, and also on national level stakeholders, particularly those who participated in or cooperated with the National Coalition for Ending Child Marriage.
- Due to limited time and scale, the Programme was not able to introduce profound changes in targeted communities, but it opened a dialogue on child marriage in the targeted Roma communities, including in broader groups of men and boys, women, and girls, raising the visibility of the issue and providing arguments against child marriage.
- Local systems enhanced their capacity to identify, recognize and react to risks or actual cases of child marriage, particularly in two out of three targeted communities, while at the national level some processes have been initiated (increased focus, mobilized stakeholders, legal and policy gaps) however the impact in terms of achieved systemic changes cannot be, and is not, yet visible.
- The Programme has mobilized a number of diverse stakeholders at local and national levels, mainly through the National Coalition for Ending Child Marriage and local programme activities. There is evidence of significant enthusiasm among stakeholders, but at the same time, uncertainty about how these new partnerships and synergies will be maintained in the future.

## Sustainability

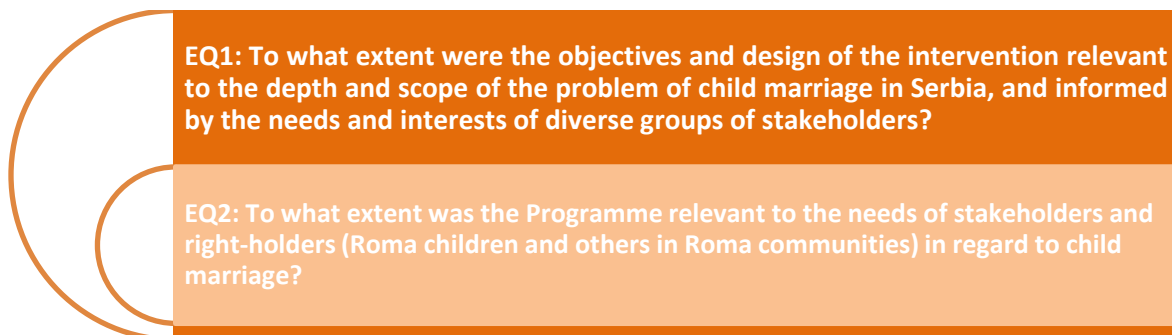
- The sustainability of all key Programme results is fragile. This is due to various factors: the model is still not sufficiently mainstreamed at national and local level; there are doubts about the allocation of specific financial resources and about legislative changes which still need to happen.

## Knowledge generation

- For mainstreaming the model, it is necessary to improve the national legislative framework, to replicate it in other local communities with Roma settlements, to provide mandatory and regular trainings of professionals in the welfare and education systems and also in other institutions engaged in local multisectoral cooperation (such as police, health system, prosecution), to enable systematic knowledge transfer and promotion of good practices in multisectoral cooperation among local communities. At the national level, the role of National Coalition for Ending Child Marriage is seen as crucial as it can advocate for political commitment and for replicating or upscaling the model with adequate allocation of funds.

## 6.1 Relevance

Evaluation of relevance criteria was based on the following evaluation questions:



**KEY FINDING: THE DESIGN AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME, DEFINED THROUGH THE ToC WERE RELEVANT TO THE DEPTH AND SCOPE OF THE PRACTICE OF CHILD MARRIAGE IN SERBIA, INCLUDING THE LACK OF ADEQUATE RESPONSE OF RELEVANT INSTITUTIONS.**

**The Programme is highly relevant for addressing the depth and scope of the phenomenon of child marriage in Serbia.** As presented by the data in the background section, there are indications of a slight increase of child marriage in the general population of Serbia and no significant change in Roma settlements. Child marriage is grounded in poverty, deprivation and based on specific gender dynamics and gender norms, further limiting the roles of Roma girls and women to reproductive and domestic tasks and undermining their wellbeing. According to MICS6 2019 findings, the prevalence of child marriage in the Roma population is still very high (55.7% of women married before turning 18). Comparing to the data collected in MICS5 2014, there was no visible progress in reducing the practice of child marriage in the Roma population, while there was a tendency for those practices to increase in the general population.

**The Programme's design approach and objectives are highly relevant to establishing a coherent model to address the issue of child marriage in Serbia.** The proposed model adopted by the Programme recognised that working on child marriage through the implementation of either a top-down or the bottom-up approach alone is not sufficient to ensure substantial and system-wide change. A mixture of both approaches complemented further with an individualised approach for each specific context was relevant in ensuring the involvement of a wide variety of key stakeholders needed to address this issue inclusively. Also, taking into consideration the impact of different local contexts on the prevalence of child marriage in different communities, the specific relevance of different Programme interventions attests to the flexibility that has been included in the design of the Programme from the beginning.

All elements of the Programme as defined by the Theory of Change are relevant for the complex issue of child marriage:

- a) **Improving data collection, strengthening policy, and developing evidence-based practices.** Any intervention focused on child marriage in Roma communities requires solid evidence and data. That evidence was initially very limited, particularly concerning the communities which were targeted by the intervention. Whereas more general data on trends and background

characteristics of child marriage in Roma communities in Serbia were available from previous UNICEF MICS surveys, as well as important findings which were available due to previous ethnographic research commissioned by UNICEF, more specific knowledge about the situation, including more precise measures on attitudes and behaviours regarding child marriage in targeted communities was missing. Also, data gaps were present in the form of incomplete or insufficient administrative records either on child marriage cases, or on girls and families at risk of child marriage. Administrative data records were not harmonised between the education and social protection systems - which was an obstacle to a more effective multisectoral response to child marriage. The Programme design responded to these gaps through the implementation of baseline and end-line studies implemented by the Institute for Psychology. These studies provided more specific, contextualized knowledge about the situation in the targeted communities. The research has also provided insights into attitudes of the beneficiaries within Roma communities towards child marriage and more broadly towards gender relations, which in turn has informed better planning and targeting and has offered an opportunity for the Programme to address key enablers of, and barriers to, the reproduction of the practice of child marriage.

- b) Working with communities** – The Programme was relevant to the needs of local communities which are noticeably affected by child marriage and to the needs of girls at risk of child marriage or who already got married. At the same time, the Programme was relevant to needs of other groups in targeted communities whose attitudes and behaviours are critical to addressing these issues – mothers, boys and fathers, as well as community leaders. The opinions of these stakeholders were and are important for shaping or changing community norms and practices. One particularly relevant aspect of the Programme is mentored professional training for girls and young women who left the educational system, including but not limited to, those who did so due to marriage and childbirth. This component corresponded well to the needs of these groups and their limited life chances later in their lives.
- c) Working with institutional stakeholders** – The Programme responded to the needs of stakeholders in the systems of education and social protection, whose knowledge, skills and attitudes are critical in day-to-day work on child marriage and proper response to its challenges. Having in mind that many of practitioners in both the social protection and the education systems still hold misconceptions on the practice of child marriage, the Programme's design was particularly relevant in addressing this issue, and specifically increasing knowledge of those practitioners about this practice, helping them understand that this is a form of gender-based violence, understanding and recognising its causes, removing biases and enabling them to be ready to intervene in preventing CM through their roles more adequately.

Some of the evidence that supports the argument of weak institutional capacities to identify child marriages comes from *The Instruction on the Operation of Centres for Social Work - Guardianship Authorities in Protecting Children from Child Marriage*, developed within the programme. According to data for 2019, there were a total of 174 child marriage cases with 87 of these children belonging to families receiving financial social assistance, while the remaining 97 children had not been on the records before. Among them, 43 children come from families that receive financial support. That means that during the official procedure to determining whether the conditions for obtaining financial support were met (including field visits), CSW professionals either had not noticed the risk for the child or had not reported it to the competent children's service within CSW, or the children's service had not reacted to these



reports. The Instruction is the first, essential, step in the process of making CSW professionals more alert to child marriage. In the future, this component will be crucial for the coherence of the model in terms of the response of CSW professionals in cases when other actors (Roma health mediators, pedagogical assistants, NGOs) recognise children who are at risk from child marriage.

The evaluation has confirmed that the drop-out prevention model, developed by the Centre for Education Policies and UNICEF, which had a broad focus on the design and development of early warning instruments for children at risk, and which suggested resources for teachers as well as individual work with students, was extremely relevant as it responded to the life situation and the needs of girls in targeted communities.

*From an interview with a national NGO (recognising the CM cases and reacting appropriately)*

It is not the same when children go for seasonal labour and when they are forced to get married. That was the crucial point, to encourage a dialogue about child marriage in schools. They were aware of the existence of that practice, but they couldn't deal with it, they didn't know how to react in cases of child marriage.

- d) Enhancing multisectoral cooperation** – Programme responded to the need for strengthening multisectoral mechanisms and contributed to achieving a more coherent and better-coordinated action in response to child marriage in local communities. Multisectoral cooperation on this issue was weak or almost non-existent in the selected communities before the Programme. Given that child marriage is a complex phenomenon that does not depend on one public policy or one sector, the networking of stakeholders was an important part of the model when it comes to its prevention.

*From an interview with an IO*

The implemented interventions are very relevant. The establishment of intersectoral teams involved with the child marriage issue is really important, to connect local institutions with civil society organisations in order to provide quick and adequate reactions. Because one of the biggest problems, and drivers too, is the inadequate reaction of local institutions in charge of the issue of child marriage.

- e) Building National Coalition (NC)** – Programme also responded to the need of diverse stakeholders to join their efforts in creating a critical mass and providing them with the platform that yield substantial impact on awareness raising of different groups of the population, decision-makers, and more successfully advocate for the improvement of the legislative, policy and institutional frameworks at all levels in response to child marriage. Gathering diverse actors, from governmental bodies to Roma NGOs, the Coalition provides a broad framework for action and as such is highly relevant. The aim of the Programme's interventions, linked to the National Coalition, was to encourage and create a normative framework that enables national and local institutions to combat child marriage, particularly encouraging cities, and municipalities to be active in this field. According to several parties consulted, in practice, the National Coalition (NC) is just starting with its activities, and the COVID-19 pandemic only placed further limitations on

what it could do. Nevertheless, the work of the NC continues to be relevant even under the complex circumstances which were caused by the pandemic. Particularly because of the fact that planned advocacy activities were postponed from 2020 to 2021 under the pressure of pandemic restrictive measures. Recent activities of the NC included an official proposal for changes to the Criminal Code (child marriage is a criminal offence and should be recognized as human trafficking), the Family Law (abolishing the possibility of marriage before the age of 18), as well as the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence (child marriage recognized as domestic violence). They also include the campaign 'Childhood, not marriage'. The continuous relevance of these activities is undoubtful.

**KEY FINDING: THE PROGRAMME WAS GROUNDED IN SOLID EVIDENCE, DESIGNED TO TAKE CARE OF THE NEEDS OF TARGETED GROUPS OF PRIMARY BENEFICIARIES BUT ALSO OTHER DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS.**

**The Programme design was well-grounded in the long-lasting experience of UNICEF working with Roma communities,** issues of child protection in general and in Roma communities, and work with the specific phenomenon of child marriage. Although the design of the Programme was not specifically based on a traditional participatory consultation approach<sup>58</sup>, this extensive use of research evidence helped ensure that needs of multiple stakeholders were acknowledged not only at the start and end points but also during Programme implementation.

The evidence that was crucial in informing Programme design included:

- Two waves of Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys conducted in Serbia and Roma settlements in 2014 and 2019<sup>59</sup>, which revealed the magnitude of child marriage in the general population and Roma settlements and shed light on socio-economic determinants linked with child marriage;
- The in-depth study on child marriage among Roma was published in 2017 based on thorough ethnological-anthropological research commissioned by UNICEF and conducted by the Institute for Ethnography of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts.<sup>60</sup> The study provided comprehensive knowledge on roots, causes, forms, consequences of child marriage, forming a solid evidence base for planning the intervention and developing the model for addressing child marriage issue through Programme which is the subject of this evaluation.
- A baseline study was conducted specifically for the Programme design and implementation<sup>61</sup>.
- The stakeholders mapping analysis, which provided solid ground for designing the National Coalition for Ending Child Marriages.

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<sup>58</sup> Some of the long-term stakeholders had already had an important role in the design of the programme. Well-established partnerships between UNICEF and NGOs and CBOs ensured the relevance of the programme's content as it was built on results of long-lasting partnership and previous successful practices.

<sup>59</sup> UNICEF, SORS Serbia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014 and Serbia Roma Settlements Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014 followed up with Serbia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019 and Serbia Roma Settlements Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019.

<sup>60</sup> UNICEF (2017) *Child marriage among the Roma population in Serbia*.

<https://www.unicef.org/serbia/media/2671/file/De%C4%8Diji%20brakovi%20u%20romskoj%20populaciji%20u%20Srbiji.pdf>.

<sup>61</sup> Institute for Psychology (2018) *Towards Ending Child Marriage in Serbia – Baseline study*.

Beyond this initial evidence-based Programme design approach, **the overall real time evidence-based approach applied during the Programme implementation** enabled an adjustment/(re)design of the Programme activities continuously during its implementation to better respond to the needs, interests, or capacities of participating stakeholders. The approach functioned as a real-time evaluation tool, providing immediate feedback on the situation on the ground and in certain cases freeing up operational bottlenecks and providing real-time learning. For example, during the first year of implementation, local Roma organisations recognised the importance of involving boys and men in programme activities and accordingly in the second year of implementation, The Association of Roma Students from Novi Sad developed two thematic workshops for Roma men aiming at changing attitudes towards child marriage, which were implemented initially in Novi Bečej and after that in Belgrade and Pirot.

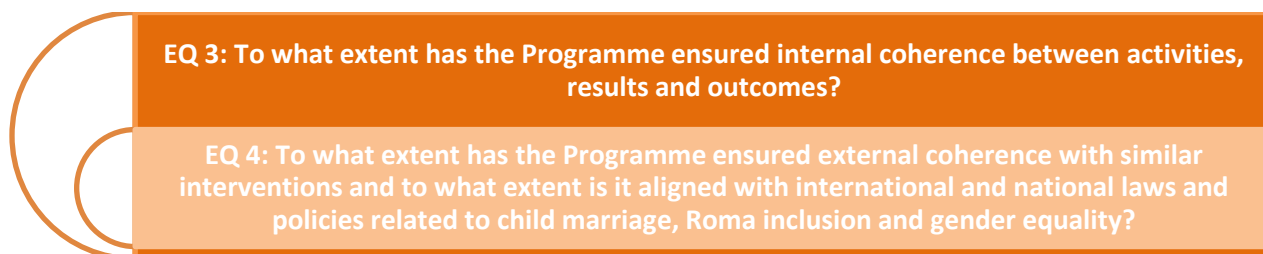
**Primary beneficiaries and other stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation mission have confirmed the relevance of the Programme and its components for their needs or the addressing phenomenon of child marriage more generally.** Activities such as social inclusion programmes, thematic forums and individual work with girls are recognized for their relevance not only in terms of raising awareness and educating girls and women but for facilitating dialogue and enabling continuity in working within the community and consequently establishing trust relations that later provide room for the implementation of new activities. As especially relevant and transformative were emphasized the activities aimed at the male population that was developed and implemented in Belgrade, Pirot, and Novi Bečej. These workshops were regarded as a pioneer undertaking and came from a genuine reflection on the ground that to tackle the issue of child marriage, an inclusive model of empowering individuals as well as their immediate family and communities are the only way to overcome barriers and change norms and values.

From an interview with a national NGO

It is particularly important to introduce this topic in the public space but dealing with it demands dedicated long-term, structural engagement by all stakeholders. Things might not change immediately, like everything else in Serbia, there is not much changed in the last three years, but some small steps have been made, which is particularly important. We still have much work to do.

## 6.2 Coherence

The evaluation of coherence was based on the following evaluation questions:



### 6.2.1 Internal coherence between activities, results, and outcomes

**KEY FINDING: THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAMME, THE PROGRAMME'S TOC AND THE METHOD OF DELIVERY OF THE INTERVENTIONS ENSURED INTERNAL COHERENCE AND OUTPUTS AND CONSEQUENTLY THE RESULTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS FED INTO AND BUILT ON EACH OTHER. HOWEVER, IN REGARD TO SOME ELEMENTS OF THE MODEL COHERENCE WAS UNDERMINED DUE TO THE SHORTFALLS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION RELATED TO THE COMMITMENT OF GOVERNMENTAL STAKEHOLDERS AND INEFFECTIVE STATUS OF FAMILY OUTREACH WORKERS. IN OTHER CASES, THE COHERENCE WAS WEAKENED DUE TO THE SPECIFIC LOCAL SETTING, SUCH IN THE CASE OF BELGRADE.**

The internal design of the Programme, expressed clearly in the Programme's ToC, included three types of activities: activities at the level of Roma communities, activities at the level of the wider local communities and activities at the national level. Given the wide scope of the Programme, the coherence of the key components and activities within them was supported by UNICEF's key role in coordinating the key processes, such as establishing the National Coalition to End Child Marriage, as well as close coordination and management of the different Programme components, both of which are crucial for the coherence of the Programme implementation. At the same time, the objectives and outcomes of the programme feed into each other.

The internal coherence of the implemented activities at the level of Roma community, mainly implemented by Roma NGOs, was high both in terms of careful design of activities and continuous coordination between Roma NGOs during the programme implementation. Furthermore, the choice of the workshop topics in all three pilot locations were dedicated to issues of women and children's rights (discrimination / violence), participation in decision making, education, child marriage, reproductive health, and Roma traditions, all of which fully correspond to wider issues of child marriage prevention within the education, social protection, and health sectors, and also correspond to the broader policy framework on women's and children's rights and anti-discrimination.

Social inclusion activities implemented specifically in form of workshops fit well within the context of the empowerment of Roma communities and in particular Roma girls and women for whom the Programme interventions are designed. An example of such practice is the activity "*Roma to our town*" organized by the NGO *Ternipe* from Pirot, which deepens cohesion within the Roma community and also acts positively in terms of integration into the wider community. These types of intervention have been available for more than a decade in a more ad-hoc format, however they were adopted by the

Programme as a good practice worth implementing as part of the wider model and child marriage approach. This is a good example of the flexible way in which the Programme included existing good practice, ensuring not only coherence but also continuity of work, implementing these practices in environments already sensitised to the issue of child marriage, for enhanced impact and effectiveness.

The formal workshop approach was complemented by a more informal set of activities such as promoting visits outside the Roma settlements, something which is of primary importance for the personal development and inclusion of young Roma women in the life of the community and helps prevent child marriage. Likewise, the training courses with mentoring support presented an additional layer of intervention to Roma girls, promoting the importance of education, economic empowerment and, consequently, a greater role in decision-making for Roma girls and women.

Turning now to objectives focused on enhancing specific services, the Family Outreach service piloted in the first year of the Programme in all three locations proved to be a key part of the programme, with the idea of using this service as a measure to early marriage and child marriage. The fact that this measure was implemented only in the first year of the programme, due to the government legislative regulations not being adopted, affected the coherence of the Programme after Year 1. The assumed consistency of this component with other interventions did not work optimally in practice. The service provider's reports state that there was a problem in the selection of families, primarily due to the lack of experience of the local NGOs to recognize adequate cases in which family outreach workers could make a full contribution. Also, practice has shown that family outreach workers didn't have much influence in cases when children were at risk of child marriage and that in such cases the direct influence of the Centre for Social Work was required.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, the coherence of this element of the model was assessed by local NGOs and beneficiaries to be weak in localities where there was no cooperation between CSWs and Roma NGOs. The Family Outreach service was undoubtedly important within the logic of the Programme since the idea was to reach out to the most vulnerable families and include them in other programme activities. The idea was to support girls via this service who attend the workshops but at the same time are at risk of child marriage. So, the activity was in theory coherent with other programme activities, but due to the lack of support from institutions and no real authority given to Family Outreach workers, it was not sufficiently effective in practice (see more in the chapter on effectiveness) and therefore, the coherence of this component of the programme was undermined. The potential of this component of the model was not fulfilled since there was no opportunity (due to the fact that government did not provide legal ground for it) to learn from these initial experiences and improve the service to better fit the model for preventing child marriage as whole.

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<sup>62</sup> See Kljajić S. and Drašković N. 2018. *Uloga i mogućnosti usluge porodični saradnik u sprečavanju dečijih brakova*. Family outreach worker (as a new intensive family-support service for families with complex problems) was piloted and evaluated before this programme (the process lasted more than 5 years, more than 1000 families involved). Given its positive results, the idea was to test its effectiveness in this context as well. As you rightly say discontinuation was critical – one year is simply not sufficient to make all its components work smoothly. Its inclusion into the programme was based on assumption (as there were very strong indications in that regard from MoLEVSA) that the service will be mainstreamed into the system so its financing will be secured. Since it didn't happen and given shortage of programme funds and challenges during the first year, it has been decided to stop it.

***From an interview with an International Organization***

And then we come to Belgrade, as a huge place which is not coherent at all, where you just can't mobilize the community in order to provide any kind of support... Belgrade is scattered, there are so many administrative problems, constant fluctuation of Roma settlements is also an issue, they are constantly on the move (...) everything in Belgrade is about politics. A small programme like this can't change a lot. Belgrade is a black hole, having so many different issues...

Activities at the local community level reflected the coherence of the Programme's overall approach albeit on a micro level; the focus of activities was on analysing the situation at the local level, strengthening the capacity of schools through drop-out prevention measures, and establishing local coordination bodies consisting of all relevant actors. The coherence of the Programme crucially depended on the first of these components, as the collection of relevant data (community mapping, baseline study etc.) had a key influence on the planning of other components, from activities in Roma communities, through local coordination, to the national level. The coherence of the model was visible in the context of specific local communities, except in Belgrade, where it was difficult to establish a coherent model of action, primarily due to the unclear jurisdiction of various institutions and due to the cultural and spatial heterogeneity of the Roma communities. In these types of situations, to establish full coherence, while

acknowledging the considerable importance of non-governmental sector participation, it is necessary for local government to take more proactive role and ensure coordination between diverse stakeholders.

Turning now to interventions aimed at enhancing the capacities of the education and social protection systems and their ability to cooperate in addressing and preventing child marriage, certain weaknesses were identified by local NGO partners which might have affected the overall coherence of the Programme itself, in particular frequently poor communication between educational institutions and other institutions such as CSW, and their overall slow response (Novi Bečej and Belgrade). In terms of activities focused on strengthening the role of the Centres for Social Work in the prevention of child marriage and the formation of the Coalition to End Child Marriage, coherence with other activities was primarily secured through the creation of mechanisms by which the Centres for Social Work fully recognize child marriage as a standalone issue.<sup>63</sup> This enables the recognition of this phenomenon by CSWs and thus enables coherence in the process of identifying and preventing child marriage in cases of Roma children who are at risk.

Finally, the establishment of the National Coalition as one of the Key Results of the Program made an essential contribution to the coherence of the Programme and the child marriage prevention model. Bringing together all key stakeholders (national and local institutions, non-governmental sector, advocacy organisations) contributed considerably to establishing consistent action on the issue of child marriage. The programme has taken steps to start the work of the National Coalition.

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<sup>63</sup> *The Instruction on the Operation of Centres for Social Work - Guardianship Authorities in Protecting Children from Child Marriage.*

## 6.2.2 External coherence with international policies and similar interventions

**KEY FINDING: THE PROGRAMME IS CONSISTENT TO RELEVANT NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICIES AND SEEKS TO FURTHER IMPROVE AND HARMONISE THEM TO FULLY RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILD MARRIAGE**

### *From an interview with a national NGO*

The programme design is fully coherent with national policies. Implementation is not always great, but in terms of the basic idea and the planned activities, it is fully harmonised. What is really important is to unify activities depending on different environments and different local communities. To have all actors in the community on the same side and to speak same language.

The Programme was is fully consistent with the following national and local policies and indeed seeks to further improve and harmonise them to fully recognise the importance of child marriage: the *Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia*, the *National Strategy for Gender Equality*, the *Strategy for Prevention of and Protection against Discrimination*, the *Strategy for the Prevention of and Protection of Children from Violence*, as well as *Education Strategies 2020 and 2030*. In many cases, as some of these policy documents do not fully recognise child marriage as a separate act of violence against children, the Programme and its results act as an additional advocacy and evidence-based policy making tool to further the work on the harmonization of national legislation and public policies with

relevant international conventions (CDC, Istanbul Convention, CEDAW, ICPD), recognizing child marriage as an act of violence against children<sup>64</sup>.

The Programme is also in line with international legal and policy documents, in particular with objectives recognised in 2013 by the *UN Human Rights Council Resolution to Strengthen Efforts to Prevent and Eliminate Child, Early and Forced Marriage* and with the SDG goals of ending child, early and forced marriage globally by 2030, especially those highlighted under Target 5.3 of SDG 5, providing a new platform to advocate for and take action to end child marriage around the world. The programme specifically addresses the SDG Indicator **5.3.1**: Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18.

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<sup>64</sup> According to the GREVIO report (*Baseline Evaluation Report: Serbia*. Council of Europe Expert Group on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 2020), the Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia does not contain special measures to protect Roma women from gender-based violence, including measures to combat early and forced marriages. In addition, the problem is that the Action Plan for this Strategy for 2019 and 2020 has never been adopted. Also, one of the goals of the Program was to change the Family Law in the context of recognizing child marriage as an act of violence against children, but that has not happened yet. Also, the *Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence* recognises the problem of child marriage only as a consequence of domestic violence, through the criminal offense of forced marriage (Article 187a of the Criminal Code) and the criminal offense of extramarital union with a minor (Article 190 of the Criminal Code). In this way, the problem of multisectoral cooperation arises when child marriage is *not* a direct consequence of domestic violence.

In the GREVIO report (ibid), it is stated that the database on types of gender-based violence used within CSWs is not adequate, especially with respect to early and forced marriage. An improvement is expected pending on the full implementation of the Instruction for CSWs, which is one of the results of the Programme.

On the other hand, the *Strategy for Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence 2020-2023*, apart from dealing with early and forced marriages, specifically recognizes child marriage as a violation of human rights that compromises the well-being of girls and explicitly requires a ban on marriages of minors. Also, the *Strategy for Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence against Women, and Domestic Violence* for the period 2021-2025 fully recognizes child marriage as a violation of children's rights.



The Programme is also fully in line with international agreements that further underscore the importance of free, full, and informed consent to marriage, including: the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*<sup>65</sup>, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*<sup>66</sup>, the *Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages*<sup>67</sup>, and the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*<sup>68</sup>.

**KEY FINDING: THE PROGRAMME HAS ACHIEVED A HIGH LEVEL OF COHERENCE WITH OTHER PROCESSES RELATED TO ROMA INCLUSION, THROUGH COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS AS WELL AS WITH INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC NGOS.**

*From an interview with an IO*

We work with the judiciary system to improve procedures on child marriage. GIZ is also interested in working with us on civil processes and the implementation of the Family Law. We are also introducing a new curriculum with the Judicial Academy focused on legal protection related to the family. Child marriage will be a part of the curriculum too. Professionals from the judicial system received training like this for a long time, and now it is a great opportunity to do a refresher. There are many new issues and we are trying to harmonise them with legal practice.

Donor partners also stated that the Programme has managed to ensure a noteworthy level of harmonisation with other donor-funded programmes in this field. An example of such harmonisation is the complementarity with the GIZ supported programme “*Inclusion of Roma and Other Marginalized Groups in Serbia*”. Implemented by GIZ with the support of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, this programme provided support for beneficiaries to better position themselves in the labour market, through organizing different types of professional training. The GIZ

programme is particularly focused on combating discrimination, stereotypes and on promoting gender equality. It has been implemented in several cities in Serbia, including Belgrade and Pirot, and as such a synergy was created between the two programmes which provided the beneficiaries of the evaluated Programme, primarily Roma girls and women, with an additional opportunity to continue with the process of empowerment through potentially gaining a footing in the labour market as a step towards further economic empowerment. Furthermore, both programmes aimed to improve and strengthen institutional frameworks, capacities and resources, specifically through improving the framework for the implementation of the *Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia 2016 - 2025*. Likewise, the programme activities between the *Economic Empowerment of Roma Women: Improving Employment and Self-Employment Capacities Programme*, implemented by NGO Bibija with the support of GIZ and UNICEF and evaluated Programme have also been harmonised primarily by promoting gender sensitive measures for employment and gender equality, which further build on empowerment of Roma women and offer significantly brighter perspectives for economic empowerment of Roma women. The economic empowerment in itself plays a significant role in reducing incentives for child marriage, among the girls, their families and also their communities.

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/udhr.pdf>.

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx>.

<sup>67</sup> [https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=XVI-3&chapter=16&clang=en](https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVI-3&chapter=16&clang=en).

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>.

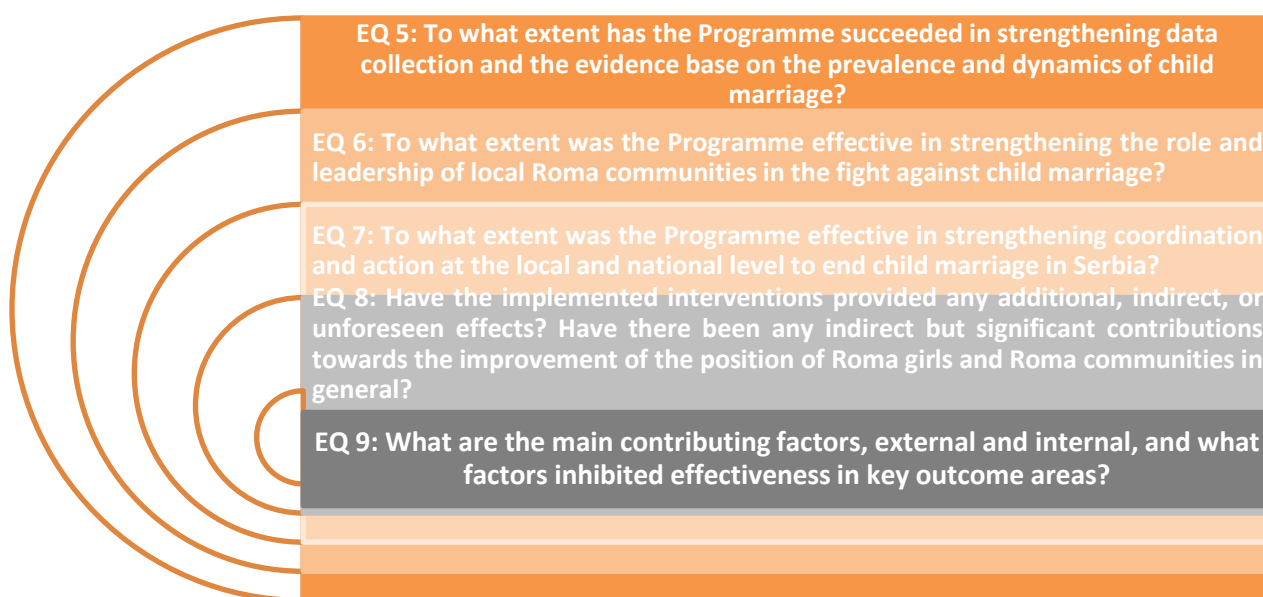


A good example of harmonisation with other programmes and of the pooling of resources is also the link created with the regional programme supported by the EU and UN Women entitled “*Implementing Norms, Changing Minds*”. This programme aims at ending gender-based discrimination and violence against women in the Western Balkans, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged groups of women. In attempt to ensure that Serbia adopts and fully implements frameworks aligned with international norms – including the standards outlined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Istanbul Convention, the Programme focused on strengthening the capacity of women’s organizations to hold governments accountable, advocate for effective implementation, and monitor prevention of and response to violence against women. Beyond the full implementation of legislative frameworks, the Programme also addresses the structural causes of gender inequality – and one of its most pervasive expressions, violence against women – through a transformation of gender discriminatory stereotypes, perceptions, and beliefs. UNICEF’s interventions utilised and built on the momentum created by this Programme, promoting interventions that combated negative and discriminatory stereotypes and both programmes shared the same goal of harmonising service and support provisions with relevant international norms.

## 6.3 Effectiveness

The effectiveness of this Programme can be understood as a qualitative measure of immediate and observable change in the target groups and institutions as a direct result of the implemented activities and outputs. However, the evaluation team has not used the approach of measuring individual results of the activities but has rather focused on assessing whether the Programme has been effective as a model of intervention towards ending child marriage, using the effectiveness criteria as mentioned in the ToC. Alongside this, in Annex 7, we have identified the extent to which the individual interventions were (or were not) implemented according to the outputs and indicators set out in the original results framework.

The evaluation of effectiveness was based on the following evaluation questions:



### 6.3.1 Strengthening data collection and the evidence base on the prevalence and dynamics of child marriage

**KEY FINDING: THE PROGRAMME HAS MANAGED TO STRENGTHEN DATA COLLECTION AND THE EVIDENCE BASE AT THE SOCIAL SECTOR LEVEL AND TO IMPROVE STATISTICS ON THE PREVALENCE OF CHILD MARRIAGE TO A SIGNIFICANT EXTENT.**

The baseline and end-line data collected through the surveys implemented by the Programme provided a wealth of new information on social norms, knowledge, attitudes, perception of girls and their parents on girls' education, reproductive health, and social participation, in addition to facilitating better measurement of the success of the Programme interventions.

The Programme has contributed to improving monitoring of the practice of child marriage within the social protection system, including the gender and national structure of the children victims of child marriage, as well as the educational structure of children and parents of children victims of child marriage at the national level. Evidence was collected through a household survey covering general demographic data on household members, including age, marital status, education, marriage and childbirth, as well as data on attitudes toward child marriage but also about some broader relevant gender relations and practices. The survey was conducted in Belgrade (800 Roma households in the 8 designated settlements), Novi Bečej (400 households) and Pirot (600 households). The actual number of families has been established which is a prerequisite for assessments of the impact that child marriage has on them.

The Analysis of the normative framework and practices related to child marriage of CSWs and the Instructions on the code of conduct of the social welfare system in response to child marriage, developed within the programme, have improved operational procedures, also around data gathering, and has enabled early warning of child marriage. Data collected based on the Instructions have enabled deeper insight into the child marriage issue and the response of the centres for social work to child marriage. Key stakeholders said in interview that significant changes to the social protection database were made to allow for more accurate data collection by CSWs on child marriage specifically.

**Data collection following these new formats has been improved as is evident from the data reported by RISP. However, due to delays with the technology** routine data collection by CSWs needs further improvements. The statistics collected are not yet routinely utilized for the planning of future interventions. Data sharing also needs to be better addressed, as is visible in the low rate of response of CSWs approached recently to provide data for policy analysis conducted by the organisation *Praxis*.

### ***6.3.2 Strengthening the role and leadership of local Roma communities in the fight against child marriage***

**KEY FINDING: THE PROGRAMME INTERVENTIONS HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN BUILDING ON AND UPGRADING A LARGE VARIETY OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES AND SOCIAL AND INTERPERSONAL EVENTS FOR GIRLS AND BOYS AND MOTHERS AND FATHERS IN THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH THE THREE LOCAL NGOS WERE ALREADY IMPLEMENTING ACTIVITIES.**

Various activities implemented during the programme, such as training activities, interpersonal events for girls as well other groups in targeted communities covered important issues such as reproductive health, gender roles, negotiation, and decision-making, as well psychosocial and socio-educational workshops with girls focusing on information and skills, particularly around life aspirations. They included contents adapted for each location and resulted in a well-tested methodology on increasing knowledge of reproductive health for Roma girls and women. Under the Programme, a model of workshops to influence the attitudes of Roma men and boys towards child marriage that could be repeated and replicated in other communities was developed and successfully tested. Young Roma men and women increased their capacities as trainers for work on child marriage and as positive role models in the communities. Girls from Roma communities were successfully encouraged to enrol and/or continue education especially while in transition periods, such as enrolment in elementary school, transition to 5th grade of elementary school or the transition from primary school to secondary school.

**KEY FINDING: THE PROGRAMME HAS CONTRIBUTED TO ROMA ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS BEING RECOGNIZED BY OTHER LOCAL ACTORS AS ORIGINATORS OF THE INTERVENTIONS AGAINST CHILD MARRIAGE.**

The Programme has contributed to the important collaboration of Roma organizations with the education system in preventing child marriage, as schools recognized them as partners who provide valuable and timely information on children at risk of dropping out and child marriage. They have also increased their role in strengthening capacities of the teachers/school staff in assisting workshops, planning measures or early risk identification.

At the national level, Roma organizations have played a significant role in the National Coalition to End Child Marriage and one of the organizations is a co-chair of the Coalition. Local expertise and good practices in fighting child marriage in Roma communities are recognized and validated at the national level through the Coalition. The design of the local levels of the Programme intervention, working with Roma communities, aimed to mobilise individuals, communities and relevant professionals, creating a strong constituency for NGOs, resulting in support to NGO efforts to bring the issues on to the national agenda. This is another contribution to Roma participation in the Coalition.

**KEY FINDING: THE PROGRAMME HAS SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTED TO OPENING A DIALOGUE WITHIN ROMA SETTLEMENTS ON THE HARMFUL IMPACT ON CHILD MARRIAGE.**

Intergenerational workshops with boys and men were assessed as successful by participant as a way of starting the dialogue within Roma settlements and in the wider community on the harmful impact of child marriage. Those workshops provided both formal and, more importantly, informal forums, during breaks and after the workshops, for men and boys, often from the same extended families and of different ethnicities, to openly discuss and exchange information on the topic. The interventions have contributed to increasing awareness of child marriage and its harmful effects (also on boys). However, it is felt by the participants of those workshops that the Programme did not last long enough to result in actual changes in behaviour that would show significant changes in power relations in local communities. Since the success in raising awareness of the harmful effect of child marriage was uneven across the municipalities, the intervention was repeated in those communities where it took longer to achieve changes. Both the interviews with the beneficiaries and the results of the end-line study clearly show the changes in attitudes among Roma girls participating in the programme (see more in chapter on impact). Girls and women have a more critical view of child marriage after the intervention, and they now consider that the practice of child marriage was more common in the past than today. This has also been confirmed by the findings of the end-line research: among the girls that participated in the programme, there was a lower share of those who got married and who left education, and the average desired age for marriage among them has increased.

On the question of the success in increasing online connectivity and raising awareness of the child marriage programme with a view of expanding opportunities for linking with peers, role models and education activities, the evaluation established that the planned activity of connecting up to five Roma settlements to the Internet has not been implemented, due to high costs and some technical issues. The component related to linking with peers and role models was substituted by establishing groups using the WhatsApp digital platform.

The Programme has been effective in raising awareness on the issue of child marriage as part of gender-based violence and its harmful effects on girls. These Programme activities were complemented through a partnership with the Roma NGO Novi Svet and their Roma radio activities. It can be judged that awareness of the issue of child marriage has been increased through media activities, such as the highly visible campaign of 16 days of activism against violence against women and girls, which also included

the campaign “*Child Marriage is not a Roma tradition*”, that had wide media coverage. The Programme and National Coalition were specifically focused to communicate positive role models (through human interest stories, videos, their participation at other external youth events, etc.) which also contributed to their recognition.

The Programme has had some significant success in supporting those families who already had a critical attitude towards child marriage, supporting their children in getting an education and participating in social activities in the community. However, neither schools nor NGOs had the capacity to reach the most vulnerable families, those whose children did not regularly attend schools or who lived in remote areas or were vulnerable in other aspects, so the role of the CSW remained crucial. The Programme has contributed to some extent to directing welfare services more towards those families where there was a risk of child marriage. But there were the usual obstacles in reaching such families, for instance their lack of trust in institutions or an insufficient number of CSW professionals (case managers).

### **6.3.3. Strengthening coordination and action to end child marriage at local and national levels**

**KEY FINDING: THE PROGRAMME HAS SUCCEEDED TO A SIGNIFICANT EXTENT IN INCREASING CAPACITIES OF LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS TO IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS CHILD MARRIAGE, AND ENHANCED LOCAL COORDINATION OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS.**

The policy changes introduced (the new Instructions and particularly the accompanying indicators developed within the programme) have provided welfare professionals with tools for improved recognition and identification of girls at risk of child marriage and offered a framework that enabled them to utilise and commit to a problem-solving approach in tackling the root causes of child marriage, i.e. in as many interventions in one family as needed until the identified problem has been solved.

#### ***From an interview with a CSW professional***

The benefit from this Programme for our institution is that we have received the Instruction from the Ministry on the code of conduct in relation to the risk of child marriage. That is very important for all centres, as it was not directed only at the centres and local communities included in the Programme, but it came out of it and it is beneficial for all Centres for Social Work at the level of the Republic.

...

It is even more important that, together with this Instruction, we received some indicators that are much more important for the CSW professionals so that they can identify it (a risk of child marriage) while working with a family on another form of social protection.

However, the training programmes developed based on the new guidelines/instructions for case managers were not delivered to CSW professionals as planned and it is yet to be assessed whether the new guidelines have been successfully implemented.

According to the respondents coming from the local education institutions, the Programme has contributed to the capacities of the education system to better understand the nature of child marriage, its causes and consequences and therefore better recognize risks of child marriage, and to be able to link it to dropout and to recognize early warning signs. Schools are also now recognized by other local actors as the primary environment for early warning of risks of child marriage via information on school

dropout. The system of Unique Education Number that will soon be put in place, as planned by the Education Strategy 2020, will provide a unique identifier for each child and will enable more systematic collection of data, including those relevant for additional support to child's education. School representatives and teachers also confirm that the most important collaboration is with the CSWs. This has been helped by the role of pedagogical assistants who have been equipped to prevent children dropping out of school and recognize the link to risks of child marriage. The pedagogical assistants have established a community of practice and, in collaboration with CSWs and NGOs, have managed to bring back to school some girls who changed their minds after marrying young, and some young mothers who wanted to continue their education after they had children. Material support for education (in the form of school supplies) has been singled out as a very effective and much-needed intervention. Efforts have been made towards supporting and mentoring Roma girls to return to secondary schools or complete vocational courses to enable them to get a job. 70 girls and young mothers have completed vocational training and 30 girls have received mentorship support. In spite of all this, some girls who attended the mentorship programme did marry young, but at least they completed the vocational training.

**Overall, intersectoral collaboration at the local level has been effectively improved due to the Programme interventions. Collaboration among the schools, CSWs and Roma organisations have been strengthened in all the municipalities/communities.** The cross-sectoral meetings facilitated with RISP in partnership with local Roma CSOs were held in all three Programme locations. In one of the municipalities (Novi Bečej), an Agreement on the prevention of violence against children was signed between the NGO and the Prosecutor's Office. This had positive effects of changes in understanding of the issue of child marriage by representatives of this institution. Yet, the intersectoral collaboration has been more effective in two and less effective in one of the communities where the interventions were implemented.

*From an interview with a national NGO*

As for the prosecution, I also wanted to say that we had a very good cooperation with them, so we inquired about some cases to refer us to this and that, since we signed with them exactly the name of the Agreement on the Suppression of Violence against Children. We were the initiators of that agreement through the programme, and this is what it is called when a representative of the prosecution was here to visit us, what is his name, we were surprised by his opinion and his support. They want to get involved through some activity and they think that in some way the Roma community is not guilty because they are not informed, they do not know that it is a crime. They don't know what the consequences are when it happens and when you tell them they say I didn't know that...

So I think that this program was very successful because we achieved cooperation, whatever cooperation we achieved. We have some support, we see that they also care, that they want to react after that and that the opinion is changing, that somewhere in the beginning some senior employees in those institutions were of the opinion that it is a Roma custom where in the end it all changes, when through those meetings with them they state that they were wrong and that it is not so and that it can be worked on. So I think that, at least 70 percent of that has been done properly and you can see the success.

**KEY FINDING: THE PROGRAMME'S INTERVENTION HAS SUCCEEDED (AT LEAST INITIALLY) TO STRENGTHEN COORDINATION AND ACTION IN ADDRESSING CHILD MARRIAGE BY ESTABLISHING NATIONAL COALITION FOR ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE AS AN IMPORTANT GENERAL PLATFORM FOR ACTION WHICH DID NOT EXIST BEFORE, GATHERING TOGETHER BOTH LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY INSTITUTIONS, ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH A RESPONSIBILITY TO COMBAT, AND/OR ACTIVE IN COMBATING, CHILD MARRIAGE.**

The stakeholders at all levels pointed out that the strongest evidence of the Programme effectiveness, in terms of enhanced awareness raising, is the Coalition's work on bringing the topic of child marriage more strongly into public discourse, contributing to the use of adequate language when speaking about child marriage, and understanding child marriage as a form of violence against children and a result of wider issues of gender inequalities, discrimination, poverty and cultural norms that devalue women and girls. The effectiveness of the Programme is also visible in the Coalition's work ensuring that child marriage is singled out as a specific problem, and as such has been specifically targeted within the context of protection and prevention of violence against children, with a comprehensive understanding of its complex nature. Furthermore, the Coalition has improved transparency, information exchange and, to a significant extent, coordination of various activities of different stakeholders aiming at preventing and ending child marriage through the formal planning of activities of each institution and organisation, in order to avoid overlaps. Further support to the Coalition during 2021-2022 has been secured through Joint UN Programme "*Integrated Response to Violence against Women and Girls in Serbia, Phase III*", supported by SIDA.

Moreover, the interventions focused on supporting the Coalition's work have been effective and recognised as an example of a good mixture of top-down and bottom-up approaches, which have brought recognition to local experts and have validated local successes in tackling child marriage, and which have enabled local organisations to act at the national level whilst simultaneously providing the local level with valuable coordination and policy guidance on ending child marriage.

The Programme interventions have been effective in integrating measures to end child marriage in key national policies. Namely, the Programme has provided important inputs to the draft strategy on child marriage and provided close coordination with previously adopted *Strategy for the Prevention of and Protection of Children from Violence (2020 – 2023)*, along with the *Action Plan for 2020 and 2021*. This Strategy includes definitions of child marriage, forced marriage and early marriage, all of them recognized as a severe violation of the rights of children and girls in particular. Important legislative amendments to the Family Law to prohibit child marriage (by changing the current age limit for marriage from 16 to 18) and to include a definition of child marriage, forced marriage and early marriage, have been prepared, but getting them adopted will require further advocacy efforts. The Programme has identified gaps in national legislation and policy, particularly relating to implementing regulations of relevant strategies, such as in the *Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia (2016-2025)*, that does not address child marriage and does not have an action plan for its implementation. Over the last period, the important initiatives related to the amending Criminal Code were also initiated, as well as initiative to amend the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, which will enable that coordination teams for prevention of domestic violence can also deal with child marriage.

#### **6.3.4 Indirect or unforeseen effects, contribution towards improvement of the position of Roma girls and Roma communities**

An important, complementary, strategy in addressing the attitudes of Roma males towards child marriage was developed and implemented during 2019 in one programme site (Novi Bečej), and then it was replicated in the other two in 2020 (Piroć and Belgrade). The approach re-examines child marriage as part of Roma heritage and questions the dominant attitudes and beliefs of Roma males through male-to-male dialogue in interactive workshops. The Roma male attitude change has been reported in all three programme sites.

No negative unforeseen effects on Roma communities and Roma girls have been identified.



### **6.3.5 Main internal intervention factors contributing to effective implementation and achievement of results in key outcome areas**

**KEY FINDING: THE ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER AVAILABLE MECHANISMS, SUCH AS FAMILY OUTREACH WORKERS, ROMA HEALTH MEDIATORS AND PEDAGOGICAL ASSISTANTS WERE ALL CRUCIAL FOR ENSURING THAT THE INTERVENTIONS STARTED FROM THE NEEDS OF THE ROMA COMMUNITIES AND INDIVIDUALS, AND FOR CONTINUING THEIR WORK IN THE PREVENTION OF CHILD MARRIAGE, SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND GIRLS AT RISK OF CHILD MARRIAGE, IN ESTABLISHING CONTINUOUS RELATIONSHIPS OF TRUST AND SUPPORT.**

The evaluation has found that the Programme design considered the specific needs of the Programme intervention areas and their Roma communities. In the Programme sites where the local organisations and local government were already collaborating well, the Programme intervention built on the previous good practice in working with Roma communities. The Roma NGOs commended the Programme design's recognition of Roma communities as equal partners whose participation from the beginning was essential for the success. Involvement of Roma women's organizations ensured access to girls, women, and families in the communities where issues of communication and trust building were specifically important. The involvement of Roma men in the interventions in the communities was successful in achieving changes in attitudes towards child marriage in the targeted communities and families.

The Programme aspired to address gaps in providing a coherent response to child marriage that does not overlap with any other work or interventions of the relevant institutions and organizations. This requires that individuals and organizations active in fighting child marriage as well as local institutions each recognise their scope of work and work together towards the same goal. Interviews with local institutions and NGOs pointed out that in the communities where such collaboration already existed, the interventions were more successful. The intervention in Belgrade, that could not be considered a single community that could be mobilized to provide support, had to be modified as there were a number of external factors and events that affected the original intervention design: Roma families were moved from one settlement to a number of other settlements in different municipalities, which fell into the catchment of different CSWs, and made it impossible to bring together schools and CSWs in a number of cases. The intervention focused on directly targeting girls at risk and young women in Roma communities who dropped out of education and on working with boys and men addressing their attitudes towards child marriage.

The main factors that *inhibited* the effectiveness in key outcome areas can be identified as:

- the lack of clear responsibilities and roles of all sectors/institutions, particularly but not only at the national level: a key *external* factor;
- the lack of accountability at higher-level institutions, which can be seen as an issue of political culture, preventing an effective intersectoral response: a key *external* factor.

The Programme has contributed to strengthening the capacities of the local organisations both through their engagement in the communities as implementing partners and through their management role in the National Coalition to End Child Marriage. At the same time, it has also contributed to building knowledge of child marriage among national actors and government institutions, due to the exchange with the local organisations who have expertise in fighting child marriage. These partnerships have had



effects on the local level through the implementation of the new methodology of work and approach in dealing with the issue of child marriage.

The Programme implementation strategies have resulted from a mix of top-down approaches, addressing the issue of child marriage at the national level, and at the level of local of Roma communities and at the level of individuals. The task of achieving an effective balance between this diversity of interventions and partnership with many (various) stakeholders has been a challenge and at this moment, the evaluation is satisfied that the implementation strategies have been effective given the resources and time limitations. However, as leaving school and entering child marriage are two interrelated phenomena, it is significant that the end-study shows that every third girl who was included in the Programme (38%) left school before completing secondary education, which is still significantly lower than among the girls who lived in the Programme sites but did not participate in it. Therefore, the evaluation finds that a more comprehensive intervention should be implemented to achieve the 2030 outcome.

This Programme could be seen as bringing necessary changes in the social protection sector in dealing with child marriage. The social protection sector, in particular CSWs, is seen by all stakeholders as a key duty bearer in child protection, given that it is the ultimate institution that can impose and implement effective measures, when necessary, while the Programme has contributing to strengthening its preventative role as well as. The education sector, health sector or NGOs can work more in the area of prevention or referral. This implies that the social protection sector could have been more in the focus of the intervention meaning inevitably that more resources should be allocated.

**KEY FINDING: THE EVALUATION EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT THE PROGRAMME INTERVENTION HAS NOT YET RESULTED IN A SYSTEMIC RESPONSE TO CHILD MARRIAGE.**

The system bottlenecks are mainly reflected in the lack of an adequate response from the decision-makers: ministries and the institutions responsible for prosecution services and sanctioning. As the evidence shows, the National Coalition has not yet succeeded in building consensus, acknowledgment, and prioritization around the importance of this particular child rights violation that primarily affects girls/boys from an already discriminated minority groups. It is hard to say at this point whether these systemic bottlenecks will be addressed in the future work of the government and its partners, as it is an issue that can be dependent on the functioning of the National Coalition, as an adequate platform for keeping the issue of child marriage in focus. Also, adequate funding for achieving the identified strategic goals is another bottleneck, resulting, among other things, in the discontinuation of the work of family outreach workers, thus affecting individualized work with vulnerable families. In order to implement positive changes to data collection and capacity building efforts or the continuation of the activities that were only implemented in the first year of the Programme, additional budget allocations both at national and local levels would be required for sustainable changes to be made in the various social services systems.

**KEY FINDING: THE PROGRAMME HAS HAD LIMITED SUCCESS IN REACHING THE MOST VULNERABLE FAMILIES DUE TO A NUMBER OF FACTORS, THE MOST IMPORTANT BEING THE USUAL FACTORS THAT EXCLUDE THOSE FAMILIES FROM OTHER COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES.**

The integration of child marriage into the activities of family outreach workers has proved to be important in overcoming trust issues towards institutions in targeted families, as well as the provision of material resources supporting girls to stay in school. The fact that the FOWs were discontinued after the

first year of the Programme is found to have significantly influenced the effectiveness of the intervention. The material resources helped provide incentives for getting involved in the Programme but were not limited to the duration of the Programme. Additionally, local government has not been very visible in terms of providing support or ensuring the sustainability of the interventions.

**KEY FINDING: OVERALL, THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC DID NOT HINDER THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE PLANNED RESULTS, BUT IT DID HAMPER THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES**

The vast majority of the activities were completed, and the targets were achieved before the start of the pandemic: out of 32 activities, the COVID-19 pandemic affected five, of which three related to the functioning of the National Coalition. Four of the five were rescheduled.

The training programme for social protection professionals (case managers on the new Instruction) and the Guide for dealing with child marriage were not completed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, thus it was not possible to strengthen the capacities of case managers. This could be considered a major gap which has significantly affected the ability to sustainably implement new guidelines and protocols and increase coordination on the local level. An adjusted short version of the training was planned to be delivered online, but the activity was not completed. Three online panels were organized for 47 CSW caseworkers from 16 CSWs (November-December 2020).

The re-test research, utilising a survey of girls and mothers to focus on perceived social norms, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour towards education, reproductive health and social participation was originally scheduled for September 2020, but it was re-scheduled due to COVID-19. This did not affect the achievement of the output as the Report was produced in February 2021 and was available to this evaluation.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the dynamics and the planned results of the work of the National Coalition to End Child Marriage which was put on hold during 2020. What was planned for 2020 happened in 2021 – 1. Campaign “*Childhood, not marriage*” and 2. Launching the initiative for amendments of three laws and The last Programme year (2020) was supposed to be marked with the advocacy and visibility efforts by the National Coalition, however, it could not have been done. This could potentially diminish the focus and the momentum around the issue of child marriage that was created by the Coalitions’ good work.

## 6.4 Efficiency

**EQ 10: To what extent did the Programme provide an efficient framework for delivery of services to companies, utilisation of resources, and accounting for results?**

The Programme had a total budget of US\$ 510,099 of which US\$ 382,000 was allocated to the Programme interventions as per the key areas identified by the Programme's logic pathway. While the subject of this evaluation is not to assess whether the total interventions were adequately budgeted, important results have been achieved for the allocated resources. However, the evaluation team finds that the interventions in the social protection sector are seen as a sector reform which requires a longer-term approach and a larger financial commitment.

It has not been established whether the Programme has made any efforts in securing financial sustainability of the results achieved, apart from the partnership with GIZ that would replicate the model in several new municipalities and the financing of the National Coalition through Joint UN Programme "*Integrated Response to Violence against Women and Girls in Serbia, Phase III*" (financed by SIDA). However, the Costing of the Child Marriage Prevention Model document provides detailed financial information needed for planning and implementing future interventions on ending child marriage.

The results of the Programme were not significantly affected by contextual factors due to the effective monitoring mechanism which allowed for modifications and adjustments of the intervention in a simple procedure initiated by the partners and based on mutual trust.

**KEY FINDING: THE STEERING AND MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAMME WERE WELL BALANCED AND RESULT-ORIENTED IN PRACTICE.**

This means that the Programme interventions were flexible, and this flexibility was already included in the original programme design. Likewise, the monitoring of the Programme progress was done both through UNICEF's monitoring mechanism and also through daily contact with partners, which has resulted in timely minor modifications and adjustments in the interventions "*on the go*" as proposed by the implementing partners based on changes in the context or the priorities of the beneficiaries. For example, the Programme changed the intervention in Belgrade, as it was concluded that the intervention had to be different in this city. These changes were implemented quite quickly, as the programme plans developed by the partner organisations identifying programme activities, which included budgets and changes of activities, were possible without additional budget funding.

**KEY FINDING: THE MONITORING TOOLS ALLOWED FOR AND FACILITATED CHANGES IN THE PROGRAMME LEVEL.**

The most important monitoring tool is found to be continuous communication with the partners. Modifications of up to 20% of the budget could be approved by e-mail, which ensured solid financial

monitoring and use of not only financial but also HR resources, avoiding unnecessary additional administration.

**KEY FINDING: AN ISSUE OF UNEVEN DISTRIBUTION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES WAS NOTED.**

Members of government institutions were not remunerated for their engagement in the Programme and they brought up this as an issue: that they were expected to implement activities which they saw as add-on without additional remuneration, unlike the non-government organisations. However, this is not a unique issue for this Programme, given that the policy of most donor organisations is not to provide remuneration to government officials for activities that they carry out within the scope of their duty.

On the other hand, more on a general note, a real problem is that there are practically non-existent funds from domestic sources which can be allocated to activities to end child marriage. Local governments generally want to participate if there are funds provided by donors and most activities are funded through programme funds, including funding for positions such as the Roma coordinator in the municipalities.

**KEY FINDING: THE EVALUATION FINDS THAT THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATION SEGMENT AND THE FAMILY OUTREACH SERVICE OF THE INTERVENTION MODEL TO END CHILD MARRIAGE WERE NOT THE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE WAY TO OBTAIN THE EXPECTED RESULTS OF THE PROGRAMME.**

A significant amount of Programme funds was given to the schools and for the family outreach service, but the design of this part of the intervention was not best suited to address the problem of child marriage. Namely, the schools included in the intervention did not seem to be well prepared, very few people were actually engaged in the implementation and awareness of the problem was very low at the beginning. Also, according to the COP report, the mentoring work was very narrowly designed, which could be interpreted as a waste of resources given how low the goals were set.

The family outreach service is assessed to be not entirely efficient intervention as it could not be sustained beyond the first year of the Programme. This intervention was undoubtedly important in terms of reaching out to the most vulnerable families and supporting girls who are at risk of CM. However, the actual reach of Family Outreach Workers was limited since they faced obstacles in establishing cooperation with local CSWs, particularly in Novi Bečej and Belgrade. Also, according to the service provider's reports, the selection of the families for the work of the FOW was problematic, primarily due to insufficient experience of the local NGOs to recognize cases in which FOWs could make an efficient contribution.

## 6.5 Impact

*Impact* is evaluated at the level of the overall programme outcome and at the level of Key Results. As described in the introductory chapters, the overall outcome of the programme was expressed as:

***Girls fully enjoy their childhood free from the risk of marriage: experience healthier, safer and more empowered life, including making choices and decisions about their education, sexuality, relationship formation/marriage, and childbearing.***

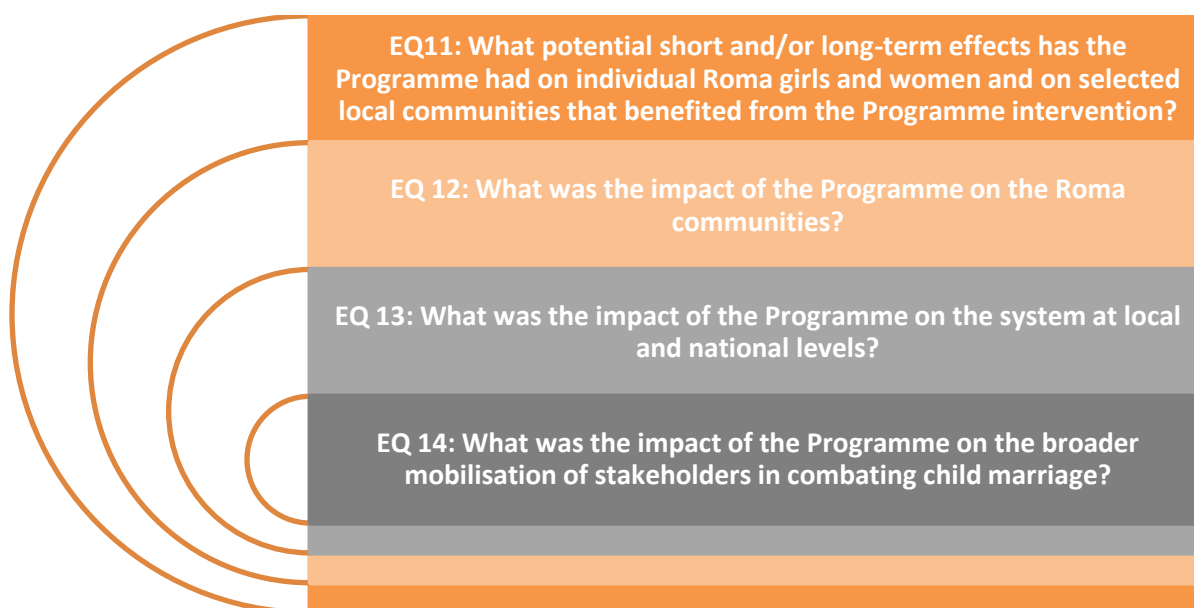
Three planned Key Results were:

1. Strengthened data collection, policy, and practice
2. Strengthened role and leadership of local Roma communities in the fight against child marriage
3. Strengthened coordination and action at the national level to end child marriage in Serbia by 2030

This section of the evaluation focusses on assessing changes that can be attributed particularly to this programme and aims to highlight specifically contributions to higher-level impact (both intended and unintended). The evaluation team tried particularly to capture both intended and unintended results of the intervention and assessed them at different levels: individual, group, community level, system, and the whole of society.

As the programme framework does not contain outcome level indicators but rather only states output levels, the evaluation of impact relied on mixed (but mainly qualitative) indicators as defined in the evaluation framework.

The findings on impact are presented along with the key evaluation questions:



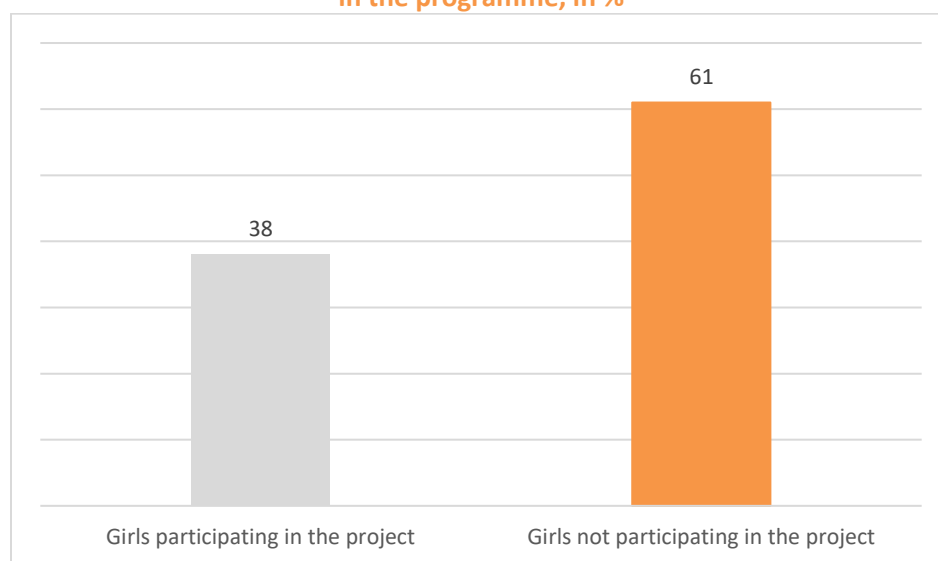
### 6.5.1 Potential short/long-term effects of Programme on the individual Roma girls and women and selected local communities benefiting from the Programme intervention

**KEY FINDING: THE PROGRAMME INTERVENTIONS IN ROMA SETTLEMENTS HAD SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS AMONG WHOM THE PROPORTION OF THOSE WHO LEFT EDUCATION BEFORE COMPLETING SECONDARY SCHOOL WAS MUCH LOWER AS WAS VISIBLE IN THE RESULTS OF POST-TEST SURVEY AND THE INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS WITH BENEFICIARIES OF THE PROGRAMME.**

The Programme significantly contributed to changes in attitudes on child marriage among girls living in targeted Roma settlements and played an important role in supporting the girls in expressing and exercising their choices against child marriage. However, **this contribution should be understood in interaction with other important structural and normative factors, since the impact was larger where girls were already more critical towards child marriage and better integrated into the education system. However, the evidence also points to an 'empowerment paradox': While girls were empowered to refuse offers of early marriage, they felt equally emboldened to use their power to decide to get married at an early age, as demonstrated through their narratives during the evaluation.**

The narrative evidence from the evaluation undoubtedly shows the contribution of the programme to the changes in attitudes towards child marriage among girls living in targeted Roma settlements who participated in the programme activities. Quantitative evidence supporting this finding can be found also in the post-test study: a much lower share of girls who married, left education or who do not see the benefits of secondary education among those girls who participated in the programme in comparison to those who did not participate.

**Figure 5: Proportion of girls who left education before completing secondary school, by participation in the programme, in %**



Source: Institute for Psychology, Child marriage – two years later, 2020

Additionally, among underage girls who participated in the programme only 3% got married between the pre-test and post-test surveys, while among underage girls who did not attend programme activities that percent is much higher: 19.7% got married. Moreover, girls from the targeted settlements viewed sexual intercourse before marriage and having a boyfriend as acceptable in a significantly higher proportion than girls from settlements in the control group.

**Figure 6: Share of girls who married between pre-test and post-test surveys, by programme participation, in %**



Source: Institute for Psychology, Child marriage – two years later, 2020

The Programme has had an impact also on the attitudes towards a desirable age for marriage and childbearing. Among girls participating in the programme, the average desirable age for marriage has increased from 21.4 to 22.4 years, while in settlements from the control group there was no significant change (Institute for Psychology, Child marriage – two years later, Belgrade 2020).

Due to their participation in the programme activities, the girls were also empowered to rely more on

**Fragments from an FGD with Roma girls, Novi Becej**

*Interviewer: What do you think, what would be the optimal age when girls should marry?*

*Participant 1: When they are mature.*

*Participant 2: Twenty-five...*

*Participant 3: Yes, twenty-five...*

*...*

*Interviewer: OK, so tell me how old were your mothers when they got married?*

*Participant 3: Mine twenty-three.*

*Participant 4: I think mine was 18.*

*Participant 1: Fifteen.*

*Interviewer: So how do you think that influenced their lives?*

*Participant 2: Depends on the man.*

*Participant 1: I think bad. How should I say, she should be more mature so, so she could understand what life is, to achieve what she wants. Like this, she did not...*

*...*

*Interviewer: So why do you think it is important to change these early marriage practices?*

*Participant 2: Because their childhood is cancelled, and they are denied opportunities to get some experience. And then they get children when they are 16, 17 and when they reach 20, they realize what they did, and then they leave their husband, everything, then they start to live, their eyes finally open...*

their own autonomous decisions. However, this has brought up another concern: their empowerment also means that they can use this newly gained independence and power to decide to avoid early marriages but also, on the contrary, they may decide to marry early even against their parents' will. As the post-test study showed, half of the girls participating in the programme activities reported that they would be ready and willing to run away from their home if their parents would not support their relationship. However, the good news is that this increased autonomy mainly resulted in greater preference towards increased age for a first marriage.

The interviews with the institutional partners and the focus group discussions with beneficiaries at the local levels also showed that impact was stronger in locations where previous programmes had established an

enabling environment for better integration of Roma children and particularly Roma girls in schools, less rigid patriarchal structures within the families or in the immediate social environment. In such contexts, girls were already more critical towards early marriages, and they often expressed the desire not to repeat the same life-course patterns of their mothers. In such circumstances, the programme had a stronger impact as its effects complemented already initiated positive changes.

Finally, aside from self-assessed changes captured through FGDs, these changes in girl's attitudes were also noted by the professionals interviewed by the evaluation team. Teachers working with girls targeted by programme activities also reported noticeable changes related to the girls' self-confidence. Even if some changes in attitudes and distancing from dominant norms in their communities had taken place before programme activities, the participation in the workshops gave a legitimacy to these girls to continue with the development of views which are distinctive from dominant community norms.

### ***6.5.2 Impact of the interventions on the new perspectives on child marriage among different stakeholders/Programme beneficiaries***

**KEY FINDING: THE PROGRAMME IMPACT WAS VISIBLE ON MOTHERS, MALE PEERS AND MEN IN THE TARGETED COMMUNITIES, AS WELL AS ON PROFESSIONALS IN LOCAL INSTITUTIONS (SCHOOLS AND CENTRES FOR SOCIAL WORK) ENGAGED IN THE RESPONSE TO CHILD MARRIAGE, AS WELL AS ON NATIONAL LEVEL STAKEHOLDERS, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED IN OR COOPERATED WITH THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE.**

Professionals working in the welfare and education system, as well as those from other institutions participating in the multisectoral response to child marriage, better understand after participating in the Programme the nature and causes of child marriage, value cooperation more highly in addressing the causes of child marriage and have better skills to do so due to newly acquired knowledge, skills, and tools. **The evidence suggests that Programme interventions contributed to the abandonment of frequently held prejudice among professionals that child marriage is limited to Roma communities and that it represents an ethnic custom rather than a distinct form of gender-based violence on girls as defined by the Istanbul Convention.**

Though the implementation period was too short to enable a large scale and profound impact on diverse stakeholders' understanding and views on child marriage, many short-term impacts are visible. In addition to the already-described impact on attitudes of girls living in targeted communities, there was a visible impact on their mothers, male peers and men in the same communities (which will be described further in the following section), as well as on professionals in local institutions engaged in the response to child marriage, particularly schools and centres for social work, as well as on national level stakeholders, particularly those who participated in or cooperated with the National Coalition for Ending Child Marriage.

#### ***From an interview with an implementing CSO***

Focus groups that we organized with them (professionals from centres for social work) revealed that they are very interested in this topic because they understand that this is a vicious circle from which other problems arise, other problems that should also be addressed by the centre (for social work).

Civil society organizations involved in Programme implementation, who had abundant fieldwork experience, shared their insights in the very low initial capacities of many CSWs to deal with child marriage before the programme. According to their testimonies, professionals from these local institutions for social protection did not



know what to do or how to react when informed about individual cases of child marriage. However, after their participation in programme activities, their awareness of child marriage has significantly increased, and they learned how to recognize early warning signals for risks of child marriage and how to react in such cases. An important role in their learning processes was played by examples of good practices from local communities which showed higher achievement in preventing and combating child marriage (for example the work of the Centre for social work from Zrenjanin). With increased skills for early identification of girls under risk of child marriage, and knowledge on how to tackle it, their motivation to address the problem increased. Women from targeted Roma communities also reported during focus group discussions that the change among professionals from CSWs was visible. They started to behave differently towards them, showing them more understanding.

The programme's impact was likewise in reducing stereotypes towards child marriage that are widespread across different groups of stakeholders and at different levels of governance as well as across diverse communities. The preconception that child marriage is a custom, a tradition linked solely and specifically to Roma culture, and not a severe social problem that is deeply rooted in social exclusion and poverty was addressed and removed among participating stakeholders. Local stakeholders, Roma NGOs in particular, indicated the importance of this kind of change in knowledge and attitudes. The fact that now early marriage shows sign of increase in the general population (though still relatively low), contributes to the understanding of child marriage is not only limited to Roma communities, but also to other groups which use it as an adverse strategy for coping with the poverty. Therefore, the programme managed to highlight the social rather than the cultural nature of the problem. Stakeholder awareness was also raised with the support of a firm legal framework that defines child marriage as a form of gender-based violence, grounded in the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which Serbia has ratified in 2014.

### ***6.5.3 The impact of the Programme on the Roma communities***

**KEY FINDING: DUE TO LIMITED TIME AND SCALE, THE PROGRAMME WAS NOT ABLE INTRODUCE PROFOUND CHANGES IN TARGETED COMMUNITIES, BUT THE EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT IT HAS OPENED A DIALOGUE ON CHILD MARRIAGE IN TARGETED ROMA COMMUNITIES, INCLUDING BROADER GROUPS OF MEN AND BOYS, WOMEN, AND GIRLS, RAISING THE VISIBILITY OF THE ISSUE AND PROVIDING ARGUMENTS AGAINST CHILD MARRIAGE.**

There are also indications that Programme-supported processes challenge strong traditional patriarchal structures both within the family and the community, however as the Programme has only recently ended it is too early to ascertain how big a shift it has brought in terms of gender relations and overall power dynamics.

What is already clear is that the Programme activities have introduced a new dynamic to the targeted communities. During workshops discussions, which were separate for mothers and girls and boys and fathers in targeted communities, a dynamic dialogue transpired. Participants were ready to share their own adverse experiences due to their own early marriages or those of their parents and they felt empowered to express openly opinions that were often not positive towards the practice of early marriages. The most visible effects of the interactions and dialogues facilitated by the Programme were among mothers who often expressed an aspiration for their daughters not to marry early, to continue with education, achieve a significant level of economic independence and to better plan and time their transition to married life and motherhood so as not to miss on life chances, as was the case with their own lives. Some of the representatives of implementing organizations said that mothers would often stay after the workshops for additional advice, for example on the education of their daughters.

Although the influence of mothers' opinions has a crucial role in shaping attitudes, preferences and life choices of girls, the in-community workshops confirmed that the key strategic decisions were still in hands of the girl's fathers: the typical patriarchal power dynamic in Roma families. Consequently, decisions related to schooling or marriage must be brought or approved by fathers. Participation of fathers in the workshop was therefore important for facilitating a more inclusive dialogue on this issue in the targeted communities. The evaluation found evidence during interviews of fathers who changed their attitudes after the workshops they attended and after consulting with organizations who had organized programme activities in their communities. For example, some of them were previously very hostile towards the idea that daughters should enrol in secondary school ('school will spoil them', 'they will run around with boyfriends'). After the workshop where they had the opportunity to share views and discuss with other participants, male participants changed their attitudes to some extent and some of those girls were allowed to enrol in the secondary school eventually.

While the evaluation team cannot judge that the Programme has already made profound changes in patriarchal relations in the communities and changed gender dynamics entirely, it can be concluded based on evidence collected during focus groups and interviews with community members, that due to the programme activities, those rigid patriarchal structures are no longer accepted as a given norm, without questioning and without defiance, due to the newfound awareness and power acquired through programme activities. The empowerment of mothers, girls and boys as well, contributed to this shift simple because they could openly express their opinions, and because their opinions and views were accepted as just as legitimate as the opinions of other members of the community. The issue of child marriage became public and open to debate. Representatives of the implementing organizations noticed that women became more determined to oppose the opinions of husbands and express their opinions more openly in public.

#### 6.5.4 Impact of the Programme on the system at the local and national levels

**KEY FINDING: LOCAL SYSTEMS ENHANCED THEIR CAPACITY TO IDENTIFY, RECOGNIZE AND REACT TO RISKS OR ACTUAL CASES OF CHILD MARRIAGE, PARTICULARLY IN TWO OUT OF THREE TARGETED COMMUNITIES, WHILE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL EVIDENCE INDICATES SOME PROCESSES HAVE BEEN INITIATED (INCREASED FOCUS, MOBILIZED STAKEHOLDERS, IDENTIFIED LEGAL AND POLICY GAPS) HOWEVER THE IMPACT IN TERMS OF ACHIEVED SYSTEMIC CHANGES CANNOT BE, AND IS NOT, YET VISIBLE.**

##### *From the interview with implementing CSO*

*Before local institutions (police, centre for social work) could not react to the cases of child marriage even if they recognized them. But now this is impossible...It is impossible to ignore it because so many people are involved. Now so many people from different institutions and organizations are involved in a single case so they must react. If they do not react, the case will come to my organization, to some other institution and we will know it. Therefore, in my opinion, it is not possible to ignore it anymore.*

The impact on multisectoral response varied between the three communities, depending significantly on the specific institutional settings and previous levels of cooperation among different institutions and stakeholders. The impact was the least visible in Belgrade, as a consequence of much more complex systems where responsibilities overlapped between municipal and

city levels. In the other two local communities – Novi Bečej and particularly in Pirot- the positive impacts were more visible. Actually, very positive multisectoral cooperation was achieved by the stakeholders in Pirot, however it should be mentioned that although this municipality already had a very good record of multisectoral cooperation, the strengthening came in the form of enhanced and targeted participation

of local Roma organizations in activities focused on the improvement of social inclusion of the Roma population.

The cooperation between schools, CSWs and Roma organizations was evaluated as improved. Consequently, the prevention of child marriage was easily incorporated in the local action plan. Representatives of local schools indicated that with enhanced multisectoral cooperation they feel supported by other institutions, they do not have to decide alone how to proceed with cases, they have clearer protocols on how to deal with it and feel that they are working in line with the law. Implementing organizations testified that the Programme increased their capacities and improved the cooperation with other local communities participating in the Programme. The cooperation with the Republic Institute for Social Protection was received particularly positively as it provided expert help and new tools that can be used for identifying and addressing child marriage.

#### ***6.5.5 Impact of the Programme on the broader mobilization of stakeholders in combating child marriage***

**KEY FINDING: THE PROGRAMME HAS MOBILIZED A NUMBER OF DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS AT LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS, MAINLY THROUGH THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE AND LOCAL PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES. THERE IS EVIDENCE OF SIGNIFICANT ENTHUSIASM AMONG STAKEHOLDERS, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, UNCERTAINTY ABOUT HOW THESE NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND SYNERGIES WILL BE MAINTAINED IN THE FUTURE.**

Undeniably, child marriage has become an important public issue, present in public discourse and media due to the involvement of different stakeholders through the National Coalition or in local communities targeted by the Programme. Child marriage has been the topic of various campaigns implemented by the organizations involved in the Programme or their partner organizations. It was one of the key topics during the annual campaign *16 Days of Activism*. The debate about child marriage was initiated on different occasions and in different places involving public institutions, civil society organizations and the National Coalition. Representatives of Roma women's organizations participating in the Programme reported on the spill-over impact of the Programme. The mobilization of different stakeholders around child marriage contributed to the organization of two conferences by other Roma women's organizations, as the issue gains importance and includes broader groups of organizations and donors supporting similar initiatives.

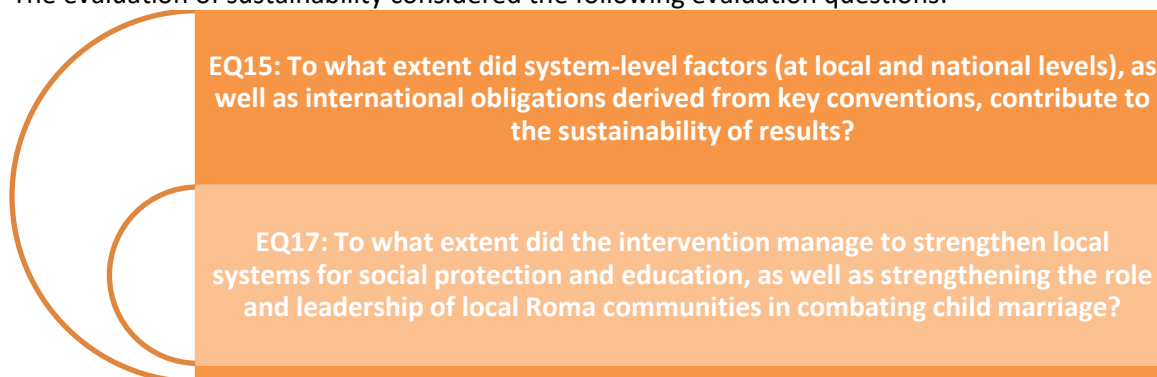
Many groups of stakeholders were included in the work on national legal frameworks and policies. The National Coalition advocated for much needed legislative changes, particularly in the Family Law and Criminal Code. However, the legislative processes were slowed down during the Programme implementation due to the elections and due to the pandemic of the activities related to legislative changes were postponed for 2021. Furthermore, there are different opinions about work on legislation: some national-level stakeholders think that legal analysis must precede legal changes, while other stakeholders think that the requirements of international legal instruments (mainly CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention) are sufficient. Some stakeholders think that amending the legal framework is not even necessary but a more effective implementation of the existing legal framework.

Undoubtedly the Programme induced a lot of enthusiasm among different stakeholders to engage and contribute to the ending of child marriage, but how long this mobilization can be maintained after the

Programme ends will depend on financial allocations for these types of models in the future as well as on other sustainability factors that will be analysed in the following section.

## 6.6 Sustainability

The evaluation of sustainability considered the following evaluation questions:



### ***6.6.1 Contribution of the system-level factors (at local and national levels) and international obligations derived from key conventions on the sustainability of results***

**KEY FINDING: THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ALL KEY PROGRAMME RESULTS IS FRAGILE. THIS IS DUE TO VARIOUS FACTORS: THE MODEL IS STILL NOT SUFFICIENTLY MAINSTREAMED AT NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL; THERE ARE DOUBTS ABOUT THE ALLOCATION OF SPECIFIC FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND ABOUT LEGISLATIVE CHANGES WHICH STILL NEED TO HAPPEN.**

The sustainability of this Programme depends on the overarching national legislative and policy frameworks which currently do not provide an optimal basis for ending child marriage. Recent legislative and policy developments (the adoption of new Law on Gender Equality and an amendment to the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination) could contribute indirectly to the sustainability of Programme results and further mainstreaming of the model for ending child marriage, by creating more a favourable gender-equality and anti-discrimination context, if effectively implemented. However, national legislation still needs improvement, for example, the Family Law should facilitate better prevention of formal or informal child marriage, while the Criminal Code should be better aligned with the Istanbul Convention, which was ratified by Serbia in 2014, on the issue of child marriage.

However, there are two additional supporting factors which should already be recognized and utilized as a potential resource for further addressing child marriage as they provide a good policy basis and could potentially facilitate further sustainability of the Programme's results and model. Those two factors are two important national policies: the *Strategy for the Prevention of and Protection of Children from Violence 2020-2023* and the *Strategy for Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence 2021-2023*. However, it is hard to predict how these national policies will translate locally, both in the areas targeted by the Programme and in other communities, and how specifically they could contribute to the sustainability of results and or provide better context for the replication of the model.

Sustainability has been assessed along Programme's key results, with key result 1 assessed in this sub-chapter and two other key results assessed in following sub-chapters.

**Key Result 1** includes a complex set of sub-results related to the improved evidence on child marriage, improved policies and practices. Sustainability to a large extent depends on specific local contexts. Some general prerequisites are needed at the national level to provide an adequate framework for combating child marriage in local communities and at the moment these prerequisites are not always given. However, on the local level, factors contributing to the sustainability of results are stronger, as follows:

- **The existence of enriched local systems for prevention and protection from child marriage**, which are also able to maintain an improved system of evidencing incidence of child marriage;
- **Local networks of stakeholders with a strong record of multisectoral cooperation and cooperation.** As was already noted, the more experience exists of cooperation between stakeholders in this sector, the higher the likelihood for sustaining results at the local levels. Key factors include the existence of Roma pedagogical assistants in schools and their good cooperation and teamwork with teachers, school psychologists and educational specialists and active civil society organizations, as well as good cooperation between CSOs and local institutions.
- **Institutions with low fluctuation of personnel.** These can more easily institutionalise newly acquired knowledge, skills and intervention procedures and ensure a longer-term institutional memory which in turn contributes to the sustainability of results;
- **A commitment of the local authorities to combating child marriage** - in the form of the existence of local policies and financial resources allocated to this issue from local budgets.

Keeping in mind the above factors, it follows that local models established in Pirot and Novi Bečej have much higher sustainability chances, and less so in Belgrade due to more complex institutional settings, an overlap of responsibilities between municipalities and city authorities, less closely knitted communities and a higher fluctuation of staff due to the better opportunities in the local labour market.

#### **6.6.1.1 Contribution of international obligations derived from key conventions to the sustainability of results**

Serbia's obligations related to international human rights instruments, such as CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention, are important factors contributing to sustainability since the pressure on the Serbian Government to implement policies can bring more decisive and effective action. These obligations and recommendations by the CEDAW Committee and GREVIO are supportive of all interventions related to ending violence against women, including child marriage and empowerment of Roma girls. In its recommendation no. 32, the CEDAW Committee recommends Serbia to establish a system to track all cases involving child marriage and stateless children, in particular, Roma girls; in recommendation no. 34, it calls for strengthening mechanisms for keeping Roma girls in the education system, while in recommendation no. 48 it calls for the eradication of child marriage and forced marriage through coordinated action by the competent authorities, non-governmental organisations, and the Roma community.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Serbia,

In its first report on Serbia, GREVIO acknowledged the scale of the problem of child marriage and welcomed the establishment of the National Coalition, emphasizing the importance of effective work by the Coalition. GREVIO delivered sets of recommendations to Serbia on how to improve the prevention and protection of women and girls from violence, encompassing all forms of violence as defined by the Conventions, which also includes child and forced marriages.<sup>70</sup>

### ***6.6.2 Sustainability of changes in the Roma communities***

The sustainability of **Key Result 2** can be assessed at different levels. At the individual level, changes in awareness and attitudes (harmfulness of early marriage, links with worse lifestyles, lower opportunities, changes in preferences towards increased age for first marriage, more frequent acceptance of pre-marital relations, etc.), once instigated are not easily lost. However, unfavourable living conditions could in the future adversely impact these newly introduced norms and acquired attitudes. Consequently, prolonged or increased poverty and social exclusion could have a stronger impact on choices, leading to the re-introduction of the practice of child marriages even in communities where currently there has been progress. Additionally, lack of opportunities and the absence of extracurricular or free time activities can limit and narrow the scope of life choices for girls, increasing the tendency towards early marriage.

Amongst Roma communities there is visible impact in the form of a more critical stance towards child marriage and initial processes of deconstruction of very rigid, hierarchical patriarchal relations in those communities. This certainly contributes to the increased resilience of these communities to child marriage and its adverse consequences. However, increased poverty and social exclusion, particularly as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and as a result of the economic crisis caused by it, combined with the refocused attention of local and national governments towards particularly urgent economic issues, could undermine these achievements and decrease once more the resilience of communities to child marriage, which is often mentioned as one of the only possible socio-economic coping strategies of poor families. Keeping in mind the differences between the three local communities, it can be assumed that increased resilience of local Roma communities can most probably be sustainable in Pirot as the Roma communities in that location are faced with less exclusion and are targeted more by local social inclusion policies. Furthermore, community resilience in this location is strengthened by the continuous and strong engagement of local Roma women's organizations and other civil society organizations. Somewhat lower sustainability and resilience could be expected in Roma communities in Novi Bečej, due to the less favourable context (weaker social services and the more excluded Roma communities), but this can be mitigated with additional support and the continued active contribution of CSOs. Finally, evidence points to a lower chance of results sustaining in Belgrade, indicating that the model should be revised to better suit the particularly complex social and administrative context for Belgrade and similar (bigger and less homogeneous) locations.

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[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fSRB%2fCO%2f4&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fSRB%2fCO%2f4&Lang=en)

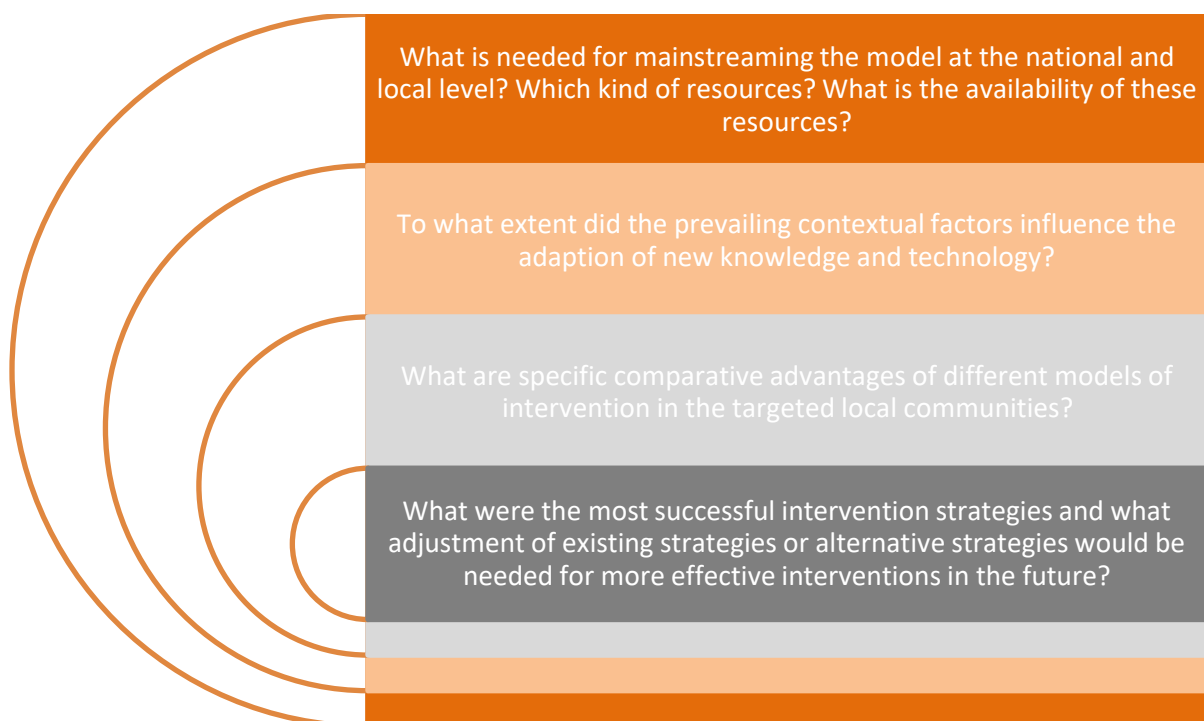
<sup>70</sup> GREVIO, Baseline Evaluation Report Serbia, <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-report-on-serbia/16809987e3>.

The sustainability of **Key Result 3** is strongly dependent on central government's commitment in the future. The motivation of most stakeholders is positive. National Coalition members have a high level of commitment, however the coordination role as it was defined during the Programme cycle cannot ensure sustainability without firmer governmental support (both political and financial). This does not mean that coordination should necessarily be transferred from CSO to government, rather that the government should financially support the coalition, ensure regular representation of government institutions among Coalition members, and adopt Coalition proposals in legislation and policy initiatives. At least for the immediate future (2021-2022) the financing of National Coalition has been secured through the UN Joint Programme *"Integrated Response to Violence against Women and Girls in Serbia, Phase III"*, financed by SIDA.



## 6.7 Knowledge generation

The knowledge obtained through the evaluation was systematised around the following questions:



**KEY FINDING: FOR MAINSTREAMING THE MODEL, IT IS NECESSARY TO IMPROVE THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK, TO REPLICATE IT IN OTHER LOCAL COMMUNITIES WITH ROMA SETTLEMENTS, TO PROVIDE MANDATORY AND REGULAR TRAINING OF PROFESSIONALS IN THE WELFARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND ALSO IN OTHER INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN LOCAL MULTISECTORAL COOPERATION (SUCH AS POLICE, HEALTH SYSTEM, PROSECUTION SERVICES), TO ENABLE SYSTEMATIC KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND PROMOTION OF GOOD PRACTICES IN MULTISECTORAL COOPERATION AMONG LOCAL COMMUNITIES. AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE IS SEEN AS CRUCIAL AS IT CAN ADVOCATE FOR POLITICAL COMMITMENT AND FOR REPLICATING OR UPSCALING THE MODEL WITH ADEQUATE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.**

The model for ending child marriage designed within the Programme is a complex one. To be mainstreamed and implemented in different local communities it should have on the one hand key universal components that provide its main functions, but also to be flexible to enable adjustment to specific local communities. As one respondent indicated, it should be provided as a menu of options from which each local community should be able to pick the elements that are most suitable or feasible in its own context.

Resources needed for mainstreaming the model include:

- An adequate legal framework that enables effective prevention, and sanctioning, of cases of child marriage;

- Human resources: trained professionals in various institutions engaged in preventing and combating child marriage;
- Organizational resources: effective multisectoral local teams equipped with solid protocols and prevention and protection mechanisms and procedures;
- Financial resources: allocated from local public budgets as regular financial support and from the national budget for coordination of the National Coalition for Ending Child Marriage;
- Active civil society organizations, with an emphasis on local Roma women's organizations continuously present in local Roma communities.

Many stakeholders (such as local social protection and educational organisations, NGOs) told the evaluation team that the model should be replicated in other local communities. Some stakeholders shared the view that the model for combating child marriage should be defined in a way that is applicable to all populations, not only focused on Roma communities, as an increase of child marriage is noticeable also in other populations.

In replicating the model, it is of utmost importance to consider specific contextual factors, including the level of inclusion of Roma communities and their inhabitants in the broader communities of which they are a part, the level of development of local services involved in the action against child marriage, the previous history of multisectoral cooperation, and the presence of active and influential civil society organizations. Depending on these various factors, certain components of the model should be enhanced, and 'missing links' should be compensated for by providing other elements or initiatives. For example, the evaluation evidence points to the crucial role of local Roma women's organizations and the high importance of other civil society organizations for achieving programme results. The presence and long experience of individual Roma women's organizations, and their continuous presence in local communities, have a beneficial effect for the establishment of local models for ending child marriage. Therefore, replication could first focus on communities with a significant proportion of Roma population and with experienced Roma women's organizations. However, the need to replicate the model in all communities with a Roma population living in deprived settlements, even if there is no strong civil society, was clearly communicated by various stakeholders during the evaluation. In such communities, local governments could have a key responsibility. Even if there are some missing links, such as a lack of local Roma women organizations, local governments should adjust the model to the local context. Some respondents suggested that even if this 'top-down' approach is not optimal, the very attempt to establish the model could increase awareness among local authorities of how important is to support local CSOs, as they can play a major role in the effective implementation of the model. The presentation of the benefits of the model in targeted communities should be the first step in any plan to replicate the model. Local authorities should understand the returns from social investment in this model.

The model for ending child marriage requires diverse and well-qualified human resources. Professionals (teachers, social workers, policemen, judges, health workers) should be trained not only in the issue of child marriage, but more broadly on discrimination and stereotypes, as many of them are not aware of harmful practices, some of which they may even be reproducing. They should also be aware of the legal framework in regard to child marriage. Teams for dropout prevention in all schools should be further trained for more effective drop-out prevention caused by child marriages in the context of the model developed through the programme, which places the emphasis on cooperation with local social welfare systems and a more proactive approach to the work with girls under risk and Roma communities. Evaluation of education institution quality should be enhanced, through development of descriptors specifically targeting child marriage risks, and implementation of such descriptors in the process of the evaluation of education institutions.

Some complementary initiatives contribute to the sustainability of the Programme results, for example the work with the Judicial Academy related to the capacity building of prosecutors and judges engaged in family law proceedings include the issue of child marriage.

The model should include health centres and particularly gynaecologists. Health centres do not seem to have played an important role in current local models. However, according to the experiences of some implementing partners, health centres and particularly gynaecologists are often the first entry point of cases of child marriage into the system. Since marriages are not formal and could stay below the radar of the law and other social services, the gynaecologist service could be an important element of the system that can sound the alarm and set into motion multisectoral teams.

Important elements of the model which should be mainstreamed include various elements focused on the education-employment nexus. This would include not only dropout prevention, but also easy return to school, training for employability skills and at least minimum qualifications. However, according to some evaluation respondents, this would pose too heavy a burden for some small and poor local communities. In these cases, stronger cooperation with the National Coalition or national institutions could help to adjust the model to a version feasible for their communities.

According to some respondents, models should include a broader version of the empowerment components. This means that not only awareness raising, schooling and employment should be used in order to empower girls, but also a broader set of activities that expand their choices, such as travel and participation in sport and cultural activities. Girls should be supported to develop diverse interests so they can expand their life choices.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

### CONCLUSIONS

The Programme has delivered valuable results in terms of:

***Raising the profile of child marriage in policy discourse in Serbia.*** The visibility of the issue of child marriage has significantly increased as a direct result of the Programme. Its policy and advocacy interventions as well as the evidence-based approach to programming and policy making have made it clear that although the existing national policies and programmes dealing with child rights and GBV, if effectively implemented, could contribute to addressing some of the aspects of child marriage, without establishing and sustaining the model of multisectoral service provision and support promoted within this Programme these national legislative and policy frameworks are not sufficiently supportive for effective action against child marriage. This is especially true as key frameworks like the Family Law and the Criminal Code do not contain provisions that will enable full alignment with the Istanbul Convention which defines early marriage as a form of gender-based violence. The sustainability of the Programme results and the continued visibility of the issue in the policy arena depend now on government commitment in terms of assigning coordination responsibilities to the Coalition, supporting financially the work of the Coalition and using its expertise in legislation and policymaking around the issue of child marriage.

***Enhancing evidence-based policymaking on child marriage.*** The Programme was highly effective in terms of promoting improved data collection and analysis and strengthening and promoting evidence-based policy and programme design in general. Design and implementation were informed by a wealth of evidence-based research, which has the potential to be used as a baseline for many individual institutional Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEAL) frameworks. Bearing in mind the limitations of capacity-building for child marriage data collection and considering still limited data user capabilities this Programme has been an example for decision makers of the potential benefits of evidence-based policies and of an environment where policy makers can and do consider the existing available evidence, and engage with researchers/analysts to produce new evidence when needed. The component of the Programme on improving data collection and analysis at the institutional level was also beneficial, as delivering evidence-based policy is only possible if the institutions involved are independent, professional and have the credibility to perform their function. Indeed, one way to establish that credibility is through demonstrating an ethical approach to acquiring and using evidence and through transparency around every stage of policy development and implementation.

***Working directly with communities, girls at risk of child marriage, women, boys, and men in changing power dynamics in communities especially in terms of addressing child marriage.*** Workshops aimed at girls and women in Roma settlements were relevant not only in terms of raising awareness and educating girls and women but in terms of facilitating dialogue within the community. Particularly effective and transformative were the activities aimed at the male population, serving as an inclusive model of empowering individuals as well as their immediate family and communities as the way to overcome barriers and change norms and values. Changes in individual preferences among girls as well as the resilience of Roma communities to child marriage however depend on the broader context of social inclusion. The likelihood of these results sustaining is higher in communities that are better included in the local social context, with lower incidence of poverty.

**Strengthening cooperation between different stakeholders in addressing child marriage at the local and community levels.** The Programme was effective in enhancing multisectoral cooperation to address the issue of child marriage, although the scope of interventions varied in terms of effectiveness at the local level. The overall Programme approach and model are still of great relevance as the general trend of early marriage continues to be an issue in Serbia, particularly among the Roma population. Interventions related to the strengthening of the systems of social welfare were effective at the institutional level, however in the education sector they were effective mostly at the level of individuals. The impact of the Programme on the strengthening of the social welfare response to child marriage is already visible in outputs such as the *Instruction for Local CSWs*, developed within the programme, which recognised child marriage as a standalone issue and as a significant violation of children's rights. Further effects are seen in the way that child marriage is now recognised within the education system as an important factor for withdrawal from the system. However, there are still gaps to overcome regarding the educational and social service system, particularly on the local level.

Having in mind the limited time and scope of the Programme, it was not realistic to expect it to have a profound impact. However, the evaluation evidence indicates that within these limits the Programme succeeded in achieving a noticeable impact on different levels:

- On the individual level, impact is particularly noticeable among girls participating in the Programme. As confirmed by the post-test study, they developed attitudes that are different from the pre-Programme period or in comparison to girls not participating in the Programme. They appreciate education and economic independence more, they are more aware of the harmful effects of early marriages and consider it preferable to start marriage and childbearing later.
- Programme activities also instigated changes in gender and generation dynamics which depart from traditional patriarchal models of decision making and expressing opinions.
- On the system level, impact is visible through newly gained awareness of child marriage among professionals, but also there are now clear instructions on how to assess the risks, how to address cases and how to cooperate with other local institutions and civil society organizations in tackling the issue. The impact is stronger in communities that already have a good record of multisectoral cooperation.
- The impact on mobilization of diverse stakeholders was also visible, with the National Coalition for Ending Child Marriage as a recognizable key actor which gathers together various forms of expertise and commitments.
- The general assessment is that the impact is stronger in smaller communities where local stakeholders are more easily mutually reachable, where there is a record of previous good cooperation and where there are established links between different institutions, and between them and civil society organizations. Moreover, the impact in targeted communities is stronger where there is stronger and longer involvement of civil society organizations. Also, the impact is positively correlated with broader social inclusion, so the effects are better among girls in communities that are better integrated into the broader local community. At the same time, the most marginalized families and individuals were very difficult for the Programme to reach and they are less likely to benefit from its impacts.
- Finally, clear instructions, protocols and legal norms are very important for a more effective institutional response. Further interventions should follow the example of this Programme and focus not solely on building the capacities of individuals performing professional roles in local institutions but rather also on equipping their institutions with clear procedures and tools on how to deal with cases of child marriage.

The Programme has shown that a successful model to end child marriage consists of effective actors at the local level who all have in their mandate child protection and the prevention of, and fight against, gender-based violence, with a strong child-centred approach; and who work together. There is no effective response to child marriage if any of the actors fail to provide this.

- The Programme has succeeded in redistributing the focus of the traditional task of the CSW: to act upon identified risks of child marriage in families, or once a child marriage happens to other actors in the local communities. This has been done successfully in the communities where local government recognized and promoted a shift towards *prevention* of child marriage and the CSW has played a key role in establishing and leading a local coalition of all stakeholders who work towards ending child marriage; this has happened at national level too, mobilizing existing resources such as Family Outreach Workers, Roma health mediators and mobile teams.
- However, the effectiveness of multisectoral cooperation, as the most important element of the model to respond to child marriage, varied depending on the programme location. In Belgrade, it was difficult to establish cooperation among relevant institutions, particularly schools and CSWs, due to the complex city administration systems. In Novi Bečej and Pirot, formal and informal communication channels among the relevant actors were established and are operational.
- The role of local Roma women's organisations and other CSOs active in fighting against child marriage is judged to be crucial in achieving Programme results. The continuous presence of Roma women's organisations in local communities was recognized, and these organisations have been integrated into Programme design; the Programme relied heavily on these partnerships.
- The intervention aimed at supporting educational opportunities for girls at risk of child marriage was effective in linking school drop-out and risks of child marriage. Moreover, the intervention that supported teachers and pedagogical assistants in preventing child drop-out was effective in raising awareness and mobilising some teachers but not entire schools. However, the success of the intervention in the Programme sites relied on the work of individual teachers and cannot be evaluated as effective in the education system more broadly – or at least not as successful as those in the social sector.
- Although the Programme and the approach were judged in this evaluation to be coherent and harmonised with many of the ongoing national and local reform activities, the Programme model requires some adjustments due to limitations related to specific contexts in localities where the institutional jurisdiction is not clear and targeted communities were less homogenous.
- In terms of the efficiency of the Programme, the funds were allocated and spent for the most part in an accountable and cost-effective way. Indeed, in relation to the budget allocated, the Programme has achieved significant results. However, stakeholders said that the design and implementation of the education segment could have been more cost-effective, as significant funds were disbursed to schools, but results were not achieved at the level of schools, but with individual teachers. Also, the FOW service was discontinued after the first year, despite being provided with substantial funds. Finally, the plan to connect Roma settlements to the internet had to be abandoned due to high costs, raising the question whether sufficient preparation work/budgeting was done for this.
- The Programme was overall well-managed and coordinated and oriented to results, which allowed adapting the interventions to the priorities of the beneficiaries. These changes in the interventions were implemented without additional budget funding.

### *Key Conclusions as per ToC components*

#### *1. Evidence-based policymaking*

- 1.1. The databases of families and girls at risk of child marriage are not fully satisfactory. Databases are still not fully developed and functional in all communities partly as it is still not clear whose mandate it is to manage these (despite the guidelines and procedures which have been developed). Data collection is not done routinely, and the database is not present in an easily accessible IT format: it is hard to see any type of centralised working database functioning at the community level.
- 1.2. Research on child marriage produced as part of the Programme activities has had a significant impact on presenting a clear picture on the ground in terms of prevalence of and attitudes towards child marriage in Serbia.
- 1.3. The test and re-test research on attitudes to child marriage were useful in determining the baseline and end-line for the Programme and were useful for monitoring changes and adjusting the model to fit the needs of communities.

#### *2. Work in Communities*

- 2.1. The community work, which included girls, mothers, boys and fathers, was extremely beneficial and impactful. Economic empowerment interventions, supporting educational opportunities for girls at risk of and affected by child marriage resulted in changes of perception of the importance of employment. Some beneficiaries gained employment, but these mainly stayed within stereotypical gender-assigned roles (cosmetician, hairdresser, etc). Empowerment activities were narrowly focused on economic empowerment and not necessarily on increasing social and cultural activities that would serve to expand girls' perception of their life opportunities. Online connectivity was also not achieved as planned because of the cost.

#### *3. Multisectoral cooperation on child marriage*

- 3.1. Actors in multisectoral cooperation have learned more about child marriage, have improved cooperation, and established new procedures through a set of guidelines framing their coordination. However, this mechanism is partially parallel to those created for multisectoral cooperation according to the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, thus creating a heavy burden on local stakeholders: the same representative/s must participate in both mechanisms.
- 3.2. Healthcare institutions were not sufficiently included in the coordination mechanism, yet they might be a very important entry point and a great source of potential information sharing (family planning, SRH etc).
- 3.3. Roma Women's NGOs play a very important role in the functionality of the multisectoral cooperation in the targeted communities. They are key mobilisers connecting different stakeholders and providing a continuous presence in the community.

#### *4. Broader mobilization of stakeholders in combating child marriage*

- 4.1. The National Coalition has provided an important and previously non-existent general platform for action. However, despite the impact that it had on mobilising different



stakeholders through advocacy and awareness-raising on child marriage during Programme implementation, it is questionable how sustainable it can be in the future without institutional budgetary support.

4.2. The National Coalition has ambitious goals that are often too many and too broad.

The sustainability of the overall model is difficult to assess at this point, both because it is still too early to say, as some of the Programme activities have only recently been finalised, and because the model for preventing and combating child marriage is complex and the sustainability of each component depends on specific sets of factors and the external local context. The likelihood of the sustainability of the model varies between the three targeted communities: it is highest in Pirot, medium in Novi Bečej and low to medium in Belgrade. It would be useful for any further implementation in bigger cities and less homogenous Roma communities to examine local contexts in detail, focusing on identifying the appropriate functions and levels as well as potential bottlenecks.

### LESSONS LEARNED

Although some of the key lessons and insights gained were presented in the chapter on knowledge generation as well, those were related more so to the understanding of what areas of the model were identified as those that needed further enhancement for the model's rollout and for the model to work in the future and different contexts. Lessons learned, however, those more related to the processes of the project design and implementation. Key lessons could be summarized as follows:

- The intervention combating child marriage must be complex including various components and activities. The project implementation confirmed that each component as stand-alone would not have the sufficient effect and that combination of different interventions simultaneously targeting key aspects, such as knowledge on child marriage, awareness, norms, attitudes, and behaviours, including the interaction between different groups (girls, parents, boys, men, and women), the system response and mobilization of diverse stakeholders only can bring positive effects.
- The project should be designed in a flexible manner allowing for additional contextualization after initial implementation as factors influencing the outcomes could be so numerous, insufficiently known or even volatile in certain times that require revision and adjustment of project activities to achieve similar effectiveness in quite different communities.
- Combined top-down and bottom-up approach is very important for the effective implementation as local interventions get additional stimulus and a more favourable environment for the implementation, while 'real' change comes from the root levels in local communities and among primary beneficiary groups.
- Relying on CSOs closely linked with targeted communities and with well build relations with beneficiary groups increases the likelihood of effectiveness.
- The time for the project cycle is not sufficient for a bigger impact, particularly in times marked by the pandemic or other crises. Such a complex phenomenon requires longer project cycles and more resources.
- Bringing together diverse stakeholders builds synergy enabling exchange, mutual learning, mutual support and increased motivation and commitment, like in the case of the National coalition for ending child marriage.



## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations were proposed having in mind the specific role of UNICEF and with the idea of the possible future UNICEF action that might contribute more to the favourable environment for ending child marriages than through direct support of small-scale projects.

The project has successfully piloted the model for addressing the issue of child marriages. In the following period, the other stakeholders should take over the responsibilities and take control over the roll out of the initiatives. The UNICEF should retain the role of the 'guardian' of the model and the 'supportive force' to others engaged in ending child marriages. Starting from this rationale, the possible streams of actions that UNICEF might take could include:

- Targeted advocacy activities should focus on leveraging or mobilising stakeholders whose actions are essential to provide a more favourable legislative, institutional, policy environment for the effort directed to ending child marriages to provide some specific changes. The advocacy should be particularly focused on legislative changes of the Family Law, Criminal Code and Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence. The advocacy should also focus on effective implementation of policies that entail measures for ending child marriages, particularly Roma inclusion strategy, Strategy on prevention of violence against children, Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2030, and Strategy for prevention and combating violence against women and domestic violence 2021-2025. Targeted advocacy should focus also on mobilising sufficient financial allocations at different levels of the system to fund the model's elements and its rollout in the future.
- Strengthen the partnerships with other UN agencies and international/bilateral organisations (for example, UN Women, GIZ, SIDA, SDC) to accommodate more concerted dialogue with the Government of Serbia on the need to provide an adequate framework for addressing child marriages. Through this cooperation, UNICEF can transfer abundant knowledge obtained through this project and other projects and programmes on effective ways to address child marriages.
- Supporting the National Coalition for Ending Child Marriages as one of the key stakeholders contributing to the more favourable environment for action against child marriages.
- Supporting cooperation and experience exchange of various stakeholders by (co) organising events for knowledge and experience sharing, promoting good practices.
- Mainstreaming the issue of child marriages in the regular UNICEF work with relevant stakeholders, such as social protection, judiciary institutions. This does not entail additional or separate activities related to child marriages. However, it means that in these such as trainings, workshops, or other capacity-building activities the stronger emphasis could be placed to child marriages. Another example could be the work of Roma health mediators who should be trained and engaged in screening for child marriage risks.
- To further explore financing aspects, including the tracing of public financing and to advocate for more generous public budget funding of activities dedicated to ending child marriages, including through implementation of previously mentioned strategies. Also, to explore new fundraising opportunities for financing action against child marriages that were not previously used, such as IPA funds.

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## **ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

As part of *the Request for Proposals* (LRFP-2020-9157976), the ToR for this evaluation will be attached as a separate document.

## ANNEX 2: RESULT FRAMEWORK MATRIX

<b>OVERALL OBJECTIVE: Girls fully enjoy their childhood free from the risk of marriage: experience healthier, safer and more empowered life, including making choices and decisions about their education, sexuality, relationship formation/marriage, and childbearing</b>								
Key result areas	Outputs	Activities	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status/follow-up	Implementing partner(s)	
<b>Key Result area 1: Strengthened data collection, policy and practice</b>	<b>1.1 Strengthening data collection and evidence on the prevalence and dynamics of child marriage</b>	1.1.1.1 Household survey on general demographic data on household members, including age, marital status, education, marriage, childbirths, etc.	Existence of basic demographic data on households in the targeted communities	N/A	*Belgrade: Demographic data on 800 Roma households in the 8 designated settlements, *Novi Bečej: 400 households *Piroć: 600 households	Finalized in Year 1	Institute for Psychology; RWC Bibija, Ternipe, Association of Roma Novi Bečej	
		1.1.1.2 Baseline field research through survey of girls and mothers to focus on perceived social norms, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour towards education, reproductive health and social participation	Existence of baseline data on social norms, knowledge, attitudes, perception of girls and their parents on girls' education, reproductive health and social participation	N/A	*Belgrade: 240 mothers, 400 young Roma girls (aged 13-17, not married or in union) from the designated settlements and 240 mothers, and 400 girls (aged 13-17, not married) for the comparison group survey. *Novi Bečej: 100 girls aged 13-17 who are not married/in union	Finalized in Year 1; Sample consisted of 482 mothers and 545 unmarried girls from 13 to 17 years of age. More precisely, 241 mothers in both pilot and control locations and 264 girls in pilot plus 281 girls in control location participated in the research.	Institute for Psychology; RWC Bibija, Ternipe, Association of Roma Novi Bečej	

					and 60 mothers. *Piro: 100 girls aged 13-17 who are not married/in union and 60 mothers, each in Piro for the experimental group and Bela Palanka for the control group.		
		1.1.1.3 Re-test research through survey of girls and mothers to focus on perceived social norms, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour towards education, reproductive health and social participation	Existence of end line data on social norms, knowledge, attitudes, perception of girls and their parents on girls' education, reproductive health and social participation	Baseline data (to decide upon main indicators)	Second wave measurement is designed as longitudinal, follow up study *same subjects, mothers and girls. As some dropout or quit/rejection is expected, the goal is to obtain at least 40 respondents in Novi Bečej and Piro, an at least 60 in Belgrade.	To be realized in September 2020; Rescheduled due to Covid-19 situation	Institute for Psychology; RWC Bibija, Ternipe, Association of Roma Novi Bečej
	<b>1.2 Developing national early warning mechanisms and operational response procedures to child marriage</b>	1.1.2.1. Analysis of the normative framework and practices related to child marriage of Centres for Social Work (CSWs)	Existence of the analysis	N/A	Report on the normative framework analysis and practice of CSW	Finalized in Year 1	Republic Institute for Social Protection (RISP)
		1.1.2.2 Development of the guidelines on the code of conduct of the social welfare	Guidelines/Instructions developed for CSW professionals	N/A	Developed Instruction on the code of conduct of CSW in child marriage response	* Relevant for the Result Area 3 as well	RISP



		system in response to child marriage					
		1.1.2.3. Development of training programme for professionals in CSWs to enable implementation of the Guidelines in practice	Existence of training programme for case workers	N/A	1) Training programme developed and adjusted according to the needs 2) Training documentation accredited	1) Training programme developed in Year 1 2) To be finalized in 2020	RISP
		1.1.2.4. Practitioners trained to implement the guidelines on implementing operational procedures for inter-sectorial response to child marriage	1) Number of practitioners in pilot localities trained	N/A	1) At least 70 CSW professionals received 2-day training	Given the central coordination role of CSW in child protection, the programme was directed towards strengthening capacities of CSW professionals to cooperate with other sectors. Due to Covid-19 pandemic outbreak it was not feasible to deliver training to CSW professionals on the ground as initially planned, but will be organized online instead (adjusted short version)	RISP
		1.1.2.5. Mobilization of local actors into coordinated action towards preventing and responding to	1) Number of cross-sectoral joint coordination meetings of local actors 2) Number of bilateral meetings held	1) 0 2) 0 3) N/A	1) 15 (Year 1: 8 (total) (Belgrade:1 Novi Bečej:2 Pirot:5); Year 2: 7 (total) (Belgrade:N/A Novi	Due to Belgrade's complex administration and the lack of a 'sense-of-community/belongin	RISP, Bibija, Ternipe, ARNB

		identified cases at risk of child marriage	between the Roma community, schools, social protection system and available mechanisms at local level (FOW, Roma health mediators...) 3) Number of individual cases related to the risk of child marriage acted upon		Bečej:2 Pirot: 5 ) 2) 66 (Year 1: 36 total (Belgrade:18 Novi Bečej:8 Pirot:10); Year 2: 30 (Belgrade:10 Novi Bečej:10 Ternipe:10) 3) 18 (Year 1: 9 (total) (Belgrade:5 Novi Bečej:2 Pirot: 2); Year 2: 9 (total) (Belgrade:N/A Novi Bečej:6 Pirot: 3)	g', it was practically impossible to bring key actors into coordinated action around selected Roma settlements to provide individualized support to Roma girls. This required a change in the strategy for Belgrade in Year 2 (within the programme's scope and resources)	
		1.1.2.6. Provision of family outreach worker (FOW) service (community-based support)	1) Number of family outreach workers engaged and trained in responding to the specific needs of girls and families at risk 2) number of cases referred to and acted upon by FOW	1) 0 2) 0	1) Total 15 (Bibija:5 Novi Bečej:5 Ternipe:5) 2) 6 (Bibija:3 Novi Bečej:3 Ternipe: 3)	As part of this activity, 12 FOW were additionally trained and continuously mentored/supported to work with families with children at risk of child marriage within programme Year 1. In this way, 14 families with girls at risk of child marriage were provided with home visits, counselling and other forms of support over a 3- to 6-month period. Due to lack of financing (from the national budget), the service was discontinued in	RISP, Bibija, Ternipe, ARNB

		1.1.2.7. Documenting the overall intervention and development of a practicum/guide for community and local-level work on addressing child marriage.	1) Availability of concept documentation methodology 2) Availability of the costing analysis of the model 3) Availability of comprehensive documentation and developed practicum/guide	N/A	1) Developed methodology for concept model documentation 2) Costing analysis of the model 3) Developed Guide/practicum for local-level Action addressing child marriage	Year 2. 1) finalized 2) work in progress 3) work in progress	RISP
	1.3 Supporting education system to offer education opportunities for girls at risk and affected by child marriage						
	1.1.3.a Implementation and Upgrading of the Early Warning and Identification of Dropout Model (EWIDM)	1.1.3a.1 Upgrading capacities of schools/teachers and professional associates for dropout prevention, including for development of school Action Plans with special focus on Roma girls	1) Number of schools involved 2) Number of professionals capacitated 3) Number of school AP (action plans)	1) 0 2) 0 3) 0	1) 8 schools involved in three locations 2) At least 10 teachers/professional associates from selected schools (80 in total) participated in the training 3) 8 school Action plans developed	Ad 1) In total 9 schools involved. In 2nd Year there have been changes regarding schools in Pirot (one new school entered the programme, while the other school exited). "Old" schools worked on adapting existing IPs and developing new DPM APs, while the new school passed initial training and was closely supported in the process of identification of students and AP development. Ad 2) In addition to the 80	Centre for Education Policy (CEP)

						teachers trained in Year 1, 30 new teachers have been included, making a total of 110 teachers capacitated for EWIDM implementation. Ad 3) 9 school Action plans developed	
		1.1.3a.2 Providing support for school staff to develop individual DOP plans, especially for pupils at the highest risk of dropout developed	1) Number of schools supported 2) Number of school staff supported to develop IP 3) Number of individual drop-out prevention plans 4) Number of individualized plans for pupils at the highest risk of dropout developed and implemented	1) N/A 2) 0 3) No action plans for combating dropout 4) No individualized plans for pupils at the highest risk of dropout	1) Instrument for identification applied in 8 schools 2) At least 10 teachers/professional associates from selected schools 3) Individualised plans for 8 schools student's population developed 4) Individualised plans for pupils at the highest risk of dropout implemented (around 5% of pupil population)	Year 2: Ad 1) revision of school drop/out APs Ad 2) 30 new teachers have been included Ad 3) 70 revised individualised plans and identification for the 5th grade and 1st in secondary school redone Ad 4) Out of an initially estimated 200 Roma children to be directly targeted, a total of 160 (including 15 newly identified in 2019) received individualized dropout-prevention plans.	CEP
		1.1.3a.3 Monitoring dropout prevention model	1) Availability of monitoring methodology	1) N/A 2) N/A	1) Effectiveness of DPM monitored and evaluated in each	Finalized	CEP

		implementation and evaluating results against the baseline	2) Availability of evaluation reports		school 2) Lessons learnt are made available to local and national stakeholders		
	<b>1.1.3.b. Facilitating education opportunities for girls at risk and young women who have dropped out from education within Roma communities</b>	1.1.3b.1 Material support for education e.g. school supplies, books, etc.	1) Number of young Roma girls who received material support for education	1) 0	Year 1: 135 (Bibija: 50 Novi Bečej: 25 Ternipe: 60); Year 2: 185 (Bibija: 45 Novi Bečej: 80 Ternipe: 60 girls)	Finalized Year 1: 158 girls (Bibija: 50, Pirot: 73, Novi Bečej: 35) Year 2: 186 girls (Bibija: 45, Pirot: 61 girls + 43 boys, Novi Bečej: 80) boys were included in Pirot as well to receive material support (school accessories)	Bibija, Ternipe, ARNB
		1.1.3.b.2 Counselling and mediation/facilitation of enrolment to prevent school drop-out, education and participation in alternative forms of education piloted (e.g. online education and learning methods)	1) Number of girls encouraged to enrol/continue education especially while in transit period - enrolment in elementary school, transition to 5th grade of elementary school, transition from primary school to secondary school 2) Number of Roma girls and mothers included in informative/motivational activities	N/A	1) Year 1: total 340 (Belgrade: 200 Novi Bečej: 80 Pirot: 60) Year 2: total 140 (Belgrade: 0 Novi Bečej: 80 Pirot: 60) 2) 400 (Belgrade: 200 mothers, 200 young Roma girls (aged 13-17, not married or in union)	Finalized in Year 2 1) Year 1 330 (Belgrade 200, Pirot 73 Novi Bečej 57) Year 2 142 (Belgrade 0, Pirot 61, Novi Bečej 81) 2) 200 mothers and 200 girls	Bibija, Ternipe, ARNB
		1.1.3b.3 Provision of vocational courses for girls and young mothers who	1) Number of girls and mothers enrolled and completed vocational training and/or non-	1) 0 2) 0	1) 70 in total Year 1: 15 (Bibija) Year 2: 55 (45 Bibija: 30 girls and 15	FINALIZED 1) 70 girls and young mothers completed vocational training	CEP, Bibija, ARNB

		have dropped out	formal education 2) Number of girls provided with mentorship support		mothers), 10 (Novi Bečej) 2) 30 girls (Bibija Year 2)	2) 30 girls	
		1.1.3b.4 Mentoring program documentation and evaluation	1) Number of mentors' reports for each individual plan 2) Number of quarterly mentoring reports 3) Evaluation Guidelines and Methodology 4) Evaluation report	1) N/A 2) N/A 3) No guidelines and methodology 4) 0	1) Min 30 reports 2) 3 quarterly summary reports 3) Evaluation Guidelines and Methodology developed 4) Program result reports	The activity not initially planned but added as complementary to the activities / vocational courses realized in Belgrade in Year 2	CEP, Bibija, ARNB
<b>Key Result Area 2: Strengthening the role and leadership of local Roma communities in the fight against child marriage</b>	<b>2.1 Fostering Dialogue within Roma settlements on the harmful impact of child marriage</b>	2.1.1. Develop and upgrade the program for working with Roma girls and boys, mothers and fathers on child marriage prevention	Existence of effective methodology (workshops/inter-personal communication model) for influencing Roma girls and boys, men and women	1) Existing sets of workshops on reproductive health and education in Roma women NGOs 2) Non-existing methodology for working with Roma boys and men	1) Programs of three NGOs for working with girls and mothers upgraded and adjusted to respond the program requirements (content added based on local needs assessment) 2) Developed model of workshops for working with boys and men	1) Finalized 2) Work in progress	Bibija, Ternipe, ARNB; Association of Roma students (ARS)
		2.1.2. Psychosocial and socio-educational workshops with girls focusing on information and skills, particularly	1) Number of Roma girls (13-17) involved in educational workshops focusing on information and skills 2) Number of workshops with girls	1) 0 2) 0	1) Year 1: total 340 (Belgrade: 200 Novi Bečej: 80 Pirot: 60) Year 2: total 140 (Belgrade: 0 Novi Bečej: 80 Pirot: 60) 2) 192 in total	Finalized 1) Year 1 330 (Belgrade 200, Pirot 73 Novi Bečej 57) Year 2 142 (Belgrade 0, Pirot 61, Novi Bečej 81) 2) 192	Bibija, Ternipe, ARNB

		around life aspirations, reproductive health, gender roles, negotiation and decision-making			Year 1: 132 total (Belgrade 48, Novi Bečej: 12, Pirot: 72); Year 2: 60 total (Belgrade: 0, Novi Bečej: 24, Pirot: 36)	workshops	
		2.1.3. Mediated dialogue between mothers and daughters on the subject of reproductive health and personal experiences of early marriage (workshops with mothers and daughters)	1) Number of workshops with girls and mothers 2) Number of workshops with mothers 3) Number of mothers involved	1) 0 2) 0	1) Year 1: 36 (Belgrade:0, Novi Bečej:0 Ternipe 36) Year 2: 36 (Belgrade: 0, Novi Bečej:0 Pirot: 36) 2) Year 1 total 60 (Belgrade: 48 Novi Bečej: 12 Pirot: 0); Year 2: total 24 (Belgrade:0 Novi Bečej: 24, Pirot: 0) 3) Year 1: total 320 (Belgrade: 200 Novi Bečej: 60 Pirot: 60) Year 2: total 130 (Belgrade: 0 Novi Bečej: 70 Pirot: 60)	Finalized 1) 72 in total 2) 84 in total 3) Year 1 300 in total (Belgrade 200, Novi Bečej 53, Pirot 47) Year 2 129 in total (Novi Bečej 79 Pirot 50)	Bibija, Ternipe, ARNB
		2.1.4. Workshops with boys focusing on information and skills, particularly around life aspirations, reproductive health, gender roles, early marriage, Roma tradition and identity, violence	1) Number of Roma boys (13-17) involved in educational workshops focusing on information and skills 2) Number of workshops with boys	1) 0 2) 0	1) Year 2: 30 (Pirot:30, Belgrade up to 60) 2) Year 2: 36 (Pirot)	Finalized 1) 43 boys (Pirot), 40 (Belgrade) 2) 36 workshops (Pirot)	Ternipe, Novi Svet, ARS

		prevention					
		2.1.5. Workshops with men addressing Roma males' attitudes towards child marriage	1) Number of workshops with Roma men 2) Number of Roma men involved	1) 0 2) 0	1) Year 1: 12 (Belgrade:0 Novi Bečej:12 Pirot: 0); Year 2: 20 (Belgrade 16, Novi Bečej 4, Pirot: 0) 2) Year 1: 60 (Belgrade 0 Novi Bečej: 60 Pirot: 0); Year 2: up to 100 (Belgrade: up to 100 Novi Bečej: 0 Pirot:0)	Finalized 1) 16 girls mentors 2) 13 young Roma activists passed ToT; 11 Roma activists capacitated to realize workshops with Roma men and boys (4 in Pirot, 7 in Belgrade) 3) 220 girls participated socializing activities (all three locations, 57 boys (Pirot and Novi Bečej))	Bibija, ARNB, Ternipe, Novi Svet, ARS
		2.1.6. Strengthening and promoting positive role models among girls and boys (through workshops and different socializing activities)	1) Capacity building of youth Roma trainers (females) to work with girls in Roma settlements 2) Capacity building of Roma men to work on child marriage 3) Number of youths involved in socializing activities in Roma settlements and in the local community	1) N/A 2) N/A 3) 0	1) Total 16 (Novi Bečej 4; Pirot 7; Belgrade 5) 2) Year 2: 12 participants from three locations passed ToT; 10 qualified young Roma activists supported and equipped to realize workshops and be actively engaged with Roma men and boys (4 trainers in Pirot and 6 trainers in Belgrade) 3) (Novi Bečej - at least 80; Pirot - at	Finalized 1) 16 girls mentors 2) 13 young Roma activists passed ToT; 11 Roma activists capacitated to realize workshops with Roma men and boys (4 in Pirot, 7 in Belgrade) 3) 220 girls participated socializing activities (all three locations, 57 boys (Pirot and Novi Bečej))	Bibija, ARNB, Ternipe, Novi Svet, ARS



					least 90; Belgrade-at least 50)		
		2.1.7. Mobilization of support within the Roma community against the harmful practices of child marriage	1) Number of Roma men and women who took participation in information and educational activities in Roma settlements 2) Number of Roma women involved in social life, through activism and public advocacy 3) Number of public actions (cultural, activist, humanitarian actions, street actions, marking significant dates) involving Roma women	1) 0 2) 0 3) 0	1) *Bibija: 200 mothers *Novi Bečej: 60 mothers and 60 fathers *Ternipe: 60 mothers 2) Ternipe: 60 mothers 3) Year 1: 3 actions (Piro) Year 2: 8 actions (Piro)	Finalized 1) *Bibija: 200 mothers *Novi Bečej: 79 mothers and 54 fathers *Ternipe: 50 mothers 2) Ternipe: 50 mothers 3) Year 1: 3 actions (Piro) Year 2: 8 actions (Piro)	Bibija, Ternipe, ARNB
		<b>2.2</b> <b>Increasing online connectivity and raising awareness on child marriage program</b>	2.2.1. Up to five Roma settlements connected to the internet (community WIFI)	N/A	Up to 5 settlements	The activity was not feasible due to high costs	N/A
			2.2.2. Online peer exchange of youth, creating the direct channel to communicate with youth from across the target settlements	N/A	fb and Viber youth groups on three locations		Bibija, Ternipe, ARNB
			2.2.3. Design and realisation of media content on child	0	5 documentaries/videos on the activities	Work in progress	Novi Svet

		marriage program			in three locations: Belgrade, Novi Bečej, Pirot		
		2.2.4. Creation of raising awareness materials and sharing through the network and social media	1) Created policy briefs, newspapers articles and human-interest stories on child marriage	0	1 policy brief created and shared with basic information on child marriage in Serbia; 1 HIS per programme year developed and shared through social media; at least 5 articles produced per local community annually	Finalized	UNICEF, All partners
<b>Key Result Area 3: Strengthening coordination and action at national level to end child marriage in Serbia by 2030</b>	<b>3.1. Convening a National Coalition to End Child Marriage in Serbia</b>	3.1.1. Stakeholder analysis to produce the ToR and action plan of the coalition	Existence of SHA	Non existing SHA	Developed SHA	Finalized in Year 1	Individual Contractor
		3.1.2. Establishment of the National Coalition to End Child Marriage	1) Developed ToR and Annual Work plan of the National Coalition 2) Existence of regular communication and coordination of NC activities	N/A	1) ToR and Work Plan of the NC adopted by the Coalition members 2) Regular communication and coordination exist among NC member organizations	The functioning of the National Coalition temporarily on hold/awaiting action in 2020 due to Covid-19 crisis	Coordination Body for Gender Equality, UNICEF
		3.1.3. Technical supporting functioning of the National Coalition	1) Number of meetings held 2) ToR developed for CSO to provide technical support to the work of Coalition 3) Partnerships with the media established to inform wide public	1) N/A 2) Non existing ToR 3) Non existing partnership with media on child marriage	1) At least three meetings of the National Coalition held per year 2) Selected CSO to provide technical support to NC 3) Coalition messages	The functioning of the National Coalition temporarily on hold due to Covid-19 crisis	UNICEF, Coordination Body for Gender Equality, Ternipe, Bibija,

					disseminated through communication channels		
		3.1.4. Development of Guidelines on effective methods of dialogue and messages and dissemination to stakeholders nationally	1) Number of advocacy initiatives launched by National Coalition 2) Working groups established to address sectoral issues (health, education, prosecution, social welfare) 3) Existence of models and guidance for implementing evidence-based inter-sectorial interventions to reduce/prevent child marriage 4) Conference on child marriage to disseminate good practice/model interventions held	1) 0	1) Up to 5 annually 2) at least 3 WG in National Coalition functioning 3) Developed guidance on inter-sectorial interventions to reduce CM 4) Held conference to disseminate good practice	The functioning of the National Coalition temporarily on hold due to Covid-19 crisis; activities rescheduled for 2nd half 2020	National Coalition To End Child Marriage
	<b>3.2. Integrating measures to end child marriage by 2030 into existing strategies and plans across relevant sectors</b>		1) VAC Strategy adopted which includes definition of child marriage 2) Family Law adopted which includes explicit ban of child marriage	1) non existing VAC Strategy 2) Family Law not adopted	1) Adopted VAC Strategy which includes definitions of child, forced and early marriage 2) Family Law includes ban on child marriage	VAC Strategy adopted in 2020; Family Law still not adopted	MoLEVSA, All SH

## ANNEX 3: INITIAL LIST OF DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Programme documents	
1.	Association of Roma Novi Bečej (2018). Annex 1 – Terms of Reference Year 1 (internal document).
2.	Association of Roma Novi Bečej (2019). Annual report 2018-2019 (internal document).
3.	Association of Roma Novi Bečej (2019). Programme Document Year 2 (internal document).
4.	Association of Roma Novi Bečej (2020). Annual report 2019-2020 (internal document).
5.	Association of Roma Novi Bečej. Budget Year 1 (internal document).
6.	Association of Roma Novi Bečej. Budget Year 2 (internal document).
7.	Association of Roma students (2019). Annex 1 – Terms of Reference (internal document).
8.	Association of Roma students (2019). Evaluation report – pilot project “ <i>Changing attitudes of Roma male and representatives of institutions on child marriage</i> ” (internal document).
9.	Association of Roma students (2019). Final report – pilot project “ <i>Changing attitudes of Roma male and representatives of institutions on child marriage</i> ” (internal document).
10.	Association of Roma students (2019). Progress report Jun – August 2019 (internal document).
11.	Association of Roma students (2019). Budget for 2019 (internal document).
12.	Association of Roma students (2019). Progress report September – October 2019 (internal document).
13.	Association of Roma students (2020). Budget for 2020 (internal document).
14.	Association of Roma students (October 2019). Izveštaj sa okruglog stola „ <i>Dečiji brakovi, institucionalni okvir i stav romske zajednice</i> ” (internal document).
15.	Association of Roma students (October 2019). Izveštaj sa treninga – metodologija rada sa muškarcima Romima na rešavanju pitanja dečjih brakova (internal document).
16.	Association of Roma students, UNICEF (August 2020). Promena stavova muškaraca Roma o dečjim brakovima u Srbiji. Priručnik za trenere. Belgrade: Association of Roma students.
17.	BIBIJA (2018). Annual 1_progress report April - October 2018 (internal document).
18.	BIBIJA (2018). Programme Document Year 1, 2018 (internal document).
19.	BIBIJA (2019). Annual 2_progress report November 2018 - April 2019 (internal document).
20.	BIBIJA (2019). Draft Programme Document Progress Report (internal document).
21.	BIBIJA (2019). Programme Document Year 2, 2019 (internal document).
22.	BIBIJA (2019). Progress report May - October 2019 (internal document).
23.	BIBIJA (2020). Budget Year 1, 2020 (internal document).
24.	BIBIJA (2020). Budget Year 2, 2020 (internal document).
25.	CEP (2019). Budget Year 1, 2018- 2019 (internal document).
26.	CEP (2019). Caring schools matter in prevention of dropout and child marriage. Project Report March 2018 – April 2019 (internal document).
27.	CEP (2019). Programme Document Year 2, 2019 (internal document).
28.	CEP (2020). Budget Year 2 (internal document).
29.	CEP (2020). Efekti obrazovnih mera na prevenciju dečjih brakova u republici Srbiji – draft (internal document).
30.	CEP (2020). Final progress report 2019-2020 (internal document).
31.	CEP (August 2019). Programme progress report Q2 (internal document).
32.	CEP (July 2019). Programme progress report Q1 (internal document).
33.	CEP (March 2018). Programme Document Year 1, 2018 (internal document).
34.	CEP (March 2018). Programme progress/final report Q1 (internal document)

35.	CEP (March 2018). Programme progress/final report Q2 (internal document)
36.	CEP (March 2018). Programme progress/final report Q3 (internal document)
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## ANNEX 4: LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS AND THE TARGET POPULATION PARTICIPATING IN DATA COLLECTION

Institution/organization/community		Number of respondents
UNICEF team		
UNICEF		3
National stakeholders - governmental		
Ministry of Interior		2
National Coalition for ending child marriages		
Commissioner for the protection of equality		1
Coordination Body for Gender Equality		1
Republic Institute for Social Protection		1
UNFPA		2
UNHCR		1
National stakeholders – non governmental		
NGO Bibija		1
NGO Osvit		1
Institute for Psychology		1
Praxis		1
INDIGO		1
NVO Atina		1
Centre for Education Policy		1
International organizations/donor		
GIZ		1
Piot		
NGO Ternipe		1
Roma mediators		1
Roma mothers beneficiaries		4
Roma girls beneficiaries		4
Roma boys beneficiaries		4
Professionals from local CSW, FOW		1
Representatives of schools		2
Belgrade		
NGO Novi Svet		1
NGO Bibija		1
Roma mediators		1
Roma mothers beneficiaries		4
Roma girls beneficiaries		4
Professionals from local CSW, FOW		1
Representatives of schools		2
Novi Bečej		
Association of Roma Novi Bečej		1
Roma mediators		1
Roma mothers beneficiaries		4
Roma girls beneficiaries		4

	Roma boys beneficiaries	4
	Roma men beneficiaries	4
	Representatives of schools	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>70</b>



## ANNEX 5: INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

### Parental or Guardian Consent Form for Participation in the interview Involving a Minor

Contact info: Ivan Djordjevic, [djordjevic.ivan77@gmail.com](mailto:djordjevic.ivan77@gmail.com); Dzenita Hrelja Hasecic: [dz.hrelja@gmail.com](mailto:dz.hrelja@gmail.com)

Good afternoon. Let me first introduce myself – my name is \_\_\_\_\_ (name of the researcher).

UNICEF has contracted SeCons to evaluate the programme “Towards Ending Child Marriage in Serbia”. Your permission is being sought to have your child participate in this study. Please read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not to give your permission.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the achievement of results and performance of the programme according to recognized evaluation criteria. Thank you for your interest and readiness to let your child taking part in the interview/focus group discussion. Your child's opinion is of great importance to us and it will help us better understand the programme’s implementation and results. Participation in the interview/FGD is fully voluntary. Please be assured that your child responses to the questions will be treated confidentially. All his/her personal data and information obtained during the interview/FGD will be stored and presented following the highest ethical research standards and shall not be misused or used for other purposes in any other way than for the purposes of this project.

Your child's participation or refusal to participate in this interview/FGD will not jeopardize services/activities you have access to in any way. The interview will not last more than 1 hour and 30 minutes. You or your child can stop the interview process at any point, as well as to skip questions you don't feel comfortable to answer. We kindly ask you for your permission to audio record the conversation.

If you have any questions about the project, please ask us before you decide whether to take part in the interview/focus group discussion.

By signing this form, you hereby acknowledge that you have given consent for your child's participation in this interview/focus group discussion.

#### **PARTICIPANT’S STATEMENT:**

I agree that:

- I have read the above text and understand the purpose of conducting this interview/FGD.
- I understand that if I decide to refuse my child to take part in this interview/FGD, I can notify the researchers and withdraw immediately.
- I understand that information obtained during the interview/FGD will be treated as confidential per the Law on Personal Data Protection.
- I understand that my child's participation or refusal to participate in this interview/ FGD will not jeopardize services/activities I have access to in any way.

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Signature of the participant

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Signature of the researcher

In \_\_\_\_\_(place), \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

### Consent Form for Participation in the interview

Contact info: Ivan Djordjevic, [djordjevic.ivan77@gmail.com](mailto:djordjevic.ivan77@gmail.com); Dzenita Hrelja Hasecic: dz.hrelja@gmail.com

Good afternoon. Let me first introduce myself – my name is \_\_\_\_\_ (name of the researcher).

UNICEF has contracted SeCons to evaluate the programme “Towards Ending Child Marriage in Serbia”. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the achievement of results and performance of the programme according to recognized evaluation criteria. Thank you for your interest and readiness in taking part in the interview/focus group discussion. Your opinion is of great importance to us and it will help us better understand the programme’s implementation and results. Participation in the interview/FGD is fully voluntary.

Please be assured that your responses to the questions will be treated confidentially. It is of primary importance to the evaluation that your responses be frank and direct. All your personal data and information obtained during the interview/FGD will be stored and presented following the highest ethical research standards and shall not be misused or used for other purposes in any other way than for the purposes of this project.

Your participation or refusal to participate in this interview/FGD will not jeopardize services/activities you have access to in any way. The interview will not last more than 1 hour and 30 minutes. You can stop the interview process at any point, as well as to skip questions you don't feel comfortable to answer. We kindly ask you for your permission to audio record the conversation.

If you have any questions about the project, please ask us before you decide whether to take part in the interview/focus group discussion.

By signing this form, you hereby acknowledge that you have given consent for participating in this interview/focus group discussion.

#### **PARTICIPANT’S STATEMENT:**

I agree that:

- I have read the above text and understand the purpose of conducting this interview/FGD.
- I understand that if I decide to refuse to take part in this interview/FGD, I can notify the researchers and withdraw immediately.
- I understand that information obtained during the interview/FGD will be treated as confidential in accordance with the Law on Personal Data Protection.
- I understand that my participation or refusal to participate in this interview/ FGD will not jeopardize services/activities I have access to in any way.

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Signature of the participant

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Signature of the researcher

In \_\_\_\_\_(place), \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

### Consent Form for Participation in the FGD

Contact info: Ivan Djordjevic, [djordjevic.ivan77@gmail.com](mailto:djordjevic.ivan77@gmail.com); Dzenita Hrelja Hasecic: [dz.hrelja@gmail.com](mailto:dz.hrelja@gmail.com)

Good afternoon. Let me first introduce myself – my name is \_\_\_\_\_ (name of the researcher).

UNICEF has contracted SeCons to evaluate the programme “Towards Ending Child Marriage in Serbia”. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the achievement of results and performance of the programme according to recognized evaluation criteria. Thank you for your interest and readiness in taking part in the interview/focus group discussion. Your opinion is of great importance to us and it will help us better understand the programme’s implementation and results. Participation in the interview/FGD is fully voluntary.

Please be assured that your responses to the questions will be treated confidentially. It is of primary importance to the evaluation that your responses be frank and direct. Please keep this discussion confidential from anyone outside this group.

All your personal data and information obtained during the interview/FGD will be stored and presented following the highest ethical research standards and shall not be misused or used for other purposes in any other way than for the purposes of this project. Your participation or refusal to participate in this interview/FGD will not jeopardize services/activities you have access to in any way. The interview will not last more than 1 hour and 30 minutes. You can stop the interview process at any point, as well as to skip questions you don't feel comfortable to answer. We kindly ask you for your permission to audio record the conversation.

If you have any questions about the project, please ask us before you decide whether to take part in the interview/focus group discussion.

By signing this form, you hereby acknowledge that you have given consent for participating in this interview/focus group discussion.

#### **PARTICIPANT’S STATEMENT:**

I agree that:

- I have read the above text and understand the purpose of conducting this interview/FGD.
- I understand that if I decide to refuse to take part in this interview/FGD, I can notify the researchers and withdraw immediately.
- I understand that information obtained during the interview/FGD will be treated as confidential in accordance with the Law on Personal Data Protection.
- I understand that my participation or refusal to participate in this interview/ FGD will not jeopardize services/activities I have access to in any way.

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Signature of the participant

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Signature of the researcher

In \_\_\_\_\_ (place), \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

## ANNEX 6: EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation Criteria	General questions	Specific questions	Indicators	Sources of verification	Instruments
Relevance	<b>EQ 1: To what extent were the objectives and design of the intervention relevant to the depth and scope of the problem of child marriage in Serbia, and informed by the needs and interests of diverse groups of stakeholders?</b>	Was the overall Programme design as reflected in the Theory of Change relevant to the depth and scope of child marriage in Serbia?	Number of staff, partners and stakeholders utilising this theory of change to tackle the problem of child marriage.	UNICEF and partner documents.	Interviews, review of documents.
		To what extent were objectives and design of intervention informed by the needs and interests of diverse groups of stakeholders, including primary target group: Roma children and Roma communities?	Number and quality of beneficiaries' and stakeholders' (including primary target group) involvement in design, implementation, and monitoring of the programme interventions. Scope of participation of different stakeholders; insights in the needs of target groups, and particularly primary beneficiaries obtained from previous programmes, work with target groups.	Yearly reports.	Document review and interviews.

	<b>EQ 2: To what extent has the Programme been relevant to the needs of stakeholders and right-holders (Roma children and others in Roma communities) in regard to child marriage?</b>	Were the implemented interventions relevant for Roma communities to open up a dialogue on attitudes and behaviours toward child marriage (more generally toward girls and women) and to strengthen understanding of the locally specific circumstances underpinning the practice of child marriages?	The degree to which a number of Roma communities proactively continuing this dialogue; aggregated knowledge about the needs and context of child marriages in local specific circumstances in Serbia.	Community narrative.	Interviews and FGDs.
		To what extent were the interventions relevant for strengthening the systems of social welfare and education in supporting children at risk of child marriage? What interventions were the most and the least relevant?	The degree to which the programme is designed and implemented in line with specific potentials and shortfalls of the systems of education in order to strengthen them for more effective response to child marriage.	Stakeholder plans and programmes; UNICEF studies, reports, with focus on education and social protection systems.	Report review and interviews.
		To what extent were the interventions relevant for strengthening intersectoral collaboration in response to child marriage locally and nationally?	The degree to which the programme addresses gaps and weaknesses of existing mechanisms to enhance intersectoral collaboration locally/nationally in response to child marriage.	Relevant local plans.	Report review and interviews.

		To what extent do the achieved results (goals, outcomes and outputs) continue to be relevant to the needs of Roma girls and women and Roma communities?	Child marriage trends in Serbia.	MICS.	MICS; interviews and FGDs.
Coherence	<b>EQ 3: To what extent has the Programme ensured internal coherence between activities, results, and outcomes?</b>	How did the internal design of the programme affect the achievement of the programme goal? Are key components (outputs and activities) coherent and complementary, leading to the more effective achievement of results? Are there inconsistencies in programme outputs and activities that might undermine the overall programme coherence?	The degree to which the intended impacts have been attained, e.g. direct and indirect knowledge generated and level of increase of utilisation of services/rights/network support available in communities. Logical coherence of the result framework (Do activities lead to outcomes, do outcomes lead to results? This is coherence in design as well as implementation.	Programme progress reports and partner reports.	ToC, document review and interviews.
	<b>EQ 4: To what extent has the Programme ensured external coherence with similar interventions, and to what extent is it aligned with</b>	To what extent has the Programme been aligned with national and local policies related to the elimination of child marriage, Roma inclusion and gender equality and empowerment of women?	Matching Programmes' strategies and interventions against these constraints.	Stakeholder strategies.	Document review and interviews.

	<b>international and national laws and policies related to child marriage, Roma inclusion and gender equality?</b>	To what extent has the Programme been aligned with international laws and policies addressing the issue of child marriage, Roma inclusion and gender equality, such as CEDAW, Istanbul Convention, Convention of the Child Rights, ICPD, and others?	Matching Programmes' strategies and interventions against these constraints.	Donor strategies and policies (International Conventions, such as CEDAW, Istanbul Convention, Beijing Platform for Action).	Document review and interviews.
		Has the Programme taken necessary steps to ensure complementarity, harmonisation, and co-ordination with other processes in relation to Roma inclusion?	Scope of coordination with other processes.	Donor strategies and policies.	Interviews with other donors UNFPA and UNHCR, OSCE, SIDA, GIZ.
		To what extent has the Programme added value while avoiding duplication of effort?	Degree of additionality of the partnerships – including the additionality of new practices and new methodology provided and the knowledge attained compared to the local context.	National and donor programming, community programming.	Document review and interviews.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>EQ 5: To what extent has the Programme succeeded in strengthening data collection and the evidence base on the prevalence and dynamics of child marriage?</b>	To what extent has the intervention managed to strengthen data collection, policy options and develop evidence-based practice/interventions for implementation/rollout at scale nationally and for women in particular?	Scope and quality of data collection, analysis and utilisation.	Programme research, analysis and policy briefs.	Document review and interviews.

		To what extent have the implemented interventions contributed to the capacities of the social welfare system (case-managers) to recognise, identify and react to child marriage?	Share of local partners continuing to implement some variation of interventions /methodology/approach degree to which social protection services are delivered in line with the model.	CSW programming documents.	Institutional interviews.
		To what extent have the implemented interventions contributed to the capacities of the education system (schoolteachers) to recognize, identify, and react to child marriage? To what extent has the Programme succeeded in supporting the education system to offer educational opportunities for girls at risk and affected by child marriage?	Share of local partners continuing to implement some variation of interventions /methodology/approach degree to which education services are delivered in line with the model.	Partner discussions.	Interviews.
		To what extent were the interventions effective in supporting intersectoral collaboration at the local level in strengthening prevention and protection measures?	Scope and quality of the results of intersectoral collaboration and local level, degree to which the intervention addresses gaps and weaknesses of existing mechanisms to strengthen their child marriage prevention and protection	Local government reporting.	Institutional interviews.



			capacities.		
			Scope of new interventions/approaches adopted by education system in better inclusion or return of Roma girls into education.	School and education authority reporting.	Institutional interviews.
	<b>EQ 6: To what extent was the Programme effective in strengthening the role and leadership of local Roma communities in the fight against child marriage?</b>	To what extent the implemented interventions managed to increase access of families and children to educational/awareness-raising activities on child marriage harmful effects?	Number of and type of involvement of families and children in advocacy interventions.	Partner reports.	Document review and interviews.
		To what extent the Programme has managed to foster the dialogue within Roma settlements on the harmful impact of child marriage?	Number, type and focus of the dialogue in Roma settlements and relevant interventions steaming from these discussions.	Partner reports, information from beneficiaries.	Document review and interviews, FGDs.
		Has the Programme succeeded in increasing online connectivity together with raising awareness on child marriage Programme?	Number of communities with increase online connectivity; type of utilization; cyber security and protection issues.	Reporting, information from beneficiaries.	Interviews and FGDs.

		To what extent the implemented measures, and in particular interventions in Roma settlements, were successful in reaching the most vulnerable families and children (those at highest risk of child marriage)?	Number and type of interventions (and location of the interventions) that successfully targeted the most vulnerable (if possible, no of child marriage prevented directly).	Partner discussions, information from beneficiaries, end line study.	Document review, FGDs and interviews in the community with beneficiaries and Roma leaders.
	<b>EQ 7: To what extent was the Programme effective in strengthening coordination and action at the local and national level to end child marriage in Serbia?</b>	To what extent has the National Coalition for Ending Child Marriage been successful in raising awareness and coordination in partnership with other actors to end child marriage?	Scope and success of interventions of National Coalitions' work within the programme.	UNICEF and partner documents.	Interviews, document review.
		Has the Programme succeeded to integrate measures to end child marriage in key national policies?	The degree to which programme directly contributed to key national policies on child marriage.	UNICEF and partner documents, key national strategies.	Interviews, document review.
	<b>EQ 8: Have the implemented interventions provided any additional, indirect, or unforeseen effects? Have there been any indirect but significant contributions towards the improvement of the position of Roma girls and Roma</b>	Have the implemented interventions provided any additional, indirect but significant contribution towards the improvement of the position of Roma girls and Roma communities in general?	Type of unintended outcomes.	Partner discussions.	FGDs and interviews in the community with beneficiaries and Roma leaders.
		Have the implemented interventions provided any negative unforeseen effects on Roma communities and Roma	Type of negative unforeseen effects.	Partner discussions.	FGDs and interviews in the community

	communities in general?	girls?			with beneficiaries and Roma leaders.
	<b>EQ 9: What are the main contributing factors, external and internal, and what factors inhibited effectiveness in key outcome areas?</b>	What are the main internal intervention factors that have contributed to the effective implementation and achievement of results?	The level of appropriateness of identifying relevant contextual factors by national and local partners.	Partner discussions, end line study.	Interviews and FGDs, document review.
		To what extent did the partnership/s, through the adoption of new knowledge or methodology, lead to improved performance, increased inclusion and/or increased efficiency/effectiveness of working environment for local partners?	Partner motivation: context, already existing efficiency/ resources/ costs, competitive factors, or enabling NGO environment.	Partner discussions.	Interviews and FGDs.
		How effective were the implementation strategies? How was the mix of specific interventions, and has an effective balance been achieved between the different interventions?	Reasons for differences in programme approaches and systematic assessment against defined context parameters.	Partner discussions.	Interviews and FGDs.
		What would be alternative strategies for more effective prevention and protection against child marriage? Would more emphasis on any of the interventions be recommended for better results?	Number and type of alternative strategies for which comparative advantage is perceived by programme staff and other stakeholders.	Partner discussions.	Interviews and FGDs.

		Which are the system bottlenecks that have not been addressed and/or which the government and its partners have not been able to remove? And what are the reasons for that?	Number and type of system level factors that inhibited the implementation or full effectiveness results.	Partner discussions, information from beneficiaries, documents and studies.	Interviews and FGDs, document review.
		Which community-level factors inhibited the effectiveness of the achievement of results?	Number and type of community level factors that contributed to the achievements of results.	Partner discussions.	Interviews and FGDs.
		How did the COVID-19 pandemic influence effectiveness? Which components of the intervention were particularly impacted and what were the mitigation strategies?	Number and type of consequences of COVID on implementation of programme activities and achievement of results.	Partner discussions.	Interviews and FGDs.
Efficiency	<b>EQ 10: To what extent did the Programme provide an efficient framework for delivery of services to companies, utilisation of resources, and accounting for results?</b>	Was the use of resources well-coordinated to encourage synergy (including leveraging donor/domestic resources), and avoid overlaps?	Scope of coordination at national and community levels.	Programme progress reports and partner reports.	Interviews.
		Would there have been a more cost-effective way to obtain the expected results?	Existence and quality of alternative approaches.	Partner discussions.	Interviews.
		How efficient was the model promoted in the Programme in establishing systematic cooperation between sectors and stakeholder? What are the key issues to highlight and who	Scope of participation of different stakeholders; yearly basis.	Programme progress reports and partner reports.	Report review and interviews.

		were the stakeholders who excelled/did not excel?			
		How efficiently were partnerships promoted, from the start to the end of the programme implementation phases?	Rate of partners inclusion in the programme. Unintended new partnerships.	Programme progress reports and partner reports.	Report review and interviews.
		What specific factors (for instance partner type, motivation, financial incentives, the power relationship between partners, type of partnership programme, or other) promoted this systematic cooperation?	Scope and substance of the strategic alliances and level of additionality. Community alliance structure: BG, Bečej, Pirot.	Programme progress reports and partner reports.	Report review and interviews.
		To what extent did the prevailing contextual factors influence the results?	Substance of changes due to C-19 pandemic and mitigation strategies.	Partner reports.	Interviews.
		How efficient were the partners in adapting to external and internal factors in all the phases of Programme (including during the COVID-19 pandemic)?	Assessment of programme management structures vis a vis programme utility in particular at the community levels.	UNICEF and partner documents.	Interviews.
		To what extent was the steering committee and management of the Programme well balanced between ensuring control of funds, providing easy access to NGO and community partners and providing the framework	Enabling and limiting context vis a vis human and financial investments.	Progress reports, partner reports, community leaders.	Interviews.

		for efficient use of administrative/financial/HR resources?			
		Value for money: Under what conditions did the programme provide the best results in terms of achieving its objectives in relation to human and financial inputs (Programme costs)?	The most significant changes in attitudes and behaviours among Roma girls, and women identified by themselves, their male peers from the communities, community leaders, and other stakeholders.	Community narratives, end line survey, local professionals in the systems of social protection, education.	FGDs and interviews in the community with beneficiaries and Roma leaders, professionals, review of survey findings.
Impact	<b>EQ11: What potential short and/or long-term effects has the Programme had on individual Roma girls and women and on selected local communities that benefited from the Programme intervention?</b>	To what extent have the interventions in Roma settlements supported adolescent girls at risk or affected by child marriage to change their attitudes on child marriage and express and exercise their choices against child marriage?	The number and type of programme interventions identified as the most effective in influencing attitudes identified by Roma girls, women, men, and boys, Roma leaders, other stakeholders.	Narratives of programme beneficiaries, professionals, other community level stakeholders.	FGDs and interviews in the community with beneficiaries and Roma leaders. Professionals in the system of education and social protection, other

					stakeholders.
		To what extent have the interventions contributed towards new perspectives on child marriage among other stakeholders/Programme beneficiaries?	The most significant changes in communities identified by adolescent girls and their families, community leaders, other local stakeholders.	Community narratives, local professionals.	FGDs and interviews in the community with beneficiaries and Roma leaders.
	<b>EQ 12: What was the impact of the Programme on the Roma communities?</b>	What was the impact on the Roma communities, in terms of changes of norms, increased awareness, public debate on child marriage, shifting the power relations, behaviours and practices?	The most significant changes related to SRH and child marriage identified by adolescent girls and their families.	Community narrative.	FGDs and interviews in the community with beneficiaries and Roma leaders.
		What was the impact of the Programme in terms of SRH and child marriage among Roma girls in targeted communities?	The most significant changes identified by adolescent girls and their families, Roma men and boys, community leaders.	Community narrative.	FGDs and interviews in the community with beneficiaries and Roma leaders.
		What was the impact on social relations in the targeted Roma communities: gender relations, relations between mothers and girls, fathers, and girls, etc.? Is there any evidence that power relations have been changing	The most significant changes identified by adolescent girls and their families.	Community narrative.	FGDs and interviews in the community with beneficiaries and Roma

		due to the impact of the Programme?			leaders.
		What was the impact on neighbouring local communities in terms of adoption of practices, or in other areas?	Share of professionals with new capacities, level of integration of the approach in their work.	Institutional documents.	Institutional interviews.
	<b>EQ 13: What was the impact of the Programme on the system at local and national levels?</b>	What was the impact on the perception and capacities of professionals in local welfare and education institutions?	Degree of additionality of the partnerships – including the additionality of new practices and new methodology provided and the knowledge attained compared to the local context.	Institutional documents.	Institutional interviews.
		To what extent did the Programme stimulated the creation of partnerships that would not otherwise have occurred?	Changes in practices/mechanisms and quality of multisectoral cooperation and response mechanisms at different locations	Institutional documents.	Interviews.
		What was the impact on multisectoral cooperation and response mechanisms, procedures?	Number of additional partnerships, level of access to funds, quality of new proposals on child marriage.	Programme progress reports and partner reports.	Interviews.
	<b>EQ 14: What was the impact of the Programme on the broader mobilisation of stakeholders in</b>	What was the impact of the Programme partnership on national/regional/international strategic alliances, increased access to funds, improved	Assessment of current legislation gaps.	Partner discussions.	Interviews.



	<b>combating child marriage?</b>	competitiveness or other?			
		To what extent does legislation in this area support further development of child-marriage prevention and protection Programme and improvements of options for adolescent girls at risk of and affected by child marriage?	Number and type of resources needed for upscaling, number and type of sustainability factors contributing to probability of continuation of programme intervention, methodology and knowledge (including international obligations, knowledge and skill integration, partnerships, participatory programme design and implementation and political commitments.	Partner discussions.	Interviews.
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>EQ15: To what extent did system-level factors (at local and national levels), as well as international obligations derived from key conventions, contribute to the sustainability of results?</b>	To what extent did the international obligations of Serbia in regard to the key conventions (such as CEDAW, CRC, Istanbul Convention), contribute to the sustainability of results?	Number and type of resources needed for upscaling, number and type of sustainability factors contributing to probability of continuation of programme intervention, methodology and knowledge (including international obligations, knowledge	Partner discussions.	Interviews.
		To what extent are new knowledge and skills integrated into regular activities of professionals working with Roma children and their families (case managers,		Partner discussions.	Interviews.

		teachers)?	and skill integration, partnerships, participatory programme design and implementation and political commitments		
		To what extent have partnerships continued and are likely to continue beyond the period supported by the Programme. What are the particular circumstances that have led/are likely to lead to the continuation?	Number and type of joint initiatives of partners that will endure after the programme, plans for new joint initiatives.	Partner discussions.	Interviews.
		To what extent were stakeholders involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of interventions aimed at child marriage prevention?	Integration of child marriage in regular work of stakeholders, inclusion of the issue in the policies, services they implement	Partner and stakeholders discussions.	Interviews.
		To what extent has the Programme ensured the political commitment and sustainability of a National Coalition to End Child Marriage?	Identification of programme elements that will be incorporated in the work of National Coalition.	Partner discussions.	National Coalition interview/s.
	<b>EQ16: To what extent did the intervention manage to strengthen local systems for social protection and education, as well as strengthening the role and leadership of local Roma</b>	What is the local level system's ability (post-Programme) for short-term coping and long-term adaptation to address child marriage and Roma inclusion? What is the level of the Roma's community ability to absorb impacts in the short term and self-organize and	The ability of local partners and communities for continued use of the methods introduced through the partnership and attainment of similar results/responses and	Community narrative.	FGDs and interviews in the community with beneficiaries and Roma leaders.

	<b>communities in combating child marriage?</b>	increase its capacity for learning in the long term (including in the post-COVID-19 context)?	practices (as derived from the programme) to address the impacts of different type of crises (including the post-Covid-19 environment) . The extent to which donors and government have recognised the importance of child marriage and have allocated resources towards future interventions.		
		To what extent did local partners and communities benefit from skills, resources, competences through partnerships which can be utilised after the completion of the Programme?		Donor interviews, stakeholder interviews, programmes in pipeline/s.	Interviews with key stakeholders.
<b>Knowledge Generation</b>	<b>EQ 17: What knowledge was generated by the Programme that could be used in future interventions?</b>	What is needed for mainstreaming the model at the national and local level? Which kind of resources? What is the availability of these resources?	Quality of knowledge product/knowledge transfer in specific communities and key enabling frameworks.	Knowledge products, programme progress reports and partner reports.	Document review and interviews.
		To what extent did the prevailing contextual factors influence the adaption of new knowledge and technology?	Assessment of and identification of roll up strategies.	Knowledge products, programme progress reports and partner reports.	Document review and interviews.
		What are specific comparative advantages of different models of intervention in the targeted local communities?	Assessment of and identification of roll up strategies.	Knowledge products, programme progress reports and partner reports.	Document review and interviews.

		What were the most successful intervention strategies and what adjustment of existing strategies or alternative strategies would be needed for more effective interventions in the future?	Assessment of and identification of roll up strategies.	Knowledge products, programme progress reports and partner reports.	Document review and interviews.
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## ANNEX 7: ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTPUT-RELATED INDICATORS IN KEY RESULT AREAS

Results		Indicator	Baseline/Target	Status in 2021	Assessment
<b>Key Result area 1: Strengthened data collection, policy and practice</b>	Output 1.1 Strengthening data collection and evidence on the prevalence and dynamics of child marriage	Existence of basic demographic data on households in the targeted communities	Not available / Yes	Finalized in Year 1	Achieved
		Existence of baseline data on social norms, knowledge, attitudes, perception of girls and their parents on girls' education, reproductive health and social participation	Not available / Yes	Finalized in Year 1	Achieved
		Existence of end line data on social norms, knowledge, attitudes, perception of girls and their parents on girls' education, reproductive health and social participation	Baseline data / End line data	Finalized in November 2020 (rescheduled from September 2020 due to COVID-19)	Achieved
	1.2 Developing national early warning mechanisms and operational response procedures to child marriage	Existence of the analysis	Not available / Report on the normative framework analysis and practice of CSW	Finalized in Year 1	Achieved
		Guidelines/Instructions developed for CSW professionals	Not available/ Developed Instruction on the code of conduct of CSW in child marriage response	Finalized in Year 1	Achieved
		Existence of training programme for case managers	Not available / 1) Training programme developed and adjusted according to the needs 2) Training	Finalized in Year 1 (per 1) and in 2020 (per 2)	Achieved

			documentation accredited		
		1) Number of practitioners in pilot localities trained	Not available / 1) At least 70 CSW professionals received 2-day training	The training goal modified towards strengthening capacities of CSW to cooperate with other sectors.	Partially achieved: Due to COVID-19, the training was not delivered in person, so an online training was offered, but the response was weak.
		1) Number of cross-sectoral joint coordination meetings of local actors 2) Number of bilateral meetings held between the Roma community, schools, social protection system and available mechanisms at local level (FOW, Roma health mediators...) 3) Number of individual cases related to the risk of child marriage acted upon	1) 0 / Total 15 2) 0 / Total 66 3) NA / Total 18	1) Finalized 2) Finalized  The programme intervention changed in Belgrade due to its complex administration and the lack of a 'sense-of-community/belonging'	Partially achieved
		1) Number of family outreach workers engaged and trained in responding to the specific needs of girls and families at risk  2) Number of cases referred to and acted upon by FOW	1) 0 / Total 15 2) 0 / 6	14 families with girls at risk of child marriage provided with home visits, counselling, and other forms of support over a 3- to 6-month period. Due to lack of financing (from the national budget), the service was discontinued in Year 2.	Partly achieved
		1) Availability of concept documentation methodology  2) Availability of the costing	1) Not available / Developed methodology for concept model documentation	1) finalized  2) finalized	Achieved

		analysis of the model  3) Availability of comprehensive documentation and developed practicum/guide	2) Not available / Costing analysis of the model 3) Not available / Developed Guide/practicum for local-level Action addressing child marriage	3) finalized	
	1.1.3.a Implementation and Upgrading of the Early Warning and Identification of Dropout Model (EWIDM)	1) Number of schools involved 2) Number of professionals capacitated 3) Number of school AP (action plans)	1) 0 / 8 schools involved in three locations 2) 0 / At least 10 teachers/professional associates from selected schools (80 in total) participated in the training 3) 0 / 8 school Action plans developed	1) In total 9 schools involved 2) In addition to the 80 teachers trained in Year 1, 30 new teachers have been included, making a total of 110 teachers capacitated for EWIDM implementation. 3) 9 school Action plans developed	Overly achieved
		1) Number of schools supported 2) Number of school staff supported to develop IP 3) Number of individual dropout prevention plans 4) Number of individualized plans for pupils at the highest risk of dropout developed and implemented	1) Not available / Instrument for identification applied in 8 schools 2) 0 / At least 10 teachers/professional associates from selected schools 3) 0 / Individualised plans for 8 schools student's population developed 4) Individualised plans for pupils at the highest risk of dropout implemented (around 5% of pupil population)	1) revision of school dropout APs 2) 30 new teachers have been included 3) 70 revised individualised plans and identification for the 5th grade and 1st in secondary school redone Ad 4) Out of an initially estimated 200 Roma children to be directly targeted, a total of 160 (including 15 newly identified in 2019) received individualized dropout-prevention	Achieved and overly achieved

				plans.	
		1) Availability of monitoring methodology 2) Availability of evaluation reports	1) Not available / Effectiveness of DPM monitored and evaluated in each school 2) Not available / Lessons learnt are made available to local and national stakeholders	Finalized	Achieved
	1.1.3.b. Facilitating education opportunities for girls at risk and young women who have dropped out from education within Roma communities	1) Number of young Roma girls who received material support for education	0 / Year 1: 135 (Bibija: 50 Novi Bečej: 25 Ternipe: 60); Year 2: 185 (Bibija: 45 Novi Bečej: 80 Ternipe: 60 girls)	Finalized Year 1: 158 girls (Bibija: 50, Pirot: 73, Novi Bečej: 35) Year 2: 186 girls (Bibija: 45, Pirot: 61 girls + 43 boys, Novi Bečej: 80) boys were included in Pirot as well to receive material support (school accessories)	Overly achieved
		1) Number of girls encouraged to enrol/continue education especially while in transit period - enrolment in elementary school, transition to 5th grade of elementary school, transition from primary school to secondary school 2) Number of Roma girls and mothers included in informative/motivational activities	Not available / 1) Year 1: total 340 (Belgrade: 200 Novi Bečej: 80 Pirot: 60) Year 2: total 140 (Belgrade: 0 Novi Bečej: 80 Pirot: 60) 2) 400 (Belgrade: 200 mothers, 200 young Roma girls (aged 13-17, not married or in union)	Finalized in Year 2 1) Year 1: 330 (Belgrade 200, Pirot 73 Novi Bečej 57) Year 2: 142 (Belgrade 0, Pirot 61, Novi Bečej 81) 2) 200 mothers and 200 girls	Achieved
		1) Number of girls and mothers enrolled and	1) 0 / 70 in total Year 1: 15 (Bibija)	FINALIZED 1) 70 girls and young	Achieved



		completed vocational training and/or non-formal education 2) Number of girls provided with mentorship support	Year 2: 55 (45 Bibija: 30 girls and 15 mothers), 10 (Novi Bečej) 2) 0 / 30 girls (Bibija Year 2)	mothers completed vocational training 2) 30 girls	
		1) Number of mentors' reports for each individual plan 2) Number of quarterly mentoring reports 3) Evaluation Guidelines and Methodology 4) Evaluation report	1) Not available / Min 30 reports 2) Not available / 3 quarterly summary reports 3) No guidelines and methodology / Evaluation Guidelines and Methodology developed 4) 0 / Program result reports	The activity not initially planned but added as complementary to the activities / vocational courses realized in Belgrade in Year 2	Achieved
<b>Key Result Area 2: Strengthening the role and leadership of local Roma communities in the fight against child marriage</b>	2.1 Fostering Dialogue within Roma settlements on the harmful impact of child marriage	Existence of effective methodology (workshops/inter-personal communication model) for influencing Roma girls and boys, men, and women	1) Existing sets of workshops on reproductive health and education in Roma women / NGOs / Programs of three NGOs for working with girls and mothers upgraded and adjusted to respond the program requirements (content added based on local needs assessment) 2) Non existing methodology for working with Roma boys and men / Developed model of workshops for working with boys and men	1) Finalized 2) Finalized	Achieved

		1) Number of Roma girls (13-17) involved in educational workshops focusing on information and skills 2) Number of workshops with girls	1) 0 / 480 in total 2) 0 / 192 in total	Finalized 1) 472 in total  2) 192 workshops in total	Achieved
		1) Number of workshops with girls and mothers 2) Number of workshops with mothers 3) Number of mothers involved	1) 0 / 72 2) 0 / 84 3) 0 / 450	Finalized 1) 72 in total  2) 84 in total 3) 429 in total	Achieved
		1) Number of Roma boys (13-17) involved in educational workshops focusing on information and skills 2) Number of workshops with boys	1) 0 / 90 (Pilot 30, Belgrade up to 60) 2) 0 / 36 (Pilot)	Finalized 1) 83 (43 boys Pilot, 40 (Belgrade) 2) 36 workshops (Pilot)	Achieved
		1) Number of workshops with Roma men 2) Number of Roma men involved	1) 0 / 32 2) 0 / up to 160 in total	Finalized 1) 16 girls mentors 2) 13 young Roma activists passed ToT; 11 Roma activists capacitated to realize workshops with Roma men and boys (4 in Pilot, 7 in Belgrade) 3) 220 girls participated in socializing activities (all three locations, 57 boys (Pilot and Novi Bečej)	Achieved
		1) Capacity building of youth Roma trainers (females) to work with girls in Roma settlements 2) Capacity building of Roma men to work on child	1) Not available / Total 16 2) Not available / 12 participants from three locations passed ToT; 10 qualified young	Finalized 1) 16 girls mentors 2) 13 young Roma activists passed ToT; 11 Roma activists capacitated to realize	Achieved

		marriage 3) Number of youths involved in socializing activities in Roma settlements and in the local community	Roma activists supported and equipped to realize workshops and be actively engaged with Roma men and boys (4 trainers in Pirot and 6 trainers in Belgrade) 3) (Novi Bečej - at least 80; Pirot - at least 90; Belgrade- at least 50)	workshops with Roma men and boys (4 in Pirot, 7 in Belgrade) 3) 220 girls participated socializing activities (all three locations, 57 boys (Pirot and Novi Bečej)	
		1) Number of Roma men and women who took participation in information and educational activities in Roma settlements 2) Number of Roma women involved in social life, through activism and public advocacy 3) Number of public actions (cultural, activist, humanitarian actions, street actions, marking significant dates) involving Roma women	1) 0 / 320 mothers, 60 fathers 2) 0 / 60 mothers 3) 11 (Pirot)	Finalized 1) 329 mothers, 54 fathers 2) 50 mothers 3) 11 (Pirot)	Achieved
	2.2 Increasing online connectivity and raising awareness on child marriage program	1) Roma settlements connected to the internet (community WIFI)	Not available / Up to 5 settlements	The activity was not feasible due to high costs	Not achieved
		Created and used groups of girls and boys on social media (fb, Viber etc...)	Not available / fb and Viber youth groups on three locations	Created and used	Achieved
		Documented programme activities on three locations	0 / 5 documentaries/videos on the activities in three locations	Finalized	Achieved
		1) Created policy briefs, newspapers articles and	0 / 1 policy brief created and shared	Finalized	Achieved

		human-interest stories on child marriage	with basic information on child marriage in Serbia; 1 HIS per programme year developed and shared through social media; at least 5 articles produced per local community annually		
<b>Key Result Area 3: Strengthening coordination and action at national level to end child marriage in Serbia by 2030</b>	3.1. Convening a National Coalition to End Child Marriage in Serbia	Existence of SHA	No / Yes	Finalized in Year 1	Achieved
		1) Developed ToR and Annual Work plan of the National Coalition 2) Existence of regular communication and coordination of NC activities	1) Not available / ToR and Work Plan of the NC adopted by the Coalition members 2) No / Yes	The functioning of the National Coalition postponed due to Covid-19 crisis	Partially achieved
		1) Number of meetings held 2) ToR developed for CSO to provide technical support to the work of Coalition 3) Partnerships with the media established to inform wide public	1) 0 / At least three meetings of the National Coalition held per year 2) Selected CSO to provide technical support to NC 3) Coalition messages disseminated through communication channels	The functioning of the National Coalition continued after being on hold due to Covid-19 crisis in 2020	Delayed /Achieved
		1) Number of advocacy initiatives launched by National Coalition 2) Working groups established to address sectoral issues (health, education, prosecution, social welfare) 3) Existence of models and guidance for implementing evidence-based inter-	1) 0 / Up to 5 annually 2) 0 / at least 3 WG in National Coalition functioning 3) No / Yes 4) No / Yes	The functioning of the National Coalition continued after being on hold due to Covid-19 crisis	Delayed / Not achieved

		sectorial interventions to reduce/prevent child marriage 4) Conference on child marriage to disseminate good practice/model interventions held			
	3.2. Integrating measures to end child marriage by 2030 into existing strategies and plans across relevant sectors	1) VAC Strategy adopted which includes definition of child marriage 2) Family Law adopted which includes explicit ban of child marriage	1) Non existing / Adopted VAC Strategy which includes definitions of child, forced and early marriage 2) Family Law does not include ban on child marriage / Family Law with an explicit ban on child marriage adopted	VAC Strategy adopted in 2020; Family Law still not adopted	Partially achieved