

ADVOCATING ON THE ISSUE OF CHILD MARRIAGE AND EARLY UNIONS (CMEU) IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:



2023

THE CASE OF UNICEF DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. Understand the involvement, contribution, and inputs of the UNICEF country office in the Dominican Republic to the process of building a public policy through the positioning of the problem of child marriage and early unions on the public and governmental agenda.
2. Describe good practices and lessons learned from the advocacy actions implemented.
3. Contribute to improving the design and implementation of advocacy strategies for both the country, the program and the Latin American region on child marriage and early unions.

METHODOLOGY

The research design was based on a qualitative comparative analysis which generated a logical sequence of the different processes and actors involved in the political, institutional and mediatic advocacy. The understanding of the problem and the processes developed was addressed, analyzing the formulation and adoption of the actions and their respective results at the political, institutional and mediatic levels.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. The generation of evidence, dissemination and knowledge management are fundamental pillars in the processes of advocacy for the positioning and creation of policies that respond to emerging problems.
2. Advocacy strategies and plans should be documented, with clarity of actors, roles, indicators and its targets.
3. Local actors are key to successfully implement advocacy strategies.
4. The social transformation approach must prevail in the outcome indicators.
5. To base the political actions on theories of change, logical frameworks and socio-ecological models of behavioral change is crucial to both understand the problems and to generate the best solutions possible.
6. Emphasis should be placed on strengthening the practical capacities for financing advocacy actions, as well the capacities for monitoring and evaluating its results.
7. Institutional learning schemes should be fostered to insert improvements based on the implementation.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Building a Solid Knowledge Base:

- Partner up with national and international organizations that have access to the population affected by the problem, to facilitate the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data and information. Prioritize standardized measurements.
- Partner up with research organizations to strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of results, which in turn can increase access to more resources and funding.
- Establish knowledge management plans for the different data and information generated, with differentiated actions at the political, mediatic and technical levels.

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Create advocacy strategies and plans, as well as corporate communication strategies and plans with milestones that include clear indicators and targets.
- Adapt the communication channels and messages of global strategies to the local context, responding to the local culture and conditions.

IDENTIFICATION OF POLITICAL ALLIES

- Establish a map of relevant actors and establish specific lines of action for each group, generating alliances, support, and complementation.
- Create a plan for the creation and maintenance of alliances with the main actors, which allows the pursuit of short, medium, and long-term objectives.

BOOSTING LEGAL FOUNDATIONS

- Identify legislation and regulations that need to be reviewed and updated.
- Identify all possible mechanisms for changing legislation and prioritize the one with the best chance of success, which is usually the option in which the greatest number of allies can participate.

