

UNICEF Evaluation Management Response Template

Evaluation Title: Joint Evaluation of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage 2020-2023

Region: Global

Office: Programme Group

Evaluation Year: 2023

Person-In-Charge for Follow-up to Management Response: Nankali Maksud

Overall Response to the Evaluation: *Include here Senior Management general impression on the process and outcomes of the evaluation, adequacy of evidence collected, and reasonableness of and the concurrence with findings. Were there shortfalls or limitations in the process and/outcomes? Are there any additional insights not articulated in the recommendations?*

The independent Joint Evaluation of the Phase II of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage was undertaken to assess the progress towards results, sustainability of interventions, programme coherence and relevance, and programme efficiency and effectiveness to support the design of the third phase of the programme by learning early lessons in joint programme management and implementation including adaption during the polycrisis. This is the second independent joint evaluation of the Global Programme to End Child Marriage, and UNFPA and UNICEF welcome the findings and recommendations that provide a clear understanding of the progress, good practices and key lessons learned through the implementation and adaptation of the Global Programme during the polycrisis in the 12 focus countries and 4 regional offices. We agree with the independent joint evaluation process that was consultative, evidence-based, objective and forward looking, and consider the recommendations as adequate to guide the design of the third phase of the programme and inform implementation and learning priorities. We agree with seven of the recommendations provided and partially agree with one of them (fifth) and will continue and expand on the existing best practices identified in the report.

Planned Use of Evaluation: *Include here what's the process to facilitate the intended use by the intended users, focusing on how evaluation findings will affect implementation of the programme and contribute to evidence-based decision making*

The Programme Group has developed the evaluation management response in consultation with UNFPA and UNICEF global, regional, and country offices. These offices will be involved in the management and implementation of planned activities including timely reporting on progress. The independent joint evaluation has been disseminated to all global, regional, and national partners including those at subnational level. At the global level, the evaluation findings and recommendations have been used in the design of the programme guidance, global theory of change and global results framework for the third phase of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage. And these findings and recommendations will be used to leverage the catalytic role of the Global Programme for advocacy, evidence generation, and galvanizing commitments towards ending child marriage within and beyond the Global Programme countries. More specifically, the findings are shaping programme priorities for capacity building, sustainability, contextualization and adaption to humanitarian and fragile settings, targeting of the most at-risk girls, and promotion of institutionalization of programme approaches. At the regional and country level, the findings and recommendations are being used in the design of evidence-based country offices theories of change and results frameworks adapted to the local context, the prioritization of specific populations most at-risk, the transformation of social and gender norms and behaviors, the strengthening of mechanisms for outcome monitoring and generation of evidence on what works and what does not work to end child marriage.

Allowed Editor: Include here name/s of person/s who will edit the Management Response in the EMR Tracker

RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 1: Contextualize the global theory of change for national and subnational contexts and for specific populations

- Frame the contextualization of the global theory of change at national and subnational levels to adapt and invest to reach specific populations of at-risk girls, and to allow for greater expansion and reach of more girls through scaling up promising or effective approaches.
- Countries should follow an inclusive consultative prioritization process between the two agencies during the adaptation of the global theory of change, with national- and subnational-level representation of implementing partners, and with realistic and due consideration of conditions for programmatic geographic convergence, which is critical to address the intersectional needs of adolescent girls.
- Countries should define the evidence-based needs of adolescent girls at national and subnational levels in particular, girls in urban areas compared with rural ones (going beyond the prevalence figures of child marriage), and for girls with specific vulnerable profiles (social minorities, disabled, pregnant, married), document theory of change adaptations and revisions, and adapt monitoring and results frameworks as well.
- Countries should conduct a “reality check” assessment of programme progress at the midterm of phase III, as well as a light situation analysis, and validate the adapted theory of change and its assumptions, and make adaptations, if needed, particularly on population targets, drivers of child marriage for subnational and specific vulnerable population groups.

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
1.1. Country offices take stock of the context, mechanism and outcomes, using programme effectiveness reviews or situation analyses, to validate the adapted theory of change and results framework and make necessary revisions that consider specific populations of at-risk girls, and the potential of scaling up interventions through	UNICEF and UNFPA Regional offices UNICEF and UNFPA Country offices	TBD	31 December 2025	Not started		

an inclusive consultative process between both agencies and with the national- and subnational-level representation of implementing partners.						
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Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 2: [Make the Programme more agile and adaptive for humanitarian and other complex contexts](#)

- Provide technical support to countries to enhance their capacities to contextualize programming approaches and to adapt existing guiding documents and tools to their humanitarian and fragile contexts, including capacities to enhance emergency preparedness and risk management planning and advocate with key actors to facilitate the integration of prevention and response to child marriage in humanitarian crises.
- Propose a strategic phased implementation approach and support adaptation of the Programme to contexts where the operational capacity is regularly reduced due to political conditions, humanitarian crisis, or other situations as might occur in certain regions of countries with protracted crisis.

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): [Agree](#)

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
2.1. Develop, adapt and roll out tools on the humanitarian-development peace nexus to child marriage, and adaptation design and implementation, to build the capacities of United Nations and local partners and guide strategic phased implementation.	Programme Group (Child Protection-Prevention of Harmful Practices team)	TBD	31 Dec 2025	Underway		

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 3: [Sustain and increase programme effectiveness, and deepen the gender-transformative approach and expand it in the countries where it is nascent.](#)

- The Global Programme should ensure that the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool is rolled out to all 12 countries; that action plans for the Accelerator Tool have been developed and implemented, and are periodically monitored; and that countries undergo a second assessment phase with reviews, action plans, monitoring and reporting on implementation of the plans.

- Consider integrating a standard and light measurement of the institutionalization of transformative programming, capacities of implementing partners, and eventually the change in norms and empowerment of adolescent girls. Adopt ways to better measure progress to capture social and gender norm and behaviour change that can complement existing tools.
- Expand the integration of men and boys at all levels to create new models of positive masculinity in favour of gender equality and ending child marriage, and, more specifically, focus on retaining the engagement of men and boys through approaches and interests that sustain their participation.
- Continue to be intentional in engaging with families and community members; the understanding of family composition should be systematically assessed to embrace extended families and, hence, go beyond reaching parents to include uncles, grandparents and others who influence key decisions.
- Continue to engage with community and religious leaders to influence social and gender norm change, with emphasis on embedding behaviour change messaging within existing structures for sustainability (for example, in schools as done in school clubs, child protection mechanisms in the community, interfaith and religious councils), including enhancing alignment and complementarity of legal and customary/traditional norms and practices.
- Continue advocacy for the enforcement of laws and policies, open an internal dialogue mechanism to discuss unintended consequences of the enforcement of laws limiting the age of marriage. This dialogue process should be documented to jointly identify risks and practical mitigation measures for country offices, and to complement the implementation of the well-developed technical note on child marriage and the law.

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): **Agree**

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
3.1. Adopt, adapt and scale up gender-transformative approaches and tools, including standard measures, and ensure that issues related to legal and customary/traditional norms and practices,	Programme Group (Child Protection-Prevention of Harmful Practices team) UNICEF and UNFPA Regional offices	TBD	31 Dec 2025	Underway		

and unintended consequences are integrated into the action plans of all country programmes.	UNICEF and UNFPA Country offices					
3.2. Develop, adapt and roll out tools to strengthen community-led networks in programming on positive masculinities, engagement of key reference groups (extended families, community, religious and traditional leaders), and retention of programme beneficiaries.	Programme Group (Child Protection-Prevention of Harmful Practices team) UNFPA Technical Division (SRH Branch)	TBD	31 Dec 2024	Underway		
3.3. Monitor, assess and develop strategies mitigating potential gaps and conflicts in laws and law enforcement that could weaken the prevention and response to child marriage at regional, national and subnational levels.	Programme Group (Child Protection-Prevention of Harmful Practices team) UNICEF and UNFPA Regional offices UNICEF and UNFPA Country offices	TBD	31 Dec 2024	Not started		

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 4: Make further strategic and ambitious use of the Global Programme’s potential to accelerate the elimination of child marriage globally.

- The Global Programme should leverage opportunities with donors and particularly private sector actors, including at the national level, to strengthen partnerships, and also focus explicitly on humanitarian contexts.
- The Global Programme should make use of its global and regional position of influence to strategically contribute to accelerating the elimination of child marriage at the global level, to reach countries and regions with a high prevalence of child marriage beyond the current Global Programme countries.
- The available information about the value added and positive influence of the Global Programme should be systematically documented, thoroughly analysed and utilized strategically to catalyse further results.
- The Global Programme should partner internally and externally and make concerted efforts to advocate at global, regional and country levels the practical integration of the prevention of (as well as response to) child marriage and harmful practices in regular work in humanitarian contexts. This advocacy work should target measures ranging from including harmful practices in regular monitoring and reporting tools at the cluster level, to explicit reflection in funding appeals templates, to mobilize funding from donors or funds such Education Cannot Wait, the Education Outcomes Fund, or pooled funds such as the Central Emergency Response Fund or Country-based Pooled Funds.

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
4.1. Country and regional offices develop and start using investment cases in national advocacy to influence decisions and catalyse investments, and to monitor and document value added and positive influence opportunities and outcomes.	Programme Group (Child Protection-Prevention of Harmful Practices team) UNICEF and UNFPA Regional offices UNICEF and UNFPA Country offices	TBD	31 Dec 2025	Not started		

4.2. Develop a concept note, application toolkit and assessment criteria, and invite potential country offices for prepositioning as Global Programme additional countries	Programme Group (Child Protection-Prevention of Harmful Practices team)	TBD	30 Jun 2024	Underway		
4.3. Develop an advocacy brief with key messages on why child marriage should be prioritized in humanitarian action	Programme Group (Child Protection-Prevention of Harmful Practices team)	TBD	31 Dec 2024	Not started		

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 5: [Strengthen coordination and partner capacity and improve resource mobilization and flexible use of funds for increased efficiency.](#)

- Review and refine the existing coordination mechanisms between agencies with the aim to further facilitate the programme geographic convergence, particularly at the subnational level, including reviewing and identifying strengths and weaknesses of the efforts to attain geographic convergence and regularly reviewing (i.e. during annual reviews or Global Programme meetings) what is and what is not working in this regard, especially at the subnational level.
- Consider also expanding further the engagement of staff with gender and adolescent-youth programming expertise for phase III.
- The Global Programme could consider complementary measures such as devising different types of incentives linked to the mobilization of external and internal (sectors) funds at the country level, including its measurement through the Global Programme monitoring and reporting system.
- Consider the refinement of the protocol to monitor funds utilization to add flexibility, also including provisions to utilize funds adequately and timely in cases of unachieved activities or changes in workplans.

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Partially agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: The evaluation lacked evidence to fully support the recommendation on “expanding further the engagement of staff with gender and adolescent-youth programming expertise for the next phase”. Both UNFPA and UNICEF have dedicated staff at country, regional and global levels with expertise on gender and adolescent-youth programming who work on the Programme. Regarding the recommendation on the “refinement of the protocol to monitor funds utilization to add flexibility, also including provisions to utilize funds adequately and timely in cases of unachieved activities or changes in workplans”, both UNFPA and UNICEF procedures support flexible adaptation of workplans and allocation of programme resources.

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
5.1. Country offices develop and start the implementation of resource mobilization plans specific to prevention and response to child marriage.	UNICEF and UNFPA Regional offices UNICEF and UNFPA Country offices	TBD	31 Dec 2025	Underway		
5.2. Develop and deliver a capacity-building model to build capacity of grass-root youth-led, women-led, feminist groups, coalitions and movements to enable them to achieve greater organizational independence, autonomy and resource mobilization to participate in advocacy and programming initiatives to end child marriage.	Programme Group (Child Protection-Prevention of Harmful Practices team) UNICEF and UNFPA Regional offices UNICEF and UNFPA Country offices	TBD	31 Dec 2024	Underway		

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 6: [Generate more evidence on what works in programme contexts and use it](#)

- Consider the introduction of sentinel indicators to complement the monitoring of at least selected interventions and other light measurements to assess outcome-level change at community or intervention area level. Enhance the Global Programme global results framework, the monitoring and reporting system and tools, with learning-oriented refinements. Programme budgets should include costing for monitoring, evaluation and data generation from the outset.

- Continue budgeting and supporting the conduct and use of research and evaluation and include also in this budgeting and support the generation of data from studies or third-party surveys that can integrate modules to measure girls' agency and empowerment, as well as the prevalence of child marriage.
- Identify and strategically select a few interventions across the Global Programme to invest in special measures to generate evidence on what works at the contextual level, using impact evaluation combined with process evaluation.
- Incentivize and mobilize internal or external support to assess the effectiveness of promising and scalable interventions on Global Programme outcomes and pathways in diverse contexts, including in humanitarian contexts.
- Assess the reach and access to the documentation and evidence gathered and accrued through Global Programme platforms and repositories. Target internal and external audiences, at national and subnational levels, including implementing partners.

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
6.1 Monitor, assess and review the quality of research and evidence generated by regional and country offices, including mechanisms for the collection of disaggregated data, outcome measurement and promotion of learning.	Programme Group (Child Protection-Prevention of Harmful Practices team) UNICEF Innocenti-Global Office of Research and Foresight UNICEF and UNFPA Regional offices	TBD	31 Dec 2025	Underway		

	UNICEF and UNFPA Country offices					
6.2 Continue expanding the uptake of evidence and research through international repositories, webinars and through the Child Marriage Research to Action Network, in partnership with Girls Not Brides.	<p>Programme Group (Child Protection-Prevention of Harmful Practices team)</p> <p>UNICEF and UNFPA Regional offices</p> <p>UNICEF and UNFPA Country offices</p>	TBD	31 Dec 2025	Underway		

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 7: [Systematically integrate the Programme’s work with the social protection sector and advocate for the strengthening of public finance management for the empowerment of adolescent girls](#)

- Expand existing Global Programme thematic convergence to systematically include social protection interventions such as cash transfer programmes.
- Advocate for national and particularly subnational budget allocations and spending on goods and social services critical to the empowerment of adolescent girls and the prevention of child marriage.

Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:

Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents

7.1 Country offices start conducting a mapping of social protection programmes and other financing mechanisms; identify potential entry points and advocate to leverage them for girls' empowerment.	UNICEF and UNFPA Regional offices UNICEF and UNFPA Country offices	TBD	31 Dec 2025	Underway		
<p>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 8: Elaborate sustainability plans in each country, jointly with implementing partners and counterparts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adopt a bottom-up approach in developing sustainability plans in each country with implementing partners and counterparts, starting with the development of sustainability at the subnational level with selected interventions, by relevance in terms of investment, change potential or another criterion of criticality. Include the development of these plans as an activity in the multi-year workplans of the Global Programme and incorporate indicators and benchmarks to assess the success of the development of the plans, to be used for annual reporting of the Global Programme. Prioritize systems strengthening interventions wherever they are institutionalized (comprehensive sexual education, life skills development, sexual health and reproductive rights related services, etc.). ○ Integrate processes and tools to increase learning, uptake and accountability, such as the Maturity Model assessment of government programmes, approaches, and systems to eliminate child marriage. While this is now only a piloted and nascent tool, this or an alternative one should be utilized across; its ownership and hosting should be planned and promoted so that it resides either with Governments or third parties that are credible, at the national or even regional level. These types of tools will help not only with regularly assessing progress at the institutional level, but also with building consensus around priority interventions. 						
<p>Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree): Agree</p>						
<p>If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:</p>						
Actions planned	Responsible Office	Responsible Person	Expected completion date	Implementation stage: Not started Underway Completed Cancelled	Actions taken	Supporting documents
8.1 Country offices develop and start the implementation of institutionalization and sustainability plans,	UNICEF and UNFPA Regional offices	TBD	31 Dec 2025	Not started		

based on a participatory approach with all stakeholders.	UNICEF and UNFPA Country offices					
8.2 Develop a brief on key considerations for sustainability, institutionalization, and scalability including mechanisms for monitoring.	Programme Group (Child Protection-Prevention of Harmful Practices team)		31 Dec 2024	Not started		