

Evaluation of UNICEF's work for Accelerating Action towards Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh

Final Evaluation Report

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Evaluation of UNICEF's Work for Accelerating Action towards Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh

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List of abbreviations	
AFHS	Adolescent Friendly Health Services
BCO	Bangladesh Country Office
CBCPC	Community Based Child Protection Committee
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CMRA	Child Marriage Restraint Act
C4D	Communication for development
CBCPC	Community Based Child Protection Committee
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CP	Country Programme
CPD	Country Programme Document
CRC	Committee on Rights of Children
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CWB	Child Welfare Board
C4D	Communication for Development
DNCC	Dhaka North City Corporation
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EE	Entertainment-Education
ECM	Ending Child Marriage
EY LLP	Ernst & Young LLP
FGD	Focussed Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GE	Gender Equality
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GPECM	Global Programme on Ending Child Marriage
HR	Human Rights
ICRW	International Centre for Research on Women
IDI	In-depth Interview
INGO	International non-governmental organizations
IR	Immediate Results
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
KII	Key Informant Interview
LCG WAGE	Local Consultative Group Women Advancement and Gender Equality
LSBE	Life Skills Based Education
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MFLO	Muslim Family Law Ordinance
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Child Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NAP	National Action Plan
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee
PCR	Programme Component Results
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
RBMF	Results-Based Management Framework
RCT	Randomised Controlled Trial
SBCC	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEM	Socio-Ecological Model
SPOC	Specific Points of Contact
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework

UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Executive summary

Background

The practice of child marriage has been a critical area of focus for Bangladesh. Currently, it is ranked at **134 out of 175 countries on the End of Childhood Index 2020**¹ and has the fourth highest rate of child marriage in the world after African countries of Niger, the Central African Republic, and Chad². Statistics from the MICS 2019 show that 19.8 per cent of women before turning 15 years of age (aged 15-49 years) and 60 per cent (aged 20-49 years) before turning 18 are married.³ Drivers of child marriage are complex, diverse, interlinked⁴ and at times, context specific. *Gender and social norms interact with several socio-economic factors to form a complex web of interrelated facets to place a girl child at risk of marriage.*

The key drivers of this pervasive practice are rooted in **gender-based violence and inequality, intergenerational cycles of poverty, lack of access to education, poor income generating capacities, vulnerability caused due to climate change and natural disasters, and limited access to resources** for girls and women, especially a lack of their own income and financial planning skills.⁵ Distinctions also exist for factors such as differences in the rates of employment among young women, economic conditions of those who facilitate child marriage and economic pressures related to dowry payments. Further area of concern is the linkage between an **ageing population and the occurrence of child marriage**. Moreover, the influence of religion in the context of Bangladeshi society has also been highlighted as a key driver of child marriage in the country.

Programme description

At a global level, in 2015, **United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF launched their Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage (GPECM)** across twelve programme countries.⁶ Bangladesh is one of the 12 countries in the world that is a part of the joint UNICEF and UNFPA GPECM that also implements its strategies with a goal to delay marriage, address associated conditions that are contributing factors to child marriage nationally and provide support to girls who have already been married off early.

To work towards Ending Child Marriage (ECM), Government of Bangladesh, UNICEF BCO and its partners support various programmes that engage adolescents in increasing their awareness on the adverse consequences of child marriage while simultaneously providing them with adequate skills to help improve their lives and delay marriage. In 2015, the BCO received initial funding and the **New Country Programme Document of 2016 acknowledged the opportunity to sharpen the approach on ECM across the country**. The strategy note on ECM was used as a basis for the GPECM when Bangladesh became one of the three GPECM countries in UNICEF's South Asian Region for Phase 1 of the joint UNFPA-UNICEF GPECM programme.

Objective and scope of the evaluation

The overall objective of the evaluation was to assess the progress made by BCO towards achievements of results of its ECM programmes. The evaluation has analysed the relevance of BCO's work on ECM, effectiveness and added value of the joint UNFPA UNICEF GPECM and BCO's ECM interventions

¹ [End of Childhood Index 2020](#)

² Human Rights Watch, "Bangladesh: Girls Damaged by Child Marriage," June 9, 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/09/bangladesh-girls-damaged-child-marriage>

³ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2019

⁴ Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia, Working Paper, UNICEF and UNFPA, 2018

⁵ Buchmann, N., Field, E., et al., Power vs Money: Alternative Approaches to Reducing Child Marriage in Bangladesh, a Randomized Control Trial, 2018

⁶ The twelve programme countries in the first phase of the GPECM are: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia and Yemen.

outside the GPECM funded through OR of different sections. It has identified opportunities and barriers of the implementation of cross sectoral evidenced based intervention strategies. Additionally, it has also identified good practices of convergence among sectors and lessons especially from Phase I of the GPECM.

The evaluation has included all activities under the CP 2017-2020 and the GPECM Phase 1 (2016-2019). Additionally, aspects of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have also been covered. Further, the evaluation has covered work undertaken at the national level and aspects of the programme that were conducted at ECM districts, either through GPECM interventions or other ECM activities.

Our approach and methodology

The evaluation incorporated a theory-based evaluation framework, and the **OECD DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability** was applied in the evaluation of the programme. Further, a **non-experimental evaluation design was adopted wherein qualitative data collection in all five divisions as stated in the ToR namely, Mymensingh, Dhaka, Barisal, Khulna and Rangpur** were undertaken. The evaluation was approached through highly **consultative and participatory lenses**.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic our team adopted a “**blended methodology**” as the way forward to allow flexibility in design. To initiate the organisation of data collected, **a workshop mode was adopted** wherein the objective was to triangulate the data collected against the information provided by the various stakeholders in order to derive final conclusions/answers against each evaluation question. After analysing the information, the insights obtained was grouped as per various heads related to the evaluation questions. They were then summarised and critically analysed to find answers to the evaluation questions.

An evaluation rubric was also developed to map BCOs performance against each evaluation question. The parameters of assessment include Excellent/Good/Adequate/Poor.

Limitations

Overall limitations in undertaking the evaluation may be attributed to the extensive delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent travel and mobility restrictions. Despite rigorous sampling, due to the time lag and unavailability of key stakeholders, it is possible that some significant aspects of the programme were missed, and some biases crept in reaching out to the respondents in the community. The COVID-19 induced restrictions made it challenging to access data and information on how the pandemic has impacted the programme and its beneficiaries in sampled *Upazillas* and districts. Further, programmatic and financial, reporting undertaken by UNICEF during the implementation did not have clear compartmentalisation between the two. Therefore, maintaining clear separation or to avoid overlap in terms of findings related to the two programmes was not possible.

Key findings

Relevance

Ending child marriage (ECM), is a relevant and required priority area for both the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and its development partners. Additionally, through the adoption of an **area-based approach, life cycle approach and multisectoral approach. the programme was excellently designed in a comprehensive manner**, accounting for varied contexts of different groups in society. **The programme has also incorporated a gender-transformative approach** to address the drivers of child marriage and structural drivers of inequality in the context of Bangladesh. However, while there have been efforts to correctly implement the programme following a human rights, equity and culturally sensitive approach, **inclusion of certain vulnerable groups can be further strengthened**. Further,

ECM work in BCO is found to be guided by two Theories of Change. One at the National level and the other proposed by GPECM. Bangladesh was one of the few GPECM countries that formally adapted the global ToC to the country level. Moreover, while the programme was found to be **aligned to the objectives of the NAP to ECM to a good degree**, there were challenges with respect to awareness, resources, collaboration and monitoring impede NAP's seamless implementation.

Effectiveness and Impact

BCOs ECM efforts have made **an adequate impact in terms of contributing to the process of reduction in number of child marriages**. The evaluation finds that **predominant focus of the interventions was on Adolescent empowerment through Adolescent Clubs, and Community Mobilisation**. Additionally, partnerships at the highest levels developed through **advocacy carried out by UNICEF and UNFPA will ensure that ECM remains a significant agenda of the Government**. However, a **stronger focus also needs to be placed on the promotion of income generation and livelihood opportunities for girls**. Overall review of the progress of the strategies highlights that **BCO will need to continue its concerted efforts at all levels (individual, community, institutional, state and policy) to effectively combat child marriages**. Further, **wider and more focused engagement is needed with different stakeholders for a longer period for achievement of gender transformation**. Further, **ECM efforts and its planned results for its five strategies needs to be seen corroboratively with the Outcome on Adolescents as well as GPECM reporting** as the entire gamut of ECM efforts does not adequately report against a combined RBM. It is key to note that the evaluation team has also been **limited in its ability to comment on the entire impact of the programme due to COVID-19 induced discontinuity in regular ECM efforts** and challenges to accessing protection services that threatens the momentum gained for ECM as well as restrains spillover effects.

Efficiency and Cost-effectiveness

UNICEF and UNFPA, have worked jointly for the GPECM programme. However, both the organisations predominantly implemented GPECM interventions in Bangladesh **without any combined planning, except at the national or policy advocacy level**, limiting impact at the sub-national and sub-district levels, further challenged by gaps in coordination at field level. Moreover, the GPECM **helped streamline good efforts and aid the process of evidence generation** which was critical for strengthening the overall ECM agenda. While **funding priorities were aligned to organisational mandates as well as sectoral priorities** within UNICEF BCO, **GPECM funding, though limited, helped streamline various ongoing efforts under a comprehensive programme**. With regards to cost-effectiveness, it was seen that **most of the ECM funds were allocated to Education and Child Protection interventions aimed at reducing child marriages**.

Sustainability

BCO's ECM interventions promoted sustainability through various good practices and strategies, including advocacy, institutionalisation, strengthening systems, developing capacities and mobilising complementary funding. However, there is **scope for enhanced advocacy and engagement** to sustain gains in social norm change and redressal of harmful behaviours. For sustained efforts and scaling up interventions, adequate **system strengthening needs to be embedded at all levels** including national policies, programme planning and design and in implementation, especially at the sub-district levels.

Conclusions and lessons learnt

BCO's ECM interventions and the GPECM have made some significant inroads in propelling collective efforts to meet the stated national targets. The evaluation notes that cross sectoral convergence and collaboration and the partnership between UNICEF and UNFPA was a key strength of BCOs ECM efforts. Moreover, partnerships with stakeholders including women's groups have been found to be

diverse and effectively leveraged to further the agenda for ECM. Advocacy at the highest levels has also contributed to the creation of government ownership and commitment to ECM through the development of the NAP. There is however scope for improvement with respect to monitoring and tracking results achieved against BCO ECM Strategy Note and the GRF as current systems are collecting data aligned to Outcome 3 of BCO CPD. While there is ownership at the highest levels of government, the same rigour is absent at the district and *Upazilla* level and requires focused and consistent capacity building. Significantly, while interventions have recorded success at different degrees, some strategies worked better than others and recorded better results. **Key lessons learnt from the evaluation are as follows:**

- **Joint programming by UNICEF and UNFPA has enhanced ECM efforts in Bangladesh.** There is enough reason to believe that the partnership between UNICEF and UNFPA has worked well to this programme. Both the organisations have their unique strengths which have complemented each other and strengthened the voice of the United Nations on this issue
- **Incentives and conditional cash transfers seem to have worked well in some parts. This needs to be examined more closely.** In case it is found to make a positive impact, a solution to this may be found to provide incentives to girls, perhaps by helping the Government to design a suitable scheme
- **The existing monitoring system within UNICEF is not designed to collect relevant data for ECM.** The mismatch in monitoring programmes makes collation of relevant data collection very challenging and there is likelihood of missing out of information that may provide evidence for planning

Overarching, each question of the evaluation criterion has been given a ranking of Excellent/Good/Adequate/Poor. General improvement may be required to enhance effectiveness of strategies with respect to mapping the results achieved, and over all sustainability of interventions rolled out.

Recommendations

- **UNICEF should work towards providing social protection to vulnerable children and their families for overall poverty reduction.** As per the definition of UNICEF “Social protection covers the range of policies and programmes needed to reduce the lifelong consequences of poverty and exclusion.” Therefore, the focus of interventions in future should be to ensure that essential services are provided to all vulnerable families to reduce inequality, poverty and vulnerability. This would require working together with other organisations with similar mandate of poverty alleviation
- **Vulnerability mapping needs to be more nuanced and evidence based where factors other than incidence of child marriage should also be considered.** The scope of vulnerability mapping should be increased by including other factors such as low level of education (including drop outs and out of school children); economically disadvantaged population, incidence of gender-based violence, disaster prone areas and other vulnerable sections such as migrants. This will help in identifying other vulnerable pockets and interventions can be designed accordingly
- **UNICEF should limit the number of interventions it carries out to address the issue of ECM.** Research has shown that programmes with fewer interventions reaches out to a larger population and shows better sustainability. Therefore, **UNICEF may consider focusing on fewer interventions where it has achieved better results** and aim at scaling up the pilots
- There is a **need for greater engagement and involvement with the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Social Welfare and Ministry of Home Affairs to act on child marriage within their own sectors.** UNICEF has been working primarily with MoWCA on the issue of ECM. It may consider working more closely with other Ministries too

which have a significant role in formulating policies, enforcing law, offering schemes to the disadvantaged communities

- **There is a need for a more robust and user-friendly surveillance system and research to analyse the impact of interventions** and to collate information related to an area effectively. It is also important to collect disaggregated data for disadvantaged groups to analyse the impact on vulnerable groups
- UNICEF should **limit its intervention in skill development programmes to extending technical support to identify vulnerable adolescents and develop soft skills.** There are organisations which have significant experience in this area and can be more effective in implementing programmes related to skill development. UNICEF can extend technical support to identify vulnerable adolescents and develop programme for soft skill training
- It is recommended that the **partnership between UNICEF and UNFPA be sustained** as it can make greater impact by leveraging their core areas of strength
- **Capacity development of officials at the district and upazilla level would be a key factor to the success of the ECM programme.** It was found that the level of awareness and capacity to execute programmes effectively was not uniform in all *Upazillas*. Leadership provided by the CO was extremely important in this regard. Therefore, UNICEF may collaborate with local government representatives across all departments to undertake capacity development programmes at this level

Chapter 1: Background

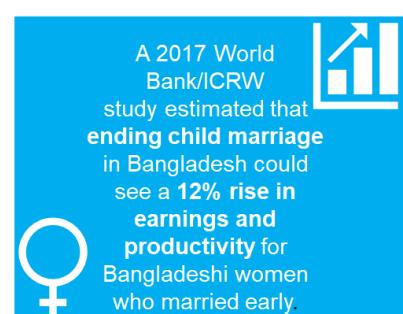
1.1 Situation and context of child marriage in Bangladesh

Globally, 12 million girls are married before the age of 18, accounting for 23 girls a minute and one in almost every 2 seconds.⁷ As a practice, child marriage transcends geographical boundaries, cultures and religions, augmented by poverty, gender inequality, age old traditions and insecurity. While it pervades across the world and differs in nature across communities, economically emerging countries tend to display higher incidences, with a vast majority of such cases stemming from South Asia. One such country in the global South is Bangladesh with the fourth-highest rate of child marriage in the world.⁸

Defined by UNICEF as “*marriage of a girl or boy before the age of 18*”,⁹ child marriage is essentially a form of early and forced alliance, steeped in adverse traditions and practices passed on between generations¹⁰. It is not only a complete disdain of human rights but given that it disproportionately affects girls who are more likely to be married off before attaining legal age¹¹, risks associated with early pregnancy, increase in school dropout rates, spousal violence, poor health of maternal and child health¹², plague several young women globally and in Bangladesh.

Key drivers of child marriage in Bangladesh

Currently, Bangladesh is ranked at **134 out of 180 countries on the End of Childhood Index 2020**¹³ and **60 per cent of girls** (aged 20-49 years) in Bangladesh marry before reaching their 18th birthday, while 19.8 per cent are married before the age of 15 years (aged 15-49 years).¹⁴ It has the fourth-highest rate of child marriage in the world after African countries of Niger, the Central African Republic, and Chad.¹⁵ With 36 million adolescents who make up 22 per cent of the country’s population, Bangladesh’s focus on the many challenges associated with child marriage is critical for the country.¹⁶ On the positive side, as part of the broader process of economic transition and social change, in the last two decades, gender relations in Bangladesh have undergone a course of progressive transformation. As reported in MICS 2019, **32.9 per cent girls** between the ages of 15-19 years are currently married.¹⁷ This is a clear indication to sustain efforts to encourage shifts in policies, programmes and socio-cultural values that continue to shape implicit societal understanding of roles and responsibilities of women and girls.



⁷ Girls Not Brides, “About Child Marriage”. Retrieved from <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/about-child-marriage/>

⁸ Human Rights Watch, “Bangladesh: Girls Damaged by Child Marriage,” Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/09/bangladesh-girls-damaged-child-marriage>

⁹ UNICEF, “Child Marriage.” Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/what-we-do/child-protection/child-marriage>

¹⁰ International Center for Research on Women, “Child Marriage in South Asia: Realities, Responses and the Way Forward,” 2013. Retrieved from: https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Child_marriage_paper-in-South-Asia_2013.pdf

¹¹ International Center for Research on Women, “Child Marriage in South Asia: Realities, Responses and the Way Forward,” 2013. Accessed from: <https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Child_marriage_paper-in-South-Asia_2013.pdf>

¹² UNICEF Global Donor Report. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/protection/files/ChildMarriage-Global-DonorReport-v7.pdf>

¹³ End of Childhood Index 2020

¹⁴ MICS 2019

¹⁵ Human Rights Watch, “Bangladesh: Girls Damaged by Child Marriage,” June 9, 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/09/bangladesh-girls-damaged-child-marriage>

¹⁶ UNICEF, “Improving health of adolescents: Promoting gender-responsive adolescent health.”. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/en/improving-health-adolescents>

¹⁷ MICS 2019

Social understanding and typology of gender is instrumental in perpetuating harmful gender roles and socio-cultural expectations that act as underlying causes for child marriage. Drivers of child marriage are complex, diverse, interlinked¹⁸ and at times, context specific. *Gender and social norms interact with several socio-economic factors to form a complex web of interrelated facets to place a girl child at risk of marriage.* Gender-based discrimination begins early for a girl. Even before birth, patriarchal gender norms and values reinforce early subordination and limit choices and opportunities over her life course.

The key drivers of this pervasive practice are rooted in **gender inequality, intergenerational cycles of poverty, lack of access to education, poor income generating capacities and limited access to resources** for girls and women, especially a lack of their own income and financial planning skills.¹⁹ Distinctions also exist for factors such as differences in the rates of employment among young women, economic conditions of those who facilitate child marriage and economic pressures related to dowry payments. As a strategic indicator of gender equality, young women and men who are more educated, tend to marry at a later age, while women with primary, secondary, and higher education, were 24 per cent, 72 per cent and 94 per cent less likely to marry at a young age respectively, compared to their counterparts with no formal education.²⁰ Furthermore, research confirms vulnerability to poverty continues to have concrete gender dimensions and **gender-based capability poverty** is an issue in Bangladesh.²¹

While Bangladesh has made significant progress in enhancing accessibility to education at all levels, dropout rates at the secondary level of education, especially amongst girls is a recurrent challenge. **Dropout rates for girls has been recorded at 46 per cent** compared to 34 per cent for boys in the country. Concerningly, a large portion of these girls have been found to dropout due to child marriage.²² Relatedly, recent data shows that the women's labour force participation rates stand at a mere **36.4 per cent** compared to 84 per cent for men.²³

While poverty, lack of education and opportunities for girls and overall limited awareness have consistently been identified as key drivers of child marriage, gender inequity and norms concerning girls' sexuality need to be highlighted as well. Research has found that the linkage of child marriage with control over girls' sexuality in Bangladesh manifests itself as preserving their **marriageability, virginity and family honour**. Engaging in child marriage is seen as a medium of protection against the possibility of girls being involved in sexual activity that would bring "shame" to the family.²⁴

Relatedly, research carried out by Human Rights Watch found that the **prevalence of widespread sexual harassment** of girls is a key factor in families encouraging the practice of child marriage in Bangladesh.²⁵ Girls are subjected to **gender-based violence in private and public spheres which greatly undermines their agency, health, social and economic status**. Violence in the form of discrimination faced in the family along with social norms affecting their experiences outside it at places like school, often becomes a push towards child marriage. Social pressure on families coupled with status of girls as liabilities further exacerbates their vulnerability to rampant oppression.

¹⁸ Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia, Working Paper, UNICEF and UNFPA, 2018

¹⁹ Buchmann, N., Field, E., et al., Power vs Money: Alternative Approaches to Reducing Child Marriage in Bangladesh, a Randomized Control Trial, 2018

²⁰ Human Rights Watch, 'Marry Before Your House is Swept Away, Child Marriage in Bangladesh', June 2015

²¹ KfW Bankengruppe, Bangladesh Gender Profile, Discussion Paper 42, 2006

²² The Population Council, Keeping Girls in School to reduce Child Marriage in Rural Bangladesh', Program Brief, January 2020, Retrieved from: [Keeping girls in schools to reduce child marriage in rural Bangladesh \(popcouncil.org\)](http://www.popcouncil.org)

²³ The Financial Express, 'Women's economic empowerment and the future development of Bangladesh', January 2021, Retrieved from: [Women's economic empowerment and future development of Bangladesh \(thefinancialexpress.com.bd\)](http://www.thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

²⁴ Share-Net Bangladesh, 'Child Marriage and linkage with fear and desire to control girls' sexuality', May 2019, Retrieved from: [Child marriage and linkage with fear and desire to control girls' sexuality - Share-Net Bangladesh](http://www.share-net.org)

²⁵ Human Rights Watch, 'Marry before your house is swept away', February 2016, Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/06/09/marry-your-house-swept-away/child-marriage-bangladesh>.

Further, to avoid expenses on the sustenance of girl children, families look to offload this deemed burden by getting them married as soon as possible. Studies highlight that perceived benefits of child marriage in a country like Bangladesh are viewed by some households to outweigh the alleged risks associated with it.²⁶ Given this belief, for some families, marrying of girl children early is associated with benefits of dowry, decrease in household size, and the ability to transfer human capital among households. Additionally, some evidence suggests, child marriage is linked with higher prestige among families and considered better for child safety.²⁷

Social attitudes determined by patriarchal structures and notions further propagate the concept of 'safety' of girls ensured by marriage. Aligned to this, research in Bangladesh has found that of households that display knowledge of the negative consequences of child marriage, 45.9 per cent had a girl child who was married before the age of 18. An analysis of this suggests that despite being aware of the negative consequences, factors such as "**having one less mouth to feed, securing a groom and protecting honour**" outweigh the harmful impact of child marriage.²⁸

A review of literature additionally highlights the role religion plays in the context of Bangladesh as a driver for early child marriage. It has been argued that the duty of families to comply with religious practices of maintaining *purdah* and related aspects results in early marriage of girls as a **divine command**.²⁹

In the context of Bangladesh, a further area of concern is the linkage between an **ageing population and the occurrence of child marriage**. Research shows that the growth rate of the population aged 60 years and above in the country is faster than other developing and least developed countries.³⁰ A key driver of an ageing population has been found to be a decrease in fertility rates.³¹ Relatedly, research has found that child marriage results in a higher fertility rate as girls who marry early are likely to bear children earlier and a larger number of children compared to if married at a later age. Therefore, with an increasingly ageing population, the need for a younger population that is capable of effectively contributing to the economy is likely to see an increase, exacerbating the risk the girls in the country face with respect to child marriage.

Furthermore, in Bangladesh, **natural disasters and climate change have exacerbated child marriage** in many regions.³² A 2014 study finds that the economic crises created by the challenges of climate change are accentuating child and forced marriages because dowry is cheaper for younger girls.³³ The phenomenon of child marriage has been found to be highly prevalent in such areas as it is inter-linked with poverty, vulnerability to disaster induced-displacement in the face of socio-economical disadvantages and deprivation. In the anticipation of recurring natural disasters, families choose to marry of their young daughters to ameliorate the hardships due to hunger, poverty and loss of home.³⁴

Within this context, it is also key to note that since 2017, an influx of over 720,000 Rohingya refugees to Bangladesh has resulted in the fastest growing refugee crisis in the world. The vast majority of this

²⁶Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia, Working Paper, UNICEF and UNFPA, 2018

²⁷ Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia, Working Paper, UNICEF and UNFPA, 2018

²⁸ BBS and UNICEF Bangladesh," Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh: What Matters For Change? Exploring preferences, beliefs and norms: A Discussion Paper", August 2018

²⁹ Share-Net Bangladesh, 'Literature Review on Early Child Marriage', April 2019, Retrieved from: [Literature Review on Early Child Marriage - Share-Net Bangladesh](#)

³⁰ Islam, S., Rahman, A., Mahmood, A. K. A., Mamun, A. A., & Khondoker, M. F. U., May 2019, 'Old Home and Caring Elderly Population: Need or Dilemma', *Bangladesh Journal of Medical Science*, 18(3), 453–457, Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.3329/bjms.v18i3.41611>

³¹ Bloom, D.E., Canning D., and Fink G., April 2008, 'Population Aging and Economic Growth', *Program on the Global Demography of Aging Working Paper Series*, Retrieved from: [Microsoft Word - PGDA_WP_31.doc \(harvard.edu\)](https://www.harvard.edu)

³² *ibid*

³³ Alston. M., Whittenbury, K., et al., Are climate challenges reinforcing child and forced marriage and dowry as adaptation strategies in the context of Bangladesh? December 214

³⁴ Human Rights Watch, *Child Marriage Bangladesh*, Retrieved from: [HRW - Feature](#)

population are women and children³⁵. Refugee crises are characterised by loss of livelihood, reduced economic opportunity, heightened insecurity and the absence of education, all of which leads to an increase in practices such as child marriage.³⁶ Research suggests that extreme poverty, widespread violence, fear of gender-based violence and political strife³⁷ has exacerbated the incidence of child marriage in humanitarian settings in Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh. Moreover, while early marriage is a common practice amongst the Rohingya communities, several young girls have also reported food rations to be a key motivating factor influencing early marriage decisions.³⁸

It is key to note here that given this overall scenario, achievement of targets set out in GoB's 8th Fifth Year Plan (July 2020 - June 2025) to shift the country out of the Least Developed Country category as well as transition to a Middle-Income Country by 2031 and subsequently to a High-Income Country by 2041 is fraught with challenges stemming from low empowerment and agency of girls and women in the country.

Preserving the rights of girls: A look at policies and programmes

The policy landscape:

Child marriage has been illegal in Bangladesh since 1929 with a minimum age set at 18 for women and 21 for men since the 1980's. In 2014, the government pledged to end child marriage before the age of 15 by 2021 and end marriage before the age of 18 by 2041.³⁹ Moreover, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) **with technical and financial support from UNICEF Bangladesh**, is in the process of developing a costed National Adolescent Strategy which brings together different sectors including Ministries of Social Welfare, Education, and Health. Bangladesh is also a part of an eight-member countries of South Asia pact called the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIVAC) that has developed a Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Asia.⁴⁰ While the country has over time witnessed the adoption of policies, legislation and schemes, the practice of child marriage continues to engulf Bangladesh.

Drawing from several global policies and conventions, the Government of Bangladesh enacted specific laws and policies geared towards addressing this social evil. However, in Bangladesh, the national laws often come in conflict with customary religious laws and practices, making it difficult to enforce or implement the national laws.⁴¹ Moreover, with a **confluence of cultures and religions in the country**, the concept of marriage differs across Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian communities, resulting in overlapping legal systems.⁴² Each religion has separate laws that govern marriage, separation and divorce and the personal laws of each of these communities are officially recognised laws.

Additionally, the **1929 Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA)**, which had set the legal age of marriage for girls at 18 and boys at 21 was amended over the years, most recently leading to the **2017 Child Marriage Restraint Act** that introduced a retrogressive exception that allows child marriages without any minimum legal age in "special cases." The act states that "*if a marriage is solemnised in such manner and under such special circumstances as may be prescribed by rules in the best interests of*

³⁵ UNFPA, 'Reproductive Health of Rohingya Adolescents and Youth in Bangladesh: A Qualitative Study', October 2018, Retrieved from: [Marriage and sexual and reproductive health of Rohingya adolescents and youth in Bangladesh: A qualitative study \(popcouncil.org\)](https://popcouncil.org/study/marriage-and-sexual-and-reproductive-health-of-rohingya-adolescents-and-youth-in-bangladesh-a-qualitative-study)

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Syed. S., 'Child Marriage in Humanitarian Settings: Looking at Rohingya Syrian Refugee Communities', *Melbourne International Journal of Law*, Vol. 39, 2018, Retrieved from: [Child Marriage in Humanitarian Settings: Looking at Rohingya and Syrian Refugee Communities — The Michigan Journal of International Law \(mijonline.org\)](https://mijonline.org/Child-Marriage-in-Humanitarian-Settings-Looking-at-Rohingya-and-Syrian-Refugee-Communities---The-Michigan-Journal-of-International-Law-mijonline.org)

³⁸ The Guardian, 'Rohingya girls as young as 12 compelled to marry just to get food', November, 2017, Retrieved from: [Rohingya girls as young as 12 compelled to marry just to get food | Global development | The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/nov/01/rohingya-girls-as-young-as-12-compelled-to-marry-just-to-get-food)

³⁹ Human Rights Watch, "Bangladesh: Legalizing Child Marriage Threatens Girls' Safety,: Contain harm with strict regulations.", Mar 2, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/02/bangladesh-legalizing-child-marriage-threatens-girls-safety>

⁴⁰ Girls Not Brides, "The Role of Parliamentarians," 2016. Retrieved from:

https://www.girlsnottbrides.org/wpcontent/uploads/2015/05/GNB_The_Role_of_Parliamentarians_2016_v9_Final.pdf

⁴¹ Women and Justice Fellow

⁴² ibid

the minor, at the directions of the court and with the consent of the parents or the guardian of the minor, as the case may be, it shall not be deemed to be an offence under this Act.”⁴³

Amidst widespread criticism from the international human rights communities, including organisations such as the Human Rights Watch that stated that the law was a “devastating step backwards for the fight against child marriage in Bangladesh,”⁴⁴ the law came into effect on 10th December 2017, repealing the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929.⁴⁵

Combating child marriage is further aligned with the **fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goals**. As a core development issue, child marriage is both borne out of and causes intersectional disadvantages. Making progress on ending child marriage is crucial to the achievement of interlinked SDGs including those related to poverty, food security, health, education, gender equality, economic growth and peace and justice.

Programmes and partnerships: A collaborative effort to ending child marriage

On the ground, various stakeholders from both government and non-governmental organisations have programmes and partnerships in place to help tackle issues associated with high prevalence of child marriages. Evidence from studies highlight the impact of interventions such as **encouraging girls to stay in school and strengthening their abilities to negotiate later marriages by empowering them and providing them with skills** that can increase their financial prospects. However, often, these interventions fall short of directly addressing the complexities of child marriage in South Asia, and especially in Bangladesh where the role of parents in determining age of marriage and sexual onset is extremely influential and critical in an adolescent girls’ life.⁴⁶ Interventions such as financial incentives to families of adolescent girls have instead, proven to be effective in a country like Bangladesh, and have reduced likelihood of child marriage.⁴⁷

Efforts by prominent global development organisations such as Save the Children’s to ensure availability of quality maternal, new born and family health planning services at community levels, or Plan International’s programme to provide family planning, nutrition, life skill straining to married and unmarried young women, are other key efforts running in various districts of the country. Similarly, UN Women’s programme on combating gender violence in Bangladesh aims to work with marginalised women, partner with district based and high-level leadership of key institutions such as local government, civil society organisations, women’s organisations, education institutions and work places and implement a strategic approach prevent violence against women and girls.

These programmes and several others by local and global organisations have been working in the country addressing various determinants of child marriage. However, driving transformational change will continue to require multiple stakeholders to jointly deliver results for children and ensure that their contributions are cohesive and complementary rather than duplicative in nature.

1.2 Programme description

Bangladesh has one of the **highest rates of child marriage in the world**. Therefore, ending child marriage (ECM), is a relevant and much needed priority area for both the Government of Bangladesh

⁴³The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017 (Act no. VI of 2017). Retrieved from:

<https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/sites/unicef.org.bangladesh/files/201810/Child%20Marriage%20Restraint%20Act%202017%20English.pdf>

⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch, “Bangladesh: Legalizing Child Marriage Threatens Girls’ Safety,: Contain harm with strict regulations,” Mar 2, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/02/bangladesh-legalizing-child-marriage-threatens-girls-safety>

⁴⁵The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017 (Act no. VI of 2017). Retrieved from:<https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/sites/unicef.org.bangladesh/files/201810/Child%20Marriage%20Restraint%20Act%202017%20English.pdf>

⁴⁶ Buchmann, Nina, et.all, “Power vs Money: Alternative Approaches to Reducing Child Marriage in Bangladesh, a Randomized Control Trial,” 15 April, 2017.

⁴⁷ ibid.

(GoB) and its development partners. UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office (BCO) and its partners support various programmes that engage adolescents in increasing their awareness on the adverse consequences of child marriage while simultaneously providing them with adequate skills to help improve their lives and delay marriage. A multi-stakeholder meeting took place in December 2014 to develop an extensive analysis of the situation of child marriage in Bangladesh and developed a Theory of Change for the work around ECM in the country, which was in turn the basis of the BCO strategy note for ECM.⁴⁸ BCO's ECM Strategy Note was aligned to Bangladesh's National Action Plan on ECM, that identified a combination of strategies to combat concerns of child marriage through community engagement, advocacy and institutional strengthening with the aim to increase access to quality education for girls, providing livelihood support and establishing ways to empower adolescents.

A key area of focus for the GoB and BCO has been on gender equality, recognising that bridging the **gender gap is instrumental in achieving several other linked development targets**. Moreover, acknowledging the multipronged and cross-sectional issues, the UNICEF Country Programme Document for Bangladesh mentions **a life-cycle approach** to address the challenges of child marriage in the country. The focus overall is to improve social inclusion and increase awareness of **children's rights by strengthening capacities at the national and sub-national levels** and develop robust systems that address inequity issues through a mix of top-down and bottom-up approaches.⁴⁹ Additionally, efforts were also made to encourage a shift in perceptions surrounding harmful gender norms by establishing access to knowledge and information to motivate parents and community. The inherent ethos is to work with adolescents, families, communities and other relevant key stakeholders and provide the required information, knowledge, skills, exposure and channels through which informed choices can be made that are not stripped from the realities of the country.

UNICEF and UNFPA: A joint effort to eliminate child marriage

At a global level, in 2015, United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF launched their Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage (GPECM) across 12 programme countries.⁵⁰ Bangladesh is one of the 12 countries that is a part of the joint UNICEF and UNFPA GPECM that also implements its strategies with a goal to delay marriage, address associated conditions that are contributing factors to child marriage nationally and provide support to girls who have already been married off early.

For the first time, strategies across key sectors **such as health, education, child protection and water and sanitation, are brought under a holistic programme** with shared goals and plans. Aligned to government, civil society organisations and the youth of the country themselves, in Bangladesh the GPECM programme aimed to reach more than 425,000 girls over four years.⁵¹ The GPECM results framework (*Annexure 1*) draws on the logic defined by the Global Theory of Change, with five key outcomes and seven outputs.

UNICEF BCO efforts to end child marriage

The Government of Bangladesh worked with UNICEF and UNFPA on a National Plan of Action to implement commitments made by the Prime Minister at a Girls' Summit in July 2014. The following year, in 2015, the BCO received initial funding and the New Country Programme Document of 2016 acknowledged the opportunity to sharpen the approach on ECM across the country. The Strategy Note on ECM was used as a basis for the GPECM when Bangladesh became one of the three GPECM

⁴⁸ ToR

⁴⁹ UNICEF Country Programme Document (2017-2020)

⁵⁰ The twelve programme countries in the first phase of the GPECM are: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia and Yemen.

⁵¹ UNFPA "Child Marriage." Retrieved

from:<https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pubpdf/Final%20CM%20brief%20Bangladesh%20for%20web.pdf>

countries in UNICEF's South Asian Region for Phase 1 of the joint UNFPA-UNICEF GPECM programme.

A combination of strategies was curated to address the complexities associated with the prevalence of child marriage:

- **Empowerment of adolescent girls** with interventions aimed at mobilisation of out of school adolescents into adolescent clubs to build their leadership and life skills, and their understanding of development issues that affect them directly such as health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, HIV/AIDS prevalence and nutrition.
- C4D strategy focus was **Social and Behavioural Change** through an emphasis on **Community Engagement** interventions, combined with other interventions and approaches, that recognised the instrumental role played by families and communities and underlying social norms in the high incidences of child marriages. Interventions were developed to mobilise, engage, and develop a dialogue among important stakeholders who can help build ownership and facilitate collective action to ensure girls attend school and are not pulled out to get married at an early age.
- At the root of some of the strategies was **institutional strengthening, advocacy and law enforcement**. Under this, UNICEF and UNFPA worked together to advocate against the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017 (CMRA) and support the development of the National Action Plan on ECM.
- **Improving accessibility to quality formal education for girls** by enabling them to continue their education and delay their marriages was another key strategy. This included providing safe and hygienic conditions for girls in school, providing second-chance education for girls who have dropped out for various reasons, equipping girls with skilling opportunities that include life skill building, vocational training, teacher training, and additional help with job matching and job placements to become financially independent and contributing members of their families, thereby also increasing their bargaining power and decision making.
- **Provision of livelihood support and financial incentives** through cash transfers to provide families with financial backing so they can support their girls' education. The BCO aimed to provide the GoB with the technical support required to develop and reinforce suitable financial incentives for families.

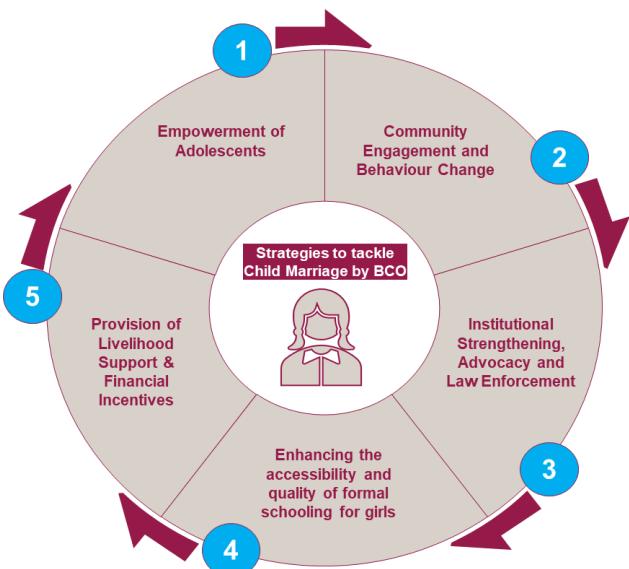


Figure 1: Strategies developed by UNICEF BCO to end child marriage

While the programme at the national level did not have any formal and consolidated **National Theory of Change document**⁵², UNICEF BCO aligned their programmes with the National Action Plan drawn up by MoWCA and wherever possible concretely included related outputs and activities in the rolling work plans, in partnership with the government. Moreover, as the specific strategies identified by

⁵² BCO ECM Strategy Note 2016

UNICEF BCO were aligned to the main outcomes of the government's action plan, advocating with government partners at the local and national level and implementing the activities in identified UNICEF target districts would roll out systematically.

When GPECM was launched in Bangladesh, the BCO aligned all interventions aimed at ECM to global strategies under the GPECM and brought them under the joint programme with UNFPA. These interventions were then funded by the GPECM funds received by UNICEF for Phase I. The indicative budget for Phase I stood at an estimated USD 246.7 million for a period of four years (2016-2019) with contributions from Canada, the Netherlands, Italy, the United Kingdom and the European Commission.⁵³ While the GPECM fund, as will be elaborated upon in subsequent sections of the report, acted as a catalytic fund, BCO's ECM efforts were also carried out through utilisation of funds received from other donors.

An “**Area-Based Programming Approach**” was adopted both the BCO ECM Strategy and UNICEF-UNFPA GPECM, recognising that different regions of the country had different prevalence rates of child marriage and varied causes and consequences of the same.

- **BCOs ECM strategy note**

When the first proposal for funding on child marriage was developed in 2015, 11 *upazillas* and two city corporations with high prevalence of child marriage were selected as target implementation areas.⁵⁴

Division	District
Dhaka	Slums in Zone 2
	North Dhaka City Corporation
Mymensingh	Kishoreganj
	Jamalpur Sadar
	Sarishabari
Khulna	Khulna City Corporation
	Dacope
Rangpur	Nilphamari
	Dinla
	Domar
Barisal	Bhola Sadar
	Lal Mohon
	Char Fasson

Table 1: BCO ECM Strategy Note: Target implementation areas

This selection was based on several considerations including the 2012-2016 UNDAF priorities, UNICEF's programme presence, scope of local government partners, and presence of NGOs and other partners, among others. As mentioned in the Strategy Note, the choice of intervention districts considers

⁵³ ToR

⁵⁴ BCO ECM Strategy Note 2016

child marriage prevalence rates and geographical proximity, to address the issue of scale, both by addressing beneficiary numbers and seizing the opportunity of positive contamination and cross-district learning at the divisional levels.

- [Global Programme to Eliminate Child Marriage \(GPECM\)](#)

In Bangladesh, an 'Area-Based Programming Approach' was adopted for efforts to end child marriage in the country, using high prevalence rates of child marriage from MICS 2013 as the key variable for determining the area selection. The following areas were included in the GPECM according to the global programme proposal:⁵⁵

Division	District	Upazilla
Mymensingh	Jamalpur	Islamapur and Dewanganj
	Netrokona	Kolmakanda and Khalajjhuri
	Sherpur	Sreebordi ad Nalitabari
Barisal	Bhola	Char Fassion, Lal Mohon, Monpura, Sadar
	Patuakhali	Kalapara
	Barguna	Patharghata
Khulna	Khulna	Dacope and Koyra
	Kustia	Daulatpur and Bheramara
Rangpur	Nilphamari	Dimla, Domar and Kishorganj

Table 2: Geographical Coverage of GPECM

Key results to be achieved by BCOs ECM can be summarised as follows:⁵⁶

- In the target districts and city corporations there should be a reduction in child marriage by at least 30 per cent for girls under 18 years of age.
- The Country has endorsed a full costed five-year National Action Plan for Ending Child Marriage.
- A nationwide communication for development (C4D) campaign against child marriage comprising both media and on-ground community engagement initiatives is launched in Bangladesh in 2016, bringing together key sectoral partners, NGOs, adolescents, young people and women's rights networks and academia to achieve behaviour and social norm change.
- There is a positive shift in attitudes and practices around child marriage which includes both condemnation and prevention of child marriages at the ward level in the UNICEF target *upazillas* and city corporations.

Both Phase I of the GPECM and BCO's ECM efforts under the CPD 2017-2020 **have been concluded**. Phase II of the GPECM was commenced on the 1st of January 2020 and is slated to continue till 31st December 2023. It is also key to mention that BCO CPD was extended by a year and activities were carried out during 2021 as well. At the time of writing this report, a new CPD (2022-2026) had been designed by BCO and was under review. The evaluation's findings will be used to develop the specific and detailed annual workplans for the new CPD and refine the Phase II plans for GPECM.

⁵⁵ ToR

⁵⁶ BCO ECM Strategy Note 2016

COVID-19 and its impact

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in global devastation, governments across the world adopted stringent measures to combat it. On March 26, 2020 the Government of Bangladesh announced a nationwide lockdown for a few weeks as a preventive step to contain the spread of this virus. The sudden lockdown and the consequent shutdown of public transport and other services created a humanitarian crisis with a public health dimension. While this impacted the evaluation itself with subsequent changes in methodology and timelines, initial ground reports highlighted its devastating impact in the country.

Months after the initial outbreak, as COVID-19 continued to disrupt systems and increase the susceptibility of vulnerable groups, its impact on child marriage was a crucial focus among child protection stakeholders. Given its unprecedented nature, research from the early days of the pandemic indicated an increase in incidences of child marriage, potentially impeding the gains made in ending the age-old practice thus far. Furthermore, studies also indicated an increase in violence among married adolescent girls (35 per cent) during the COVID-19 imposed lockdown compared to their unmarried peers (16 per cent).⁵⁷ Correspondingly, a study conducted recorded the occurrence of 462 and 174 child marriages during the months of June and July 2020 respectively.⁵⁸ The study found that parents, relatives and community members facilitated child marriages as a means to reduce the burden families faced during the lockdown period.

These findings are intrinsically tied to the overall context of child marriage discussed in this report and were exacerbated by the lockdown. Loss of social protection measures, economic downfall of already underprivileged families, increasing gender discrimination and exposed vulnerabilities of girls and women, as a result of the pandemic, contributed to an increase in child marriages. Additionally, due to diverted priorities, the resulting limited focus of local community and law enforcement structures responsible for the aversion of child marriage also contributed to an increase in child marriages. Thus, cooperation and coordination among various stakeholders will be critical as the country continues to battle not just COVID-19, but child marriage as a phenomenon.

⁵⁷ Population Council, 'Bangladesh: COVID-19 Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices & Needs', April 2020

⁵⁸ Manusher Jonno Foundation, 'Violence against women and children: COVID-19, Telephonic Survey', July 2020

Chapter 2: Evaluation purpose and methods

2.1 Theory of Change for Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh

The following ToC's are of particular relevance to ECM efforts in Bangladesh (Annexure 7):

National level ToC

A two-day workshop (February 24-25th, 2014), "*Theory of Change: Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh*," was conducted jointly by UNFPA and Plan Bangladesh, and developed and facilitated by the Asia Regional Office of International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW).⁵⁹ The workshop brought together different stakeholders and members of the community, including Government, NGOs, INGOs, donors, religious leaders, and adolescent children under one platform to address issues related to child marriage.⁶⁰ The intent was to jointly conceptualise a ToC that should serve as a framework in developing strategies, identifying goals and activities, and possibly developing monitoring and evaluation indicators to ensure that short-term and long-term goals for ECM are met. This multi-level, dynamic approach was then built into an overall comprehensive ToC framework at the national level.⁶¹

Based on an analysis of the drivers, consequences and solutions of child marriage, an ecological framework, where a girl's life impacts and is impacted upon by factors that operate at various levels was undertaken to form the ToC. Participants identified five layers of influence on a girl's life, considered as five pillars of the ToC intended to end child marriage: Child, Family, Community, Institutions and Policies.⁶² The strategies proposed, including using information and communication technologies to inform and educate the family on child marriage prevention laws and change family and community attitude to female child cut across all levels, and were particularly important to achieve gender transformative results. Further, one of the five programme strategies explicitly state, "*engage men and boys*", a critical component to successfully eliminate child marriage in the country.

2017-2020 country programme ToC

The CP was developed in close dialogue with the GoB to ensure its alignment with the Seventh Five-Year Plan, sectoral plans, the in-country process to define Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2017-2020, Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and lessons from the Mid-Term Review of the previous Country Programme.⁶³ The vision of the ToC was noted as, "*By 2020, adolescent girls and boys in Bangladesh, especially the most disadvantaged, utilize quality basic social services in a safe and protective environment, and are resilient and empowered as active agents of change*".⁶⁴ Headline results included improving equitable access to quality inclusive education and reducing out-of-school children, and preventing violence against children.⁶⁵ Of particular mention are the implementing strategies prioritising children with disabilities which included addressing deprivations of children with disabilities and leveraging mass media and communication efforts around social norms and practices surrounding violence against children, disability and inclusive education. However, it is critical to note that the Outcome 3 ToC is not an ECM focused one, but rather provides a framework for child protection as a whole for adolescents in Bangladesh.

⁵⁹ International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), PLAN and UNFPA, *Theory of Change: Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh*, (2014)

⁶⁰ International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), PLAN and UNFPA, *Theory of Change: Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh*, (2014)

⁶¹ International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), PLAN and UNFPA, *Theory of Change: Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh*, (2014)

⁶² International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), PLAN and UNFPA, *Theory of Change: Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh*, (2014)

⁶³ BCO Country Programme 2017-2020 and Strategy Note (2016)

⁶⁴ BCO Country Programme 2017-2020 and Strategy Note (2016)

⁶⁵ BCO Country Programme 2017-2020 and Strategy Note (2016)

GPECM ToC

The global ToC was constructed to address the main recognised determinants that lead to child marriage, though gaps were identified in the intervention logic. The ToC, which informed the programme design, allowed for country-level contextualisation and adaptation, though only a few countries, including Bangladesh, formally adapted the ToC.

2.2 Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office (BCO) contracted **Ernst & Young LLP's (EY LLP) services** for undertaking the final evaluation of their work on Ending Child Marriage (ECM).

Purpose

The overall objective of the evaluation was to assess the progress made by BCO towards the **achievements of results of its ECM programmes**. The evaluation has analysed the relevance of BCO's work on ECM, effectiveness and added value of the **joint UNFPA UNICEF GPECM** and BCO's ECM interventions outside the GPECM funded through OR of different sections. It has identified opportunities and barriers of the implementation of **cross sectoral evidenced based intervention strategies**. Additionally, it has also identified **good practices of convergence** among sectors and lessons especially from Phase I of the GPECM.

Based on the ToR, the specific objectives of the evaluation include:

1. Assess results against the strategies outlined in the Strategy Note on ECM and the results framework and workplan of the GPECM.
2. Assess cross sectoral convergence and collaboration and if the comparative advantage of each sector was leveraged.
3. Assess to what extent the scale and sustainability have been built into the interventions.
4. Assess the extent to which equity and gender equality have been addressed in the programme implementation.
5. Assess whether the programme was gender transformative in its design and whether it has led to gender transformative results.
6. Assess how UNICEF BCO used its standing with the GoB to push the ECM agenda and how it leveraged the local consultative groups (LCG) Women Advancement and Gender Equality platform for national level advocacy.
7. Assess how BCO built and promoted partnerships with all stakeholders especially the women's organisations and civil society.
8. Assess the extent to which policies and laws at the national level have been translated and used at the district and *upazilla* level.
9. Calculate the cost-effectiveness of the programme.
10. Develop a methodology that uses existing information to estimate the number of child marriages that are averted and prevented.
11. Assess the impact of COVID-19 on Child Marriage

Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, an additional objective (objective 11) was added to the scope of the evaluation. With the added vulnerabilities created by COVID-19 and the consequent restrictions and lockdown, it was vital to capture the phenomenon of child marriage in Bangladesh in the light of the current pandemic.

The findings from this evaluation will help understand lessons learnt and in informing the next phase of the GPECM. Additionally, the findings will help UNICEF and Government of Bangladesh in developing the next Country Programme Document 2021-2025. Moreover, the findings will act as accountability and help donors who support the various programmes on ending child marriage.

2.3 Scope of evaluation

Reference period of the evaluation: The evaluation notes that ECM related work was covered under the current Country Programme (2016-2020) and GPECM Phase 1 (1st January 2016-31st December 2019). However, this evaluation includes not only activities covered till the end of GPECM Phase 1 but has also looked into 2020 as the evaluation was deferred by UNICEF on account of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This allowed the evaluation to cover aspects of the COVID-19 impact. Specific objectives and evaluation questions on the COVID-19 aspect were defined further in close consultation with UNICEF.

Geographic coverage for the evaluation: The evaluation has covered work undertaken at the national level and aspects of the programme that were conducted at ECM districts, either through GPECM interventions or other ECM activities. All activities implemented during the period of evaluation have been covered with a focus on the progress towards achieving outputs and contributions towards outcomes as defined in the GPECM and BCO CP Outcome 3 Theories of Change (ToC) (*Annexure 7*). Based on this point, we incorporated a non-experimental evaluation design in all five divisions namely, **Mymensingh, Dhaka, Barisal, Khulna and Rangpur**. In each division, one district and one *upazilla* within (ECM, GPECM or both) the selected district was covered for primary data collection (see sampling below).

2.4 Approach and methodology

2.4.1 Approach

As a part of our overall approach, our team structured and rolled out OECD DAC criteria-based framework in order to capture the data/information required to comprehensively assess the progress towards achieving results of the ECM programme across intervention districts, including the value and impact of the joint UNFPA-UNICEF GPECM programme as well as the impact of interventions outside of the GPECM. The evaluation has incorporated assessment a theory-based evaluation framework, which has been attached as *Annexure 6*. The evaluation framework was developed using the DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. It also maps the evaluation questions and the tools that have been used to collect the same.

2.4.2 Methodology

This section explains various steps that were undertaken during the course of the evaluation along with research methods and strategies that were applied.

Phase I: Inception Phase

The **kick-off call** followed by an **inception meeting** in **Dhaka** (February 2020) was attended by key stakeholders from UNICEF with the objective of developing a common understanding of the ToR and confirm expectations, scope of the evaluation, timelines and deliverables. Post the inception meeting, the evaluation team was preparing for the data collection to commence in March 2020. However, with COVID-19 exploding the evaluation was halted. As a response, alternate methodologies were proposed by the team for UNICEF's consideration in April 2020. In May 2020 a decision was taken to defer the evaluation by four months. Unfortunately, with the situation not improving, a decision was taken in September 2020 consultation with UNICEF to adopt a "blended methodology" as the way forward to allow flexibility in design considering the ever-changing circumstances posed by the pandemic.

COVID-19 response: Blended methodological approach through remote data collection, supplemented with face to face interactions and literature review

The revised methodology included data harnessed through a review of literature along with remote data collection through telephonic interviews with key stakeholders. Remote data collection was further supplemented by in-person interactions where possible after **assessing its feasibility and necessary clearance from UNICEF and Ethical Review Board**. In order to undertake face to face interactions, the evaluation team brought on board local consultants in Bangladesh.

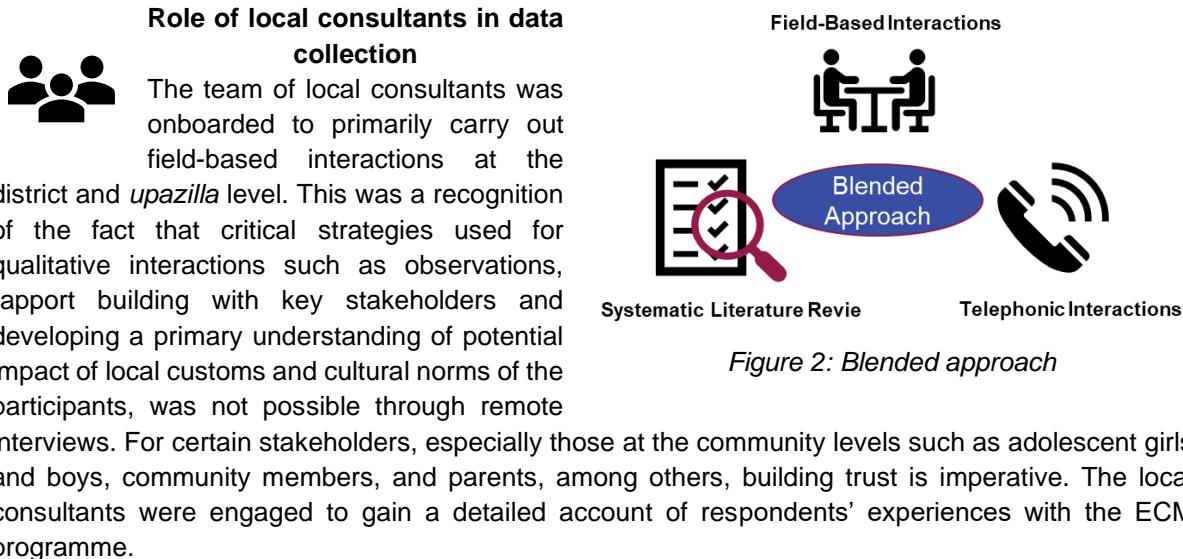


Figure 2: Blended approach

Remote stakeholder consultations



Amidst the circumstantial constraints, the evaluation team from India undertook extensive **remote interactions with the National level and UNICEF staff** which was supplemented by field-based interactions that was led by our local consultants in districts and *upazillas* in Bangladesh. The remote interviews were used to gather narrative data on the stakeholder's participation, experience, opinions and assessment. **The remote interviews were conducted using the convergent interviewing technique as it seeks to resolve the dilemma of broad versus specific questions with a structured approach.**

With the adoption of the blended approach the evaluation team took necessary steps to ensure adequate protocols were set in place as the engagement navigated through the pandemic. Some of the measures included (but not limited to) the following:

- Crucial role of our lead local consultant, Rashida Parveen (Senior Thematic Expert based in Dhaka) who played a frontal role in enhancing rapport building with participants over the telephone and to improve the quality of interactions with stakeholders at all levels
- Survey instruments were reformulated to meet certain best practices criteria for remote interviews as given by prominent organisations⁶⁶

Literature review



The **blended data collection** approach was **complemented with a review of literature and documents that covered programmatic and non-programmatic facets**. The evaluation utilised programme and result reports prepared by the programme implementers and UNICEF's sectoral teams. Further, a logically precise review of the programme results-based framework, programme cooperation agreements and work plans helped to record occurrences and variances over the programme duration. Understanding the programme's theory through existing documentation was an integral part of our secondary research in

⁶⁶ Best practices for conducting phone surveys, J-PAL, Retrieved from: <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/blog/3-20-20/best-practices-conducting-phone-surveys>

providing evidence for why certain aspects of the programme “worked” or “didn’t work”. Secondary data analysis was also carried out by aggregating, analysing, and synthesising previous research reports from empirical literature or existing databases.

Data collection methods



Specific revisions were made to methods and tools to adapt to the blended approach for data collection. Overall, adjustments to tools were made in terms of length, number of open-ended questions, and re-phrasing of sensitive questions, as a practical step in carrying data collection.

The following section elaborates on the data collection methods and tools:

In-depth Interviews (IDI) were conducted with adolescent girls and boys who are affiliated and not affiliated with adolescent clubs to develop an understanding of the impact of the programme. It was designed to develop a narrative that helped reveal gaps and potential areas of improvement and gauge the level of inclusion of the programme of the most marginalised communities.

Semi-structured Interviews were undertaken with community stakeholders to gain relevant insights into the extent of behaviour change and their engagement towards a collective action to prevent child marriages within target intervention areas

Key Informant Interviews (KII): These interviews facilitated the emergence of a broader perspective and specific recommendations to make the evaluation findings more useful for stakeholders. These interactions additionally helped in understanding the policies, programmes and initiatives that the various stakeholders have put in place for eliminating child marriage, mobilisation, institutional strengthening, advocacy, and law enforcement to support policy and legal reform against child marriages. Further, the tool also allowed us to clarify the reasons for any incongruity that emerged between the document review and the qualitative interactions.

U-Report polls: The team also reviewed the u-report polls that have already been conducted on child marriage by UNICEF. While these polls included non-representative samples of adolescents, their review helped in developing a wider understanding of the programme strategies and the contextual variables that appear to facilitate or prevent progress towards achieving project outcomes.

Data Checklist: These were used to gather programme specific data that helped provide benchmarks for comparing the analysis that was drawn from the data collected through the other qualitative tools. It also helped us in collecting data pertaining to programme activities and was primarily used for collecting data/information required to comment upon the programme’s effectiveness.

Mapping of key stakeholders



UNICEF's ECM programme is structured around the Socio-Ecological Model (SEM) to ensure targeted interventions. It guides the programme with an effective framework to understand the multiple levels of a social system and the interactions between individuals and environment within this system.

Recognising the importance of SEM as an approach, we have applied the model to contribute in identification of relevant key stakeholders at various levels. At an individual level, key target groups included adolescent girls and boys. Similarly, second level, interpersonal, comprised family and community members & leaders. The figure below maps the various stakeholders covered in the

evaluation against the five hierarchical, closely related and interconnected levels of the model⁶⁷

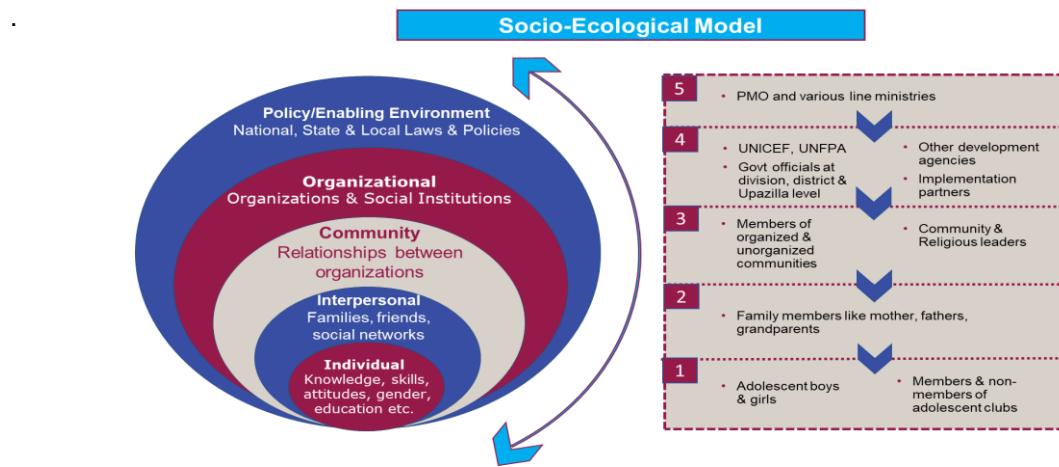


Figure 3: Socioecological Model

Adopting such an approach also assisted in understanding the multifaceted and interactive effects of personal and environmental factors that determine behaviours that either propagate or deter practices surrounding child marriages.⁶⁸ It has also informed the designing of our relevant data collection instruments to gauge the effectiveness of the interventions targeted at specific stakeholders under UNICEF's ECM programme.

In line with the same, a stakeholder mapping exercise was undertaken to identify and ensure the inclusion of a broad range of stakeholders in the evaluation. It must be also noted that the evaluation team was flexible to include any additional stakeholder suggested by respondents during interactions subject to respondent availability and overall COVID – 19 context. A list of stakeholders mapped for data collection along with the tools used has been placed in (*Annexure 2*).

Sampling

Division sampling	District	Reason of selection	Upazilla sampling
Mymensingh	Jamalpur	Districts with upazillas covered through GPECM interventions or other ECM activities or a combination of both and is a convergent programme district for UNICEF's sectoral teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jamalpur Sadar
Dhaka	Dhaka		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North City Corporation
Barisal	Bhola		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lal Mohan
Khulna	Khulna		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dacope
Rangpur	Nilphamari		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kishoregonj

Table 3: Site for Field-Based Data Collection



The evaluation team's understanding is that the programme is being implemented across the country and the geographic scope of the evaluation required us to focus on both work undertaken at the national level and work that happened in the ECM districts,

⁶⁷ UNICEF. What are the Social Ecological Model (SEM), Communication for Development (C4D). Accessed from https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiBxvWp4bXVAhXMq48KHX7mCVoQFgg0MAI&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.unicef.org%2Fcbsc%2Ffiles%2FModule_1_SEM-C4D.docx&usg=AFQjCNEsoNf809kypyU66LfiOc69kairDw

⁶⁸ *ibid*

either through GPECM interventions or other ECM activities.

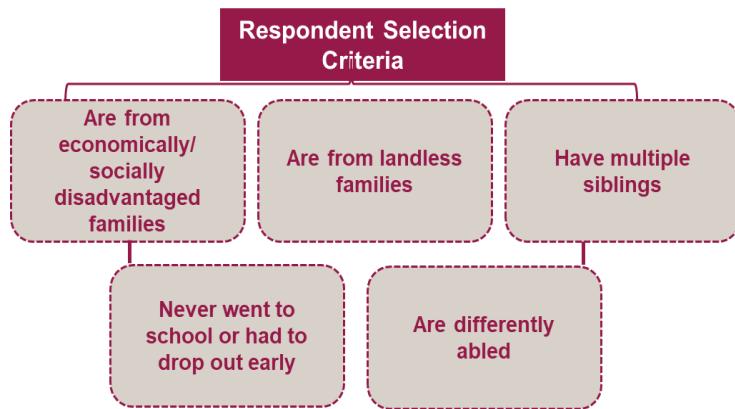


Figure 4: Respondent selection criteria

Respondent selection and identification

The listed categories of respondents from the community, particularly the adolescent girls and boys (affiliated and not affiliated to adolescent clubs), were selected to adopt a maximum variation approach. Further, it must be noted that adolescents' boys & girls (10-19 years) and young women & men who were married in the last two – four years (as a minor) were primarily considered for the evaluation.

The parameters mentioned in Figure 4 were considered for identification of respondents to account for the varying backgrounds and inclusivity of the participants. With support of the implementation partner, a list of adolescent girls and boys (affiliated and not affiliated to adolescent clubs) along with their telephone numbers was shared with the evaluation team, in addition to details of other community and district level stakeholders. In this regard, varying backgrounds and inclusivity of the respondents was taken into consideration by including more women, **differently abled people, and respondents from marginalised population**, while also keeping respondents who may not belong to disadvantaged sections.

The districts have been selected consultatively with UNICEF and a purposive sampling has been adopted to ensure that the selected districts have *upazillas* covered through GPECM interventions or other ECM activities or a combination of both and are a convergent programme district for UNICEF's sectoral teams. The evaluation team further selected *upazillas* with convergent programming by UNICEF's sectoral teams from the list of *upazillas* provided by UNICEF. Finally, our purposive sampling technique at the *upazilla* level is followed up with the method of convenience sampling to arrive at the final data collection sites. However, in the face of the restrictions posed due to COVID-19 induced lockdown, data collection in only selective *upazillas* was carried out post consultation with UNICEF.

Establishing an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)

An oversight body was constituted: Evaluation Reference group (ERG). This group assisted in guiding the evaluation and met at the specified points during the engagement lifecycle to review and comment upon the work. A brief ToR for the ERG has been appended as *Annexure 14* for reference.

Phase II: Primary data collection

Data collection began with the Team Leader and Senior Thematic Expert holding an online workshop with all team members. This was followed by a face to face workshop held at DCN office by the Senior thematic Expert with the data collection team. KLLs with key stakeholders at the national level were

remotely led by the Team Leader. Field-based interactions in April 2021 and May 2021 were undertaken by the team local consultants in Bangladesh. A copy of the field plan has been attached as *Annexure 10*. As per the plan primary research had to be carried out with 96 respondents. However due to the prevailing situation it was possible to cover only 79 respondents (15 IDIs with adolescent girls and boys, 50 KIIs with stakeholders within UNICEF and the government and 14 SSIs with community level stakeholders at the *Upazilla* level like parents and members of CBCPCs).

Sr. No.	Data collection tool	Indicative sample	Achieved sample
1	In depth interviews (IDIs)	15	15
2	Key informant interviews (KIIs)	66	50
3	Semi structured interviews (SSIs)	15	14
	Total	96	79

Table 4: Data Collection Tool with Achieved Sample

The ToR was developed for the field team also keeping COVID-19 protocols in mind and the same has been attached as *Annexure 9*.

Phase III: Analysis and report writing phase



a) Qualitative data analysis

The qualitative information formed a larger part of the report, due to the range of information that was obtained from the multiple stakeholders of the ECM and GPECM programmes. To initiate the organisation of qualitative data, the KIIs, IDIs, and semi-structured interviews, **a workshop mode** was adopted wherein the objective was to triangulate the data collected against the information provided by the various stakeholders in order to derive final conclusions/answers against each evaluation question. Once this workshop was completed, the team had a set of four excel sheets disaggregating information into main sections of the evaluation framework including Relevance and Responsiveness, Effectiveness and Impact, Efficiency and Sustainability. The same files were then referred to for the entire set of data/information/insights which would feed into the evaluation report.

Given the nature of the evaluation design being predominantly qualitative in nature the focus of the evaluation was to garner perspectives, document changes that have taken place and create an element of traceability between where things were and where things currently stand. An attempt was therefore made to discern the role played by stakeholders, especially change agents. The analysis was therefore inductive in nature where responses provided by diverse user groups were analysed for usage of matching terms or similar sentence patterns. These in turn were assessed for consistency to see if there are shared perceptions or sentiments being aired across similar user groups across diverse regions, indicating consistency in delivery of activities in the project. Notes maintained during the course of interactions were reviewed to see if views expressed on themes are individual in nature or have an element of group-view about them. The analysis was therefore evaluative, iterative but progressive, with information gathering and analysis proceeding together. At an aggregate level, the following analysis techniques were used to glean maximum information and use of these analysis techniques depended on the type of information or pattern that was being reported.

Type of analysis	Objective
Content analysis	To enable categorisation of verbal or behavioural data. It is usually analysed at both a descriptive level as well as at an inferential level
Narrative analysis	Transcribed experiences basis a KII or an IDI with the stakeholder concerned
Evaluative analysis	To respond to the evaluation questions, taking the evaluation criteria into consideration
Gender analysis	To understand if the programme had different impact on girls, boys women and men, while ensuring that the different needs of girls, boys, women and men were clearly identified and addressed by the interventions. Further, note any differences between and among women and men, based on the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints and power among other factors.

Table 5: Type of Analysis and Objective

b) Applying triangulations and complementarity

After analysing the information, the information obtained was grouped as per various heads related to the evaluation questions. They were then summarised and critically analysed to find answers to the evaluation questions. In case of any incongruence in one topic from primary source, the data was **triangulated from a secondary source**. The exercise enabled us to also validate the primary data collected during the field visit. Additionally, all types of data arising from the literature review was triangulated with the findings from the field to ensure that **internal validity is maximised**. Apart from triangulation, we also use complementarity to use data generated from the desk review to elaborate on information generated from the qualitative interviews.

The data gathered was analysed to ascertain to what extent the interventions had contributed to achieve the 4 key result areas mentioned in the previous section. A causal connect between the strategies and related interventions and the ECM strategy note was examined to ascertain what had worked well and which strategies or interventions needed to be relooked.

Methodology for cost effectiveness



The cost effectiveness analysis was carried out by triangulating data collated by UNICEF and secondary research. Data provided by UNICEF BCO contained the number of beneficiaries across the programme's output indicators and the expenditure of UNICEF across outcomes (in USD). A key component of the cost effectiveness analysis of the GPECM programme was the per-beneficiary cost. This cost was calculated by summing the number of beneficiaries for outputs and dividing it by the total expenditure for their respective outcome. The same methodology was adopted to calculate per-beneficiary costs for other countries. While costs were calculated in this manner, benefits could not be measured using the data shared by UNICEF. As a result, the effectiveness of the programme was gauged by comparing the actual number of beneficiaries of various outputs to their respective targets. Finally, Bangladesh's per-beneficiary costs (2017-19) of Outcome 1, Outcome 2, and Outcome 3 were compared with other GPECM countries.

This analysis was used to calculate the per-beneficiary cost for the abovementioned sectoral interventions in Bangladesh. Due to the absence of any known targets for the abovementioned interventions, the actual per-beneficiary costs could not be compared with the targets to gauge effectiveness or success. As a result, through secondary research, studies were found that established the benefits that could be accrued through interventions in the abovementioned areas. The costs were then compared to these benefits.

Report writing

The evaluation report has been structured around the OECD DAC criteria where '**relevance**', '**effectiveness & impact**', '**efficiency**', and '**sustainability**' are separate chapters. **Gender and equity perspectives have been clearly highlighted but incorporated across the five sections to avoid duplicity.** Further, the report attempts to provide detailed gender analysis and organise information about gender differences wherein the focus includes analysis of key national laws and policies, difference in access to assets, services and resources. Additionally, the evaluation attempted to capture the wider community social norms, traditions and contexts that helped set the context and identify causality and key drivers of child marriage among target beneficiaries. Similarly, findings related to the 5 major strategies of the ECM have also been interwoven across the section.

Evaluation Rubric

A key component of the evaluation was the creation of a rubric that enabled mapping of the key questions. This was assessed against a ranking matrix with the parameters of 'Excellent/Good/Adequate/Poor'. This rubric aims to gauge the performance of BCO's ECM efforts and highlight areas that require improvement. It is key to note here, however, that rankings have been provided for evaluation questions suited to be mapped against the rankings. In general, the rankings may be interpreted aligned with the description provided below in *Table 6*.

Rating	Description
Excellent	Excellent implies that the programme has met all set targets for the context to be addressed. Gradual improvements may be required, if the context so demands
Good	Good implies that while the programme has shown correct efforts to address the context. There may be room for improvement with respect to strengthening efforts in a manner that allows for sustainable and long-term change
Adequate	Adequate implies that the programme has met basic expectations on the whole. Significant enhancement may be required for better overall impact
Poor	Poor implies that the programme has not met basic expectations and/or not shown minimally acceptable progress on the whole. Immediate and major improvements are critical

Table 6: General Rubric Ranking Descriptors

2.5 Quality assurance procedures

The evaluation team put in place a robust engagement management plan through which ensured the quality and relevance of our deliverables. The final deliverable is an output of a carefully planned and well executed approach and methodology; one which has in place sufficient number of quality checks and measures. Detailed steps of our QA plan have been Annexed in this report as *Annexure 11*.

2.6 Risk and mitigation measures

As per our understanding of the TOR, the evaluation team had enlisted few risks which may have had the potential to undermine the reliability and validity of the evaluation results. Mitigation strategies were proposed for countering the potential risks based on our strong understanding of risk management systems. (Attached as *Annexure 12*)

2.7 Ethical considerations

The evaluation team understands that there is a need for evaluators to consider the dimensions of human rights and gender equality and for these to reflect in the tools and framework for the evaluation. The approach and methodology used to carry out this evaluation is developed in accordance with and adhering to the 'UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis'. Further, the team has adhered to the guidelines for Ethical Research Involving Children and integrated Human Rights (HR) and Gender Equality (GE) perspectives while carrying out the required field-based research. Ethical considerations for the respondents and a code of conduct was developed

(Annexure 3) and was an important part of training to the team members and researchers.

Obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) Clearance
Institute of Health Economics (IHE) has an Institutional Review Board (IRB) registered with the Federal wide Assurance (FWA) for the Protection of Human Subjects. It is an authorised panel of members that provide ethical approval for conducting research. For the purpose of this evaluation/ Ethical clearances from IHE- IRB has been obtained for the adoption of blended approach and evaluation tools. Approval was received post incorporation of changes suggested by IHE-IRB. IRB approval letter has been added to Annexure 4.

2.8 Limitations

- Given that the programme started in 2016, a number of key stakeholders closely involved in the conceptualisation and implementation of the programme in Phase I were difficult to reach especially in the case of UNICEF officials, local government officials and implementing partner organisation staff who had been replaced, and adolescents who were no longer residing in the intervention areas any more for various reasons. As a result, there was limited institutional memory of the process of design and implementation of the programme. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing restrictions further limited the ability of participants to be reached and engaged with.
- The sampling plan was prepared after extensive consultations during the kick-off meeting. The districts and *upazillas* were identified after taking into consideration a number of factors as mentioned above. Similar rigor was followed in identifying criteria for the respondents too. However, due to the time lag and resulting limited availability of adolescents who had participated in the ECM programme, all the respondents could not be reached. In view of this, it is possible that some significant aspects of the programme were missed, and some biases crept in reaching out to the respondents in the community. Since the adolescents were the end users of the programme, establishing a causal relation to the interventions may have been impacted.
- As Phase 1 of the programme ended in December 2019, the findings can inform and strengthen strategies to be used in subsequent phases but cannot assess and comment upon the final impact of programme. Relatedly, given the gap of almost two years between completion of Phase 1, delay caused by COVID in the start of the Phase 2 of the programme and the evaluation being conducted, it was noted that community stakeholders particularly had to be probed to recollect their association with the ECM interventions. Further, field interactions in Bhola and Khulna districts found that with the support of UNICEF, the respective Implementing Partners are currently carrying out similar interventions for ECM outside of the scope of activities identified for this evaluation. As a result, there was lack of clarity among respondents on the impact of previous BCO ECM interventions.
- The ToR sought to maintain a difference in terms of programme and funding related findings associated with the GPECM and ECM interventions of UNICEF BCO. However, whether programmatic or financial, reporting undertaken by UNICEF during the implementation did not have clear compartmentalisation between the two. Therefore, maintaining clear separation or to avoid overlap in terms of findings related to the two programmes was not possible. Additionally, field interactions highlighted that the respondents were unable to distinguish between GPECM and BCO ECM interventions. This lack of clarity was palpable even among Implementing Partners.
- While undertaking cost benefit analysis, in both the analyses (for GPECM and BCO ECM programmes), it was assumed that the number of beneficiaries shared by UNICEF BCO are unique beneficiaries. While comparing the per-beneficiary cost of Bangladesh to other GPECM countries,

it was assumed that data on number of beneficiaries and expenditure was collected in the same manner. Moreover, the comparative analysis does not account for the purchasing power of USD in different countries. The benefits in the ECM analysis were calculated from different secondary sources for various areas. It may be noted that the methodology to calculate the costs and benefits are not the same. Due to the absence of data with respect to the number of beneficiaries married prior to the interventions and the number post the intervention, it is difficult to attribute causality to specific interventions carried out in Bangladesh.⁶⁹

- The COVID-19 induced restrictions made it challenging to access data and information on how the pandemic has impacted the programme and its beneficiaries in sampled *upazillas*, districts. Further, with the ongoing restrictions, commenting on the impact relied heavily on the availability of such information. Therefore, any comment aligned to this angle was limited to assumptions and predictions from key stakeholders interacted with.

⁶⁹ Non-robust analysis and insufficient data has limited the cost effective analysis from presenting conclusive findings

Chapter 3: Evaluation findings

Data generated through the desk review and remote and on-field consultations were analysed to answer key questions of the evaluation framework. The following section presents the key findings across the identified evaluation criterion of Relevance, Effectiveness and Impact, Efficiency and Sustainability. Findings have been mapped to specific evaluation questions under each category. Based on the key findings, a rubric has also been created to identify the status of progression that has been achieved by BCO strategies and interventions for ECM in Bangladesh aligned to the evaluation questions. The same has been categorised as Excellent, Good, Adequate or Poor (*Annexure 16*).

3.1 Relevance

Sr. No.	Evaluation Question	Assessment Against Rubric
1	To what extent is the programme relevant and responsive to contribute toward ending child marriage in Bangladesh? To what extent has the programme been designed in a way that is responsive to different groups in the society, their own contexts and needs?	Assessment: Excellent Programme objectives have been designed in a comprehensive manner, aligned to the context and needs of adolescent girls in Bangladesh. This is further evidenced through a focused alignment with national and international legal and policy frameworks
2	To what extent do the programme strategies and activities address structural drivers of (gender) inequality?	Assessment: Excellent BCOs ECM efforts have correctly adopted gender transformative strategies to address the issue. The focus has been on addressing harmful gender norms and socio-cultural structures that encourage the same
3	To what extent is the ToC that guides the ECM work in Bangladesh well developed, aligned with the Bangladesh context, based on robust evidence and realistic in its assumptions and pathways of change	Assessment: Good ECM efforts in Bangladesh have been predominantly guided by two TOC's; National level TOC and the GPECM TOC. While the TOCs have been found to be contextually relevant, there is room for improvement with enhancing alignment to the needs and context of adolescent girls vulnerable to child marriage in Bangladesh
4	How well aligned is UNICEF ECM programme with the National Plan of Action strategies and pillars? Are there clear strategies of the NPA that UNICEF should focus on during the next ECM programme given UNICEF's expertise?	Assessment: Good ECM efforts are in line with the strategic directions outlined in the Government of Bangladesh's NAP to ECM, sector priorities outlined in policy documents of line ministries, and development priorities enlisted by key donors. Efforts may be enhanced with respect to implementation of the same at the ground level and capacity building of officials involved
5	To what extent has the programme been implemented following a human rights, equity and culturally sensitive approach?	Assessment: Good Culturally sensitive programming with a focus on human rights and equity has been a key approach of BCOs ECM efforts. However, within the socio-cultural context of Bangladesh, efforts to create a holistic environment that encourages complete protection of children's rights are required

Table 7: Summary of Relevance EQ Findings

To what extent is the programme relevant and responsive to contribute toward ending child marriage in Bangladesh? To what extent has the programme been designed in a way that is responsive to different groups in the society, their own contexts and needs?

3.1.1 Programme objectives are excellently relevant and responsive to needs of girls and adolescents who are vulnerable to early marriage in Bangladesh.

Recognising the adverse impact child marriage has on the lives of girls and adolescents, ECM programming in Bangladesh aimed to change harmful social norms and structures, while also addressing immediate drivers in target districts over a short to medium-term period. Through a focus on adolescent empowerment, community mobilisation and awareness, institutional strengthening and law enforcement, BCO's efforts have appropriately identified and responded to the need of the hour.

BCOs ECM efforts saw application of a gamut of strategies and interventions that targeted adolescent girl well-being, community engagement with key stakeholders for the creation of an enabling environment as well as high level advocacy with authorities to allow for a supportive legal and policy framework. Efforts were carried out through a combination of strategies that recognise the fact that while the occurrence of child marriage is primarily attributed to underlying harmful gender norms and structures, causality analysis highlights the multi-faceted nature of key drivers in the country.⁷⁰

To elucidate, through adolescent clubs BCOs ECM efforts aimed to mobilise out-of-school adolescent (especially girls) and those in school, and provide them with leadership training, life skills development and peer education training with a focus on ECM and adolescent development issues. Additionally, as part of the C4D strategy, targeted partnerships with the Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh and other faith-based organisations were formed to promote the ending of child marriage through dialogue and messaging among families, especially parents. Further, BCO ECM efforts also focused on engaging out of school adolescent girls and providing them with access to vocational training through existing set ups. Moreover, ECM strategies also aimed to focus on identifying livelihood opportunities to adolescent girls within the community to promote financial independence and break out of the cycle of intergenerational poverty.⁷¹

3.1.2 Programme objectives are excellently aligned to international and national laws and priorities that seek to prioritise ending child marriage and protecting the rights of women and girls.

The Government of Bangladesh has placed a strong focus at the highest political levels on ending child marriage. At the UK Girls' Summit in 2014, Bangladesh's Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, committed Bangladesh to end marriage for children younger than 15 by 2021, and for all girls under age 18 by 2041.⁷² The commitment to address this child rights violation is also evidenced in the National Seventh Five Year Plan which set a target of reducing the proportion of child marriage to 30 per cent by the year 2020.⁷³ These high-level commitments have paved the way for both Government and development partners to prioritise and accelerate investments in targeted solutions to end child marriage.⁷⁴ Already, the Government has formulated the National Women Development Policy- 2011, the National Children Policy- 2011, the Children Act- 2013 and the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017 to ensure and protect child rights.⁷⁵

The government of the people's republic of Bangladesh has also committed to fulfilling various international commitments, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the

⁷⁰ BCO ECM Strategy Note 2016

⁷¹ BCO ECM Strategy Note 2016

⁷² A Scoping Analysis of Budget Allocations for ECM

⁷³ A Scoping Analysis of Budget Allocations for ECM

⁷⁴ A Scoping Analysis of Budget Allocations for ECM

⁷⁵ NPA ECM

Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration, including the Action Plan and Beijing platform.⁷⁶ Further, the SDGs, specifically target 5.3 aims to “eliminate all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage.” This is a critical tool to help drive action, hold governments around the world accountable to their commitments, and track progress on ending child marriage at the global scale.

This evaluation finds that BCO's ECM programme was aligned to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). While the CRC does not explicitly address early marriage, nearly the entire Convention is relevant to its harmful consequences, especially the right to protection from violence (Article 19), the right to health (Article 24), the right to education (Article 28), and the right to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (Article 34).⁷⁷ A UNICEF Paper Series (2007) states that “*while child marriage is not referred to directly in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, child marriage is connected to other rights - such as the right to express their views freely, the right to protection from all forms of abuse, and the right to be protected from harmful traditional practices*”⁷⁸

Additionally, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) provides for the prohibition of Child Marriage in Article 16.⁷⁹ Unlike the CRC, CEDAW contains a specific provision prohibiting the practice of early marriages. CEDAW Article 16(2) provides that child marriages shall have no legal effect. Thus, child marriages in those states that have ratified CEDAW not only violate international law but are void.

Lastly, UNICEF BCO's CP 2017-2020 is found to contribute to national priorities, including the Seventh Five-Year Plan, to complete the remaining agenda of achieving the social and economic outcomes of the Government's Vision 2021 and the Perspective Plan 2010-2021. Further, it also aligns with national priorities with the achievement of nearly all of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the objectives of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Bangladesh 2017-2020.⁸⁰

3.1.3 Programme was designed in a comprehensive manner, excellently accounting for different groups in society and their own contexts and needs.

BCO's ECM efforts were designed using three approaches – area-based approach, lifecycle approach and multisectoral approach. A combination of these three approaches helped in looking at the design of the programme from different perspectives.

The selection of geography was based on several considerations including the 2012-2016 UNDAF priorities, UNICEF's programme presence, scope of local government partners, and presence of NGOs and other partners, among others. As per the Strategy Note, the choice of intervention districts considers child marriage prevalence rates and geographical proximity, to address the issue of scale, both by addressing beneficiary numbers and seizing the opportunity of positive contamination and cross-district learning at the divisional levels. Districts with high prevalence rates of child marriage were identified from MICS 2013. The life cycle approach is followed in the Country Programme and it guides the planning process. Besides, multisectoral interventions has been the core strength of UNICEF. These approaches were used to identify diverse areas that provided an opportunity to address the issue in different contexts.

Field interactions also highlighted the relevance of the area-based programming approach adopted. With low awareness on the adverse impact of child marriage, high rates of poverty and lack of social

⁷⁶ NPA ECM

⁷⁷ World Policy Analysis Center, *Assessing National Action on Protection from Child Marriage*, Fact Sheet, November 2014, Retrieved from:

https://www.worldpolicycenter.org/sites/default/files/WORLD_Fact_Sheet_Protection_from_Child_Marriage_2014.pdf

⁷⁸ UNICEF, COVID-19, Retrieved from: https://www.unicef.org/french/files/Child_Marriage_and_the_Law.pdf

⁷⁹ UNICEF, COVID-19, Retrieved from: https://www.unicef.org/french/files/Child_Marriage_and_the_Law.pdf

⁸⁰ BCO Country Programme 2017-2020 and Strategy Note (2016)

security as well as acute gender discrimination among other key factors, child marriage records a high rate in the selected geographical areas for programme implementation. Additionally, interactions also highlighted the district specific factors that contribute to the high rates of child marriage. For instance, ECM interventions in Dhaka focused on marginalised and low-income slum areas that recorded high rates of child marriage. Moreover, the selected districts of Khulna and Bhola are highly prone disaster areas and the resulting economic vulnerability further adds to the high rates of child marriage. Further, Bhola is also an island district, isolated from the mainland and adolescent girls are at a high risk of exploitation and abuse from local landlords and religious fundamentalists. With respect to Jamalpur, field findings highlighted the role the district plays in the supply of day labourers⁸¹ to Dhaka city as a critical factor of high rates of child marriage. Additionally, as a highly flood prone area, children's vulnerability to child marriage is high.

With an aim to reach the largest number of beneficiaries and remain aligned to funding and other priorities, interventions were chosen based on the context on the area. For example, respondents in Bhola highlighted that due to a limited number of schools and colleges in the district, parents prefer sending their adolescent children to *madrasas*. As a result, adolescents are largely unaware of their rights and the national laws that exist for their protection. Recognising this, BCOs ECM interventions placed a strong focus on generating awareness on the adverse impact of child marriage and the existing legal provisions to protect adolescents from the same. Simultaneously, adolescent girls and boys were mobilised through the formation of adolescent clubs to provide them with knowledge and skills and serve as platform for them to raise their voices.

Overall, this evaluation highlights that the ECM programme adopted a combination of strategies to address the complexities associated with prevalence of child marriage. Interventions to address unequal gender norms and practices and overall empowerment for girls were piloted in one district. Similarly, cash incentives through a case-management CCT initiative were rolled out in specific *upazillas*. Focussed initiatives such as institutional strengthening, law enforcement, social mobilisation and awareness raising, however, were rolled out across all selected districts. Further, the evaluation found that the programme correctly considered DRR, disability and vulnerable groups in their approach, however, the implementation and effectiveness of the same will be explored in subsequent sections of the report. Across interventions, there was a concentrated focus on building the capacities of girls and adolescents and making them agents of change.

To what extent do the programme strategies and activities address structural drivers of (gender) inequality?

3.1.4 Programme correctly adopted gender-transformative interventions and strategies to eliminate child marriage. These were focused on tackling harmful gender roles, norms and power relations in the context of Bangladesh for good impact.

UNICEF BCO adopted a combination of intervention strategies to address both demand and supply side constraints to leverage results in accelerating an end to child marriage in the target geographies. The intervention strategies in themselves had a strong gender dimension—separate interventions for adolescent girls and boys; involvement of fathers in parent groups to sensitise them on the harmful impact of child marriage; enhancing the value of girls in society and building assets for adolescent girls among others—in order to ensure that there was a shift in perceptions and practices that adversely impact girls and women in society. The programme also relied heavily on strategies of adolescent empowerment, attainment of education for girls, and livelihoods and financial incentives for adolescent girls and their families.⁸²

⁸¹ Respondents in Jamalpur highlighted the dire economic situation as a key factor that leads to early child marriage. As such, many children are also sent to Dhaka as day child labourers to supplement family income. Resulting from this many adolescent girls are entered into illegal marriages as a way to keep them “safe” and reduce the economic burden on the family.

⁸² BCO ECM Strategy Note 2016

The strategic interventions chosen to address adolescent empowerment and to ensure that girls were able to complete secondary schooling and have access to livelihood options are expected to bring about a ‘shift’ in perceptions – specifically those that emerge in a highly patriarchal society where girls and women are considered ‘less valuable’ and deserving of a ‘lesser stature’. This was reinforced during field interactions that highlighted that BCO ECM messaging and efforts focused on the importance of gender equality to ending child marriage and creating an environment of value for girls.

The incorporation of boys (30 per cent) in adolescent clubs and increased engagement of fathers and mothers were positive actions to encourage a shift in power relations between girls and boys or men and women. Most adolescent clubs in the country received life skills training and support in assessing financial means to facilitate income generation. Nationally, approximately 15 per cent of adolescent girls between 12 and 18 years were participating in one form of club or group.⁸³ A key intervention strategy was the mobilisation of out-of-school adolescents (especially girls) into adolescent clubs, alongside those who are in school, with the aim of providing them with leadership, life skills development and peer education training with a focus on the prevention of child marriage and adolescent development issues (health, Water Sanitation and Hygiene, HIV/AIDS, nutrition).⁸⁴ Union level monitoring reports that have been submitted to the district office, for instance, in a few of the intervention districts, and confirmed by the implementing NGO BRAC, have shown that in the wards where both young girls and boys as well as out of school children frequent adolescent clubs regularly, less cases of sexual harassment of girls have been reported, with young boys often playing the role of a protective companion when girls have to venture out of their community.

Additionally, the global programme evaluation also found that BCOs efforts towards involvement of men as fathers, gatekeepers and leaders in community dialogues has helped to create a more supportive environment for adolescent girls to exercise their rights and to challenge gender norms and stereotypes. The involvement of women as mothers and gatekeepers has also been critical and integrated into many community-level approaches.⁸⁵ The scale-up of courtyard community meetings is noteworthy in this regard.

Other gender-transformative interventions included accelerating cooperation in the protection of women and children by activating the Community Based Child Protection Committee (CBCPC), union women and child abuse prevention committees. Under Outcome 3 of the Country Programme, families and communities, including local and religious leaders, as well as other key influencers, were informed, mobilised and engaged, enabling them to take action to protect adolescent and child rights, especially those around gendered social norms and practices. These efforts included the creation of Community-Based Child Protection Committees and support to public declarations to end child marriage.⁸⁶ As found by the evaluation group, these actions correctly address the drivers of child marriage and structural drivers of inequality in the context of Bangladesh.

To what extent is the ToC that guides the ECM work in Bangladesh well developed, aligned with the Bangladesh context, based on robust evidence and realistic in its assumptions and pathways of change?

3.1.5 ECM work in BCO is found to be guided by two Theories of Change. One at the National level and the other proposed by GPECM. The one proposed by GPECM has helped to develop good strategies which are followed to address the issue.

The National level TOC was developed through participation of a number of organisations. A multi-stakeholder meeting took place in December 2014 to develop an extensive analysis of the situation of child marriage in Bangladesh and developed a theory of change for the work around ECM in the country,

⁸³ BCO ECM Strategy Note 2016

⁸⁴ BCO ECM Strategy Note 2016

⁸⁵ GPECM Global Evaluation

⁸⁶ BCO Country Programme 2017-2020 and Strategy Note (2016)

which was in turn the basis of the BCO strategy note for ECM.⁸⁷ Additionally, MoWCA⁸⁸ developed elements from documents by organisations such as Plan/ICRW/UNFPA, Girls Not Brides Alliance and Maxwell Stamp, a study that had been commissioned by UNICEF, and used the main findings to form the basis of the National Action Plan to End Child Marriage (2018-2021).⁸⁹ Thereafter, UNICEF BCO aligned their programmes with the National Action Plan and wherever possible concretely included related outputs and activities in the rolling work plans, in partnership with the Government. When GPECM was launched in Bangladesh, the BCO aligned all interventions aimed at ECM to global strategies under the GPECM and brought them under the joint programme with UNFPA.⁹⁰ With respect to the BCO Country Programme 2017-2020, ECM has been incorporated within the TOC for Outcome 3. It is critical to note, however, that the Outcome 3 ToC is not an ECM focused one, but rather provides a framework for child protection as a whole for adolescents in Bangladesh.

The ToC developed as part of GPECM was constructed to address the main recognised determinants that lead to child marriage, though gaps were identified in the intervention logic. The ToC, which informed the programme design, allowed for country-level contextualisation and adaptation, though only a few countries, including Bangladesh, formally adapted the ToC.

Drivers and causes of child marriage as identified by the Global ToC include:

- Discrimination against girls and women
- Gender roles that restrict girls and women to family and household roles
- Economic opportunities/structures of the economy
- Inaccessible and/or low-quality services such as schools or health facilities
- Legal and policy frameworks that do not protect adolescents

The Strategy note on ECM developed by BCO identifies similar drivers for child marriage, including gender-based violence. However, in the global programme TOC, gender-based violence has not been explicitly identified as a key driver of child marriage although it does recognise discrimination against girl child as a factor. The strategy has not made an explicit mention of violence against girls including sexual harassment as a driver for child marriage. As elaborated previously, gender-based violence in private and public spheres limits the agency of adolescent girls, pushing them into child marriage as a 'safety net'. Since the global TOC also guides BCOs ECM efforts to a large extent, by not focusing on it, this has also not found a direct place in the strategies identified by BCO.

A global evaluation of the TOC highlighted that there were gaps in the results framework, such as a lack of outputs/indicators measuring Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) and advocacy as well as cross-cutting issues related to programming principles. The reliance on quantitative indicators was also noted as a weakness in understanding progress in terms of changes in perceptions, attitudes and behaviours that contribute to the elimination of child marriage.⁹¹ This is a big gap because in the absence of relevant indicators to monitor progress, it would be challenging to ascertain the impact.

The five strategies that guided BCOs ECM efforts are all very relevant to address the problem of ECM. However, given the time frame results can be achieved only if it is building on its existing core area of strength. For instance, UNICEF's strategy on livelihood included moving people out of poverty through livelihood training and financial incentives. However, several respondents reported reservations on the success of this strategy. It was seen that Implementing Partners across visited districts faced challenges with respect to adequate funds to apply this strategy, limiting its effectiveness. On the other hand, the strategies of adolescent empowerment and community mobilisation and social behaviour change

⁸⁷ ToR

⁸⁸ The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs is the GoB's selected line ministry for coordinating all government response on ending child marriage

⁸⁹ BCO ECM Strategy Note 2016

⁹⁰ ToR

⁹¹ GPECM Global Evaluation

recorded significant successes on ground. Moreover, given the socio-cultural context of Bangladesh and widespread gender discrimination, creation of livelihood options for adolescent girls goes beyond technical training and skilling. It requires focused efforts to create a holistic and empowering environment within the community that will enable girls to translate their technical training into practical experience. Therefore, by adopting an approach that builds on the strengths of BCOs ECM work while simultaneously addressing the root causes of child marriage is critical.

As per the global evaluation of the TOCs, despite limitations, it drew on secondary evidence, primarily from South Asia, as well as both UNICEF and UNFPA programming experience. The drivers of child marriage identified in the ToC were also based on evidence and include a combination of structural and socio-cultural factors.⁹² As mentioned previously, Bangladesh was one of the few GPECM countries that formally adapted the global ToC to the country level.

How well aligned is UNICEF ECM programme with the National Plan of Action strategies and pillars? Are there clear strategies of the NPA that UNICEF should focus on during the next ECM programme given UNICEF's expertise?

3.1.6 Programme is aligned to the strategic directions and objectives outlined in the Government of Bangladesh's Draft National Action Plan to End Child Marriage to a good degree. However, areas for improved collaboration and capacity building remain.

To ensure alignment, strategies selected by UNICEF in their ECM efforts are in line with the strategic directions outlined in the Government of Bangladesh's Draft National Action Plan to End Child Marriage, sector priorities outlined in policy documents of line ministries, and development priorities enlisted by key donors who have identified ECM as a priority.⁹³ For instance, the NAP to ECM objective focusing on “empowerment of adolescents including increased opportunities for adolescent girls to acquire life-skills and participate in decision-making within the family and community on issues that affect their lives”⁹⁴ is aligned to Outcome 3 of BCO's CP, BCOs ECM Strategy Note as well as the various ToC's discussed in previous sections. Other objectives, including enhancing “access to quality education, health, nutrition, protection, and water and sanitation services” are covered under the various UNICEF sectoral programmes to ECM in the country.

Further, the activities proposed in UNICEF Bangladesh's strategy to combat child marriage on one hand will strengthen the existing legislation and its enforcement by raising awareness among key decision-makers, while supporting the operationalisation of the costed five-year national action plan. To ensure institutional strengthening it will engage with the *kazis* or marriage registrars, union parishad chairpersons and members/commissioners towards holding them accountable for upholding the Child Marriage Restraint Act. As such, it will be possible for UNICEF to concretely include related outputs and activities in the rolling work plans of the CO, which are prepared in partnership with the Government. Further, as the strategies identified by UNICEF are well aligned with the main outcomes established in the government plan, advocating with national and local government partners as well as implementing programme activities in the UNICEF target districts will take place more systematically.⁹⁵

To what extent has the programme been implemented following a human rights, equity and culturally sensitive approach?

3.1.7 While there have been good efforts to correctly implement the programme following a human rights, equity and culturally sensitive approach, inclusion of certain vulnerable groups can be further strengthened.

⁹² GPECM Global Evaluation

⁹³ BCO ECM strategy

⁹⁴ NAP

⁹⁵ BCO ECM strategy

Programmes adopting the United Nations Human Rights and Gender Equality perspective integrate a gender component and address issues such as power relations and social transformation, equal inclusion and participation, as well as the empowerment of women.⁹⁶ In the context of Bangladesh, adopting United Nations Human Rights and Gender Equality in programming is of upmost importance.

Field interactions highlighted the limited acceptability of children's rights and participation and the high reluctance amongst parents to discuss challenges that adolescents face, that challenge the implementation of a culturally sensitive programme. Additionally, BCO's efforts for culturally sensitive programming in Bangladesh has also been constricted by widespread acceptance of child marriage among key stakeholders like parents, community level influencers, marriage registrars to name a few.

Under the 2017-2020 Country Programme, Outcome 3 specifies a focus on the most deprived adolescents and their communities. Further, the equity for adolescents' approach emphasises the disaggregation of data that is sex- and age-specific and highlights sub-national differences. Active involvement of decentralised structures, communities and adolescents is encouraged in the development of evidence-based policies and strategies and implementation of high-impact interventions to achieve universal coverage of basic social services.⁹⁷ Further, it mentions that addressing the particular vulnerabilities of adolescents with disabilities will be a key component of Outcome 3.⁹⁸ UNICEF BCO also supported Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in designing and launching the first National Disability Survey in July 2021. It is key to note here that despite this, field interactions highlighted the need for more robust programming to cater to the needs of children with disabilities.

UNICEF BCO Water, Sanitation and Hygiene interventions focused on access to safe sanitation and water, designed to address cultural sensitivity and local issues. For example, the menstrual hygiene management sessions in school were conducted by the female teachers. For adolescent girls, bathing cubical were also provide in the community, with separate toilets for boys and girls. Additionally, MHM facilities were also provided for the girl's toilets of school/madrasas. This was done in consultation with female students.⁹⁹

UNICEF BCO efforts have also focused on scale up strategy for Alternative Learning Program (ALP) for the most disadvantaged out-of-school adolescent, which was scaled up as Generation Unlimited in February 2019.¹⁰⁰¹⁰¹ Efforts also focused on Madrassas through the production of a *Madrasa Resource book* on life skills for adolescents, which was to be rolled out in 2020 in selected *Madrassas*.¹⁰² Additionally, to address the micronutrient deficiency among adolescents, a major public health issue in Bangladesh, evidence has been generated for policy makers on the cost effectiveness of adolescent nutrition intervention for implementation and scale up.¹⁰³

Progress has also been made in terms of evidence generation. To support GoB monitoring of the adolescent clubs an on-line monitoring system through GIS Mapping and digital platform has been developed. Generation Parliament initiative engaged 525,000 adolescents (aged 13 to 17 years) in an online platform to engage with parliamentarians.¹⁰⁴ However, while there is a strong focus on upstream work, implementation, monitoring and funding for policies, laws and strategies at the sub-national levels remain weak.¹⁰⁵ Other limitations also include programming overlooking key vulnerable communities

⁹⁶ UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Human Rights and Gender Equality, Retrieved from:<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/human-rights-and-gender.html>

⁹⁷ BCO Country Programme 2017-2020 and Strategy Note (2016)

⁹⁸ BCO Country Programme 2017-2020 and Strategy Note (2016)

⁹⁹ GPECM Bangladesh 2018 Results Report

¹⁰⁰ RAM Narrative for Outcome 3

¹⁰¹ To address the issues adolescents and youth aged 14-24 years face with respect to skills and employment, through a public-private partnership approach, Generation Unlimited was launched in February 2019. A National Steering Committee to oversee Gen U was formed with the 1st Steering committee meeting held on 19 November 2019

¹⁰² RAM Narrative Outcome 3

¹⁰³ *ibid*

¹⁰⁴ RAM Narrative Outcome 3

¹⁰⁵ *ibid*

and a lack of focus on equity in programming under Outcome 3 of the existing CP. For example, the remote location of tea gardens in Bangladesh means the labourers that cultivate them tend to be very isolated. The abuse of children, child marriage and child labour are common in the tea garden communities. These violations of children's rights are associated with poverty, illiteracy and traditional social norms, making girls particularly vulnerable.¹⁰⁶ However, UNICEF BCO's ECM Strategy Note and CPD make no mention of efforts focused on children from these tea garden communities.

3.2. Effectiveness and impact

Sr. No.	Evaluation Question	Assessment Against Rubric
1	To what extent has the ECM programme achieved or is on track to achieving its planned results in all its 5 strategies? Has the combination of these strategies been able to prevent and stop child marriages in programme areas? Has there been evidence of spill over effects of the programme into non-programme areas? If so, is there evidence of what the main change factors that are being spilled over?	Assessment: Adequate Despite the absence of a combined RBM, BCOs ECM efforts have recorded significant successes. ECM efforts in the country have led to the development of the starting point for long-term change. However, there is a key requirement for clear guidelines on attribution of progress and results to BCO ECM interventions and others such as the GPECM to correctly measure impact and prevent overlap and misreporting. Spill over of programme impact has been restrained due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant mobility restrictions
2	Considering the 5 strategies, what have been the supporting and constraining factors? Were there any unexpected results (positive or negative)?	Assessment: Adequate Joint advocacy efforts at the highest levels, leveraging schools as an effective entry point and adopting a pilot approach the GPECM among others have created a supportive environment for BCOs ECM efforts. However, there is scope for enhancing efforts with respect fostering greater ownership, ownership and capacity building of the government and stronger implementation of laws and policies at the ground level
3	Has the programme been gender transformative and achieved gender-transformative results?	Assessment: Good Strategies and interventions adopted by BCO for ECM have been clearly fitted with a gender-transformative lens. There is scope for improvement with respect to creating an enabling atmosphere for adolescents' access and uptake of services provided and involving adolescents from an early age

Table 8: Summary of Effectiveness EQ Findings

To what extent has the ECM programme achieved or is on track to achieving its planned results in all its 5 strategies? Has the combination of these strategies been able to prevent and stop child marriages in programme areas? Has there been evidence of spill over effects of the programme into non-programme areas? If so, is there evidence of what the main change factors that are being spilled over?

3.2.1 BCO ECM efforts have made an adequate impact in terms of contributing to the process to bring about a reduction in number of child marriages. The pace of achieving the intended results varied due to multiple factors including operational challenges and bringing about convergence of sectoral interventions.

Source: MICS 2019

¹⁰⁶ LSE, Protecting girls in Bangladesh's tea garden communities: Ends and means, December 2015, Retrieved from: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2015/12/28/protecting-girls-in-bangladesh-tea-garden-communities-ends-and-means/>

Percentage of girls who are married in evaluation districts					
District	Jamalpur	Dhaka	Khulna	Bhola	Nilpamhari
Percentage of girls age 15-19 years who are married	41	32	33.3	39.8	35.9
32.9-51.7 (≥ National average)	13.5-32.8 (< National average)				
Percentage of women age 20-24 years who were first married before age 15 by District (SDG 5.3.1), MICS 2019	21.5	15.7	17.8	18.8	16.2
15.5-38.8 (≥ National average)	5.7-15.4 (< National average)				
Percentage of women age 20-24 years who were first married before age 18 by District	58.5	41	58.8	60.3	58.8
51.4-72.9 (≥ National average)	25.5-51.3 (< National average)				

Table 9: Percentage of girls who are married in evaluation districts

UNICEF's concerted efforts have led to the beginning of limited but desirable changes in its programme areas. To elaborate further, data from MICS 2019 (Table 6) shows that there is a decline in child marriages in the country. However, the process of this decline has been slow. Therefore, to fully understand if the combination of strategies really worked, **one needs to analyse the same in light of following considerations:**

Firstly, the five strategies were not implemented for the same duration everywhere and often were short term interventions that did not necessarily cover entire duration of our evaluation period. Both, the GPECM and ECM interventions in terms of its coverage were limited and lacked scale even at the district level to ensure full targeting. Therefore, commenting on the overall impact of the programme across geographies is fraught with challenges. **Thus, there still remains the need for evidence at scale to detail its effectiveness.** This also finds resonance in GPECM's annual report in the year 2018 which notes that while there is adequate evidence to confirm what works at a small scale, there is still limited knowledge about what will work to achieve results at greater scales. This was further reinforced through field interactions where respondents reported differences in project implementation time periods across the districts visited that had varying influences on programme impact. For instance, while in Dhaka the implementation period was of 37 months, in Bhola and Nilphamari it was recorded at 18 months and 24 months respectively.

Attempts at scaling faced challenges in terms of making trade-offs between reaching the largest number of girls and reaching the most vulnerable and most marginalised girls. Scaling up life skills through social schemes and education systems in Bangladesh may not have reached the most vulnerable girls, while the use of media did reach large numbers. However, the same may be limited to awareness-raising, compromising the quality of the intervention. Scaling up of the programme needs to have continuity with the earlier phase which at times poses an additional challenge. For instance, field interactions in Dhaka highlighted that within the programming area, migration is a regular phenomenon. Therefore, in many instances after a period of time, many beneficiaries were not found to be present or benefitting from interventions.

The operationalisation of a multisectoral approach to ensure convergence between strategies is difficult with the predominant sectoral mindset. Interactions with UNICEF zonal offices revealed that the adoption of the multisectoral approach for the first-time opened sections to seek ideas and

direct a convergent approach to strengthen BCO's commitment towards elimination of child marriages. However, the multisectoral method with a life-cycle approach to programming showed that each sector continued to focus on the attainment of their related goals and agendas. The collaboration and coordination among the sectors required to actually achieve integrated goals was limited. Therefore, there still remains the need for a structured approach for goal setting and robust M&E to strengthen sectoral collaboration and avoid duplicity. Thus, the usefulness of the strategies should not only be seen in its terms of its relevance but also how well it coordinated with sections to accomplish joint goals.

Overall review of the progress of the strategies highlights that BCO will need to continue its concerted efforts at all levels (individual, community, institutional, state and policy) to effectively combat child marriages. The evaluation recognises the adoption of the relevant holistic approach to engage varied stakeholders especially at the community level across generations and gender to drive social norm change. However, the same needs to be more gender transformative and involvement of boys and men need a systematic approach. It was also reinforced through field interactions that engagement with married girls and girls with disabilities needed a more enhanced focus.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned factors in mind, combination of these strategies provided the required momentum to consolidate efforts to address the complex challenge of child marriage. Some remarkable results were achieved for Adolescents in Bangladesh preserving millions of childhoods. UNICEF Bangladesh promoted adolescents' empowerment and their participation in the community as social change agents through the establishment of adolescent clubs and the provision of tailored packages of services in all UNDAF districts. The services package included life skills-based education (LSBE), civic engagement training, stipends for the most vulnerable adolescents, and orientation and sensitisation of parents and communities to create the foundation for a supportive environment. In 2016, these interventions received recognition and were adopted by the Government of Bangladesh through MoWCA. In 2016, within, the first year of its implementation, 1,500 new adolescent clubs were established in seven additional districts, which are contributing to preventing child marriage through life skills and livelihood options.¹⁰⁷ Field interactions further commended the formation of adolescent clubs as central spaces for adolescents to share information, gather knowledge and skills and raise their voice against child marriage.

In 2017, adolescent girls were provided with access to remain in secondary education in three districts with high rates of child marriage and in six sub-districts. An additional 24 districts and 50 sub-districts received support through UNICEF's regular education programme in the same year. The main strategies include curriculum development for both in school and out-of-school adolescents, teacher training and capacity building of relevant stakeholders. Likewise, in 2018 manuals for life skills-based education, comprehensive sexuality education, menstrual hygiene management and prevention of school-related gender-based violence in Bangladesh was integrated into government curricula.¹⁰⁸

Even in 2019, UNICEF BCO's ECM interventions made significant strides in undertaking social mobilisation and community engagement, reaching out to over 320,000 community-members and local leaders and leading to 93 unions declaring themselves child-marriage free. In addition, the trans-media initiative "#Raisethebeat4ECM/Dhol Campaign" reached an estimated 186 million people across TV, radio and social media, engaging close to 95 million through social media since its launch, and received two new awards. The adolescent drama-series "*Icchedana*" also reached an estimated 50 million viewers through all media, engaging approximately 10 million through social media.¹⁰⁹ However, it is key to note that the endline report of the same also highlighted that overall coverage and outreach of the series was too low to estimate its effectiveness accurately.

¹⁰⁷ 2019 EYR - End Year Summary Report - Outcome 3 20191214

¹⁰⁸ GPECM 2018 Report

¹⁰⁹ 2019 EYR - End Year Summary Report - Outcome 3 20191214

Field interactions also highlighted the focus of ECM efforts to work with key community influencers such as teachers and religious leaders, and local government officers such as the Union Parishad Chairman and other members has empowered them to raise their voices against child marriage. Further, engagement with local law enforcement officials and agencies was also commended. The evaluation also recognises the positive effect of the ECM interventions in Zone 2, DNCC wherein UNICEF's efforts to regularise the functioning of CWBs and CBCPCs encouraged the Deputy Director of the district to strengthen the same in wards outside of the UNICEF programme.

Further, recognising that the dropout rate in secondary schools remains a concern, UNICEF BCO focussed on addressing the issue of quality of learning to improve dropouts of girls and boys from a systems approach. Therefore, the overall effort during 2019 was on improving the quality of learning, strengthening school-based planning, informal apprenticeship and alternative pathways for out-of-school adolescents especially girls, in partnership with the GoB and private sector.¹¹⁰



Graph 1: Indicators of child marriage- MICS 2013 & MICS 2019

3.2.2 M&E and reporting systems lack adequately clear guidelines for capturing the results directly attributable to the ECM interventions versus others.

The entire gamut of UNICEF BCO's ECM efforts do not report against a combined RBM to track the progress of multi-sectoral indicators contributing towards the planned results in each of the five strategies. Interactions with UNICEF's sectoral teams revealed that typically a programme like ECM is accompanied with a results and monitoring framework which is the designated responsibility of the respective sector lead implementing the interventions. As a result, progress against activities and indicators are reported through sectoral team Information Management Officers to PD Manager. Additionally, programme level indicators are included in the sector's annual work plan and therefore not as reflective in the Result Assessment Module report. Furthermore, with the M&E and reporting systems lacking clear guidelines for capturing the results directly attributable to the ECM interventions versus others like the GPECM programme, it was noted that tracking of progress against planned results was not without confusion and with chances of reporting overlap between the two.

The same is highlighted during the 2017 ECM Programme Review Meeting at Mymensingh and Field Visit to Jamalpur. It was noted that some of the sectoral initiatives that were included in the 2014-2015 proposal did not critically prioritise sectoral interventions based on the extent to which the selected initiatives could accelerate the reduction of child marriages. Moreover, in 2015 with the conceptualisation of the ECM Strategy Note, UNICEF BCOs programme went through subsequent changes in 2016. Resultantly, the changes in terms of reporting requirements and variance in

¹¹⁰ 2019 EYR - End Year Summary Report - Outcome 3 20191214

implementation of activities between the two years also led to some anomalies in data collected and reported.

3.2.3 In view of the above finding, BCOs ECM efforts and their planned results for its five strategies needs to be seen collaboratively with Outcome on Adolescents as well as GPECM reporting for an adequate understanding on impact.

UNICEF Bangladesh's 2017-2020 Country Programme adopted a life-cycle approach to programming, with a standalone Outcome on Adolescent Girls and Boys. Prioritised areas include ending child marriage (ECM), adolescent health and nutrition, secondary education and adolescent participation. **While Outcome/Output Performance on Adolescent Girls and Boys is reported to be on track, the evaluation notes that reporting was not always independent. Additionally, a clear demarcation between ECM and GPECM interventions of BCO, whether programmatic or financial reporting, was blurred.**

Nevertheless, it must be recognised that some remarkable results were achieved for adolescents in the country and major milestones were reached through UNICEF's ECM programme. For instance, the evaluation notes the launching of the National Plan of Action (NAP) to End Child Marriage in August 2018 with UNICEF support as a landmark. Furthermore, to address the issues adolescents and youth (15-24 years) face in terms of skills and employment, a partnership approach between government, the private sector and development organisations was adopted; Gen U¹¹¹ was launched in Bangladesh in February 2019. A National Steering Committee to oversee Gen U was also rolled out in this regard. Moreover, a major milestone to address the challenges in accessing age and gender appropriate quality health services was the approval of the multi-sectoral National Plan of Action for Adolescent Health Strategy (2017-2030). Correspondingly, UNICEF has continued its focus on capacity building of government and other stakeholders to deliver the package of quality services for adolescent boys and girls.¹¹²

With regards to the GPECM programme, interactions with stakeholders highlighted its strength in terms of its design to foster change processes with outcomes that include top-down, bottom-up and individual empowerment interventions. **The programme is reported to be on track to achieve its outputs with aggregate tracking showing signs that the GPECM is extending its reach and accelerating its approach in 2018 under most outputs despite significant reductions in funding, largely due to the strategic use of pool funding.** Various country offices not only used the GPECM resources for designing stand-alone country interventions but GPECM funds were used to integrate ECM components in existing programmes that have shown promising impact and scale at the country level. Therefore, the use of this 'pool funding' as this approach is known, has been noted by stakeholders as a strategic and effective means to extend the outreach of GPECM despite limited funding.¹¹³

However, it is also crucial to mention that the programme also faced challenges in meeting certain targets over the course of its implementation. For example, while the NAP narrative was finalised and all consultations with partners were completed in 2015 and early 2016, the expectation was that the final draft of the NAP would be reviewed and endorsed by the Ministry so that the costing exercise could be initiated. However, the Ministry took a firm stand to not proceed with finalising the NAP until the Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA) was passed in Parliament. This led to extensive delays resulting in the target for 2016 not being achieved. It is also crucial to note that while the monitoring of higher-level indicators was undertaken, data availability and reliability across countries, especially for qualitative measurements, remained an issue.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ To address the issues adolescents and youth (15-24 years) face in terms of skills and employment, Gen U was launched in February 2019 as part of BCO ECM efforts

¹¹² 2019 EYR - End Year Summary Report - Outcome 3 20191214

¹¹³ Joint Evaluation of UNICEF-UNFPA 2019

¹¹⁴ Joint Evaluation Report May 2019

Furthermore, interactions with UNICEF's zonal and sectoral teams highlighted that in the absence of a robust mechanism to consolidate the results of the multi sectoral action for ECM, there are also possibilities of certain activities and its achievements remaining unenumerated. This seems to be particularly true when one notes the extent of efforts undertaken by the various sectoral teams to mainstream thematic interventions to tackle child marriage. On the other hand, UNICEF Bangladesh aligned its country programme with the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021, and continued to integrate gender results in and across programme areas. Designating the outcome on adolescents and ending child marriage a targeted priority (high-level result) significantly stepped-up efforts to target adolescent girls. While, other priorities including girls' secondary education and skills, adolescent girls' health and nutrition, and gender-based violence in emergencies (GBViE) also retained its major focus. Therefore, there remains a strong need for strengthening reporting of sectors that align to ECM and also closely looking at the opportunities and merits of linking ECM with other broader programmes of UNICEF—like GenU.

3.2.4 COVID-19 induced discontinuity in regular ECM programming and challenges faced in accessing health care and social services threatens progress against child marriage and restraining spill over effects of ECM interventions.

Fears that the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant restrictions and exacerbated vulnerabilities may cost years off the country's progress towards ECM were echoed across all stakeholder interactions. Growing economic insecurity, discontinuity in education and interruptions in services along with the overall prevalence of child marriage in the country is likely to intensify the risks of child marriage and jeopardise the gains of UNICEF's ECM interventions. While the evaluation notes the significant successes made by BCO, it is crucial to also note that the impact of the ongoing pandemic is likely to adversely impact the progress made, creating a gap in efforts being made and results being achieved. This is particularly crucial to recognise as any *gender-transformative* change typically requires sustained engagement and takes a long time, while, more than often the progress does not occur in a linear fashion.

Interactions with UNICEF's Zonal offices also revealed that the hard-earned momentum moulded by the ECM interventions is waning in its effect. For example, in 2018 some 50,000 adolescents were informed of the ECM helpline and 10,000 community members were educated on what to do when child marriage is suspected; the helpline received reports of 870 suspected cases and 150 child marriages were stopped.¹¹⁵ However, the pandemic-related travel restrictions and physical distancing adversely effected a girl's access to community support to protect her from child marriage.

The evaluation notes similar examples to highlight how the expected spill over effects of a multi sectoral approach remained constrained. For instance, in the year 2016, 1,500 new adolescent clubs were established in seven additional districts to contribute to preventing child marriage through life skills and livelihood options. In the same year, 5,305 girls were successfully mainstreamed back to formal primary schools.¹¹⁶ However, as schools remain closed, girls are more likely to drop out of education and not return. Additionally, increased economic insecurity may also force families to marry their daughters to ease financial burdens. Likewise, the ECM programme prioritised adolescent health services with health sector programmes focussing on scaling up and allocation of funds for enabling the facility for services (200 facilities/year). The Country Programme Document 2017-2020 also designated outcomes specifically for adolescent development to address the rights of adolescent girls and boys to quality services, and participation. However, COVID -19, as a **humanitarian crisis with a public health dimension is repressing the strides made by BCO's ECM interventions by exacerbating the challenges faced by vulnerable girls to access health care and social services.**

The pandemic also delayed the implementation of certain ECM activities, in addition to regular ECM programming efforts having to be rolled back, re-proposed and sectoral teams focusing

¹¹⁵ GPECM 18 Report

¹¹⁶ GPECM 2016 Report

on minimising the impact of the outbreak. For instance, to encourage lesson learning amongst programme and non-programme districts, the GPECM programme intended to conduct study tours/exchange tours. The tours were supposed to be organised in close consultation with MoWCA, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and with support from district officials to exchange lessons and good practices from high performing GPECM districts. However, the same had to be deferred.

Considering the 5 strategies, what have been the supporting and constraining factors? Were there any unexpected results (positive or negative)?

With respect to unexpected results (positive or negative), the evaluation team is constrained in the ability to comment on the same. This may be attributed to the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the limitations posed by the same. The resulting delay in commencement of the evaluation limits the visibility on the immediate impact of ECM efforts, therefore restricting the ability to comment on unexpected results. However, certain factors have been identified as supporting/constraining factors to the ECM efforts. The same has been elaborated upon below.

3.2.5 Joint efforts for focused advocacy by UNICEF and UNFPA adequately supported institutionalisation and collaboration to ending child marriage

The findings note that joint advocacy at the highest levels of national programming in Bangladesh supported the institutionalisation of the key commitment to ECM within the government agenda. Additionally, both agencies played a significant role by presenting a joint front as the national advocacy group “One UN Voice” for the drafting of the CMRA 2017, the NAP and for the design of the National Adolescent Health Strategy 2017.¹¹⁷ Further, UNICEF also supported the development of an action plan for the Adolescent Development Strategy till 2030, and a costing plan for the same.¹¹⁸ Moreover, UNICEF and UNFPA were able to effectively leverage partnerships with platforms such as GNB and LCG WAGE to consolidate commitments to ending child marriage.

3.2.6 ECM interventions leveraged schools as an adequate effective entry point for interventions to enhance outcomes on ECM and extended it beyond the schools by forming adolescent clubs. However, there remains a need for a creation of an enabling environment for adolescent clubs to flourish and place greater focus on income generation and livelihood opportunities for girls

Nested within an institutional set-up, schools provided the momentum necessary to sustain long-term change for girls by providing them with the autonomy to make their own decisions.¹¹⁹ The programme interventions in Bangladesh were able to leverage and utilise **schools as effective entry points** to strengthen the approach to ending child marriage. For instance, in Bhola, programme interventions incorporated the capacity building of teachers to take action as caregivers against child marriage. Additionally, girls and boys were also trained to raise their voices for ECM.

ECM programming in Bangladesh placed critical focus on leveraging **Adolescent Clubs** to empower adolescents and equip them with the necessary skill sets to successfully raise their voices for ending child marriage. Community level adolescent platforms were established to encourage dialogue to support awareness generation and mobilisation for a change in gender norms and structures. Additionally, it also fostered crucial linkages with other government and non-government platforms for greater advocacy for child rights and protection. It is found that adolescent clubs were also able to create an awareness on action to take in the event of child marriage, encouraging accountability of law

¹¹⁷ UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage Joint Evaluation report May 2019

¹¹⁸ KII with UNICEF BCO Health Sectoral Team

¹¹⁹ World Bank, *Educating girls, ending child marriage*, August 2017, Retrieved from: [Educating Girls, Ending Child Marriage \(worldbank.org\)](http://www.worldbank.org)

enforcement officials to respond promptly and decisively. For example, the highest number of calls to the 1098 helpline to report child marriages were recorded in Bhola from members of adolescent club.

In 2018, support to 1,873 adolescent clubs was provided in order to focus on peer-learning around livelihood skills and preventing gender-based violence. It was reported that 108,780 adolescents including 87,024 girls and 21,756 boys successfully finished 38 life skills sessions in adolescent clubs in the same year. Specifically, in Bhola district, 28,759 girls in adolescent clubs positively impacted from sessions on menstrual hygiene management and effects of child marriage.¹²⁰

However, within the confines of a traditional and conservative society such as Bangladesh, the creation of an enabling environment is crucial to prevent a potential backlash against and branding of adolescent girls who participate in programme interventions as rebels and troublemakers.¹²¹ During field interactions, adolescent girls reported that the formation of Adolescent Clubs and girls who participate in them were not always responded to positively by community members, further heightening their vulnerability. Additionally, discrepancies in the continued functioning of Adolescent Clubs across the visited districts were also noted during field interactions. For instance, while in Dhaka Adolescent Clubs are still operational through the government or other NGO partners, the same was not found in Jamalpur.

Addressing this heightened sense of risk is central to effective programming to delay the age of marriage. Field interactions in Nilphamari highlighted that while adolescent clubs had been formed, no designated place had been identified to run them. Additionally, balancing political pressures was also recorded as a challenge. Interactions with UNICEF's zonal offices in Mymensingh division and Gazipur City Corporation highlighted the challenges faced in maintaining attendance at virtual sessions organised for adolescent clubs. Relatedly, changes in enrolment rates is also believed to impede the outreach of clubs.¹²² Furthermore, the findings also highlight the difficulties in engaging with and retaining the most marginalised children such as those with disability and/or are already married.¹²³.

Further, the evaluation notes certain challenges in provision of **Adolescent-friendly health services**¹²⁴ such as limited logistical capacity; inability to account for privacy; insufficient number of trained service providers; limited BCC material and inadequate supply of medicines.

Interactions also highlighted the need to focus on the demand and supply of gender-responsive services. System strengthening both at national and sub-national levels remains critical to ensure uptake and delivery of gender-responsive services. Therefore, the evaluation findings suggest systematic interventions and efficient inter-sectoral collaboration between schools, adolescent clubs and service providers in Bangladesh for sufficient generation of demand and supply of services.¹²⁵

A stronger focus also needs to be placed on the **promotion of income generation and livelihood** opportunities for girls. The information recorded through field interactions highlights that the predominant focus of the interventions was on Adolescent empowerment through Adolescent Clubs, and community mobilisation. However, other aspects such as the provision of stipends did not find a similar focus and outreach. Across the visited *upazillas*, it was reported that there were challenges to identifying and selecting beneficiaries to provide livelihood support and financial incentives as the budget allocated was not sufficient.

3.2.7 Successful piloting under GPECM adequately enabled continual learning and opportunities for improvement in future programming. Further, implementation of ECM interventions through

¹²⁰ GPECM Country Profile 2018

¹²¹ UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage 2018 Annual Report

¹²² Mymensingh Division and Gazipur City Corporation: An Innovative Approach to Empowering Adolescent Virtually First Quarterly Progress Report (August 23 – November 22) 2020

¹²³ Accelerating Protection of Children in Mymensingh Division and Gazipur City Corporation: An Innovative Approach to Empowering Adolescent Virtually 2nd Quarterly Progress Report (23 November- 22 February 2021)

¹²⁴ KII with UNICEF BCO Health Sectoral Team

¹²⁵ UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage Joint Evaluation report May 2019

the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) enabled greater ownership amongst municipal and ward officials

The evaluation finds that Phase I of the GPECM placed a strong focus on piloting interventions in the targeted districts of Rangpur, Mymensingh, Barisal and Khulna. Acting as a catalytic seed fund, the following interventions were successfully modelled in the four districts:

- Establishing and capacitating Adolescent Clubs
- Imparting Life-skills based education training module
- Strong focus and promotion of social and behaviour change through the national multimedia *Dhol* Campaign (#RaiseTheBeat4ECM)
- Support to the development of the National Menstrual Health Management Plan that is to be costed
- Setting up of Adolescent Friendly Health Centres
- Alternative Learning Pathway Project

As evidenced in various sections of this report, the above-mentioned interventions have shown high potential for long term positive impact and change. Additionally, stakeholder interactions have highlighted that the learnings through the piloting of interventions is expected to reinforce the programme design and implementation for Phase II of the GPECM.¹²⁶

The evaluation also finds that the implementation model in DNCC through the city corporation enabled strong involvement of municipal and ward officials, and greater incorporation of the agenda to end child marriage in their routine functioning. This involvement also fostered enhanced capacity building and training of key stakeholders such as members of Child Welfare Committees and Community Based Child Protection Committees contributing to the creation of a supportive environment to combat child marriages. This was further reinforced through interactions on field with DNCC representation. Further, as a result of this partnership, monitoring of programme implementation was made possible at different levels. While the Chief Executive Officer was designated at the central level to oversee monitoring efforts, programming efforts were also monitored by the Regional Zonal Officer, Project Focal Point and the Project Planning and Monitoring Officer.

3.2.8 Government ownership and leadership towards balancing political commitments and addressing policy anomalies remains adequately limited

Ending child marriage, as already noted, has been recorded as a key government priority in Bangladesh. However, it is important to recognise that national laws often conflict with customary religious laws and practices, making it difficult to enforce or implement the national laws in Bangladesh.¹²⁷ Additionally, despite continuous and rigorous advocacy with the government on the CMRA 2017, inclusion of the Special Provision that allows for child marriage under the age of 18 years under special circumstances is a major setback to the overall agenda to ECM. Therefore, while the political commitment to ending child marriage is clearly visible, the inclusion of the Special Provision is directly contradictory to it.

Relatedly, the GoB passed the Children's Act in 2013 aligned to the CRC (ratified by Bangladesh in 1990) to ensure effective protection of children through a specific child-oriented law. Significantly this Act identifies any person below the age of 18 as a child.¹²⁸ However, this Act does not specifically address exposure to violence and physical and humiliating punishment.¹²⁹ Additionally, formulation of rules for implementation of the Act had still not been completed.¹³⁰ Further, there has been no costing

¹²⁶ KII with UNICEF BCO Gender Specialist

¹²⁷ Women and Justice Fellow

¹²⁸ UNICEF, *UNICEF in Bangladesh: Our Timeline*, Retrieved from: [UNICEF in Bangladesh | UNICEF Bangladesh](#)

¹²⁹ Save The Children, 'Status Report: Violence against Children in Bangladesh', Presented at the Conference on VNR 2020 of Bangladesh: Positioning Non State Actors, March 2020, Retrieved from: [PowerPoint Presentation \(bdplatform4sdgs.net\)](#)

¹³⁰ Dhaka Tribune, NHRC Chairman: Bangladesh failed to formulate rules for Children Act 2013 in four years, January 2018, Retrieved from: [NHRC chairman: Bangladesh failed to formulate rules for Children Act 2013 in four years | Dhaka Tribune](#)

activity for implementation either. The Act has also been criticised for the lack of complete implementation with respect to child friendly police desks, adequate number of probation officers and child welfare boards.¹³¹

As such, in the absence of holistic government accountability, the agenda to child protection and specifically ending child marriage faces legal impediments and cannot reach its maximum potential. Further, national level efforts were severely impacted by significant delays in receiving approval from relevant government authorities. Similar delays were also recorded at the district level in 2017 resulting in the inability to implement planned UNFPA interventions.¹³²

3.2.9 Limited adequate enforcement and implementation of NAP and CMRA 2017 and limitations of MoWCA to spearhead and coordinate a multisectoral approach to ending child marriage

Evaluation findings highlight that translation of legal instruments and operationalisation of national action plans at sub-national level to strongly drive the ECM agenda on the ground has been inadequate. For example, the CMRA 2017 lays down clear provisions for the establishment of committees for child protection at all levels. However, CBCPCs have either not been established or adequately operationalised across the country. Significantly, field interactions with *upazilla* level stakeholders highlighted the lack of awareness among concerned authorities around the legal age of marriage as per the current Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017. Sustained efforts will be required to translate the objectives of the NAP and CMRA at sub-national level through hand holding support and focused capacity building initiatives for duty bearers.

Further, the evaluation finds that MoWCA, though designated as the lead ministry on the government of Bangladesh's agenda to ending child marriage, is limited in many ways to drive a multisectoral approach to ECM. ECM interventions in Bangladesh have recorded several challenges with respect to MoWCA's limited capacity, specifically in the absence of an on-ground cadre. For instance, no representation at the *upazilla* and union level resulted in restricted engagement in actual implementation, technical support and monitoring of adolescent programmes at the community and household level.¹³³ Moreover, MoWCA is represented by a Project Director, further limiting its ability to coordinate a multisectoral programme. The aforementioned factors are also found to restrict MoWCA's ability to effectively leverage available resources and mobilise prompt action from other key ministries. Therefore, it is unsurprising to note that several challenges were faced by MoWCA in convergence and coordination with other line ministries and the same was consistently recorded during the implementation of the GPECM.¹³⁴

"Marriage Registrars are one of the key problems for occurring child marriage. Many of them help the parents/guardians to get their children married before reaching at the legal age. They often accept fake documents like birth certificate to justify child marriage".

-A Marriage Registrar

3.2.10 Findings on the 5 strategies related to the ECM programme

Insights gained during interactions with different respondents as well as review of documents shared by UNICEF have been outlined in this section.

¹³¹ Ferdousi, N., 'Justice for Children in Bangladesh: Legal and Ethical Issues', *Bangladesh Journal of Bioethics*, 11(1), pp.35-43, September 2020, Retrieved from: [PDF Justice for Children in Bangladesh: Legal and Ethical Issues \(researchgate.net\)](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343331130/Justice_for_Children_in_Bangladesh_Legal_and_Ethical_Issues)

¹³² UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage 2017 Annual Report

¹³³ GPECM Bangladesh Results Report 2018

¹³⁴ GPECM Bangladesh Results Report 2018

Strategy 1: Empowerment of Adolescents

Are there signs that adolescent girls who have been part of the programme have been empowered and have increased skills? Have the interventions built the agency of girls as influencers and decision-makers, especially on marriage decisions? If so, has this led to a decrease in child marriage? Has this led to an overall increase of adolescent wellbeing?

A number of observations were noted by the research team which highlights that the programme has helped in the empowerment of adolescent girls and overall wellbeing.

- The Bangladesh 2017-2020 country programme facilitated MoWCA to set up Adolescent Clubs and implement the Life-Skills Based Training module across the country. The focus of these training sessions was empowerment training, support to MHM and creating awareness on SRH. In certain conservative areas like Bhola, the programme also established mixed safe spaces for girls and boys for shared interaction, while simultaneously providing life skills training. Adolescent girls interviewed in Bhola highlighted that despite the conservative nature of the district, ECM programme interventions had provided them with the confidence and ability to exert control over their lives.
- Study findings¹³⁵ suggest that among participants of Adolescent Clubs and LSBE sessions there was a heightened sense of agency and awareness on their rights and harmful gender norms and practices. Participants also reported that they have taken prompt action at the community level against child marriage, either individually or with the Adolescent Club.¹³⁶ This was reinforced through field interactions. For instance, in Bhola, a peer leader reported that on multiple occasions complaints have been registered with the police and the *Upazilla Nirbahi Officer* and prompt action had been facilitated.
- Adolescent girls have also been supported through an increased focus on their secondary education through capacity building of the secondary education system to carry out skill-based education. Additionally, the programme also contributed to the enhancement of sub-national systems to address issues of retention and regular attendance to increase the completion of schooling. Further, an alternative learning programme was also imparted to out-of-school adolescents.
- In 2018, 78.3 per cent and 62 per cent of adolescent club members under the age of 15 years and 17 years respectively were found to be unmarried, recorded as higher than the national average.¹³⁷
- Further, through the launch of the Generation Parliament initiative, the Bangladesh Country Programme (2017-2020) engaged with 525,000 adolescents (aged 13-17 years) to enable discussion and dialogue with parliamentarians.¹³⁸
- Technical support was also provided to set up Adolescent Friendly Health Services (AFHS) at service delivery points. Additionally, the government was assisted to develop Accreditation Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on AHFS. Training in AHFS was also carried out for 200 service providers and field workers in programme districts, with a focus on ending child marriage, and 67 AHFS were made operational in the districts on Nilphamari and Bhola.¹³⁹
- Across programme areas, 1,15,609 adolescents (75,738 female adolescents and 39,871 male adolescents) were able to benefit from AHFS provided.

¹³⁵ A documentation of the adolescent programme was carried out with technical support from Manheim University and UNICEF ROSA.

¹³⁶ GPECM Bangladesh Results Report 2018

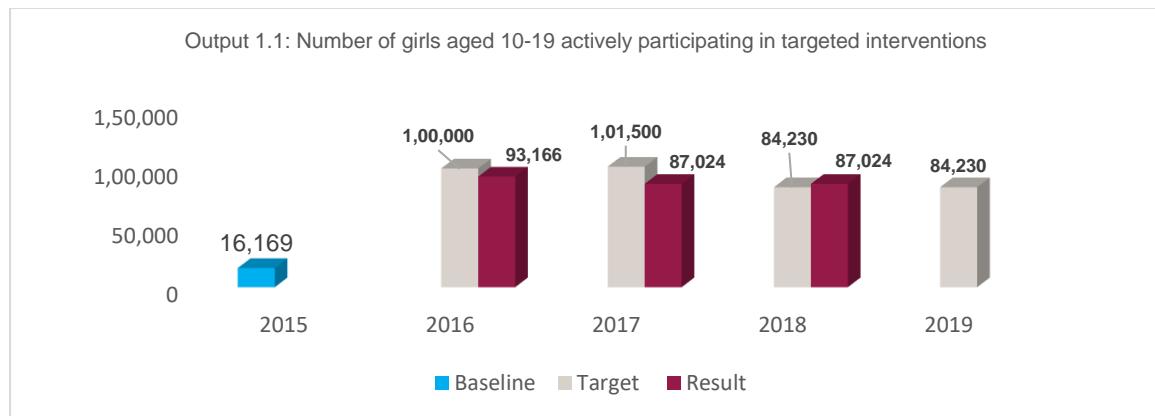
¹³⁷ GPECM Bangladesh Results Report 2018

¹³⁸ 2019 EYR - End Year Summary Report - Outcome 3 20191214

¹³⁹ GPECM Country Office Phase I Results Report

“Adolescent clubs genuinely made us empowered. We don't feel like we are girls and should keep us down. We know how to protect us from gender-based abuse and exploitations. We are even now playing football in the playground with boys.”

– A member of an adolescent club in Dacope Upazilla of Khulna District



Graph 2: Number of girls aged 10-19 actively participating in targeted interventions

Is there evidence of the spill-over effects from adolescents who have been part of the programme to other adolescents in the community who have not been part of the interventions?

Field interactions did record spill-over effects with respect to adolescents who had not participated in the interventions in programme areas. However, there is limited data available to be able to adequately comment on this aspect. Given the gap between the end of the programme and commencement of the evaluation, the evaluation team finds limited institutional memory amongst available stakeholders. Additionally, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has halted and caused significant delays to programme activities. As such, it is difficult to gauge whether the impact of interventions benefitted key stakeholders outside of programme areas.

Have the interventions reached the most vulnerable? (out of school adolescents, those from low quintiles, adolescents with disabilities, already married girls)

Significantly, interactions on-field found that the majority of adolescents reached through interventions belonged to families of the lowest quintiles. However, the focus on adolescents with disabilities and girls who are already married remained limited. The wide range of vulnerable adolescents reached through outreach interventions are mentioned below:

- Transgender adolescents in Mymensingh City Corporation were reached out to through virtual models of the APC project. DESH expanded the outreach of the project through the formation of virtual clubs¹⁴⁰ to equip target adolescents with the skills to transform their own lives, and community perceptions on non-normative gender identity groups.
- Approximately 10,372 out-of-school girls across the 8-14 year age group in Satkhira and Dhaka urban slums were also supported with the second chance education programme. Further, 5,305 girls were mainstreamed within the primary education system.¹⁴¹
- Additionally, an estimated 500 girls from child marriage prone areas of Khulna City Corporation, Khulna Division and the *upazilla* of Dacope were provided with training in basic literacy and numeracy, and the pilot programme on life skills education.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ The Third Gender Children in Mymensingh City Corporation: Their engagement and transformation

¹⁴¹ UNFPA-UNICEF GPECM Annual Report 2016

¹⁴² UNFPA-UNICEF GPECM Annual Report 2016

- The ECM programming in Bangladesh adopted a mentorship approach in community safe spaces or adolescent clubs¹⁴³ in order to reach out to the most vulnerable girls (those who are out-of-school, extremely poor, pregnant, young mothers, married or at-risk of marriage, HIV positive, orphans, victims of violence, or suffering from obstetric fistula).
- Further, LSBE training sessions were equipped with provisions to ensure flexible hours and home visits by peer leaders to mobilise family members to enable access for married and disabled girls.¹⁴⁴

Strategy 2: Community Engagement and Behaviour Change

Have prevailing mindsets, beliefs, and attitude towards child marriage and gender norms changed in the communities and among the key community level influencers described in the strategy?

It is key to note here that community-based interventions were multi-faceted in nature. In some programme areas while the focus of Child Protection activities was focused on adolescent clubs, C4D activities focused on community engagement through adoption of the SEM approach. In other programme areas there were C4D initiatives with adolescents who were not members of the clubs as well as community engagement activities.¹⁴⁵

Through adolescent clubs, the programme demonstrated good potential to contribute to a change in existing systems of belief and behaviours that encourage child marriage.¹⁴⁶ More than 10,000 community people comprising parents, lawyer, teacher representatives, woman ward / union members, representatives from Child-Led Organizations (CLOs) were also trained on referral mechanisms for any form of violence including child marriage.¹⁴⁷

Research carried out on the impact of the edutainment series '*Icchedana*' focused on assessing the extent of visible change in respondents understanding and traditional beliefs around child marriage. Data shows that 54 per cent of the respondents at the endline reportedly displayed accurate knowledge on the legal age of marriage for both boys and girls, an increase from 49 per cent at the baseline.¹⁴⁸. With respect to community perceptions around the right age of marriage for girls and boys, 90 per cent respondents reported it to be over the legal age.¹⁴⁹ Findings of the study on respondents understanding of the impact of social norms on the practice of child marriage, suggest that a higher percentage of respondents believed that child marriage had reduced at the endline:¹⁵⁰

- Data from the endline survey on the *Icchedana* series shows that 93 per cent respondents believed that less than half the number of girls in their community were married before the legal age, whereas 96 per cent reported that less than half the number of boys were married. At the baseline, this stood at 86 and 94 per cent respectively.
- A drop of 3 per cent was recorded at the endline from 88 per cent at the baseline in respondents' intent to prevent child marriage within their own families.
- Contrastingly, the average across exposure groups of those who were inclined to prevent child marriages within their communities was recorded at 83 per cent at both the baseline and endline.¹⁵¹
- With respect to respondents' inclination to report on incidences of child marriage, the study recorded an increase from 7 per cent at the baseline to 10 per cent at the endline.¹⁵²

¹⁴³ UNFPA-UNICEF GPECM Annual Report 2018

¹⁴⁴ UNFPA-UNICEF GPECM Annual Report 2018

¹⁴⁵ Interaction with UNICEF BCO C4D representative

¹⁴⁶ UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage Joint Evaluation Report May 2019

¹⁴⁷ GPECM Bangladesh Results Report 2018

¹⁴⁸ BRAC University, *Results for baseline-endline survey of the entertainment-education campaign study*, January 2020

¹⁴⁹ BRAC University, *Results for baseline-endline survey of the entertainment-education campaign study*, January 2020

¹⁵⁰ BRAC University, *Results for baseline-endline survey of the entertainment-education campaign study*, January 2020

¹⁵¹ BRAC University, *Results for baseline-endline survey of the entertainment-education campaign study*, January 2020

¹⁵² BRAC University, *Results for baseline-endline survey of the entertainment-education campaign study*, January 2020

- Survey results on child marriage during COVID-19, however, show that 31 per cent respondents¹⁵³ believe that child marriages were carried out for reasons of greater security and safety for girls.¹⁵⁴

Perception around the incidence of child marriage was not found to be linked to respondents' level of education or economic capital but was found to be varied across study districts.¹⁵⁵ Significantly, at the endline a higher number of respondents' reported disapproval of child marriage, including amongst their families and communities. Furthermore, interactions with key community stakeholders highlighted the growing recognition of the importance of education for girls to enable them to be empowered and consequently delay their age of marriage.

How effective has work on multiple platforms and different levels (national, district, upazilla) been on achieving social mobilisation and community engagement? Have families, community members and key community level influencers taken concrete action to protect adolescents from child marriage and to stop and prevent child marriage? Have actions varied across these key stakeholders? Has saying no to child marriage become the common norm in the programme communities?

The research team found some evidence to state whether community level influencers have taken concrete actions to stop and prevent child marriage. A positive response to the adolescent clubs and the AFHS does indicate that the interventions are finding resonance among adolescents and they do have a need to discuss their issues. BCO's ECM programming focused on catering to demand generation for AFHS, crucial to ensuring that necessary action was taken by community members and influencers to create an environment of safe and regular access and uptake by adolescents. Information dissemination sessions on available AHFS were conducted during assemblies in school. This resulted in the increased uptake of services by adolescents in school.¹⁵⁶

Fostering gender equitable beliefs and attitudes is key to the overall agenda of the GPECM. Accounted for as Outcome 2 of the Global Results Framework, programme interventions have focused on engaging with community members, local leaders and key influencers through dialogues that promote gender equality, including a delay in and prevention of child marriage¹⁵⁷. In 2018, the country recorded a success rate of 44.7 per cent against a targeted 45 per cent for Outcome 2 of the GPECM GRF.¹⁵⁸.

Data for the GPECM shows that in 2018, 870 cases of child marriages were reported on the child helpline, while a 150 were prevented by CBCPCs in ECM districts¹⁵⁹. Field findings highlight that in many instances mothers in the community reported that they were able to challenge traditional patriarchal norms and encourage their daughters to complete their education, thereby delaying their age of marriage. With respect to preventing marriages during the on-going COVID 19 pandemic, survey results show that only 23 per cent were stopped by family and community members.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵³ Respondents were segregated by age, gender and geographical area

¹⁵⁴ Result of U-Report Poll on: Girl child marriage during COVID pandemic

¹⁵⁵ BRAC University, *Results for baseline-endline survey of the entertainment-education campaign study*, January 2020

¹⁵⁶ KII with UNICEF Health Sectoral Team

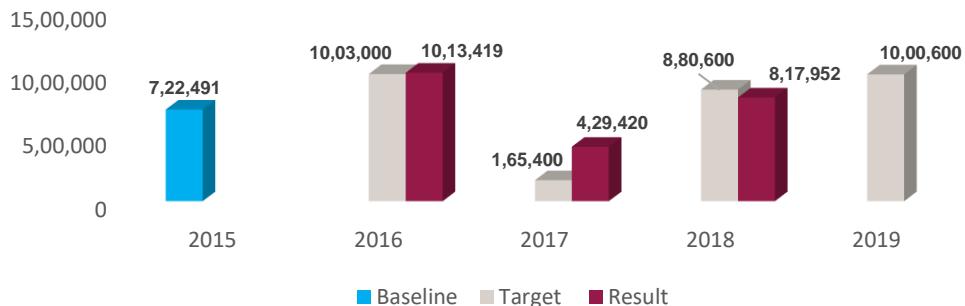
¹⁵⁷ Bangladesh Country Profile 2017

¹⁵⁸ Bangladesh Country Profile 2018

¹⁵⁹ GPECM Bangladesh Results Report 2018

¹⁶⁰ Result of U-Report Poll on: Girl child marriage during COVID pandemic

Output 2.1: Number of individuals in programme areas who regularly participate in dialogues promoting gender equitable norms including delaying child marriage



Graph 3: Number of individuals in programme areas who regularly participate in dialogues promoting gender equitable norms including delaying child marriage

However, survey results on child marriage during the COVID-19 pandemic show that 54 per cent of the respondents¹⁶¹ reported that no attempt was made to stop child marriage, whereas a minimal 8 per cent recorded a success in preventing marriages.¹⁶² Additionally, 41 per cent also reported that child marriages had taken place since March 2020.¹⁶³ This is indicative of a setback to the overall progress made under the ECM programme.

The Government of Bangladesh was also supported by UNICEF Bangladesh Data and Analytics team on data generation activities through the implementation of the MICS Survey in 2019. Significantly, stakeholder interactions highlighted that data from MICS 2013 and MICS 2019 shows that prevalence of child marriage in the country has not seen a notable decrease, reducing by only two to three per cent.¹⁶⁴

Strategy 3: Institutional Strengthening, Advocacy and Law Enforcement

How effective has UNICEF and UNFPA been in advocacy for a normative and legislative framework that protects adolescent girls from child marriage? Were there any missed opportunities in the advocacy strategy that needs to be addressed? Has the process been timely? Has the legislative and normative framework trickled down into specific policies and programmes?

UNICEF and UNFPA together have been quite successful in bringing about new policies and plans that would help in addressing the issue of early child marriage. Partnerships at the highest levels will ensure that this remains a significant agenda of the Government.

Strategic leveraging of the LCG WAGE platform enabled enhanced advocacy and promotion of ECM with government ministries and other development partners. The forum allowed for government accountability on ECM, specifically from MoWCA, and encourage cross sectoral collaboration and convergence.¹⁶⁵ The advocacy agenda of UNFPA-UNICEF with the Government of Bangladesh drew strength from its strategy of 'One UN Voice'.¹⁶⁶ A National Plan of Action to End Child Marriage was drawn up and finalised with technical and financial support from UNFPA and UNICEF. The programme advocated for the development of an associated Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.¹⁶⁷ Moreover,

¹⁶¹ Respondents were segregated by age, gender and geographical area

¹⁶² Result of U-Report Poll on: Girl child marriage during COVID pandemic

¹⁶³ Result of U-Report Poll on: Girl child marriage during COVID pandemic

¹⁶⁴ KII with UNICEF Bangladesh Data and Analytics Cross-Cutting Team

¹⁶⁵ GPECM Bangladesh Results Report 2018

¹⁶⁶ Bangladesh Country Profile 2017

¹⁶⁷ GPECM Bangladesh Results Report 2018

the programme also supported the institution of a costed National Adolescent Health Strategy.¹⁶⁸ Further, issues such as cybercrime and mental health were also incorporated within National Guidelines and SOP for Adolescent Friendly Health Services.¹⁶⁹ Advocacy was also undertaken with the government to finalise the Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA) 2017 with the exclusion of the Special Provision.

Under the Bangladesh Country Programme, efforts led to the development of the first National Curriculum Framework from K to secondary school and the adoption of an adolescent skills framework.¹⁷⁰ Additionally, rigorous advocacy on the importance of menstrual hygiene to remove barriers for adolescent girls in secondary schools led to the establishment of a multi-sectoral National Strategy on Menstrual Health Management.¹⁷¹ Further, the development of a National Adolescent Strategy was also undertaken as a result of advocacy through the BCO Country Programme.¹⁷²

Significantly, a formal partnership was also launched between UNICEF and the Governance and Innovations Unit of the PMO to enhance local government capacity to take preventive action against child marriage and encourage social mobilisation at the community level. Additionally, technical support was also provided for the development of the District Action Plan and building the capacity of authorities on child rights.¹⁷³

What role has evidence played in UNICEF advocacy strategy? Are there any evidence gaps that could strengthen UNICEFs capacity to strengthen institutions and legal and normative frameworks around child marriage? Does the existing evidence provide enough information on the different needs of adolescents depending on their various contexts? (wealth quintile, location, family context, level of ability, schooling situation etc.)

GPECM has used baseline and midline surveys in the programme districts to inform both policy and programming interventions. Moreover, BCO country programme additionally contributed towards the overall evidence generation focus by producing a study titled 'Context of Child Marriage and its Implications in Bangladesh'. Additionally, in collaboration with the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division of the Ministry of Planning and the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the GPECM established a module on normative beliefs and attitudes that act as drivers of child marriage for implementation in 64 districts. Further, an in-depth study, 'Context of Child Marriage and its Implications in Bangladesh', on the causes and consequences of child marriage, and key recommendations to end it was also published.¹⁷⁴

Consistent advocacy with the GoB carried out by UNICEF, UNFPA and other development partners also led to the establishment of the CMRA 2017, an enhanced version of the 1929 Act. However, there is scope for greater advocacy around the inclusion of the Special Provision that allows for marriage below the age of 18 years under special circumstances. While the evaluation notes that the increased robustness of the Act can be recorded as an improvement¹⁷⁵, continued and stronger evidence generation on what works to prevent marriage¹⁷⁶ and advocacy is needed to provide a holistic and truly protective legal framework for at-risk adolescent girls.

While the programme has generated rich evidence and lessons to be learnt, proper documentation is extremely crucial to strengthen knowledge management and scale-up. Additionally, standardisation of

¹⁶⁸ Bangladesh Country Profile 2017

¹⁶⁹ GPECM Country Office Phase I Results Report

¹⁷⁰ 2019 EYR - End Year Summary Report - Outcome 3 20191214

¹⁷¹ 2019 EYR - End Year Summary Report - Outcome 3 20191214

¹⁷² 2019 EYR - End Year Summary Report - Outcome 3 20191214

¹⁷³ UNICEF Annual Report 2016

¹⁷⁴ Bangladesh Country Profile 2017

¹⁷⁵ GPECM Country Office Phase I Results Report

¹⁷⁶ KII with UNFPA Representative

templates to capture necessary information is critical to accurately record the peculiarities and particularities of child marriage in varied contexts in the country.

Strategy 4: Enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling for girls

How effective has UNICEF been in enhancing accessibility and quality of formal schooling and alternative learning pathways for adolescent girls? Has a focus on girls had a negative impact on boys? Have adolescent girls who have benefitted from this strategy been more able to access the job market and to make decisions about their lives, including marriage? What external factors have influenced the effectiveness of this strategy?

Education being a core area of UNICEF, it has taken a number of pilots in addition to extending support to improve quality of education in formal schools. One relevant intervention has been provision of conditional cash transfers to encourage girls to continue with their formal education. The longer they remain in school, there are more chances of delay in marriage.

Schools were also leveraged to act as monitoring mechanisms to ensure that children being provided with incentives are remaining in school. The list of identified children was made available to the *Upazilla* Child Welfare Board and Union Parishads. For the duration of the programme, 3500 CTCs of 36,000 Bangladesh Taka each were provided to children and their families in the division, placed in the care of the family so that it can be appropriately invested for the child. The programme adopted a rigorous and systematic case management process to identify vulnerable children, supported by the Child Welfare Board and a member of the Community Based Child Protection Committee.¹⁷⁷

Interventions in Sylhet also incorporated a component of life skills training for income generation through the grant of stipends to an estimated 1500 adolescent girls and boys. The focus target group for this intervention were girls at risk of child marriage. It engaged extensively with Adolescent Club members, peer leaders and CBCPC members to effectively target and identify vulnerable girls. Though a limited amount was allocated for the stipend, the main purpose was to provide adolescents with an avenue of income generation to delay child marriage. Enrolling in and attending the yearly skills training sessions offered by MoWCA was made mandatory to receive the stipend amount.¹⁷⁸

While the evidence suggests that cash-based interventions are somewhat effective for ending child marriage, research also highlights the importance of a multiple pronged approaches to programming. For example, results from the Bangladeshi Association for Life Skills, Income, and Knowledge for Adolescents (BALIKA) show that programmes to educate girls, build their skills for modern livelihoods and engage their communities can reduce the likelihood of child marriage by one third and produce better health, educational and social outcomes for them.

Strategy 5: Provision of livelihood support and financial incentives

How effective has UNICEF been in supporting the government to provide financial support to families and adolescent girls at risk of child marriage so that they remain in school and unmarried? Has the government expanded its financial support and social protection schemes as a response of UNICEFs advocacy and technical support? Has UNICEF been effective in changing the perception of families around the value of the girl child and the relevance of education for adolescent girls?

Alternative Learning programme (ALP) for the most marginalised out of school adolescents through informal apprenticeship was positioned as a key strategy of the programme.¹⁷⁹ It was developed in recognition of the fact that out-of-school adolescents are among the most vulnerable to abuse and

¹⁷⁷ KII with representation from Sylhet UNICEF Zonal Office

¹⁷⁸ KII with representation from Sylhet UNICEF Zonal Office

¹⁷⁹ GPECM Annual Report 2020-21

violence. In the absence of alternative learning opportunities, they are likely to enter the unskilled labour workforce, putting them at-risk to work in hazardous conditions with minimal pay, and to be forced into child marriage. The programme was planned in coordination with ILO and BRAC for out-of-school adolescents and provide them with opportunities to employment and further education.

A key strength of this intervention was its linkage with the National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF). Employment training modules were standardised and linked with the national qualification framework. As such, through the Recognition for Prior Learning (RPL) mechanism, learners received certification that would enable them access to further education. Further, cash incentives were also provided to learners to encourage retention and completion. Learners were also provided with on-the-job training in the form of a supervised informal apprenticeship after receiving theoretical competency training and completing an assessment. Additionally, social mobilisation techniques were leveraged to engage with the community to orient and inform them as well as source feedback from them.

Key results¹⁸⁰

- An estimated 28000 out-of-school adolescents were provided with access to learning, relevant skills and livelihood opportunities
- More than 50 per cent of participation was from the most disadvantaged and vulnerable adolescent girls, while at least 10 per cent of learners were children with disabilities
- 95 per cent of learners were able to secure employment one month after completing the course. Significantly, a BRAC tracer study highlighted that 77 per cent were continuing with their secured employment after a period of two and a half years
- Delaying early marriage for young adolescents has been recorded as a key achievement of this intervention. Study findings show a decrease in early marriage by 62 per cent
- Supported and contributed to the transformation of structures that encourage gender-biased employment
- Increased employment and monthly income for out-of-school adolescents compared to non-participants in the intervention by about six times. Savings of participants showed an increase by an estimated 7.5 times and per day per capita food expenditure increased by about 9 per cent. Non-food expenditure also increased by about 5 per cent
- Gender disaggregated analysis showed that the impact was greater for female participants than for males. A cost benefit analysis was also done assuming that benefits will last for 10-15 years. BCR ranges between 2.75 to 4.42 which is significant

The programme had its set of challenges¹⁸¹

- Limited capacity and facilities of the system to conduct assessments for certification
- Lack of interest of middle or large entrepreneurs to engage with on-the-job training for learners
- Inadequate standardisation of trades
- Increased risk of child labour for learners in popular trades involving children
- Absence of a robust policy and legal framework for apprenticeship for the informal sector.
- Limited acceptance in the community of girls and women participating in traditionally unconventional job roles

Some other sectoral interventions helped in enhancing access to schooling. For instance, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene sectoral interventions included capacity building and training of teachers, SMC members, adolescent girls and district and *upazilla* level authorities. It had a focus on bringing forth long-term change in the lives of girls.¹⁸² Additionally, interventions also facilitated the installation of

¹⁸⁰ Alternative Learning Pathway for most Disadvantage and Vulnerable Out of School Adolescents

¹⁸¹ Alternative Learning Pathway for most Disadvantage and Vulnerable Out of School Adolescents

¹⁸² KII with BCO WASH Sectoral Team

Water Sanitation and Hygiene blocks, handwashing stations supported by the GoB, separate latrines for girls and boys with MHM facilities for girls at Adolescent Clubs and secondary schools/madrassas, resulting in preventing girls from being absent from their schools. Further, facilities were constructed in a manner to be disabled friendly and inclusive.¹⁸³

Alignment to the Theory of Change

As previously elaborated upon, ECM efforts in Bangladesh are guided by the GPECM ToC and the National level ToC. Both ToC's have been found to be aligned to the country context and deliver in line with the needs of the country, albeit with certain limitations. For instance, a National Plan of Action to End Child Marriage was drawn up and finalised with technical and financial support from UNFPA and UNICEF. The programme also advocated for the development of an associated Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.¹⁸⁴ Such efforts are likely to contribute to the creation on a robust policy and legal environment for effective implementation of the law. However, the evaluation also finds that limited awareness of the NAP at the sub-district levels acts as key deterrent to implementation on ground.

With respect to fostering positive attitudes and behaviours for transformation in social norms and practices, interventions with a focus on increased awareness and capacity of community gatekeepers and adolescents to prevent child marriage has recorded significant successes. Across districts visited by the evaluation team, it was found that majority of adolescents reported an increased sense of confidence in demanding their rights driven by the training they had received through Adolescent Clubs. Similarly, the increasing role of mothers in preventing child marriage was highlighted in certain areas. However, the evaluation team was not able to analyse individual attitudinal behavioural trends in the absence of Focussed Group Discussions (FGDs).¹⁸⁵

Incorporation of boys within adolescent clubs has also been highlighted as a key strength of the intervention, contributing to creating a safe environment for girls. For instance, adolescent girls interacted with in Bhola highlighted that as a result of this incorporation, incidence of sexual abuse and harassment had reduced thereby contributing to an increased sense of safety. With respect to the outcome on improved civil registration systems, however, the evaluation team was not able to collect any conclusive data as concerned stakeholders were not available due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Further, interactions also highlighted the focus on vulnerable constituencies of girls, but simultaneously highlighted the need for a stronger focus on adolescent girls already married and adolescents with disabilities.

¹⁸³ GPECM, Bangladesh, Annual Report 2018

¹⁸⁴ GPECM Bangladesh Results Report 2018

¹⁸⁵ Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent mobility and travel restrictions, FGDs could not be held

Has the programme been gender transformative and achieved gender-transformative results?

While the GPECM programme and BCO's Outcome 3 recognise the importance and significance of ensuring interventions are fitted with a gender transformative lens (*Figure 5*).¹⁸⁶, transformation of such nature requires time and consistent focus to be institutionalised to the extent where external influences are not required to facilitate it. The need to strengthen the programme with a gender transformative model and shift from a gender sensitive framework has also been recorded as key for Phase II of the Global programme.¹⁸⁷

Achieving gender equality through a gender transformative approach	3.2.11 ECM interventions and strategies have been fitted with a gender lens and incorporate good and strong elements of a gender transformative approach.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enabling analytical study of prejudices, gender norms, roles and stereotypesIdentifying and reinforcing positive factors that allow for equality and an empowering environmentEmphasizing the comparative position of women, girls and marginalised groups, and changing the systems, policies and social norms that underpin and propagate gender inequalities <p>Source: https://www.iawg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Gender-Continuum-PowerPoint_final.pdf</p>	<p>The strategies and interventions rolled out as part of the ECM programming in Bangladesh have been designed with the clear purpose of identifying and addressing root causes of gender inequality that encourage and allow for the practice of child marriage. By adopting cross-sectoral interventions, ECM efforts undertaken by BCO aimed to address elemental causes of gender inequalities and modify gender roles. Correspondingly, the interventions adopt a human rights-based and gender transformative approach to ensuring that adolescent girls and their families and communities' benefit from the programme, and eventually take on an active role as an agent of change.¹⁸⁸</p>

Figure 5: Gender transformative approach

To elucidate, such an approach was well adopted in the LSBE

Training module that UNICEF carried out through Adolescent Clubs. The underlying theme of the module was to build the capacity and empower adolescents to act as *agents of change*. Additionally, the module was designed to strengthen current knowledge systems and to prevent negative and discriminatory attitudes and behaviour.¹⁸⁹ Carried out through a *peer education model*, the objective of the LSBE Training package was to amplify the confidence, self-worth, independence and empathy of participants.

Though initially catering only to girls, over the course of the programme, several clubs had incorporated boys, at 30 per cent of total membership in many areas. As a result of this, many girls reported a reduction in sexual harassment and violence.¹⁹⁰ While such an approach has shown promising results and high potential, scope for enhancement is visible with respect to linkages with service delivery and livelihood options. Creating alternative opportunities to marriage and domestic work, such as access to work, savings or loan activities provides girls with strategic control over their life choices, including marriage and sexual and reproductive health.¹⁹¹ Providing adolescent girls and their families with appropriate livelihood opportunities has been recognised as a key strategy to ending Child Marriage.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁶ Marcus, R, and Samuels, F, *Gender-transformative programming: A background paper for UNICEF's revised Gender Action Plan*, December 2020

¹⁸⁷ GPECM Phase II Design Workshop Report 2019

¹⁸⁸ GPECM Bangladesh Results Report 2018

¹⁸⁹ GPECM Bangladesh Results Report 2018

¹⁹⁰ UNICEF ROSA, *Gender review of the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Programme 2017-2020*, 2019

¹⁹¹ Girls Not Brides, *How empowering girls can help end child marriage*, Retrieved from: [How empowering girls can help end child marriage - Girls Not Brides](#)

¹⁹² Plan International, *5 ways to end child marriage*, Retrieved from: [5 ways to end child marriage - Plan International Canada \(plancanada.ca\)](#)

The evaluation finds that BCO C4D interventions recognised the fact that communication is critical to changing social norms, placing consistent emphasis on messaging and interventions that promoted long-term and sustained change.

C4D strategies have recognised that child marriage is not necessarily a result of only individual behavioural patterns, rather there is a strong linkage with community behavioural trends and traditions that have been cemented as social norms¹⁹³. A key strategy highlighted by the GPECM ToC and BCO ECM strategy note is placing a strong focus on the community within communication interventions to bring about gender transformative social behaviour change. The impact of the same has been quantified as Outcome 2 of the GPECM: *Households demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours regarding gender equality and equity.*

Interventions utilised methods that included media campaigns through radio, TV and drama as well as innovative social media platforms and toolkits to reach more community members with social behaviour change messaging. The activities aimed to support community-focused dialogues, including creating an understanding on the risks of child marriage.¹⁹⁴ Additionally, a review of the data generated by the programme in Bangladesh on the *Number of individuals in programme areas who regularly participate in dialogues promoting gender-equitable norms, including delay in child marriage* (recorded as Output Indicator 2.1 of the GPECM programme Outcome 2) shows that targets set for Phase I have been consistently met. In 2019, 1,560,412 individuals were found to be participating, while the target had been set at 1,351,100.¹⁹⁵

BCO C4D also supported the Islamic Foundation, Bangladesh to carry out capacity building sessions activities to identify and address key issues, including child marriage and adolescent health and well-being. These discussions were held as part of the Friday *Khutba*, primarily attended by male members of the community.¹⁹⁶ Additionally, the National Multimedia Campaign¹⁹⁷ launched in July 2017, also known as the 'Raise the Beat' or '*Dhol*' campaign mobilised over 320,000 community members and local leaders, resulting in 93 unions (local councils) declaring themselves as 'child marriage-free'. Since its launch, the #RaiseTheBeat4ECM campaign has been viewed an estimated 186 million times across television, radio and social media, reaching out to almost 95 million viewers on social media, and has also received two international awards in 2019.¹⁹⁸

Further, *Icchedana*, an entertainment educational drama series was developed and broadcasted on national platforms to engage maximum viewership.¹⁹⁹ The series, adopting an entertainment approach, highlighted critical social issues like child marriage, dowry, adolescent nutrition, health, and wellbeing. Data on the impact of the *Icchedana* programme showed an enhancement in respondents' knowledge on the legal age of marriage, while an understanding on the legal consequences of child marriage was high both at the baseline and endline.

As such, the evaluation notes that interventions focusing on community engagement through interpersonal communication and recurrent dialogue is a human and financial resource intensive process. Therefore, sufficient financial investment and capacity building of those

¹⁹³ National Multi-media campaign strategy for End Child Marriage

¹⁹⁴ UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage Phase I Report

¹⁹⁵ UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage Phase I Report

¹⁹⁶ KII with Director, ICT, Islamic Foundation

¹⁹⁷ The National Multimedia Campaign is a part of a larger C4D/SBCC Strategy to end child marriage, and will go hand in hand with on-ground social mobilisation and community engagement efforts in high child marriage prevalent districts

¹⁹⁸ GPECM Country Office Phase I Results Report

¹⁹⁹ An Endline Evaluation by BRAC University found that the overall impact of the *Icchedana* series was difficult to estimate due to limited overall viewership. This has been attributed to an unforeseen cultural preference amongst adolescents for Indian soaps and shows. It was therefore recommended that to increase viewership, the series needed linkages with social media platforms popular amongst Bangladeshi adolescents, integrate with other national-level programming to enhance the scope of outreach and focus on capacity building of media professionals to embed socially sensitive messages in their mainstream work to allow for cost effectiveness and sustainability of the interventions

engaged at the community level will remain critical to bringing about transformation of structural systems of inequality and discrimination.

3.2.12 ECM interventions in Bangladesh engaged with key stakeholders at all levels. However, with respect to bringing about gender transformation, wider and more focused engagement is needed with different stakeholders for a longer period for good results.

To elaborate further, it is important to closely look at some of the interventions by BCO to understand its gender transformative elements and areas that require strengthening.

SBCC strategies focusing on girls and at the community level in Bangladesh have been supported by

a focus on enhancing existing systems of education, health and child protection. Programming efforts fostered close linkages between Adolescent Clubs, schools and communities with adolescent-friendly health services (see figure 6).²⁰⁰

Adolescent-friendly health services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Counselling on SRHR• Management of menstruation related problems and Sanitary Napkin distribution• Management of Reproductive Tract Infection/ Sexually Transmitted Infection (RTI/STI);• Limited Curative Care• Nutrition services and IFA distribution• Preconception, Antenatal, Delivery and Postnatal Care Family Planning Services (married adolescents)• Menstrual Regulation (MR) and Post Abortion Care (PAC)• Td Vaccination• Referral Services

To ensure that services were utilised, and adolescents were encouraged to access them, courtyard sessions were conducted with parents and community gatekeepers. Additionally, advocacy sessions with local authorities, teachers and religious leaders on available services, and encouraging engagement of other key government personnel²⁰¹ were carried out to ensure demand generation for adolescent-friendly health services. BCO also supported the training of trainers on the national guidelines and standard operating procedures for adolescent-friendly health services.²⁰²

Figure 6: Adolescent friendly health services

In addition to AFHS, the enhancement of education systems was also supported with gender-friendly Water, Sanitation and Hygiene facilities. This included MHM provisions, hygiene promotion sessions in school and capacity building of teachers, SMC's and School Brigades on hygiene management. ECM efforts also facilitated training on operation and maintenance of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene amenities and advocated with the government on the importance of financial investment in such facilities to allow for long-term benefit and wider outreach.²⁰³ Aligned to Outcome 3 of the country programme, the production of economical sanitary pads by girl members of Adolescent Clubs was also facilitated, referred to as Sani-Mart.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁰ Bangladesh Country Profile 2018

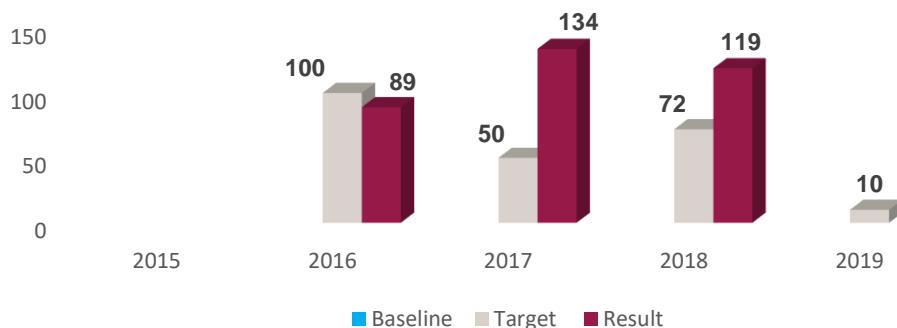
²⁰¹ District level officers from Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and Ministry of Information

²⁰² GPECM Country Office Phase I Results Report

²⁰³ Bangladesh Country Profile 2018

²⁰⁴ UNICEF ROSA, *Gender review of the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Programme 2017-2020, 2019*

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



Graph 4: Number and proportion of service delivery points in programme areas implementing guidelines for adolescent girl-friendly health and protection services

Within the confines of a traditionally conservative society in Bangladesh, safe and easy access to AFHS however remains a consistent challenge. Despite carrying out demand generation activities with key stakeholders, AFHS saw limited uptake²⁰⁵, which can be attributed to limited awareness and acceptability of available services and the stigma attached to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. Consequently, service providers were less inclined to proactively address and respond to adolescent health issues, limiting the impact of such services.

Therefore, the evaluation notes that a gender transformative approach to addressing adolescent health issues and well-being requires consistent and focused targeting of all stakeholders.

An increased emphasis on boys as gender equality envoys and supporters of ending child marriage is a key strategic requirement to ensure equitable and safe access and uptake of services. Additionally, there is also a need to enhance engagement with parents and communities so that adolescents can leverage service delivery points easily,²⁰⁶ while programming also requires a stronger focus on divorced and married adolescent girls to achieve real gender transformative results.²⁰⁷ Significantly, a gender review carried out by ROSA in 2019 also noted that greater investment in addressing violence against women²⁰⁸ was crucial to strengthen future programme efforts through a gender transformative approach.

Correspondingly, it is reiterated that within the prevention approach engaging with boys and girls in their early childhood is crucial to change social norms, gender stereotypes and discriminatory socialisation of children. This is particularly important because by the age of 10 children learn the gendered roles and relationships which perpetuates existing gender biases. Research suggests that by the age of three, children start understanding and inculcating stereotypes, resulting in the *world to expand for boys and shrink for girls by age 10*.²⁰⁹ Between the ages of three and seven, conceptions of gender have been found to be formed in children, including knowledge on gender norms, identities and stereotypes²¹⁰, and strong gender biases. **As such, it is imperative to include an understanding on gendered notions, norms, and practices within Early Childhood Education and development,**

²⁰⁵ GPECM Country Office Phase I Results Report

²⁰⁶ GPECM Country Office Phase I Results Report

²⁰⁷ UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, *Joint strategic reflection retreat on Bangladesh GPECM Phase II*, June 2019

²⁰⁸ UNICEF ROSA, *Gender review of the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Programme 2017-2020*, 2019

²⁰⁹ UN Women, *Gender equality starts at home: Seven tips for raising feminist kids*, May 2019, Retrieved from: [Gender equality starts at home: Seven tips for raising feminist kids | UN Women – Headquarters](#)

²¹⁰ Ruble, N. Diane, et. al., 'The role of gender constancy in early gender development', *Child Development*, 78(4), July 2007, Retrieved from: [The Role of Gender Constancy in Early Gender Development - Ruble - 2007 - Child Development - Wiley Online Library](#)

instead of a sole focus on adolescents within a gender transformative approach to ending child marriage.

To conclude, evaluations findings, as elucidated above, highlight that programme strategies and interventions have provided for components of a gender transformative approach, while the impact and outreach of the same has been gender-sensitive to a large extent. However, gender transformation is a time intensive process and cannot be achieved in the life span of a single programme cycle.²¹¹

What has been the impact of COVID-19 on child marriage?

3.2.13 COVID-19 exacerbated vulnerabilities faced by children, particularly girls and women. Therefore, there were increased cases of child marriages reported through various rapid assessments and studies that were undertaken.

The COVID-19 outbreak has been a human tragedy, pushing governments globally to launch unprecedented public-health and economic responses. On March 26, 2020 the Government of Bangladesh announced a nationwide shut down as a preventive step to contain the spread of the virus, creating a humanitarian crisis with a public health dimension.

UNICEF reports that COVID-19 poses a serious threat to the futures of 600 million children in South Asia.²¹² Moreover, studies highlight that while 240 million children in the region already live in "multidimensional" poverty, the pandemic will push an additional 120 million children into poverty. Additionally, there are fears that COVID-19 will impact Bangladesh's long fight to eradicate child marriage. Projections indicate the pandemic will disrupt the efforts made to end child marriage thus far, resulting in 13 million more girls forced into child marriages between 2020 and 2030 globally.²¹³ While it is early to estimate the true impact of COVID-19 on child marriage, experience from the Ebola crisis and other emergencies suggest that girls and women will be disproportionately affected, particularly the poorest and socially marginalised.²¹⁴ Existing research also shows that, "*many of the complex factors that drive child marriage in stable environments are exacerbated in emergency settings, as family and community structures break down during crisis and displacement.*"²¹⁵



Field interactions across the visited districts recorded that closure of schools for an indefinite period had extremely negative implications on the high incidence of child marriage in the country. In Bhola, a secondary school teacher reported fears of an approximate 30 per cent of girls not being able to return to school. Further, in Dhaka, it was found that as a result of loss of income and livelihood opportunities of parents, many showed inclinations of marrying their daughters to address their heightened economic vulnerabilities.

Between April 21st and April 30th, 2021, the Population Council Bangladesh conducted the first round of a series of rapid surveys on COVID-19 knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP) and social and other

²¹¹ GPECM Country Office Phase I Results Report

²¹² UNICEF, "Urgent action needed to safeguard futures of 600 million South Asian children threatened by COVID-19", June 2020, Retrieved from: www.unicef.org/india/press-releases/urgent-action-needed-safeguard-futures-600-million-south-asian-children-threatened

²¹³ The World Bank Blogs, "Child marriage: the unspoken consequence of COVID-19", October 2020, Retrieved from <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/child-marriage-unspoken-consequence-covid-19>

²¹⁴ Menéndez, C. et al. "Ebola crisis the unequal impact on women and children's health," *The Lancet: Global Health*, Vol. 3, Issue 3, 2015.

²¹⁵ Girls Not Brides, "COVID-19 and Child, Early and Forced Marriage: An Agenda for Action", April 2020

impacts of COVID-19 on adolescent girls living in their programme areas in rural Bangladesh.²¹⁶ The findings highlighted that the negative economic impact of the pandemic was evident with girls reporting food scarcity and income loss in their families. Half of the adolescent girls reported a stop in their household income due to the lockdown and one fifth reported urgent concern for food and immediate needs in the families. Further, 18 per cent reported facing some form of violence (rebuke, anger, beating), while 28 per cent reported increased cases of violence in their surrounding areas.²¹⁷

Findings from the 'Rapid Analysis of Child Marriage Situation During COVID-19 in Bangladesh' (2021) paint an equally bleak picture. Between April to October 2020, respondents were asked their estimates on the number of child marriages occurring in their respective neighbourhoods. This figure amounted to 13,886 child marriages (overlap unknown).²¹⁸ Breaking down by geography, the highest numbers were reported from Barguna (1,652), Nilphamari, (1,369), Kurigram (1,321), Laxmipur (1,064), and Kushtia (950) districts. Further, in over three-fourths (78 per cent) of these marriages, the parents were reported as initiating the child marriage. In approximately 35 per cent (4,866) of the marriages, the Marriage Registrar was said to have registered the marriage.²¹⁹ Gauging the factors that led to this increase in child marriages, the research found that "*while knowledge on the legalities and negative impacts of child marriage were strong, COVID-19 increased the vulnerabilities of families, exacerbating existing social norms and beliefs*".²²⁰

Given the devastating effect of COVID-19 on children, UNICEF has targeted interventions to tackle the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic. For the reporting period of 1 January to 30 December 2020, UNICEF supported the Government of Bangladesh and other humanitarian actors to prevent and respond to the impact of COVID-19 in the Rohingya camps and host communities. This response included accelerated risk communication and hygiene promotion, delivery of \$4.5 million in personal protective equipment and medical supplies to NGO and government health facilities and the establishment of severe acute respiratory infection isolation and treatment centres.²²¹ Government schools across the country as well as Learning Centres in the Rohingya camps remained closed from March through the end of the year, disrupting structured learning programmes for nine months and increasing child protection concerns including child marriage and child labour. While remote learning modalities were introduced, UNICEF reported that the most vulnerable children could not access these modalities easily or equally.²²²

During the COVID-19 pandemic, safe spaces remained open for individual services to respond to the escalating GBV incidents, including child marriage and intimate partner violence. 71,114 women, men, boys and girls in camps and 15,079 in host communities were reached with messaging on GBV awareness and countering negative social norms during the COVID-19 pandemic.²²³ Additionally, 15,175 women and adolescent girls received dignity kits to facilitate their dignified access to services and 4,047 (2,641 female) frontline workers were trained on case management, psychosocial support and GBV risk mitigation, as well as protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.²²⁴ UNICEF-supported CBCPCs played a significant role during the COVID-19 lockdown, undertaking information and awareness sessions at community-level and responding to protection concerns. Other services

²¹⁶ Population Council, BANGLADESH: COVID-19 KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, PRACTICES & NEEDS, April 2021

²¹⁷ Population Council, BANGLADESH: COVID-19 KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, PRACTICES & NEEDS, April 2021

²¹⁸ UNICEF et al., Rapid Analysis of Child Marriage Situation During COVID-19 in Bangladesh, 2021

²¹⁹ UNICEF et al., Rapid Analysis of Child Marriage Situation During COVID-19 in Bangladesh, 2021

²²⁰ UNICEF et al., Rapid Analysis of Child Marriage Situation During COVID-19 in Bangladesh, 2021

²²¹ UNICEF, Bangladesh Humanitarian Situation Report No. 55, Retrieved from:

<https://www.unicef.org/media/92016/file/Bangladesh-Humanitarian-SitRep-December-2020.pdf>

²²²UNICEF, Bangladesh Humanitarian Situation Report No. 55, Retrieved from:

<https://www.unicef.org/media/92016/file/Bangladesh-Humanitarian-SitRep-December-2020.pdf>

²²³UNICEF, Bangladesh Humanitarian Situation Report No. 55, Retrieved from:

<https://www.unicef.org/media/92016/file/Bangladesh-Humanitarian-SitRep-December-2020.pdf>

²²⁴UNICEF, Bangladesh Humanitarian Situation Report No. 55, Retrieved from:

<https://www.unicef.org/media/92016/file/Bangladesh-Humanitarian-SitRep-December-2020.pdf>

provided during COVID-19 were psychosocial support, quality case management, positive parenting sessions and life skills training for adolescents.²²⁵

Further, in the context of COVID-19 especially, innovations that leverage technology become all the more relevant and pertinent. Therefore, under the GPECM programme, operational plans were adopted to include measures such as Digital Platform /Virtual Platform. Adolescents were trained through the mobile phone application called, “Digital Application for Adolescents on COVID-19 messages with an aim to protect themselves, their families, peers and community members from COVID-19²²⁶. Additionally, these messages were also geared towards enabling adolescents to stay vigilant against GBV, child marriages and VAC during this time. Through a cascading model, the adolescents who received these trainings, in turn reached out to 132,846 adolescents (70 per cent girls), 27,962 parents and 63,517 community members through the application.²²⁷ Moreover, approximately 227,000 adolescents received Online Safety training all over the country. Subsequently, developing e-booklets on Life skills, VAC, child marriage is a focus of the programme to enhance outreach to more adolescents in the remote locations.²²⁸

UNICEF BCO also undertook efforts for awareness raising and information dissemination on COVID-19 protocols and best practices. These include media campaigns such as ‘Meena: Let’s stay at home, remain free from coronavirus’ and ‘#WearAMask Campaign’, as well as leaflets on safe breastfeeding tips, classroom etiquette, hand-washing among others.²²⁹ Additionally, it has conducted a number of U-Polls to gauge the impact of the COVID-19 situation on adolescents, including data on child marriage, violence against children and more.

3.3 Efficiency and cost effectiveness

Sr. No.	Evaluation Question	Assessment Against Rubric
1	Relating to the GPECM portion of work, has the joint programme and management structure with UNFPA at the country level facilitated achieving results and efficient delivery? Which areas have gained the most from this programme and which one the least?	Assessment: Good The GPECM played a critical role in creating a pool of funding and engaging with stakeholders to inform national level policies, planning and strengthen programme design. Focus was also placed on evidence generation. However, there were challenges with respect to coordination at field level, thereby restricting impact
2	Relating to the GPECM portion of work, to what extent has being part of a global programme facilitated linkages and synergies to accelerate efforts to end child marriage within UNICEF and its partners?	Assessment: Good The GPECM took into account the need for convergent and multi-sectoral programming to address an issue such as ECM. This is evidenced by the efforts invested for horizontal, vertical and geographical convergence. However, this was primarily visible at the National level, whereas at the sub-district level coordination was weak

²²⁵ UNICEF, Bangladesh Humanitarian Situation Report No. 55, Retrieved from:
<https://www.unicef.org/media/92016/file/Bangladesh-Humanitarian-SitRep-December-2020.pdf>

²²⁶ GPECM Annual Report 2020-21

²²⁷ GPECM Annual Report 2020-21

²²⁸ GPECM Annual Report 2020-21

²²⁹ UNICEF, Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) information centre, Retrieved from:

<https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/en/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-information-centre>

3	What key principles have determined where UNICEF has mainly spent its resources for ending child marriage? Have high impact areas been prioritised?	Assessment: Adequate UN and government priorities guided funding and resource allocation for BCO ECM efforts. An overall challenge, however, was limited funding. As resources were limited to address root causes, it is key to carry out focused out efforts t with various development partners and pushing for coordination with PMO and MoWCA to influence ECM agenda is key to enhance the impact of the programme
4	Has the country programme structure of a life cycle approach facilitated efficient delivery of results?	Assessment: Adequate Adoption of the life-cycle approach has fostered convergence and partnerships across sectoral teams. However, given that addressing an issue such as ECM requires long-term efforts and it was only adopted for a four-year time period with a switch being made to a life-cycle lens for next CP (starting 2021), it remains too early for the evaluation to comment on the efficiency of this approach.

Table 10: Summary of Efficiency EQ findings

Relating to the GPECM portion of work, has the joint programme and management structure with UNFPA at the country level facilitated achieving results and efficient delivery? Which areas have gained the most from this programme and which one the least?

3.3.1 The joint programme and management structure helped collate complimenting resources and capacities of UNICEF and UNFPA and thereby enhance good outreach and outcomes. However, these were primarily at the national level and policy level advocacy.

UNICEF and UNFPA, worked jointly for the GPECM programme. While UNICEF has a long track record of addressing ECM through multisectoral efforts using education, social protection, C4D, changing social norms, and child protection interventions, for UNFPA, its ECM efforts are rooted in a focus on addressing reproductive health, culture and gender. Both the organisations were able to jointly synthesise the global vision, while accounting for diversity in activities at the country level, and defining specific roles and responsibilities aligned to their comparative advantages and experiences.

Both the organisations predominantly implemented GPECM interventions in Bangladesh without any combined planning, except at the national policy and advocacy level. Geographically, Jamalpur was the only common district, however, a conscious effort was taken by both organisations to ensure there was no overlap or duplication of efforts at a district level. Therefore, there was no joint implementation of interventions at the district level. However, the joint programme was important to pool in complementing resources of both organisations and together work with various stakeholders in Bangladesh to inform national level policies, planning and strengthen programme design. The regional offices worked together with UNICEF BCO to contextualise the global theory of change to country level. Moreover, it had a strong element of work that focused on developing the strategy on gender transformative programming and aided efforts to engage more men and boys into the programme for better impact. Both regional offices built a joint model of working where activities such as monitoring, research studies, meetings, and knowledge management were undertaken jointly.

A common evidence framework was created that helped combine inputs from both organisations' regional and country offices. This framework helped identify gaps and collate sectoral efforts such as health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, education, child protection, cash transfer for social protection, empowerment of adolescents through the implementation of adolescent clubs, among other key areas. Additionally, the global programme supported programmes in the humanitarian context of Bangladesh too. As a country with a high proportion of refugees and increased vulnerabilities resulting from disasters and climatic conditions, looking at ECM efforts through a humanitarian lens was very important to the

wider ECM agenda. The global programme moreover helped institutionalise life skills education into the national education system in Bangladesh.

Moreover, with a very critical focus on evidence generation, the global programme was instrumental in undertaking research and studies. These findings were then used to refine strategies and strengthen programmes that helped not just UNFPA and UNICEF in their programmes but also had a cascading effect in strengthening interventions undertaken by their respective partners. To reinforce, BCO too had a strong focus on evidence generation during Phase 1 of the programme, however, the use of evidence to inform implementation was not always consistent. Regional support helped ensure more evidence-based programming was undertaken. To summarise, at the national level, jointness of the global programme helped strengthen the NAP and its costing, undertake the development of M&E mechanisms, and enhance efforts such as Dhol Campaign under C4D initiatives. Moreover, it had an added value at the national level and together both organisations were able to push the ECM agenda and enhance complementarity at a larger scale. However, the joint programme had limited impact at the sub-national and sub-district levels except in Jamalpur. Further, as highlighted during interactions with zonal offices, there were gaps in coordination at field level between UNFPA and UNICEF, further limiting the impact.

3.3.2 The joint programme helped enhance efficiency of good results in key areas such as national level coordination and policy and advocacy. Further, it helped streamline efforts and aid the process of evidence generation which was critical for strengthening the overall ECM agenda.

Policy level advocacy efforts

The joint programme was instrumental in enhancing national advocacy efforts with a focus on legal reforms and national strategies. Together UNICEF and UNFPA helped strengthen the NAP under the leadership of MoWCA to make it more comprehensive. Both organisations provided technical and financial support to develop the document as well as conduct consultations/workshops with key development partners (DPs). Therefore, the NAP development resulted in stronger ownership of the action plan and in identifying key areas for contribution of the partners during the implementation phase. Through a joint effort, the NAP was submitted to the MoWCA for their approval and endorsement. The result contributes to Outcome 4 of the GPECM.

Additionally, along with various partners, UNICEF and UNFPA helped advocate for the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017 (CMRA). In 2017, during Phase 1 of the programme, the government finally adopted the CMRA after two years of consistent technical engagement and support.²³⁰ Moreover, efforts were taken by both organisations to advocate with the government to exclude the Special Provisions clause that allows for marriage of children below 18 years given specific circumstances. Both organisations continued their support to MoWCA to develop the 2018 rules of CMRA to define exceptional circumstances vetted through a rigorous process under which the Special Provision could be used.²³¹

To streamline operations and coordination of various stakeholders, country offices had a focus in supporting several external and internal coordination mechanisms. For instance, UNFPA and UNICEF are both members of the National Alliance to End Child Marriage and Female Genital mutilation steering committee.²³² Moreover, in 2018, every ministry in countries such as Bangladesh that had costed national plans approved, had integrated ECM into their design, implementation and monitoring. This was at a policy and programmatic level to maximise impact on ECM. Additionally, parliamentary sub-committees on preventing gender-based violence including a focus on ECM, were set up. Both

²³⁰ GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2017

²³¹ GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2017

²³² GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2017

organisations through collaborative efforts supported and engaged with key line ministries including MoWCA in these aspects.²³³

Enhancing evidence generation and strengthening Communication for Development (C4D) initiatives

As noted during discussions with the C4D representations at the zonal offices, the global programme and joint working of UNICEF and UNFPA were important in streamlining various C4D initiatives and bringing about cohesiveness on C4D interventions such as ECM messages and community engagement. As highlighted during discussions, designing C4D initiatives requires convergent programming and alignment with other sectors to enhance outcomes. Therefore, the GPECM and joint efforts under it, helped the sectoral teams adopt stronger evidence-based mechanisms in addition to providing financial support. For instance, C4D initiatives for UNFPA were primarily on an ad hoc basis, however, as a result of the joint programme, along with UNICEF support, they worked together on C4D engagements which supplemented and complimented each other. Moreover, joint efforts helped in designing and rolling out Phase II of the national multimedia campaign in 2018. With UNICEF's communication team as the technical lead and UNFPA financial contribution, the collaboration helped enhance the efforts. It supported the integration of messaging on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) in the EE series.²³⁴

The joint community-based initiatives that complimented each other, enabled the C4D team to augment their reach through LCG wage and other platforms. As noted in discussion with child protection unit, while ECM was a key priority for the unit, it was with the GPECM funding that they could curate more in-depth programming. It helped expand their programming focus, train 40,000 teachers, initiate adolescent clubs focusing on ECM, reach out to children, parents, community members as well as policy makers. Though the funding was limited, it enabled the unit to revisit ongoing programmes, undertake studies to understand why child marriages persist in their implementation areas and identify areas of intervention required. The fund brought about more cohesiveness in efforts with a strategic focus on ECM interventions under GPECM, from grassroots to policy level.

Additionally, in the joint programme district of Jamalpur, UNFPA and UNICEF both worked on community-based interventions for enhanced outreach and outcomes. Further, as mentioned earlier, in Jamalpur, UNFPA implemented their work in five sub-districts and UNICEF in two. It was a strategic decision to not jointly implement activities and avoid overlapping areas. The joint efforts were undertaken at the district and administration level, joint meetings with district coordinators, meetings with school representatives, among other key elements. These helped streamline work from the districts to sub-district level. Moreover, both organisations were also able to leverage networks and platforms such as LCG WAGE group to enhance advocacy for ECM. The jointness helped impact these efforts and also improve the quality and improve the comprehensiveness of the interventions.

It is important to reinforce, the jointness of programmes is reflected in adequately testing and using the same approaches to identify and implement what could work towards ECM in the country. Thereby, it helps provide an integrated package to address ECM through complimentary resources and skills of both organisations. In this context, various country offices not only used the GPECM resources for designing stand-alone country interventions but GPECM funds are used to integrate ECM components in existing programmes that have shown promising impact and scale at the country level. Therefore, the use of this 'pool funding' as this approach is known, has been noted by stakeholders as a strategic and effective means to extend the outreach of GPECM despite limited funding.²³⁵ Moreover, with support of the programme, a costed National Adolescent Health Strategy was launched in 2017. Further, it is important to note, during the design phase, the conceptualisation of the programme was

²³³ GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2017

²³⁴ GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2018

²³⁵ Joint Evaluation of UNICEF-UNFPA 2019

not comprehensive and had resulted in certain gaps. A joint programme policy approach at the sub-national level was non-existent and the project primarily aimed at targeting certain outputs for which numbers needed to be tracked and collected from various stakeholders.²³⁶ However, over time and with consistent coordination, the “jointness” of the programme was built with clearer mechanisms in place.

Relating to the GPECM portion of work, to what extent has being part of a global programme facilitated linkages and synergies to accelerate efforts to end child marriage within UNICEF and its partners?

3.3.3 GPECM helped augment good synergies and cohesiveness among various key actors within the ECM ecosystem, however, these were primarily fostered at the national level. At sub-district level, coordination was weak and limited.

ECM being a multidimensional issue, the transformational change required to address it in entirety requires collaboration among multiple stakeholders. In this context, the evaluation finds the programme was cognisant of the need for convergent and multisectoral programming. This is evidenced through the various convergence efforts across different areas that found focus. The horizontal sectoral convergence focus aimed at coordination between sectors, departments, ministries and agencies while the thematic convergence aimed to link child marriage with Violence Against Girls, Sexual and Reproductive Health, education and health.²³⁷ Congruently, the vertical (multi-level) convergence was between levels of government at national, district, sub-district level as well as between government and civil society organisations. Geographic convergence had a critical focus whereby multiple stakeholders addressed different aspects of an identified issue with the same set of population in one geography.²³⁸ Tracking of geographic convergence between 2016 and 2017 under the global programme highlighted for countries like Bangladesh number of areas where both the agencies were working remained relatively unchanged.²³⁹

It is important to note, the government of Bangladesh focused on strengthening thematic convergence through several ways. This included linking legislation between child marriage and related sectors included education, sexual and reproductive health, child protection and gender-based violence. For instance, harmonising legislations to enable pregnant and married girls to continue their schooling.²⁴⁰ Through collaboration and engagement among various stakeholders, the global TOC was contextualised for the country level. Moreover, as noted during interactions with the social protection team, a concerted effort was taken to advocate for social protection programmes. Local consultative groups and committees who were involved in the development of the action plan were engaged. Efforts such as the development of NAP, M&E mechanisms or C4D initiatives such as *Dhol* campaign were not reflected at sub-district level. Further, UNICEF and UNFPA worked together in critical aspects such as the development of an adolescent club learning package.

While the extent of the impact of the joint programme is not known comprehensively, UNFPA and UNICEF worked jointly in Jamalpur district, as noted in prior sections of the reported. At the sub-district level, *upazillas* were divided between the two agencies to avoid duplication or overlap of work. While UNFPA worked primarily on health aspects aligned to their mandate and experience, UNICEF BCO drove the majority of the GPECM efforts in the country. In terms of pulling resources, as noted during KIIs, both organisations were committed to building the capacity of relevant stakeholders at district and sub-district level on child marriage related legal and policy frameworks as well as on enhancing capacities to support implementation efforts. For instance, while UNICEF developed training modules to train government officials on key aspects pertaining to ECM such as awareness on the CMRA or on

²³⁶ UNICEF UNFPA South Asia Regional Planning Meeting GPECM_20to21aug2019

²³⁷ GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2017

²³⁸ GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2017

²³⁹ GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2017

²⁴⁰ GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2017

implementation of NAP, for better collaboration, UNFPA joined hands with UNICEF and provided their technical support to strengthen training modules. With the jointly developed training module, both organisations could undertake training in their respective implementation areas. This helped synthesise training, enhance outreach and deliver a more standardised set of information to stakeholders without duplication of efforts. Moreover, in terms of management, both the organisations had their own respective management with no sole management. Funds disbursed under the joint programme stemmed from individual headquarters and there was no single pool of funds for both organisations together. In addition, fund management too was aligned to each organisation's agency structure with no overlap.

What key principles have determined where UNICEF has mainly spent its resources for ending child marriage? Have high impact areas been prioritised?

3.3.4 Funding priorities were adequately aligned to organisational mandates as well as sectoral priorities within UNICEF BCO. However, overall, while GPECM funding was identified as inadequate to address the extent of ECM challenges, it helped streamline various ongoing efforts under a comprehensive programme.

The evaluation notes, government priority and UN priority both governed the allocation of resources. Several stakeholders the team interacted with, highlighted resources were limited when it comes to addressing root causes, therefore the criticality of having concerted efforts with various development partners and pushing for coordination with PMO and MoWCA to influence ECM agenda is key to enhance the impact of the programme. Moreover, as highlighted through the evaluation, MoWCA which is the nodal ministry for driving ECM efforts and leading implementation of NAP has limitations. Therefore, substantial increase in investment, resource building and capacity building efforts for them is needed to drive and lead ECM efforts mandated by the ministry and act as strong support to other partners.

Moreover, sectoral teams identified specific priorities aligned to their individual mandates and requirements. The social protection team with UNICEF BCO for instance had ECM as a strong priority area in the Eighth Five Year Plan. It supported the government to undertake six background analyses to help inform the new five-year plan. Through consistent engagement with the government, social protection alongside ECM was a priority for the government in the Eighth Five Year Plan. However, for the priority to materialise, adequate budgeting for ECM will be needed under the Plan. For the child protection unit too, GPECM funding was limited. It was inadequate to cover all CP initiatives for ECM. Interventions in four zones of Rangpur, Khulna and Barisal received technical support under the GPECM funding. While the unit supported many adolescents and programmes in these areas, only around a quarter was supported directly under the GPECM fund. However, as noted during KII's with sectoral teams, the GPECM programme streamlined efforts with a strategic focus on ECM, helped teams revisit existing programmes and reconfigure them to enable programmes to be more gender transformative. Thereby, it helped teams look beyond their sectoral mandates and refine programming efforts through a multisectoral lens.

3.3.5 Given the complexities and extent of challenges, to translate commitments into effective interventions, there is a need to adequately enhance financial and human resources and streamline fund management for overall impact.

An overall challenge for both organisations was limited and insecure sources of finances under the GPECM programme. As highlighted in KIIs, country offices were given an approximation of allocated funds, in different batches across a two-year period. This proved to be challenging as it hindered long term planning. Additionally, with each organisation and sectoral team working closely with implementation partners who require an understanding of definite funding over the duration of the project to help map out interventions accordingly, the lack of information about the availability of funds was a challenge. Furthermore, GPECM was primarily catalytic funding and limited considering the

complex need of the country. As a result, programmes also leveraged other funds and tried to integrate ECM in the activities of community engagement even outside the GPECM fund. Stakeholders additionally noted that reporting mechanisms were drawn from the priority indicators mandated against the fund. This runs the risk of inadvertently not reporting against priority indicators of other external funds drawn upon, limiting the ability to gauge the overall effectiveness of the interventions.

To reiterate, ECM programmes require multi-sector collaboration, adequate sector funding and appropriate monitoring mechanisms. For sectors like education, social welfare and health, stronger technical support and financial resources is required to further invest in relevant initiatives that provide access to quality services for girls, particularly those that result in their economic empowerment and provide tangible alternative pathways for secure livelihoods.²⁴¹ However, the considerable impact is predominately dependent on the ability of the government to support scale up of programmes at all levels of governance. With limited government capacity, this often acts as a hindrance to overall ECM impact. For instance, for the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene sector, as a result of limited government capacity for timely delivery coupled with inadequate funding of schools to operationalise and sustain Water, Sanitation and Hygiene facilities, providing adequate support services to girls in schools proved to be a challenge.²⁴² This in turn could lead to higher dropouts among girls and thereby increase vulnerabilities to early marriages. Congruently, additional and adequate funding would be needed to sustain the momentum built around the media campaign. To mobilise and enhance community engagement efforts, dedicate on ground cadre with a dedicated budget focusing on SBCC is key.

As the evaluation notes, prioritisation of funds is aligned to individual mandates of sectoral units and of organisations working on the ground, however, this is not often enough for desired results. Prioritising all related aspects together is needed in order to enhance outcomes given the socio-political cultural-economic context of the country. However, efforts to enhance social protection and livelihood measures simultaneously with adolescent girl empowerment or SBCC, is often constrained by inadequate funds. Enhancing funding gaps would help in increasing prioritisation to enable addressing a lot of root causes that may not otherwise be covered under individual programme mandates. Subsequent programmes and phase II planning requires concerted focus on these aspects holistically and strategically.

Has the country programme structure of a life cycle approach facilitated efficient delivery of results?

3.3.6 While the life-cycle approach fostered adequate convergence, collaboration and systems thinking across sections towards ECM programming, documentation on how the same was achieved remains limited. Further, given that delivery of results for ECM requires long-term and sustained efforts, it remains too early to comment on the efficiency of this approach.

As highlighted in stakeholder interactions, the life cycle approach under the 2017-2020 Country Programme fostered collaboration and partnership among the various sectoral teams towards ECM. It also brought line ministries and stakeholders at various levels under one agenda. By adopting a life-cycle approach, efforts were made to target issues such as maternal health, child mortality and child poverty, which have a relation to early marriage and early pregnancy. Through this approach, efforts addressed the persisting negative social norms which are key drivers for the high prevalence of child marriage in Bangladesh.

However, as the life-cycle approach was adopted for a four-year period and with BCO making a shift from the life-cycle approach to a life-cycle lens to guide its next country programme (starting 2021), it remains too early for this evaluation to comment on the efficiency of the life-cycle approach and its delivery of results. Especially because delivery of results for ECM requires long-term and sustained

²⁴¹ GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2017

²⁴² GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2017

efforts. However, some notable achievements under Outcome 3 pertaining to education, adolescents' access to health services and community engagement have been discussed in the previous section.

Despite the successes under the life-cycle approach, challenges and gaps remain, as reflected in RAM Narrative for Outcome 3²⁴³ and stakeholder interactions:

- Human and financial resource constraints across sectors on adolescent programming hindered overall progress towards the outcome
- Alignment of multi-sectoral interventions to ensure convergence between strategies was challenging due to sectoral mind set and weak coordination mechanisms
- Monitoring and funding for policies, laws and strategies at the sub-national levels remain weak
- Engaging private, public, development partners and CSOs in one platform to work for youth skills and employability remains challenging
- While theoretically, the life-cycle approach enhances sectoral partnerships, programming, prioritisation and structures remain sectoral. For instance, funding provided to sectors with limited coordination on collective usage
- As the life-cycle approach is a UNICEF framework, there remains a lack of incentivisation for stakeholders, particularly government counterparts at the sub-national level to follow it effectively on the ground
- To see efficient delivery of results, a longer time frame of monitoring the programme is needed

3.3.7 Cost effectiveness of GPECM and BCO ECM Programmes

The following sections attempted to estimate the cost-effectiveness of GPECM and ECM programmes in Bangladesh. The cost per beneficiary has been calculated for interventions wherever possible. Additionally, the benefits from such interventions have been estimated using results from similar studies in Bangladesh. Finally, in the case of the GPECM programme, the per-beneficiary costs were compared with the average per-beneficiary cost in all GPECM countries. The following analysis has been conducted based on the information shared by UNICEF.

Analysis of GPECM Programme in Bangladesh

Outcome	Expenditure (USD)			
	2017	2018	2019	Total
Outcome 1	661,321	1,459,356	676,464	2,833,141
Outcome 2	732,739	521,416	491,833	1,745,988
Outcome 3	617,482	180,259	332,005	1,129,746
Outcome 4	25,313	88,475	55,600	169,388
Outcome 5	101,531	-	117,047	218,578
Total	2,138,386	2,285,506	1,672,949	6,096,841

Table 11: Expenditure across GPECM Outcomes

- Outcome 1: Adolescent girl at risk of and affected by child marriage are better able to express and exercise their choices.
- Outcome 2: Households demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours toward investing in and supporting adolescent girls.

²⁴³ RAM Narrative for Outcome 3

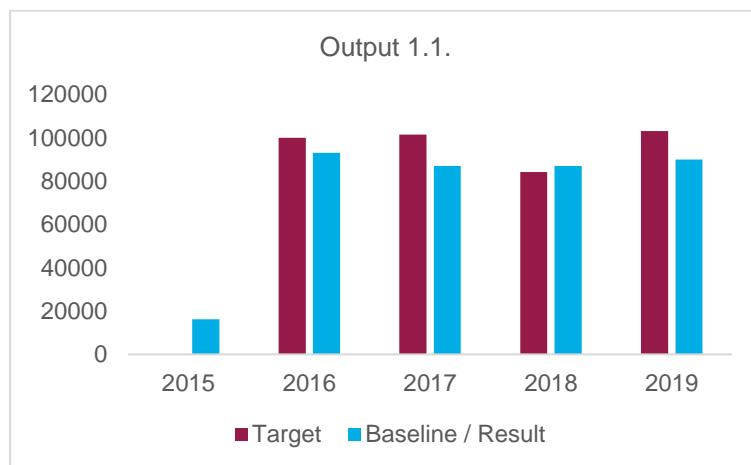
- Outcome 3: Relevant sectoral systems deliver quality and cost-effective services to meet the needs of adolescent girls.
- Outcome 4: National laws, policy frameworks and mechanisms to protect and promote adolescent girls' rights are in line with international standards and are properly resourced
- Outcome 5: Government(s) and partners within and across countries support the generation and use of robust data and evidence to inform policy and programming, track progress and document lessons.

Outcome 1:

As per the Indicator Reference Sheet by UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, there are two outputs under Outcome 1:

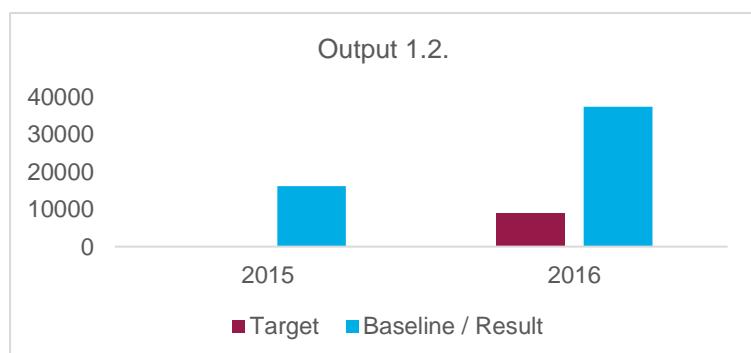
- Output 1.1. – Adolescent girls (aged 10-19) are actively participating in a targeted programme (life skills, health information, economic empowerment, social protection).
- Output 1.2. – Adolescent girls are supported to enrol and remain in formal and non-formal education, including through the transition from primary to secondary education.

The following chart illustrates Bangladesh's Output 1.1. from 2016-19:



Graph 5: Adolescent girls (aged 10-19) are actively participating in a targeted programme (life skills, health information, economic empowerment, social protection)

The number of adolescent girls (10-19 years) who are directly benefiting from an intervention has been lower than the GPECM annual targets for Bangladesh. However, it may be noted that there has been a significant improvement as the GPECM increased the number of adolescent girls directly benefiting out of an intervention from 16,169 girls in 2015 to an average of 89,297 girls between 2016-19.



Graph 6: Adolescent girls are supported to enrol and remain in formal and non-formal education, including through the transition from primary to secondary education

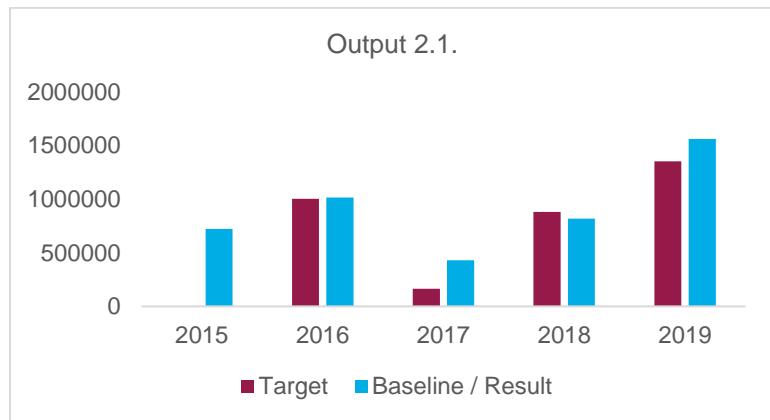
The GPECM programme recorded that the number of adolescent girls who were supported to access or remain in primary/lower-secondary or non-formal education surpassed the target for 2016. Moreover, it exceeded the number of adolescents who were supported to remain in primary/lower-secondary or non-formal education in 2015. However, it is worth noting that no such data is available from 2017-2019.

Outcome 2:

As per the Indicator Reference Sheet by UNFPA -UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, there is one output under Outcome 2:

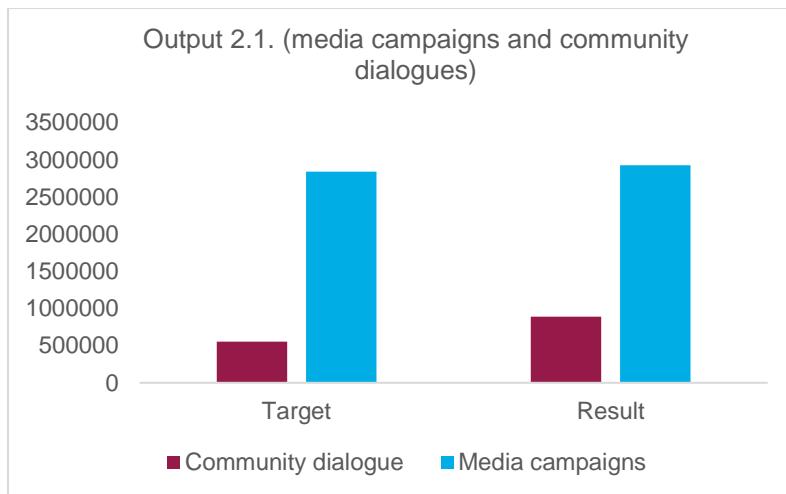
- Output 2.1. – Households are increasingly aware of the benefits of investing in adolescent girls and ending child marriage.

The following chart illustrates the number of individuals in programme areas who regularly participate in dialogues promoting gender-equitable norms including delaying child marriage:



Graph 7: Households that are increasingly aware of the benefits of investing in adolescent girls and ending child marriage

The chart shows how the number of households that are increasingly aware of the benefits of investing in adolescent girls and ending child marriage increased from 2015 before the GPECM programme (other than in 2017). The GPECM programme was also able to exceed the annual targets for all years other than in 2018. In order to achieve the above-mentioned output, several media campaigns and community dialogues were undertaken.



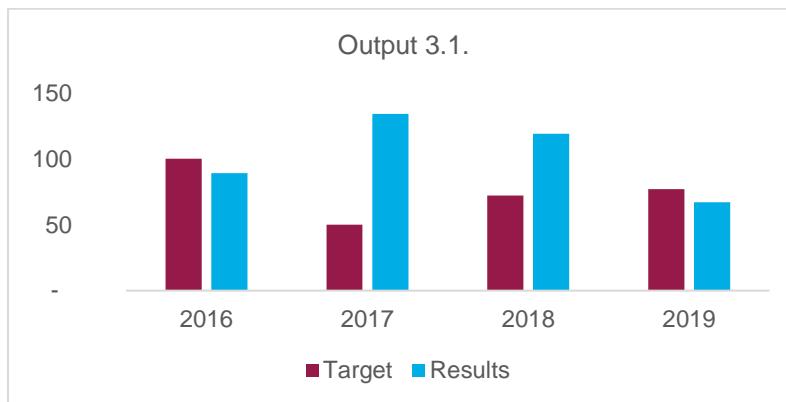
Graph 8: Graph 4: Number of Media Campaigns and Community Dialogues

Outcome 3:

As per the Indicator Reference Sheet by UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, there are two outputs under Outcome 3:

- Output 3.1. – Health and protection systems supported to implement guidelines, protocols, and standards for adolescent girl-friendly health and protection services.
- Output 3.2. – Non-formal/primary/secondary schools supported to improve quality of education for adolescent girls.

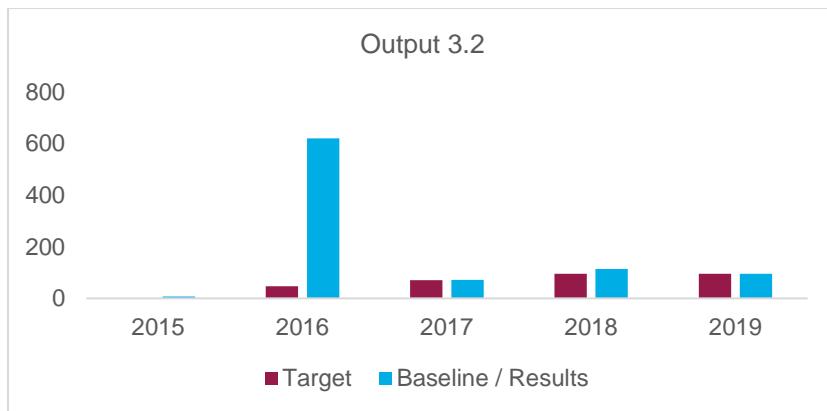
The following chart illustrates the number of service delivery points under the GPECM programme that implement guidelines for adolescent girl-friendly health and protection services:



Graph 9: Health and protection systems supported to implement guidelines, protocols, and standards for adolescent girl-friendly health and protection services

The number of service delivery points that implemented guidelines for adolescent girl-friendly health and protection services exceeded the GPECM annual target in 2017 and 2018. The GPECM targets were not met in 2016 and 2019.

The following chart illustrates the number of non-formal, primary, and secondary schools that implement interventions to improve the quality of education for adolescent girls:



Graph 10: Non-formal/primary/secondary schools supported to improve quality of education for adolescent girls

The number of non-formal, primary, and secondary schools that adopted interventions to improve quality of education for adolescent girls has been higher or equal to the GPECM annual targets.

Outcome 4:

As per the Indicator Reference Sheet by UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, there is one output under Outcome 4:

- Output 4.1. – Whether country had developed a costed national action plan/development plan on ending child marriage across more than one ministry.

In Bangladesh, prior to the commencement of the GPECM programme, there was no national action plan or development plan on ending child marriages in more than one ministry. The GPECM programme set targets to ensure such national action plans under more than one ministry from 2017 onwards. Results show that the more than one ministry in Bangladesh adopted national plans to end child marriages from 2018.

Outcome 5:

As per the Indicator Reference Sheet by UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, there is one output under Outcome 5:

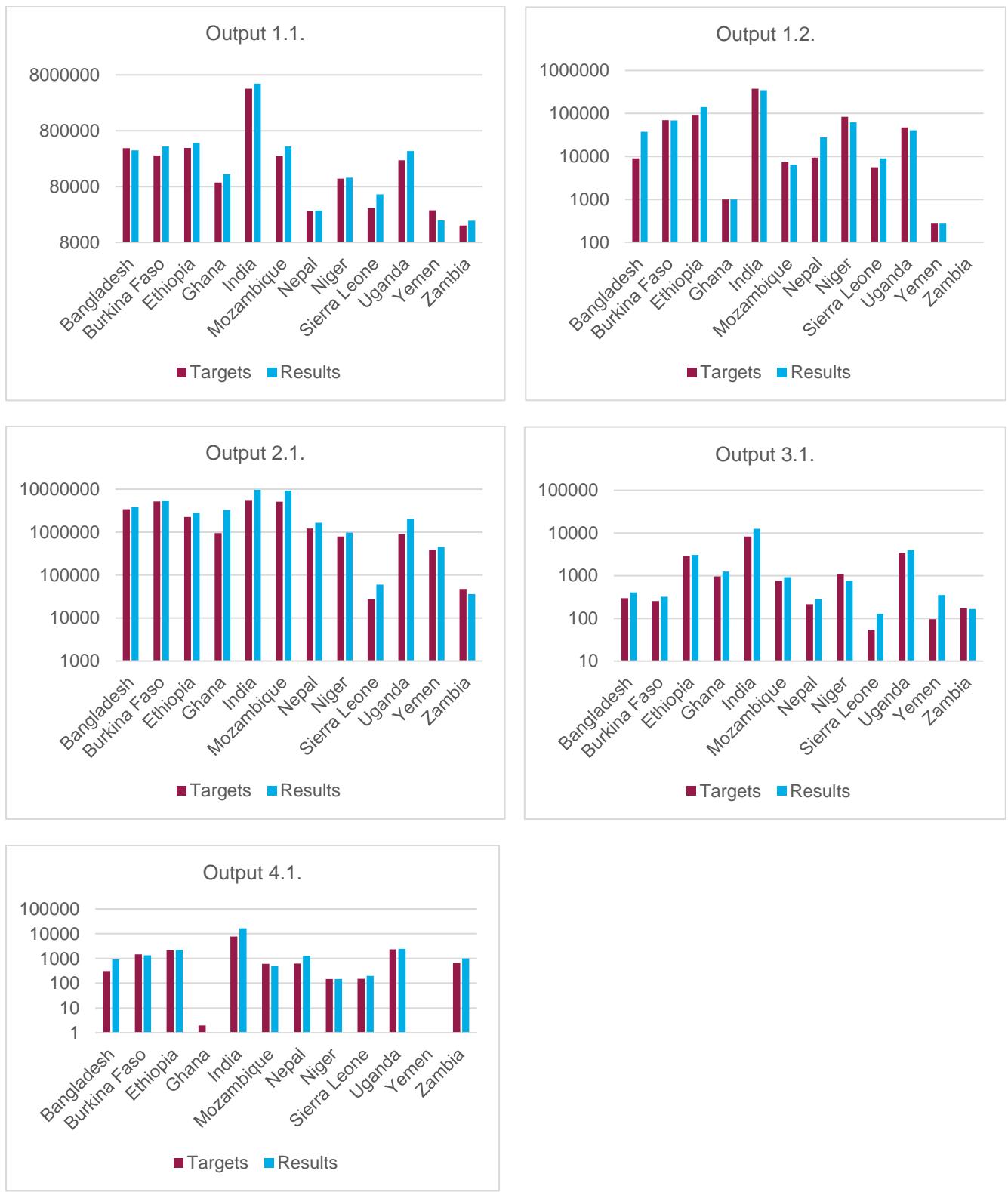
- Output 5.1. – Country-specific, high-quality data and evidence generated and shared on what works at scale to accelerate ending child marriage.

UNICEF conveyed that a costed action plan on the ECM NAP was placed in a ToR which has been in the contracting stage for 6 months. This plan was developed in late 2019 for implementation in early 2020. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has disturbed the process. As a result, it is planned to be implemented under UNFPA's oversight (with UNICEF support) in 2022-23.

However, unlike in other GPECM countries, in Bangladesh, a costed national action plan was not formed, and neither was the national action plan financed.

Comparison with other GPECM countries:

The following chart compares Bangladesh's progress with other GPECM countries across the abovementioned output indicators:



Graph 11: Output comparison across GPECM countries

Estimation of per beneficiary cost under GPECM:

Based on the information shared by UNICEF, the per-beneficiary costs of the following interventions in Bangladesh were calculated:

Outcome	Expenditure (USD)	Beneficiaries (#)	Per beneficiary cost
Outcome 1	2,833,141	264,022	10.73 USD/person
Outcome 2	1,745,988	2,807,784	0.62 USD/person
Outcome 3	1,129,746	602 delivery points / schools	1,876.65 USD/delivery point or school

Table 12: Per beneficiary cost (2017-2019)

The following table compares the per-beneficiary cost in Bangladesh with other GPECM countries:

Outcome (USD)	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3
Bangladesh	10.73	0.62	1,876.65
Burkina Faso	1.39	0.17	193.74
Ethiopia	2.64	0.57	219.00
Ghana	2.68	0.06	196.90
India	0.60	0.18	95.13
Mozambique	1.54	0.09	335.75
Nepal	12.44	0.09	280.36
Niger	11.29	1.30	267.30
Sierra Leone	11.59	1.99	13.45
Uganda	2.75	0.17	89.20
Yemen	11.76	0.56	83.35
Zambia	8.34	7.49	485.42
Average	6.18	1.09	260.11

Table 13: Per beneficiary cost across GPECM countries (2017-19)

When compared with the GPECM countries' average, Bangladesh's cost per beneficiary is lower only for interventions related Outcome 2. For Outcome 1 and Outcome 3, Bangladesh's cost per beneficiary is higher than the GPECM countries' average.

Cost-effectiveness of ECM Programme

Under the ambit of the BCO's Country Programme 2017-2020, as mentioned in previous sections, within Outcome 3, *Adolescents as Agents of Change*, ending child marriage was selected as one of the headline results highlighted by all UNICEF programme sections Office (BCO). The program essentially focussed on five channels. A summary of expenditures²⁴⁴ on each channel is stated as follows:

Year*	Water Sanitation and Hygiene	Health	Education	Communication	Child Protection

²⁴⁴ The cost effectiveness analysis of the ECM programme relied on data shared by the BCO on expenditure and number of beneficiaries for all activities and outputs. It may be noted that not all of the expenditure for Outcome 3 contribute to ECM

2016	-	-	-	-	633,650.90
2017	621,842.00	24,604.87	904,963.33	-	392,775.18
2018	118,942.00	209,368.93	4,112,155.26	6,819.73	596,799.82
2019	77,110.00	95,645.98	963,021.55	79,227.06	683,253.05
2020	-	57,862.38	425,507.58	-	704,305.49
Total	817,894.00	387,482.16	6,405,647.72	86,046.79	3,010,784.44

* Amount in USD

Table 14: Summary of BCO expenditure for ECM

Research shows that poverty and low literacy rates are the key factors that cause child marriages in Bangladesh. Although the child marriage rates have fallen in Bangladesh in the last 30 years, these practices still prevail in the interiors of the country. The following section provides a cost-benefit analysis of each of the interventions stated above. Due to lack of concrete data on the benefits accrued due to these interventions, this analysis relies on a method of estimating such benefits from similar interventions in the past and various other research papers.

1. **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene:** Bangladesh has achieved significant success in the last three decades in terms of improving sanitary conditions. Research in Bangladesh shows that over 98 per cent of clean drinking water came from technologically improved man-made sources as opposed to 79 per cent in 1990s²⁴⁵. Although this success is remarkable compared to that of other countries, Bangladesh is still yet to reach the goal of universal access to clean water and sustainable sanitation as defined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). BCO interventions aim to achieve this goal through its impact on ending child marriage. Based on the funding data, a total of USD 387,482 was spent on interventions pertaining to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene targeting 205,526 beneficiaries across the years 2016 to 2020. **This amounts to a per-beneficiary cost of USD 3.98.**

A study from the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP) estimates an average per-beneficiary gain of USD13.83 across multiple interventions to improve sanitation and hygiene practices in Bangladesh. Based on the report's calculations, an average gain of USD 10.2 can be envisaged from projects pushing towards improved access to clean water.²⁴⁶ The gains from improvements could be largely due to a reduction in absenteeism at schools, low open defecation sites, etc. Since there are large externalities to socio-economic interventions, these gains are likely to have a greater inter-generational impact as the target groups included young children, mothers and adolescents. Moreover, if one accounts for the potential losses that Bangladesh may incur in the future if attempts to improve Water, Sanitation and Hygiene facilities were neglected, the economic gains could potentially increase to a much larger per-capita benefit. These economic as well as financial gains could lead to an increase in enrolment rates and investment in education among the lower strata of the economy thereby reducing the incidence of child marriages in Bangladesh.

2. **Health:** Bangladesh is home to 36 million adolescents who comprise 22 per cent of the total population. However, the healthcare infrastructure for adolescents is not well developed in Bangladesh. Thus, high rates of child marriage lead to multiple complications like early pregnancies, lack of nutrition, and violence. In order to address these concerns, the ECM programme has devised various interventions

²⁴⁵ Towards a cleaner Bangladesh: Safe water, sanitation, and hygiene for all, World Bank Blogs, 15 September 2017, Retrieved from: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/towards-cleaner-bangladesh-safe-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-all>

²⁴⁶ Economic Impacts of Inadequate Sanitation in Bangladesh, Water and Sanitation Program, Retrieved from: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/379261468210888740/pdf/717330WP0Box370SI0Bangladesh0Report.pdf>

to spread awareness about healthcare needs. The total expenditure across the four years amounted to USD 387,482 which benefitted 445,149 adolescents. **Thus, the cost per beneficiary for this programme was USD 0.87.**

Awareness programmes related to healthcare among the youth would have intergenerational effects. In monetary terms, awareness campaigns like these would encourage the target groups to take preventive measures and thereby save on medical bills that they would have incurred in the absence of the intervention. Since economic interventions have large externalities, these gains would exceed the cost incurred in implementing them.

3. **Education:** The main deciding factors in child marriage are poverty and low literacy rates. Research across education intervention programmes show that an additional year of education causes the probability of child marriage to reduce significantly. Further, interventions through education programmes are one of the most effective ways to reduce child marriage which throws light on as to why the ECM programmes allocate the largest share of the ECM funds to reduce child marriages through education programmes. A summary of the interventions is stated below.

- a) The education for adolescents' programme started working in 250 secondary schools and 50 Madrasahs in the initial stages to reduce dropout rates and increase student engagement. However, the work was subsequently mainstreamed to 20,000 secondary schools under the Directorate of Secondary Education (DSHE).
- b) The Programme also worked with National Curriculum & Textbook Board to develop the Comprehensive Skills Framework for Adolescents and support the National Curriculum revision process which would benefit all primary and secondary school-aged children in Bangladesh.
- c) For adolescents who were out of school, the programme implemented an alternative learning programme (ALP) through which 4250 most marginalized adolescents have already received skills training and are now gainfully employed. Based on estimates, 6550 learners will be reached by end of 2021.

Based on the data provided by the BCO, a total of USD 6,405,648 was incurred in the intervention pertaining to education campaigns in Bangladesh. Given that the intervention was conducted in over 20,000 schools, a per-school cost of USD 320 was incurred. Further, based on an assumption that an average school in Bangladesh comprises of 500²⁴⁷ students, **this would result in a per-student cost of USD 0.64.**

4. **Child Protection and Communication:** The Bangladesh ECM programme has conducted interventions through campaigns by spreading awareness about child protection rights to reduce the incidence of child marriage in Bangladesh. While the communication campaigns mainly focussed on larger target groups through social media, child protection campaigns empowered marginalized adolescents in various regions of the country. A summary of the interventions is given as follows:

Communication

- a) A drama series about girls' football "Icchedana" was produced and a PSA on child marriage by activist Keshab Roy that was funded by Communication for Development.
- b) Adolescent boys and girls selected and trained to play at the tournaments where male and female caregivers participated in the tournaments of national talent hunt as audience.

²⁴⁷Bangladesh Education Statistics, BANBEIS, 2019

- c) A series of videos in celebration of 30 years of the Convention on Child Rights on empowered girls from across Bangladesh was made. The videos featured girls discussing child rights and how they tried to bring change in their communities in different ways. The series was broadcasted on social media and projected in CRC30/World Children's Day 2019 Event.

Child Protection

- a) Empowered marginalized adolescents (70 per cent girls) through LSBE training following Peer Leader Model under EECR project with MoWCA (Ministry of Children and Women Affairs).
- b) Empowered marginalized adolescents (70 per cent girls) in ECM zones under EECR project through LSBE training with MoWCA and implemented through CSO/NGOs partners in all the zones.

A summary of the expenditure incurred on the two interventions is provided in the table below:

Intervention	Cost (in USD)	No. of Beneficiaries	Cost per beneficiary
Communication	86,046.79	-	-
Child Protection	3,010,784.44	626,023	4.81

Table 15: Expenditure across Child Protection and Communication interventions

Since child protection and communication campaigns are targeted on a community-wide level, it would be more appropriate to assess the benefits on a macro-level (unlike the intervention programmes assessed earlier).

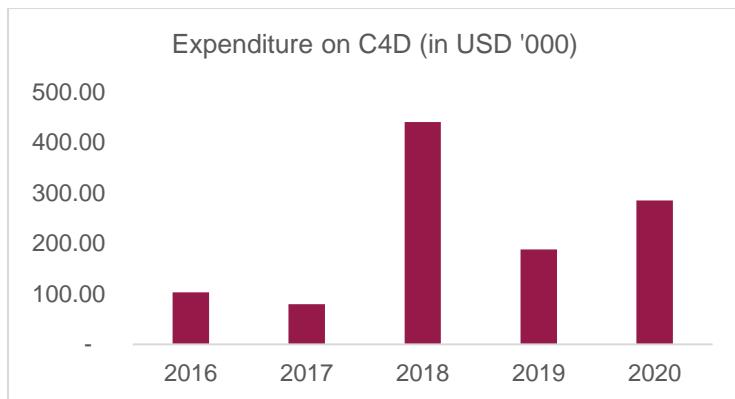
5. **Communications for Development (C4D):** The C4D programme in Bangladesh aimed to engage the community and encourage public commitment towards ending harmful practices of child marriage. To this end, the C4D programme used mass media and entertainment-education models to create awareness and increase engagement with the community.

Following are the points that summarise the implementation strategies of the C4D programme in Bangladesh²⁴⁸:

- Evidence: generation, analysis, and utilisation
- Guidance standards: models, and packages
- Capacity development: needs assessments, partnerships, training, packages, mentoring
- Coordination, Partnerships and Leveraging of Resources: at national, sub-national, and community level
- Advocacy and Social Accountability: for institutionalisation of C4D and community/public engagement mechanisms within policies and systems

The following chart provides a summary of the expenditure on C4D programme in Bangladesh from 2016-20. It can be observed that the expenditure has been inconsistent across the duration.

²⁴⁸ UNICEF ROSA, Communication for Development Strategic Framework 2018-2021, Retrieved from: <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/2436/file/ROSA%20C4D%20Strategic%20Framework.pdf>



Graph 12: Expenditure on C4D

The following table provides a break-up of the expenditure on C4D programme according to the C4D activities:

C4D Activity	2016(USD)	2017(USD)	2018(USD)	2019(USD)	2020(USD)	Total (USD)
Social mobilisation and community engagement (SMCE)	35,937	70,059	3,24,670	98,719	37,559	566,974
Staff Cost	66,930	9,592	6,261.50	-	37,637	120,421
Multi-media campaign (nationwide)	-	-	115,830	89,189	83,155	288,175
Total	102,868	79,651	446,792	187,908	158,351	975,570

Table 16: Break-up of the expenditure on C4D interventions

The above table summarises that the highest expenditure was allocated to the SMCE program. Since the abovementioned programmes engage with the community directly and through media platforms, it is difficult to gauge the impact or the number of beneficiaries of such programmes.

To conclude, from the above data it was seen that most of the ECM funds were allocated to Education and Child Protection interventions aimed at reducing child marriages. The maximum amount of investment was in activities related to Child Protection amongst all other programmes and has been gradually increasing over the years of programme implementation. Additionally, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene initiatives have incurred the highest per beneficiary cost while the Health initiatives incurred the lowest per beneficiary cost between the years.

3.4 Sustainability

Sr. No.	Evaluation Question	Assessment Against Rubric
1	To what extent are there sustainability considerations built into programme implementation?	Assessment: Good BCOs ECM efforts were designed keeping a focus on sustainability considerations. As a result, there has also been an increase in adolescent girls' sense of confidence and awareness of other key stakeholders. However, sustainability of the ECM agenda is heavily contingent on stakeholder capacity and ability to carry it forth in the absence of external influences
2	To what extent has the programme generated/is in the process of generating robust evidence that supports the scaling up of a successful intervention to allow for the government to take these over in the future?	Assessment: Adequate BCOs ECM efforts have placed a crucial focus on use and generation of evidence. However, there is no proven model of success on a national scale. The GPECM provides an opportunity to develop a national model of scalable practices for ECM, which can be achieved through an enhanced focus and increased resource investment
3	To what extent has the programme been able to generate an enabling environment and strong involvement of key stakeholders at different levels (individual, family, community and local authorities) that will prevent gains in social norms to go back to pre-programme levels even in the absence of further interventions? Has the programme reached a tipping point where social norms and gender transformative results are strongly rooted in all these levels?	Assessment: Adequate BCOS ECM efforts have contributed to the creation of an enabling environment through capacity building and advocacy with key stakeholders. However, there is scope for greater engagement. Therefore, while the groundwork has been carried out for achievement of the 'tipping point', behaviour change, and transformation of embedded systems requires more focused investment and engagement for longer than the duration of a single programme cycle

Table 17: Summary of Sustainability EQ Findings

To what extent are there sustainability considerations built into programme implementation?

3.4.1 ECM interventions by BCO incorporated a focus on fostering sustainability through adoption of good practices in planning and implementation of programme interventions.

ECM interventions promoted sustainability through various strategies, including advocacy, institutionalisation, strengthening systems and social workforce, developing capacities and mobilising complementary funding. Aligned to this, interventions at the community level were delineated keeping long term achievements as a key expectation.²⁴⁹

A review of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene interventions carried out by BCO clearly shows that sustainability and long-term change have been recorded as essential components of programme planning. Sectoral interventions were divided into two units, software and hardware. Through capacity building and training of teachers, SMC members, adolescent girls and district and *upazilla* level authorities, interventions had a focus on bringing forth long-term change in the lives of girls.²⁵⁰ Interventions such as installation of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene blocks, handwashing stations supported by the GoB, separate latrines for girls and boys with MHM facilities for girls at Adolescent Clubs and secondary schools/madrassas, had the effect of preventing girls from being absent from their schools. The establishment of the SLIP Fund, which encourages schools to provide financial investments for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene facilities²⁵¹, is also key to ensuring that impact and uptake of facilities is possible in the long-term. Further, creation of Operational Guidelines for

²⁴⁹ UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage Joint Evaluation Report, May 2019

²⁵⁰ KII with BCO WASH Sectoral Team

²⁵¹ KII with BCO WASH Sectoral Team

maintenance of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene facilities in schools will also enable sustainable benefits and change.

In Dhaka, as highlighted during interactions, through community dialogues that saw the participation of predominantly male members (reported to be 80 per cent in many cases), the focus was to emphasise the harmful impact of child marriage and the active role that they can play to prevent it. Training of members of CBCPCs to respond to ending child marriage interventions was also carried out by C4D and Child Protection teams. Furthermore, the inclusion of a police officer as a part of the CBCPC structure also allowed for quick response in cases of child marriage and other forms of violence against children.

Moreover, a key target group for ECM interventions were religious leaders, with a focus on highlighting elements of religious texts that condemn violence against women.²⁵² This is significant as within a conservative society such as Bangladesh, the position of religious leaders is critical and can aid in the establishment of positive norms and behaviours for ending child marriage. Faith leaders can play a crucial role in transforming systems of inequality for girls and women through awareness generation, advocating for the strengthening of law enforcement structures and encourage a change in harmful social norms and practices.²⁵³

Institutionalisation of programme strategies and approaches is also essential for sustainability and achievement of long-term benefits. While institutionalisation of interventions has not been recorded as a clear target in the Global Results Framework²⁵⁴, significant efforts have been made by the programme in Bangladesh for the same.

Through continuous advocacy on adolescent health issues, the GPECM enabled the incorporation of adolescent health indicators in the health management system. This is significant in contributing to sustaining services as data recorded has a significant impact on the planning and monitoring of interventions.²⁵⁵ Manuals on key areas of sexuality education, MHM, prevention of gender-based violence in schools have also been merged with government curricula.²⁵⁶ Further, in Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), the entire ECM programme was overseen by government authorities. Such integration is direct evidence of institutionalisation of programme interventions as part of routine functioning, enabling an environment that will allow for sustainable and long-term change. This was further reinforced through interactions on field with DNCC representation.

3.4.2 ECM programming in Bangladesh has strengthened the ability of key stakeholders to further the commitment to ending child marriage. However, greater mentoring/coaching and incorporation of key stakeholders within programme implementation is needed to ensure good and sustainable outcomes.

For sustainable outcomes, it is important to ensure that key stakeholders are capacitated to carry out their roles and responsibilities beyond the duration of the programme interventions. In line with this, BCO's efforts that focused on adolescent girls' empowerment had a strong impact on enhancing girls' knowledge and abilities, resulting in an increase in their sense of confidence. After the acquisition of these skills, target groups were likely to carry over their learnings and understanding to the household level, thereby enabling positive change for themselves and other girls in the community. Additionally,

²⁵² KII with DNCC UNICEF Field Office

²⁵³ World Vision, *New vows: Empowering communities to end child marriage*, 2019, Retrieved from: [2019_WV_Child_Marriage_Report_web.pdf \(worldvisionadvocacy.org\)](https://worldvisionadvocacy.org/2019_wv_child_marriage_Report_web.pdf)

²⁵⁴ UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage Joint Evaluation Report, May 2019

²⁵⁵ GPECM Country Office Phase I Results Report

²⁵⁶ UNFPA-UNICEF GPECM 2018 Annual Report

through the adoption of a mentorship strategy, women from the same or nearby communities were able to consistently support adolescent girls.²⁵⁷

Interventions carried out by the Communications team of BCO also showed promising results for the sustainability of the programme agenda. Targeted children were trained in the essentials of journalism and were provided with access to an online portal (HelloBD portal) to publish their stories and videos. For these child journalists, ECM has been mandated as a compulsory focus area, encouraged to collect and narrate compelling stories through social media.²⁵⁸ Child journalists trained through the programme have also been presented with several awards in recognition of their work.²⁵⁹

As mentioned in previous sections of this report, the COVID-19 pandemic has highly exacerbated the risks posed to children in Bangladesh. Recognising this ECM programming in Bangladesh adapted the following approaches to identify and respond to the heightened vulnerability of children:²⁶⁰

- C4D interventions through public service announcements, adolescent clubs and community radio programmes with radio partner Bangladesh Betar
- Adolescents were trained to use the ‘Digital Application for Adolescents’ to learn and communicate to other community members about COVID-19, gender-based violence, child marriage, and mental health and psychosocial support
- Face-to-face counselling by front-line workers was transferred to online platforms/telecommunication
- A U-Report perception poll on child marriage in Bangladesh during the COVID-19 pandemic was conducted

Significantly, the platform for child journalists was also effectively leveraged during the COVID-19 pandemic²⁶¹, providing evidence of how focusing on building capacities helped in responding and adapting to the challenges posed by the pandemic. It is important to note, such adaptation was key to ensuring that efforts to ECM remain consistent and bring about desired change.

However, the evaluation notes that the sustainability of the ECM agenda is heavily dependent on the ability and capacity of key stakeholders to further enhance it and carry it forth in the absence of external influences.

Efforts in Bangladesh do not record any evidence on the provision of rolling membership and building the capacity of newly enrolled children in the Adolescent Club model, crucial to ensuring that the design and purpose of the Adolescent Club achieve its desired results and can be sustained in the long-term. Additionally, ensuring the regular engagement of members of adolescent clubs was fraught with challenges that inhibited the outreach of adolescent clubs.²⁶² For instance, girls and their families have been found to be increasingly inclined to attend Adolescent Clubs if there is training on practical skills, such as learning English and using computers. Additionally, amongst the most marginalized out-of-school adolescents, while married adolescents, especially girls, and adolescents with disabilities were restricted by family norms and limited accessibility to the adolescent clubs with respect to safety, hours

²⁵⁷ UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage Joint Evaluation Report, May 2019

²⁵⁸ KII with BCO Communications Team

²⁵⁹ BDNews24, *Four hello child journalists win Meena media awards 2019*, October 2019, Retrieved from: [Four Hello child journalists win Meena Media Awards 2019 | bdnews24.com](#)

²⁶⁰ [Battling-Perfect-Storm-Adapting-child-marriage-programmes-COVID-19.pdf \(unicef.org\)](#)

²⁶¹ Coping with COVID-19 series, Retrieved from: [\(64\) Coping With COVID-19 - YouTube](#)

²⁶² GPECM Country Office Phase I Results Report

of operation and distance, adolescents in labour were further burdened by economic priorities that they had to fulfil.²⁶³

While CBCPCs have been identified as a community-based network with the necessary influence to bring about a change in social norms and further the agenda to protect the rights of children, the evaluation notes the importance of focusing on increasing women and adolescent girl participation in the same. In other words, custody of men over the lives of girls and women offers a strong defence to the power and control that emerges from a patriarchal system. Resultantly, this has strong linkages with the enablement and encouragement of violence against and discrimination of girls and women.²⁶⁴ While members of adolescent clubs are included in CBCPC membership²⁶⁵, UNICEF efforts must recognise that long-term sustainable impact requires adequate gender representation, so that women are able to exercise the fundamental right of choice.

To what extent has the programme generated/is in the process of generating robust evidence that supports the scaling up of a successful intervention to allow for the government to take these over in the future?

3.4.3 Evidence generation found adequate resonance in ECM efforts with BCO focusing extensively in using data and evidence to strengthen programmes. However, prioritisation and use were driven considerably through the GPECM programme.

The generation and use of robust data and evidence, both qualitative and quantitative, is recognised as key in the context of addressing child marriage practices in the country. Programmes like GPECM have used studies, baseline, and midline surveys in the programme districts to inform both policy and programming interventions. To elaborate, the programme has focused on evidence-based advocacy by sharing of data briefs on ECM based on MICS 2019 and ‘Study on Child Marriage in Humanitarian Settings’. These have been key to influence relevant and responsible ministries. Further, MoWCA has used new evidence generated by the report on “Ending Child Marriage: A profile of progress in Bangladesh” which was published along with UNICEF headquarters in New York. MoWCA used evidence to revise the national targets for Ending Child Marriage (ECM) for Bangladesh’s Eighth Five Year Plan.²⁶⁶ Moreover, BCO country programme contributed towards the overall evidence generation focus by producing a study titled ‘Context of Child Marriage and its Implications in Bangladesh.’ It provides insights into the causes and consequences of child marriage in the country. The findings and insights were disseminated with locally elected representatives to encourage key stakeholders, especially at sub-district levels, to speak out and help in generating community awareness on the consequences of child marriages.²⁶⁷

Correspondingly, use of evidence to strengthen programmatic efforts was an important element of interventions for other BCO sectors such as child protection and data and analytics unit, among others. For instance, child protection unit undertook a knowledge management study in December 2018 with a focus on Sylhet and Barisal districts under the supervision of ROSA. Additionally, they developed a digital platform for adolescent development in 2019. As noted in the discussion with the education unit, evidence generation was a part of national-level ECM planning. An implementation research on “Keeping girls in school to reduce child marriage in rural Bangladesh” was conducted to test a few standardised interventions through the education system & measure its impact on reducing child marriage.

²⁶³ GPECM Country Office Phase I Results Report

²⁶⁴ Human Rights Watch, *Qatar: Male guardianship severely curtails women's rights*, March 2021, Retrieved from: [Qatar: Male Guardianship Severely Curtails Women's Rights | Human Rights Watch \(hrw.org\)](https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/03/01/qatar/male-guardianship-severely-curtails-women-rights)

²⁶⁵ GPECM Country Office Phase I Results Report

²⁶⁶ GPECM Annual Report 2020-21

²⁶⁷ Country Programme highlights

With funding support under the GPECM, UNFPA undertook a national study²⁶⁸ with an exclusive focus on child marriage. It was conducted in 14 districts and is representative at district level and are a rich data source that could be leveraged to inform policy briefs, advocacy and programmatic efforts on the ground. It is key to note, as mentioned, UNICEF Bangladesh undertook several studies to refine, inform and strengthen critical areas of ECM efforts. For instance, UNICEF focused on developing and strengthening modules within real-time monitoring systems that helped track variations in norms of child marriage practice over time.²⁶⁹ This data aimed to generate information around incidences of child marriage and further aid the process of timely and accurately available information on the prevalence and situation of child marriage at sub-national levels, which is a critical element to enhance ECM efforts.

In addition, BCO conducted a scoping study in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance to analyse government resource allocation to ECM efforts.²⁷⁰ Based on the dissemination of findings from the scoping analysis, at sub-national levels budget allocation analysis was being undertaken with the aim to increase investments towards ECM. Further, according to the GPECM Annual Report of 2018, with the goal to improve government accountability for adolescent health programmes, UNICEF supported efforts to integrate adolescent health indicators into national health management information system.

3.4.4 For sustained efforts and scaling up interventions, adequate system strengthening needs to be embedded at all levels including national policies, programme planning and design and in implementation, especially at the sub-district levels.

To reiterate, for sustaining the several multidimensional and multisectoral interventions and activities being undertaken, it is important for organisations to recognise those practices that have the potential to help in uniting and scaling efforts within the ECM movement. There is cognisance among key stakeholders interacted with that this identification of key interventions is critical and needs to be rooted in robust use of data and evidence, as not all interventions are scalable.

In this context, the evaluation finds, the GPECM has a strategic aim to identify and mobilise catalytic models and scalable platforms that would augment systems-level change. At a country office level, efforts are being taken to identify key programmes that have shown success and would stand as important examples for scaling up efforts and enhancing outreach to empower more adolescent girls. It is key to note, UNICEF had an aim to support the government in scaling up programmes that directly benefit girls. For instance, BCO's country programme's effort enabled the institutionalisation of life skills within the national education systems. Moreover, it was able to influence skills-based education and alternative learning programme for out-of-school adolescents in the education sector-wide approach (Swap).²⁷¹ Further, it aims to integrate other key sectors of health, nutrition, Water Sanitation and Hygiene, MHM interventions into schools for adolescents.

Moreover, BCO's adolescent empowerment project proved to be a successful strategy in target districts. With nearly 150,000 girls reach with at least 1 intervention related to the empowerment of adolescent girls, the government agreed to roll out 5000 new adolescent clubs through the country. With technical support to MoWCA and through UNICEF's "*Kishori Abhijaan*" programme from the past, the country now has 2000 adolescent clubs supported by both government and non-government organisations.²⁷² This was to be done by the government from using their revenue budget and based on lessons learnt from the adolescent empowerment project by UNCIEF.²⁷³ Since 2016, MoWCA was allocated a revenue budget to scale up such clubs, owing to their promising impact. Additionally, a scale-up

²⁶⁸ GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2016

²⁶⁹ GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2018

²⁷⁰ GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2018

²⁷¹ Country Programme highlights

²⁷² GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2017

²⁷³ GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2016

strategy for the Alternative Learning Program (ALP) focusing predominantly on disadvantaged out of school adolescents was drafted and with plans for scale-up as part of the Generation Unlimited.²⁷⁴

Furthermore, investing in gender-responsive Adolescent Friendly Health Services (AFHS) was identified as a key priority area. While UNICEF set up and implemented AFHS plans in target *upazillas*, they were monitored by the Director General of Health Services (DGHS) and Director General of Family Planning (DGFP). With a continuous focus on gender disparities, teenage pregnancy and access to SRSH for both married and unmarried adolescent girls and also boys, UNICEF leveraged resources from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) to scale up AFHS in 4 ECM/AFHS priority districts.²⁷⁵ These instances highlight notable efforts taken for engaging with the government, providing technical support where required and help scale efforts.

It is key to note, despite a strong focus on evidence generation and isolated examples of successes across intervention areas, at present, there is no proven model for national level success on ECM. As noted in prior sections of the report, ECM is deeply rooted in Bangladesh's complex socio-economic-cultural practices that have regional variations. Therefore, as noted during interactions, an intervention that works in one context may not in another. To understand scalable practices, the country has an opportunity for the first time through the GPECM to test and understand which strategies and combination of strategies could do impact at various levels of governance across the country. To leverage this opportunity and understand medium- and long-term impact in addressing ECM, more resources and dedicated budget is needed. Finding the balance between contextualising while simultaneously working at scale, would be critical to enhance ECM outcomes. Moreover, often with limited government resources, strengthening collaboration with stakeholders and engaging in innovating ways to scale up, would be needed for system wide transformation.

To what extent has the programme been able to generate an enabling environment and strong involvement of key stakeholders at different levels (individual, family, community and local authorities) that will prevent gains in social norms to go back to pre-programme levels even in the absence of further interventions? Has the programme reached a tipping point where social norms and gender transformative results are strongly rooted in all these levels?

3.4.5 BCO's ECM interventions have adequately contributed to the creation of an enabling environment and interventions have targeted engagement with key stakeholders at all levels. Capacity building of and advocacy with stakeholders on ending child marriage has been a key approach. However, there is scope for enhanced advocacy and engagement to sustain gains in social norm change and address overarching harmful behaviours.

Improving quality of life for adolescent girls and providing them with knowledge and access to resources and services, resting on the assumption that this combined with addressing drivers of gender inequality, will delay marriage was a key objective of the BCO's ECM efforts. Simultaneously, the interventions also focussed on fostering a supportive environment (laws, policies, data and services) through engagement with concerned authorities and community members (Table) to aid and enhance the process of transformation.²⁷⁶

C4D interventions through regular and constant engagement with stakeholders and partners proved necessary to ensure sustainability and scale (especially with the Government), use available resources and assure quality. UNICEF adopted a public-private partnership approach that enabled greater outreach and impact of media dissemination in 2018.²⁷⁷ The strategy for C4D activities also recognised the cruciality of advocacy with ministries, departments as well as the media at national and local level.

²⁷⁴ 2019 End Year Summary Report

²⁷⁵ GPECM Phase 1 Annual Report 2016

²⁷⁶ UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage Joint Evaluation Report May 2019

²⁷⁷ Bangladesh Country Profile 2018

Key Stakeholders			
District	Upazilla	Union	Ward
District Child Welfare Board	Nirbahi Officer	Union Chair-Person	Marriage Registrars
Deputy Commissioner	Child Affairs Police Officer	Female and Male Ward Members	CBCPCs
Deputy Director, Women Affairs Office	Women's Affairs Officer	Marriage Registrars	Union <i>Parsihad</i> Member
Deputy Director, Department of Social Service	Social Services Officer		Religious Leaders
Police Superintendent			Community Leaders
			Teachers

Table 18: Stakeholders engaged

Moreover, a notable example of concretising and recording learnings and approaches to ECM in Bangladesh can be seen in the development of the “Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh: What Matters for Change?” discussion paper presented by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF in 2018. The paper attempted at providing a more wholesome understanding of which variables are correlated with child marriage in Bangladesh, and which may be the ones that have the strongest importance in people’s decision-making process.²⁸⁰ Studies such as this have the potential to go a long way in informing the ideology behind programmatic approaches, providing the necessary local context and also serving as an effective base to initiate discussion with and involve MoWCA and other line ministries to ensure sustainability and scale up of programme interventions.

The evaluation notes that advocacy through the Global Programme, along with other development partners and NGOs, proved to be critical to mobilise governments and promote ownership.²⁸¹ However, there is greater scope to strengthen the approach.

UNFPA and the Speaker of Parliament, a parliamentary sub-committee on ‘Preventing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Including Eliminating Child Marriage’ was constituted within the Standing Committee of MoWCA. This strategic partnership provided UNFPA and partners an extended area to propagate the agenda to end child marriage and prevent all forms of violence against women and girls.²⁸² Further, anti-sexual harassment committees were set up in 72 secondary schools in two target districts aligned to guidelines of the Bangladesh High Court, and members were trained on the prevention of sexual

²⁷⁸ C4D Section, UNICEF Bangladesh, *An overview of the C4D initiatives to Accelerate the End of Child Marriage in Bangladesh*, June 2017

²⁷⁹ GPECM Bangladesh Results Report 2017

²⁸⁰ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF Bangladesh, *Ending child marriage in Bangladesh: What matters for change? Exploring preferences, beliefs and norms: A discussion paper*, August 2018

²⁸¹ UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage Joint Evaluation Report May 2019

²⁸² Bangladesh Country Profile 2018

abuse. This has successfully enabled a change in the approach of teachers to sexual violence and school²⁸³, aligned to Outcome 3 of GPECM, wherein relevant sectoral systems deliver quality and cost-effective services to meet the needs of adolescent girls. Members of these committees have also been provided with information on relevant health and legal services in close proximity, and a complaint and referral mechanism has been drawn up to address any incidence of sexual harassment within or near school premises.²⁸⁴ Additionally, this contributed to the creation of a safe environment in schools, resulting in retention and regular attendance of girls in school. Ensuring the same is crucial so that girl children are protected from violence and discrimination and can prevent child marriage and early motherhood.²⁸⁵ Relatedly, support was also provided for the operationalisation of existing parent-student forums in schools. The focus has been to encourage communication to facilitate continued learning and retention in schools for girls.²⁸⁶

Interactions with representatives of the UNICEF highlighted that the Global Programme enabled joint effort among UNICEF sections, development partners and government counterparts. Additionally, it also created a specialised focus on ECM at the grassroots level, key to ensuring that interventions are sustainable and to the creation of a positive environment that upholds the rights and value of girls. Further, evidence-based programming reinforced the approach to ending child marriage through a gender lens. Significantly, field interactions with the Deputy Commissioner in Bhola district highlighted the attempts being made to envisage and implement a common programme that addresses cross-cutting issues of child protection and child rights, supported by UNICEF.

Addressing structural systems of inequality and transforming gender norms and practices is a time-intensive process and requires greater intensity and scale to achieve desired results. It is important to note here that the Global Programme focused on select districts, whereas for scale and sustainability increased geographical coverage is key. Data from MICS 2019 highlights that the registration of birth rates of children under the age of five shows makes a strong case for geographical scale-up of programme interventions. To elucidate, non-programme districts such as Kushtia and Sirajganj record registration at 24.8 per cent and 32.1 per cent²⁸⁷ respectively, whereas programme districts of Barishal and Jamalpur record significantly higher rates (72.9 per cent and 64.4 per cent).²⁸⁸

Relatedly, stakeholder interactions with the representation of the Social Protection/Policy team in Bangladesh suggested that a restricted eligibility criterion prevents many girls from the uptake of social protection schemes, in effect having no actual impact on the high rates of child marriage. It was noted that the amount received is nominal and does not effectively incentivise families or at-risk girls to not engage in child marriage.²⁸⁹ Greater advocacy is needed to expand set criterion, as well as focusing on alternative avenues for adolescent girls and their families to effectively delay the age of their marriage.²⁹⁰ Significantly, during field interactions, it was reported that while the government has the necessary financial capacity and inclination to further the agenda to ECM, there is a strong dependence on support from UNICEF, UNFPA and other development partners.

3.4.6 The programme has placed emphasis on enabling social and behaviour change and addressing the structural causes and drivers of gender equality. Achievement of the ‘tipping point’, however, needs adequate, longer and more intensive investment and focus. Behaviour change, and transformation of embedded systems and structures requires consistent and

²⁸³ GPECM Bangladesh Results Report 2018

²⁸⁴ GPECM Country Office Phase I Results Report

²⁸⁵ CNN, *Make schools safe for girls everywhere*, October 2012, Retrieved from: [Make schools safe for girls everywhere - CNN](#)

²⁸⁶ KII with UNICEF BCO WASH Sectoral Team

²⁸⁷ MICS 2019

²⁸⁸ MICS 2019

²⁸⁹ KII with UNICEF BCO Social Protection/Policy Team

²⁹⁰ UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women Joint Strategic Reflection Retreat on Bangladesh GPECM Phase II June 2019

focused engagement at all levels for a sustained period, going beyond the duration of a single programme.

Transformation of gender norms, relations and roles moves beyond empowerment of girls and women to changing the underlying structures and systems that perpetuate inequalities and legitimise gender discrimination.²⁹¹

A key approach of the GPECM design was the focus on the critical mass theory to create agents of change to encourage and support transformation within the community.²⁹² This theory advocates that on reaching a critical group size, a dedicated proportion of the population can influence and drive sustained social and behaviour change.²⁹³ The point where this critical mass is achieved and self-sustained change is visible is known as the Tipping Point. Though the Tipping Point does not have a fixed value, it is commonly accepted to present itself at 25 per cent.²⁹⁴ The evaluation finds that while the tipping point may not have been achieved, BCOs efforts for ECM have contributed in multiple ways to the process of change. Focused efforts, as seen through this evaluation, have achieved significant positive results, that have sustainability built in their design and immense scope for scale up. However, behaviour change and transformation of harmful gendered and social structures requires consistent engagement at all levels for longer than the duration of a single programme.

Addressing long-term social norms and behaviour change around gender norms and transforming patriarchal and conservative systems that perpetuate gender inequalities requires consistent engagement with all key stakeholders, including men and boys.²⁹⁵ BCO programme efforts have significantly included a strong focus on investing in masculinities, through engagement with religious leaders, C4D communication and community-based strategies and interventions. A communications campaign focused on boys and men as fathers and grooms, fostering positive attitudes amongst boys around masculinities through Adolescent Clubs and the Generation Breakthrough project have been recorded as successful interventions that propagated and advocated for the transformation of gender norms and systems that drive it.²⁹⁶ However, while funds have been utilised to engage with boys in terms of health interventions, a limited number of boys have been found to regularly utilise available services, suggesting that the country is not entirely ready for gender transformation model, rather it is in a gender-responsive stage.²⁹⁷ Therefore, while interventions of the BCO have shown a focus on men and boys, it is crucial for future programming to consistently reinforce this approach, and ensure comprehensive engagement to overhaul traditional concepts of masculinity and encourage and promote equity at the household and community level.²⁹⁸

Additionally, under the ambit of Water Sanitation and Hygiene focused interventions, UNICEF has been working with the government to construct sanitation facilities in schools, however, maintenance of the same has emerged as a challenge. Further, supported has also been provided to the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) in preparing Operations and Maintenance guidelines for Water Sanitation and Hygiene facilities. Currently it is under review with the Director General, DPE for final approval to go for printing. Stakeholder interactions suggest that unless the governmental system has the capacity and willingness to carry forth interventions and benefits, sustainability and scale-up is difficult to achieve.²⁹⁹

²⁹¹ Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage Phase II Design Workshop Report

²⁹² UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage Joint Evaluation Report May 2019

²⁹³ Centola, D., et.al., 'Experimental evidence for tipping points in social convention', *Science*, 360(6393), 116-119, June 2018, Retrieved from: [Experimental evidence for tipping points in social convention | Science \(sciencemag.org\)](https://sciencemag.org)

²⁹⁴ Ibid

²⁹⁵ Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage Phase II Design Workshop Report

²⁹⁶ UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage Phase I Report

²⁹⁷ KII with UNICEF Health Sectoral Team

²⁹⁸ UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women Joint Strategic Reflection Retreat on Bangladesh GPECM Phase II June 2019

²⁹⁹ KII with UNICEF WASH Team

Behaviour change in order to achieve the tipping point is an intricate process that needs focused investment, in terms of the messaging being delivered, and the creation of access to services in a protective and dignified environment.³⁰⁰

Therefore, while the evaluation notes that BCO's ECM efforts have laid down the groundwork and established a starting point for transformative results and towards the achievement of the tipping point, significant and continued investment and support is essential to achieve desired results and secure the tipping point where transformative results and gains are embedded and self-sustained at all levels.

³⁰⁰ GPECM Bangladesh Results Report 2018

Chapter 4: Conclusions and lessons learnt

The urgency to end child marriage in Bangladesh is recognised by all. There is political will and keen involvement of civil society organisations to address the issue. BCO ECM efforts and the GPECM – the joint programme of UNICEF and UNPFA – have made some significant inroads in propelling collective efforts to meet the stated national targets. The achievements, gaps and challenges have been discussed in the previous sections of the report. In this section the evaluation team takes an overview of the ECM efforts and draws conclusion on each of the objectives of the study. The same has been mentioned in parenthesis. Being a third-party, we also share our views of the direction that the programmes need to take in future through an objective analysis. The feedback shared is on the basis of insights gained through review of documents and interactions with the respondents.

Conclusions

Relevance

4.1 The ECM programme in Bangladesh was guided by GPECM and CPD 2017-2020. This limited its work at the household level although it was identified as an area of intervention in the ECM strategy note developed by the BCO (Objective 1)

BCO has a strategy note on ECM that provided a well-articulated view of the causal factors, strategies to address the problem. However, the actual interventions were guided by the CPD 2017-2020 (Outcome 3) and the Theory of Change formulated by GPECM. There was synergy between the BCO ECM Strategy Note and the TOC (GPECM) except that it took a more lenient view of focusing on gender discrimination instead of gender-based violence. It also aimed to work towards getting families to provide space to girls in decision making. In effect this would mean designing interventions to do more in-depth work at the household level.

The other guiding document for ECM was Outcome 3 of the CPD which took a broader view of designing interventions for adolescent empowerment. There was no explicit focus on ECM, but the assumption was that this multiprong approach – involving different units of UNICEF - would be able to deal with the complex problem of child marriage. The funds made available through the GPECM programme were aligned to Outcome 3. In addition, it also provided the opportunity to BCO demonstrate some interventions that could have greater impact. While this worked well for most strategies, interventions were not designed at the household level. At best these were designed at the community level.

4.2 Three approaches were used to develop the ECM programme. With each of these approaches separately had its advantages as well as limitations, together these complemented each other to help in better design (Objective 2)

As stated, there is recognition that ECM is an important issue to be addressed by all stakeholders. Everyone wants to see that Bangladesh does not remain among the top ten countries where early childhood marriage is still exists. It has been a priority area for UNICEF. Specific to the evaluation period, three approaches were followed by UNICEF to strengthen their work: the lifecycle and multi sectoral approaches that were aligned to the CPD and the area-based approach was largely propelled by the GPECM programme. All three approaches have been useful in building understanding on the issue. While there are advantages in following each of these approaches, each approach also has its limitations:

- **Multi sectoral approach** – There is convergence of different units at the CP level to achieve all the outcomes. Interventions by all units to deal with the problem of ECM are part of Outcome 3. There is an existing mechanism within UNICEF to distil relevant information and monitor its outreach. In the case of the GPECM, like other donor supported projects, it is not an explicit part of the Country results-based framework. There is a different mechanism to track progress and report for donor

supported projects which have limited duration. In such projects it is a challenge to bring about convergence across different units on one particular issue. There is a possibility of the focus getting lost while implementing sector specific programmes which may have other priorities and geographic areas where there are ongoing programmes.

- **Life cycle approach** is very useful because to deal with such an issue which is deep rooted, requires long term work with a number of people. However, in order to see the impact of these programmes these need to be implemented over a long period of time. It is difficult to see the impact of these interventions which are of short duration. Projects following this approach may not last to see the impact.
- **Area based approach**— It is easier to see the impact of interventions are confined to a geographic area because effective monitoring can take place. However, it is not possible for any organisation or even for a collective to cover the entire country. Besides, the UNICEF units may choose to work in a different geographic area to support a project but may choose to discontinue their work after the project duration is over.

Either of these approaches used in isolation may not have been as insightful as a combination of all three. It helped to design the programme without much delay. The same approach may be adopted in the next phase too where areas are selected on the basis of vulnerability and interventions may be multi sectoral or seen from a life cycle lens.

4.3 The ECM programme provides some useful insights about working with the vulnerable populations although it was carried out in limited areas. It identifies the need for providing social protection to vulnerable families so that they do not get their daughters married out of distress (Objective 4 and Objective 5)

Phase 1 of GPECM has helped to understand the efficacy of some interventions in addressing the issue of child marriage. The programme was implemented in limited areas. In order to make an overall impact at the country level, all vulnerable families need to be identified and given social protection. In addition to CCTs there can be other ways to extend this protection. UNICEF is well positioned to help in designing schemes/programmes in this regard for the government because of the work done with adolescents in areas of education, health, child protection.

Effectiveness and Impact

4.4 Results against the strategies outlined in the Strategy Note on ECM and the results framework and workplan of the GPECM are difficult to adequately quantify and monitor because monitoring by BCO is being done for Outcome 3 (Objective 1)

The interventions planned and executed as part of both programmes were well designed and have been useful in one way or the other. There has been merit in all activities carried out although the interventions related to adolescent empowerment and community mobilisation appear to have made a greater impact. This has come out clearly in the interactions with the respondents. It is, however, difficult to quantify and monitor these because the existing monitoring systems within UNICEF do not leave room for tracking progress of some interventions. As a result of which the impact of some of these interventions cannot be gauged. Monitoring of Outcome 3 - which also included ECM but not in a focussed manner – has been effective since the interventions and their impact get captured. However, it does not specifically focus on ECM. Rather it provides insights about sectoral convergence towards adolescent empowerment. Monitoring of interventions under GPECM has been in a form that is difficult to analyse systematically.

4.5 Cross sectoral convergence and collaboration was there especially with the Education and C4D related interventions (Objective 2)

The space to undertake cross sectoral planning to end child marriage was provided by the GPECM programme. Each unit analysed the issue from their perspective and tried to address the problem through their respective interventions. From the construction of toilets in schools to remove the barriers related to basic services by Water Sanitation and Hygiene, to setting up adolescent friendly health services by the health unit are all good examples of efforts to address the multi-faceted issue. Among all sectors direct impact of education and C4D was most palpable especially the work done to form adolescent clubs and effective C4D campaigns to create awareness. Child protection unit received maximum support in terms of availability of resources which helped in deepening its work in this area. Most significant one was the setting up of community-based child protection committees which can be the backbone to put an end to the problem. There was little evidence of joint goals and the impact made.

4.6 National level advocacy has been very effective especially in the development of the National Action Plan (Objective 6)

Development of NAP has been an achievement since it has been finalised through collective efforts. UNICEF has been part of this effort. It is being viewed as a significant step forward. While the document is good it is yet to be rolled out because costing for the proposed interventions has not yet taken place. Efforts to convince the government to take appropriate steps need to continue.

4.7 Partnerships forged with stakeholders have been good, diverse and effective (Objective 7)

Several organisations had already been working on the issue of child marriage. The GPECM provided another opportunity for different organisations to come together. Mapping their activities has been a useful exercise and will help in getting a better understanding about the nature of interventions and geographic presence. For instance, partnerships with platforms such as GNB and LCG WAGE have proven to be highly effective on advancing and strengthening the agenda for ECM. If taken forward it will help in minimizing duplication of work, forge collaborations based on areas of strength and presence in the area. Disaster prone areas have been recognised as hotspots for early childhood marriage. It is not possible for all organisations to be present there whereas some others have many years of experience of work on this issue. Such partnerships will need to be strengthened in the coming years if the target of reducing child marriages by more than one third is to be met. It is also a reality that each organisation is bound by its own mandates. They will need to look beyond their own organisation.

4.8 Use of national policies and laws at the district and *Upazilla* level need to be strengthened (Objective 8)

One of the strengths of the programme has been formulation of the NAP through collective efforts. The LCG WAGE platform was also used effectively to involve civil society organisations. With regard to translation of these policies at the district level, roles and responsibilities have been defined. MoWCA is the nodal agency that takes the lead on ECM. It is working along with other Ministries to address the problem holistically. While the interaction and partnership are strong at the national level, the same cannot be said at the *Upazilla* level. In the absence of an on-ground cadre at the *Upazilla* level, there are challenges in bringing convergence across different Departments at the sub-district level.

4.9 There is lack of sufficient and adequate evidence that ECM programme has adequately addressed the causal factors (Objective 1)

Several examples have been given in the other sections of the report that show that the programme has made successful attempts to develop some good replicable and scalable interventions. Adolescent clubs and effective C4D programme are few examples. However, when one looks at the overall result areas which BCO had planned to achieve, there is not sufficient evidence to prove that. The BCO ECM Strategy Note has identified the following achievements it will contribute to by the end of 2018:

- In the target districts and City Corporations there should be a reduction in child marriage by at least 30 percentage points for the under 18 age group.

- The country has endorsed a fully costed five-year National Action Plan to End Child Marriage.
- A nationwide communication for development (C4D) campaign against child marriage comprising both media and on-ground community engagement initiatives is launched in Bangladesh in 2016, bringing together key sectoral partners, NGOs, adolescents, young people and women's rights networks and academia to achieve behaviour and social norm change
- There is a positive shift in attitudes and practices around child marriage which includes both condemnation and prevention of child marriages at the ward level in the UNICEF target *upazillas* and city corporation

There is information available at the output level for some result areas. But there is no evidence that the programme is reaching out to the disadvantaged communities because the data is not disaggregated. Evidence for result area 4 should have been some KAP studies, but feedback has been limited to baseline, midline and endline surveys.

4.10 Some strategies have been more effective than others in addressing the problem (Objective 1)

The five strategies adopted by UNICEF to plan for the ECM programme were all very well thought out. A closer look at the impact made through the use of these strategies shows that some strategies have been more effective than the others. For instance, a greater impact seems to have been made through programmes related to community mobilisation and empowerment of adolescents. Work done with the adolescents through the adolescent clubs and value addition done by UNICEF to make the clubs run more effectively has been recognized. Similarly, UNICEF has contributed significantly in national advocacy efforts especially in facilitating the development of NAP along with other organisations.

The same cannot be said about the livelihood options. Review of documents and interactions with the stakeholders did not indicate that girls have improved their livelihood options by undergoing skill training in a very significant way. Creation of livelihood options goes much beyond training. For the trainees, especially girls, translating the skills acquired through training to generate an income would require finding jobs or accessing funds to start businesses. Given the societal attitude towards them, they are less likely to get support from their families. Unless the skill development and livelihood programmes focus on those aspects, these interventions will not be very helpful to the girls. Yet addressing this issue is important since poverty has been recognized as one of the drivers for early childhood marriage.

Efficiency and Cost effectiveness

4.11 There was greater cohesiveness in the programme especially the C4D interventions and advocacy (Objective 2)

A number of examples were identified wherein partnership between UNICEF and UNFPA have resulted in bringing in more efficiency in the implementation of the programme. Different efforts helped in more effective advocacy and streamlining the C4D interventions which made the messaging more effective. However, it was also realised that more resources would be required for taking the programme forward and expanding it.

4.12 With respect to cost effectiveness of the programme, the highest allocation of funds has been to education and child protection (Objective 9)

The programme has been successful in reaching out to more people and creating awareness through effective media campaigns. Analysis of fund allocation shows that most funds were allocated to implement education and child protection related interventions. Per beneficiary cost for the health sector within UNICEF was found to be lower than that of other sectors. Since GPECM was a global programme implemented in other countries too, when compared with the GPECM countries' average, Bangladesh's

cost per beneficiary is lower only for interventions related to only one outcome. For the other two outcomes Bangladesh's cost per beneficiary is higher than the GPECM countries' average.

Sustainability

4.13 There is evidence of Gender equality on programmes and gender transformative results especially in the adolescent clubs and community-based child protection committees (Objective 4 and Objective 5)

Both the GPECM and BCOs ECM efforts have planned interventions that are generating interest as demonstrated by the baseline and end line surveys carried out. The reason for the success of these interventions has been to carefully bring in changes to ensure gender equality while not losing focus on the overall objective of reducing the number of child marriages. The decision to include 30 per cent boys in adolescent clubs has been very helpful in sensitising boys who need to be involved. There are indications from some of these clubs that there has been reduction in the number of cases of sexual harassment towards girls where boys were part of the club. This demonstrates a change in mindset of boys, which is so important for bringing about a sustainable change. Similarly having a diverse set of people in the community-based child protection committees as influencers is likely to be more impactful wherein the community takes the responsibility to stop early marriages. While law enforcement is necessary, the real success would come if the problem is recognised and addressed by the community itself. Both these programmes have shown that it is possible to do so.

4.14 Certain interventions can be scaled up further. Greater efforts would be required for adequate capacity development at different levels in order to ensure sustainability of the interventions (Objective 3)

Some interventions carried out as part of these programmes have already shown that these have the potential to be scaled up. Adolescent clubs, for example, were replicated in seven districts in the year 2016 wherein 1500 adolescent clubs were formed. These can be further scaled up. Similarly, the value of AFHS has been recognised from the response it is getting. However, in order to scale these up greater efforts are needed to implement these effectively. For instance, in order to make the AFHS run effectively the staff would need to be trained so that they are better equipped to deal with adolescents. Similarly, while manuals have been prepared to guide the adolescent clubs, this would require training of facilitators. This can be planned in a phased manner.

4.15 Impact of COVID-19 on Child Marriage has had an adverse impact on the campaign since face-to-face interactions are limited. UNICEF is making use of technology to bridge this gap (Objective 11)

COVID-19 has certainly had an adverse impact not just in the execution of the programme but in addressing the issue too. The planned activities had to be slowed down and some deferred. Rapid analysis shows that there has been a rise in number of incidents of gender-based violence judging by the rise in the number of calls to the helpline. Many showed inclinations of marrying their daughters to address their heightened economic vulnerabilities arising due to loss of livelihoods. There is apprehension among teachers that about 30 per cent girls may not return back to school, which will be a huge setback to the campaign. UNICEF is making all out efforts to overcome the challenge. Since face-to-face interactions are still not possible, digital platforms are being used to create awareness about the pandemic and how to stay safe. Efforts have also been made to impart training to adolescents on safety issues and in continuing to provide safe spaces to girls, should they face any incident of violence against them.

Lessons learnt

UNICEF and UNFPA working together has enhanced ECM efforts

There is enough reason to believe that the partnership between UNICEF and UNFPA has worked well for ECM efforts in Bangladesh. Both the organisations have their unique strengths which have complemented each other and strengthened the voice of the United Nations on this issue. While UNICEF has greater experience of working in sectors (Education, Social Protection and Health) and C4D, UNFPA has done significant and more focussed work in areas like reproductive health and gender. The joint knowledge pool can help in better planning of programmes related to adolescents and finally that is what matters. With regard to this programme, the two organisations took care to carve out their roles and responsibilities such that these did not overlap with each other. This partnership can be further explored for other similar programmes since working with adolescents is a priority for both.

Incentives and conditional cash transfers seem to have worked well in some parts. This needs to be examined more closely

Conditional cash transfers (CCT) to encourage girls to continue with their school education have worked well in many countries. Even in Bangladesh, few respondents highlighted that it has worked well. In particular, an example from Sylhet was given where a CCT initiative was taken along with the government and the results were good. However, in line with the global guidelines wherein the focus of UNICEF would be more towards social protection, this initiative was discontinued. This aspect needs to be examined more closely through research and seen whether CCT is a significant factor in making girls continue with their education. In case it is found to make a positive impact, a solution to this may be found to provide incentives to girls, perhaps by helping the Government to design a suitable scheme.

The existing monitoring system within UNICEF is not designed to collect relevant data for ECM

UNICEF has a mechanism to collate information across different units to report against stated outcomes through RAM. Therefore, information related to Outcome 3 is collected and its review gives a good understanding of progress being made. While information related to Outcome 3 was readily available it does not focus on ECM alone. Rather it focuses on overall adolescent empowerment. The GPECM project has a separate process to gather information which is gathered by focal points in each unit by the project lead. It is not part of the central monitoring system. This mismatch in monitoring programmes makes collation of relevant data collection very challenging and there is likelihood of missing out of information that may provide evidence for planning. While reporting maybe done for the donor, there is a need to modify the existing system such that information related to programmes like ECM can be accessed easily.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

The evaluation followed a systematic process of collecting relevant information through primary and secondary research. The existing studies and data helped to understand the big picture. This was validated by interacting with respondents at different levels including the leadership. The findings were analysed, and certain key conclusions were drawn. Based on these conclusions, some recommendations have been made with the aim to provide inputs for the next phase of this programme. Draft recommendations were provided to both UNICEF on two occasions, and the ERG which allowed for real-time and follow up documentation for refinement. Through these consultations, the recommendations provided below have been further refined and prioritised for action. These recommendations have also been categorised as medium and high priorities, with specific time frames and addressees for each recommendation put forth.

Recommendation 1: UNICEF should work towards providing social protection to vulnerable children and their families for overall poverty reduction, which is one of the main drivers for early marriages

There is enough evidence to suggest that the problem of ECM is more pronounced in vulnerable sections of Bangladesh. Girls are married off at an early age because of a variety of reasons of which poverty stands out. There are various ways in which organisations have addressed this issue mostly through short term support. It is increasingly being felt that a wider approach is required to pull the families out of poverty. ADB³⁰¹ recognises that investments in social protection help reduce poverty, inequality, and vulnerability. As per the definition of UNICEF “*Social protection covers the range of policies and programmes needed to reduce the lifelong consequences of poverty and exclusion.*” Therefore, the focus of interventions in future should be to ensure that essential services are provided to all vulnerable families to reduce inequality, poverty and vulnerability. This would require working together with other organisations with similar mandate of poverty alleviation. With its experience of working with children, UNICEF can contribute towards child protection which is one of the important elements of social protection.

Addressee:	Time frame:	Prioritisation:	Aligned to Conclusions/Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UNICEF• UNDP• ADB• ILO• MoWCA• Ministry of Social Welfare• Local Government Engineering Department• Civil Society Organisations	Long-term	High	Finding 3.1.3 Conclusion 4.3

Recommendation 2: Vulnerability mapping needs to be more nuanced and evidence based where factors other than incidence of child marriage should also be considered

Selection of geographies in the first phase of the ECM programme was based on two factors – incidence of child marriage and presence of UNICEF and their partners. In the next phase, the scope of vulnerability mapping should be increased by including other factors such as low level of education

³⁰¹ ADB: Social Protection Operational Plan 2014-2020; December 2013

(including drop outs and out of school children); economically disadvantaged population, incidence of gender-based violence, disaster prone areas and other vulnerable sections such as migrants. This will help in identifying other vulnerable pockets and interventions designed accordingly, especially offering them social protection. Here one may add that the increase in vulnerabilities arising due to climate change led disaster situations and pandemics like COVID-19 are raising new challenges which need to be analysed more closely at the planning stage. Activity mapping of organisations engaged in work related to ECM has provided useful information related to their focus areas and geographic presence. GPECM, in its next phase should focus on developing a campaign along with these organisations. Vulnerability mapping and sharing with partners and potential partners can help them develop needs-based programmes aligned to their respective mandates.

Addressee:	Time frame	Prioritisation:	Aligned to Conclusions/Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF • UNFPA • MoWCA • Development Organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term 	High	Finding 3.1.3 Finding 3.1.7

Recommendation 3: UNICEF should limit the number of interventions it carries out to address the issue of ECM

UNICEF had carried out a number of interventions in this phase, the impact of which is not very visible for the project period. For instance, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which Water Sanitation and Hygiene related interventions have helped in reducing ECM. However, the impact the programme has made by way of strengthening the adolescent clubs and carrying out C4D interventions is discernible and better recognised. Research³⁰² has shown that programmes with fewer interventions reaches out to a larger population and shows better sustainability. Therefore, UNICEF may consider focusing on fewer interventions where it has achieved better results and aim at scaling up the pilots. Many areas such as AFHS – that provide safe places for adolescents - are already being focussed under Outcome 3 activities. GPECM may support BCO in providing technical support to other organisations to design and implement interventions in other geographic locations.

In doing so it may be noted that while UNICEF follows the adolescence age bracket of 10-19 years as suggested by WHO, research³⁰³ shows that the period of early adolescence (ages 10-14 years) which is very significant in imbibing gender norms is greatly overlooked. This aspect maybe considered while designing interventions for adolescents.

Addressee:	Time frame:	Prioritisation:	Aligned to Conclusions/Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF • UNFPA • Relevant agencies working on ECM • MoWCA 	Mid Term	High	Finding 3.2.10 Finding 3.4.6 Conclusion 4.10

³⁰² Malhotra, A. and Elnakib, S., '20 Years of the Evidence Base on What Works to Prevent Child Marriage: A Systematic Review', *Journal of Adolescent Health*, November 2020

³⁰³ It Begins at 10: How Gender Expectations Shape Early Adolescence Around the World Robert W. Blum, M.P.H., Kristin Mmari, Dr.P.H., and Caroline Moreau, *Journal of Adolescent Health* 61 (2017)

Recommendation 4: There is a need for greater engagement and involvement with the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Social Welfare and Ministry of Home Affairs to act on child marriage within their own sectors

It is not contested that a multidimensional approach to understanding, and addressing, child marriage is needed in Bangladesh. Therefore, ensuring capacity building and costing of government action plans and strategies that seek to end child marriage is not applicable only for the lead ministry, but equally critical for related line ministries. UNICEF has been working primarily with MoWCA on the issue of ECM. It may consider working more closely with other Ministries too which have a significant role in formulating policies, enforcing law, offering schemes to the disadvantaged communities. Greater engagement will also enable alignment with UNICEF's Child Protection Programme. The role of different Ministries in addressing the issue has been clearly outlined in the National Action Plan. Engaging with them by way of sharing of information, extending technical support whenever required would help in more effective implementation of NAP. An area of support to the Ministries would be to develop a robust monitoring system to assess progress of activities for which the respective Ministries are responsible.

Addressee:	Time frame:	Prioritisation:	Aligned to Conclusions/Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs • Ministry of Home Affairs • Ministry of Social Welfare • UNICEF 	Mid term	High	Finding 3.1.6 Finding 3.2.8 Finding 3.2.9 Conclusion 4.8

Recommendation 5: A better surveillance system and research to analyse the impact of interventions is required

As mentioned previously, undertaking robust and accurate cost effectiveness analysis was challenging (subsequently impacting impact analysis) due to how results and budget information are recorded and managed in UNICEF reporting systems. There is a need to develop a more robust and user-friendly system that is able to collate information related to an area effectively. It is also important to collect disaggregated data for disadvantaged groups to analyse the impact on vulnerable groups. It is also recommended that the GPECM, in the next phase carries out more social research in the form of carrying out RCTs and KAP studies to have a better understanding of the ground level situation. This will help in more effective planning too. Investing in and planning such an approach is crucial to address issues like ECM that are cross-cutting across outcomes and outputs.

Addressee:	Time frame:	Prioritisation:	Aligned to Conclusions/Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF • UNFPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate 	High	Finding 3.2.2 Finding 3.2.3 Conclusion 4.4

Recommendation 6: UNICEF should limit its intervention in skill development programmes to extending technical support to identify vulnerable adolescents and develop soft skills

As shared in the earlier sections converting skill training into livelihood option is a complex process. It involves identification of target groups, appropriate skills suited to their aptitude and market demands, access to funds if they wish to be self-employed or find jobs. Challenges in implementing livelihood programmes have been discussed in the section on Effectiveness. There are organisations which have significant experience in this area and can be more effective in implementing programmes related to skill development. UNICEF can extend technical support to identify vulnerable adolescents and develop programme for soft skill training.

Addressee:	Time frame:	Prioritisation:	Aligned to Conclusions/Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF • UNFPA • ILO • Education Department (TVET) • Other development partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate 	High	Conclusion 4.9 Conclusion 4.10

Recommendation 7: The partnership between UNICEF and UNFPA can make a greater impact. Both organisations may consider continuing with this partnership

The study has highlighted that partnership with UNFPA on the GPECM programme has been very useful with both organisations complementing each other's work. Both organisations have their core areas of strengths which would help in strengthening the overall approach to address the issue of child marriage and also making optimum use of resources by having a repository of tools and resource material.

Addressee:	Time frame:	Prioritisation:	Aligned to Conclusions/Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF • UNFPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate 	High	Finding 3.3.1 Finding 3.3.2 Conclusion 4.7

Recommendation 8: Capacity development of officials at district and *Upazilla* level would be a key factor to the success of the ECM programme. UNICEF may focus more on this aspect in the next phase of the programme

Our research shows that wherever the Child Welfare Committees and Community Based Child Protection Committees were well informed and active, it contributed to creation of a supportive environment to combat child marriages and it was easier to monitor the impact. However, it was found that the level of awareness and capacity to execute programmes effectively was not uniform in all *upazillas*. Leadership provided by the BCO was extremely important in this regard. Therefore, UNICEF may collaborate with local government representatives across all departments to undertake capacity development programmes at this level.

Addressee:	Time frame:	Prioritisation:	Aligned to Conclusions/Findings

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF • UNFPA • MoWCA • Local Government Representatives across all Departments 	Medium term	High	Finding 3.2.8 Finding 3.2.9 Finding 3.2.12 Finding 3.3.3 Conclusion 4.8
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Annexures

Annexure 1: GPECM result framework

Sr.no	Outcome	Output
1.	Adolescent girls at risk of and affected by child marriage are better able to express and exercise their choices.	Output 1.1 Adolescent girls (aged 10–19) are actively participating in a targeted programme (life skills, health information, economic empowerment, social protection). Output 1.2 – Adolescent girls are supported to enrol and remain in formal and non-formal education, including through the transition from primary to secondary education.
2.	Families and communities demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours towards investing in and supporting adolescent girls.	Output 2.1 – Families and communities are increasingly aware of the benefits of investing in adolescent girls [and ending child marriage].
3.	Relevant sectoral systems are able to scale up quality and cost-effective services to meet the needs of adolescent girls.	Output 3.1 – Health and protection systems supported to implement guidelines, protocols and standards for adolescent girl-friendly health and protection services. Output 3.2 – Non-formal/primary/secondary schools supported to improve quality of education for adolescent girls.

4.	National legal and policy frameworks protect the rights of adolescents (in line with international standards).	Output 4.1 – Country has costed NAP or development plan on ending child marriage across more than one ministry.
5.	Government(s) and partners within and across countries support and promote the generation and use of robust data and evidence to inform programme design, track progress and document lessons learnt.	Output 5.1 – Country-specific, high-quality data and evidence generated and shared on what works at scale to accelerate ending child marriage.

Annexure 2: Stakeholder mapping

Stakeholder	Data collection tool	Indicative sample	Mode of interaction
UNICEF level			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country Representative • Deputy Representative • Representative from Regional Office, ROSA • Gender & Development Specialist • Communication for Development Specialist • Water Sanitation and Hygiene Specialist • Emergency Specialist • Child Protection Specialist • Health Specialist • Education Specialist • Nutrition Specialist • Social Policy, Evaluation, Analytics and Research 	KII	1 KII * per stakeholder = 12 KII	Remote
Central / National level			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Minister's office • Ministry of Women and Child Affairs • Ministry of Social Welfare • Ministry of Education (DSHE) • Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 	KII	1 KII * per stakeholder = 5 KII	Remote

District and <i>Upazilla</i> level				
• Deputy Commissioner	KII	1 KII * 5 Districts = 5 KII	In person	
• <i>Upazilla Nirbahi Officer</i>	KII	1 KII *5 <i>Upazilla</i> = 5 KII		
• Ward Shova Members/Union Parishad Members/ Ward Council (Male and female members)	KII	2 KII *5 <i>Upazilla</i> = 10 KII		
• Senior Secondary School teachers	KII	1 KII * 5 <i>Upazilla</i> = 5 KII		
Community level in <i>Upazillas</i>				
• Adolescent girls and boys (both members and non-members of adolescents' clubs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Already married young women ○ Adolescents with disabilities ○ Adolescents from lowest quintiles ○ Out of school adolescents 	IDI	3 IDI * 5 <i>Upazilla</i> = 15 IDI	In person	
• Family members like mother/father/grandparents/mother-in-law	Semi structured interview	1 Semi structured interview *5 <i>Upazilla</i> = 5 Semi structured interviews		
• Community members of organised committees: CBCPC/CSG/CCMG	Semi structured interview	1 Semi structured interview *5 <i>Upazilla</i> = 5 Semi structured interviews		
• Religious leaders	Semi structured interview	1 Semi structured interview *5 <i>Upazilla</i> = 5 Semi structured interviews		

Other key stakeholders				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNFPA (Members of Partner Advisory Groups/ Programme Officer Gender and A&Y) • UN Women • Women's Organisations: <i>Nari Pukho</i> • Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh • BRAC • Save The Children • Plan International • Action Aid • Any other Girls Not Brides (and consortium partner) • Representatives from LCG Wage • DFID • ADB • USAID • Donors • Canada Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development • Embassy of Netherlands 	KII	1 KII * per stakeholder = 14 KII	Remote	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing Partners • NGO/CSO 	KII	2 KII * 5 Upazilla= 10 KII	Remote	
Total respondents	KII, IDI, Semi structured interviews	66 KII, 15 IDI, 15 Semi structured interviews		

Annexure 3: Ethical considerations and code of conduct

Ethical conditions for evaluators including data collectors	
<p><i>The Code of Conduct should be interpreted in a spirit of transparency and common sense, with the best interests of children, adolescents, and community members.</i></p>	
<p><i>These guidelines apply to the interaction of team members with all children, adolescents, and community members.</i></p>	
Consent	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explain the research to respondents especially adolescents and community members. This includes an explanation of the research process and what use the research will be put to when it is completed2. It is necessary to receive the consent of each of the respondents3. Choice was given to respondents to refuse being interviewed4. Adolescents may wish to have their parents present while being interviewed5. All respondents should be able to stop the interview at any point as they wish6. All respondents are free to refuse to answer some questions if they wish	
Credibility	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Evaluation shall be credible and based on reliable data and observations8. Evaluation reports shall show evidence of consistency and dependability in data, findings, judgements, and lessons learnt; appropriately reflecting the quality of the methodology, procedures and analysis used to collect and interpret data9. Evaluation managers and evaluators have endeavoured to ensure that each evaluation is accurate, relevant, and timely and provides a clear, concise, and balanced presentation of the evidence, findings, issues, conclusions, and recommendations	
Independence	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">10. Evaluation team members have ensured that they are duly influenced by the views or statements of any party11. If evaluation team members come under any pressure to adopt a particular position or to introduce bias into the evaluation findings, they needed to ensure that they maintain independence of judgement and escalate the matter to the evaluation manager to discuss concerns	

Impartiality
<p>12. Evaluation team members have maintained an objective and balanced presentation of the programme 13. They operated in an impartial and unbiased manner at all stages of the evaluation, collect diverse perspectives on the subject under evaluation, guard against distortion in their reporting caused by their personal views and feelings</p>
Conflicts of interest
<p>14. Conflicts of interest has been avoided as far as possible so that the credibility of the evaluation process and product shall not be undermined. 15. Evaluators were required to disclose in writing any experience, of themselves, their immediate family, close friends, or associates, which may give rise to a potential conflict of interest. 16. The evaluation team leader shall carefully assess any offer of assistance to ensure the necessary independence of judgement from any contributing parties and to prevent any undue influence over the work of the office.</p>
Avoiding harm to respondents, non-discrimination, and equality & inclusion
<p>17. Do not record information without the knowledge of participants 18. Ensure that all stakeholders, irrespective of scale of functioning or position of responsibility are treated fairly and given equal opportunity to express their opinion 19. Ensure inclusion of more females, differently abled and respondents from marginalised population</p>
Child protection
<p>20. Prohibition on scolding, hitting, or otherwise physically assaulting or abusing children, developing sexual relationships with children or develop relationships with children that could in anyway be deemed exploitative or abusive 21. Prohibition on using language, making suggestions, or offering advice, which is inappropriate, offensive, or abusive 22. Prohibition on discrimination against, showing differential treatment, or favour children to the exclusion of others 23. Evaluation team members should, as far as possible, be visible to the parents or guardians while working with children.</p>
Confidentiality
<p>24. All data accessed through interactions to remain confidential. The name of respondents to not be shared outside the team 25. Findings from the evaluation will not be shared with anyone outside the immediate evaluation team and UNICEF 26. Information provided in the final report will be anonymized to ensure confidentiality</p>

Accountability

27. Complete the evaluation deliverables within the timeframe and budget agreed
28. Give notice and record any change to the evaluation plan or any risks to the successful completion of the evaluation

Ethical considerations for respondents

- **Code of ethics:** The team has developed a code of ethics based upon the understanding of the UNEG code of conduct for evaluator's (2008) which its team members are expected to follow while carrying out field-based data collection. In order to ensure that the team members adhere to the Code of Ethics, they were constantly monitored by senior resources and experts from Ernst and Young LLP India. Aspects such as consent, confidentiality, sensitivity of questions, comfort of the respondents and equity were kept in mind while developing research tools and were strengthened on the basis of the pilot- testing results.
- **Training of team members:** The code of ethics were explained to the researchers through a dedicated session nested under the 'field orientation' workshop. This ensured that the profile, competencies and skills of the team members are of a standard that prevents harm to respondents, both through acts of commission or omission.
- **Consultation with government stakeholders and UNICEF Bangladesh:** The approach and methodology to carry out the evaluation, the key research questions, the data/information collection instruments, profiles of the team members and consent forms are finalised in consultation with UNICEF and key Government stakeholders. Further, data was collected after informing the *Upazilla* level officials, caregivers/parents and adolescents about the evaluation objectives.
- **Human rights and gender equality:** The evaluation team proposed is gender-balanced and female researchers are entrusted with the responsibility of interacting with female respondents. Further, the data collection tools to be used to conduct interviews to collect quantitative and qualitative data/information will allow for gender disaggregated analysis and the same is expected to reflect throughout the report. Overall efforts were undertaken to ensure inclusion of more females, differently abled and respondents from marginalised population.
- **Consent form:** Most importantly, interviews were conducted after receiving formal (verbal consent will be sought for telecommunication-based interactions) consent from the respondents. The team drafted a consent form which required them to explain the evaluation objectives and nature of questions to the respondents. Further, the researchers are required to explain to the respondents that they could choose not to respond to a question that made them uncomfortable and could refuse to continue to participate at any point. This helped to ensure the autonomy of the respondents and recognise their capability for self-legislation, ability to make judgments, to state their opinions and to make choices.

Annexure 4: IRB approval letter



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March 23, 2020

Dr Niraj Seth
Team Leader
Email: niraj.seth@in.ey.com

Title of the project: Evaluation of UNICEF's Work on Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage in Bangladesh

Dear Dr. Niraj

The Institutional Review Board of the Institute of Health Economics (IHE-IRB), which is approved by *Federalwide Assurance* (FWA), No. FWA00026031, has recently reviewed your responses to the conditions placed upon the ethical approval of the proposal entitled "Evaluation of UNICEF's Work on Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage in Bangladesh". Your proposal now meets the requirements and, hence, full ethical approval has been granted.

Dr. Muhammad Abdus Sabur
Chair
IRB, IHE

Annexure 5: Literature review log

Sr No.	Name of document	Author	Insight	Evaluation section
1	UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage-Joint Evaluation Report	UNFPA, UNICEF	This joint evaluation report of Phase 1 of GPECM assesses the progress towards results, the sustainability of interventions and programme efficiencies and effectiveness of GPECM. The first phase of the programme started on 1 January 2016 and will continue through 31 December 2019. The evaluation highlights that the programme is on track to achieve programme outputs and has surpassed its targets to end child marriage. It also highlights good practices and lessons learnt to inform future programming.	Country Context Effectiveness Efficiency Impact Relevance Sustainability
2	Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage in Bangladesh	Sajeda Jyotirmoy Masuma Amin, Saha, Billah, Nargis Sultana, Eashita Haque, Surojit Kundu	This baseline study describes the lives of adolescent girls from selected communities in Northern Bangladesh. It was conducted to generate baseline indicators and provide information on the impact of three programme interventions to build adolescent skills and change community social norms around child marriage. The study found that building skills and expanding opportunities can positively improve well-being, including a delay in marriage.	Country Context Relevance
3	UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage-Evaluability Assessment	UNFPA, UNICEF	The purpose of the report was to determine the extent to which progress towards GPECM objectives can be readily and reliably measured, monitored and evaluated. This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the assessment, and provides evidence to programme management to strengthen, where necessary, the programme logic and MRE systems resulting in more effective results and stronger reviews/evaluations in the future.	Country Context Effectiveness Efficiency Impact Relevance

Sr No.	Name of document	Author	Insight	Evaluation section
				Sustainability
4	GPECM 2018 Annual Report: Turning Commitments into Solid Action	UNICEF, UNFPA	This annual report provides an overview and assessment of GPECM in the 12 implementation countries. It provides a context to the issue of child marriage across the countries, introduces the global programme approach, and maps the outcome and results of the programme across all implementation countries as of 2018. The report also dives into details about the next steps of the programme, namely the launch of Phase II in 2020 and the broad-scale shifts that are anticipated as a result of the same.	Country Context Effectiveness Efficiency Impact Relevance Sustainability
5	GPECM 2018 Annual Report: Country Profiles	UNICEF, UNFPA	This report provides an in-depth analysis and overview of the progress in ending child marriage for each of the 12 programme implementation countries. For each, it presents a country profile, global programme results in 2018, the years programme highlights, and an analysis of the progress made under each outcome. For each outcome indicator, it focuses on a brief summary of other activities that have a potential impact on ending child marriage in the country and acknowledge the key challenges moving ahead.	Country Context Effectiveness Efficiency Impact Relevance Relevance
6	Investing in Knowledge for Ending Child Marriage: Publication Catalogue 2016-17	UNICEF, UNFPA	The Global Programme, as one of its five outcome areas, aims to generate and use robust data and evidence to inform programmes and policies relating to adolescent girls. This publications catalogue showcases research that was produced or supported by the Global Programme in 2016 and 2017, across the 12 implementation countries and the four regions where these countries are located: Eastern and Southern Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia and West and Central Africa.	Relevance Sustainability

Sr No.	Name of document	Author	Insight	Evaluation section
7	Child Marriage in South Asia: An Evidence Review	UNICEF, UNFPA	This publication reviews the latest evidence on the practice of child marriage in South Asia over the life of the Global Programme. It reviews the influence of gender norms, economics and societal expectations on child marriage, as well as the relationship between child marriage and health, education, violence and policies and laws. The report presents and synthesises the latest evidence and implications for programming in order to ensure effective programme interventions.	Country Context Effectiveness Impact Relevance
8	Preventing Child Marriage: Lessons from World Bank Group Gender Impact Evaluations	Jennifer Parsons, Jennifer McCleary-Sills	This brief explores strategies and programme components to identify intervention that are effective in delaying marriage based on seven impact evaluations supported by the World Bank Group in developing countries. The findings suggest programmes and strategies must address multiple social and economic drivers to delay marriage and provide individual and family-level resources within interventions. Effective programmes will ultimately increase girls' educational attainment, increase girls' value and opportunities in society, and reduce poverty.	Country Context Relevance
9	Child Marriage in Bangladesh	Dr. Md. Nurul Islam	This paper explores the various factors driving child marriage in Bangladesh including poverty, natural disasters, lack of access to education, social pressure, harassment, and dowry. It further explores the consequences of child marriage, provides an overview of the current legislation to address the problem, maps government and development agency initiatives to end child marriage in the country, and concludes with a list of recommendations on the same.	Country Context Relevance
10	A Scoping Analysis of Budget Allocations for Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh	UNICEF	This document analyses the size, trend and proportion of budget allocation given to programmes and projects critical towards ending child marriage in Bangladesh. The baseline assessment shows an upward trend of total budget allocations for ending child marriage in the period between 2010 and 2016 and maps key government interventions that potentially contribute towards ending child marriage. It finds that most ECM investments are in social safety net programmes, and adolescent health and secondary education.	Country Context ECM Relevant Programmes Efficiency Sustainability

Sr No.	Name of document	Author	Insight	Evaluation section
11	Ending Child Marriage: Child Marriage Laws and their Limitations	Quentin Wodon, Paula Tavares, Oliver Fiala, Alexis Le Nestour, Lisa Wise	This document summarises the findings from research undertaken by Save the Children and the World Bank on the lack of legal protection against child marriage for girls and marriages that take place below the national minimum age of marriage. The study finds that while national laws against child marriage are important, they are not sufficient for ending the practice. Additional measures addressing the underlying cause of child marriage, expanding access to quality education and providing opportunities to girls need to be actively pursued by governments and international communities.	Relevance
12	The Contemporary Factors for Child Marriage in Bangladesh; A Statistical Analysis	Md. Ashadujjaman, Asma Akter	This study aims to identify and analyse the contemporary factors promoting child marriage in Bangladesh. The nine factors identified are marriage without registration and corruption of local marriage registrar, lack of social security for female child and greediness of dowry of male child parents, lack of administrative restriction and monitoring, gender inequality and influences of patriarchy, afraid of admeasure for female child and poverty, political influences of government representatives and ineffective laws, tampering of age of birth registration index and lack of judicial punishment, illiteracy, and lack of awareness and applicability of the child marriage act.	Country Context Relevance
13	Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh	UNFPA, UNICEF	This document provides an overview of the prevalence and scope of child marriage in Bangladesh. It outlines the major goals of GPECM and explores Bangladesh's National Plan of Action ambition and commitment to end child marriage. It also offers an overview of the work undertaken by UNICEF along with local government in Bangladesh such as creating a positive legal and policy environment, empowering adolescent boys and girls, offering conditional cash transfers, establishing a child helpline, and setting up a women helpdesk in police stations.	Country Context GPECM Relevant Interventions Relevance
14	Child Marriage in Bangladesh: Trends and Determinants	S.M. Mostafa Kamal, Che Hashim Hassan, Gazi Mahabubul Alam, Yang Ying	This study examines the trends and determinants of child marriage among women aged 20–49 in Bangladesh from the last six nationally representative Demographic and Health Surveys conducted during 1993–2011. The study identifies key determinants of child marriage and suggests rigid enforcement of the legal minimum age at first marriage as critical in decreasing child	Country Context Relevance

Sr No.	Name of document	Author	Insight	Evaluation section
			marriage in the country. The variables identified as important determinants of child marriage in the study were education of women and their husbands, and women's occupation, place of residence and religion. Women's education level was the single most significant negative determinant of child marriage.	
15	An End in Sight to Early Marriage? Evidence from IFPRI's 2015 Survey in Rural Bangladesh	Akhter Ahmed, Farha Sufian, Julie Ghostlaw	Upon request of the Governance Innovation Unit of the Prime Minister's Office, this note provides an overview of the state of early marriage in rural Bangladesh, changes in marriage trends over a twenty-year time period, and briefly explores ways to reduce the incidence of early child marriage in Bangladesh as a conduit for development progress. The data used in this research note is from the 2015 nationally representative household survey data.	Country Context Relevance
16	Child Marriage in Bangladesh: Findings from a National Survey 2013	Dr. Rukhsana Gazi, Quamrun Nahar, Humayun Kabir, Md Hamidul Huque, Md Moinuddin, Shams El Arifeen, APM Shafiu Rahman, Tauhid Nasrin, M. Sekander Hayat Khan, Dr. Selina Amin, Zinnat Afroze, Amina Mahbub	This report presents findings from a national survey commissioned by Plan International Bangladesh. It aims to understand the present situation of child marriage in the country, identify causes of, and factors associated with, the practice, and provides recommendations to strengthen efforts towards ending child marriage in Bangladesh. The data reveals that while the trend of child marriage in Bangladesh is declining, particularly with regard to marriages under 15 years of age, this decline is slow.	Country Context Relevance
17	Asia Child Marriage Initiative: Summary of Research in Bangladesh, India and Nepal	Ravi Verma, Tara Sinha, Tina Khanna	This study on child marriage in Bangladesh, India and Nepal explores the perceptions of different stakeholders about the causes and consequences of child marriage and the efficacy of Plan's programming in addressing these factors through their Asia Child Marriage Initiative (ACMI). The initiative aims to prevent child marriage and mitigate its negative consequences by understanding the practices of child marriage and exploring pathways for addressing the issue. This report explores the cause of child marriage in each	Country Context Relevance

Sr No.	Name of document	Author	Insight	Evaluation section
			country and identifies successful prevention strategies and recommendations to eliminate the same.	
18	Child Marriage and Fertility in Bangladesh	Adenike Onagoruwa, Quentin Wodon	This brief estimates the impact of child marriage on the number of children that women have over their lifetime in Bangladesh, as part of a larger global series of standardised briefs on this topic for multiple countries. The global series looks at the impacts of child marriage on health, population, education, employment, agency, and violence, among other outcomes. The welfare, budget, and non-monetary costs of child marriage are estimated and the legal/institutional aspects and options to reduce the practice are also discussed.	Country Context Relevance
19	Child Marriage in Bangladesh: Impact of Discriminatory Personal Laws	Leigh Blomgren, Elizabeth Brundige	This Memorandum discusses the impact of personal laws on the treatment of child marriage within Bangladesh. It discusses how antiquated personal laws relating to marriage fail to protect children, reinforce support for early marriage, and directly contradict statutory law in Bangladesh. It explores the current legal framework, personal laws, conflict between the two legal systems as pertaining to child marriage and identifies Bangladesh's obligation under international human rights law to eliminate child marriage in the country.	Relevance
20	Power vs Money: Alternative Approaches to Reducing Child Marriage in Bangladesh, a Randomised Control Trial	Nina Buchmann, Erica Field, Rachel Glennerster, Shahana Nazneen, Svetlana Pimkina, Iman Sen	This paper examines alternative strategies, namely an adolescent empowerment training programme and a conditional incentive programme, to reduce child marriage and teenage childbearing and increase girls' education in Bangladesh. The findings suggest conditional incentive programmes are highly effective in increasing age at marriage and schooling attainment, while empowerment programmes have no effect on marriage timing, but do encourage unmarried and older married girls to stay in school.	Country Context Relevance
21	Evaluation of UNICEF Strategic Positioning in Bangladesh	Goss Gilroy Inc.	The evaluation covers the overall UNICEF country programme in Bangladesh, focusing on the first three years of the current cycle (2012-2014). It assesses the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of existing UNICEF programmes in achieving results for children in Bangladesh, and how key strategies augment the place of UNICEF in the national	Country Context ECM Relevant Programmes

Sr No.	Name of document	Author	Insight	Evaluation section
			development landscape. It also identifies lessons and formulates recommendations on how best to strengthen the role of UNICEF as a key national proponent for child rights in the upcoming Country Programme.	Effectiveness Efficiency Relevance Sustainability
22	Country Programme Document for Bangladesh (2017-2020)	Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and United Nations Office for Project Services	This country programme document outlines UNDP contributions to national development priorities and to United Nations Development Assistance Framework outcomes. It details the results and resources for Bangladesh on the years 2017-2020, along with a brief overview of the country context and development challenges faced by Bangladesh.	Country Context Relevance
23	Cost-Benefit Analysis of Strategies to Reduce Child Marriage in Bangladesh	Erica Field, Rachel Glennerster, Nina Buchmann, Kyle Murphy	This study performs a comprehensive comparative cost-benefit analyses of six interventions from South Asia, Sub Saharan Africa, Latin America and Bangladesh which have demonstrated significant impacts on child marriage rates or girls' age of marriage. It finds that programmes which provides girls with financial incentives conditional on marriage status is both the most cost-effective way to avert child marriages and has the highest benefit-cost ratio as compared to programmes that provide cash incentives for education, unconditional cash transfers and empowerment programmes.	Country Context Relevance
24	Children's Participation in Ending Child Marriage: Exploring Child Activism in Bangladesh	E. Kay M. Tisdall, Patricio Cuevas-Parra	This research project explores the claims, practices and outcomes of child activism to end child marriage in Bangladesh from the perspective of child activists, potential child brides and community members. The research engaged with 36 child activists from two local Child Forums, as well as girls who had been at risk of being married, their parents and key community members mobilised by the child activists. The subjects reported stopping 72 child marriages in two years as a result of their collective actions.	Country Context Relevance
25	The Effect of Child Marriage on Children's Health Outcomes:	Amy Ramnarine	This paper provides evidence on the relationship between child marriage and the health outcomes of children produced from these unions. It addresses the question of whether children from child marriage unions suffer poorer health outcomes, using the condition of stunting as a measure of health outcomes.	Country Context Relevance

Sr No.	Name of document	Author	Insight	Evaluation section
	Evidence from Bangladesh		The results indicate that children produced from child marriage unions are more likely to be stunted and provides causal evidence that the impact of child marriage is not limited to the child bride but extends into the next generation.	
26	Child Marriage: Latest Trends and Future Prospects	UNICEF	This report provides global estimates of child marriage retrieved primarily from nationally representative household surveys and census data for 125 countries. The global number of child brides is now estimated at 650 million, including girls under age 18 who have already married, and adult women who married in childhood. It shows that despite a marked reduction in child marriage, especially in South Asia, no region is on track to eliminate the practice by 2030.	Relevance
27	Reducing Marriage Increasing Girls' Schooling in Bangladesh	Nina Buchmann, Rachel Glennerster, Mary O'Neill, Alejandra Vargas	This paper evaluates the impact of two different approaches— an adolescent empowerment training programme and a conditional incentives programme, on reducing child marriage and adolescent childbearing in rural Bangladesh. It finds that providing incentives to unmarried girls significantly delayed marriage and childbirth among adolescent girls, while empowerment programmes did not have the same effect.	Country Context Relevance
28	Child Marriage Law, Gender Norms and Marriage Customs in Bangladesh	Amrit Amirapu, M Niaz Asadullah, Zaki Wahhaj	This paper provides key insights and analyses whether formal laws, particularly the 2017 Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA) can influence informal social norms and practices related to child marriage. The new law increased the punishment and monetary fine for child marriage and added an exception clause. The study findings indicate that, even in a setting with weak law enforcement, where traditional norms shape people's life choices, changes in the law can affect their attitudes and behaviour.	Country Context Relevance
29	Ending Impunity for Child Marriage in Bangladesh: Normative and Implementation Gaps	Center for Reproductive Rights Melissa Upreti, Sonali Regmi, Payal Shah	The purpose of this brief is to identify and inform law and policymakers, law enforcement officials, and human rights defenders of the key legal gaps and inconsistencies that have undermined efforts to address child marriage in Bangladesh, particularly in light of constitutional guarantees, national laws and policies, and international human rights standards. It puts forward a set of concrete recommendations for addressing the gaps and challenges in order to promote access to justice for the victims of child marriage.	Country Context Relevance

Sr No.	Name of document	Author	Insight	Evaluation section
30	Ending Child, Early, and Forced Marriage: SRHR as Central to the Solution	Azra Abdul Cader	This paper unpacks concepts related to child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) in the context of ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of girls in South Asia. It presents the root causes and drivers of CEFM, provides recommendations for ensuring SRHR in order to counter the effects of CEFM and guarantee the wellbeing and potential of girls in the Asia-Pacific region. The paper suggests upholding and enforcing the age criteria of 18 years as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child as key to controlling the effects of the practice on those below 18 years of age.	Country Context Relevance
31	Psychological Impact Evaluation of Early Marriages	Sadaf Ahmed, Saima Khan, Malka Alia, Shamoon Noushad	The purpose of the study was to evaluate the aspects of psychological disturbances occurring in married young girls along with depression rate and educational withdrawal in Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. The study concluded that early marriage, multiple responsibilities and early pregnancies are risk factors of depression in young girls. It also established a strong link between early marriage and low educational attainment among young girls.	Country Context Relevance
32	Unhappily Ever After: An Analysis of Child Marriages in Bangladesh and Niger	Samantha Morrow	This paper analyses the economic and social motivation behind child marriage, the cyclical role of education in preventing early marriage, and the health-related consequences of child marriage. The author concludes that gender norms and poverty are the two key underlying causes of child marriage and finds a strong correlation between the evolutions of GDP per capita, literacy rates, and child marriages in Bangladesh and Niger. An increase in literacy rates in Bangladesh is identified as a significant factor in the reduction of child marriage in the country.	Country Context Relevance
33	Child Marriage Laws around the World: Minimum Marriage Age, Legal Exceptions, and Gender Disparities	Megan Arthur, Alison Earle, Amy Raub, Ilona Vincent, Efe Atabay, Isabel Latz, Gabriella Kranz, Arijit Nandi, Jody Heymann	This paper analyses national legislation regarding minimum marriage age, exceptions permitting marriage at earlier ages, and gender disparities in laws. The findings indicate that despite narrowing gender disparities in legal protections against early marriage over time, widespread discriminatory provisions in legislation that disadvantage girls remain. Moreover, legal exceptions to minimum age provisions based on parental consent and customary and/or religious laws create loopholes that lower the legal minimum age of marriage below the age of 18 in many countries worldwide.	Relevance

Sr No.	Name of document	Author	Insight	Evaluation section
34	Child Marriage, Adolescent Pregnancy and School Dropout in South Asia	Ashish Bajracharya, Stephanie Psaki, Maqsood Sadiq	The report explores important questions on how child marriage affects attendance of adolescent girls, especially in secondary school. It analyses the interrelationships between child marriage, adolescent pregnancy and educational attainment in the South Asia region. It looks at the contributing factors that hinder adolescents' school attendance after marriage and pregnancy or childbirth, the extent to which the effect of child marriage varies by geographic, socio-economic, ethnic and religious factors, and how adolescent pregnancy affects secondary school attendance.	Country Context Relevance
35	Adolescents in Bangladesh: Programmatic Approaches to Sexual and Reproductive Health Education and Services	Sigma Ainul, Ashish Bajracharya, Laura Reichenbach	This policy brief presents selected findings from a comprehensive review and analysis of ASRH programming in Bangladesh. The objective of the review was to identify programmatic and evidence gaps, as well as best practices, and support the development of effective, inclusive, and sustainable programmes that can operate at scale. Of the 32 programmes identified, only 9 had both a primary focus on SRH and were exclusively focused on adolescents aged 10-19.	Country Context Relevance
36	Delaying child marriage through community-based skills-development programs for girls: Results from a randomised controlled study in rural Bangladesh	Sajeda Amin, Johana Ahmed, Jyotirmoy Saha, Md. Irfan Hossain, Eashita Haque	This study aims to understand whether skills-building approaches to empower girls can delay marriage in Bangladesh in communities where child marriage rates are highest, namely in the three districts in southern Bangladesh of Khulna, Satkhira, and Narail. The BALIKA results show that programmes that educate girls, build their skills for modern livelihoods, and engage their communities can reduce the likelihood of child marriage by one third and produce better health, educational, and social outcomes for girls in Bangladesh.	Country Context Relevance
37	Expanding Access to Integrated Family Planning Intervention Packages for Married Adolescent Girls in Urban Slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh	Fauzia Akhter Huda, Hassan Rushekh Mahmood, Sadia Afrin, Anisuddin Ahmed, Nafis Al Haque, Bidhan Krishna Sarker	This research project was implemented with an aim to reduce the prevalence of unintended pregnancy and unmet need for family planning (FP) among married adolescent girls aged 14 -19 years living in urban slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh. The objective was to examine the acceptability and feasibility of forming married adolescent girls' clubs, involving BRAC <i>Shasthya Shebikas</i> and marriage registrars to increase access to family planning information and services, to promote the uptake of long-acting reversible contraceptive	Country Context Relevance

Sr No.	Name of document	Author	Insight	Evaluation section
			(LARC) methods, and to provide FP information to the newly wed couples at the time of marriage registration.	
38	Having a Child Before Becoming an Adult: Exploring the Economic Impact in A Multi-Country Analysis	Population Council, Women Deliver	This report presents findings from one of the first multi-country analyses to examine the short- and long-term impacts of having a child before 18 on employment and monetary compensation (cash earnings). The study dives into women's economic empowerment by analysing married women's sole control over her cash earnings. The analysis of data of over 600 million women from 43 low- and middle-income countries demonstrates that when a woman gives birth before the age of 18, her economic and financial options become more limited throughout her lifetime.	Relevance
39	Marriage and Sexual and Reproductive Health of Rohingya Adolescents and Youth in Bangladesh: A Qualitative Study	Sigma Ainul, Iqbal Ehsan, Eashita F Haque, Sajeda Amin, Ubaidur Rob, Andrea J Melnikas, Joseph Falcone	The study focuses specifically on displaced Rohingya adolescents and youth (ages 14-24) and explores how the crisis has impacted their sexual and reproductive health (SRH), marriage practices, safety and security, and related attitudes and aspirations. This research aims to identify approaches to improve adolescents' knowledge of SRH issues and their access to and uptake of services, and to identify gaps in programming knowledge and practice. The study identifies the absence of well-defined laws and legal processes of documentation in camps as a leading factor in the high levels of child marriage in the area.	Country Context Relevance
40	Impact of SAFE intervention on sexual and reproductive health and rights and violence against women and girls in Dhaka slums	Ruchira Tabassum Naved, Sajeda Amin	SAFE is an action research programme to improve sexual and reproductive health and reduce intimate partner violence among women and girls in urban slums in Bangladesh. This evaluation study identifies and measures sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and violence-related improvements among participant women and identifies reasons for programmatic success or failure. The study explores a range of outcomes measuring sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence and marriage and childbearing indicators. The report identifies integrated programme intervention design, targeted efforts towards vulnerable girls and women (particularly married adolescent girls), interactive group sessions and activism involving community members as key approaches to positive change.	Country Context Relevance

Sr No.	Name of document	Author	Insight	Evaluation section
41	Addressing early marriage and adolescent pregnancy as a barrier to gender parity and equality in education	Stephanie R. Psaki	This paper begins by providing an overview of trends in child marriage globally and the evolution of international and domestic policies outlawing child marriage, followed by information on adolescent pregnancy levels, policies, and programmes, with a particular focus on schoolgirl pregnancy. It describes the challenges in disentangling the relationship between child marriage, adolescent pregnancy, and schooling, and provides some evidence on the nature of these relationships using four country case studies from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Guatemala, and Kenya.	Relevance
42	Early Marriage of Women: The Case of Bangladesh	Tahsin Farzana Jisun	The study focuses on the present scenario of early marriage in Bangladesh and examines the socio-demographic and economic determinants that influence early marriage in the country. Using secondary data from Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) 2011, the report identifies the determinants of age at first marriage and finds that respondent's education, husband's education, place of residence, religion and respondent's work status have a significant effect on early marriage in Bangladesh.	Country Context Relevance
43	Reproductive Health Needs of Adolescents in Bangladesh: A Study Report	Quamrun Nahar, Cristobal Tunon, Irit Houvras, Rukhsana Gazi, Masud Reza, Nafisa Lira Huq, Barkat-e-Khuda	This study assesses the reproductive health needs of adolescents in Bangladesh. This community based, cross-sectional and descriptive study was conducted in three rural and two urban areas of the country. The study findings confirm that adolescents have a limited knowledge about their reproductive health issues and have limited access to accurate information or services. In this context, effective strategies to make accurate and relevant information available in formats that are accessible to adolescents is imperative. The authors suggested more behaviour change communication (BCC) to create a supportive environment for adolescents in Bangladesh.	Country Context Relevance
44	Empowering adolescent girls in rural Bangladesh: Kishori Abhijan	Sajeda Amin	This paper provides key insights and learnings from the baseline survey of 'Kishori Abhijan' (Adolescent Girls' Adventure). The programme aimed to lower school dropout rates, increase girls' independent economic activity, and raise the age at which girls marry. Life-skills training consisted of enhancing self-esteem and leadership skills and providing education related to gender roles and discrimination, health and nutrition, and legislation and legal rights, particularly early marriage and girls' and women's rights. The study found	Country Context Effectiveness Impact

Sr No.	Name of document	Author	Insight	Evaluation section
			significant achievements on educational achievement and health awareness, but highlighted areas in need of concentrated policy efforts.	Relevance
45	A qualitative study exploring perceived barriers to infant feeding and caregiving among adolescent girls and young women in rural Bangladesh	Kristy M. Hackett, Umme S. Mukta, Chowdhury S. B. Jalal, Daniel W. Sellen	This study documents key barriers to optimal infant and young child feeding and caregiving perceived by adolescent girls and young women in rural Bangladesh. The study finds that poverty and vulnerability to economic crisis are significant barriers to later marriage and delayed childbearing, even among girls and young women aware of the risks associated with early marriage and childbearing. Improving maternal, neonatal and child outcomes will likely be most successful if combined with efforts to empower girls financially, as simple delivery of public health messages on infant care and feeding without any other form of support or counselling is not sufficient.	Country Context Relevance
46	Girls' Education, Empowerment, and Transition to Adulthood: The Case for a Shared Agenda	Ann Warner, Anju Malhotra, Allison McGonagle	This paper makes a case for why leveraging education to facilitate girls' transitions to healthy, safe and productive adulthood is the single most important development investment that can be made. It provides guidance on how to build on past progress, forge more productive alliances and redouble efforts to ensure that all girls in the developing world have the opportunity to obtain a quality, relevant education.	Relevance
47	Realizing an Enabling Environment for Adolescent Well-being: An inventory of laws and policies for adolescents in South Asia	Elena Camilletti	This paper takes stock of legal and policy frameworks for adolescents in eight countries of South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It sheds light on the similarities and differences among South Asian countries regarding the translation of international human rights law into their national normative frameworks and aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how 'adolescent-sensitive' their legal and policy frameworks are. The study findings are organised in this paper in line with nine overarching sets of rights for adolescents, as laid out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).	Country Context Relevance
48	Unrecognised Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in Child,	Dr. Eliana Riggio Chaudhuri	This thematic report aims to contribute to deepening the appreciation of the interconnections linking CEFM to sexual abuse and exploitation of children, also of a commercial nature. It proposes a conceptual framework through which to analytically examine the various forms of sexual violence being perpetrated in the context of early marriage. The exploration examines child,	Relevance

Sr No.	Name of document	Author	Insight	Evaluation section
	Early and Forced Marriage		early and forced marriage from a child protection angle, to analyse the array of sexual violations that occur, including but not exclusively, in the realm of reproductive and sexual health.	
49	Age at marriage, women's education, and mother and child outcomes in Bangladesh	Erica Field, Rachel Glennerster, Shahana Nazneen, Svetlana Pimkina, Iman Sen, Nina Buchmann	This report evaluates the impact of an empowerment training programme and a financial incentive programme to reduce child marriage in rural Bangladesh. In collaboration with Save the Children USA, the researchers ran a clustered randomised trial in rural villages from January 2007 and September 2015 to examine alternative strategies to reduce child marriage and increase girls' education in Bangladesh.	Country Context Relevance
50	Community Engagement to End Child Early Forced Marriage – Experiences in Selected South Asian Countries	Frances J. Ferreira, Mostafa Azad Kamal	This study aims to identify the role of community engagement and local community organisations in contributing towards ending child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) through ensuring equitable access of marginalised and out-of-school girls to education and training. The study was based on data collected from surveys administered to out-of-school girls affected by CEFM in both urban and rural areas of three selected South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) countries- Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India.	Country Context Relevance
51	Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia	Stephan Dietrich, Aline Meysonnat, Victor Cebotari, Julia Reinold, Franziska Gassmann, Inez Roosen and Neil Foster-McGregor	This study provides empirical evidence on the cross-sectional and temporal effects of micro-level and macro-level factors on child marriage in three South Asian countries, namely Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. While micro-level effects on child marriage are extensively documented, the effects of macro-level drivers remain an open area of inquiry. To the extent that child marriage leads to limited opportunities and violation of basic human rights, this research seeks primarily to investigate those macro-level circumstances that are most effective in reducing the prevalence of child marriage in selected contexts.	Country Context Relevance
52	Context of Child Marriage and its Implications in Bangladesh	Md. Aminul Haque, A. K. M. Nurun Nabi, Ms. Tehmina Ghafur, Md. Mehedi Hasan Khan, Mohammad Bellal	The Department of Population Sciences, University of Dhaka (DPSDU) with support from UNFPA conducted an in-depth study on the context of child marriage and its implications in Bangladesh during the period from August 2015 to December 2016. The objective of this study was to examine child marriage from a multi-dimensional perspective to generate evidence for	Country Context Relevance

Sr No.	Name of document	Author	Insight	Evaluation section
		Hossain, Md. Rabiul Haque, Mohammad Mainul Islam, Md. Kamrul Islam, Sanjit Roy, Mohammad Sazzad Hossain	formulating effective policies, strategies and programmes to deal with the problem. This objective was achieved through collecting data from six categories of respondents via face-to-face interviews using structured questionnaires. The categories of the respondents are: ever-married women, husband, father-in-law, mother-in-law, father, and mother. Qualitative data were collected from various stakeholders and different categories of respondents through in-depth Interviews (IDI).	
53	Baseline Survey Results: Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage in Bangladesh	Population Council	<p>The Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage project is designed to identify ways to scale up skill-building activities along with alternative community participation strategies to ensure long-term sustainability of the program. The project is a randomized controlled trial involving more than 13,000 girls aged 10-19 in 72 communities within two districts (Bogra and Jamalpur) of Bangladesh.</p> <p>The baseline survey was conducted among a representative sample of adolescent girls aged 12 to 19 in the 96 selected communities from April to May 2017. The survey captured information on adolescent experiences, knowledge and attitudes in the domains of marriage, reproductive health, gender based violence, work, and social life.</p>	Country Context Relevance
54	Income Support, Cash Incentives and Transfers to End Child Marriage: Annotated Bibliography and Mapping of Initiatives in South Asia	Marleen van der Ree	This document presents an annotated bibliography of articles and publications on income support initiatives, including cash transfers designed to prevent or delay child marriage and a mapping of these initiatives in South Asia. The materials identified and presented are, for the most part, research papers. Other documents included are peer review articles, journalistic papers and several socio-economic publications. It primarily focuses on South Asia but it also includes literature from other regions as supporting background information. The main focus is incentives and schemes that have been assessed or evaluated as well as other relevant documentation on income support and cash transfers to end child marriage.	Country Context Relevance

Annexure 6: Evaluation framework

TOR Questions	Indicator	Source of Information	Data/Information Collection Tool	Evaluability	Assumptions
RELEVANCE					
1. To what extent is the programme relevant and responsive to contribute toward ending child marriage in Bangladesh? To what extent has the programme been designed in a way that is responsive to different groups in the society, their own contexts and needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence suggesting the programme objectives are in congruence with the national policies, laws and strategies of the government Evidence suggesting the programme objectives are in congruence with UNICEF's mandate Evidence that the country has developed a costed national action plans/development plans on ending child marriage across more than one ministry 	<p>Literature Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme concept note/document (Country Programme Document for Bangladesh 2017-2020) Bangladesh 2018-19 GPECM Country Office Annual Work Plan GPECM Phase 2 Design Workshop Report Strategic Reflection on GPECM Phase 2 (2020-2023) Programme proposal (UNICEF GPECM Program Model and TOC) 	<p>Stakeholder consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting/Interview with UNICEF and UNFPA Officials Representatives from the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, representatives from other ministries responsible for the education of children Representatives from other organisations/ NGOs looking at the issue of child marriage <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literature review KII 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the relevant documents have been shared with the evaluation team Availability of relevant data Availability of key respondents from various stakeholder groups
2. To what extent is the ToC that guides the ECM work in Bangladesh well developed, aligned with the Bangladesh context, based on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs assessment/ situational analysis/gender analysis reports have been used to understand the existing policy landscape of the country and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF country strategy documents (Country Programme Document for Bangladesh 2017-2020) 	<p>Stakeholder consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF, UNFPA, Implementing partners <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KII 	High	

<p>robust evidence and realistic in its assumptions and pathways of change?</p>	<p>challenges faced by street children in accessing education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that the objectives, outcomes and outputs of the programme are based on findings of empirical research studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any baseline and midterm reports (Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage 2016-18 Results Reports) • Phase 1 GPECM Global Reports 2015-18 • Accelerating SDG's in Bangladesh: An Assessment on Coverage of Basic Social Services • Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage in Bangladesh • ECM strategy/policy notes (BCO ECM Strategic Note: Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh) 			
<p>3. To what extent do the programme strategies and activities address structural drivers of (gender) inequality?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that interventions targeted and reached the most marginalised • Evidence of active involvement of key influencers with the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage in Bangladesh 	<p>Stakeholder consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF, UNFPA, Implementing partners • Community representatives <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KII 	<p>High</p>	
<p>4. How well aligned is UNICEF ECM programme with the National Plan of Action strategies and pillars? Are there clear strategies of the NPA that UNICEF should focus on during the next ECM programme given UNICEF's expertise?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping the UNICEF strategies with the NPA strategies • Evidence from different sections of UNICEF about progress made against each strategy 	<p>Other secondary data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Ending Child Marriage: Child Marriage Laws and their Limitations) • Ending Impunity for Child Marriage in Bangladesh: Normative and Implementation Gaps • Child Marriage Law 	<p>Stakeholder consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting/Interview with UNICEF and UNFPA Officials • Representatives from the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, representatives from other ministries responsible for the education of children • Representatives from other organisations/ NGOs looking at the issue of child marriage <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review • KII 	<p>High</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Norms and Marriage Customs in Bangladesh National Plan of Action (National Action Plan to End Child Marriage 2018-2030) Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia Context of Child Marriage and its Implications in Bangladesh Baseline Survey Results: Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage in Bangladesh Income Support, Cash Incentives and Transfers to End Child Marriage: Annotated Bibliography and Mapping of Initiatives in South Asia 	<p>Stakeholder consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactions with UNICEF, UNFPA Implementing partners Adolescent girls and boys, both members and non-members of adolescent clubs <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KII 	High	
5. To what extent has the programme been implemented following a human rights, equity and culturally sensitive approach?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of HR and gender equality and culturally sensitive approach integrated in implementation at all levels with partners and other stakeholders 				

EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT

6. To what extent has the ECM programme achieved or is on track to achieving its planned results in all its 5 strategies? Have the combination of these strategies been able to prevent and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of adolescent girls in programme areas supported to access and remain in primary or lower-secondary school or non-formal education Number of adolescent girls (aged 10-19) in 	<p>Literature Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literature review: Programme LFA, RBMF, progress reports UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate 	<p>Stakeholder consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactions with UNICEF officials Parents of the adolescent girls and boys 	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence is being collected by UNICEF as per the LFA developed for the programme The UNICEF focal persons and implementing
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<p>stop child marriages in programme areas? Has there been evidence of spillover effects of the programme into non-programme areas? If so, is there evidence of what the main change factors that are being spilled over?</p>	<p>programme areas actively participating in at least one targeted intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence suggesting adoption of learnings from interventions including livelihood skills training • Evidence suggesting that the adolescent clubs are an effective platform to carry interventions on elimination of child marriage • Evidence suggesting that the programme outcomes/outputs have led to development of the community's understanding and willingness to prevent cases of child marriage • Evidence suggesting that there is a visible change in the legislature's intent to develop laws and policies to combat the problem of child marriage, including budgetary allocation to eradicate child marriage • Number of individuals in programme areas who regularly participate in dialogues promoting gender equitable norms 	<p>Action to End Child Marriage-Joint Evaluation Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPECM 2018 Annual Report: Country Profiles • Turning Commitments into Solid Action, Investing in Knowledge for Ending Child Marriage: Publication Catalogue 2016-17 • Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage 2016-18 Results Reports • Phase 1 GPECM Global Reports 2015-18, ECM partner progress reports • MIS data extracts • Web articles • Secondary data from various national surveys (An End in Sight to Early Marriage? Evidence from IFPRI's 2015 Survey in Rural Bangladesh • Child Marriage in Bangladesh: Findings from a National Survey 2013 • UNICEF Child Marriage: Latest Trends and Future Prospects • Empowering Adolescent Girls in Rural Bangladesh: <i>Kishori Abhijan</i> • Accelerating SDG's in Bangladesh: An Assessment on Coverage of Basic Social Services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members, representatives from local NGOs/CSOs • Representatives of relevant Government Ministries & departments • UNICEF stakeholders, UNFPA, Implementing Partners • District/<i>Upazilla</i> Level: Deputy Commissioner/<i>Upazilla Nirbahi Officer/Union Parishad Member/Members of Organized committees (CBCPC/ CSG/CCMG)</i> • Adolescent girls and boys (both members and non-members of adolescents' clubs) • Family members like mother, father, grandparents, mother-in-law • Community members of organised committees • Community and religious leaders <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review log • IDIs/ /KII • Semi-structured Interviews • Data checklists • U – polls 		<p>partners will support the research team by identification of adolescent groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is minimal loss of institutional memory despite change of personnel involved in the programme over the years
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	<p>including delaying child marriage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of intersectoral collaboration to end child marriage at the country level • Evidence of country-specific, high-quality data and evidence generated and shared on what works at scale to accelerate ending child marriage • Evidence of any additional/changes in child protection laws/policies • Evidence of girls completing their formal schooling • Evidence of greater budgetary allocation towards social protection schemes by the government and other donor organisations 			High	
7. Considering the 5 strategies, what have been the supporting and constraining factors? Were there any unexpected results (positive or negative)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for selection of geographies and target groups for interventions • Evidence of synergy in social mobilisation across different levels – national, district and <i>Upazilla</i> • Evidence suggesting that the programmes outcomes/outputs have led to behaviour change 		<p>Stakeholder consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with UNICEF officials • Parents of the adolescent girls and boys, adolescent girls and boys, community members • Representatives from local NGOs/CSOs 	High	

	<p>among the parents, adolescents' girls & boys and community members towards child marriage – both positive and negative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives of relevant Government Ministries & departments • UNICEF stakeholders • Division/District/<i>Upazilla</i> Level, Community Level in <i>Upazilla</i> 's, Other Key Stakeholders <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review log • IDIs/KIIs • Semi-structured Interviews • Data checklists 		
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<p>8. Has the programme been gender transformative and achieved gender transformative results?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence suggesting that individuals in programme areas participate in programme community initiatives promoting gender-equitable norms in addition to delaying child marriage, decision making and economic empowerment 		<p>Stakeholder consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with UNICEF officials • Parents of the adolescent girls and boys, adolescent girls and boys, community members • Representatives from local NGOs/CSOs • Representatives of relevant Government Ministries & departments • UNICEF stakeholders • Division/District/<i>Upazilla</i> Level, Community Level in <i>Upazilla</i>'s, Other Key Stakeholders <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review log • IDIs/ KIIs • Semi-structured • Interviews • Data checklists • U- polls 	<p>Moderate</p>	
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9. What has been the impact of COVID- 19 on child marriage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence suggesting increase in number of child marriages Evidence of activities/Programme's /Interventions or strategies adopted to address COVID-19's impact on number of child marriages Evidence of repurposing existing ECM interventions to adapt and manage impacts of the pandemic Evidence of receiving additional funding / Emergency Aid for managing the impact COVID-19 on ECM 	<p>Literature Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF programme documents Adapting to Covid-19 Pivoting The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage To Respond To The Pandemic 23, September 2020 International Women's Day 10 million more girls at risk of child marriage due to COVID-19, warns UNICEF, March 2021 Children and COVID-19 Research Library 	<p>Stakeholder consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactions with UNICEF, UNFPA Implementing partners Adolescent girls and boys, both members and non-members of adolescent clubs <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KII Literature Review 	High	
EFFICIENCY					
10. Relating to the GPECM portion of work, has the joint programme and management structure with UNFPA at the country level facilitated achieving results and efficient delivery? Which areas have gained the most from this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The programme made strategic use of financial and human resources across outcomes to deliver results Efficient use of technical capacity of each organisation Leveraging complementary strengths to achieve desired results 	<p>Literature review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme concept document Budgetary scoping analysis on expenditure on child marriage (Ending Child Marriage: Scoping Analysis of Budget Allocations in Bangladesh) Audited financial reports for the programme, progress reports 	<p>Stakeholder consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting/Interview with UNICEF and UNFPA Officials Implementing partners <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary research of quantitative data Literature Review 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of data on the achievements by each agency against the respective contribution Availability of data on results achieved in different program areas like advocacy, awareness

programme and which one the least?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key outcomes achieved by each agency • Evidence of timeliness of execution of the programme • Monthly, quarterly and annual reports (UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage- Joint Evaluation Report) • GPECM 2018 Annual Report: Country Profiles • GPECM 2018 Annual Report: Turning Commitments into Solid Action, Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage 2016-18 Results Reports • Phase 1 GPECM Global Reports 2015-18 • ECM partner progress reports • ECM partner PDs/contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme MIS data extract formats • KIIs 		<p>generation, capacity development, stakeholder engagement etc.</p> <p>• Availability of data on results achieved through global best practices for comparable programmes development etc.</p>
11. Relating to the GPECM portion of work, to what extent has being part of a global	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of learnings from GPECM introduced in the programme for Bangladesh 	<p>Stakeholder consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting/Interview with UNICEF and UNFPA Officials 	High	

<p>programme facilitated linkages and synergies to accelerate efforts to end child marriage within UNICEF and its partners?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical know-how introduced in ECM programme from global learnings • Synergies and linkages established to facilitate capacity development of UNICEF partners 		<p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary research of quantitative data • KIIs • Literature review of documents related to GPECM and ECM 		
<p>12. What key principles have determined where UNICEF has mainly spent its resources for ending child marriage? Have high impact areas been prioritised?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget and financial design • Evidence suggesting that segmentation within the budget is in accordance to the outputs of the programme • Documented evidence of variance in terms of cost incurred and time spent between stipulated approach and alternate approach • Evidence suggesting periodic documentation of progress and challenges through interaction with programme stakeholders 		<p>Stakeholder consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting/Interview with UNICEF and UNFPA Officials • Implementing partners <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary research of quantitative data • Literature Review • Programme MIS data extract formats • KIIs 	High	
<p>13. Has the country programme structure of a life cycle approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of tracking of action points finalised during coordination meetings 		<p>Stakeholder consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with ECM nodal persons from each section – Child Protection, C4D, 	High	

facilitated efficient delivery of results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of consistent advocacy efforts at various levels 		Education, Health, DRR, Nutrition and gender focal person		
14. What has been the cost effectiveness of the programme in terms of investments to end child marriages and the (approximate) number of marriages averted or stopped? How does this compare to other proven interventions to stop child marriages in Bangladesh and even in South Asia region?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total direct and indirect costs of the programme Geography wise allocation of cost Functional area wise allocation of cost TOC strategy wise allocation of cost Number of child marriages averted Cost per outcome for programmes aimed at ending child marriage for similar interventions in Bangladesh or South Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports documenting tracking of decisions taken during the coordination meetings Data related to indicators of output and outcomes as defined in the TOC Data on current and historical rate of child marriage 		<p>Stakeholder consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting/Interview with UNICEF and UNFPA Officials including Finance Heads and Implementing partners <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary research of quantitative data TOC defined outcome and output indicators since programme inception Literature Review Programme MIS data extract formats and other direct costs KIIs Analytical Tools: Discrete-Time Markov chains model 	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no interventions of the scale and size of UNICEF interventions in target areas that began at the same time as the ECM programme Direct cost data is accessible and attributable to respective organisations (UNICEF, UNFPA and other Implementing Organisations)
SUSTAINABILITY					
1. To what extent are there sustainability considerations built into programme implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence suggesting that sustainability considerations were taken into account while planning and implementing the programme 	<p>Literature review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme proposal Strategy documents (BCO ECM Strategic Note: Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh) 	<p>Stakeholder consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting/Interview with UNICEF and UNFPA Officials, Implementing partners 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of relevant data over a period of time to gauge the trend Availability of evidence of the

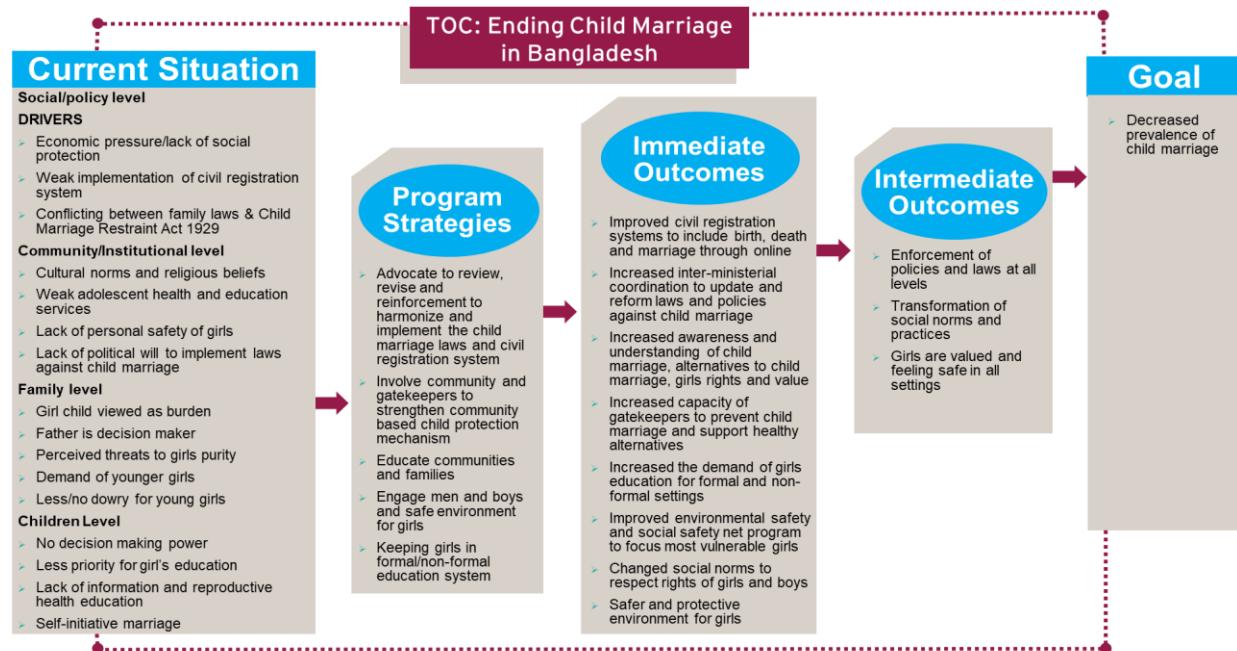
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness of the community, NGOs and government to continue working on the programme components/elements post programme completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country Programme Document for Bangladesh 2017-2020 Policy documents and financial reports (A Scoping Analysis of Budget Allocations for Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh) Joint Evaluation: UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child, ECM partner progress reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representatives from the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, representatives from other ministries responsible for the education of children Deputy Commissioner/<i>Upazilla Nirbahi Officer/Union Parishad Member/Members of Organized committees (CBCPC/CSG/CCMG)</i> Adolescent girls and boys (both members and non-members of adolescents' clubs) Family members like mother, father, grandparents, mother-in-law Community members of organised committees Community and religious leaders <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literature review IDI Semi structured interviews KIIs 	issue discussed in public discourse with UNICEF communication team
2. To what extent has the programme generated/is in the process of generating robust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence highlighting dropouts, enrolment rates, job placements of adolescents who have undergone 		<p>Stakeholder consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting/Interview with UNICEF and UNFPA 	High

<p>evidence that supports the scaling up of a successful intervention to allow for the government to take these over in the future?</p>	<p>training with UNICEF post implementation of the programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation that the programme identified, generated and/or demonstrated components that are replicable and/or scalable • Evidence suggesting that there is a visible change in the legislature's intent to develop laws and policies to combat the problem combat of child marriage, including budgetary allocation to eradicate child marriage 	<p>Officials, Implementing partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, representatives from other ministries responsible for the education of children • Deputy Commissioner/<i>Upazilla Nirbahi Officer/Union Parishad</i> Member/Members of Organized committees (CBCPC/ CSG/CCMG) • Adolescent girls and boys (both members and non-members of adolescents' clubs) <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review • IDI • KII • Secondary research of quantitative data • Programme MIS data extract formats 		
<p>3. To what extent has the programme been able to generate an enabling environment and strong involvement of key stakeholders at different levels (individual, family,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence suggesting that the government has integrated or is in the process of integrating the programme objectives into the policies and programmes 	<p>Stakeholder consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting/Interview with UNICEF and UNFPA Officials, Implementing partners • Representatives from the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, 	Moderate	

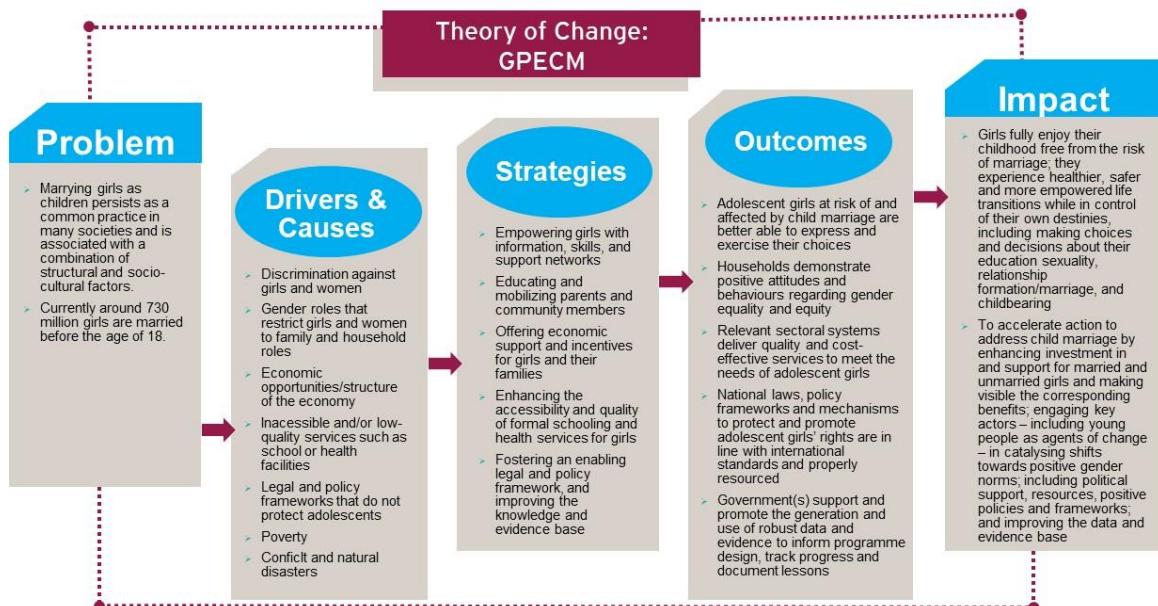
<p>community and local authorities) that will prevent gains in social norms to go back to pre-programme levels even in the absence of further interventions? Has the programme reached a tipping point where social norms and gender transformative results are strongly rooted in all these levels?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of long-term partnerships and creation of enabling environment • Evidence suggesting that the programmes outcomes/outputs have led to behaviour change among the parents, adolescent girls & boys and community members towards child marriage 	<p>representatives from other ministries responsible for the education of children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District/<i>Upazilla</i> Level: Deputy Commissioner/<i>Upazilla Nirbahi Officer</i>/Union <i>Parishad</i> Member/Members of Organized committees (CBCPC/ CSG/CCMG) • Adolescent girls and boys (both members and non-members of adolescents' clubs) • Family members like mother, father, grandparents, mother-in-law • Community members of organised committees • Community and religious leaders <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review • IDI • KIIs • Semi structured interviews • U-Polls 	
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Annexure 7: Theory of Change: Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh

National Theory of Change

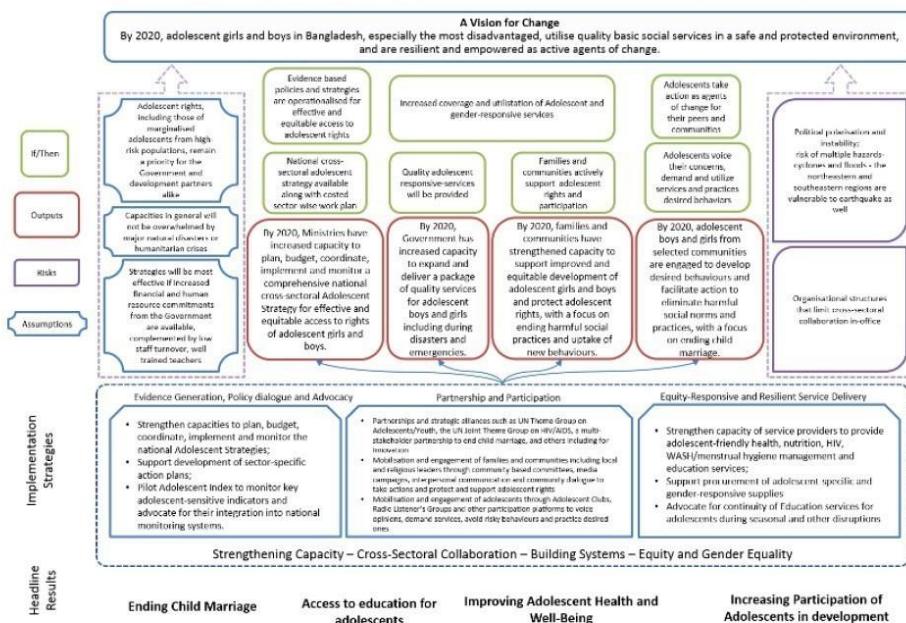


GPECM Theory of Change



Outcome 3 Theory of Change

Annex 1: Theory of Change for Bangladesh Outcome Area 3



Annexure 8: ToR for ERG

Establishing an Evaluation Reference Group for Evaluation of UNICEF Bangladesh's work on Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage in Bangladesh, May 2020

(বাংলাদেশ সরকার মন্ত্রণালয় প্রতিক্রিয়া গ্রন্থি ও বৈজ্ঞানিক বিভাগ)
 Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 Ministry of Planning
 Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division
 'CDMRI-ECBSS (Phase II)' Project
 Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka
www.imed.gov.bd



No. 21.00.0000.162.99.011.18-562

Date: 25/03/2021

Subject: Notice of 1st 'Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)' Meeting

To learn about the multi-faceted nature of UNICEF Bangladesh's End Child Marriage (ECM) efforts, UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office is conducting an evaluation to understand the context and issues related to child marriage in Bangladesh and to evaluate the efficiency, relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of all of UNICEF's ECM related work. To provide guidance to the key variables of the evaluation, an 'Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)' comprised of 15 concerned multi-sectoral partners was formed (Reg. No.: 21.00.0000.162.99.011.18-564; Date: 26/01/2021) under the 'CDMRI-ECBSS (Phase-II)' Project being implemented by Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) with the support of UNICEF.

The 1st Meeting of this 'Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)' will be held on **6 April 2021 at 4:00 pm** via **virtual platform**. Mr. Pradip Ranjil Chakraborty, Secretary, IMED has given his kind consent to attend the meeting as Honourable Advisor and Mr. Md. Aftab Hossain, Director General, Monitoring and Evaluation Sector-6, IMED will chair the meeting.

As directed, you are requested to kindly attend the meeting on time and put your valuable opinions and inputs. The meeting documents and link will be provided via email prior the meeting.

Agenda:

1. Overview of the ERG role
2. Progress on the first deliverable- 'ECM Activity Mapping'
3. Expectation setting on the ECM Evaluation
4. Miscellaneous

Attachment: Formation of Evaluation Reference Group

(Sujan Chandra Bhownik)
 Assistant Director, IMED
 & Deputy Project Director
 "CDMRI-ECBSS (Phase II)" project
 Phone: 9180974; Email: sujan.voumik@imed.gov.bd

Distribution: (Not in order of Seniority)

1. Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
 [With request to nominate concerned Deputy Secretary as representative in the ERG and attend the meeting].
2. Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
 [With request to nominate concerned Deputy Secretary as representative in the ERG and attend the meeting].
3. Director General, 'Multi Sectoral Program on VAW' Project, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Dhaka.
4. Project Director, 'Multi Sectoral Program on VAW' Project, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Dhaka.
5. Mr. Md. Shahidul Hossain, Director (Social), Monitoring & Evaluation Sector-6, IMED
6. Ms. Zamratul Ferdous, Deputy Chief, Parmstec Wing, SEI Division, Planning Commission.
7. Project Director, CDMRI-ECBSS (Phase II) Project, IMED, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka.
8. Mr. Mekonnen Woldegorge, Chief, SPEAR, UNICEF Bangladesh, Dhaka.
9. Ms. Monira Hassan, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Bangladesh, Dhaka.
10. Ms. Noreen Khan, Gender & Development Specialist, UNICEF Bangladesh, Dhaka.
11. Ms. Andrea Cooper Parks, Research & Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Bangladesh, Dhaka.
12. Deputy Project Director, 'CDMRI-ECBSS (Phase II)' Project, IMED, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka.

Copy for information:

1. Mr. Md. Azizur Rahman, Social Policy Specialist, SPEAR, UNICEF.
2. P.S to Secretary, IMED, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka.
3. P.O to Director General, Monitoring and Evaluation Sector-6, IMED, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka.
4. Office Copy

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 Ministry of Planning
 Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division
 'CDMRI-ECBSS (Phase II)' Project
 Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka
www.imed.gov.bd



No. 21.00.0000.162.99.011.18-554

Date: 26/01/2021

Subject: Formation of Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)

The undersigned is directed to constitute the following Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) to oversee the Evaluation of UNICEF's Work on Ending Child Marriage (ECM) in Bangladesh under 'CDMRI-ECBSS (Phase II)' Project of Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED):

SL	Officers and Organization	Designation in the committee
1	Secretary, IMED	Advisor
2	DG, Monitoring & Evaluation Sector-6, IMED	Chair
3	DG, Monitoring & Evaluation Sector-7, IMED	Member
4	DG, Monitoring & Evaluation Sector-8, IMED	Member
5	Concerned Director, Monitoring & Evaluation Sector-6, IMED	Member
6	Concerned Deputy Chief, Planning Commission	Member
7	Project Director, MSPVAW Project, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs	Member
8	Concerned Deputy Secretary, MoWCA	Member
9	Concerned Deputy Secretary, MoSW	Member
10	Project Director, CDMRI-ECBSS (Phase II) Project, IMED	Member
11	Chief, SPEAR, UNICEF	Member
12	Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF	Member
13	Gender & Development Specialist, UNICEF	Member
14	Research & Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF	Co-Member Secretary
15	Deputy Project Director, CDMRI-ECBSS (Phase II) Project, IMED	Member Secretary

4. Review key deliverables (Markov Model to estimate averted child marriages, cost-effectiveness study results, draft and final evaluation report) and provide comments;
5. Support in framing key messages and findings of the evaluation;
6. Ensure overall quality of the analysis, on which the conclusions and recommendations are based, and the validity and credibility of the findings;
7. Advise on and support the implementation of the communication and dissemination plan for the evaluation, including by suggesting/supporting relevant dissemination events and/or distributing deliverables to key stakeholders and partners;
8. Advise on the timeline and scope of the evaluation and ensure that it fully takes on board the findings and recommendations.

(Mohammad Afifur Rahman)
Deputy Secretary, IMED &
Project Director, CDMRI-ECBSS (Phase II) Project
mohammadafifurrahman@yahoo.com
Phone: 9180974

Distributions (Not in order of Seniority)

1. Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Planning and Children Affairs, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka. [With request to nominate concerned Deputy Secretary as representative];
2. Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
3. [With request to nominate concerned Deputy Secretary as representative];
3. Director General, Monitoring & Evaluation Sector-6/7/8, IMED, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka;
4. Project Director, 'Multi-Sectoral Program on VAW' (MSPVAW) Project, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Dhaka;
5. Mr. Md. Shahadat Hossain, Director (Social), Monitoring & Evaluation Sector-6, IMED;
6. Ms. Zannat-ul Ferdous, Deputy Chief, Pamstec Wing, SEI Division, Planning Commission;
7. Mr. Md. Mekonen Woldegeorgis, Director, SPEAR, UNICEF Bangladesh, Dhaka;
8. Mr. Mekonen Woldegeorgis, Chief, SPEAR, UNICEF Bangladesh, Dhaka;
9. Ms. Monira Hassan, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Bangladesh, Dhaka;
10. Ms. Norina Khan, Gender & Development Specialist, UNICEF Bangladesh, Dhaka;
11. Mr. Andrew Cooper Parks, Research & Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Bangladesh, Dhaka;
12. Deputy Project Director, 'CDMRI-ECBSS (Phase II)' Project, IMED, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka.

Copy for information:

1. Mr. Md. Afifur Rahman, Social Policy Specialist, SPEAR, UNICEF,
2. P.S to Secretary, IMED, Ministry of Planning, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka.
3. Office Copy

Annexure 9: ToR for field team

ToR Field Team for Evaluation of UNICEF Bangladesh's work on Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage in Bangladesh, May 2020

Purpose of the field team:

UNICEF Bangladesh is undertaking an “Evaluation of UNICEF’s work for Accelerating Action towards Ending Child Marriage”. The evaluation aims to assess the progress made and achievements of results of Ending Child Marriage programmes in Bangladesh, and the effectiveness of the joint interventions by UNFPA- UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage (GPECM). Additionally, the assignment aims to identify opportunities and barriers to the implementation of cross sectoral evidence-based intervention strategies, identify good practices of convergence among sectors and lessons learnt from the first Phase of the GPECM. Against this background, the evaluation team comprises of technical and functional experts with experience in undertaking the requisite field level interactions in Bangladesh with identified stakeholders. Additionally, field team consists of members who understand the local language to streamline interactions, especially at the division level. Field team members will play an instrumental role in the primary data collection phase as the findings from this phase will drive the narrative of the evaluation.

Time frame of the study: April 2021-May 2021

Role of field team:

- Familiarise themselves with programme context, evaluation purpose, and objectives
- Contribute to the main evaluation design including inputs on evaluation methodology, identify critical evaluation questions that align with the programme and objectives, identify outcome indicators, data sources needed, and plan the timeline for field data collection
- Review survey instruments and translate them to local language
- Coordinate with programme implementation partners and be involved in route mapping for field data collection. Overall field team members have to be heavily involved in strategically planning all travel logistics
- Attend workshop in Dhaka, Bangladesh, led by team leader and senior thematic expert. Field team members need to ensure they are well equipped with necessary equipment and materials needed for travels and data collection (consent form copies, notepads, identification cards, if any, etc)
- Travel to respective field destinations and undertake primary data collection, aligned to all protocols agreed upon
- Prepare field notes based on interactions and attend field debrief meeting to address the same
- Some members of the field team will additionally be involved in the report writing phase of the evaluation
- Field team members to validate report findings in the compiled draft report before submission
- The field team will ensure all necessary safety precautions are adopted including the use of PPE kits and general safeguarding practices to ensure safety of both enumerators and participants

Field team members:

- Dr Niraj Seth, Team Leader
- Rashida Parveen, Senior Thematic Expert
- Swadipta Sadique, Local Expert
- Junty Sharma Pathak, Execution Team Lead and Qualitative Research Expert
- Jija Dutt, Qualitative Research Expert

Please note: The report retains the original ToR that was developed for field team members, however, given the COVID-19 situation and as elaborated in the report, the field team comprised of local consultants in Bangladesh. The core team members from India were leading consultations through e-communication means. Further, with finalisation of the methodology COVID – 19 related precautions, safety measures and other field work related considerations will be adequately included in this ToR to ensure safety of both facilitators and respondents.

Annexure 10: Field plan

Field Plan			
Division Sampling	District	Upazilla	Timeline
Mymensingh	Jamalpur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jamalpur Sadar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd and 3rd June
Dhaka	Dhaka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North City Corporation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6th – 7th May
Barisal	Bhola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lal Mohan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30th – 31st May
Khulna	Khulna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dacope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23rd – 24th May
Rangpur	Nilphamari	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kishoregonj 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18th-19th May

Annexure 11: Quality assurance plan

Defining the scope of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The first step of the QA plan was to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the scope of work. Thus, at the planning stage itself, the inception meeting was utilised to clearly defining the scope of work and validating the expectations of the key stakeholders is conducted. ▶ For the purpose of this engagement, an inception meeting followed by meetings with the key stakeholders was organised in Dhaka during the last week of February 2020.
Establishing clear communication protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Based on the discussion with UNICEF, a standard communication protocol to be followed throughout the engagement lifecycles was established. A Single Point of Contact (SPOC) was established with clear guidelines on who needs to be marked for everyday communication and which stakeholders should be contacted under different circumstances. For a consultative and participatory approach, protocols for regular communication through emails, video conference, and telephonic calls were established. ▶ For the purpose of this engagement, clear communication protocols were established in consultation with UNICEF. Key stakeholders were marked on everyday communication through email which were defined along with need-based consultations. ▶ Along with the above protocol, an oversight body was constituted: Evaluation Reference group (ERG) – This group assisted in guiding the evaluation and met at the specified points during the engagement lifecycle to review and comment upon the work. ▶ The composition of these groups along with the roles and responsibilities were finalised in consultation with UNICEF during the inception.
Identification of reviewers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reviewers were identified for the engagement from both the entities i.e. the consultant and UNICEF. This ensured clarity on who is responsible for reviewing the drafts as well as the final reports under a specified time; which in turn helped in timely completion of the engagement. Internally at EY, a multiple review process was laid and based on the expertise required for the subject, stakeholders were identified. Similarly, a list of reviewers for the engagement was obtained from the client. ▶ For the purpose of this engagement, internal reviewers along with reviewers from UNICEF, were established.
Execution as per the plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Based on the above steps, multiple review of the final deliverable along with sub-deliverables was carried out. At all times during the engagement lifecycle, the defined protocols were followed. The stipulated timeline for conducting reviews as well as providing deliverables were established in consultation with the client. ▶ For the purpose of this engagement, reviews were carried as per the stipulated timelines and pre-decided plan.
Consolidating the findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ This is the final stage of the QA plan to enhance the quality of the deliverable that reflects EY standards and matches the expectation of the client. At this stage, changes were incorporated within the stipulated time based on the feedback from the reviewers ▶ For the purpose of this engagement, feedback was incorporated to deliver a quality deliverable on time.

Annexure 12: Risk and mitigation measures

Stages of evaluation	Potential risks	Probability	Impact	Mitigation strategies
Data Collection	Quality and Validity of Data: A methodological limitation of the study will be reliance on the opinions of programme partners and stakeholders involved in the programme delivery. Such opinions may be subjected to bias and affect the validity of the data.	Medium	Low	In order to minimise possible biases and enhance data validity, EY will use triangulation of methods and data. Herein, we will validate the perspective provided by one stakeholder by checking if other stakeholders presented a similar perspective. Most importantly to cross check with implementation in the field. Our blended approach moving forward will additionally help capture the nuances through e-communication consultations with stakeholders in addition to field-based interactions, which will help to mitigate any potential challenges with quality or validity of data otherwise.
Data Collection	Language Constraint: We realise that for data collection we will be interacting with respondents who only speak dialects of Bengali.	High	High	To mitigate this risk, we will select a local team that is well versed with the language and can also support the EY team during the telephonic interviews
Data Collection	Availability of government stakeholders for interactions: We understand that it might be a challenging task to seek appointment with the government functionaries given the limitation of time.	Medium	Medium	To mitigate this risk, we will develop a field plan before the visits and share it with UNICEF. We will take UNICEF's support to seek appointment with the government officials well in advance. To account for any disruptions in scheduled interactions, the team will keep a flexible timeline.
Data Collection	Challenges in data collection due to COVID-19 Pandemic: COVID-19 disruptions are difficult to predict, and lockdowns can disrupt scheduled interactions that our local consultants in Bangladesh will be carrying out. Further, as a result of any unwarranted local restrictions, travel to sample divisions/Upazilla's may become a challenge for local consultants.	High	Medium	The evaluation team's COVID responsive plan already accounts for a blended approach where several interactions will be accounted for through e-communication in addition to community level field-based interactions through our local consultants in Bangladesh. Further, all field plans will be developed and shared with UNICEF in advance and the team will be in close connection with local team, UNICEF BCO and our Senior Thematic Expert and Local Expert based in Bangladesh. This will help the team monitor the situation and track any changes in schedule travel and visits.

Stages of evaluation	Potential risks	Probability	Impact	Mitigation strategies
Data Collection	Risks with field-based interactions in the COVID-19: The pandemic has put forward several risks of in person meetings, restricting movement overall. This may challenge seamless interactions for our local consults in Bangladesh with identified stakeholders at the community level.	High	Medium	The evaluation team will take all necessary precautions to ensure field enumerators wear PPE during interactions, and practice necessary safe hygiene measures including carrying sanitizers, disinfectant wipes and soap for hand washing. Additionally, in the workshop before data collection, our team leader will ensure key safe practices are reiterated to all field enumerators. Some of these are already identified in the report and will be further strengthened and contextualised basis inputs from lead consultants such as our Senior Thematic Expert from Bangladesh.
Quality of written reports and other documents	The quality of the reports either does not comply with UNICEF standards or lacks the necessary insights	Low	Low	EY is positioning a team that has carried out a mixture of evaluations and documentations, that have been recognised very well globally within UNICEF. The team leader, Dr Niraj Seth, has been directly involved with many such evaluations while Sidharth has worked closely on many documentations done for UNICEF. Further, the team has experience of writing several UN reports and are well versed with UN standards and aspects such as HRBA requirements.

Annexure 13: Evaluation team

EVALUATION TEAM	
NAME OF STAFF	POSITION ASSIGNED
Dr. Niraj Seth	Team Lead
Sidharth Dutta	Engagement Manager
Rashida Parveen	Senior Thematic Expert on the assignment
Junty Sharma Pathak	Execution Team Lead and Qualitative Research Expert
Jija Dutt	Qualitative Research Expert
Swadipta Sadique	Local Expert and Qualitative Research Expert
Sangeeta Singh	Valuation, Modelling and Econometrics Expert
Vrishali Sinha	Team Member for Data Analysis
Siya Mukerji	Team Member for Qualitative Analysis
Development Communication Network	Local Team

Annexure 14: Terms of Reference

ANNEX-E

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INSTITUTIONAL CONTRACT

Title of the assignment	Evaluation of UNICEF's work for Accelerating Action towards Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh
Purpose	The overall objective of the evaluation is to assess the progress made by BCO towards and achievement of results of its ECM programmes. The evaluation will assess the relevance of BCO's work on ECM, effectiveness and added value of the joint UNFPA UNICEF GPECM and will also assess BCO's ECM interventions outside the GPECM. It will identify opportunities and barriers to the implementation of cross sectoral evidence-based intervention strategies. The evaluation will assess the efficiency of UNICEF's ECM work, its relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. It will also identify good practices of convergence among sectors and lessons especially from the Phase I of the GPECM
Location	Bangladesh: Dhaka and programme areas
Estimated Duration	6 months (September 2019-February 2020)
Reporting to Technical Supervisor of this assignment	Research and Evaluation Specialist and Gender Specialist
1. Background and rationale:	
<p>With a prevalence rate of 52.3% of women between the age of 20-24 married before their 18th birthday, and 18% marrying before 15 years married (MICS 2013), Bangladesh has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world. While the practice of child marriage has slowly decreased in Bangladesh over the last 30 years, it remains unacceptably high nationally, with more married children in rural areas and urban slums, and particularly among poor and less educated girls.</p> <p>Ending child marriage is a priority for both the Government and its development partners, who recognize the need to preserve childhoods, secure children's rights to education and life, reduce their exposure to violence and exploitation and contribute to ending intergenerational poverty. In 2014, UNICEF and its partners' support to programmes aiming at harnessing adolescents' energy and skills to improve their lives while supporting the country's development objectives resulted in the Prime Minister's commitment to accelerate the eradication of child marriage in Bangladesh by 2035. The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, is the GoB's selected line ministry for coordinating all government response on ending child marriage.</p> <p>BCO initially received funding in 2015, based on a multi-sectoral proposal, which included building on existing initiatives across different sectors of work and in some cases retrofitting to include child marriage in existing work. In 2016 with a new CPD there was an opportunity to sharpen the approach on ECM and strengthen the links between adolescent programming and gender. In addition, BCO's 2017-2020 Country Programme adopted a life-cycle approach to programming, with a standalone outcome on adolescents and under this outcome ECM was placed as a high-level result in the CPD Output 3.7: "By 2020, adolescent boys and girls from selected communities are engaged to develop capacities as agents of change and facilitate action to eliminate harmful social norms and practices with a focus on ECM". The indicator for this output is as follows: "Targeted parents/primary caregivers reached by programmes addressing child-rearing practices; Number and proportion of adolescents reached through Life Skills Education (LSE) packages on gender, sexual harassment and early marriage nationally that will enable them to influence development agendas". The CO also developed a Strategy Note on ECM and has in place a BCO ECM proposal from March 2016 which was used as a basis for the GPECM when Bangladesh became one of three GPECM countries in ROSA for Phase I of the UNFPA UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage from 2016-2019. It is important to note that a multi-stakeholder meeting happened in December 2014 developed an extensive analysis of the situation of child marriage in Bangladesh and developed a theory of change for the work around ECM in the country, which was in turn the basis of the BCO strategy note for ECM. This TOC, along with the TOC of the GPECM, is presented as an annex to these TOR. Therefore, the key response to ECM has been through the GPECM which offered a framework promoting the right of girls to delay marriage, addressing the conditions that keep the practice in place, and caring for girls already in union.</p>	

There is no national Theory of Change but GoB has utilized elements from three sets of documents that were developed by Plan/ICRW/UNFPA, the Girls Not Brides Alliance and Maxwell Stamp (study commissioned by UNICEF) and the main findings from these documents along with the ToC framework have provided the basis for consultations and formulation of the National Action Plan to End Child Marriage (2016-2020). Moreover, UNICEF is planning to hold a multi-stakeholder meeting late June 2019 to validate the existing problem tree and ToC for ECM. It is important to note that the strategies identified by BCO correspond well with the strategies of the National Action Plan.

At the onset of the GPECM, BCO pulled together all interventions aimed at ECM and that were aligned with the global strategies under the GPECM TOC and brought them under the umbrella of the joint programme with UNFPA. These interventions were then funded through the GPECM funds that UNICEF received for Phase I. There is a cross sectoral task force on ECM coordinated by the Gender Specialist with focal points from all sections, who are also part of the more general group that works on adolescents.

This initial phase had an indicative four-year budget (2016-2019) estimated at \$246.7 million with contributions from Canada, the Netherlands, Italy, the United Kingdom and the European Commission. Close to 10.5 million dollars have been received to date. The first phase of implementation is aimed at targeting adolescent girls (ages 10-19) at risk of child marriage or already in union, particularly adolescent girls.

The prevalence of child marriage varies across districts in Bangladesh. At subnational levels, the north and western parts of the country show higher child marriage prevalence than other parts of the country (MICS 2013). An overall objective of the programme is to accelerate action to address child marriage by enhancing investments in and policies and frameworks promoting positive change and improving the data and evidence base.

In Bangladesh, an 'Area-Based Programming Approach' was adopted for efforts to end child marriage in the country, using high prevalence rates of child marriage from MICS 2013 as the key variable for determining the area selection. The following areas were included in the GPECM according to the global programme proposal.

Division	District	Upazilla	In GPECM?
Mymensingh	Jamalpur	Islampur and Dewanganj;	Yes
	Netrokona	Kolmakanda and Khalijhuri	Yes
	Sherpur	Sreebordi ad Nalitabari	Yes
	Mymensingh	Sadar	No
Dhaka	Gazipur	City Corporation	No
Barisal	Bhola	Char Fassion, Lal Mohon, Monpura, Sadar	Yes
	Patuakhali	Kalapara,	Yes
	Barguna	Patharghata	Yes
	Barisal	City Corporation	No
Khulna	Khulna	Dacope and Koyra	Yes
	Kustia	Daulatpur and Bheramara	Yes
	Bagerhat	Shoronkhola, Morolgonj	No
	Khulna	City corporation, Rupsha, Terokhada, Digholia, Phultala, Botiaghata, Paikgacha	No
Rangpur	Nilphamari	Dimla, Domar and Kishorganj	Yes
	Kurigram	Sadar, Char Rajibpur	No
	Gaibandha	Sadar, Fulchuri	No
	Sirajgonj	Beluchi, Shahjadpur	No
	Chapai Nawabgonj	Sadar, Shibgonj	No

The ECM Strategy note mentions a combination of strategies that are being used to address both demand and supply side constraints in order to leverage results in accelerating an end to child marriage.

1. A key strategy is the empowerment of adolescent girls with interventions aimed at mobilization of out-of-school adolescents (especially girls) into adolescent clubs, alongside those who are in school, with the aim of providing them with leadership, life skills development and peer education training with a focus on prevention of child marriage and adolescent development issues (health, WASH, HIV/AIDS, nutrition).
2. Another strategy is Community Engagement and Behaviour Change with interventions aimed at community mobilisation, dialogue, mobilising and engaging families and communities to challenge prevailing beliefs and attitudes, build ownership and facilitate collective action to ensure girls are not married before 18 and attend school etc. It also includes social reinforcement of abandonment of these norms and uptake of new attitudes and actions through mobilisation and engagement of key community level influencers such as religious and local leaders, as well as service providers to achieve a 'critical and irrevocable' mass of population that have changed their beliefs and norms.
3. Institutional strengthening, advocacy & law enforcement is another strategy that involves interventions around advocacy, evidence building and technical support to policy and legal reform. Under this strategy UNICEF and UNFPA have worked together on advocacy regarding the Child Marriage Restraint Act (CM RA), and support to the development of the National Action Plan (NAP) on ECM and evidence generation.
4. Another important strategy is enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling for girls which includes integrating life skills in the curriculum, teacher training, MHM, vocational training component with ILO targeting technical TVET and apprenticeship, job placement and job matching mechanisms, etc.
5. Lastly, provision of livelihood support & financial incentives is a strategy aimed at advocacy and technical support to the GoB, at national and local levels to develop or reinforce appropriate forms of financial incentives that would encourage families to keep their adolescent girls in schools and also perceive a value and relevance of education and formal/non-formal vocational trainings that are linked to livelihoods.

So far, the reach of ECM activities has been: More than 800 dropped out adolescents (640 girls and 160 boys) went back to school after getting stipends to run small income generating activities. More than 10,000 community people comprising parents, lawyer, teacher representatives, woman ward / union members, representatives from Child Led Organizations (CLOs) gained knowledge on referral mechanism during emergency and any kind of violence including child marriage. Around 150 child marriages were stopped through the support of CBCPCs in the ECM districts during the reporting period. (Ref: GPECM Report 2018, page 4). However, there are no current models or estimations in place for the number of marriages averted as a result of all strategies and interventions that are part of the programme. How to best do this will be part of the questions asked as evaluation questions later in these ToR.

BCO's work on ECM also includes generating evidence that supports the strategies mentioned above. So far, the following evidence products have been produced, and will be shared with the winning bidder.

- The work education is leading for keeping girls in schools is accompanied by an impact evaluation design (RCT) and an operations research. The baseline data collection has already finished, and a report will be delivered in May.
- The ECM mass media campaign and edu-drama is accompanied by a baseline, midline and endline data collection that aims to understand impact. Baseline and midline reports will be made available.
- The adolescent health interventions are accompanied by baseline studies, as well as ongoing operations research on adolescent friendly health services. The baseline report is finished.
- Exploratory work on social norms was undertaken based on a nationwide survey. A discussion paper titled What Matters Most for Ending Child Marriage was developed, and will be made available to the public soon.
- MICS 2019 data on child marriage prevalence will be available in August 2019.
- A budgetary scoping analysis on expenditures on child marriage was also undertaken and can be found in the public domain.

Within the current CP ECM related work is going on in geographic areas that are not part of the GPECM. In terms of the GPECM, the Evaluation Offices of UNICEF and UNFPA commissioned an evaluability assessment of the GP which was conducted between April and September 2017 and covered the GPECM from its launch in January 2016 to August 2017. A joint evaluation of this joint UNICEF UNFPA GPECM has been finalized in end

2018. It took stock and captured the changes the programme has gone through in this learning phase, to test the Global Programme theory of change, to assess progress made in different country contexts, support learning among key stakeholders to inform current implementation, and feed into the potential next phase of the Global Programme. The results of this evaluation along with the Evaluability Assessment are key documents that are feeding into the development of the Phase 2 of the GPECM including a revised ToC.

The global evaluation of the GPECM did not go in-depth into the UNICEF Bangladesh's ECM related work and especially our overall work that goes beyond the GPECM. Therefore, this evaluation will take a deeper look into how the GPECM is working in Bangladesh, beyond the general findings from the global evaluation that are applicable to all GPECM countries. This evaluation will also look at BCO's work beyond the GPECM in terms of successes and challenges, coherence and complementarities with the GPECM. In addition, it will also assess to what extent being part of the global programme has supported BCO's efforts and to what extent has the joint programme achieved joint results. Finally, aspects of efficiency, value for money will also be explored.

One further point to note is the meaning of sustainability for the ECM programme and thus for the evaluation. As ending child marriage will largely depend on a shift of social norms, sustainability of the results will largely depend on the sustainability of the change in the norms. This includes reaching a critical mass of people who oppose child marriage, as well as ensuring a supportive environment for girls to choose their own destiny. In this scenario, sustainability must go beyond sustainability of resources to keep the programme running, or sustainability of resources to ensure that services continue to be available to girls even if UNICEF funding declines over time. This needs to be in the background of the sustainability questions of the ECM programme evaluation.

The main users of the evaluation will be UNICEF, UNFPA and UNWOMEN as part of the GPECM, the government of Bangladesh and in the Prime Minister's office and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs including all Development partners and CSO working on ECM .. These will benefit from the evaluation in terms of lessons learnt and for managerial decisions, namely informing the next phase of the GPECM, and the joint UNICEF-GoB Country Programme Document 2021-2025. The evaluation will also be used by the donors who support the work being done for accelerating an end to child marriage, serving a purpose of accountability.

2. Purpose/Objective of the assignment:

The overall objective of the evaluation is to assess the progress made by BCO towards and achievement of results of its ECM programmes. The evaluation will assess the relevance of BCO's work on ECM, effectiveness and added value of the joint UNFPA UNICEF GPECM and will also assess BCO's ECM interventions outside the GPECM funded through OR of different sections. It will identify opportunities and barriers to the implementation of cross sectoral evidence-based intervention strategies. The evaluation will assess the efficiency of UNICEF's ECM work, with a focus on understanding. It will also identify good practices of convergence among sectors and lessons especially from the Phase I of the GPECM.

2.1 Specific objective:

1. Assess results against the strategies outlined in the Strategy Note on ECM and the results framework and workplan of the GPECM.
2. Assess cross sectoral convergence and collaboration and if the comparative advantage of each sector was leveraged.
3. Assess to what extend scale and sustainability have been built into the interventions.
4. Assess the extent to which equity and gender equality have been addressed in programme implementation.
5. Assess whether the programme was gender transformative in its design and whether it has led to gender transformative results
6. Assess how UNICEF BCO used its standing with the GoB to push the ECM agenda and how it leveraged the LCG WAGE platform for national level advocacy.
7. Assess how BCO built and promoted partnerships with all stakeholders especially the women's organizations and civil society.
8. Assess the extent to which policies and laws at the national level have been translated and used at the district and upazilla level.
9. Calculate the cost-effectiveness of the programme
10. Develop a methodology that uses existing information to estimate the number of child marriages that are averted and prevented

2.2 Scope of the evaluation

Temporal coverage: The evaluation will cover the ECM related work covered under the current Country Programme (2016-2020), from its onset until the time of the conduct of the evaluation (Q3 2019).

Geographical scope: The evaluation will cover the upstream work undertaken at the national level and the downstream work that happens in the ECM districts, either through GPECM interventions or other ECM activities.

Content: The evaluation will cover all activities planned and/or implemented during the period under evaluation. The evaluation will focus primarily on the progress towards achieving outputs and contribution to outcomes in the Theory of Change and results frameworks presented. Moreover, the evaluation will focus on both streams of ECM work currently ongoing in the country, namely the work happening under the GPECM and that happening outside of the GPECM. When evaluating the GPECM in Bangladesh, we expect the evaluators to go beyond the findings of the [Global Evaluation of the GPECM](#) and to provide a deeper and more contextualized understanding of the situation in Bangladesh. The unit of analysis will be the programme as a whole, as opposed to the discrete interventions, as most of these have strong evidence generation activities. However, an area of interest of the evaluation is understanding spillover effects from programme districts to non-programme districts.

Stakeholders: Different groups of respondents will need to be taken into consideration for the evaluation both at the upstream and downstream level. In addition to UNICEF staff both in Dhaka and the field, the socio-ecological model that is at the heart of the ECM programme should also guide the types of respondents that need to be reached out to throughout the evaluation. Government officials directly involved with the ECM programme from the Prime Minister's Office, MoWCA and other Ministries will need to be included. Other UN agencies and in particular UNFPA, as well as donors and implementing partners will need to be reached out to. Community members, both those who are part of organized committees that support children and their rights, as well as "unorganized" community members need to be included. Families with children (adolescents and younger), both male and female should be included. Adolescent boys and girls, including married girls, both those who attend adolescent clubs or similar and those that do not attend such groups should be included in data collection efforts. An important note is that although the programme focuses on ending child marriage involving girls, men and boys are also key stakeholders in marriage related decisions, and thus they need to be also involved as key respondents in the evaluation. Understanding how to better involve boys and men into programming is at the core of the learnings expected.

2.3 Evaluation questions

The evaluation will be informed by the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

The preliminary evaluation questions are articulated around the key objectives and scope of the exercise and further focus the evaluation criteria. Once the evaluation team acquires a clear understanding of the logic and rationale of the programme, as well as the extent of implementation of the Programme, the team will further refine the evaluation questions as well as develop the evaluation matrix for this exercise during the inception phase, detailing all evaluation questions, assumptions to be assessed, indicators, and sources of information. The potential usefulness as well as feasibility of each proposed evaluation question will be assessed in close collaboration with the ERG with a view to determining the final set of questions. The bidding team can suggest changes to the evaluation questions in the proposal, as long as it clearly mentions how the original question is being captured and the reasoning behind the changes.

Relevance and responsiveness:

1. To what extent is the programme relevant and responsive to contribute toward ending child marriage in Bangladesh? To what extent has the programme been designed in a way that is responsive to different groups in the society, their own contexts and needs? (Consider different contexts to define these groups such as urban and rural, living in high-child marriage districts as defined in the Country Programme, in-school and out of school, unmarried and already married girls, wealth quintile, gender and ability. Also consider different decision makers and influencers on marriage decisions, such as fathers, mullahs, mothers in law, male and female community leaders, etc.).
2. To what extent do the programme strategies and activities address structural drivers of (gender) inequality?

3. To what extent is the ToC that guides the ECM work in Bangladesh well developed, aligned with the Bangladesh context, based on robust evidence and realistic in its assumptions and pathways of change? How can it be improved for the next country programme and second phase of the GPECM?
4. How well aligned is UNICEF ECM programme with the National Plan of Action strategies and pillars? Are there clear strategies of the NPA that UNICEF should focus on during the next ECM programme given UNICEF's expertise?
5. To what extent has the programme been implemented following a human rights, equity and culturally sensitive approach?

Effectiveness and impact

6. To what extent has the ECM programme achieved or is on track to achieving its planned results in all its 5 strategies? Have the combination of these strategies been able to prevent and stop child marriages in programme areas? Has there been evidence of spillover effects of the programme into non-programme areas? If so, is there evidence of what is the main change factor that is being spilled over?
7. Considering the 5 strategies and specifically answer for each the following questions. When answering the questions please keep in mind and explore the following considerations: What have been supporting and constraining factors? Were there any unexpected results (positive or negative)?
 - a. (S1) Are there signs that adolescent girls who have been part of the programme are more empowered and have increased skills? Have the interventions built the agency of girls as influencers and decision makers, especially on marriage decisions? If so, has this led to a decrease in child marriage? Has this led to an overall increase of adolescent wellbeing?¹
 - b. (S1) Is there evidence of spillover effects from adolescents who have been part of the programme to other adolescents in the community who have not been part of the interventions?
 - c. (S1) Have the interventions reached the most vulnerable? (out of school adolescents, those from lowest quintiles, adolescents with disabilities, already married girls)?
 - d. (S2) Have prevailing mindsets, beliefs and attitudes towards child marriage and gender norms changed in the communities and among the key community level influencers described in the strategy? (please explore different community and family members, with a special focus on men, fathers, mullahs, community leaders, mothers in law, and other identified key decision makers and influencers on marriage decisions)
 - e. (S2) How effective has work on multiple platforms and different levels (national, district, upazilla) been on achieving social mobilization and community engagement? Have families, community members and key community level influencers taken concrete action to protect adolescents from child marriage and to prevent and stop marriages? Have actions varied across these key stakeholders? Has saying "no" to child marriage become the common norm in the programme communities?
 - f. (S3) How effective have UNICEF and UNFPA been in advocating for a normative and legislative framework that protects adolescent girls from child marriage? Where there any missed opportunities in the advocacy strategy that need to be addressed? Has the process been timely? Has the legislative and normative framework trickled down into specific policies and programmes?
 - g. (S3) What role has evidence played in UNICEF's advocacy strategy? Are there any evidence gaps that could strengthen UNICEF's capacity to strengthen institutions and legal and normative frameworks around child marriage? Does the existing evidence provide enough information on the different needs of adolescents depending on their various contexts (wealth quintile, location, family context, level of ability, schooling situation, etc.)?
 - h. (S4) How effective has UNICEF been in enhancing accessibility and quality of formal schooling and alternative learning pathways for adolescent girls? Has a focus on girls had a negative impact on boys? Have adolescent girls who have benefited from this strategy more able to access the job market and to make decisions about their lives, including marriage? What external factors have influenced the effectiveness of this strategy?
 - i. (S5) How effective has UNICEF been in supporting the government to provide financial support to families and adolescent girls at risk of child marriage so that they remain in school and unmarried? Has the government expanded its financial support and social protection schemes as a response of UNICEF's advocacy and technical support? Has UNICEF been effective in changing the perception of families around the value of the girl child and the relevance of education for adolescent girls?

¹ Note that so far we do not have a unified definition nor have an adolescent index. Wellbeing here is taken from the impact level indicator of the ToC

8. Has the programme been gender transformative and achieved gender transformative results?

Efficiency

9. Relating to the GPECM portion of work, has the joint programme and management structure with UNFPA at the country level facilitated achieving results and efficient delivery? Which areas have gained the most from this joint programming and which ones the least?
10. Relating to the GPECM portion of work, to what extent has being part of a global programme facilitate linkages and synergies to accelerate efforts to end child marriage within UNICEF and with its partners?
11. What key principles have determined where UNICEF has mainly spent its resources for ending child marriage? Have high impact areas been prioritised?
12. Has the country programme structure of a life cycle approach facilitated efficient delivery of results?
13. What has been the cost-effectiveness of the programme in terms of investments to end child marriage and the (approximate) number of marriages averted or stopped? How does this compare to other proven interventions to stop child marriage in Bangladesh and even in the South Asia region?

Sustainability

14. To what extent are there sustainability considerations built-into programme implementation?
15. To what extent has the programme generated/is in the process of generating robust evidence that supports the scaling up of successful interventions to allow for the government to take these over in the future?
16. To what extent has the programme been able to generate an enabling environment and strong involvement of key stakeholders at different levels (individual, family, community and local authorities) that will prevent gains in social norms to go back to pre-programme levels even if the absence of further interventions? Has the programme reached a tipping point where social norms and gender transformative results are strongly rooted in all these levels?

3. Indicative assignment dates: September 2019–February 2020

4. **Duty station:** Overall duty station can be the base country of the evaluation team. However, in case the winning firm is not based in Bangladesh, the team leader and key team members are expected to be in Bangladesh for the key moments of the evaluation and to ensure enough time spent in the country for understanding the programme and for ensuring high quality of the evaluation products. Bidding firms need to describe the optimal balance of work inside and outside of Bangladesh in the bid. It is expected that the team leader leads key presentations, even when done through Skype. As the evaluation is taking place in Bangladesh, meetings, skype calls and other interactions are expected to take place within Bangladesh working week working hours (Sunday-Thursday), 8:00-16:30 BST.

5. Methodology:

The ECM programme evaluation will need to be conducted using a mixed methods approach that reaches out and covers various sources of both quantitative and qualitative data. The bidders will need to show in the proposal outstanding command of different methods available that will ensure a high quality evaluation, and thus this section is under-described on purpose. However, some elements that are expected to show up in the evaluation and that should be expanded upon in the proposal are the following:

5.1 Methods for data collection

Desk review: Of existing literature and grey literature, as well as of existing programme documents, policy frameworks, National Plan of Action, and other relevant documents that have been produced in Bangladesh and in relevant similar contexts. This is expected to take place during the inception period, and should help identify knowledge gaps, should start informing the evaluation matrix and should help develop the data collection tools. The winning firm needs to be in the capacity to identify key documents to review and ask UNICEF to complement when these are not available in the public domain.

Review of secondary quantitative data: Bangladesh is a data rich country, especially when it comes to data that is representative to the district level. The following datasets should be used to assess outcome and impact level indicators, as well as access to some services:

- MICS 2013-2014: Data are publicly available for all districts and possibly can be used as baseline or point of comparison. This would include information on child marriage indicators, as well as on access to school and formal and non-formal education indicators.

- MICS 2019: Data collection is almost complete. It is expected that key indicators can be used for in this evaluation
- ECBSS: Data on effective coverage of social services at district level. In the case of child marriage, it includes a module on social norms.

Quantitative data collection: It is suggested that an online survey is used to collect responses from UNFPA, UNICEF and key stakeholders/partners. The inception report will contain the questionnaire and guidance to the online survey process. If a different way of collecting data is perceived superior, or if the high risks of non-response rates are perceived to high by the bidder, alternatives can be suggested in the proposal.

This evaluation does not foresee any household surveys to take place, given the rich amount of information available from ECBSS and MICS. However, social media can be used to explore certain evaluation questions with adolescents. Bangladesh has a large number of facebook and u-report users which can be accessed through facebook and u-report polls. Some u-report polls have also already happened on child marriage which should also be reviewed. These are non-representative samples of adolescents, but can be used nonetheless to get a stronger understanding of some of the key areas of the evaluation, especially around outcome and impact level changes.

Qualitative data collection: Focus group discussions and key informant interviews with key stakeholders will be conducted. When organizing focus group discussions, attention will be given to ensure: gender balance, geographic distribution, and cultural sensitivity, representation of population groups and representation of the stakeholders/duty bearers at all levels (policy/service providers/target groups/communities). The evaluation team must detail in the technical bid the characteristics of each sample: how it is selected, the rationale for the selection, and the limitations of the sample for interpreting evaluation results. It is expected that both GPECM and non-GPECM areas are covered, and that there is variation of the sample selected.

Methods for data analysis

The evaluation matrix will provide the guiding structure for data analysis for all components of the evaluation. The evaluation questions will be used to structure data analysis. The following methods of data analysis and synthesis are encouraged to be used:

- **Descriptive analysis** - to identify and understand the contexts in which the programme has evolved, and to describe the types of interventions and other characteristics of the programme.
- **Content analysis** - to analyze documents, interviews, group discussions and focus groups notes and qualitative data from the survey to identify emerging common trends, themes and patterns for each key evaluation question, at all levels of analyses. Content analysis can be used to highlight diverging views and opposing trends. The emerging issues and trends provide the basis for preliminary observations and evaluation findings.
- **Quantitative analysis** - Different types of analysis could be explored with the existing datasets. First, MICS will show the trends and changes over time. Special caution needs to be taken when analyzing these trends, as child marriage is usually measured as percentage of women 20-24 who got married before 18. This means that not all the women under this cohort were object of the programme interventions. However, MICS also collects data at the individual level, allowing for targeted analysis to take place. The bidding firms should expand on how to best capitalize on the data. The social norms module has been analysed in a UNICEF Discussion Paper "What Matters Most for Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh", but additional analysis can take place, especially when in combination with MICS 2019. Additional analysis can be done with multiple data sets that could help in terms of impact and attribution. The bidder is expected to explore these options in the proposal. It is expected that the proposed methods have limitations and strong assumptions, which need to be noted and taken into consideration when any analysis is being undertaken.
- **Contribution analysis** - to assess the extent to which the programme contributed to expected results. The team is encouraged to gather evidence to confirm the validity of the theory of change in different contexts, and to identify any logical and information gaps that it contained; examine whether and what types of alternative explanations/reasons exist for noted changes; test assumptions, examine influencing factors, and identify alternative assumptions for each pathway of change.
- **Methodology for estimating averted/prevented marriages:** The golden question of the evaluation and of the impact and effectiveness of the programme is its capacity to end child marriage in Bangladesh. A methodology should be designed and tested with the existing data from secondary sources to estimate (an approximate) estimation of averted child marriages in Bangladesh as a consequence of the programme.

- **Cost-effectiveness analysis** – based on the cost information collected and of the number of marriages averted calculated with the evaluator's proposed methodology, a cost-effectiveness analysis should be undertaken. The firm should explore the possibility of estimating the cost-effectiveness of each of the 5 strategies individually, if possible, and of their combination for the whole programme.

Cross-cutting consideration: One important cross-cutting consideration when designing the tools to answer the questions and designing the analysis is taking into consideration the ecological model and to consider both "beneficiaries", as well as decision makers. This means focus should not only be on adolescent girls, but should also consider key stakeholders, decision makers and influencers around marriage. This includes men and boys, fathers, mothers in law, mullahs, community leaders, policy makers, etc. All levels should be considered across.

Evaluation matrix: The firms are requested to present a preliminary evaluation matrix that shows how different methods will be used to answer each of the evaluation questions proposed.

Norms and standards guiding the evaluation

This evaluation will be held to the highest standards employed by UNICEF for the conduct of evaluations and research. This means it will abide by the following:

- United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, 2016
- Ethical Guidelines for UN Evaluations; Ethical guidance for Research in UNICEF

The final report is expected to meet the UNICEF-adapted UNEG Evaluation reports standards as well as benchmarks used in UNICEF's Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System ([GEROS](#)).

These guidance documents will be part of the contract of the evaluator/team. It is expected that the evaluator team read these guidelines and documents thoroughly and in the proposal already include a section on quality assurance and how the evaluation will abide to the UNEG norms and standards, and also a section on the expected ethical challenges and issues that the evaluation will need to overcome. The proposal will need to already take into account the need for getting IRB approval that meets the standards set out in the UNICEF Ethical Guidelines for research and evaluation. The proposal will need to spell out how the guidelines will be followed/met, rather than only mentioning that the evaluation will abide by them.

A Reference Group comprised of key stakeholders from the government and other partners will be set up from the onset of the evaluation. The Reference Group will be consulted on each key milestone of the evaluation and will give feedback on the TORs and deliverables of the evaluation. Evaluation results will also be presented and validated by the Reference Group. The evaluation manager will have the accountability of accepting each deliverable.

6. Work schedule:

The time-frame for the entire consultancy is 6 months.

Deliverable	Items covered/included	Time frame	Payment schedule
1 Inception report and presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inception report including sampling design, data collection tools, data analysis and triangulation methodology, timeline, interview schedule, evaluation questions and tools consistency matrix, ethical considerations, etc. - Secondary data review should have happened during this stage - Presentation of the inception report to UNICEF for approval of report 	1 month	20%

2	Field work report and presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct data collection mission (interviews, surveys, FGDs, observation) - Presentation of aide memoire on key findings and highlights from field work 	2 months	20%
3	Draft final report and presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data analysis and triangulation - Responding evaluation questions in report, ensuring DAC-OECD evaluation criteria - Drafting conclusions and recommendations tied with findings - Power point presentation with main contents of the report for initial feedback 	1.5 months	20%
4	Final evaluation report And dissemination workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporation of feedback into final report - Reader-friendly and innovative policy brief - A participatory debriefing/workshop of final report with stakeholders to finalize recommendations 	0.5 month	20%
5	Methodological report for averted marriages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report on the methodology for estimating averted marriages using secondary data 	1 month	20%

7.1 End products

1. An inception report that presents the complete methodology approach to conducting the work, with all tools fully drafted. The inception report will also need to fully develop the data collection and analysis strategy and triangulation methodology. The tools and analytical methods used should explicitly consider gender, human rights and equity dimensions. An evaluation matrix that includes the evaluation questions and maps these to the tools and specific questions in the tools, as well as respondent groups is expected. Ethical considerations need to be included. The inception report should present the proposed content of the final report following the GEROS reporting standards.
2. The inception report will need to be accompanied by a PPT, which needs to be presented and shared with the reference group.
3. Draft Final Report. A final report that adheres to the GEROS reporting standards. The report needs to show a clear flow from objectives and purpose of the evaluation, evaluation questions, methods and tools used to collect and gather information, analytical approach, findings, conclusions and recommendations. Recommendations are expected to be presented and discussed with the reference group.
4. Draft final report PPT: The draft final report is to be presented and discussed with the reference group. Special attention to be taken to the discussion of the recommendations.
5. Final Report. A final report that incorporates comments and inputs given to the draft final report and that adheres to the GEROS reporting standards. The report needs to show a clear flow from objectives and purpose of the evaluation, evaluation questions, methods and tools used to collect and gather information, analytical approach, findings, conclusions and recommendations. The report should aim for conciseness, readability, and visual appeal.
6. The final report will be followed by a participatory dissemination workshop, where the key stakeholders will take part in finalizing the recommendations of the report. This presentation will include maximum 10 slides in the key findings, followed by the initial recommendations that will be presented for discussion.

7. A reader-friendly policy brief that summarizes the key findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation needs to be produced. The firm can choose the format, but it is expected that innovative formats such as infographics or an ebook are used for enhanced readability.
8. **Data archive:** Data gathered in the exercise is transferred in an organized archive that will permit follow-on users to replicate or extend the analysis. Suitable care to be taken in assuring the anonymity of respondents.
9. A stand-alone methodological report that develops a method for estimating the number of prevented marriages as a result of the programme using existing secondary data (MICS 2013, MICS 2019, ECBSS, etc.) and test the methodology using existing secondary data.

The inception report and draft evaluation report will be shared with the evaluation reference group for feedback.

The consulting team will refine the proposed timeframe and expected products in the inception report. UNICEF Bangladesh reserves the right to ensure the quality of products submitted by the external evaluation team and will request revisions until the product meets the quality standards as expressed by the joint EMG.

7. Supervisors and management of the assignment:

The research and evaluation specialist will manage the evaluation. The Chief SPEAR will supervise the overall assignment. The gender specialist will be involved throughout the entire evaluation.

8. Payment schedule:

First payment: 20% upon approval of the inception report and work plan

Second payment: 20% upon approval of fieldwork report and delivery of presentation

Third Payment: 20 % upon approval of draft final report and delivery of presentation

Fourth payment: 20% upon approval of final report and dissemination workshop

Fifth payment: 20% upon approval of a methodological report for estimating averted marriages

9. Qualifications or specialized knowledge/experience required for the assignment:

This evaluation is to be carried out by highly qualified consultants including an evaluation and a thematic expert as well as a research/data Analystist.

The team must demonstrate a clear understanding of the UN system and ensure that the evaluation is conducted in line with the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System and abides by UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct as well as any other relevant ethical codes

The team is expected to be composed of **three** core members. In case none of the core members is from Bangladesh, the team must include a local expert, who will also need to be fully involved throughout the process.

a. Team Leader – Evaluation Expert

The **team leader** must have an extensive experience in leading evaluations or programmes of a similar complexity and character, as well as technical expertise in areas related to child marriage, education, adolescent health, gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights, behaviour and social change. His/her primary responsibilities will be:

- Conducting and leading the evaluation in all its phases and managing the inputs of the other team members throughout the exercise;
- setting out the methodological approach;
- undertaking Bangladesh visits;
- reviewing and consolidating the team members' inputs to the evaluation deliverables;
- representing the evaluation team in meetings with stakeholders;
- delivering the inception reports, and evaluation report in line with the requested quality standards.
- Leading the methodological design for estimating averted marriages
- Lead the cost-effectiveness analysis

Minimum qualification required:

- Master's degree in Development Studies, Sociology, Economics, Social Studies, International Relations or other related field.
- 10 to 15 years of experience conducting evaluations in relevant thematic areas such as adolescents and youth, child marriage, child protection, gender equality and education.
- Experience working with United Nations agencies, particularly UNICEF and UNFPA.
- Awareness of ethical risks in programming around sensitive issues, both in programme delivery and in all aspects of M&E.
- Proven skills in evaluation methodology and mixed methods approaches including quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques.
- Demonstrated expertise/experience in developing results frameworks, tools or guides for monitoring and evaluation;
- Demonstrable experience of ensuring a human rights based approach to evaluation;
- Be fully acquainted with results-based management orientation and practices;
- Excellent report writing skills, analytical skills, and computer skills.
- Excellent command in written and spoken English
- Experience leading teams.

b. Senior thematic expert

The **senior thematic expert** must have knowledge of and expertise in the following areas: (Harmful practices and social norms; child marriage; human rights, including specifically gender equality and the rights of women; education; and sexual and reproductive health. He/she should have a strong ability to interact with a wide range of stakeholders, particularly on issues that are quite sensitive. His/her primary responsibilities will be:

- Contributing to the design of the methodological approach;
- Contributing to the inception and final reports in line with the requested quality standards;
- Undertaking country visits;
- Providing quality inputs to all deliverables.

Minimum qualification required:

- Master's degree in Development Studies, Health, Sociology, Economics, Social Studies, International Relations or other related field.
- 10 to 15 years of experience in relevant thematic areas such as child marriage, harmful social practices, gender
- Experience working with United Nations agencies, particularly UNICEF and UNFPA.
- Experience in participating in programme evaluations on relevant areas.
- Understanding of ethical issues and approaches to informed consent with regards to collecting information on child marriage.
- Excellent analytical, communication and drafting writing skills in English.
- Proven skills in social and behaviour change programming
- Extensive experience in women's human rights and gender equality, with a specific focus on social norm change.

c. One Research/Data Analyst consultant

The **data/research analyst** will support the team leader and thematic expert in data collection, undertaking an in-depth documentary review and preparing inputs to the evaluation report deliverables.

In close cooperation, and under the supervision of the team leader, the data/research analyst is expected to:

- Conduct the data collection and assemble relevant data and information,
- Conduct the analysis of the secondary data sources
- Undertake desk-review of data sources and materials relevant to the independent evaluation and undertake analysis;
- Prepare matrices and other formats required for systematic analysis and synthesis of the material reviewed;

The data/research analyst will have the following qualifications:

- a university degree (MA) in one of social sciences, economics, or in evaluation, statistics, or research methods;
- at least 10 years of experience performing quantitative data analysis with proven expertise in quantitative analysis software (e.g. Stata, SPSS, R)
- preferably research or evaluation experience in gender evaluations and gender-analysis;
- understanding of gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women, equity and child rights as an area of policy and practice;
- excellent analytical, writing and communication skills (English and at least working knowledge of French and/or other UN languages);
- experience with literature/document search and analysis.

d. One local expert (in case none of the above are from Bangladesh)

The local expert must have knowledge of and expertise in the following areas: (Harmful practices and social norms; child marriage; human rights, including specifically gender equality and the rights of women; education; and sexual and reproductive health. He/she should have a strong ability to interact with a wide range of stakeholders in Bangla, particularly on issues that are quite sensitive and ability to interact with the Government. His/her primary responsibilities will be:

- Contributing to the design of the methodological approach;
- Contributing to the inception and final reports in line with the requested quality standards;
- Undertaking desk review, especially of documents that are only available in Bangla, and supporting the collection of necessary documents and data needed for the evaluation
- Ability to set up the required meetings and to plan the fieldwork missions in Bangladesh

Minimum qualification required:

- Master's degree in Development Studies, Health, Sociology, Economics, Social Studies, International Relations or other related field.
- 5-10 years of experience in relevant thematic areas such as adolescents and youth, child marriage, child protection, health, gender equality and education.
- Experience in participating in programme evaluations on relevant areas.
- Understanding of ethical issues and approaches to informed consent with regards to collecting information on child marriage.
- Excellent analytical, communication and drafting writing skills in Bangla and in English.
- Extensive experience in women's human rights and gender equality, with a specific focus on social norm change.

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

CATEGORY	POINTS
OVERALL RESPONSE * Understanding of, and responsiveness to, UNICEF Bangladesh Office requirements; * Understanding of scope, objectives and completeness of response; * Overall concord between UNICEF requirements and the proposal.	5
METHODOLOGY AND DETAILED TIMELINE * Quality and suitability of the proposed approach and methodology including for the additional methodological report on estimation of averted marriages (detailed description of overall approach, draft evaluation matrix, initial sampling design, initial proposed methods, analysis and triangulation, etc.); * Quality of proposed implementation plan, i.e how the bidder will undertake each task and time-schedules; * Risk assessment and ethical considerations - recognition of the risks/peripheral problems and methods to prevent and manage risks/peripheral problems, and inclusion of ethical considerations. * Timelines proposed must be detailed and realistic;	(35) 20 5 5 5

ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY and PROPOSED TEAM	(30)	
* Professional expertise of the firm/company/organization, knowledge and experience with similar projects, contracts, clients and consulting assignments	10	
* Team leader: Relevant experience, qualifications, and position with firm;	10	
* Team members - Relevant experience, skills & competencies;	5	
* Organization of the team and roles & responsibilities;	5	
TOTAL MARKS	70	

For this RFP, the **Technical Proposal** has a total score of 70 points. Bidders must score minimum of 49 points to be considered technically compliant and in order, for the Financial Proposals to be opened. Financial proposal has a total score of 30 points.

The final selection of the bidder will be based on a quality and cost basis as specified in the RFP.

Annexure 15: List of interviewees

List of Interviewees	
Designation	Organisation
Country Representative	UNICEF
Deputy Representative	UNICEF
Representative from Regional Office	UNICEF
Chief, SPEAR Section	UNICEF
Gender & Development Specialist	UNICEF
Communication for Development Specialist	UNICEF
Communications Specialist	UNICEF
Water Sanitation and Hygiene Specialist	UNICEF
Child Protection Specialist	UNICEF
Health Specialist	UNICEF
Education Specialist	UNICEF
Social Protection/Policy Specialist	UNICEF
Planning & Monitoring	UNICEF
Data & Analytics Team, SPEAR	UNICEF
Programme Specialist, Field Services DNCC Focal Person (external)	UNICEF
Chief Field Office, Mymensingh Child Protection Officer	UNICEF
Chief of Field Office, Barisal C4D Child Protection Officer	UNICEF
Chief Field Office, Khulna C4D Officer, Khulna	UNICEF
Chief Field Office, Sylhet Child Protection Officer Planning & Monitoring Officer	UNICEF
Chief Field Office, Rangpur & Rajshahi Child Protection Officer, Rangpur C4D Officer, Rangpur & Rajshahi	UNICEF

Child Protection Manager, CxB Child Protection Officer, CxB Emergency Manager, CxB	UNICEF
Deputy Director, M&E, DSHE	DSHE
Senior Curriculum Specialist, NCTB	NCTB
Asst. Director, Program	Bangladesh Betar, Ministry of Information
Director, ICT	Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh under Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA)
PM(A&RH), MCH-S Unit, DGFP	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Additional Secretary, People's Republic of Bangladesh	Social Welfare Ministry
Project Director, APC Project, Senior Programme Officer, Multi Sectoral Programme to End Violence Against Women;	Ministry of Women and Child Affairs
Development Advisor	Canada Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) High Commission of Canada Bangladesh.
Social Development Adviser	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Bangladesh
Senior Program Development Specialist Gender, Donor Coordination and GOB Liaison	USAID-Bangladesh
Assistant Health Officer	DNCC and Focal Point for ECM Project
President	Takerbari Child Protection Committee
Religious Leader	Takerbari Child Protection Committee
Ward Councilor	Ward No. 2, DNCC
Ward Councilor	Ward No. 2, DNCC

Senior Teacher	Uttar Kalshi Ideal High School, Mirpur, Dhaka
Father	Beguntila, Kalshi, Mirpur, Dhaka
Mother	Beguntila, Kalshi, Mirpur, Dhaka
Member	Adolescent Club Tekerbari, Mirpur, Dhaka
Member	Adolescent Club Beguntila, Kalapani, Mirpur, Dhaka
Non-member adolescent girl	Beguntila, Kalapani, Mirpr, Dhaka
Executive Director	Coast Trust
Member	Adolescent Club, Lalmohon, Bhola
Member	Adolescent Club, Lalmohon, Bhola
Member	Adolescent Club, Lalmohon, Bhola
Mother of adolescent club member	Gazaria, Lalmohon, Bhola
Member CBCPC and Female Ward Member	7 No. Poschim Choron Union Paarishad, Lalmohon, Bhola
Member	8 No. Ward, Charvota Union parishad, Lalmohon, Bhola
Teacher	Secondary School of Lalmohan Upazilla
Marriage Registrar	Lalmohon Sadar, Bhola
Project Coordinator	Coast Trust
Upazilla Nirbahi Officer	Lalmohon, Bhola
District Commissioner	Bhola
Member	Adolescent Club, Jogir Ghopa, Jamalpur
Member	Jogir Ghopa Adolescent Club, Jamalpur

Member	Jogir Ghopa Adolescent Club, Jamalpur
Religious Leader	Jogir Ghopa, Jamalpur
General Secretary	CBCPC, Jogir Ghopa, Jamalpur
Mother	Jogir Ghopa, Jamalpur
Head Teacher	Jamalpur High School
Deputy Director (Deputy Secretary)	DC Office, Jamalpur
Upazilla Nirbahi Officer	Jamalpur Sadar, Jamalpur
Regional Manager	BRAC, Jamalpur
Member	Adolescent Club, Dacope, Khulna
Member	Adolescent Club, Dacope, Khulna
Member	Adolescent Club, Dacope, Khulna
Member	CBCPC, Dacope, Khulna
Member	CBCPC, Dacope, Khulna
Father of an adolescent club member	Dacope, Khulna
Marriage Registrar	Dacope, Khulna
Member	1 No. Pankhali Union, Dacope, Khulna
Member	1 No. Pankhali Union, Dacope, Khulna
Mother of an adolescent club member	Dacope, Khulna
Teacher	Dacope, Khulna
Executive Director	Rupantar
Upazilla Women Affairs Officer	Dacope, Khulna
Deputy Secretary	Directorate of Women Affairs, Khulna
Coordinator	RDRS
Marriage Registrar	6 No. Kishoregonj Sadar Union, Nilphamari

Member	Kishoregonj Sadar Union, Nilphamari
President	Keshba Adolescent Club, Kishoregonj, Nilphamari
Secretary	Tarunner Joyjatra Adolescent Club, Kishoregonj, Nilphamari
Member	Adolescent Club, Keshba Model Para, Kishoregonj, Nilphamari
Mother	Keshba Moidan para, Kishoregonj, Nilphamari
Father	Keshba Moidan para, Kishoregonj, Nilphamari
Member	Kishoregonj Sadar Union, Nilphamari
Head Teacher	Motlobia Dakhil Madrasa, Kishoregonj, Nilphamari

Annexure 16: Evaluation rubric

The general rubric ranking may be interpreted as follows:

Rating	Description
Excellent	Excellent implies that the programme has met all set targets for the context to be addressed. Gradual improvements may be required, if the context so demands
Good	Good implies that while the programme has shown correct efforts to address the context. There may be room for improvement with respect to strengthening efforts in a manner that allows for sustainable and long-term change
Adequate	Adequate implies that the programme has met basic expectations on the whole. Significant enhancement may be required for better overall impact
Poor	Poor implies that the programme has not met basic expectations and/or not shown minimally acceptable progress on the whole. Immediate and major improvements are critical

Performance of the programme against the evaluation rubric is as follows:

Evaluation Parameter	Evaluation Question	Ranking: Excellent/Good/Adequate/Poor	Rationale
Relevance	To what extent is the programme relevant and responsive to contribute toward ending child marriage in Bangladesh? To what extent has the programme been designed in a way that is responsive to different groups in the society, their own contexts and needs?	Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through an emphasis on adolescent empowerment, community mobilisation and awareness, institutional strengthening and law enforcement, BCO has identified and responded to the context of adolescent girls in Bangladesh. Interventions were carried out through a multitude of strategies that recognise the fact that while the occurrence of child marriage is primarily attributed to underlying harmful gender norms and structures, causality analysis highlights the multi-faceted and complex nature of key drivers in the country The Evaluation notes that ECM's programming and objectives are in coherence with Government enactments such as the National Women Development Policy- 2011, the National Children Policy- 2011, the Children Act- 2013 and the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017 to ensure and protect child rights. Additionally, the programme is aligned to international policies like the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention

Evaluation Parameter	Evaluation Question	Ranking: Excellent/Good/Adequate/Poor	Rationale
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration, including the Action Plan and Beijing platform • ECM programme adopted a multitude of strategies to address the complexities associated with prevalence of child marriage through the identification of issues related to different regions and social groups. BCO's ECM efforts were designed using three approaches – area-based approach, lifecycle approach and multisectoral approach. As per the Strategy Note, the choice of intervention districts takes cognisance of child marriage prevalence rates and geographical factors, to address the issue of scale, both by addressing beneficiary numbers and seizing the opportunity of positive contamination and cross-district learning at the divisional levels. Districts with high prevalence rates of child marriage were identified from MICS 2013
	To what extent do the programme strategies and activities address structural drivers of (gender) inequality?	Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECM programme encompasses various strategic efforts including separate interventions for adolescent girls and boys; engagement of fathers in parent groups to sensitise them on the negative impact of child marriage, life skills development and peer education training with a focus on the prevention of child marriage and active involvement of the Community Based Child Protection Committee (CBCPC), union women and child abuse prevention committees

Evaluation Parameter	Evaluation Question	Ranking: Excellent/Good/Adequate/Poor	Rationale
	To what extent is the ToC that guides the ECM work in Bangladesh well developed, aligned with the Bangladesh context, based on robust evidence and realistic in its assumptions and pathways of change	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BCO ECM efforts in Bangladesh were predominantly guided by the National level TOC and GPECM TOC. The National level TOC was formulated through a participatory process, which became the base note for BCO's ECM strategy. Within the CPD 2017-2020, ECM was included within the TOC for Outcome 3. It is key to note here that this TOC is not ECM focused, but provides an overarching framework for child protection. The GPECM TOC presents itself as a guide for ECM efforts and Bangladesh was one of the countries to formally adapt the TOC. While the TOCs have been found to be contextually relevant, certain limitations have been highlighted. For instance, while the BCO ECM Strategy Note has identified gender-based violence as a key driver of child marriage, the same is not visible in the GPECM TOC. As a result, it has not found an explicit focus in the Strategy Note for ECM
	How well aligned is UNICEF ECM programme with the National Plan of Action strategies and pillars? Are there clear strategies of the NPA that UNICEF should focus on during the next ECM programme given UNICEF's expertise?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECM efforts are in line with the strategic directions outlined in the Government of Bangladesh's Draft National Action Plan to End Child Marriage, sector priorities outlined in policy documents of line ministries, and development priorities enlisted by key donors. For instance, the NAP to ECM objective focusing on "empowerment of adolescents including increased opportunities for adolescent girls to acquire life-skills and participate in decision-making within the family and community on issues that affect their lives" is aligned to Outcome 3 of BCO's CP, BCOs ECM Strategy Note. Other objectives, including enhancing "access to quality education, health, nutrition, protection, and water and sanitation services" are covered under the various UNICEF sectoral programmes to ECM in the country

Evaluation Parameter	Evaluation Question	Ranking: Excellent/Good/Adequate/Poor	Rationale
	To what extent has the programme been implemented following a human rights, equity and culturally sensitive approach?	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome 3 of 2017-2020 Country Programme had a focus on most deprived adolescents and groups and their communities. Active involvement of decentralised structures, communities and adolescents was encouraged in the development of evidence-based policies and strategies and implementation of high-impact interventions to achieve universal coverage of basic social services. However, given the socio-cultural context of Bangladesh, there was limited acceptability of children's rights and participation and reluctance amongst parents to discuss issues adolescents face, challenging the implementation of a culturally sensitive programme
Effectiveness	To what extent has the ECM programme achieved or is on track to achieving its planned results in all its 5 strategies? Has the combination of these strategies been able to prevent and stop child marriages in programme areas? Has there been evidence of spill over effects of the programme into non-programme areas? If so, is there evidence of what the main change factors that are being spilled over?	Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While UNICEF efforts for ECM in Bangladesh have led to the development of the starting point for positive change, certain operational difficulties and challenges stemming from sectoral convergence requirements have hindered progress such as different implementation timelines of the interventions. Therefore, focused and continued efforts will be required at the individual, community, institutional, state and policy level for a strong impact on the agenda to end child marriage In the absence of a combined RBM, results of the interventions were mapped through sectoral systems. There is a requirement for clear guidelines to aid in the direct attribution of progress to ECM interventions and/or others such as the GPECM, decreasing the risk of overlap in reporting of results Despite the absence of a clear and independent separation between progress attributed to BCO ECM interventions and/or GPECM interventions in reporting systems, output/outcome performance for Outcome 3 of the BCO CPD 2017-2020 has been found to be on track. Similarly, the GPECM was able to widen its impact base in 2018 for most outputs through the application of pool funding COVID-19 resultant restrictions and exacerbated vulnerabilities had an adverse impact on the progress recorded by the country for ECM. Momentum achieved by BCO has also been highly impacted by the pandemic, along with a delay in

Evaluation Parameter	Evaluation Question	Ranking: Excellent/Good/Adequate/Poor	Rationale
	<p>Considering the 5 strategies, what have been the supporting and constraining factors? Were there any unexpected results (positive or negative)?</p>	<p>Adequate</p>	<p>implementation of planned interventions and limiting spill over effects in non-programme areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy efforts led jointly by UNICEF and UNFPA allowed for cementing of the agenda for ECM at the highest levels of government and state. Efforts to collaborate with existing platforms such as LCG WAGE also enabled supportive collaboration • As an institutional mechanism, schools provide a strong platform to mobilise adolescent voices towards their empowerment. BCO ECM efforts effectively leveraged the same and extended the impact base through the formation of adolescent clubs. However, within the context of Bangladesh, there is also a need to prevent potential social backlash against those adolescents who participate in the interventions. Preventing this backlash through the creation of an enabling environment is key to delaying the age of marriage if adolescent girls. Further, livelihood and income generation activities can have a greater impact if adequate resources and time is invested in the same • As a catalytic seed fund, the GPECM Phase 1 recorded significant success through the adoption of a pilot model. This was taken a step further in DNCC where the implementation model through the city corporation fostered ownership and accountability at the governance level, allowing for greater outreach • Despite being a key government priority in the country, in the absence of holistic ownership and accountability, the agenda for ECM is obstructed by legal impediments. For instance, national laws have often been found to conflict with customary laws in the country. Moreover, the passing of CMRA 2017 along with the inclusion of the special provision is a cause for concern • Translation, understanding and implementation of national laws and action plans at the ground level remains limited. Additionally, MoWCA as the lead agency is significantly inhibited in having a positive impact in the absence of an on-

Evaluation Parameter	Evaluation Question	Ranking: Excellent/Good/Adequate/Poor	Rationale
			ground cadre. The agency's limited capacity also prevents effective usage of resources and mobilising prompt action from other key ministries
	Has the programme been gender transformative and achieved gender-transformative results?	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies adopted and interventions designed for ECM adopted a direct focus on addressing harmful gender norms and foundational factors that encourage child marriage. For instance, the LSBE training module imparted through Adolescent Clubs focused on creating "agents of change" within the community. Over time, adolescent clubs also began to cater to and include boys, at least 30 per cent, in some districts. Along with this, BCO C4D interventions recognised that communication is key to transforming harmful social norms, promoting messages that encourage long-term social and behaviour change. These interventions recorded significant successes in terms of number of people reached with the messaging • SBCC strategies focusing on girls and at the community level in Bangladesh have been supported by a focus on enhancing existing systems of education, health and child protection. Community courtyard sessions were carried out with parents and key community influencers to ensure that adolescents were encouraged to utilise the services. However, challenges were also recorded for the same given the conservative context of Bangladeshi society that prevents access to services. Further, the evaluation also finds that there is a need to engage more intensively with boys and men as envoys for gender equality, and also focus efforts on girls and boys from early childhood to address the understanding of gender and norms at a foundational level

Evaluation Parameter	Evaluation Question	Ranking: Excellent/Good/Adequate/Poor	Rationale
Efficiency	Relating to the GPECM portion of work, has the joint programme and management structure with UNFPA at the country level facilitated achieving results and efficient delivery? Which areas have gained the most from this programme and which one the least?	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF and UNFPA carried out GPECM interventions without any combined planning, except at the national level and for policy advocacy purposes. As a united voice, both organisations were able to leverage their expertise and resources, while taking into account differences at the country level, and had clearly defined roles and responsibilities as per their competencies. Along with advocacy, critical focus was also placed on evidence generation activities, crucial for replicability and scale up. The GPECM was also important in streamlining various C4D initiatives and bringing about cohesiveness on C4D interventions such as ECM messages and community engagement. While there was no joint implementation at the district level, except in Jamalpur, the GPECM played a crucial role in creating a pool of funding and engaging with stakeholders to inform national level policies, planning and strengthen programme design. However, there were challenges with respect to coordination at field level, thereby restricting impact
	Relating to the GPECM portion of work, to what extent has being part of a global programme facilitated linkages and synergies to accelerate efforts to end child marriage within UNICEF and its partners?	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The GPECM took into account the need for convergent and multi-sectoral programming to address an issue such as ECM. This is evidenced by the efforts invested for horizontal, vertical and geographical convergence. There was also a strong focus on thematic convergence led by the government. At the district level, both organisations worked jointly only in Jamalpur, while <i>upazillas</i> were divided between them to avoid duplication of efforts. Additionally, there was no single management structure or fund pool; both organisations functioned as per their independent mandates and structures

Evaluation Parameter	Evaluation Question	Ranking: Excellent/Good/Adequate/Poor	Rationale
	What key principles have determined where UNICEF has mainly spent its resources for ending child marriage? Have high impact areas been prioritised?	Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource allocation and funding priorities were guided by Government and UN priorities. However, as resources were limited to address root causes, the criticality of having concerted efforts with various development partners and pushing for coordination with PMO and MoWCA to influence ECM agenda is key to enhance the impact of the programme. Nonetheless, the GPECM helped teams look beyond their sectoral mandates and refine programming efforts An overall challenge was limited funding. For an effective impact of ECM efforts, multi-sector collaboration, adequate sector funding and appropriate monitoring mechanisms are key. Enhancing funding gaps would help in increasing prioritisation to enable addressing a lot of root causes that may not otherwise be covered under individual programme mandates. Subsequent programmes and phase II planning requires concerted focus on these aspects holistically and strategically
	Has the country programme structure of a life cycle approach facilitated efficient delivery of results?	Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The life cycle approach adopted by the BCO CPD 2017-2020 fostered partnership and collaboration between different sectoral teams. Moreover, it was instrumental in bringing line ministries and various stakeholders under one umbrella to work towards ECM. While this approach did see success, as the life-cycle approach was adopted for a four-year period and with BCO making a shift from the life-cycle approach to a life-cycle lens to guide its next country programme (starting 2021), it remains too early for this evaluation to comment on the efficiency of the life-cycle approach and its delivery of results. Especially because delivery of results for ECM requires long-term and sustained efforts

Evaluation Parameter	Evaluation Question	Ranking: Excellent/Good/Adequate/Poor	Rationale
Sustainability	To what extent are there sustainability considerations built into programme implementation?	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability was promoted through various strategies, including advocacy, institutionalisation, strengthening systems and social workforce, developing capacities and mobilising complementary funding. Aligned to this, interventions at the community level were delineated keeping long term achievements as a key expectation. For example, efforts like capacity building and training of teachers, SMC members, adolescent girls and district, installation of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene blocks, handwashing stations supported by the GoB, separate latrines for girls and boys with MHM facilities for girls were carried out Efforts that focused on adolescent girls' empowerment had a strong impact on strengthening girls' knowledge and abilities, resulting in an increase in their sense of confidence. ECM programming in Bangladesh adapted multiple approaches to identify and respond to the heightened vulnerability of children through C4D interventions, capacity building, F2F counselling, and rolling out of perception polls. However, the evaluation notes that the sustainability of the ECM agenda is heavily dependent on the ability and capacity of key stakeholders to further enhance it and carry it forth in the absence of external influences. For example, efforts to ensure rolling membership in adolescent clubs is crucial to ensure that the platform may be sustained in the long-term
	To what extent has the programme generated/is in the process of generating robust evidence that supports the scaling up of a successful intervention to allow for the government to take these over in the future?	Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of evidence to strengthen programmatic efforts was a significant part of interventions for other BCO sectors such as child protection and data and analytics unit, among others. MoWCA has used new evidence generated by the report on "Ending Child Marriage: A profile of progress in Bangladesh" which was published along with UNICEF headquarters in New York. MoWCA used evidence to revise the national targets for Ending Child Marriage (ECM) for Bangladesh's Eighth Five Year Plan. Moreover, BCO country programme contributed towards the overall evidence generation focus by producing a study titled 'Context of Child Marriage and its Implications in Bangladesh'

Evaluation Parameter	Evaluation Question	Ranking: Excellent/Good/Adequate/Poor	Rationale
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite a strong focus on evidence generation and isolated examples of successes across intervention areas, at present, there is no proven model for national level success on ECM. To understand scalable practices, the country has an opportunity for the first time through the GPECM to test and understand which strategies and combination of strategies could do impact at various levels of governance across the country. To leverage this opportunity and understand medium- and long-term impact in addressing ECM, more resources and dedicated budget is needed

Evaluation Parameter	Evaluation Question	Ranking: Excellent/Good/Adequate/Poor	Rationale
	<p>To what extent has the programme been able to generate an enabling environment and strong involvement of key stakeholders at different levels (individual, family, community and local authorities) that will prevent gains in social norms to go back to pre-programme levels even in the absence of further interventions? Has the programme reached a tipping point where social norms and gender transformative results are strongly rooted in all these levels?</p>	<p>Adequate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCO ECM efforts focused on providing adolescents with adequate knowledge and access to services combined with addressing key drivers of child marriage to effectively delay their age of marriage. Advocacy through the GPECM was carried out at targeted levels to foster ownership over the ECM agenda. However, there is scope to strengthen this approach. For instance, while the Global Programme focused on select districts, for scale and sustainability increased geographical coverage is key. This need is evidenced by the variation in registration statistics for between programme and non-programme areas, with the former recording a much higher number • BCO programme efforts have significantly included a strong focus on investing in masculinities, through engagement with religious leaders, C4D communication and community-based strategies and interventions. However, while funds have been utilised to engage with boys in terms of health interventions, a limited number of boys have been found to regularly utilise available services. Similarly, while WASH services have been provided for in schools through BCO efforts, maintenance of the same was recorded as a challenge. Government ownership and accountability is key for scale-up and sustainability. Therefore, while the evaluation notes that BCO's ECM efforts have laid down the groundwork and established a starting point for transformative results and towards the achievement of the tipping point, significant and continued investment and support is essential to achieve desired results and secure the tipping point where transformative results and gains are embedded and self-sustained at all levels

Annexure 17: Human interest stories

Agent of Change: Kabita* and her journey

Losing her father at the age of 12, Kabita and her mother were left completely on their own. Enrolled in the local government primary school, Kabita was only able to complete her education till grade 5 and her mother had to take on work as a domestic helper to make ends meet. Kabita resides in *Beguntila* slum under *Mirpur Thana* of Dhaka North City Corporation.

At the age of 17, Kabita joined the *Beguntila* Adolescent Club and was able to partake in all trainings and empowerment sessions of BCO ECM programming. She proudly states “The ECM programme has changed my life completely. I have learned many things from this program which made me empowered to a great extent. I am capable enough to stop child marriage within my community. I know where I should go, whom I should call to stop child marriage. I can talk about physical and mental changes during adolescence period with boys and my family members. I know adolescents should not feel shy to share this information with others. All these things were possible because of my involvement with adolescent club.”

Kabita has been actively working to change the mind-set of her community regarding child marriage, gender discrimination, adolescent friendly health services etc. Besides, she is also supporting out of school adolescent girls to access technical and vocational education. She also works to protect children and adolescents from child labour and all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation

*Name changed for confidentiality

From Rebel to Revolutionary

As a member of an Adolescent Club in *Lalmohon Sadar Upazilla* of Bhola district, eighteen year old Rozina*, was able to build her capacity and gain awareness on the rights of adolescents and the negative consequences of child marriage. As a result of this learning and opportunity, on being forced into marriage by her family, she was able to fight back and successfully delayed her age of marriage. Currently, she is studying in a local college with dreams of a better future.

She says, “I was treated as a “bad girl” by my family and community members when I joined the adolescent club and started speaking against child marriage. I used to share information on menstrual health and hygiene with my friends and other girls and advised them to use sanitary napkin during their period. That is why many people thought that I am a bad girl. I talked about things which I was not supposed to talk as per the traditional social norms and thus I am spoiling other girls. But I did not care and kept going.”

Rozina has also supported a number of adolescent girls to continue their education and delay their age of marriage. To prevent poor children from dropping out of schools, she also advocated with teachers for the waiver of tuition/exam fees. In her words, “I feel proud that almost all the people in my community know me as a fighter against child marriage. All the government officials at the *Upazilla* level know me personally. You go and ask. You will find everybody recognize me for my contribution to end child marriage. This was possible because of this ECM program.”

*Name changed for confidentiality

A Soldier's Tale of Empowerment

Married off at the age of 13, Moyna* Begum, mother of two girls, resides in *Keshba Moidan Para* of *Kishoregonj Upazilla* under Nilphamari district. She had to suffer gravely as a child bride and committed herself to ensuring that neither her daughters nor other adolescent girls were pushed into child marriage.

Through attendance at courtyard meetings and other activities of BCO's ECM efforts, Moyna strengthened her voice and ability to fight against the social evil of child marriage. Simultaneously, she also works to mobilise the opinions of other mothers in her community. Known to all in her village as the 'Soldier fighting against child marriage', Moyna actively prevents child marriage in her community. She has also committed to educating her daughters so that they can live an empowered life.

She says, "how can I motivate others against child marriage if I don't practice it myself?", crediting her momentum and courage to fight to her involvement with the ECM programme.

*Name changed for confidentiality