

UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage

South Africa, May 2023



Acknowledgement

The design workshop for Phase III of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage (the Global Programme) was held on 1–5 May in Johannesburg, South Africa. Almost 100 participants from UNFPA, UNICEF, governments and civil society organizations from nearly 30 country and regional teams¹ came together to discuss ways to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.3 and renew their commitment to ending child marriage.

The Global Programme, launched in 2016, offers a framework for promoting the rights of girls in 12 of the most high-prevalence or high-burden countries for child marriage² to delay marriage, addressing the conditions that keep the practice in place, and caring for girls already in union. In December 2023 Phase II of the programme will come to an end, which provides an opportunity to review, reflect and make the necessary programmatic adjustments to inform Phase III, expected to run from 2024–2030.

The Global Programme contributes to SDG 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and in particular to SDG target 5.3 to eliminate all harmful practices, specifically child, early and forced marriage. Although the global context has changed radically since the Global Programme began in 2016, the SDG 5.3 ambition of eliminating child marriage by 2030 remains, and the need to share bold approaches to meet the target has never been greater.

We want to acknowledge all the participants and speakers for their attendance – including those joining online – for sharing their experiences, lessons learned, good practices and strategic thinking for the design of the next phase of the Global Programme.

Communication resources

- ◆ [Meta-PowerPoint Presentation](#)
 - ◆ [Twitter thread of some of the coverage from the workshop](#)
 - ◆ [Overall highlights video](#)
 - ◆ [World Cafe video](#)
 - ◆ Day 1: [highlights video](#)
 - ◆ Day 2: [highlights video](#)
 - ◆ Day 3: [highlights video](#)
 - ◆ Day 4: [highlights video](#)
 - ◆ Day 5: [highlights video](#)
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1. UNFPA and UNICEF Headquarters, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Asia and the Pacific Regional Office/Regional Office for South Asia, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, East and Southern Africa Regional Office, Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Africa, South Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, West and Central Africa Regional Office, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Arab States Regional Office/Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, Egypt, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, Mexico, the Philippines, and the African Union Liaison Office.

2. Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia.

Vision and objectives of the Phase III Design Workshop

The design workshop is one part of the participatory process to develop Phase III of the Global Programme, which also includes an evaluation of Phase II, a donor meeting in early 2023, and ongoing discussions with stakeholders to help craft Phase III. The workshop had the following objectives:

- ◆ Take stock of the evolving global context in which the Global Programme operates.
- ◆ Develop strategic and forward-looking ideas to inform programme, policy and advocacy work for Phase III.
- ◆ Provide an opportunity for networking and capacity strengthening for the country and regional teams that are part of the Global Programme and for country teams beyond the 12 direct implementing countries that are also making investments in ending child marriage.

Top takeaways from the workshop



The polycrisis – conflicts, climate change, humanitarian emergencies and COVID-19 – has radically changed the context in which the Global Programme operates. The interplay of conflicts, climate shocks, humanitarian emergencies, conservatism against gender equality and human rights, lack of bodily autonomy and the persisting effects of COVID-19 are putting the gains made in eliminating child marriage at risk. The COVID-19 pandemic cut the estimated number of averted cases of child marriage since 2020 by one quarter. When conflict-related deaths increase tenfold, child marriage increases by 7 per cent. And a 10 per cent change in rainfall due to climate change

is associated with a 1 per cent increase in the prevalence of child marriage.



Acceleration is required to meet the 2030 target of elimination of child marriage. Globally, child marriage prevalence has dropped from 23 per cent to 19 per cent over the last 10 years. However, there has been uneven progress across countries with progress mainly benefiting the richest households. At this rate, it would take another 300 years to eliminate child marriage – time we do not have. To reach the SDG 5.3 target of ending child marriage by 2030, progress needs to be 20 times faster.





Amid the polycrisis, Phase III will remain focused on the most vulnerable girls and families. This requires applying the principle of leaving no one behind to prioritize the poorest, pregnant, adolescent mothers, and already married girls, as well as expanding opportunities for those at risk: keeping adolescent girls in school, making sure they have economic opportunities, and ensuring girls experience healthier, safer and more empowered life transitions.



In fragile contexts, adolescent girls face compounded childbearing, gender-based violence risks and reduced access to essential services, including adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, putting them at increased risk of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS. Therefore, the Global Programme should continue to advocate for adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights and child protection services as well as engaging with governments in systems strengthening approaches to disaster preparedness and resilience-building.



To achieve a sustainable reduction in the prevalence of child marriage, the Global Programme will scale evidence-based multisectoral interventions to prevent and respond to child marriage. Child protection, education, health – including sexual

and reproductive health – social protection, economic development and other sectors need to work closely together at the country level to develop a shared vision and congruent strategies and action plans. Recognizing multidimensional poverty as a significant driver of child marriage, a multisectoral response can leverage existing scaled systems as a vehicle to end child marriage.



We need to apply existing evidence of what works to inform programming (while recognizing what does not work). We have confidence in particular programmatic directions that show the greatest potential in preventing child marriage and improving outcomes for girls. This includes empowering adolescent girls through life skills and comprehensive sexuality education, addressing poverty through income and economic interventions such as social protection (e.g., cash transfers, vocational training and labour-market opportunities) and supporting girls' schooling and learning, especially secondary education. In Phase III, the Global Programme will build on the existing evidence and work towards testing, monitoring and evaluating interventions known to be effective across a range of settings. The Global Programme will also contribute to filling evidence gaps related to child marriage and social and gender norms programming, systems strengthening, and response and support services.





We need to scale up gender-transformative approaches in Phase III and invest in both system-level and structural change to achieve gender equality. Gender-transformative approaches are aimed at redistributing power and resources for women and girls and therefore must be integrated into government programmes, policies, budgets, advocacy and communications to leverage resources at scale and contribute to an enabling environment for transformative change for adolescent girls. Social and behaviour change with a gender-transformative focus can tackle intersectional oppressions as well as multiple forms of exclusion, discrimination and vulnerability.



It is important to know the drivers of child marriage in your context, including the meta-norms (power dynamics, gender ideologies, etc.), and tailor social and behaviour change activities to address them. Social and behaviour change needs to happen across the socio-ecological context, not just in individuals and families. In Phase III, the Global Programme will employ a range of social and behaviour change approaches to address the many drivers of child marriage, including the overarching norms influencing multiple behaviours (meta-norms) across the socio-ecological model. Challenging discriminatory social and gender norms requires understanding the drivers across the socio-ecology and working from the individual level, to communities, to the services and the policy and structural levels to achieve lasting change.



Adolescent girls, women and young people are critical changemakers and they must be central to our response as key allies and partners. The Global

Programme will form new partnerships and create more space for youth-led, women-led and feminist organizations in the global movement to end child marriage.



Integrating child marriage prevention and response into peacebuilding and humanitarian action is an imperative which should be seen as part of a lifesaving response. This includes situating the work on ending child marriage within the Humanitarian Programme Cycle and applying humanitarian-development nexus approaches. It is possible to harness humanitarian crises as an opportunity to do better for girls who are at risk of child marriage or already married.



Both digital and non-digital approaches are required to address child marriage and support adolescent girls. We recognize that closing the gender digital divide is key to ending gender inequalities and that girls and women are disproportionately affected by the gender digital divide and issues related to digital safety. The programme will use both digital and non-digital tools to support accessibility and increase the reachability of interventions, while promoting digital literacy, skills and safety among girls.



A strong monitoring, evaluation and learning system supported by a dedicated budget and skilled staff is critical in Phase III. It is essential to integrate monitoring, evaluation and learning throughout the entire span of an initiative, from the planning stages to its culmination. Moreover, flexible, innovative approaches to further enable these processes will also be promoted.



DAY 1

Setting the scene: Where are we now and where are we going?

Speakers:

- ◆ Chinwe Ogonna, Deputy Regional Director, UNFPA East and Southern Africa
- ◆ Lieke Van De Wiel, Deputy Regional Director, UNICEF East and Southern Africa
- ◆ Nankali Maksud, Global Programme Coordinator

Globally, the context for the work of the Global Programme keeps getting more difficult. However, there is renewed ambition towards 2030 to ensure that adolescent girls (including the most marginalized) in countries targeted by the Global Programme fully enjoy their childhood free from the risk of marriage, and experience healthier, safer and more empowered life transitions, including making choices about their education, sexuality, relationships, marriage and childbearing.

Phase III will focus on partnerships for enhanced results, working through government programmes, systems and platforms as well as civil society organizations – including youth-led, women-led, and feminist organizations. In addition to enhancing partnership, the programme will operate under its other principles including leaving no one behind,

fostering gender-transformative change, programming across the humanitarian-development nexus, scaling up and institutionalization, outcome and impact measurement, learning and sharing what works, and the United Nations Development System (UNDS) reform and coherence with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR).

The global context: Polycrisis, megatrends and gender equality

Moderator:

- ◆ José-Roberto Luna, Technical Specialist Adolescents and Youth, UNFPA Headquarters

Speakers:

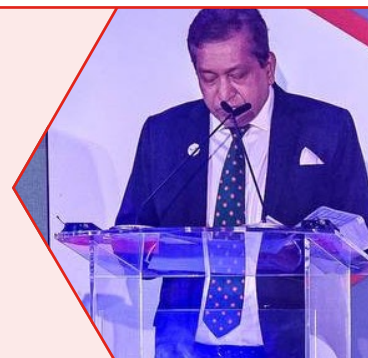
- ◆ Cecile Mazzacurati, Gender and Human Rights Adviser, UNFPA West and Central Africa (pre-recorded)
- ◆ Mona Aika, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF East and Southern Africa
- ◆ Shadia Elshiwiy, Regional Programme Analyst on Harmful Practices, UNFPA Arab States
- ◆ Veronica Kamanga Njiko, Regional Adviser Gender, UNICEF South Asia



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“The government of Bangladesh has hugely invested in girls’ education. We are providing stipends for 15M girl students, which helps to **#EndChildMarriage**. We have also achieved gender parity in primary & secondary education.”

Md. Hasanuzzaman Kallol, Secretary (MOWCA), Bangladesh



Today's multifaceted, complex crises create difficult conditions for girls to gain access to basic services, and protection concerns are high. Harmful practices such as child marriage are often driven by pre-existing social and cultural norms that are exacerbated in crisis situations. However, limited funding and limited collaboration between humanitarian and development actors translate into data and coverage gaps. The presentation from the West and Central Africa Region focused on how the Global Programme will expand or adapt its programming based on the crises in the region, where the response might have a strong focus on protection issues, but where child marriage is not yet at the centre of programming. The presentation from the East and Southern Africa Region noted the need for the Global Programme to move away from an issues-based approach to a systems-based approach, to continue to build evidence but also use existing research to inform the Global Programme's programming, and to encourage community conversations in all settings. The presentation from the Arab States Region/Middle East and North Africa Region noted the duty that the programme has to engage adolescent girls and ensure that global advocacy voices do not include only experts or community of practice members. The presentation from the South Asia Region highlighted that child marriage should be seen as a key component of humanitarian response moving forward, and that the Global Programme should consider ways of ensuring that ending child marriage fits within the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

Phase III will focus on better understanding both the scale and scope of girls' vulnerability to child marriage during crises to produce more responsive, higher quality and scalable solutions capable of addressing child marriage in heterogeneous contexts.

A review of the evidence: What works to end child marriage

Moderator:

- ◆ Upala Devi, Regional Adviser Gender, UNFPA Asia and the Pacific

Speakers:

- ◆ Gillian Mann, Head of Research and Evaluation, Child Frontiers (online)

- ◆ Manahil Siddiqi, Co-Coordinator Strategic Technical Assistance for Research (STAR) Initiative to End Harmful Practices, UNICEF Innocenti

In recent years, the evidence base for what works to end child marriage has grown across regions. A 2023 evidence synthesis classified intervention areas and types according to different classifications ranging from effective to unknown effectiveness (see Table 1). In Phase III, the Global Programme will:

- ◆ Apply what we know: We have confidence in particular programmatic directions, and these are essential to how we address child marriage and improve outcomes in Phase III.
- ◆ Fill critical gaps in intervention research: Strengthen the evidence base on promising approaches by adapting, monitoring and evaluating interventions on child marriage and 1) norms, 2) systems strengthening, 3) response and support services.
- ◆ Achieve the '3 Rs' for evidence impact (rigour, responsiveness and reach) and connect with the STAR Initiative to End Harmful Practices for support.



Table 1. Intervention effectiveness for the prevention of child marriage

Classification	Definition	Intervention area	Intervention type	Essential components
Effective, when well designed and implemented	<p>At least two medium-to-high-quality impact evaluations, using randomized control trials and/or quasi-experimental designs have found statistically significant reductions in child marriage and/or mediating drivers.</p> <p>An intervention is deemed effective by high-quality meta-analyses and systematic reviews of findings from evaluations of multiple interventions.</p>	Income and economic strengthening	a. Cash transfers b. Vocational training c. Favourable job markets	<p>Cash transfers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Length of exposure and frequency matter: Longer exposure to cash transfer results in greater delays in timing of marriage. ◆ Communication of programme and engagement with beneficiaries is a critical factor in success or failure. ◆ Sensitive to the varied contexts of child marriage. ◆ Integrate gender-transformative plus components. ◆ Link to services and systems. <p>Vocational training and favourable job markets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Invest in interventions that promote girls' safe transition from school to productive employment through skills training. To support this transition, address education and skills gaps, information gaps, limited employment opportunities and adverse social norms. Deliver beyond just schools to reach out-of-school girls. ◆ Support macro-policies that enable economic participation particularly in rural areas and inclusive economic growth (need more research on policy interventions).
		Education, life skills and comprehensive sexuality education	a. Cash and in-kind transfers for schooling b. Targeted life skills c. Comprehensive sexuality education	<p>Education interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Cross-sectoral linkages: Work with education sector to ensure education policies and the budgets that support them place greater emphasis on reducing child marriage. ◆ When possible, multilevel intervention: Availability and access to secondary schools combined with quality teaching and infrastructure and evaluate these larger-scale approaches. ◆ Inclusive programmes that reach married and out-of-school girls.
Promising, but requires further research	<p>One high or medium quality impact evaluation, using a randomized control trial, or quasi-experimental study, has found statistically significant reductions in child marriage or a pattern of change across multiple mediating drivers and is suggestive of this (statistical significance has not been demonstrated).</p>	Systems strengthening	a. Training to build the capacity of workforce across sectors	More research required.
		Gender norm change	a. Range of efforts (see below); programme components not easily disaggregated	More research required.
Mixed or conflicting evidence	<p>Evidence from different high-quality studies shows conflicting results, e.g., some interventions are found to be effective, and some are found to be harmful or detrimental.</p>	Laws and policies	a. Minimum age of marriage laws	More research required.
		Girls-focused empowerment	a. Safe spaces	More research required.
Unknown effectiveness	Evidence is too limited to draw any conclusive effects.	Sexual and reproductive health	a. Information and range of services	More research required.

Zooming in, zooming out: Ensuring quality interventions at scale

Moderators:

- ◆ Catherine Muller, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF West and Central Africa
- ◆ Bernadette Ssebadduka, Adolescent and Youth Specialist, UNFPA West and Central Africa

Speaker:

- ◆ Joachim Theis, Child Frontiers (pre-recorded)

Preliminary findings from Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone as part of a research and learning project on context-specific drivers of child marriage and how they influence programme strategies at national and subnational levels revealed that vulnerable adolescent girls need life skills, access to contraceptives, education and job skills and a supportive environment. Based on these findings, Phase III will focus on increasing investment in services that create greater opportunities and autonomy for adolescent girls (e.g., adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, education, social protection, and job skills and opportunities) and contextualizing these strategies for subnational contexts. Phase III will also work to ensure that policy advocacy and social and behaviour change promotion are supporting greater opportunities and autonomy of adolescent girls.



DAY 2

Looking at the data: The latest child marriage trends

Moderator:

- ◆ Martha Nelems, Child Frontiers

Speaker:

- ◆ Colleen Murray, Statistics and Monitoring Specialist, UNICEF Headquarters

The Global Programme targets countries which are home to nearly half of the world's child brides (i.e., 300 million out of 640 million), including countries with a high burden (number) and those with a high prevalence (percentage), and those with a combination of both. There is an elevated risk of child marriage for girls from poorer families, with the least education, living near cross-national borders, and/or from states experiencing fragility. Globally, child marriage prevalence has dropped from 23 per cent to 19 per cent in the last 10 years, but this progress has not been shared equally across countries. In order to meet the 2030 target, progress needs to be 20 times faster than in the last decade.

For more information on the latest child marriage data, refer to UNICEF's analysis from May 2023, [*Is an End to Child Marriage Within Reach?*](#)

For lasting change: Expanding gender-transformative approaches

Moderator:

- ◆ Ellen Alem, Gender Programme Specialist, UNICEF Headquarters

Speakers:

- ◆ José-Roberto Luna, Technical Specialist Adolescents and Youth, UNFPA Headquarters
- ◆ Iliza Azyei, Chief of Adolescents and Youth Unit, UNFPA Bangladesh
- ◆ Mary Thomas, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF India
- ◆ Salmey Bebert, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Niger

Gender-transformative approaches are approaches that aim to redistribute power and resources for women and girls and therefore must be integrated into government programmes, policies, budgets, advocacy and communications to leverage resources at scale and contribute to an enabling environment for transformative change for adolescent girls. Phase II introduced the concept of gender-transformative change and developed and field-tested the Gender-Transformative Accelerator tool to operationalize gender-transformative programming.

For Phase III, the objective with gender-transformative approaches is 'to go deeper' through (i) continuing to build the evidence base on what works for gender-transformative change; (ii) expanding the reach of the Gender-Transformative Accelerator tool and other gender-transformative tools; (iii) integrating gender-transformative approaches in government programmes in order to leverage resources at scale; (iv) increasing support for feminist movements and organizations; (v)



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Recommendations for leveraging social protection to **#EndChildMarriage**:

- Invest in evidence-generation efforts
- Advocate at different levels, including with donors of relevant programs
- Conduct high-level advocacy with government ministries

Tilahun Woldemeskel @mfaethiopia

using the gender-transformative lens to address intersectional issues and multiple forms of exclusion and vulnerabilities; (vi) moving beyond ‘the minimum package’ to ensure gender-transformative approaches are integrated into multisectoral programming; and (vii) fine-tuning quantitative and qualitative measurements of gender-transformative approaches.

For more information on gender-transformative approaches and the Gender-Transformative Accelerator tool, refer to the Global Programme *technical note* (2019) and *toolkit* (2021).

Addressing social norms and other drivers of child marriage: Social and behaviour change as a programme approach

Moderator:

- ◆ Maja Hansen, Technical Adviser Gender Equality and Human Rights, UNFPA Tanzania

Speakers:

- ◆ Alessia Radice, Social and Behaviour Change Specialist, UNICEF Headquarters
- ◆ Catherine Muller, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF West and Central Africa
- ◆ Leyla Sharafi, Global Gender Adviser, UNFPA Headquarters (online)
- ◆ Massimiliano Sani, Social and Behaviour Change Specialist, UNICEF East and Southern Africa
- ◆ Zemzem Shikur, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Ethiopia

Social norms are the perceived, informal rules that define acceptable and appropriate actions within a group. Social norms often guide human behaviour and can have beneficial or harmful consequences for people’s well-being. While social norms can play a role in driving child marriage, they are not the only drivers. Phase III will focus on accurate diagnosis of drivers, including meta-norms, and tailor interventions to address the more significant ones. There will also be a strong focus on creating interventions based on the evidence of what works regarding ending child marriage and creating an enabling

environment for change, using diverse social and behaviour change approaches that go beyond dialogue and awareness-raising. In Phase III and beyond, change must take place across the socio-ecological context, not just in families and communities, which is where the focus has been during Phase II.

In Phase III, the programme will continue the consensus building and capacity development started in Phase II around social and behaviour change approaches to ending child marriage, including establishing shared definitions and terminology, and theories of change as well as consensus building on approaches.

For more information on defining social norms and related concepts, see UNICEF’s *Defining social norms and related concepts* (2021).

Maximizing impact: Quality implementation and leveraging services and systems

Moderator:

- ◆ Karin Heissler, Regional Adviser Child Protection, UNICEF West and Central Africa



Speakers:

- ◆ Yamlal Bhusal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens of Nepal, Government of Nepal (online)
- ◆ Deepesh Gupta, Head of State Office, UNFPA India
- ◆ Patricia Bahm, Programme Coordinator, National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy, Sierra Leone
- ◆ Moussa Amina, Director of Child Protection, Government of the Niger
- ◆ Humaira Aziz, Gender Programme Specialist, UNICEF Bangladesh
- ◆ Meron Negussie, Adolescents and Youth Programme Specialist, UNFPA East and Southern Africa

Within the Global Programme, there are several important thematic areas. Those chosen for discussion in this session of the design workshop represent only a fraction of the programme's activities. Across all areas, participants agreed that in Phase III and beyond, the Global Programme must work across sectors at the systems level. Within **adolescent sexual and reproductive health**, Phase III of

the Global Programme must focus on both the harmony between policies and legislation as well as their implementation. For **life skills**, entry points and activities must be context specific in Phase III. The buy-in of government partners as well as actors outside of the government ecosystem, including non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations, is critical to success. **Comprehensive sexuality education** must be contextualized in Phase III. Engaging partners in the wider health systems and embracing innovative approaches are critical to sustainability. Due to the intersectionality of **gender-based violence** and **child protection**, a multisectoral approach in Phase III is required to respond adequately to the needs of girls. Likewise, **menstrual health management** cuts across multiple sectors and thematic areas and can be used as an entry point for other interrelated topics that can work towards ending child marriage such as water, sanitation and hygiene, sexual and reproductive health and rights and comprehensive sexuality education in Phase III.

Phase III will continue to focus on further adapting approaches to local contexts to obtain buy-in from the communities (both government and non-government actors) to employ multisectoral approaches to ending child marriage.



DAY 3

Integrated across the programme cycle: Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Moderator:

- ◆ Amy Weiss, Child Frontiers

Speakers:

- ◆ Joseph Mabirizi, Programme Manager, UNICEF Headquarters
- ◆ Manahil Siddiqi, Co-Coordinator Strategic Technical Assistance for Research (STAR) Initiative to End Harmful Practices, UNICEF Innocenti
- ◆ Eduard Bonet, Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Headquarters

The use of evidence and ongoing learning to inform Phase III is critical. The Global Programme will ensure that it has a strong monitoring, evaluation and learning system in place, and that it is using the information gathered to arrive at better decisions and adjust as necessary throughout the phase.

During a participatory group exercise, workshop participants proposed that the Global Programme should stop implementing programming without clear monitoring, evaluation, research and learning plans and should no longer wait until the end of the year to carry out monitoring and evaluation. The Global Programme should eliminate duplication wherever possible, including by refraining from setting up parallel data systems, duplicate indicators, and duplication of data-collection efforts. Participants suggested that the Global Programme should continue building the capacity of partners on monitoring, evaluation

and learning, continue to focus on digitalization as well as digitizing resources and products, and continue joint monitoring visits to help engage all partners at all stages of the programming. Workshop participants acknowledged that the Global Programme must start thinking about monitoring, evaluation and learning during the planning stages of programming, and that this thinking must be grounded in a strong monitoring, evaluation and learning system. Further, the Global Programme must involve communities early on and continue communication throughout the programme, monitoring or evaluation exercise. During Phase III the Global Programme must also focus on cross-learning and cross-fertilization with other similar global actors working to end harmful practices.

In Phase III, the presence of a strong monitoring, evaluation and learning framework supported by a dedicated budget and skilled staff will allow for programming adjustments in near real-time to ensure that the latest data and learnings from the programme are being integrated across the board. This is especially important given the longer duration of Phase III and the ever-changing landscapes in which the Global Programme operates.

Crisis-adaptive programming: Practical solutions and adaptations

Moderator:

- ◆ Indrani Sarkar, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Middle East and North Africa

Speakers:

- ◆ Angela Baschieri, Climate Change Adviser, UNFPA East and Southern Africa



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“Continuous evidence-based advocacy is crucial to address dissenting voices from religious and cultural leaders and shift political leaders’ positions on the practicality of implementation.”

- Lydia Najjemba, Principal Probation & Welfare Officer @Mglsd_UG



- ◆ Haithar Ahmed, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Ethiopia
- ◆ Josue Ango, Child Protection Officer, UNICEF Burkina Faso

Understanding how girls' vulnerabilities are exacerbated in times of crises is critically important and is a crucial step in understanding how to harness humanitarian crises as an opportunity to do better for girls who are at risk of child marriage or already married. Governments also need to prioritize child marriage as part of their emergency interventions, and data-sharing between all actors in the wider humanitarian response needs to be improved. Within the Global Programme, several country teams adapted programming during recent crises by focusing more on strengthening community resilience, including recruiting community mentors for continued engagement with girls. These teams are eager to work on programmes that are able to shift from a development to a humanitarian focus.

Phase III of the Global Programme will explore situating the work on ending child marriage within the Humanitarian Programme Cycle and applying humanitarian-development-peace nexus approaches.

Launching Phase III: Developing a global communications campaign

Speaker:

- ◆ Jo Weston, Wunderman Thompson

Developing a global communications strategy for Phase III includes creating a movement to spark public and private political and financial support for continued investments in ending child marriage and supporting girls around the world. The Global Programme needs to speak with one voice, communicating a strong vision and narrative on how it can accelerate investments to end child marriage, and why this is key to achieving not just SDG 5.3 but also several other developmental goals.

Key themes that emerged in the discussion, which will be a focus for Phase III, included putting choice and agency for girls at the centre of our mission statement: to empower girls and create an enabling environment for them to

make informed decisions about their lives, reach their full potential and be able to achieve their dreams.

Leaving no one behind: Addressing intersecting vulnerabilities

Moderator:

- ◆ Germaine Haddad, Gender Adviser a.i., UNFPA Arab States

Speakers:

- ◆ Elikem Vera Awuye, Team Lead, Gender and Empowerment, International Needs Ghana
- ◆ Emilie Filmer-Wilson, Global Adviser Human Rights, UNFPA Headquarters (online)
- ◆ Patricia Grundberg, Programme Specialist Gender and Human Rights, UNFPA Mozambique
- ◆ Ruth Kalaba Mekwi, Project Coordinator, YWCA Zambia

Inclusion is key to ending child marriage. Unless we address inequality and exclusion, we will not achieve SDG 5. Findings from evaluations and assessments regarding leaving no one behind indicate that the three most helpful factors are: 1) presence of leadership that prioritizes those furthest behind, 2) presence of staff with the capacity and skills to reach those left behind, and 3) funding available to reach those furthest behind.

In Phase III, the Global Programme will use intersectional approaches and employ human rights-based approaches to ensure the inclusion of those furthest behind.



DAY 4

Phase III acceleration: Innovative solutions for scaling up

Moderator:

- ◆ Denise Ulwor Apiyo, Chief Child Protection, UNICEF Egypt

Speakers:

- ◆ Anna Spinardi, Program and Research Manager (Data Feminism), Data-Pop Alliance (online)
- ◆ Apekchya Rana Khatri, Programme Specialist Harmful Practices, UNFPA Nepal
- ◆ Iliza Azyei, Chief of Adolescents and Youth Unit, UNFPA Bangladesh

There is a clear need to blend the use of digital technologies with analogue approaches. Innovative approaches do not necessarily include technology, and non-digital tools can often help increase the reach of technology-based interventions and make them more accessible. Findings from a 13-country review of technology-based interventions to mitigate child marriage and female genital mutilation revealed that the most impactful interventions are multisectoral initiatives that involve a variety of partnerships across different stakeholders, and that a majority of these interventions employed a combination of both traditional and modern tools.

In Phase III, the programme will increase its use of digital tools to reach a larger number of girls and community members, while also continuing with face-to-face interventions, making sure no one is left behind while ensuring the safety of digital spaces for adolescent girls and continuing to address the gender digital divide and building of digital skills.

Mobilizing change: Youth-led, feminist and women-led organizations take the lead

Moderator:

- ◆ Shadia Elshiwiy, Regional Programme Analyst on Harmful Practices, UNFPA Arab States

Speakers:

- ◆ Chiagozie Udeh, UNFPA East and Southern Africa (online)
- ◆ Ellen Alem, Gender Programme Specialist, UNICEF Headquarters
- ◆ Faith Mwangi-Powell, CEO, Girls Not Brides (online)
- ◆ Gugulethu Sihlali, youth advocate, East and Southern Africa

Adolescent girls, women and young people are critical changemakers in social movements and can become key allies and partners. Although youth-led, feminist and women-led organizations are strong, creative and adaptive, they are often the least resourced. The Global Programme aims to support, foster and enable feminist organizations and those led by young people or women/girls to pursue a gender-transformative approach and advance gender equality. By 2021, the Global Programme had worked with over 165 civil society organizations, around half of which focus on women's rights. All speakers noted the importance of identifying and expanding meaningful engagement with children and young people, including youth networks, to strengthen national-level data and research related to ending child marriage, to foster agency, and to mobilize change to end child marriage.

In Phase III, the Global Programme is committed to understanding best practices for funding youth-led, feminist and women-led organizations to help end child marriage. Further, the Global Programme will support these organizations in creating gender-transformative internal policies and practices, building capacity, and undertaking gender analyses and utilization of research findings.

A key intervention to address child marriage: Gender-responsive social protection

Moderator:

- ◆ Veronica Kamanga Njiko, Regional Adviser Gender, UNICEF South Asia



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“India is committed to #EndChildMarriage & heralding an era of women-led development through concerted government interventions. The Ministry has launched multiple schemes for the holistic development & empowerment of women and girls.” - Indevar Pandey, Secretary @MinistryWCD

Speakers:

- ◆ Lauren Whitehead, Social Protection Specialist, UNICEF Headquarters
- ◆ Saphia Tamiru, Senior Programme Officer, Domestic Violence Secretariat, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Government of Ghana
- ◆ Tilahun Gebretsadik-Wolde-Mesk, Child Protection Expert, Government of Ethiopia

Mainstreaming social protection in government budget planning processes across ministries can lead to increased funding allocations for social services, including for adolescent girls. Child marriage indicators can be included in social protection policies and programmes. Social protection that can help address child marriage goes beyond cash transfers. When contextualized and delivered with additional services such as health, education or livelihood interventions – called ‘cash plus’ – cash transfers can also contribute to girls’ sense of agency and give them a greater say in the decisions that affect them as well as contributing to better health and well-being.

In Phase III, the Global Programme will focus on leveraging linkages between integrated social services and social protection to prevent and respond to child marriage.

For more information on child-sensitive social protection, see UNICEF’s *Global Social Protection Programme Framework* (2019).

Accountability in action: Policy and legislative change

Moderator:

- ◆ Meron Negussie, Adolescents and Youth

Programme Specialist, UNFPA East and Southern Africa

Speakers:

- ◆ Indevar Pandey, Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India (online)
- ◆ Lydia Najjemba Wasula, Principal Officer, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Government of Uganda (online)
- ◆ Mona Aika, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF East and Southern Africa

Working closely with national governments and understanding their needs, priorities and working cycles is key to supporting policy and legislative change relating to child marriage. A high level of political commitment and leadership often enables and incentivizes other stakeholders to engage in programming aimed at ending child marriage. However, challenges remain around implementation of existing plans, policies and legislation. Further, continued evidence-based advocacy and engagement on available research is critical to addressing contentious issues.

Phase III of the Global Programme will focus on working closely with governments to ensure utility of costing exercises and to position ending child marriage as an important and lifesaving effort.

For more information on developing budget briefs, please see UNICEF’s *Guidelines for developing budget briefs* (2019) which is available for several sectors, including child protection.

DAY 5

Discussions of the ‘how to’ of four critical areas for the Global Programme

Moderators for discussions:

- ◆ Nankali Maksud, Global Programme Coordinator
- ◆ Martha Nelems, Child Frontiers
- ◆ Rebeccah Nelems, Child Frontiers

Social protection addresses two of the strongest drivers of child marriage – poverty and gender inequality. Participants explored how an array of social protection measures can be leveraged to reduce child marriage, discussed the need to investigate how the Global Programme can integrate messaging related to ending child marriage within existing social protection programmes of other organizations, and highlighted the importance of contextualizing the ‘cash plus’ components.

Data, evidence and research can be used to shape programme planning and execution. Participants discussed how to use data, evidence and research to ensure better programme outcomes. Ideas included creating

a monitoring, evaluation and learning plan that facilitates streamlined reporting, incorporating participatory monitoring and evaluation, focusing on accountability to affected populations, and ensuring that the Global Programme has flexible, innovative approaches that allow it to learn from emerging data.

To achieve a sustainable reduction in the prevalence of child marriage, **multisectoral inputs are required, with interventions on many fronts**. Participants explored how child protection, education, health, social protection, economic development and other sectors can work more closely together to develop a shared vision and congruent strategies.

Partnerships with youth-led, women-led and feminist organizations have the potential to broaden the reach of the Global Programme to the most marginalized groups. Participants discussed how to invest in youth-led, women-led and feminist-grounded civil society organizations, coalitions and networks, including how UNFPA and UNICEF could revise their systems to work more easily with these organizations, the importance of clarity around the goals of the relationships, and the need to ensure inclusion of these organizations in the dissemination of programme deliverables.



What is next? Areas of agreement for moving forward

Speakers:

- ◆ José-Roberto Luna, Technical Specialist Adolescents and Youth, UNFPA Headquarters
- ◆ Nankali Maksud, Global Programme Coordinator



More contextualized programming

- The context in which the Global Programme operates is very different from that of 2019. It is a lot more difficult, with multiple crises at the same time. Phase III programming will take the changing context and all of the complexity into account.



Services - Phase III will focus on improving access to and quality of services, and ensuring they are inclusive.



Crisis-adaptive programming - Given that between now and 2030 there are likely to be more shocks of different types, Phase III programming must be designed to take these shocks into account by including more flexible and cohesive approaches. It is clear that the Global Programme needs to integrate into 'the humanitarian architecture': the question is how.



Data and evidence - There are some data and evidence gaps that the Global Programme will try to close, including those related to systems strengthening, gender norms change, girls-focused empowerment, and laws and policies. However, there is already a lot of data and evidence that can be used right now to improve programming in Phase III.



Monitoring, evaluation and learning - For Phase III, monitoring, evaluation and learning is critical. There are resources available for country teams which will help generate new evidence and improve programming.



Gender-transformative approaches - In Phase III, there will be consolidation of and reflection about all the learning from gender-transformative approaches which will remain central in the Global Programme. Many tools are in place to support this work, though more measurement is needed, especially given the length of Phase III.



Social and behavioural change/ social norms - There is clarity on the importance of evidence-based social and behaviour change interventions, the need for diagnosing drivers, diversifying approaches across the socio-ecological spectrum and measuring the effectiveness of these interventions through behavioural indicators.





Gender-responsive social protection

- There is clarity on the importance of gender-responsive social

protection. For Phase III, a focus on creating guidance that can be contextualized for both humanitarian and non-humanitarian situations would be beneficial. Exploring how to build on and integrate into other social protection programming within existing programmes will be a focus of Phase III.



Addressing intersecting vulnerabilities and leaving no one behind

- There is consensus about the need to address intersecting vulnerabilities in Phase III and to continue to strive to reach those furthest behind.



Increasing support for youth-led, women-led and feminist organizations

- There is a need to focus on how the Global Programme enables these partnerships and how to make working with these

organizations easier from a UNFPA and UNICEF administrative and systems perspective.



Innovations for scaling up

- There is consensus on the importance of continuing to understand operating contexts and explore both technology-enabled innovations and non-technological innovations to increase reach, improve the quality of programming and services, close the gender digital divide, and ensure the safety of adolescent girls.



Policy and legislation

- There is a clear need to continue supporting governments on policies and legislation related to ending child marriage, including budgeting and implementation plans. Positioning the Global Programme to advocate for the inclusion of ending child marriage-related activities as lifesaving measures, especially within humanitarian contexts, will be important in Phase III.

Nepal is committed to ensuring quality services for vulnerable children. Synergy across government levels is critical, with flagship programs like the Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Program and Early Childhood Development Program leading the way by uniting various sectors. In Nepal, the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens, in collaboration with UN agencies, development partners, and civil society, is actively supporting these federal provincial initiatives to strengthen and expand the impact to **#EndChildMarriage**.” - Yam Lal Bhoosal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Nepal





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