

# MOZAMBIQUE

end  
child  
marriage

A voice. A chance. A future.

COUNTRY PROFILE

2022



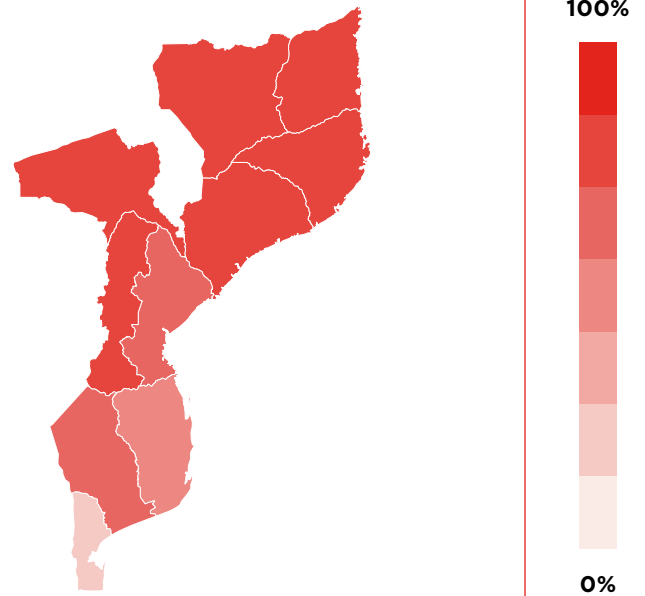
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“ I got pregnant when I was 17. After having a child, I didn't study for two years, because I was in Grade 11 when he married me. When I [lead] my sessions, the girls are able to follow my advice. I'm delighted because, until this day, none of the girls from my sessions have been married.”

— Anica, peer mentor

# MOZAMBIQUE

**FIGURE 1: Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18.**



**Note:** This map is stylized and not to scale. It does not reflect a position by UNFPA or UNICEF on the legal status of any country or area or the delimitation of any frontiers.

## The global context

Child marriage threatens the lives, the well-being and the futures of girls around the world. Globally, the prevalence of child marriage has declined by around 15 per cent since 2010. Nevertheless, COVID-19, climate change and conflict have had lasting effects on poverty, school dropout and inequality, triggering increases in child marriage. UNICEF estimates that the COVID-19 pandemic alone will have put more than 10 million additional girls at risk of child marriage by 2030.

Ending child marriage is a global priority:

93 governments have signed up to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 5.3 to end child, early and forced marriage, and 43 countries either have, or are working on, national action plans to end child marriage. Girls' education is a consistent protective factor against child marriage, with child marriage rates among girls who complete secondary school 66 per cent lower than among girls with no education, and 80 per cent lower among those who complete higher education. COVID-19 increased the number of school dropouts, thereby increasing the risk that girls who are out of school will not return. Girls who drop out of school are significantly more likely marry early, and 87 per cent of married adolescent girls are out of school.

## Global advocacy and dialogue

In 2022, the international community made key commitments to end child marriage at global and regional forums. On 15 November 2022, the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee resolution on child, early and forced marriage,<sup>1</sup> led by Zambia and Canada, was adopted by consensus. A total of 125 Member States sponsored the resolution (compared to 114 co-sponsors the last time the resolution was put forward in 2020). Countries which sponsored the resolution for the first time included: Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mauritius, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Several of the countries have a high prevalence of child marriage — and, by sponsoring, demonstrated their political commitment to ending it. The resolution highlights the urgent need to reach the poorest and most marginalized girls and women—while calling upon the international community to increase its efforts to end child, early and forced marriage. It recognizes how global health threats, climate change, conflicts and forced displacement can have a particularly negative impact on women and girls and which, by extension, can also increase child, early and forced marriage. The resolution appreciates the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage and other

1 See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-seventh Session, Third Committee agenda item 64(a) (A/C.3/77/L.19/Rev.1)*

similar global, regional, and national initiatives, encouraging coordinated and comprehensive approaches across sectors and at all levels.

In March 2022, the Global Programme and partners led a high-level side-event at the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), a session which culminated in the CSW66 Agreed Conclusions, calling for action to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of policies and programmes on climate change, and environmental and disaster-risk reduction. This session, “No Time to Lose: Child Marriage and the Triple Crisis”, enabled United Nations Member States and other stakeholders to improve their collective understanding of the effects of the triple crisis on child marriage, and what could be done in response.



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## Key highlights in 2022



**5 MILLION** men, women, adolescents and children were reached through an **integrated package of messages** on essential family practices, with a specific focus on child marriage.



**4,500** vulnerable adolescent girls, including those out of school, were **trained on life-skills**, entrepreneurship and **gender-transformative sexual and reproductive health** and rights.



More than **16,000** boys and men actively participated in group **education that addresses harmful masculinities** and gender norms.



**1,113** adolescent girls were supported to **continue their education**, including receiving bicycles to get to and from school.



More than **18,000** individuals participated in **dialogue sessions** on the consequences of, and alternatives to, child marriage, **the rights of adolescent girls** and gender equality.



**480** child journalists from 24 districts, trained by the programme, produced more than **150 news reports** and published **30 new videos on child marriage**, girls' empowerment, gender inequality and other issues related to **gender discrimination**.

## Child marriage country context

Mozambique has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world and has the second highest rate in the eastern and southern Africa region, with the practice affecting almost one in every two girls. Some 48 per cent of young women in Mozambique were first married or in a union before the age of 18, (14 per cent before the age of 15), compared with a regional average of 38 per cent in southern and eastern Africa.

Child marriage is more prevalent in rural areas where 56 per cent of young women aged 20–24

years were married by the age of 18, compared with 36 per cent in urban areas. As seen elsewhere in the world, the drivers of child marriage in Mozambique include high levels of poverty, gender inequality, poor access to quality education, limited life choices, cultural norms, especially those related to initiation rites, and high levels of teenage pregnancy.

## Overall programme performance

**TABLE 1:** Summary of output indicator performance (2022)

Indicator	Target	Result
<b>Indicator 1111:</b> Number of adolescent girls (aged 10–19) who actively participated in life-skills or CSE interventions in programme areas	56,533	4,500
<b>Indicator 1121:</b> Number of girls (aged 10–19) supported by the programme to enrol and/or remain in primary or secondary school	2,040	1,113
<b>Indicator 1211:</b> Number of boys and men actively participating in group education/dialogues that address harmful masculinities and gender norms	3,200	16,070
<b>Indicator 1221:</b> Number of individuals (boys, girls, women and men) who participate in group education/dialogue sessions on consequences of and alternatives to child marriage, the rights of adolescent girls and gender equality	21,342	18,079
<b>Indicator 1222:</b> Number of individuals (boys, girls, women and men) reached by mass media (traditional and social media) messaging on child marriage, the rights of adolescent girls and gender equality	3,470,000	5,000,000
<b>Indicator 1223:</b> Number of local actors (e.g., traditional, religious and community leaders) with meaningful participation in dialogues and consensus-building to end child marriage	200	268
<b>Indicator 1231:</b> Number of CSOs newly mobilized in support of challenging social norms and promoting gender equality by the Global Programme (cumulative)	2	1
<b>Indicator 2121:</b> Number of primary/secondary/non-formal schools in programme areas providing quality gender-friendly education that meets minimum standards	100	109
<b>Indicator 2131:</b> Number of service delivery points in programme areas providing quality adolescent-responsive services (health, child protection/ gender-based violence) that meet minimum standards	46	46
<b>Indicator 2211:</b> Number of partnerships (both formal and informal) established to deliver adolescent-responsive social protection, poverty reduction and economic empowerment programmes and services	4	4
<b>Indicator 3111:</b> Number of policies or legal instruments addressing child marriage drafted, proposed or adopted at national and subnational level with Global Programme support (cumulative)	4	3
<b>Indicator 3121:</b> Number of subnational plans with evidence informed interventions to address child marriage	10	10
<b>Indicator 3211:</b> Number of generated evidence and knowledge that focus on what works to end child marriage (cumulative)	6	7
<b>Indicator 3212:</b> Number of generated evidence and knowledge that apply a gender analysis (cumulative)	4	3
<b>Indicator 3221:</b> Number of south-to-south cooperation events (conferences, expert visits, peer consultations, study tours, communities of practice) supported	1	0

## Providing intensive support to marginalized girls

The Global Programme in Mozambique is focused on enhancing the knowledge and life-skills of marginalized adolescent girls and young women, particularly concerning their sexual and reproductive health, relationships and self-esteem, through an approach with community-based peer-to-peer mentorship in safe spaces. The programme, through partnerships with the Government and other organizations, has also established links with social protection initiatives to help economically empower adolescent girls.

In 2022, 4,500 marginalized adolescent girls were reached through the mentorship approach with comprehensive programmes on life-skills, and on sexual and reproductive health and rights education. The programme also supported adolescent girls involved in small businesses to form savings and loans groups to strengthen their mutual support. This included working together to borrow equipment or to jointly produce products for sale. Further, the Global Programme, through the school reintegration process, supported 1,113 marginalized adolescent girls to register and return to formal education during 2022. The programme partners helped to dissolve these girls' marriages before the school reintegration process.

The child helpline, Linha Fala Crianca (LFC), supported by the Global Programme, continues to provide vital information and support to adolescent girls, including training for peer mentors on reporting mechanisms for GBV and child marriages cases.

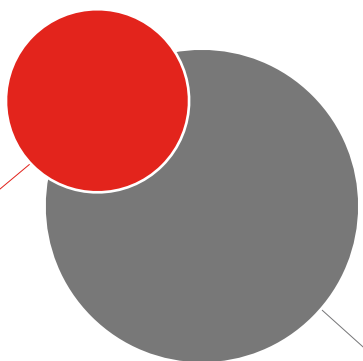
In 2022, the strengthening of LFC resulted in the helpline responding to 170,655 calls, with a total of 4,843 registered cases, a 47 per cent increase in comparison with 2021. A total of 3,576 cases were referred to different services (such as the police, an attorney office, health centres or social workers), out of which 2,694 have been closed (corresponding to 73.3 per cent). Most cases referred to the police/an attorney office are related to child marriage (42 per cent) or sexual violence (28 per cent). The majority of child marriage cases were reported from Nampula and Zambézia provinces, with Angoche district in Nampula having the most cases of registered child marriage through LFC.

## Challenges, lessons learned and next steps

Several factors affected the programme's ability to meet some of the targets set for adolescent girls' empowerment. One challenge is that the process of reintegrating out-of-school children back into formal education in Mozambique takes place during the first semester, at the beginning of the year, and students cannot be enrolled in school once this period has passed. As the programme was unable to register all targeted vulnerable and marginalized adolescent girls during this period, the target could not be met for the year.

In addition, delays in contracting implementing partners and disbursing funds to them due to the start of a new country programme for UNFPA in Mozambique resulted in knock-on delays in implementing activities. In 2023, the programme will focus on accelerating the implementation of activities and scaling up the school reintegration process.

**1.6  
MILLION**  
married  
before  
age 15



**4.7 MILLION**  
married  
before age 18

**Mozambique** is home to nearly **34 million child brides**; **1 in 2** young women were married in childhood.

**FIGURE 2:** Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18.

## Enhancing the family and community environment

In Mozambique, a UNICEF study on social norms and behavioural drivers revealed that many respondents lose confidence in their decision to abandon child marriage due to social pressure or due to their daughters' attitudes and decisions.

Respondents lose confidence if:

- some community members talk badly about their families (42 per cent)
- they are called a bad parent (40 per cent)
- they are called less religious (41 per cent)
- they are not supported by their close social circle (42 per cent)
- their daughters display interest in boys (49 per cent)
- their daughter is at risk of getting pregnant (52 per cent)
- the girl fails in school (51 per cent)
- the girl insists that she wants to get married (46 per cent).

The programme in Mozambique, despite its humanitarian and economic crises, has focused on promoting social and gender norms change through community dialogues, communication for behaviour change, social mobilization and engagement of boys and men for promoting positive masculinities. In 2022, the programme trained an additional 240 mentors to facilitate intergenerational dialogues in more communities, and enabling the programme to reach a total of 16,070 boys and young men to promote positive masculinities. The boys and young men attending the mentorship sessions reported that, although they face challenges and pressure from the sociocultural and religious context of their communities, many of them recognize that “violence is not the right path, but dialogue is”. Mentoring is contributing to the construction of a network of boys and young men that promotes a family and community culture of dialogue, contributing to the enjoyment of human rights by all, freeing the boys and young men from situations of vulnerability that expose them to increased risks of sexually transmitted infections, depression and suicide. According to findings from the reality check qualitative study conducted in 2022, and testimonies from programme participants, the boys and young men's peer-to-peer mentorship in safe spaces has proven to be



an effective way of reaching and engaging them as role models in the promotion of gender equality, positive masculinities and bodily autonomy. Those participating have shown an openness to discuss, learn and adapt a new mindset concerning masculinities and traditional male gender roles in society.

The community dialogues set up by the programme in targeted districts in Nampula province reached a total of 18,079 individuals in 2022. These dialogues are aimed at breaking the culture of silence that continues to hamper the reporting and condemnation of violence against children, including child marriage. The Global Programme, through its partnership with Secretaria de Estado at provincial level, was able to engage 268 community leaders in activities aimed at addressing child marriage, violence against children and birth registration. More than 300,000 people were reached with key messages in these areas, which contributed to the increase of reported cases in community meetings.

The behaviour change communication campaign launched a powerful and highly emotional song on child marriage on the International Day of the Girl (11 October 2022).<sup>2</sup> The song 'Quero Voar' (I want to fly) has reached more than 5 million people with its messaging on ending child marriage. Five graffiti paintings were also painted on schools and in crowded public spaces in Rapale district, Nampula city, Nametil village in Mogovolas district, Monapo and Lalaua, containing messages on child marriage, violence against children and positive masculinities. The process was videoed and disseminated through social media, reaching 819,815 people and recording 6,865 engagements with 255 comments through the different UNICEF social media platforms.

### Challenges, lessons learned and next steps

The beginning of the new UNFPA and UNICEF country programmes affected the implementation of programme activities as new partnership agreements had to be established.

A challenge for the programme is that implementing partners and key actors from civil society and community activists reported difficulties in following up on reported cases of child marriage due to several factors, including insufficient human and financial resources. Further, sometimes community members or leaders are reluctant to provide information about the perpetrator(s)

in cases of child marriage, since they may know, or be related to, the husband or parents of the married girl. The new partnership with International Child Development Programme (ICDP) will help overcome these challenges, given that ICDP has an emergency fund that will help support survivors to be linked to services and will also support following up the case management process, from referral to closure of the case (e.g., legal assistance and psychosocial support/reintegration).

The implementing partners noted good synergy between community activists, mentors, community and religious leaders and paralegals concerning the identification and reporting of cases of child marriage in 2022. This is an area which will be further strengthened in 2023, by including the ICDP as a coordinator.

In 2023, the Global Programme will strengthen partnerships with 'matronas' (traditional birth attendants) and traditional leaders at the community level to address initiation rites as a harmful practice and a form of violence against children. There were four other main priorities for 2023:

- Provincial advocacy training sessions on ending child marriage will be replicated, with member organizations of the Coalition for the Elimination of Child Marriages and Government representatives in Nampula province, after positive outcomes being shown in Zambézia in 2022.
- The application of dedicated, tailored tools for community work on masculinities and men by partners trained in 2022 will be monitored to identify results and potential challenges.
- Evidence will be collected at a national level to identify current dominant models of masculinities and opportunities for synergies with other programmes and actors.
- More evidence will be collected on the impact of community dialogues ending child marriage.

### Strengthening systems

UNICEF conducted a study on Government and non-government managed shelters for women and girls who are survivors of violence, including child marriage. It found a shortage of qualified staff trained in gender-responsive approaches, high turnover rates and low

2 UNICEF Moçambique, 'Quero Voar (I Want to Fly)', 11 October 2022, <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=IS1hI-xLJTg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IS1hI-xLJTg)>.

capacity levels among existing personnel. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action and development partners have made great strides in training service providers in recent years, but this has mainly focused on the operational aspects of service delivery, such as using the single registration form ('ficha única'), case management and monitoring, rather than on how to support survivors from a gender-responsive approach and/or a children's rights-based approach. The ministry does not have enough financial, material or human resources to coordinate the response, and there is still low coverage of services for survivors of violence. The latest 2022 Government statistics indicate there were 11,804 cases of violence against women aged 18–59 years old, including domestic violence, rape and other crimes. Within 2022, ministry social services responded only to 2,450 cases of GBV nationally. Furthermore, the Integrated Centre Assistance and shelter provision is concentrated only in certain provinces, which means services are provided in an uneven and sometimes arbitrary manner.

UNICEF is supporting the Government to implement a national standardized and comprehensive, multisectoral and inclusive case management system. A training programme will be rolled out at household level with a special focus on identifying cases of violence against children, child marriage and the providing psychosocial support. The newly established partnership with ICDP provides technical assistance to the health, women and social action district service (SDSMAS). This will give survivors of violence and child marriage psychosocial support and other services, paid for by an emergency fund. In addition, through the child helpline (LFC), a total of 375 female peer mentors (in Nampula and Zambézia) have been trained to raise awareness on how to identify and refer cases of violence and child marriage. UNICEF further supported the strengthening of LFC services by providing technical equipment and training counsellors and case managers on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and on case management (through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action e-learning platform).

UNFPA has provided technical and financial support to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action for training to improve multisectoral coordination at national, provincial and district levels. This has included paying for regular coordination meetings across sectors. Members of the multisectoral committee and key Government representatives from various sectors were also invited to attend provincial level trainings on Preventing and Combating



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Premature Unions (Law 19/2019). These trainings, for paralegals and community activists, were hosted by the Foundation for Community Development (FDC) and the Nucleus of Women's Associations of Zambézia (NAFEZA) and district attorneys. The subjects covered included:

- the mechanism for the integrated care of GBV and child marriage cases
- relevant reporting mechanisms to local authorities
- how to facilitate community social audits on law enforcement.

UNICEF continues to promote gender equality in accessing and continuing education, and in ensuring that children can learn safely. UNICEF has circulated the violence against children (VAC) referral and reporting mechanism for schools, and the VAC operational plan was approved in 2022. Some 19 (10 female) gender and school health focal points from three districts, have been trained to ensure the effective implementation of the operational plan and the smooth functioning of the reporting mechanism, in collaboration with other institutions. Another 52 members of the multisectoral committee and 55 school managers from 55 schools have been trained on the reporting mechanisms in Nampula province (Monapo, Angoche and Rapale districts). Information on the reporting mechanism and child-friendly brochures were distributed to more than 2,100 teachers, gender and health focal points, and to 22,800 students (11,856 girls).



## Challenges, lessons learned and next steps

UNICEF also assessed the operations of the Reference Groups coordination mechanism led by the Attorney General's Office. High staff turnover has resulted in several members of staff being unclear about their roles. The assessment provided key recommendations to improve this situation, including the need to strengthen the role of the technical working groups which are responsible for tracking cases and providing support for children. Reference groups should balance prevention activities with providing coordination and services.

Limited Government capacity and funds hampered efforts to coordinate the multisectoral mechanism for integrated assistance to girls and women who are survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). The VAC referral mechanism is also a multisectoral approach, which makes implementation and monitoring a challenge, as well as hampering efforts to transform deeply entrenched societal attitudes, norms, stereotypes and gender roles. At Government level, there is also a clear gap between making policy commitments and translating them into programmatic interventions with dedicated resources.

Implementation of the manual for circles of interest in schools remains weak. UNICEF has supported its implementation through the training of facilitators and teachers and recently in the development of a guide for its implementation that includes the areas of gender and climate change, and other life-skills development themes. The CI platform has brought a great impact on the development of life-skills as well as in the prevention of VAC and GBV. A lack of materials has been identified as an obstacle for the creation of circles of interest, so UNICEF plans to create a CI kit in 2023 to overcome this bottleneck and support its implementation. With the support of UNICEF Innocenti, the programme also plans to conduct a qualitative study on the implementation of the CIs, so that recommendations may be drawn on how to strengthen implementation and how to measure the impact on behaviour change and gender-transformative attitudes.

Another UNICEF priority in 2023 will be to develop a school-based mentoring manual and to implement a mentoring programme, to help girls remain in school and transition from primary to secondary school. UNICEF will also support the Ministry of Education and Human Development in translating recommendations from the Safe to Learn initiative into practical actions and suggesting

a framework for monitoring results. UNICEF will also prioritize the replication and scale-up of interventions to address GBV in schools.

Other priorities for 2023 include:

- continuing support for the health, women and social action district service (SDSMAS) through the partnership with the ICDP, and by paying directly for psychosocial support for survivors of child marriage and violence
- adapting standard operating procedures on case management in emergency settings for social workers, based on the experiences collected in Cabo Delgado during 2022
- continuing to support LFC to train all peer mentors and to provide a trend analysis on reported child marriage cases.

## Building partnerships

The programme maintained strategic partnerships with key Government institutions to strengthen the provision of services to children, as well as to ensure service provision is sustainable beyond the lifespan of the programme. In particular, positive engagements with the Supreme Court are facilitating the introduction, in 2023, of mobile courts in Zambézia province for dealing with cases of child marriage and VAC. The programme's partnership with the Attorney Office (PGR) continues with the aim of further strengthening the coordination of service provision through reference groups.

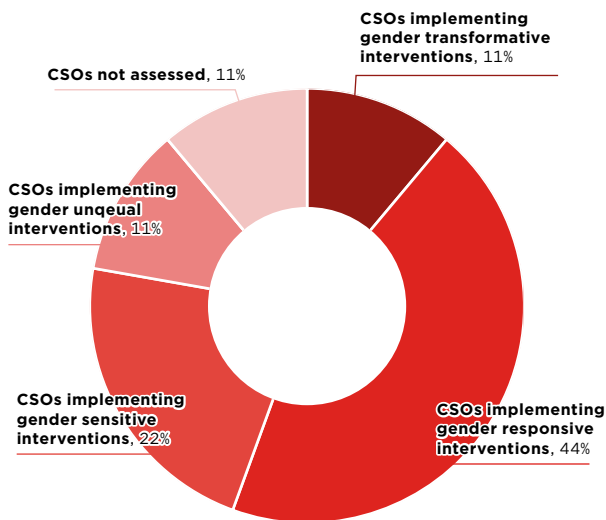
UNFPA, through its partnership with NAFEZA, has provided technical advice and capacity-building support for member organizations of 'Girls not Brides' (CECAP), particularly on advocacy and influence building.

## Investment in and support to youth-led, women-led and feminist CSOs

Partnerships are important for advancing gender-transformative programming and, recognizing this, in 2022, the Global Programme assessed the extent to which the CSOs were implementing gender-transformative approaches. The assessment was based on those partners identified as focusing on promoting girls' and women's rights from the previous year (there were nine of these in Mozambique). The assessment aimed to help guide UNFPA

and UNICEF on how better to identify and support opportunities to advance gender-transformative approaches within the Global Programme.

**FIGURE 3:** Assessment of interventions of partner organizations in Mozambique, on the gender equality continuum



The assessment was conducted by building on information from various online resources, including the CSOs’ websites, reviews of available annual reports, analysis of strategy documents, social media pages, descriptions and commentary about the CSOs from external parties (for example funders, coalitions, or networks), and news articles.

The assessment revealed that more than 50 per cent of CSOs in Mozambique are gender-responsive or gender-transformative. Coalizo, a non-profit group which works to empower girls, in order to reduce the prevalence of child marriage and teenage pregnancy, is an impressive organization. Its theory of change focuses on empowering girls, mobilizing families and communities, providing services and establishing and implementing laws and policies. The organization spends most of its budget on advancing the rights of women and girls. It has confirmed that it has an active process to understand the gender dynamics and consequences of its work and to adapt its work to overcome gender inequalities. Further, it appears to actively monitor its progress to tackle gender equality; changing public opinion and public narratives is a central part of its work. A gender-transformative approach appears to be required for all projects of the organization.

### Challenges, lessons learned and next steps

Despite efforts and investments by UNFPA and UNICEF in strengthening the CSO network in Mozambique, CECAP is still quite weak, with difficulties in coordinating the various interventions carried out at provincial level by the different members, including the Government.

Findings from the CSO assessment also indicate that gender equality and inclusion do not appear to be prioritized by all partner CSOs in Mozambique, as there is limited evidence to suggest that women





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or young people are involved in decision-making or management. Further, there are gaps in terms of policies to advance gender equality. There is no strong sense that CSOs actively incorporate the empowerment of women and girls into their programming or target structural change regarding power dynamics, norms and institutions, rather than merely focusing on the passive delivery of support services to women and girls. Support with messaging and communication may assist the CSOs in better expressing their impact and guidance is needed in terms of policy development as well as training or guidance on monitoring and evaluation. A collective workshop with the CSOs on the importance of systemic change and how to infuse gender-transformative thinking into their work could yield positive results.

## Facilitating supportive laws and policies

The Global Programme, in partnership with the African Union, commissioned an assessment of the level of integration of national and sectoral policies on ending child marriage in the Government budgets of Chad, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria and Zimbabwe in 2022. This integration is aimed at enabling programme staff and their government and civil society partners, to better advocate for, influence and develop regional, national

and subnational programmatic actions and budgets to end child marriage. The findings show a weak link between making policies and plans to guide national responses to harmful practices and their full implementation due to limited human, financial and technical resources. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that governments are allocating negligible amounts, of between 0.01-0.08 per cent of their GDPs (and between  $\approx 0.12$  per cent and  $\approx 1.3$  per cent of central government non-interest expenditure), to programmes addressing child marriage. Specific expenditure on this was only a very small share of relevant ministries' budgets, between  $\approx 0.2$  per cent and  $\approx 0.6$  per cent. As a share of countries' non-interest budgets, specific allocations to deal with child marriage were between  $\approx 0.01$  per cent to  $\approx 0.12$  per cent. The study suggests, however, that, while a lot of expenditure programmes and projects may appear relevant on a superficial level, the detail of their design and targeting is what determines their actual relevance. The study could not find conclusive evidence on change in countries' prioritization of child marriage activities at the aggregate level. Where the study was able to assess growth in detailed spending, it was not possible to discern whether changes occurred because of child marriage being a priority, or because of other factors, such as COVID-19.

In Chad and Mozambique, the COVID-19 budget adjustments had positive implications for spending on social security transfers, and for health, education and, to some extent, women affairs' ministry budgets, and less positive implications for spending on strengthening and implementing the legal framework for child marriage. However, here, too, the study was not able to say to what extent child marriage expenditure was affected specifically by these shifts because the study did not have access to detailed budgets or information on the specific use of sector budgets.

Contributions by development partners to child marriage expenditure is significant. The quantitative evidence supports a commonly held view by country respondents that development partner funding for child marriage is in multiples of the countries' own funding (between  $\approx 5$  and 2.5 times country spending). The volume of development partner expenditure is also driven by large joint social sector programmes. As for countries' own spending, these programmes present opportunities to re-orient existing outlays to also address child marriage better, alongside sector-specific targets (such as poverty reduction or reduced maternal mortality). Countries' own allocations to child marriage are spent predominantly on personnel and office

costs associated with child marriage activities. Development partners finance the non-overhead costs of activities, including recurring costs. While both sets of inputs are necessary to implement child marriage interventions, the high share of development partner funding raises sustainability challenges for child marriage interventions, as well as coordination and efficiency challenges, as development partner funding is often disbursed to non-state implementers.

Overall, the study concludes that the establishment of strategies to counter child marriage is a significant potential systemic anchor point for integrating child marriage into country budgets, but that strategy governance and capacity weaknesses, coupled with broader budget and expenditure system barriers, hampered the integration of child marriage into country and sector budgets.

Currently, UNICEF is providing technical and financial support to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action to develop the new National Plan of Action for Children III (PNAC). The evaluation of the national strategy to eliminate child marriage has also been approved by the Council of Ministers and UNICEF has supported the Government in sharing the results with key stakeholders in Maputo.

### The public policy maturity model

Elimination of harmful practices such as child marriage requires the integration of strategic approaches, processes, systems and information. UNFPA and UNICEF recognize the role national

action plans play in strengthening policy coherence to achieve this. Lessons from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development peer review process emphasize that the plans need:

- political commitment and policy statements
- policy coordination mechanisms
- systems for monitoring, analysis and reporting.

UNICEF has developed and tested a policy maturity model and tools for assessing public policies to end harmful practices and achieve SDG 5.3 by 2030 in 12 countries (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Lebanon, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia).

The maturity model provides a framework for key national stakeholders to review and assess national policy approaches and systems for

- eliminating and preventing female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage
- identifying priorities or critical investments
- building consensus around the interventions.

The model is structured around six intermediate outcomes and different subdomains that are defined by distinct levels of maturity i.e., weak-building; average-enhancing; good-integrating; and excellent-mature (see *Figure 4*).



TABLE 2: Snippet of the policy maturity model

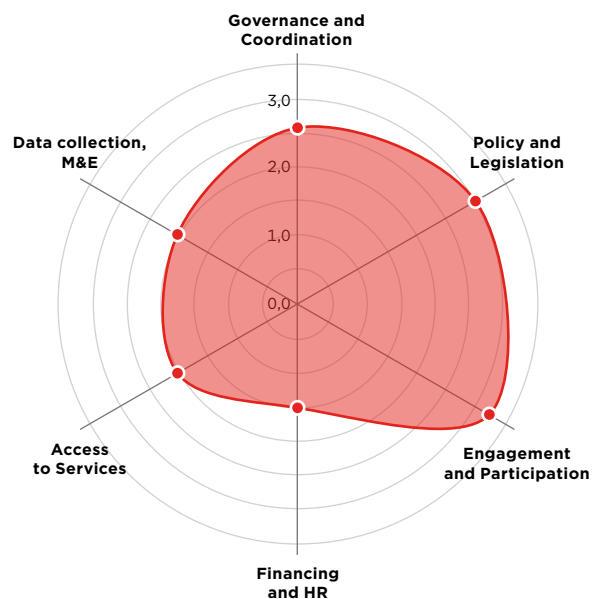
Intermediate Outcome	Sub-Domains	Score
<b>Governance and Coordination</b>	A1: Political Commitment	✓
	A2: Coordination structures	✓
	A3: National Action Plans	✓
<b>Policy and Legislation</b>	B.1: Legislation, policies and implementation mechanisms	✓
<b>Engagement and Participation</b>	C1: Independent complaint mechanism exists for children and women	✗
	C2: Civil Society Engagement, including women and children	✓
	C3: Community based mechanisms for Harmful practices prevention	—
<b>Financing &amp; HR</b>	D1: Financing of harmful practices services	✓
	D2: National budget establishment	—
	D3: National Budget execution	—
	D4: National Budget amount	✗
	D5: National Budget monitoring and review	✗
	D6: Human Resources	✓
<b>Access to Services</b>	E1: Availability of Standard Operating Procedures and/or Protocols for harmful practices services	—
	E.2: Understanding and articulation of harmful practices system	✓
	E3: Modelling testing and scaling of harmful practices services	—
	E4: Availability of harmful practices services, case management and referral systems	✓
<b>Data collection, M&amp;E</b>	F1: Administrative data systems and monitoring to routinely generate data on FGM	—
	F2: Data security and governance	✗
	F3: Research and surveys	—

The benchmarks for each level of maturity have been defined and require certain priorities, processes, and results to be achieved for each subdomain, and can be contextualized by country. Feedback from the testing emphasized the role of the model as:

- a useful advocacy tool
- something that builds Government accountability and action towards elimination of harmful practices
- a tool to review and track the implementation of a national action plan.

On average, overall country ratings on a 4-point scale ranged from 1.8 (weak-building in Bangladesh) to 3.0 (good-integrating in Zambia). Financing and human resources (rating 1.3) emerged as the area where countries were rated the least, while governance and coordination (rating 2.7) were rated highly.

FIGURE 4: Policy maturity assessment for Mozambique



## Challenges, lessons learned and next steps

The delay by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action in approving the child-friendly brochure on the new child marriage law (which took 10 months) delayed, in turn, the implementation of activities dependent on the roll out of the brochure.

## Generating and applying data and evidence

UNFPA conducted a third reality check study to understand how COVID-19-related factors have directly or indirectly influenced the vulnerability of girls and young women in Zambézia and Nampula provinces. In particular, the study focused on understanding the secondary effects of COVID-19 and how, or if, these led to an increased rate of teenage pregnancy or child marriage and what is required in order to get the programme back on track to meet the SDG target. Five case studies were produced based on the main report. The results of the study were presented by the consultants in a virtual meeting in October 2022 to the National Youth Partners Group. More than 20 key actors from the development community participated in the meeting, including Government representatives, donors, United Nations agencies and development banks.

The overall programme component evaluated in this study regards male involvement and positive masculinities. The report highlighted the structural challenges that implementing partners encounter in communities when raising awareness and bringing about expected change. Emphasis was given to the lack of adequate infrastructure to conduct mentoring sessions, the lack of employment for young

men, poverty and the high level of consumption of alcohol and other drugs. The study reported that the boys and young men involved in the programme suggested that it should include sessions on economic empowerment and business startup kits also for boys, given the many challenges to find employment which have risen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The other identified challenge was with the social and gender norms prevalent in the communities. The results note that in families, girls and boys are treated differently. Boys are awarded more privileges than girls. Families invest more in boys, including in their education. However, boys who are not the oldest among the children encounter challenges because they are less likely to be educated and more likely to be encouraged to engage in sex relationships with girls and drop out of school. Their role is to produce grandchildren to look after the family. Despite the challenges, reports from implementing partners show that some changes are beginning to be noticed among the boys involved in the mentoring sessions, who demonstrate understanding and acceptance of the law against early unions, and the adoption of non-violent attitudes and dialogue as the only option for family harmony.

UNFPA supported the National Statistical Institute in the roll out of the 2017 national census and the subsequent production of various thematic studies based on the census during the year. The Child Thematic Study contains key data on child marriage in Mozambique, including contributing factors/ causes and trends based on district-level data. UNFPA also supported the production of an accompanying Child Thematic Study Policy Brief and a Child Marriage Census Data Factsheet, along with the dissemination of census data findings through presentations to various audiences, including to the National Youth Partners Group.



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