

# ETHIOPIA

end  
child  
marriage

A voice. A chance. A future.

COUNTRY PROFILE

2022



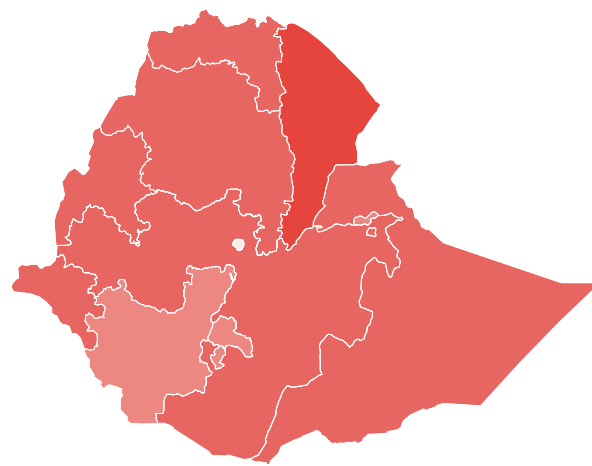
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“ I attended the forum and learned a lot about the dangers of child marriage and other harmful practices. I was unhappy with the marriage, but I had no real understanding of what the negative consequences were and what could be done to get myself out of the situation. My father was not happy as well. He married me off because the community elders insisted, so it was easier to convince him against the marriage using the information I gained at the forum. After I told my father what I had learned, he was extremely supportive. We reported the case to the Office of Women expert who supported us throughout the marriage cancellation process and encouraged me to re-enrol in school.”

— Mafuza Jemal, 17, Grade 8 student, Haramaya, Oromia region

# ETHIOPIA

**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



**145,415** adolescent girls (120,356 unmarried and 25,059 married) and **13,382** adolescent boys benefited from life-skills **training**, sexual and reproductive health information and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). Among the adolescent girls empowered, **409** have a disability.



**33,674** adolescent girls received support to **continue their education**, despite the repeated school closures due to the ongoing conflict and drought in some areas. **More than 3,000** girls received **dignity kits**, containing menstrual hygiene supplies, which contribute to **improving girls' school attendance**.



**10,557** religious and other **community leaders** were mobilized to champion **change towards ending child marriage** in their communities.



**613,989** individuals (boys, girls, women and men) participated in **group dialogue sessions** on the consequences of, and alternatives to, child marriage, the rights of adolescent girls and gender equality to change social norms.



More than **2 MILLION** individuals (boys, girls, women and men) were **reached by mass and social media messaging** on child marriage and gender equality.



Nearly **1,300** women's development groups and youth groups were supported to conduct community surveillance to **identify child marriage arrangements**, negotiate with families and provide referrals for adolescent girls to protection and care services. As a result, **1,740** child marriage arrangements were cancelled and **2,611** referred.

## Child marriage country context

There are 18.6 million child brides in Ethiopia, 8.1 million of whom were married before the age of 15. The prevalence of child marriage among girls stands at 40 per cent, a 30 per cent reduction since 1991, showing that, even in countries where the prevalence of child marriage is high, progress is possible. However, in order to meet the SDG target to end child marriage by 2030, progress would have to be greatly accelerated. If the rate of reduction remains at current levels, the prevalence will be 9 per cent by 2050; and if the rate of reduction is doubled the prevalence will be 2 per cent by 2050.

## Providing intensive support to marginalized girls

The lingering effects of COVID-19, drought and the conflict in some regions have increased the vulnerability of adolescent girls and their families. Adolescent girls are at increased risk of teenage pregnancies, school dropout and child marriage in programme areas. Displacement due to the drought and conflict resulted in many families losing their household income and exposed school-going girls to child marriage, and to sex and child labour trafficking. The Global Programme, at the onset of the crisis, provided direct economic support to these girls and their families. To sustain this support, the Global Programme has successfully linked and leveraged support for girls and their families to the Government's Productive Safety

## 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	108,926	145,415
<b>Indicator 1121:</b> Number of girls (aged 10–19) supported by the programme to enrol and/or remain in primary or secondary school	44,200	33,674
<b>Indicator 1211:</b> Number of boys and men actively participating in group education/dialogues that address harmful masculinities and gender norms	36,788	72,435
<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	740,090	613,989
<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	3,063,000	2,180,428
<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	1,986	10,557
<b>Indicator 1231:</b> Number of CSOs newly mobilized in support of challenging social norms and promoting gender equality by the Global Programme (cumulative)	41	31
<b>Indicator 2121:</b> Number of primary/secondary/non-formal schools in programme areas providing quality gender-friendly education that meets minimum standards	247	304
<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	730	797
<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)	2	2
<b>Indicator 3121:</b> Number of subnational plans with evidence informed interventions to address child marriage	8	11
<b>Indicator 3211:</b> Number of generated evidence and knowledge that focus on what works to end child marriage (cumulative)	8	6
<b>Indicator 3212:</b> Number of generated evidence and knowledge that apply a gender analysis (cumulative)	8	6
<b>Indicator 3221:</b> Number of south-to-south cooperation events (conferences, expert visits, peer consultations, study tours, communities of practice) supported	3	5

Net Programme (PSNP). The capacity of organizations such as community care coalitions and gender clubs have also been strengthened, through training, to mobilize community resources to support girls at risk of dropping out of school.

The Global Programme, in collaboration with its implementing partners, has institutionalized life-skills education through a training of trainers scheme in teachers' colleges. In 2022, 347 gender club representatives and school principals from 304 schools completed a certified master trainer's course in comprehensive life-skills that integrated knowledge on ending child marriage and FGM. In addition, a core team was established in teacher training colleges to undertake technical and monitoring activities in schools so that the life-skills education meets the set standards and to ensure facilitators are provided with on-the-spot technical guidance and support. Safe spaces were established for out-of-school adolescent girls in the community, based on age cohorts (10–14 years and 15–19 years). Overall, the programme reached 145,415 adolescent girls with comprehensive life-skills education which included 57,668 out-of-school girls and 87,747 girls from the 304 schools in the 29 woredas targeted by the programme. In order to build a movement of change-agents to end child marriage and gender inequality, the programme also targeted 13,382 adolescent boys within these communities with life-skills education and awareness-training on positive masculinities, power dynamics and gender equality.

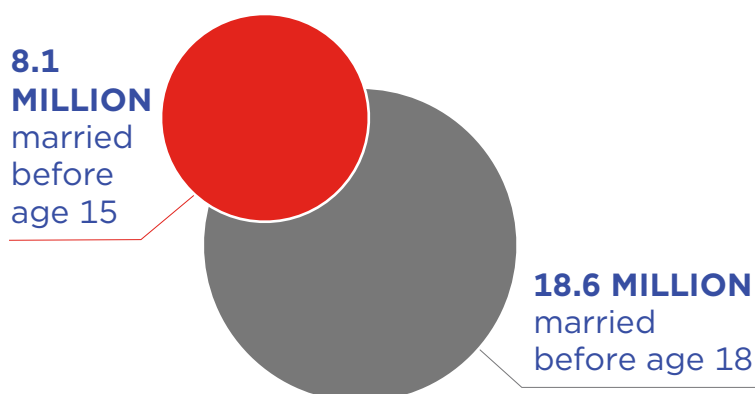
A randomized baseline survey, backed by the Global Programme, of girls aged 10–14 years revealed that 53 per cent knew about the consequences of child marriage, with no differences between the intervention and control areas. Some 78 per cent of the girls agreed that girls should have the same opportunities in the community as boys, and with the idea that women should participate equally with their husbands in making household decisions. Fewer than half (45 per cent) were a little supportive of the use of intimate partner violence with no differences between intervention and control areas.

Using the multisectoral alternative learning programme known as 'Bete' (my home), UNICEF and its partners provided out-of-school adolescent girls and boys, especially those from low-income families, with education materials in safe spaces, so that they could learn numeracy and literacy skills to enhance their performance in school. Overall, 33,674 girls received support to enrol and stay in school. In addition, more than 3,000 girls received dignity kits which contribute to improving girls' school attendance.

### Challenges, lessons learned and next steps

The conflict has delayed implementation of the programme in many of the target areas, particularly in the Tigray, Afar and Amhara regions. Due to insecurity, it was impossible to teach adolescent girls life-skills in some districts in Amhara and Afar.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Kobo, Debark Zuria, Argoba, Dehana, Artumafursi, Jilitumega, Wogidi, and Merhabtie districts in Amhara region and Dalol, Megale, Koneba, Erebt and Berhale in Afar.



**Ethiopia** is home to over **18 million child brides**; **4 in 10** 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.

Families displaced in some woredas have lost their household incomes and have been unable to meet the basic needs of their school-going children. This has resulted in families and children requiring comprehensive support (including meeting their economic needs) beyond the Global Programme, through collaboration with other partners. UNICEF stopped the provision of direct economic support to school-going girls in the middle of the implementation period, leading to the programme facilitators designing a new way of leveraging support for them from the stakeholders of the Ethiopian PSNP.

Though the support, both material and financial, was limited, the girls used it as an opportunity to continue their education which shows its importance for them. Strengthening community structures, such as community care coalitions and gender clubs, is critical to further improving their ability to mobilize more resources and continue supporting girls and boys at risk of dropping out of school due to economic challenges.

The development of the out-of-school girls' (OOSGs) comprehensive empowerment manual was delayed, because the onset of COVID-19 hampered the formative assessment needed to guide the design in 2021. The layers of consultation needed with key actors to get clearance on the content, especially that related to sexual and reproductive health and sexuality also contributed to the delay.

During the development process, the programme continued adapting life-skills education to reach schoolgirls. Issues related to the different situations of OOSGs require an innovative and motivational approach for them to complete the training as they are often busy with household chores and some of them are also engaged in various income-generating activities. The roll out of the new manual will involve the Village Savings and Loan Associations in some groups for testing and it might be considered for scaling-up, based on the test results.

One of the lessons learned from the year is that the school's administrations and the community, via the parent-teacher association members, are important in enrolling and retaining adolescent girls in primary school. In 2023, there is a need for school administrations to continue collaborating with the committees established to combat harmful traditional practices and community surveillance mechanisms.

Gender club members and school management provide crucial support for adolescent girls and boys at risk of dropping out of school. They have been instrumental in identifying vulnerable individuals and giving them the self-confidence, through school-based psychosocial support, that has resulted in the adolescents continuing their education. Life-skills education has also contributed a lot to improving school attendance: absenteeism among trained adolescents is almost none.



## Enhancing the family and community environment

The quality of community conversations has been enhanced by the redesigning of the community conversation manual. The programme achieved this by working with traditional, religious and community leaders, with a focus on using conversations to build consensus.

The new manual takes a gender-transformative approach; it is relevant to different age groups and prepares participants to jointly envisage a model community and, ideally, successful adult marriages. It responds to adults' and adolescents' situations and facilitates sessions that enable intergenerational dialogue. These dialogues drive change in social and gender norms through encouraging people to reflect on the assumptions and beliefs which perpetuate child marriage, violence and gender inequality. They look at the consequences of child marriage as well as alternative behaviours, and facilitate consensus-building on collective action against child marriage.

This led to many community groups developing action plans and revising customary laws to end child marriage. Despite displacements due to internal conflict, 613,989 people in targeted communities were involved in these dialogues. During 2022, 72,435 men and boys were engaged in structured dialogues; there were discussions for only men and boys, and also for mixed groups. This has contributed to encouraging men and boys to take up their roles as champions in supporting girls at risk of marriage and those girls whose families are forced to accept marriage proposals. This approach was crucial in communities that have a highly patriarchal system and where the main decisions (at individual, communal and societal levels) affecting the lives of women and girls, such as marriage, are made by men. Marriage is the main destiny for girls, thus, changing their situation requires men and boys to change their attitudes.

A humanitarian toolkit, appropriate to emergency settings, has also been developed and translated into the four languages of the Amhara, Oromo, Afar and Somali regions. Training-of-trainers' toolkits have also been provided for 260 social workers across the target regions.



### Challenges, lessons learned and next steps

The previous lack of a standardized manual with a clear tracking tool and implementation guide had been a major challenge in this drive to use community conversations to build consensus; it led to trainers having to use references from other countries that were not adequately adapted to the local or regional contexts. The programme's development of a culturally sensitive manual and implementation guide specifically for adolescent boys and men in Ethiopia addressed this gap.

Conflict and drought has forced men and boys to spend time looking for water and pastures for their livestock, which has led to low attendance in some key programme interventions. To address this, some activities are being delivered at the watering points to reach men and boys, particularly in Afar, Somali, Oromia and the Southern Regions Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) regions.

The security context in Ethiopia has delayed the finalization of the men's and boys' engagement intervention package and implementation guide as it is difficult to collect data from the programmatic-focused regions. The delayed data-collection hindered the completion of the formative assessment, which could provide vital information to inform the evidence-based development of the manual and the guidelines.

There were several additional challenges for the programme:

- Limited institutional capacity of faith-based organizations led to the delay in implementing some of the critical activities, including a knowledge, attitude and practice survey among religious leaders that UNICEF technically and financially supports.
- The Inter-religious Council of Ethiopia is composed of seven major denominations, and deliberating issues related to child marriage takes longer due to sensitivities, for example, around the age of marriage. Thus, to achieve consensus, thorough consultation and communication are required for the regional leaders and institutions.

Several lessons were learned.

- The critical importance of engaging men and boys is based on their role in the cancellation of child marriage arrangements, as noted by the programme and other national and regional stakeholders. A classic example is from the Amhara region, particularly the Oromo special zones, where a father rescued his 14-year-old daughter from marriage after being given by her mother to a man living in one of the Gulf countries. The bride price was even returned, and the marriage arrangement was cancelled. Despite the man attempting to abduct the girl, her father stood by her and supported her in continuing her education.
- It is crucial to have manuals and implementation guidelines focused on men and boys, to instil an effective process for changing social and gender norms. For the first time, the process of developing the manual and the implementation guide has been executed in a participatory and consultative manner, incorporating the opinions and wishes of men and boys in ending child marriage. These tailor-made tools for engagement will significantly change the quality of gender-transformative programmes (including CSE for boys) that promote healthy relationships, positive masculinities and gender equality and will encourage the scaling up of the intervention.
- Tracking progress has been addressed in the monitoring and evaluation section of the redesigned community conversation toolkits.

## Strengthening systems

The national case management framework has been rolled out, under the leadership of the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and the UNICEF child protection system strengthening team. Services have become more accessible, linked and increasingly managed by trained community workers. As a result, more than 18,673 girls received legal aid, psychosocial help, health services, and security (temporary safe shelters).

The Global Programme strengthened gender clubs in schools through training and the provision of gender-focused supplies, identified as a critical need. Vulnerable girls at risk of school dropout and, by extension, child marriage, who attended gender clubs in 304 schools were given capacity-building training on life-skills, and menstrual pads and educational materials.

- The Global Programme provided technical and material support for 116 health facilities. This included:
  - training on adolescent- and youth-friendly service provision
  - on-site technical support
  - provision of supplies
  - establishing and strengthening youth-friendly corners within health facilities
  - strengthening referral links between schools, associations and facilities.

Some 243 front-line health workers (48 male and 195 female) have been trained on youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services to enable them to provide appropriate services to adolescent girls. In Gambella, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)-SYNOD in collaboration with the regional health bureau, conducted comprehensive adolescent and youth-friendly reproductive health service training for 45 health care providers. The purpose of the training was to build their capacity and to establish youth-friendly reproductive health services within public health facilities. It will also help to increase access to, and utilization of, good quality reproductive health services, including the provision of age-appropriate information and services.





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## Challenges, lessons learned and next steps

Implementing the programme has been interrupted in some districts, due to the conflict in northern Ethiopia, and the spillover of the war into the Amhara and Afar regions. This has particularly affected the capacity-building of schools and the provision of good quality, gender-responsive education for adolescent girls, including CSE related to child marriage. It is difficult to get data on this from woredas in some instances, as most of data-collection points and systems in these areas have been affected by the conflict.

The education sector does not have enough funding to cover all Global Programme target regions and woredas; as a result, the education component is being implemented in 29 selected districts against the 128 districts originally targeted.

In parts of Afar and Somali regions, some of the target schools have been closed due to drought. The guardians/parents of school-going children have moved out of their settlements in search of water and pasture or, if their livestock have been wiped out, to settle in sites for internally displaced people.

One of the lessons learned is that regional-based teachers' colleges are crucial in enabling teachers to provide good quality, gender-responsive education for adolescent girls, including CSE in school and non-school settings. Moreover, the teachers' colleges train all teachers during in-service and refresher training. It is vitally important for the programme to increase the colleges' ability to offer teachers' capacity-building initiatives and to encourage the sharing of experiences on the efforts to end child marriage, including during school cluster meetings.

In 2023, the programme will prioritize several interventions.

- It will implement the newly developed school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) community conversations at school level. The regional education bureau is waiting for the Ministry of Education to endorse this so that it can be adapted and implemented across the regions. This will familiarize all teachers, students and parents with procedures for reporting abuse and harassment at school.
- It will conduct capacity-building on technical competence on SRGBV to demonstrate gender-responsive classroom practices for teachers.
- It will establish a partnership with the teachers' colleges to support the training of community resource persons/facilitators in delivering the out-of-school girls' engagement manual.

## Building partnerships

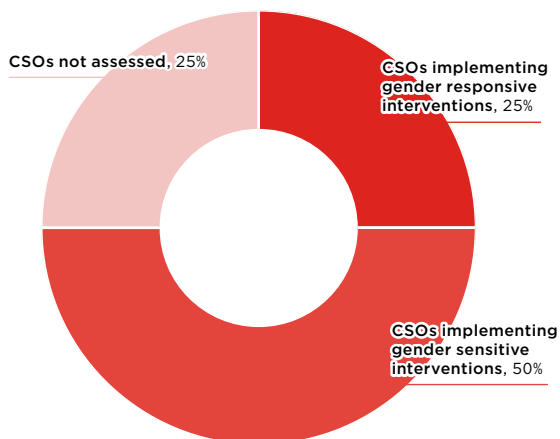
- The programme managed to mobilize 1,300 women's development groups, women's associations and youth groups to collaborate on ending child marriage and to promote gender equality in their communities. Key to this was:
  - assessing their technical and financial support needs
  - organizing different capacity-building trainings
  - sharing information, education and communication materials

- supporting their outreach activities
- inviting them to be part of review meetings organized at different levels.
- These organizations identify child marriage arrangements and potential violence, negotiate with families to reject child marriage, and link girls and their families with essential services related to ending child marriage.

### 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 – based on the partners identified as focusing on promoting girls’ and women’s rights from the previous year (four in Ethiopia). The assessment aimed to guide UNFPA and UNICEF on how better to identify and support opportunities to advance gender-transformative approaches.

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



The assessment was conducted by building on information from 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.

There is significant potential for Ethiopian CSOs to be gender-transformative. Substantively the organizations are carrying out important and effective work, including advocating for legislation and awareness around child marriage and FGM. For example, CARE, a CSO partner in Ethiopia, places women and girls at the centre of its humanitarian responses. The organization’s programming is gender-responsive and intersectional. It has a gender equality and inclusion policy through which it commits to incorporating gender equality in all the work that it does, internally and externally. The organization also recognizes that gender is non-binary and adopts an inclusive approach to diversity in its programming. However, some CSOs ranked as gender-sensitive appear to lack a coherent understanding of gender-transformative approaches and fall short in terms of structural markers. There are some gaps in relation to how CSOs communicate their impact, illustrative of weaknesses with policy and strategy, learning and monitoring, and knowledge generation.

With support in terms of conducting gender training and analysis it is likely that the gender-sensitive organizations will become gender-transforming. Targeted support on policy development and guidance on monitoring and evaluation tools could greatly benefit these CSOs. Moreover, workshops on the value of a gender-transformative approach will likely improve understanding which, in the long term, will positively influence the organizations at structural and substantive levels.

### Challenges, lessons learned and next steps

Groups led by women and young people in Ethiopia are not registered and structured as CSOs. Although the groups are established and supported by the Government, the programme cannot directly fund them due to internal United Nations guidelines, rules and regulations on partnering with community-based organizations. Hence, the programme is planning to engage women’s associations at the regional and woreda level by supporting partnerships between the Bureaux of Women and Social Affairs and women’s associations which are legally registered and play critical roles in mobilizing communities as well as promoting gender equality.

However, the capacities of women-led and youth-led groups and organizations are weak. They require further investment to strengthen their technical and institutional level capacities so that they can achieve expectations set by the programme and other stakeholders.

One of the key lessons learned is that formal child protection structures generally collapse at the onset of emergencies caused by conflict or climate change events. It is important to work closely with community groups such as women-led and youth-led organizations which are usually part of the community and are available to help vulnerable girls at risk of child marriage when all other actors have limited presence.

- Positive results can be achieved by:
- supporting partners in redesigning manuals targeting women-led and youth-led organizations and groups to influence at scale their contribution to ending child marriage
- exploring available platforms for women-led and youth-led organizations so they can engage with similar groups in other countries and establish strategic partnerships.

## Facilitating supportive laws and policies

The Global Programme supported the federal and regional governments and non-governmental partners to continue the implementation of the National Costed Road Map to End Child marriage and FGM 2020–2024. The programme's support includes building the capacity of governmental and non-governmental actors to lead, support, monitor and report on the implementation status of the map. These entailed organizing high-level advocacy initiatives with members of the standing committee of the national parliament and the regional councils to enable them to monitor and hold key sectors accountable in implementing the plan in line with the programme's mandate. In 2022, 210 parliamentarians and council members (109 female and 101 male) worked to support the efforts in rolling out the costed road map, including increasing domestic/federal exchequer funding for ending child marriage in Ethiopia.

In 2022, the Global Programme support was particularly instrumental in undertaking the revision process of the SRGBV code of conduct at national level and its contextualization by the regions/subnational states. The national code has now been finalized and Oromia, Somali and Sidama regions, among others, have drafted their regionally adapted versions ready to be endorsed by regional officials.

The Global Programme also supported the Gambella region Bureau of Women and Child Affairs and the Bureau of Justice in revising family law to consider



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the cultural contexts of communities, including the protection needs of women, children, and the family institution in general, from gender equality and human rights perspectives. This has been done by learning from a review of other regions' experiences, revisiting the existing evidence and technically and financially supporting consultations organized at different levels. Several contentious issues need to be addressed:

- dowry payments drive the child marriage of girls and result in degrading treatment for boys (even, in some cases, causing them to be beaten to death) when they fail to fulfil the payment
- the suggestion that the age of marriage for boys should be increased to 21 so that they are properly mature and economically fit to start families
- ways in which the law can support development of an accountability framework for regional officials including banning their involvement in child marriage.

The consultation among the experts and key stakeholders in the regions and at the federal level will continue until a consensus is reached.

The review and endorsement process of the family laws in Afar and Somali regions have not progressed due to resistance from community leaders and some officials. The main issues challenging the process include:

- the minimum age of marriage
- polygamy
- the rights of an adopted child
- irregular union
- determining paternity using DNA.

To address this, lawyers at federal level are exploring ways to persuade community leaders to accept minimum standards while respecting their opinions. These consultations will continue, and solutions are hoped for in the coming year.

### 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

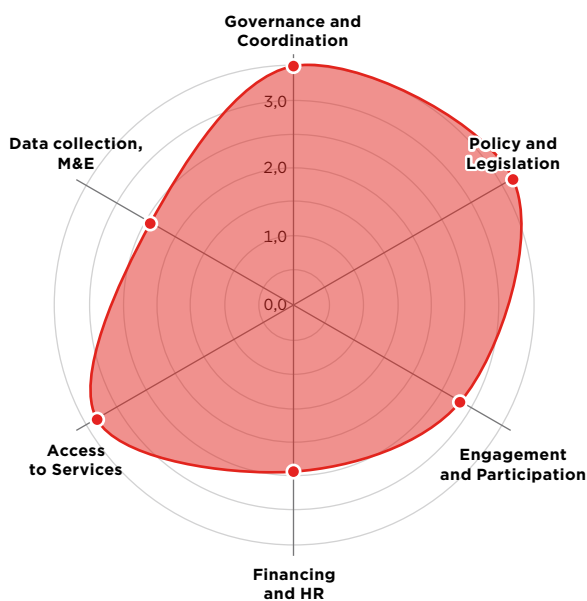
Intermediate Outcome	Sub-Domains	Score
<b>Governance and Coordination</b>	A1: Political Commitment	✓
	A2: Coordination structures	✓
	A3: National Action Plans	✓
<b>Policy and Legislation</b>	B.1: Legislation, policies and implementation mechanisms	✓
<b>Engagement and Participation</b>	C1: Independent 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 Ethiopia



### Challenges, lessons learned and next steps

Finding disaggregated expenditure data is challenging both at the regional and subnational levels. This is because the Government allocates funding on overall blocks of budget rather than an itemized costing framework. Discussions with the programme and finance staff are under way to better estimate the proportion of budget allocations.

The humanitarian situation resulting from the drought has also shifted/reduced some budgets which had been earmarked to implement the multisectoral gender-transformative plan on ending child marriage. There is therefore a need to periodically track expenditure at federal and subnational levels to influence federal and regional priorities, despite the challenging humanitarian situation in the country.

- Key priorities in 2023 are:
- supporting the midterm review of the National Costed Road Map to End Child Marriage and FGM 2020-2024
- convening stocktaking exercises with key stakeholders, including development partners
- supporting the high-level federal ministerial visit of selected regions and convening budget-based advocacy meetings with the regional government officials.

### Generating and applying data and evidence

In 2022, the Global Programme completed a formative assessment that informed the development of the National Out-Of-School Girl Empowerment Manual and the men and boys engagement curriculum and implementation guide. This assessment was carried out in six regions through a qualitative approach, including key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The manuals were validated at different levels, including by key ministries such as the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education, and translated into five local languages (Somali, Oromo, Afar, Sidama and Amhara). The training of trainers has also been provided to 88 experts at regional and woreda level (61 male and 27 female) under the leadership of Ministry of Women and Social Affairs.

The first-year progress review of the National Costed Road Map to End Child Marriage and FGM was conducted by the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs and UNICEF at the federal level and in selected regions (SNNP and Somali). The review included expenditure tracking, an implementation assessment over the first year and the extent to which the yearly milestones set were met. The review revealed a promising trend in the allocation of funding both by the Government (federal and regional levels)



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and non-governmental actors. Yet, the net value in supporting programme implementation had been limited by high inflation, which affected the Ethiopian economy. This has contributed to alerting the members of the National Alliance to End Child marriage and FGM to prioritize budgeting in their advocacy. In addition, programmatic field visits by the federal Minister and State Minister for the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs to selected states (Gambella, Sidama and SNNP regions) are planned to be part of the current rolling workplan with the ministry.

The social and behaviour change baseline survey initiated by UNICEF and UNFPA with John Hopkins University was completed and focuses on tracking the contribution of the programme to changing social and gender norms. The initial findings

of the report have revealed that there are significant changes in knowledge and shifts in personal attitudes towards ending child marriage. Preparation for a follow-up midline survey is under way.

According to local government sources, between January and June 2021, compared with the same period in 2022, child marriage increased by an average of 131 per cent across some areas in regions which are worst hit by drought (Somali, Oromia and SNNP). This data, contained in an analysis supported by the Global Programme, has shaped national, regional, and global-level discussions and has been crucial in alerting partners to follow up on the issue; to introduce mitigation measures, raise awareness among key actors, including media and donors, and inform resource mobilization initiatives.

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## COUNTRY PROFILE

2022

