

Global Child Protection Thematic Report

SC 149906

UNICEF-Eritrea



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AU	African Union
CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
ECO	Eritrea country Office
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GoSE	Government of the State of Eritrea
MoLHW	Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare
MRE	Mine Risk Education
NUEW	National Union of Eritrean women
SPCF	Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework
TWG	Technical working Group
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance

Executive Summary

Child Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and injuries and disabilities related to landmines and Unexploded Ordnances (UXO) and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) are among the key factors negatively affecting the lives of Eritrean children. Twenty per cent of women age 25 to 49 were married by age 15, and 49 per cent were married by age 18. While declining trends are observed among young children aged fifteen and five with 33 per cent and 12 per cent FGM prevalence rates respectively, the corresponding figure for Eritrea remains at 83 per cent.

The 2015-2016 rolling work plan with the Government of State of Eritrea (GoSE) integrated strategies that address these child related challenges. Whilst FGM and Mine Risk Education programmes commenced at the early stages of the Country programme, child marriage intervention was only initiated in 2015. A national prevention forum was undertaken that brought together all the key players. Formative research on the drivers and possible interventions to eliminate child marriage is ongoing. GoSE made a presentation at the African Charter on the Welfare of the Child in Gambia that resulted in several recommendations that the government is implementing to advance children's rights in the country.

During the reporting period, UNICEF supported GoSE to finalize and disseminate the child policy that was drafted in 2015. Under the community-based rehabilitation programme, UNICEF trained 92 CBR workers which resulted in reaching about 5,000 children living with disabilities with psychosocial support, physical rehabilitation, and economic reintegration.

Strategic Context - 2016

The focus of the 2013-2016 Government of the State of Eritrea (GoSE)/United Nations (UN) Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF) and the 2013-2016 UNICEF Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) on child protection programme was to protect children from abuse, violence and neglect. To this end, UNICEF Eritrea main work was on prevention of child marriage, abandonment of FGM, birth registration and community based social assistance. The programme is aligned with the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) regional priorities on child protection.

In 2016, the Eritrea Child Protection Programme continued to focus on high level advocacy to launch the 'end child marriage' national campaign. In addition, communities received support to make public and collective abandonment of harmful social norms such as FGM, to avail cash and non-cash assistance to orphan and vulnerable children, and to provide Mine Risk Education (MRE).

The partners working on the abandonment of harmful social practices expanded from the Ministry of Health to include the Ministry of Labor and Human Welfare and the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW). It is expected that this coalition of stakeholders will create a platform to work towards the SDG goals of Zero FGM and child marriage by the end of 2030.

The presence of landmines and explosive remnants of war continued to impact on the social, economic and humanitarian context and threatens the situation of children and women in the

country. The groups most at risk from landmines and ERW are children and young people. Boys in particular are the most vulnerable while herding livestock or when engaging in agricultural activities. Increasingly, the potential risk of injuries among young people is becoming more evident. From anecdotal evidence, over 655,000 people (60% children) are living under the threat of landmines and ERW.

The 2014 Health Management Information System (HMIS) analysis also revealed that deaths and injuries from violence, road accidents, forest fires, snake bites, domestic burns, falls and landmines have become a significant public health burden. In 2014, the HMIS indicated that 50,767 injury cases were reported. The Ministry of Health estimates that 70 per cent of these victims are children and young people. Due to the widespread nature of these challenges, the integrated MRE, child injuries and violence prevention programmes operate in the six *zobas* in the most hard-to-reach communities. It is estimated that there are over 400 communities contaminated by landmines and ERW that require further MRE and victim assistance services. The 2010 EPHS survey indicated that child marriage prevalence was 41 and 13 per cent respectively for under-eighteen and under-fifteen year old girls.

Results in the Outcome Area

Planned outcome: Improved and equitable prevention of and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health and National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) to empower communities with behavioural change messages to reduce child marriage. Towards this result UNICEF technical support and advocacy resulted in convincing partners to develop a strategic plan with community-based interventions such as community mobilization and further advocacy, based on existing the evidence.

Launching of the campaign to end Child Marriage in 2016 was a key result of UNICEF advocacy efforts with government authorities and the commitment of the government to tackle child marriage. The national campaign is in line with the African Union (AU) initiative for countries with high child marriage prevalence. The event resulted in the first ever joint government, national associations and the UN system commitment to increase their support to curb child marriage. The Minister of Health, the President of the National Union of Eritrea Women, Representatives from the Minister of Labour and Human Welfare, religious leaders and children's representatives addressed and confirmed their firm support to end child marriage.

In summary, the key messages from the proceedings of the meeting emphasized the need to strengthen law enforcement mechanism for existing legal provisions; to develop and implement the National Strategic Plan to end Child Marriage; to strengthen the programme's multi-sectoral approach; and to involve religious leaders.

A paper presented by Chief Judge from the Ministry of Justice and academic institutions also indicated the need for strengthening the legal enforcement of the existing law and changing of social norms within the communities.

UNICEF technical and financial support were vital in establishing a technical working group (TWG) led by NUEW and comprising of partners from the Ministry of Health, Education, National Development, Labour and Human welfare, the Union of Eritrean Youth and Students, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, and UNHCR. This TWG will develop a road map to end child marriage. The TWG reviewed and approved terms of reference for the conduct of formative research on the root causes of child marriage. The TWG also reviewed the qualitative tools to ensure key determinants of child marriage were integrated. A consultancy firm from the Eritrean Higher Education Institution was identified to undertake the research. Data were collected from three out of the six *zobas*. Data collection from the rest of the three *zobas*, analysis and report that leads to the development of National Strategic Plan to End Child Marriage are expected by end of March, 2017.

As a result of the concerted efforts, about 80,000 community members were sensitised on the prevalence and the dynamics of child marriage. In addition to the sensitisation campaign, focus-group discussions with adolescents were also held in specific health facility catchment areas in all *zobas*. The adolescent-led discussions were attended by religious leaders, government authorities, youth and women association representatives. The Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare report indicated that the engagement of religious leaders to tackle early marriage is crucial and should be emphasised in the future.

Funding from the Global thematic allowed UNICEF to support the GoSE in the strengthening the legal framework for protecting children from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation; UNICEF supported the Government in finalising and disseminating the national children's policy. The Children's Policy was disseminated among key partners after a consensus building workshop was held with partners, under the coordination of the MoLHW.

To prevent vulnerable children from the risk of landmines and ERW, UNICEF supported the Government to deliver community and school-based integrated MRE in the war-impacted communities. The thematic funds contributed to reaching about 90,000 children (4 per cent of them girls) in affected communities with integrated mine risk education. The results led to an increased awareness of the targeted communities, particularly children and young people. This integrated MRE includes awareness raising initiatives for families and care givers on the protection of children from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

In an effort to promote social services delivery for children living with disabilities, UNICEF supported the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) activities with special emphasis on hard-to-reach communities. The thematic funds contributed to the training of 92 CBR workers who in turn reached about 5,000 children living with disabilities with psychosocial support, physical rehabilitation, and economic reintegration. This support also resulted in an increased awareness on prevention of discrimination and social stigma in the targeted communities, particularly to protect children and young people.

To monitor and supervise community-based programme activities, UNICEF along with implementing partners, conducted field monitoring visits in three regions: *zoba Anseba, Gash-Barka and Maekel*. The joint field monitoring improved the implementation of programme

activities in terms of identifying challenges in a timely manner, assessing progress made, learning lessons and generating evidence for advocacy.

During the reporting period, UNICEF built a sound partnership across health, education, social welfare sectors and other grassroots organisations. UNICEF has continued to provide technical support in the areas of violence against children, promoting community-based social assistance, data gathering, documentation and field monitoring through relevant staff experts. The technical support provided by UNICEF also facilitated the implementation of the community-based programme activities.

Constraints: the key constraint in the implementation of the planned programme activities included a delay in the research which affected the subsequent programme to develop national strategic plan to address child marriage. UNICEF supported the drafting of terms of reference to expedite the process and held several discussions. Another constraint was the lack of clarity of the responsible authority and coordination mechanism to fulfill the obligations of regular monitoring on child marriage as required by the AU.

The 2016 target was to reach 250,000 community members with behavioural change messages to reduce child marriage however the field visit reports indicate about 160,000 community members were reached; mainly through seminars, youth-led dialogues, mass media, health education at health facilities and community mobilization by child wellbeing committees.

Financial Analysis

From the Global Child Protection Thematic Fund (SC 149906), under Child Marriage Prevention output, USD 120,000.00 was disbursed to partners to undertake the research, national strategic plan development and community mobilisation activities.

Table 1: Planned Budget for Outcome Area:

Outcome Area: Improved and equitable prevention of and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children.

Fund Category	All Programme Accounts
Year	2016
Business Area	Eritrea - 1420
Prorated Outcome Area	06 Child Protection

Row Labels	Output Planned
06-03 Violence, exploitation and abuse	480,135
06-04 Justice for children	17,595
06-06 Child Protection and emergencies	87,947
06-08 Child Protection # General	453,696
Grand Total	1,039,373

¹ RR: Regular Resources, ORR: Other Resources - Regular (*add ORE: Other Resources - Emergency, if applicable*)

² Planned budget for ORR (*and ORE, if applicable*) does not include estimated recovery cost.

³ ORR (*and ORE, if applicable*) funded amount exclude cost recovery (only programmable amounts).

Table 2: Country-level thematic contributions received in 2015

UNICEF Eritrea received a programmable amount of USD 364,912.63 from the thematic fund.

Table 3: Country-level thematic contributions received in 2016

Outcome Area: Improved and equitable prevention of and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children.

Thematic Contributions Received for Outcome Area by UNICEF Eritrea in 2016 (in US Dollars)

Donors	Contribution Amount	Programmable Amount
Global-Child Protection Thematic Fund		364,912.63
Total		364,912.63

Financial Implementation

From the total of the Global Child Protection Thematic Fund (SC 149906), under Child Marriage Prevention output, USD 120,000 was disbursed to partners mainly to support the formative research, national strategic plan development and community mobilisation. Part of the cash transfer is being utilized and some of the planned activities were carried over to 2017.

Table 3: Expenditures by Programme Area

Outcome Area: Improved and equitable prevention of and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children in Eritrea

Fund Category	All Programme Accounts
Year	2016
Business Area	Eritrea - 1420
Prorated Outcome Area	06 Child Protection

Row Labels	Expense
All Programme Accounts	1,065,665
06-03 Violence, exploitation and abuse	385,641

06-05 Birth registration	31,097
06-08 Child Protection # General	648,927
Grand Total	1,065,665

Table 4: Thematic expenses by programme area

Fund Category	All
Year	2016
Business Area	Eritrea - 1420
Prorated Outcome Area	06 Child Protection
Donor Class Level2	Thematic

Row Labels	Expense
Other Resources - Emergency	74,899
06-08 Child Protection # General	74,899
Other Resources - Regular	183,933
06-03 Violence, exploitation and abuse	1,852
06-08 Child Protection # General	182,081
Grand Total	258,832

Table 5: Expenses by Specific Intervention Codes

Fund Category	All Programme Accounts
Year	2016
Business Area	Eritrea - 1420
Prorated Outcome Area	06 Child Protection
Row Labels	Expense
06 Child Protection	621,420
08 Cross-Sectoral	443,074
10 Management	1,171
Grand Total	1,065,665

Table 6: Planned budget for 2017**Outcome Area 6: Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse Eritrea**

Output Result	Funding Type	Planned Budget¹	Funded Budget¹	Shortfall²
Community based social assistance	RR	97,000.00	50,000.00	47,000
	ORR	1,570,000	265,000.00	1,305,000.00
FGM abandonment	RR	0	0	0
	ORR	351,031	65,957	285,074
Child marriage prevention	RR	0	0	0
	ORR	207400	160400	47000
Birth registration	RR	0	0	0
	ORR	157,000	50,000	107,000
Sub-total Regular Resources		97,000.00	50,000.00	47,000.00
Sub-total Other Resources – Regular		2,285,431	541,357	1,744,074
Total for 2015		2,382,431.00	591,357.00	1,791,074.00

¹ Planned and Funded budget for ORR (*and ORE, if applicable*) excludes recovery cost. RR plan is based on total RR approved for the Country Programme duration

² Other Resources shortfall represents ORR funding required for the achievements of results in 2015.

Future Work Plan

The Child Protection programme will focus on strengthening community and school-based mine risk education to protect vulnerable children and young people from the threat posed by land-mines and ERW. UNICEF will scale-up humanitarian mine risk education services in additional 133 high and medium war-impacted communities in *Northern Red Sea, Anseba, Gash-Barka and Debub* to reach about 120,000 vulnerable children and women at risk. Furthermore, efforts will be made to promote basic social services for the child victims as well as for children living with disabilities in remote communities through strengthening the Community Based Rehabilitation programme.

The next steps in the prevention of child marriage will be the finalisation and dissemination of the qualitative/formative research to examine the determinants of social norms for child marriage as well as the obstacles to prevent child marriage and to investigate the underlying social norms that sustain the practice of child marriage in Eritrea. The development and launching of a national plan before July 2017 will provide strategic guidance for the implementation of the programme.

Expression of Thanks

UNICEF Eritrea would like to express its profound gratitude to the Global Child Protection Thematic Fund for its generous and continued support to the Child Protection programme to reach vulnerable children and women in hard-to-reach war-impacted communities. Without this significant contribution, it would not have been possible for UNICEF to support efforts to protect children and adolescents from the threat posed by mines and ERW as we work towards a safer environment and the realisation of children's rights in Eritrea.