04 February 2020

Reference: Strategic Positioning Evaluation of UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office


Dear Mr. Bickel,

We are pleased to submit the Final Report for the study ‘Gender Evaluation Report in the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Programme 2017-2020’

We are thankful for the kind co-operation and support provided by UNICEF staff in ROSA and Bangladesh Country Office.

Best Wishes,
For and on behalf of PricewaterhouseCoopers Private Ltd.,

Kaustabh Basu

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# List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BBS</td>
<td>Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<td>BCO</td>
<td>Bangladesh Country Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>C4D</td>
<td>Communication for Development</td>
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<td>CAP</td>
<td>Communication and Partnership</td>
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<td>CBO</td>
<td>Civil society-based organizations</td>
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<td>CO</td>
<td>Country Office</td>
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<td>CP</td>
<td>Country Programme</td>
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<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>DHIS</td>
<td>District Health Information Software</td>
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<td>FYP</td>
<td>Five-year plan</td>
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<td>GAP</td>
<td>Gender Action Plan</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GOB</td>
<td>Government of Bangladesh</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and communications technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMED</td>
<td>Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division</td>
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<td>LDC</td>
<td>Least Developed Countries</td>
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<td>LGD</td>
<td>Local Governance Division</td>
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<td>MICS</td>
<td>Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys</td>
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<td>MoWCA</td>
<td>Ministry of Women and Child Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>PSN</td>
<td>Programme Strategic Note</td>
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<td>PWD</td>
<td>Person with Disability</td>
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<td>RAM</td>
<td>Results Assessment Module</td>
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<td>ROSA</td>
<td>Regional Office for South Asia</td>
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<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>SITAN</td>
<td>Situation Analysis</td>
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<td>SPE</td>
<td>Strategic Positioning Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>T4D</td>
<td>Technology for Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCRC</td>
<td>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDAF</td>
<td>United Nations Development Assistance Framework</td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children's Fund</td>
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<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
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Executive Summary

Background
Informed by the 7th Five-year plan, the SDG goal 5, the Gender Action Plan 2018-2021 and the UNICEF Bangladesh Strategy Paper on Gender 2017-20, gender related programmes have been placed as a critical cross-cutting function in the ongoing UNICEF – GOB Country Programme of Cooperation (CP) 2017-2020 (CP 17-20). The present report is an evaluation of inclusion of Gender Equality within the overall country programme. It particularly refers to assess gender focused programming within the office and the initiatives undertaken to integrate and mainstream gender across all sectoral programmes such as health, and education, gender responsive WASH systems and also evaluate the integration followed with other cross-cutting programming areas such as communication for development, and new programming areas of the such as tea garden, climate change, persons with disability, urban programming. The results of this report will share a reflection of the success of the integration and gender programming and additionally collate inputs for the next Strategic Plan for the period starting 2021

Approach and Methodology to the evaluation
The evaluation has been conducted as a part of the Strategic Positioning Evaluation (SPE) of UNICEF Bangladesh Country Programme 2017-20 commissioned by UNICEF Regional Office of South Asia (ROSA). Gender is a critical corporate priority for UNICEF. It is a critical normative principle of programming that supports the UNICEF’s vision of leaving no child behind. The overall methodology of this evaluation integrated a gender specific focus to probe the extent to which the Bangladesh country programme has addressed issues of gender inequality. The methodology comprised of in-depth consultations with key internal and external stakeholders including of the Bangladesh Country Office (BCO). The primary data was collected from various sources, including stakeholder consultations and observation made during field visits. The key findings was compiled using triangulation of both primary as well as the secondary data analysis. This essentially comprised of review of sample literature including evaluation, situational analysis studies, pilot reports and programme implementation reports published in the term of the present country programme.

The evaluation included field visits and consultations with UNICEF Office staff and stakeholders at both the national and the sub national level across two field offices of UNICEF. An internal stakeholder workshop was conducted at the UNICEF office in Dhaka and teams reflected on the office’s focus, maturity and prioritization of issues related to gender programming within the Country Programme.

Key Findings
The findings have been drawn against the four outcome areas of the present country programme. Subsequently the extent of gender integration adopted has been analyzed under five categories namely the technical capacity of the Bangladesh Country Office to deliver gender results; resource allocation for gender programming; evidence generation; findings across convergence, collaborative environment and upstream spaces and results on Gender as a cross-cutting function. Further the performance of the CP has been analysed against the key indicators outlined within the two key guiding documents for the office focusing on gender equality, namely the UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2018-2021 and the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for South Asia 2018-2021 (UNICEF ROSA).

Institutional Response to Gender Integration
The commitment to gender equality in programming and results has been reinforced through strengthening the gender architecture of the office with placement of a Senior International Gender and Development Specialist, to lead the team. This country office team holds 53% female staffing and this includes sectional chiefs for Health, Nutrition and Communication for development

Despite the availability of a P4 level senior staff, there has been limited achievement of resource commitment for gender considering limited staff placed in the section. There has been limited achievement of resource commitment for gender with only a few key staff placed in the section. Programmatically, there is limited achievement towards integration as a cross-cutting function.

There is an effort towards gender capacity training implemented within the BCO. However, despite the trainings undergone on fundamental concepts on gender, there remains a weak understanding on certain key terminologies amongst the internal staff members of the office.¹ There is evidence to suggest that there is reluctance to adopt and use gender analysis and other tools to promote gender programming activities. Follow

¹ There has been a high turnover of staff in the BCO. This has been mentioned in Key Findings,Section3 Theme 4 of the present report.
up plan on learnings and the knowledge disseminated after trainings to assess the effectiveness of the exercise are yet to be initiated.

**Programmatic Results and Design Functions**

Gender mainstreaming while has been addressed as a critical component in the country programme, operationally remains a more section driven approach with respect to the outcome definitions. There are results on gender are reflected across programme activities within all sections and with special emergency responses also. Cox Bazar. Yet, overall a weak gender focus in programmes can be observed undertaken within Life Cycle Approach across the country programme 2017-2020. Ending Child Marriage is one of the key programmes that drives gender and adolescent focused programming within the Country Office. This programme has successfully achieved implementing a convergence approach with co-ordination from Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (MoWCA), other government counterparts and donor organizations. With help of the convergence approach underlined in the Ending Child Marriage programme, a multi-dimensional strategic outlook was incorporated in the programme design.

The programme areas where the emphasis on gender is yet to be more defined include emergency programmes, disability, health and nutrition. The gender inclusion in programming among sections is at present more driven by individual leadership and availability of resources in sections. While in Life-Cycle Approach, we require a greater insistence on use of intersectional programming, there are institutional gaps which may prevent implementing of the same. For instance, the standardized results and monitoring framework, named the Results Assessment Module (RAM) reports on programme results across outcomes. As a cross-cutting programming theme, RAM does not specify upon reporting against gender results across sections. There is a need to formulate an independent gender budget to enable generation of specific result-based indicators that support evaluation of programme activities undertaken. This may further help in recording results indicators under a designated programme in RAM. There is limited focus on the integration of boys and men for gender focused activities across outcomes one and two.

**Engagements in Partnerships**

The initiative to build partnerships and support stakeholder platforms to promote gender integration has met success with the achievement of working committees and increased network platforms. For instance, for the Ending Child Marriage programme, there is a wide scaled stakeholder working committee where MoWCA and UNICEF are co-chairs which is the Local Consultative Group on Women’s Advancement and Gender Equality. It is an active forum where key development partners including other UN agencies coordinate and meet for discussions on gender issues.

As a leading policy advocate on child rights and a dominant subject expert, UNICEF is a critical agency among many stakeholder platforms and is strongly positioned to reinforce focus on national policy making and design strategic interventions addressing gender inequality and adolescent girls issues. Ending Child Marriage is a successful example of a convergence-based effort and in health-based policy, there is the example National Adolescent Health Strategy. Yet despite the active presence of UNICEF in the network for stakeholder connection and exchange, there is limited translation of upstream dialogue for advocacy efforts on gender equal policies. For instance, there is limited upstream advocacy undertaken across issues like gender based violence.

There is significant scope to engage with and strengthen organizations that work on gender related issues including civil society groups, women’s groups, academia, and exchange knowledge and engage in relevant policy making dialogues. There is at present limited engagements with gender focused civil society organizations and this could be an emerging scope of partnerships for building policy dialogues. Similarly, partnerships with government, civil society, public-private organizations, donors, academia, UN interagency can be actively focused. The representation of young boys and girls in parliamentary caucus is a successful example of a platform promoting upstream dialogue process on gender. Adoption of the one UN reform promoting engagement in joint programming channeling leading donor organizations and government counterparts, civil society groups would enable triggering a push for adoption of convergent approaches in addressing pertinent gender issues.

**Evidence Generation**

The evaluation and research studies commissioned in 2019 specifically include gender as a component especially in WASH and ECM driven by the Social Policy Evaluation, Analytics and Research (SPEAR). In alignment to this finding, there is also a rise in acceptance to use gender disaggregated data in government institutions like Implementing Monitoring and Evaluation Division and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. While on one aspect there is a push for evidence generation on gender,(including both qualitative and quantitative data) on the other hand, the standardized reporting format for recording programmatic results, namely the Results and

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2 Further, effort in gender mainstreaming across WASH, secondary education and alternate education models has been highlighted in later sections on the report. For instance please refer Section 1 Outcome Area 1 for WASH based gender mainstreaming work; Section 3, Theme 1 for gender focused efforts in secondary education and Section 3 Theme 2 for gender inclusive alternate education models.
Monitoring Framework (RAM) does not support reporting intersectional results indicators which include gender as a cross-cutting programme area.

While there has been rise in generation of gender disaggregated data yet there is evidence to highlight the limited use of the same across programme design and literature. Challenges remained in terms of the actual gender-based findings used for gender analysis and addressing gender equality during programme design and delivery. Adequate knowledge management and need for further evidence generation on gender is required for gender transformative policy advocacy and programming.

Recommendations

Going forward, the Bangladesh Country Office needs to support more platforms enabling further opportunities of collaboration and creation of enabling environment for achieving gender equality across all key sectors of women and child development. It is recommended to uphold the one UN reform that will aid in maximizing resource efficiency by effectively using specialized resources across teams and fruitfully follow a strategic planning that allows to deliver key results in gender equality.

There is a need to further expand the gender architecture to support the vision to promote increased cross-sectional programmes. The focus on men and boys require special emphasis in the future programme design to strengthen transformative action to address gender inequalities. There needs to be a dedicated budget, accountability framework to assess and evaluate gender-based results and indicators. The technical staff capacity of the Bangladesh Country Office can be further strengthened with dedicated follow up and post training assessment conducted for gender capacity trainings. Greater coordination and engagement with the sections and focal points may also result as an effective way to support gender mainstreaming within the country programme.

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3 Cited from (Betts, Harrop, Grosso, & Esser, 2019)
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1. Introduction

Background of Country profile

In 2017, the population of Bangladesh is estimated at 162.7 million, with 81.3 million women and 81.4 million men, making it one of the densely populated countries in the world4. Bangladesh has made critical progress in having achieved lower middle-income country status in 2015. In alignment with the economic development, there has been efforts by the state in improving the socio-political environment to achieve progress in the same. While there are some improvements made across a few key development indicators, deep-rooted cultural and traditional social behaviors are playing catalytical role in impeding holistic social development across the nation (Country GAP Rank:48, Global Gender GAP score: 0.721) resulting in retaining the present gender gap.

Despite the strong traditional cultural dominance influencing the perpetuation of many structural gender discriminatory practices, as a positive achievement, Bangladesh holds a high rank in political empowerment. Bangladesh consolidates its position as the region’s top performer in the Political Empowerment sub index (2018) and breaks into the global Index with rank 5 out of 149 countries in 2018 (country score: 0.526).

This rank records a remarkable progress on closing its political gender gap, despite a widening gender gap in terms of labour force participation5. There are a few key results shared below that present an overall view on the country’s gender profile.

Marital Status of women and men

According to the recent data by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2017), nearly 99.3 percent of the women are single in age group 10–14, this drops to 76.2 percent when the age group of 15–19 is considered, and further to about 25.4 percent when they reach to the age of 20–24. The data reflects that child marriage is still prevalent in Bangladesh. Single population accounts for 38.6 percent in the case of men and 26.2 percent of women. The incidence of widowhood is more prevalent among the women (9.1 percent) than among the men (1.1 percent) for the overall sample.

Despite of increased national attention, and dedicated programmes prioritized to end child marriage, while there has been a gradual decline in the overall incidence of reported cases of child marriage, there is a still a strong trend prevalent sustaining the practice of child marriages. Bangladesh has highest rate of child marriage in Asia.

Exhibit 1: Trends in Sex Ratio
Source: Bangladesh sample vital statistics 2017

Exhibit 2: Marital Status by age for Women and Men
Source: Bangladesh sample vital statistics 2017

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A survey conducted in 85 cases across 19 districts of the country during 2016 to 2017, revealed that the rate of child marriage under the age of 15 declined from 62.8% in 2015 to 10.7% in 2017 and the rate of child marriages under the age of 18 years has gone down from 62.8 % in 2015 to 59.7 % in 2016.

Results of the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2017-2018 reported that 59% of women aged 20–24 were married before age 18. Additionally, 71% women aged between 20–49, reported being married by age 18, and 85% married by age 20. Overall, the survey revealed at nearly one-third (31%) of women aged between 20–49 years reported that they had married at age 15.

Sex Ratio

Surveys conducted in 2017 records more men than women in Bangladesh with an overall sex ratio of 100.2 males per 100 females. The Bangladesh Gender Ratio is 95 men to 100 women, which records 5 million missing women in terms of the population. This ratio is lower than the global average of 101 men to 100 women.

Gender focus in Head of the Households

Bangladeshi society is primarily male dominated and the family structure has been universally led by male members. However, there has been partial change recorded in this aspect. While overall, most of the households are still headed by male members, as can be observed from Exhibit 3, there are rising numbers of female headed households across districts. With 85.8 percent of all households are headed by males, there is an estimated 14.2 percent female headed households with 14.4 percent present in the rural area and 13.8 percent in the urban area.

Economic Profile

The Global Wage Report 2018 revealed the data on gender pay gap based on global, regional and national wage trends across 136 countries. The gender pay gap is a widely used as an indicator, representing the difference on overall pay between women and men employees. According to the same report, the gender wage gap in Bangladesh is the lowest in the globe, as it came down to 2.2% against the world average of 21.2% in 2019. Bangladesh is the only country in the globe according to the Global wage report 2018 where the factor-weighted hourly wage gender pay gap is positive.

The labour force participation rate for the Bangladesh in 2019 is 58.3. One of the most noticeable changes in the labour market of Bangladesh over the years has been a persistent rise in female labour market involvement. The size of the female labour force increased to 19.9 million in 2016-17.

Political Representation

Women’s representation in Bangladesh Parliament has been relatively strong but when it comes to active participation in policy-making and public service, the picture is quite different. In the present parliament, there are a total of 71 women lawmakers, 50 of whom occupy reserved seats. Even while the high number of representation is positive news, yet despite occupying one-fifth of the parliamentary seats, the women lawmakers

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8 Ibid
are reported to not given the same space as their male counterparts in decision-making and legislative processes, and are also held back in terms of facilities and allocations. This results in perpetuating the dominance of male led law reforms.

**Education and Gender**

There has been progress in improving access to education and address gender disparities to a certain extent. For instance, there has been a high improvement in enrolment in primary education across both genders. As visible from Exhibit 4a, there is close to equal percentage in enrolment for both genders for primary education. In comparison, there continues to be barriers in achieving the same results for secondary education. As presented in Exhibit 4b, there are both visible difference in gender differentials in enrolment as well as poor result in overall enrolment with less than 60 percent of students enrolled.

**Gender and Health**

Under health, linkages between nutrition and health has been one of the primary intervention aspects underlined in the country programme. Maternal mortality ratio and neo-natal mortality ratio are important indicators in this regard. The overall neo-natal Mortality Ratio (NMR) is estimated to be 17.0 deaths per 1000 live births in 2017. In 2010, the neo-natal mortality rate for girls was 24 and for the boys it was 28 per thousand live births. In 2017, the number sharply declined, and the rates were 15 for girls and for 17 boys per 1000 live births. (Refer Exhibit 5b). In 2017 the overall maternal mortality ratio was estimated to be 1.72 maternal deaths per 1000 live births. Since 2010 to 2017 the ratio is significantly higher in rural area than in urban area, though both are reflecting a declining trend over the years. (Refer Exhibit 5a)

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Policy frameworks for Gender

There are few key policy frameworks that are influential in guiding Gender Frameworks and influencing need for integration in the programme and interventions designed for the country. A sample of the critical gender policies and standards have been mentioned below.

7th Five-year plan of Bangladesh 2016-2020:
The gender vision of the 7th Five Year Plan is that of establishing ‘a country where men and women will have equal opportunities and rights and women will be recognized as equal contributors in economic, social and political development’. A sample of the list of gender focused targets highlighted in the 7th five-year plan can be observed from Exhibit 4.

Sustainable development goal (SDG 5):
SDG is adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. There are a total of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of which goal 5 is achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. SDG are a critical policy framework which inform the planning of the Five-Year Plan documents and other key policy frameworks driving the country programme.

Women Development policy of Bangladesh, 2010

On the policy front, the most important step taken for Gender has been the decision of the government to ratify the National Women Development Policy (NWDP) in 2011. The vision of the policy is to create a society where men and women will have equal opportunities and will enjoy all fundamental rights on an equal basis.

UNICEF Gender Action Plan (2018-2021)

UNICEF’s role in addressing the gender gap in the country is primarily defined by the Gender Action Plan 2018-2021. The GAP elaborates the gender programmatic results from the Strategic Plan (2018-2021) and specifies indicators that will help UNICEF better integrate and strengthen gender across its institutional systems and strategies. GAP draws specific indicators from the five goals of the Strategic Plan.

UNICEF Strategic Plan for 2018-2021:

One of the cross-cutting priorities identified in the ongoing country programme is Gender mainstreaming and gender equality. Evidence shows that the well-being of children is most dependent on women’s survival, protection and opportunity.18 Building on UNICEF’s Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021 to enhance system-wide efforts to promote gender equality, the Strategic Plan integrates gender in each of its five identified goal areas within UNICEF’s operations.

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17 The complete list of gender focused targets documented in the Bangladesh 7th Five Year Plan may be referred here https://erd.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/erd.portal.gov.bd/page/2f97258a_655_475a_8545_a49b657392/Development%20Planning%20FYP%20&%20SDG.pdf

UNICEF – GOB Country Programme of Cooperation (CP) 2017-2020

The Bangladesh Country Programme was developed in close consultation with the Government and with reference to the UN global mandates to ensure its alignment with the following planning documents.

- The Seventh Five-Year Plan
- Sector Plans and the In-Country Process to Define Sustainable Development Goal Indicators
- The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2017-2020 [Now UNSDPF]
- The Concluding Observations of the Committee on The Rights of The Child
- Lessons from The Midterm Review of The Country Programme

UNICEF and the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) had engaged in a consultative process to develop the new Country Programme Document (CPD) for 2017-2020. Consistent with UNICEF’s Strategic Plan 2014-2017, the Country Programme addresses the vulnerabilities that arise in the different life phases of a child and is supported by an overarching component for inclusion and increasing awareness on child rights in a coherent and integrated manner, while at the same time maintaining clear accountability and section expertise. CPD prioritizes results around the nutritional status of children, newborn care, immunization, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), as well as educational outcomes and the elimination of violence and other harmful practices, such as child marriage. Gender is a critical component that has been included across all four Outcome areas in general and with more emphasis across Outcome areas one and three in the country programme document (2017-2020).
A list of key budget highlights focused on women empowerment was included in the national budget for the financial year 2019 which has been presented below. The list reflects the rising attention invested for adoption of empowerment approaches. Similar changes in strategic priority has also been reflected in the present country programme document. Where gender has been emphasized as a critical cross-cutting programme function.

Rationale for conducting the Gender Analysis Report

The task of conducting the Strategic Positioning Evaluation (SPE) of UNICEF Bangladesh was awarded to PricewaterhouseCoopers India Private Limited. This exercise was commissioned by the UNICEF Regional office for South Asia to provide advisory services and it includes conducting the evaluation of Gender in the Bangladesh Country Program and share the said deliverable as part of the overall commitment to the project. The results of this report is expected to contribute and further motivate gender mainstreaming conducted across the CP implementation process.

Highlights of women empowerment focused areas included in Financial Budget for 2019

- Government has initiated 5292 clubs across 489 upazilas in 64 districts for building awareness and prevention through training against gender-based violence.
- Initiatives taken to provide access to information technology to 10 million rural and under-privileged women in 490 upazilas of 64 districts.
- Revolving credit facilities ranging from 5000 - 15000 taka per person in 488 upazilas of 64 districts underway to facilitate self-employment of women.
- Several training courses in a number of trades have been provided to women entrepreneurs through 25 programs financed from the operating budget.
- Income generation training provided to an estimated 217440 women at grass-root level across 8 divisions, 64 towns and 426 upazilas.
- Reserve quota for women introduced by the Prime Minister increased the number of women in judiciary, administrative and government jobs, defense and UN peace keeping missions.
- Policies and programmes to prevent gender-based violence in the workplace along with increasing acceptance of women’s participation in the workplace has contributed to political, social, economic and administrative empowerment of women.

The ongoing Bangladesh Country Programme 2017-20 has experienced a shift to a new design in moving away from sectors and emphasizing the adoption of the life cycle approach (LCA) for both design and programme delivery. This strategic shift includes promotion of inter-sectional programming and foregrounding of cross-cutting programme areas like gender, adolescence and communication for development across the implementation of the country programme. The four outcomes delineated in the Country Programme accommodate all aspects of the LCA and have aimed at cross convergence of the existing sectors to deliver collaboratively towards various programmatic interventions.

Gender is one of the primary cross-converging areas present within the Country Programme (CP) as highlighted in the Country Programme 2017-2020 as well as the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021. With an overall rise in critical gender stereotyping among early adolescents from 10-11 years of age, gender is acknowledged as a part of childhood development and it therefore must need to be addressed as an integral issue and not as an afterthought.

The overall purpose of the assignment is to assess and evaluate UNICEF’s performance and accountability to the design of the Gender programme, provide inputs for managerial decision-making and foster organizational learning. These include its commitment to the regional priority of achieving gender equality and if standards have been met in implementing a strategic shift in programme design to focus on critical strategies such as — adoption of the life cycle approach, increased push for upstream movement for programs, adoption of convergence

approach in programme design and prioritization of successful gender integration across the country programme outcomes and results.

The Evaluation Framework

The framework used for evaluation of gender in the country programme 2017-2020 was influenced by the framework used in the Strategic Positioning Evaluation of the UNICEF Bangladesh across the country programme of 2017-2020. The primary policy framework guiding the Gender Evaluation Report has been consolidated in Exhibit 8.

Methodology of the Evaluation

The evaluation was conducted using both primary and secondary data. Primary data was compiled through stakeholder consultations, interviews and participation in the online perception survey with specific responses towards queries on gender mainstreaming across the CP and gender focused programming.

The questions on both programmatic and institutional interventions intended to understand the UNICEF CP BCO's positioning with respect to gender issues in the country's development context.

Through a detailed secondary research and literature review, relevant data sets and qualitative information were identified and compiled to strengthen the findings from consultations, interviews and the perception survey specifically on gender.

Government, non-government organizations, international donor and bi-lateral organizations has been included as part of the exercise.

Methods used in the evaluation

The findings presented below have been triangulated from consultations using the methods outlined below.

- Secondary data analysis
- Interview(s) and Group Discussions
- Internal Country Office Workshop

Approach undertaken for Analysis

The analysis of data has been triangulated using the data received from individual stakeholder interviews, review of relevant literature (including key GAP reports and documents, review reports on gender prepared for the office, reports on the regional performance on gender.), responses from the internal country workshop and observations from field visits.

The evaluation framework presented in Exhibit 9 has been drawn from the four outcome areas of the country programme document of 2017-2020. The findings received has been further analysed against four broad critical parameters namely, institutional integration of gender, programmatic integration of gender, promotion of gender inclusive evidence generation and evaluation of gender as a cross-cutting section.
Objectives and framework for the Evaluation

1. Assess internalisation of gender programming across Country Program (CP)
   Assessment of Gender programming will include analysing gender-equitable results generated across the country programme influenced interventions and also examining the strategies undertook to scale up delivery of the same.

2. Integrate results of the CP with targeted Gender Priorities outlined in GAP 2018-2021
   This will include assessment of the successful integration of gender-responsive results with the 5 Goals of the Strategic Plan 2018-2022, which are also the targeted priorities of the GAP.

3. Foster Mainstreaming Gender Equality across CP interventions
   This aspect will analyse the Gender Equality approach undertaken by the BCO and the implementation of the same across the CP.

4. Assessment of the inclusion of Gender in institutional systems
   This aspect includes processes and structural systems with respect to resources, capacity, accountability and promotion of sex-disaggregated evidence generation.

Exhibit 9: Framework for evaluation of Gender in the country programme 2017-2020
2. **Key Findings**

The findings presented in the section below has been consolidated after stakeholder consultations with BCO staff members and external stakeholders like donor organizations and government counterparts. The leading questions addressed for Gender highlighted in the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the SPE has been shared below.

- Extent of representation and integration of gender related issues, barriers and opportunities addressed within the programme strategies of the BCO.
- Extent of interventions undertaken by the BCO to integrate gender in the development of the next country program.
- Performance of the country office on both programmatic and institutional results noted in the corporate Gender Action Plan.

The key findings presented in this segment of the report respond to the questions shared above. In addition, the findings have been segregated under the following four categories based on the data received against the evaluation of gender integration conducted in the SPE exercise in view of the global and country standards set by UNICEF through its country programme strategy and the GAP. The findings have been compiled using triangulation of data sources as mentioned earlier. The categories highlighted below have been drawn from the evaluation questions shared above.

- Responses of gender integration as per the Life Cycle Approach across Outcome areas
- Gender Integration across the Country Programme 2017-2020
- Achievements of the Country Programme with respect to UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2018-2021
- Achievements of the Country Programme with respect to UNICEF Bangladesh Strategy Paper on Gender: 2017-2020

**Methodology followed in formulating Findings**

The findings shared below have been drawn using triangulation of data received from stakeholder interviews conducted both with the internal respondents from the BCO as well as the external respondents, review of sample literature as well as observations from field visits completed across two divisions, i.e., Mymensingh and Sylhet. The findings has been substantiated when possible with the results of the Perception Survey that was conducted with both internal and external stakeholders.

A sample of select literature conducted in the period of the present country programme including reports on programmes, research studies, pilots, surveys, evaluation reports and situational analysis has been closely reviewed. Amongst the literature reviewed, the Gender Action Plan report 2018-2020, Gender Mainstreaming Strategy Paper 2017-2021, Gender Review of the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Programme 2017-2020 and the Bangladesh Country Programme Strategy Notes 2017-2020 has been particularly focused. There were certain global standards referred in the report to ensure that suitable gender integration has been incorporated e.g. the UNICEF corporate target of percentage of budget outlay for gender programming to assess the effectivity of gender budgeting.

**Section 1: Gender Integration across adoption of the Life-Cycle Approach**

The outcome-based components of the Country Programme have been one of the key approaches to integrate the LCA in the programme design of the office. Therefore, the same outcome-based structure has been used to highlight the key analysis with respect to the extent of gender integration within the LCA representing each of the critical age milestone of a child’s life and the other cross-cutting areas.
Across the four Outcome Areas highlighted below, findings have been presented on successful gender integration made in programs and initiatives of the UNICEF BCO. Innovative approaches implemented and missing gaps in programming has also been highlighted through the analysis.

As a cross-cutting function, Gender is an assimilated indicator that is embedded in most of the programming implemented across the four Outcome Areas. There has been significant Health and Nutrition focused results found in Outcome Area one while Outcome Areas two and three have had success in reaching out in education, communication for development and health. Outcome Area four has had success in formulating community based convergent programmes that support women’s economic empowerment while supporting child safety and nutrition through the Mothers@Work programme20.

Parliamentary Caucus21 is an example of a programme upholding advocacy forums and increased participation of children and young adolescents in developmental processes. Along with examples of programmes with positive result, there are also deficiencies in planning and monitoring such as missing gap areas including accountability structures and absence of monitoring of results in gender programming within the country office.

Findings of the gender related queries of the Perception Survey revealed positive responses on the adoption of LCA by the CO. For instance, amongst internal stakeholders, 35% stated that the response of the CO to gender issues was better after adoption to LCA. For external stakeholders, 37% voted for the same response. Overall, 64% of all stakeholders stated that the LCA responded better to equity issues than sector-based approach. This reflects an emerging consciousness within the office and in the external environment on the issue of gender with respect to UNICEF’s role in development of children and young people.

Outcome 1: Infants, Young Children and their Mothers

In this segment, the key areas of gender focused intervention have been on gender responsive WASH designs to reduce gaps in access to safe sanitation spaces; reducing neo-natal mortality, and active awareness through nutrition counselling to young mothers and children which would contribute to reduction of childhood stunting and wasting. The programmes have found success in producing results that respond to gender disparities. There has been substantial effort for gender inclusion focused work in education, particularly in secondary education and alternate learning programs including madrasa curriculum22.

For instance, ongoing programmes under the WASH section such as Accelerated Sanitation, Water for All (ASWA II) and Drinking Water Safety for the Well Being of Women and Children in Bangladesh are targeted interventions with gender inclusive components.

Towards reducing neo-natal mortality, 35 Special Care Newborn Units (SCANU) have been established across four regional medical college hospitals. This specialized units deliver critical care and medical assistance to new

20 Further details on Mothers@Work programme has been shared in Section of Segment of the present report.
21 Further details on Parliamentary Caucas achieving positive results may be found in page 17, segment 1.4 from Section 1 of the present report.
22 Please refer to sections Section 3, Theme 1 for gender focused efforts in secondary education and Section 3 Theme 2 for gender inclusive alternate education models.
born children. As of July 2019, 35 total SCANUs have cured and saved 67,902 new born children. This is an effective step to control neo-natal mortality. This intervention has primarily enhanced women’s access to medical infrastructure pertaining to delivery and health of new born children.

**Nutrition counselling** is an intervention that is now taken up to help control under-nutrition and associated health issues among children and reduce gender gaps in response to social behaviors rooted to male preference. There are gender discriminatory cultural patterns followed across communities around nutrition, especially care for mothers and new born.

There is an assigned single point of contact (SPOC) present across all field offices for Nutrition and the SPOC works parallel with the Department of Health and Family Welfare. The Integration of the Nutrition Information System to the District Health Information System 2 (DHIS2) platform helped in monitoring progress of nutrition indicators, e.g. reduction of childhood stunting, including the disbursement linked indicators. Periodic trainings are organized on nutrition counselling in the districts. Competency-based training on infant and young child feeding in 38 out of 64 districts improved the capacity of the health workforce for nutrition to deliver quality nutrition services. Nutrition Services involved programmes like Mothers@Work programme where provision of support to ensure breastfeeding to help sustain nutrition among new born children is incorporated as a gender responsive programme element.

There is adequate priority recognized in the revised programme strategy note (PSN) on the linkage on **nutrition, gender - responsive WASH and education-based interventions for outcome area one.** Despite the above linkage documented in the PSN, the results structure for the Outcome Area that does not include any specific monitoring target on nutrition as a gender sensitive area of intervention. Consequently, there are no specific monitoring target for nutrition in the revised programme strategy notes.

The absence of monitoring indicators for evaluating gender responsive nutrition interventions in RAM has weakened further planning and reporting.

The RAM reporting framework includes results monitoring based on outcomes. In this context, cross-cutting programme areas e.g., gender is not compatible to be reported in the same format. Additionally, gender focused programmes and activities with gender components are not available to be monitored using RAM. Nutrition, like gender is not an independent outcome area across the country programme, hence there is limited data available on gender responsive nutrition programmes and activities represented in RAM.

While programme strategy notes describe the nature of interventions, there is, limited opportunity to assess the effectiveness and results achieved from similar programmes.

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23 RAM, Output based Ratings (July 2nd, 2019)
24 RAM, Outcome based Ratings (July 2nd, 2019)
25 Ibid
26 Revised Programme Strategy Notes, 2019 Bangladesh Country office.
Outcome 2: Girls and Boys of Primary-School Age

The key priority areas in this outcome include gender equitable access to education, prevention of violence against children and promoting gender responsive delivery of services.

Initiatives such as promotion of child friendly schools with appropriate infrastructure enabling gender sensitive sanitation facilities has been promoted. In schools, one clear activity promoting gender sensitive sanitation is provision for separate toilet for girls. This often acts like a pull factor encouraging attendance for girls and promotion of female schoolteachers. Resultantly, availability of female teachers, access to gender sensitive sanitation facilities often influences positive change among attendance of girl students and triggers decline in school drop-out of children. Child marriage is highly prevalent in the region with 85 percent of women between the age of 20-49 married before 18 years.27

On the issue of preventing violence against children, there is high incidence of crimes recorded in Tea Garden regions and these instances of reported violence have been documented in U-reports. However, gender-based violence beyond schools has not been adequately addressed in the situational analysis report of Sylhet.28

The situational analysis report has highlighted abuse, neglect of children and adolescents, particularly the risks and preventions required for online child safety (safe internet use program) for adolescents. Through interviews conducted with local stakeholders in the division, it was learned that there are numerous instances of crimes and violence prevalent in Sylhet. These pertain to high drug and alcohol use, neglect and abuse of young children and adolescents that has remained undocumented in the situational analysis report. This is a gap in recognition of the increasing neglect of violence against children and adolescents outside schools.

Regarding gender-based violence (GBV), the Country Office of Bangladesh has a limited framework that use a continuum of violence to unpack and identify the different forms of GBV across the lifecycle. For instance, there is limited focus on GBV in the first decade of life, given that Bangladesh has a strong traditional culture of preference for male child.29

While Bangladesh has convergence focused programme on Ending Child Marriage (ECM), yet an important finding of the Global Evaluation of the first phase of the ECM programme was the lack of gender transformative approaches, despite having an evident focus on changing social norms. Despite investments in strengthening data systems, availability of GBV related data remains limited to recording all nature of violence faced both within and outside schools and homes30. Ending child marriage as a convergence based programme has numerous stakeholders aligned functioning across distinct activities. Yet, there is a missing gender transformative approach found included in the design.

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27 2018 Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey Highlights
30 Ibid
Outcome 3: Adolescents as Agents of Change

Adolescents are a major target group of intervention within the present country programme. There have been wide range of gender focused interventions targeted through Adolescent Health Corners, Adolescent Clubs and Primary Education Development Programmes that aim at improving quality learning at secondary and high education. Convergence focused programmes such as Ending Child Marriage is a successful example of cross-sectoral gender programme with integration of both education and health sections highlighting prevalent gender inequalities and social behaviors focused on adolescents.

There has been an increased focus towards integration of efforts on Menstrual Hygiene Management to contribute towards positive health seeking behavior among young girls and women. For adolescents, health, education, nutrition, communication for development and WASH are key sections which have ongoing intersectional efforts invested from the BCO. The National Adolescent Health Strategy is a relevant policy document that has contributed to shaping and promoting menstrual hygiene management. As shared in the previous section, WASH & gender audit was conducted within the Rohingya response programming.

Limited reflection of the results mapped as per the PSN can be observed in the RAM data (2018). PSN provides a descriptive narration of the programme activities and results achieved and in contrast to that, RAM as a standardized monitoring framework often does not include mention of all the detailed aspects underlined in the PSN. As a reflection on the documentation format implemented, there is a gap in how programmes are written and how the results of the same are eventually monitored.

Outcome 4: Social Inclusion and Increased Awareness of Children’s Rights

A few key results in this Outcome include increase in public budgets for children to garner more awareness and funds dedicated for upholding child rights. There are a select group of 15 Ministries and divisions presently engaged in producing dedicated children focused budgets amounting to 801.97 billion takas as per the financial year of 2019-2020.

This outcome area has delivered a range of diverse programmes that has achieved positive results for greater social inclusion and promotion of gender equality, child rights and advocacy for children and adolescents. These programmes have also contributed in an increase of gender disaggregated data collection by institutions such as BBS and IMED and rise in gender integration in institutional framework and practice across some of the critical state departments. Outcome four has been able to successfully integrate and promote social inclusion, gender equality and child rights focus through its programmes for children and adolescents. One of the critical achievements made include, a standardization of the need for collection of gender disaggregated data by national statistical and evaluation offices of the country viz. BBS and IMED.

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31 Additional details on the National Adolescent Health Strategy can be found in Section 3 Theme 1 of the present report.
• An online and face-to-face platform, ‘Bangladesh Generation Parliament,’ was initiated by the Government of Bangladesh to enable Parliamentarians to meet child representatives and further promote increased child participation in parliamentary process.

- Parliamentary Caucus is an example of a platform supported by UNICEF that promote increased involvement of children participating in dialogue and triggering awareness on children issues. Implementation of interventions such as U-reports are a useful channel to increase outreach through digital and mobile connectivity and raise public awareness on key critical issues around children and adolescents, including aspects of gender disparities in education.

- UNICEF Bangladesh made significant gains in reaching out to children and young people and promoting stories of gender equal change through social media as evidenced by actions across the various platforms. UNICEF Bangladesh’s website was relaunched in October 2018 and since then the ‘Meena Game’ has been downloaded more than 1 million times. The Meena Programme elaborates on restraining the use of discriminatory gender social norms in communities and propagates for gender neutral socialization processes.

• The Government of Bangladesh approved a three-year (2018-20) programme titled, Local Governance for Children (LGC) to further enhance national ownership and sustainability of capacity development on local governance around gender and children issues. A National Steering Committee led by Cabinet Division involving 10 ministries and two national training institutions was established to guide the programme. A partnership with Local Government Division was also formalized through a Rolling Workplan 2019-2020 for evidence-based programming for children and preparation for application of Gender and Child-Friendly City Initiative framework in the urban context.

Trainings for community engagement in bottleneck analysis, micro-planning and coordinated Social and Behavior Change Communication around issues of child rights and discriminatory gender practices are integrated in the LGC programme. This effort towards child-focused programming contribute to strengthening sub-national level development work to achieve SDGs for children in Bangladesh.

• Results for gender and child rights focused C4D in Bangladesh

The C4D programme in Bangladesh includes 11 behavioral areas covering key life-saving, care and protective practices. Bangladesh, for example, has spearheaded a multi-media Entertainment-Education (E-E) initiative focusing on adolescent issues and child marriage. Beyond the five focus areas, country offices also shared examples of emergency communication efforts that had a strong emphasis on gender and protection, e.g. the C4D response to the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh.

The following are the cross-sectoral gender focused C4D initiatives undertaken in the course of the ongoing country programme at the CO that highlight gender integration activities.

- Monitoring of Communication for Development (C4D) Programme through Knowledge Management Outreach Sites (KMOS)
- Programme Evaluation of UNICEF Bangladesh Communication for Development (C4D) Programme 2012-2016
- Community Information Services
- Adolescent Radio Listener Clubs

In addition to the initiatives mentioned above, there is an ongoing C4D theme partnership of the Bangladesh Country Office with University Grants Commission (UGC). Through this engagement, the UGC has planned to extend advanced efforts to foster a C4D curriculum and research in among

33 RAM Output based Ratings (July 2nd, 2019)
34 RAM Outcome Based Rating (July 2nd, 2019)
36 The focus areas marked are as follows, Health and Nutrition, Educating Girls and Boys, Ending Child Marriage, Ending Violence against Children and Sanitation and Menstrual Hygiene Management
37 (UNICEF, Gender Responsive Communication for Development: Mapping and Assessment of UNICEF Initiatives in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan, 2018)
academic institutions across gender inclusive developmental themes among others. This aims for standardization of C4D research and scholarship undertaken at present.

In alignment with the nature of C4D work shared above, it may be pertinent to share that from the results of the Perception Survey, 60% of both internal as well as external respondents shared that gender integration across UNICEF's activities is best suited to generate awareness on communication and social change. The Child-Budget analysis of the 2018-19 financial year showed an increase in proportion of budget, from 13.97 percent to 14.13 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provision of increased children and gender friendly budgeting since 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increased Gender focused C4D interventions</strong> promoting gender equality and ending traditional gender disparity in households has been observed. This includes initiatives mentioned previously such as multi-media Entertainment-Education (E-E) initiatives focusing on adolescent issues, child marriage and communication efforts highlighting diverse areas, including gender and protection issues for instance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increased involvement by private sector through studies like Better Business for Children and interventions like Mothers@Work</strong> was reflected. These were both driven through CSR initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• UNICEF secured two private brand partners for the Better Business for Children Initiative, raising total number of brands to nine across eight countries. 22 factories reaching more than 100,000 workers and 200,000 children were added to the initiative. This initiative provided a gender sensitive environment and child support for the ready-made garment workers' specially women, and young mothers in Bangladesh. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mothers@Work is a technical programme to strengthen maternity rights and breastfeeding support. This was further developed, and more than 80 factories are present participating in the programme. These activities ensure that the private sector in Bangladesh is active on its responsibility to respect and support women and children's rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusion of gender differentials across various evidence-based studies and in upstream institutions like IMED, BBS and BIDS</strong> has emerged in this country programme. This has increased the scope of gender analysis across critical thematic areas and standard indicators of development that bears the possibility of contributing to policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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38 This finding has been drawn from excerpts from stakeholder interview conducted with the UGC in Dhaka.
39 (Finance Division, 2019)
Section 2: Institutional integration of gender in Country Programme 2017-2020

The present country programme has included Gender as one of the key cross-sectional themes of intervention. In the following segment, we have outlined a few broad findings analyzing the success of gender integration in the country programme. In terms of the analysis done in this segment, five themes have been identified as shared below and findings have been placed under those select themes. The themes have been identified from indicators present in the Gender Programmatic Review (2019) and Gender Action Plan (2018-2021) aligned with the key evaluation questions for the SPE for the UNICEF BCO CP 2017-20 with reference to the ToR. The themes of analysis under this segment are as follows.

- Technical Capacity of the Bangladesh Country Office
- Resource Allocation on Gender
- Evidence Generation
- Findings across Convergence, collaborative environment and upstream spaces
- Results on Gender as a cross-cutting function

2.1. Technical Capacity of the Bangladesh Country Office (BCO)

Technical capacity refers to the understanding and integration of gender understanding within the programme delivery across sections, programmes, offices and staff of the BCO. It is also compiled with reference to the initiatives like capacity building and programmatic initiatives to mainstream gender within its programme. This has also considered some of the critical institutional strengthening initiatives undertaken to enhance the technical capacity of the BCO. This was done with the purpose of strengthening the capacity of the technical capacity of the technical specialists on gender and improving overall gender balance within the office. E.g. The gender architecture of the office showcased overall gender ratio stands at 53% female and 47% female.40

Some of the specific findings in this category include the following as shared below.

The Country Office recruited additional gender sectoral specialists for WASH and GBViE in CXB apart from the P4 level Gender section chief and a NOB on gender in Dhaka within the office to technically and institutionally drive the gender results within the office.

The Bangladesh Country Office conducted capacity building and trainings of staff members and front-line workers for improved gender equality and related issues. For instance, there was a recently conducted (October 2019) internal survey41 on gender capacity commissioned by the UNICEF ROSA office with the BCO as a step to generate evidence for gender-based knowledge, attitude and practices of staff members. However discussions from the interviews conducted with both internal and external stakeholders as well as results from the internal survey referred above reflected that the Country Office staff still has a nascent understanding of

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41 (UNICEF, Results of Online Assessment of the Gender Capacity of UNICEF Staff in Bangladesh office, 2019)
**gender with limited uniformity** on definitions of gender mainstreaming across the office. This is also reflected in the limited integration of gender among cross-sectional programming. To expand this finding, upon discussions with internal stakeholders on gender mainstreaming, it was observed that the term did not reflect a uniform understanding. Further evidence from the recently conducted gender capacity training in the Bangladesh Country Office also supports this finding to reflect limited technical capacity of gender.

Aligned with the finding above, limited translation of trainings into tangible knowledge base amongst staff and front-line workers has been observed. There is need to generate increased evidence of training needs assessment (on an annual basis) including both pre and post training assessments on gender to be able to enhance gender mainstreaming into the functioning of the office, strategies and planning. The post-training assessment should include opportunities of exercising use of lessons from training for future and upcoming initiatives and programmatic interventions. There is at present a gap of recording post assessments of staff capacity trainings within the results structure of the BCO that has been reinforced through stakeholder interactions within the office.

### 2.2. Resource Allocation on Gender

The Country Office met the corporate target of allocating 15 percent of their total programming budget to gender results within their country programmes in 2018, which was an increase from the allocation in the previous year (2017). As found highlighted in the exhibit below, among the South Asian countries, Bangladesh is among the few which has increased gender budget across the last two financial years. From the corporate target of 15% of total programming, it has exceeded that from 16.1% in 2017 to 22.55% in 2018.

While there is adequate budget allocation, an analysis of the allocation highlighted below shows that apart from a few select themes, the allocation did not get integrated across all sections and thematic areas:

- From the total budget, **50 percent** is earmarked for integrated priorities/vision, of which maximum was allocated to gender responsive WASH systems in 2018 and 2019 consecutively. *E.g. The SEDP includes a costed sub-component to keep adolescents in schools including gender segregated toilets, menstrual hygiene facilities and education, and sexual reproductive health.*
- 5% of the budget is allocated for adolescent girls’ priorities/vision which maximum was spent on girls’ health and nutrition. This showcases the imbalance in the allocation pattern across sectors and indicate a limited inclusion of ‘boys’ and other genders as target beneficiaries in the adolescent specific gender dialogue, strategies and interventions.

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42 Please refer to page 29, segment 2.5 from Section 2 where this finding has been elaborated.
43 Further elaboration of this finding can be referred from Section 2.5 of the present report. Additionally, the (UNICEF, Results of Online Assessment of the Gender Capacity of UNICEF Staff in Bangladesh office, 2019) may also be referred for expanded description of this finding.
2.3. Evidence Generation

Evidence generation within the present country programme has begun to include the process of compiling gender disaggregated data. This is a positive step as national statistical institutes have adopted the practice of including sex-disaggregated data within the standardized data collection processes.

However, evidence building across other domains such as research, evaluation, assessments and studies reflect that: most evidence-based reporting including baseline and end line studies conducted after 2017 reflect gender disaggregated data collection and findings. E.g. at the national level, Baseline Study and Policy Gap Mapping Report on ‘Online Safety for Children’ in Bangladesh includes children’s (both boys and girls) knowledge, behavior, perception and their exposure to various online risks and harms. Similarly, at the sub-national level, Baseline Survey on Situation of Children in Tea Gardens of Sylhet Division also reflects findings and analysis as per gender disaggregated data.

Though there is focus on gathering quantitative data with gender segregation yet there is limited focus on the qualitative studies and/or assessments conducted by the BCO to understand gaps and barriers in gender based normative attitudes and practices within the existing evidence building processes.

There are recent evaluation reports available within various sections in the BCO where evidence of gender related data has been documented. For instance, a recently conducted education evaluation report documented evidence of gender and child sensitivity addressed in the methods and data sources used for the mid-term evaluation of the UNICEF Bangladesh Education Programme (2017-2020).

From a gender perspective, the evaluation found that access to education for boys and girls in pre-primary education is similar. No significant disparities were found in their exposure to pre-primary education, or in their primary and secondary school net attendance ratios. There is a significant gender-based difference in terms of dropout rates in secondary education. The national average drop-out rate at the secondary level is 37.21% among girls the same is 38.4%

The UNICEF Education Programme (2017-2020) is aligned with the national policies and promotes availability of gender disaggregated data. However, there is both limited literatures found within the recent evaluation reports reviewed of mapping bottlenecks and proposing recommendations to address the same.

To state an example, they are no measurable indicators for the activity, ‘Mainstreaming gender for delivery of gender sensitive and women friendly ‘Maternal and Neo-natal Health (MNH) services. While it is a broad scale activity that includes numerous interventions, there are no evaluation response reported to assess effectiveness of the same.

With respect to the Health Section, the evaluation of the ongoing joint programme between the Government of Bangladesh and UNICEF revealed that while findings may be often reported using gender desegregated data however deeper analysis using a gender sensitive approach and drawing recommendations from findings is limited. The output indicators of the programme does not include gender-based activities e.g., women friendly hospital initiatives across climate change prone areas. While there are new initiatives adopted like establishment of SCANU -waiting rooms and separate feeding room for mothers in SCANU and nutrition counselling for women being implemented, yet there is still scope to further strengthen UNICEF role in supporting women friendly hospital initiatives. Given that the health programme is part of a broader life-cycle approach driven country strategy, there are opportunities to integrate gender sensitive responses within its programme implementation. For instance, a greater utilization and convergence of C4D could enhance impact and access to resources, particularly for vulnerable groups and gender concerns around major health concerns can be better addressed.

The activity to ‘Promote and Establish gender responsive adolescent friendly health service (AFHS)’ is a positive example of a programme that is reported to be on track as per the expected targets. While this seems to be the officially recorded result, Adolescent Friendly Health Corner programme, one of the most popular initiatives

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48 This was a response received from internal stakeholder interviews. The response here is also substantiated the limited literature observed from the evaluation reports and situational analysis on the bottlenecks and social-gender based barriers existent for gender integration and mainstreaming activities.

49 (Consultores, 2019)


51 The finding and insight shared has been drawn from external stakeholder interviews.

52 The result of being on track has been cited from the RAM report available with us as per July 2nd,2019.
under Adolescent health services has been reported to have weak performance owing to low acceptability in the community among other issues53.

2.4. Findings on convergence, collaborative environment and upstream spaces

With a focus on adoption of Life Cycle Approach in the present country programme, **upstream activities, convergence-based programme designs and implementing collaboration led to joint programming** are all factors that have been key areas of focus with the present country programme. The integration of gender analysis and gender sensitive design and implementation are yet to be uniformly integrated within programming. The following are the relevant sector focussed analysis revealed that, **strategies and programmatic interventions found focusing on addressing culturally sensitive transformation in gender based social norms.**

Through **Adolescent Clubs** and discussion forums conducted as part of the **Ending Child Marriage programme** by NGOs and CBOs, there are opportunities for interaction between parents and children-adolescents on issues related to adolescent health and traditional norms driving child marriages. Positive results found through evidence generation include an increase in results with respect to policy directives and programmatic interventions for women, as reflected through increased labor force participation through **readymade garment industry**, increased educational outcomes, improvements in policy context – **Domestic Violence Act, Policy for Advancement of Women, National Council for Women and Child Development etc.**

There are still limited programmatic designs which push for an increased focus in creating similar **interactive spaces** for productive dialogue in helping **address causalities** perpetuating gender-unequal discriminatory traditional practices, e.g., integrated approach to address gender and disability focused issues, gender focused problems across regions prone to climate change led disasters, gender based violence among out of school adolescents and youths influenced by alcoholism and drug abuse across urban and rural divisions.

As an organization taking lead in policy advocacy, UNICEF has reinforced adequate national attention towards some of the larger pertinent social issues in the country. This effort has met success with examples of programme activity such as Adolescent Clubs and programmes such as Ending Child Marriage, Mothers@work programme, Better business for children initiative. However, as an organization supporting and guiding implementations and design of intervention strategies, there are opportunities for further emphasis to invoke a more holistic approach for many more relevant programme areas.

**The analysis also highlighted increased impetus found in BCO to work with emerging partners in private sectors and other donor organizations. This has been realised through partnerships with organizations like DBL, Grameen Phone, and HM Foundation, UNFPA, Asian Development Bank.’**

The readymade garment (RMG) sector is a pivotal component for Bangladesh’s rising economic growth. The sector employs more than three million people, approximately 60 per cent of whom are women. In this respect, despite available legislations, there is low awareness among working women on maternity and breastfeeding rights. For instance, The Mothers@Work Program provides a supportive environment to improve breast feeding practices among working mothers. It has reached out to more than 7,000 young working women and resulted in implementation of seven standards that enabled working mothers to continue breastfeeding and nurturing their children after they return to work from maternity leave. However, though the program focusses on promoting ‘positive and inclusive parenting’ yet it only targets mothers and not the child’s overall ecosystem including fathers and presence of more members from the family unit including male and female siblings. A common drawback has been the low integration of men and boys within the gender focused programme.

**The U-Report**54 is a platform that runs polls on various community issues across the country. The polls are targeted toward young people, children and adolescents and are keen to participate in community engagements. These young users are highlighted as ambassadors of change in their communities across the large gamut of social issues related to UNICEF supported causes, such as disaster preparedness, gender-based violence,

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53 This has been cited from excerpts from external stakeholder interviews.
nutrition, civic engagement. The U-Report service therefore acts as an updated data resource directory to observe growing trends, patterns and shifts in social behavior across common social issues.

Grameen Phone, Telenor group and UNICEF together support another initiative, a wide-scaled project named, **Strengthening and Scaling Child Online Protection in Bangladesh**55. This programme aims to strengthen and scale online protection for children. This involves training 1.2 million children and adolescents to stay safe online. This program includes a prevention of risk for both boys and girls against predators and forms of sexual violence. Sensitization of parents is also a key component in the project objective as often, parents prevent children from accessing the internet due to fears about risks of exposure to a wide scale of content. The project will train 400,000 parents, teachers and caregivers to support child online protection.

**UNICEF has worked closely with the Government of Bangladesh, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and other partners to develop the five-year Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP) which aims to improve equitable access to and retention in quality secondary education. The SEDP includes a costed sub-component to keep adolescents in schools including toilet for boys and girls, menstrual hygiene facilities and education, and sexual reproductive health.** However, with strong prevalence of social issues like child marriage, child labour, GBV etc. there is an increased need to focus on outreach and behavior change interventions for improved demand of services amongst men/ women/ boys/ girls.

With the intent to integrate gender programming within its programme, UNICEF has designed and implemented joint programmes with various actors around prevalent gender concerns particular to the country perspective.

An example of such a programme is the implementation of gender responsive WASH systems with the Ministry of Health and Welfare with other non-governmental organizations, the Ending Child Marriage programme, where the programme is co-chaired with the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (MoWCA) and UNICEF.

There has been implementation of gender focused joint programming both with government as well as with other UN and donor led organizations.

**Gender specific indicators** has been incorporated across key programmes and this has enhanced the service delivery of the same programmes and interventions. However, this has not translated to a higher spread of gender integration across programmes by stakeholders across sections. This reflection could be indicative of the need to undertake better and perhaps a higher number of gender-based trainings to ensure effective learning shared between stakeholders.

Majority of respondents from the BCO have received trainings on ‘Basic concepts on gender’ (90% respondents, 82 staff) followed by ‘Gender Mainstreaming’ (82% respondents, 75 staff) and ‘Principles of gender analysis’ and ‘Gender-based violence’56 (64% respondents, 58 staff). Despite the trainings received, overall respondents reported to be more confident performing task-based activities than process-based work57.

For instance, a few of the activities that respondents expressed high confidence in being able to independently undertake are shared below.

- Identify when sex-disaggregated data are essential in your section’s work (69%)
- Collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data (67%)
- Develop gender sensitive indicators (51%)
- Identify when the engagement of men and boys is critical to overcoming gender inequalities (55%)

The activities that reflected least confidence among respondents to independently undertake has been shared below.58

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56 (UNICEF, Results of Online Assessment of the Gender Capacity of UNICEF Staff in Bangladesh office, 2019)
57 Ibid
58 Ibid
• Conduct gender analysis and identify barriers and structural causes of gender inequality (18%)
• Review national policy documents or strategies relevant to the section with a gender lens (18%)
• Draft contracts and terms of references that clearly define roles, responsibilities, and expected results in
  the area of gender equality (22%)
• Identify the resources within UNICEF (documentation or expertise) capable of supporting gender-
  responsive programming (20%)

In addition to the implementation activities conducted, there are further programme areas where advocacy for
vulnerable groups including women and girls facing particular discrimination in a community is yet to be
strengthened. For example, in Outcome 4, in addition to strengthening overall coordination and convergence
across different stakeholders, advocacy for specific coordination mechanisms that track and monitor progress of
gender equality and child rights at the local level was reported as a recommendation in one of the key review
documents published by UNICEF.59

There are multiple levels of engagement happening from CO with government, related to adolescent girls and
boys (health education, protection, nutrition), child marriage, review of national framework/policy to name a few.
However, gender focused programming and advocacy targets are not clearly reflected from the designing to
results monitoring and evaluation in these programmes with the government.

2.5. Results on Gender as a cross-cutting function

Gender has been a focused element within the ongoing Country Programme. There are examples of Gender
focused programming with an inter-sectoral programme design, e.g. the Ending Child Marriage programme is an
example of both a successful convergence, upstream and joint programming that has been led by the Gender
section of the BCO along with the other sections of the office. The Technology for Development specialist is also
positioned within the Gender Section to promote innovation in programme and intervention design.

In this section, the findings shared below have been placed under the following sub-themes which identify
success of implementation of Gender as a cross-cutting function within the ambit of the ongoing activities in the
present country programme. The themes shared below are with reference to the evaluation questions in the ToR
The analysis further reflects the programmatic and the institutional arrangements undertaken within the office to
reflect its cross-cutting role.

‘Extent of effort in addressing gender related issues, barriers, and opportunities within the ToCs and the
programming strategies of the office’

Among the ToCs present for all outcome areas, while mention of gender integration under implementation
strategies are found (Outcome one, three and four) they are not well defined in approach in the rolling
workplans of the sections to sufficiently address mechanism to affect the expected headline results. For example,
in Outcome one, the implementation strategies clearly mention the need for ‘gender equality and equity-
responsive and resilient service delivery’, however, the rolling work plans for Dhaka North, South and Sylhet do
not explicitly mention gender related indicators as an outcome and output.

There is a need felt in defining clear systems, processes, accountabilities in sectors in taking forward the gender
specific interventions and for management to uphold a clear gender intent in the BCO work plans

‘Documenting actions to be taken by the office to effectively integrate gender in the development of the
next country program’

59 (UNICEF, Gender Review of the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office, 2018)
This was also highlighted and reiterated in interviews conducted with the BCO staff where for all outcomes and sections, the need to revert to the primary role
as an advocacy leader was felt required as at present, the staff commented there is more attention invested in implementation rather than engagement in
policy dialogues.
This finding can also be found in the UNICEF BCO workshop report attached in the Annexure.
The Country Office has no dedicated human resource placed as focal points among the sections in the BCO besides the ECM focal point\(^{60}\). While there is an initiative to engage, integrate the gender perspective in both the design and implementation of interventions, the interaction with the stakeholders reflect limited accountability towards achieving gender equality through its programmes that is both visible and, measurable beyond the purview of the gender specialist\(^{61}\).

As a critical cross-cutting programme area implemented across various outcome areas in the country programme, an accountability framework reflecting result indicators and achievements is yet to be formulated. Amongst the human resources placed as the gender architecture in the BCO, there is limited resource available to gauge the extent of successful gender integration achieved.

The involvement of men in the gender dialogue was found to be limited. However, the adolescent clubs for boys and girls are an encouraging step towards this goal. Stakeholders shared that Adolescent clubs alone may not help in realizing the overall goal of engaging men and boys in the gender dialogue and may require further strategic interventions to successfully address the issue. For example, there are potential areas of gender based interventions where men and adolescent boys could be more actively engaged, such as transforming traditional gender norms and social barriers found inside the households. ECM interventions where early gender socialization is addressed at household level including father's engagement in this process, role of religious/community elders to indicate a few.

In this regard, the Perception Survey reinforces the above reflection revealing that **(37%) internal respondents and 15% external respondents** reported that poor targeting of men and boys within the gender dialogue and interventions conducted so far.

**UNICEF defines gender mainstreaming**\(^{62}\) as integration of gender in both programmatic results and institutional systems and processes as both bottom-up and top-down approaches. The process includes strengthening the integration of gender equality issues across UNICEF’s programming areas, empowering staff and implementing partners to mainstream gender concerns in their work while creating an enabling environment for promoting gender equality.

From the stakeholder interviews conducted with the BCO staff as well as with external stakeholders, there was a dissonance found amongst responses about how the conceptual term, ‘gender mainstreaming’ was often defined and mentioned. For instance, from the responses of the interviewees, gender mainstreaming was loosely defined as **gender integration within ongoing programming and the term was often interchangeably aligned with achieving gender equality**.

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\(^{60}\) This information has been substantiated with the Gender Capacity mentioned in the (UNICEF, Annual Report 2018 Gender Equality and Rights, 2019); and the organization strength outlined for Gender in the BCO organogram available with us as on July 3rd, 2019.

\(^{61}\) This has been cited from excerpts from stakeholder interviews conducted. This has also been further mentioned and can be cited from (UNICEF, Annual Report 2018 Gender Equality and Rights, 2019) pp 26 where Bangladesh is highlighted has a country with accountability only mentioned and not fully defined in their management plans to achieve gender results.

\(^{62}\) (UNICEF, Gender Mainstreaming Strategy South Asia 2018-2021)
Aligned with the response shared above, results of a recently conducted Gender Capacity assessment\(^6\) in the BCO echo similar findings. The report shared that the operational definition of gender mainstreaming was found unclear among the respondents. For instance,\(^4\) a respondent communicated that: ‘Gender Mainstreaming was often perceived as a vague and academic concept’, ‘Gender is often understood as women’s rights and women’s projects’ which underlines the belief that that boys and men are excluded from the discourse. The report highlighted that only 60% of BCO staff understood the meaning of the conceptual term correctly and this data was not dependent nor influenced with either the position of the staff or length of service in UNICEF.

These further highlights that despite the number of gender capacity trainings conducted on the conceptual literature around gender, there are still bottlenecks present over understanding on certain key terminologies and its value in programming.

The next section presents a detailed analysis under using the Gender Action Plan 2018-2021 within the country programme.

\(^6\) (UNICEF, Results of Online Assessment of the Gender Capacity of UNICEF Staff in Bangladesh office, 2019)

\(^4\) The comments shared has been cited from the source in the previous footnote.
Section 3: Achievements of the Country Programme with respect to UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2018 -2021

The present section includes findings mapped against the themes outlined in the Gender Action Plan 2018-2021. The process of engagements and consultations held with stakeholders have been used to present findings drawn across the identified themes to help outline the status and quality of gender integration presently found within the country programme activities.

Theme 1: Integrating gender equality in all programme results

Sub-Theme: Gender equality for girls and boys

Health care & Nutrition for girls and boys:

Some of the key health and nutrition challenges include pressing problems, childhood stunting, complete birth registration, early child development, water and sanitation, neo-natal mortality are all persistent challenges amongst children specifically and are related with gender inequality within the society. For instance, there is limited programmatic attention and policy focus on gender inequality in decision making related to household production and consumption. Persistent gender discriminatory practices may potentially result in issues on undernutrition amongst children through the early life stages. While SCANU and Nutrition counselling are interventions that yields positive results in this aspect, yet there is need to reinforce and place a strong focus across these gap areas in social policy. Limited evidence of sex-disaggregated data found to aide gender inclusive tracking of progress of results and draw analysis of the bottlenecks existing across interventions targeted in these areas.

Access, retention and learning for girls and boys

While gender equality was prioritized in education in 2018, this was still the least reported results area in documenting progress in integrated gender results. Bangladesh has shown tremendous progress in achieving completion of primary education across both genders. Through PEDP 4, focus on quality education and reinforcement of teacher training has been made to achieve the outcomes. However, gender gaps in secondary education remains with higher number of schools drop-outs among girls (38%) than boys (36%). The drop-out rate at the secondary level is collectively poor for both the genders and needs specific focus.

Programmes and suitable interventions to improve enrollment in secondary education for girls and boys are being developed by the UNICEF. Adoption of skill-based learning is one of the innovative features introduced to reduce drop-out rates among children. Within the intervention, gender focused indicators have been incorporated to motivate higher rates of completion of secondary education among girls and boys.

The highest dropout rate is at Grade 8 which is 14.6% for both boys and girls. Quality of learning is reported as a critical factor influencing school dropouts for both girls and boys. The challenges faced by students in accessing quality education are multifaceted and some of the key reasons are- shortage of secondary schools and quality teachers, home to school distance, lack of child friendly environment, different protection issues, cost and relevancy of education.

Prevention of and response to violence against girls and boys

In this context, only gender-based violence in emergency areas (e.g. Cox’s Bazar) is a priority area implemented by the BCO, where violence against children is increasingly seen more as a health problem.
challenge\textsuperscript{71}. Other forms of violence such as sexual violence against children in Tea-Garden estates and other parts of the country is not regarded as an active area of intervention by CO. Child Marriage continues to be high prevalent, i.e. 38.7\% in Sylhet Division, 53.6\% across tea-Gardens and violence against children associated with this social problem is often reported. This is an area of intervention that is a missing gap from the present activities.\textsuperscript{72}

**Increasing Access to Gender-Responsive Adolescent Health**

The National Adolescent Health Strategy\textsuperscript{73} is a focused policy that has highlighted gender-based vulnerabilities faced by adolescents across some of the large scaled health issues such as menstrual health and hygiene, sexual, reproductive and mental health of adolescents and violence against adolescents. This policy is aimed to reinforce attention for health system strengthening to adequately address the issues above. Another key intervention under this category is the implementation of Adolescent health corners programme. This is an interventions to improve access to adolescent-friendly health services and counselling in public health facilities. Through stakeholder consultations, it was reported that this programme has achieved limited success.

i. Interventions to improve access to adolescent-friendly health services and counselling in public health facilities through initiatives like Adolescent Health Friendly Corners have been implemented. Gender sensitive provisions/ infrastructure such as separate waiting rooms have been found missing and may be a deterrent for encouraging young girls to access the facility/ service.

ii. While this is a gender focused intervention, there are varying responses documented on the effectiveness of the strategy implemented in adolescent friendly health corners. There are responses which highlight the limited use made of this service and in alignment with this response, there is limited willingness among women and young adolescent girls and boys to utilise the centre. The personal hesitation of boys and girls remain a barrier to approach and discuss issues around adolescent health and issues\textsuperscript{74}

**Non-gender- discriminatory roles, expectations, and practices for girls and boys**

Interventions by sections such as communication for development team in collaboration with health, nutrition, wash and other sections have together formulated electronic as well as radio based advocacy campaigns that promote a gender neutral form of socialization for children and adoption of non-gender discriminatory behavior within the family.\textsuperscript{75}

i. Advocacy campaigns using communications and social media, e.g. the Meena programme, have reinforced use of non-discriminatory gender practices in social behaviour among communities.

ii. The programme, Ending Child Marriage can be considered as another illustration that used convergent approach where diverse partners have come together including both govt and private counterparts. Similar efforts to bring together both government agencies, departments and donor organizations and other partner organisations is yet to be initiated for nutrition programming\textsuperscript{76}.

**Quality Maternal Care**

Gender focused service delivery as the quality maternal care are yet to consider the social milieu and the challenges within which services are provided. Nutritional counselling\textsuperscript{77} is also a programmatic activity undertaken to contribute for support in maternal care. The key findings for this sub category has been shared below.

i. Gender focused service delivery as the quality maternal care are yet to consider the social milieu and the challenges within which services are provided.

\textsuperscript{71} Cited from excerpts from stakeholder interviews
\textsuperscript{72} Please refer to the section on Outcome 2 in the present report where this finding has been further elaborated
\textsuperscript{74} USAID (2017) Adolescent Friendly Health Corners (AFHCs) in Selected Government Health Facilities in Bangladesh: An Early Qualitative Assessment
\textsuperscript{75} Cited from the Excerpts from internal stakeholder interviews.
\textsuperscript{76} Please refer to section 1.1, findings for Outcome area 1 for additional details on nutritional counselling
ii. UNICEF contributed towards the GoB endorsement of the National Maternal Health Strategy 2019-2030. 35 SCANUs across 36 districts have saved an estimated 67,902 new-born lives. However, the facility is often not adequate to address the patient load.

iii. Access to neo-natal care through above strategies only focuses on women or mothers without addressing the overall socio-cultural context of the child and mother. Therefore, the programme activities may need to be contextualised against the structural issues reinforcing gender discriminatory behaviours perpetuating within communities and families.

iv. Some of the other gender sensitive health interventions include HIV counselling and testing services provided to thirty thousand women.

Gender equality in teaching and education systems

i. Consideration of gender differentials and attention towards gender specific vulnerabilities need adequate focus while promoting gender responsive education systems. Through programme interventions such as PEDP 4 and Ability Based Accelerated Learning (ABAL), gender-responsive education targeted at children with disability, out of school children and transgender adolescent children have been included as target populations. While efforts have been initiated towards addressing these aspects, there is significant potential for improvement. Some of critical aspects in this regard include: While there are innovative approaches adopted across certain programme designs, e.g. using skill development to reinforce increased enrolment and completion of secondary education, yet there are limited incentive driven catalysts (e.g., cash transfers) or a similar policy or schemes that promote and encourage balanced participation from both boys and girls in the same regard.

ii. There are significant gender differentials found among teaching capacity. For instance, in secondary education 54% students are girls but only 25% teachers are female. In madrasas, 55% students are girls whereas only 13% teachers are female.

iii. In terms of mapping gender vulnerability, there needs to be adequate attention shared to address gender based socio-economic, geographical barriers and bottlenecks that impact adolescents who are out of school, including those who have never been enrolled or have dropped out from school, and in-school adolescents at risk of dropout, or continuing and completing education without acquiring competency required for employment.

Gender-Responsive WASH systems

Gender responsive WASH systems are one of the inter-sectoral programmatic intervention that has successfully integrated gender and has included dedicated gender indicators in the programme design and implementation. The following section underlines few key gender vulnerabilities that still exist.

i. WASH is a cross-cutting theme that has worked inter-sectionally in the BCO using members from Health, Climate Change and includes a Gender component in design of programmes making the section an active participant of Gender Inclusive programming.

ii. UNICEF contributed to support girls’ retention and learning in secondary schools by providing information on hygiene practices including menstrual health to 19,000 adolescents (65 % female) and installed separate toilets for girls and boys in over 35 schools.

iii. Limited literature has been found on addressing the gender-based vulnerabilities around the normative challenges in using wash systems. This is a Bangladesh specific finding. Factors influencing gender-based vulnerabilities for this aspect may include for instance, longer commute and lack of access issues

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78 RAM Output Based Ratings (July 2019)
81 Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information Statistics (BANBEIS) (2017)
82 Cited from excerpts from internal stakeholder interviews conducted in the BCO and secondary literature from the UNICEF compiled Revised Programme Strategy Notes for Outcome 3 (2019)
83 RAM Outcome Based Ratings (July 2019)
for children living in tea-gardens, hill-tract areas and haor areas. While most schools have access to water and sanitation facilities, often these are reported as unhygienic, not functional, or unavailable for students’ use. These issues influence gender-based vulnerabilities and further require to be addressed to improve access for women in using these facilities.

**Theme 2: Integrating gender equality in all programme results**

**Sub-Theme: Adolescent girls’ well-being and empowerment**

**Advancing adolescent girls’ secondary education, learning and skills, including STEM**

An estimated 6 million or almost 40% secondary school going age children in Bangladesh are out of school. Of these 6 million, nearly 60% are adolescent girls. Some of the key findings with respect to gender sensitive strategies in education of the adolescents are listed below.

i. Through a new programme named, ‘Keep Girls in School’, UNICEF has engaged with Madrassas to improve enrolment and retention of students in secondary schools. This programme has been implemented across 300 schools so far. The Directorate of Madrassa Education has been engaged in the process of mobilising madrassas to provide education on life skill education and in English in addition to the usual curriculum practised. This engagement with the Directorate of Madrassa explores an innovative partnership with UNICEF aimed to promote gender sensitive education.

ii. While critical gender differences exist in teaching capacity at Madrassas, nonetheless, it is a positive innovation to have religious educational institutions like Madrassas included in the fold where these institutions today mobilize, engage and enable both community and students to act and protect adolescent and child rights, particularly those most influenced with gendered social norms and gender discriminatory traditional practices.

iii. Specific strategies focused on improving retention and quality of learning in STEM and completion of secondary education for girls addressing gender discriminatory social practises faced by girls is found missing amongst efforts to strengthen secondary education in communities apart from initiatives such ability-based learning.

iv. A positive initiative has been noted in, ‘ostad-shagrid’ model focussing on out of school adolescents with more than 60% participation of girls with inclusion of PWDs and transgender contributing to reducing child marriage. This is an alternate model of education that focuses on group-based peer learning and facilitate an informal education framework. Vulnerable populations like children with disability, out of school adolescent girls and transgender young adults are part of the target audience for this programme. This programme is effective both for contributing a decrease in child marriages among out of school adolescent girls and as an education programme, this brings together a nonformal structure for vulnerable, marginalized children.

**Preventing and responding to child marriage and early unions**

Ending Child Marriage (ECM) is a large-scale priority convergent programme that is led by government (MoWCA), private and international donor organisations where child marriage is being targeted from both child protection, education and health and nutrition perspectives. This is one of the leading interventions on child marriage presently ongoing.

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84 A Haor is a wetland ecosystem and is often also referred as a back swamp. They are primarily prevalent across the north eastern part of Bangladesh. This definition has been cited from the [https://www.bwdb.gov.bd/haor/](https://www.bwdb.gov.bd/haor/).


86 The details have been shared in the previous theme. You may find the same under segment title, Gender equality in teaching and education systems from Section 3, Theme 1 of the present report.

87 Cited from excerpts from internal stakeholder interviews. This finding may also be corroborated with secondary literature in RAM Outcome based Ratings (July 2nd, 2019)

88 Accelerated/Alternative Learning Program (UNICEF Bangladesh,2018)

89 Cited from excerpts from external stakeholder interviews.

90 Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh (UNICEF (2017))
In discussions on child marriage in Adolescent Clubs (another programme activity promoted for creating dialogues on gender discriminatory practices and promote more involvement of men in the gender conversation), local NGO partners have commented that both parents and children including boys and girls are brought in and boys are actively invited to discussions on the threats promoted by child marriage on the wellbeing for both partners.

**Preventing and responding to GBV in emergencies**

While emergencies include the Rohingya emergency in Cox’s Bazar district, and the prevalence of gender violence found there, other incidence of violence including child trafficking and sexual violence found in Tea-Garden estates and other communities also require more focussed attention.

There are reports of high incidence of gender-based violence against children including sexual violence across Tea-garden areas in Sylhet, yet this has not been found to be well-represented and documented in the Situational Analysis report done in Sylhet Division.

**Facilitating accessible and dignified menstrual hygiene management (MHM)**

MHM is an active programme implemented through counseling and supported by UNICEF. Yet awareness among adolescents especially senior girl students on personal hygiene practices including menstrual hygiene management remains low. While there has been WASH blocks installed in schools as part of the child friendly school development, the consequent rise of MHM to be met across the schools where WASH blocks have been installed is a challenging achievement that is to be met.

The absence of MHM impact both health and on school absenteeism among girls with three to five days missed per month which may cumulatively influence up to 20 percent of school time. Access to safe water and sanitation are key prerequisites for optimal development and very few schools have a separate toilet for girls with facilities for menstrual management. As a result, this often triggers parents to remove their daughters from school, thereby reducing her development opportunities and increasing the likelihood of early marriage.

It is reported that only an estimated 6 percent of government schools conduct menstrual hygiene sessions. In turn, only 42 percent of out-of- school adolescent girls have knowledge about menstrual hygiene management at menarche which resultantly for the remaining majority of those without the knowledge and/or awareness may lead to a significant impact on physical, social and mental well-being.

**Theme 3: Gender in programme strategies and institutional systems**

**Sub-theme: Gender equality in quality programming at scale**

**Generation and use of gender data and evidence**

i. The office has within the programme prioritized the collection of sex- segregated data within its programme results. However, the overall analysis of evidence building strategies and reports reflect that there is limited evidence of updated sex- disaggregated data across all CP themes present, which makes it challenging to analyse gender-based progress across success indicators. Additionally, limited availability of gender rich evidence generation also stunts exploration of analytical understanding of cross-cutting areas.

While there is attention to promote evidence generation within programmes at the BCO, there is limited attention to adequately represent gender across the evidence generating exercises among sections at the BCO.

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93 This finding has been already included in the report, please refer Section 1, Outcome 2 for additional details in this regard.


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95 Findings related to Gender-responsive WASH has been already been discussed. Please refer Theme 1 from Section 3 of the present report for additional details in this regard.

96 Cited from UNICEF Revised Programme Strategy Notes for Outcome 3

97 Data records available in IMED, BBS

98 Cited from excerpts from internal stakeholder interviews.
ii. Since 2018, efforts undertaken to include and integrate gender within programming areas with special attention towards targeting adolescent girls in the design of the same programmes\textsuperscript{99}. With this overall guiding perspective, there is evidence of successful gender integration achieved in a few programme activities across cross-sectional programme areas, like WASH, Communication for Development and Health, Education, and Nutrition. Gender focused indicators has been included in the design of these activities and gender inclusive data had been well-represented while forming the programme activity. In contrast, there are limited evidence of adequate gender integration found on programmes on gender-based violence. While there is a large scale programme on Ending Child Marriage, yet there are limited evidence of additional programmes that cater to other gender discriminatory practices. There is adequate potential for gender to be more well-represented and well-integrated as a critical perspective in programme designing and facilitating policy dialogues on child rights.

iii. There is evidence of increased adoption of sex-disaggregated data collection in government institutions like IMED and BBS. However, in addition to that there is scope for gender inclusive data to be more comprehensive in addition to sex-disaggregated data.\textsuperscript{100}

**Gender analysis for effective programme design and implementation**

Undertaking gender analysis for an integrated gender inclusive programming is an approach that is found limited within the large number of programmes ongoing. Ending Child Marriage is an example of gender inclusive programme, yet this is a strategic upstream convergence programme undertaken in priority by the government. At present there is low prioritization of gender analysis present among all undertaken interventions. Like ECM, more examples of such focused strategies with due attention to gender analysis is required for cross-cutting development interventions\textsuperscript{101}.

**Partnerships and coherence**

There are partnerships undertaken within the BCO with donor organisations and government counterparts. However, there is limited evidence of joint programming among UN organizations and limited initiative to uphold the one UN Reform context in further engagements with partner organizations. Within a gender context, there is limited focus on building partnerships with women centred civil society organisations and to promote stakeholder consortiums focused on gender policy and advocacy agendas.

i. UNICEF has been active in building partnerships with the Government and working with the Cabinet Division directly in Dhaka.

ii. Both government and other donor organisations have shared the perception of UNICEF being the most well-placed with government to lead the work on gender however with their technical capacity on children they are yet to refine their advocacy agenda focussing on gender issues to leverage this position.

iii. It has been shared that the agenda to foreground and integrate gender has initially been largely driven by individual initiatives, relationships and presence in the critical political landscape and dynamics of partnering organisations with UNICEF.\textsuperscript{102} However, with the later additions to memberships across diverse platforms, consortiums and partnerships with various organizations, government counterparts and with civil society-based organisations, there is a more collective approach observed being undertaken now. This has strengthened the strategic positioning of UNICEF as a strong gender-based policy actor.

iv. New partnerships such as those with religious foundations and institutions is aimed to reinforce practice of non-discriminatory social norms to avoid repetition of gender unequal social norms. Such partnerships helped foster community engagements across both cross-cutting key development interventions in education and health and influence positive change against gender discriminatory social norms have been done.

\textsuperscript{99} RAM Outcome based Ratings (July 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2019)

\textsuperscript{100} Cited from excerpts from internal stakeholder interviews.

\textsuperscript{101} Cited from \url{https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/en/ending-child-marriage}

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid
v. However, these partnerships are relatively nascent and evidence for scaling up such initiatives to address gender transformative dialogue in the community is yet to be established at the sub national level.\footnote{Cited from The Local Capacity Building and Community Empowerment Report (LCBCE) (2016) \url{https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/LCBCE_Evaluation_Report_Bangladesh_2018-001.pdf}}

**Theme 4: Capacity and accountability on gender results**

**Organization capability and learning on gender equality**

i. There is an online survey\footnote{(UNICEF, Results of Online Assessment of the Gender Capacity of UNICEF Staff in Bangladesh office, 2019)} underway on Gender capacity for the Bangladesh CO which is a positive step in addressing the gap in assessing the present understanding of Gender among the BCO that might aide in discussions on better integration and gender mainstreaming of interventions\footnote{Cited from excerpts from Interview with BCO Staff}.

While there are trainings organised for the BCO staff to improve staff capacity, there is no record found of pre/post training assessment of the same. This missing documentation highlights the gap in recording the gender focus of the organization\footnote{Please refer segment 2.1 from Section 2 where this aspect has been discussed in detail.}.

**Organizational accountability for results on gender equality**

i. Based on the updated information present with the UNICEF intranet, there is at present a three-member Gender team in the BCO including a P4 Level Gender Specialist, a NOB Gender Specialist and an ECM/Gender focal point group\footnote{This information has been substantiated with the Gender Capacity data mentioned in the (UNICEF, Annual Report 2018 Gender Equality and Rights, 2019) and the organization strength outlined for Gender in the BCO organogram available with us as on July 3rd, 2019.}. There is a gap in human resource to ensure the availability of sufficient team members to co-ordinate within the BCO to together design gender responsive programmes and interventions across all sections. With the trend of high turnover of staff present at the CO, there is a need for supporting a larger team architecture for the gender section.

ii. There is limited accountability present in upholding gender integration as a core policy within the organization\footnote{Please refer to segment 2.5 from Section 2 where this has been further elaborated.}. The results of gender-based programming is not recorded in RAM and the accountability structure is not clearly outlined in the BCO.
Section 4: Achievements of the Country Programme with respect to UNICEF Bangladesh Strategy Paper on Gender: 2017-2020

Findings analysed with reference to the stakeholder interactions and consultations held were mapped against the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, South Asia planning paper to draw up the findings. The findings help to assess the success of Gender Mainstreaming found implemented against the framework underlined in the document across the key critical indicators of the strategy.

Strategy 1: Ensure gender-responsive design and implementation of key programmes

Gender Mainstreaming Initiatives across Country Programme Documents Outcomes

i. Apart from Child Protection and C4D which has over 85% Budget utilization, other aspects like Nutrition, Education, Health, WASH have only about 75-78% utilization for gender mainstreaming activities on the Gender Equality Marker\(^{109}\).

ii. The common gap areas with regard to adequate representation of gender mainstreaming activities in the BCO include, limited adoption of gender responsive policy designs among sections in the BCO, limited technical capacity on gender prevalent among sections in BCO, inadequate reporting of gender results of programme activities in the RAM \(^{110}\).

iii. There is limited evidence of measurable gender indicators present for all the programmes run by different sections in the BCO. This impacts the limited evidence present to assess the success of gender integration in the programmes. Gender focussed indicators have been defined across few programmes of sections like WASH, Communication for Development, Health for selected programmes only.\(^{111}\)

iv. Despite limited programme attention invested in gender among cross-sectional interventions, the missing visibility of gender indicators in RAM reporting structure may be influenced owing to a globally adhered, standardised RAM reporting format. Interviews with internal stakeholders have revealed that the RAM reporting structure is based on a standardised format and considering that gender as a strategic programming perspective is a recent addition in the BCO, it may be difficult to incorporate the same in RAM due to limited feasibility in changing the format.

Targeted Gender Priorities

Child Marriage currently is one of the leading Gender focused programme foregrounded by the GoB. Through configuring interventions resulting for a positive change in this programme, other aspects such as girl’s education, health and menstrual hygiene, gender based adolescent clubs are also being integrated to foster a more gender sensitive decision making in communities and reduce traditional discriminatory challenges to access resources for girls and women. However focussed gender priorities are yet to emerge in other sectoral programmes.\(^{112}\)

Increasing Access to Gender-Responsive Adolescent Health

Through Adolescent Friendly Health Corners, while there is focused human resource allocated for adolescent corners, yet there is no separate space for waiting rooms for adolescents which have may shy away the adolescent girls as service users\(^{113}\).

\(^{109}\) (UNICEF, Annual Report 2018 Gender Equality and Rights, 2019)

\(^{110}\) The evidence base for this finding include excerpts from stakeholder interview, UNICEF RAM Output and Outcome Ratings as per (Sept 23rd, 2019) and the (UNICEF, Results of Online Assessment of the Gender Capacity of UNICEF Staff in Bangladesh office, 2019)

\(^{111}\) Please refer Segment 3 from Section 3 named, Generation and use of gender data and evidence for more details on this aspect.

\(^{112}\) Cited from excerpts from Interview with BCO staff

\(^{113}\) Cited from excerpts from external stakeholder interviews
Strategy 2: Build institutional capacity on gender within UNICEF and of partners

Increasing Investment for Girls’ Access to Secondary Education

In the BCO, there is an increased percentage of investment in adolescent girls’ education from 1.5% in 2018 to 1.8% in 2019. UNICEF has supported the education department of the government with strategic planning to strengthen implementation and achieve higher completion of secondary education. Thus, increased interventions have resulted in activities targeted for increased budget for gender responsive access to secondary education114.

Results of BCO Building institutional capacity on gender

i. While there are multiple trainings and learning activities conducted within the CO, there is gap in documentation of both pre and post learning assessment to map the capacity of the team for gender programming skills.115

ii. The present team structure of the BCO has only three Gender focused resource present116. There is a trend of high staff turnover within the CO and in order to meet the expectations of ensuring a holistic gender-responsive effort of policy work and programming across all sections, there is a need to further expand the present gender architecture in the BCO.117.

iii. While both UNICEF and other UN Agencies may work on the similar themes, there was limited effort observed in co-ordination for joint—programming or use of UN-inter-agency mechanisms to pool in efforts or to work together on mobilisation of strategic gender policy advocacy results118. From the results of the Perception Survey, 36% external stakeholders shared that UNICEF has a consistent and well-prepared presence to lead Partnerships and joint programming efforts.

Strategy 3: Reinforce gender equality within the organization

Gender Equality within the BCO

i. The present staffing of the BCO reveals that the women comprise 53% of the total BCO staff members. Along with this, the recent BCO organogram (July, 2019) reveals 3 dedicated gender resources present at the CO. With a high turnover of human resources, adequate support system from the gender resource team has been limited to ensure the expectations of including institutional integration of gender responsive programming.

ii. Increased number of focused partnerships with gender-based organizations and policy centres doing work on gender responsive evidence generation is required to promote a well-designed advocacy work contextualising the country perspective119.

Strategy 4: Position of UNICEF as a strong gender-responsive organization

Active membership across Partnerships, Stakeholder Platforms and Consortiums

i. UNICEF is presently the co-chair both with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, GoB and the World Bank led Local Consultative Group on Women and Gender Equality. UNICEF is strongly positioned to lead reinforcing focus on national policy and design strategy interventions highlighting gender mainstreaming across cross-cutting themes and issues.

ii. With the access to such platforms, a suitable alignment of strategic partnerships is required with civil society and local development organisations to mobilize and leverage public attention towards practice of non-discriminatory social norms and promote gender neutral shift in family practices.
3. Recommendations

The recommendations have been formulated based on the following two categories, namely strategic recommendations and operational recommendations.

**Strategic Recommendations** are those which will enable an overall strengthening of gender integration and drive gender mainstreaming within the CO and deliver the same externally, considering the country perspective and add value to the nature of partnerships, memberships at consortiums and other policy platforms.

**Operational Recommendations** are those which will support the achievements of the strategic recommendations and will directly control the present institutional and programmatic bottlenecks observed and faced by the CO.

The recommendations shared has been in alignment with the key thematic findings presented across all the sections of report. They are aligned with and seek to leverage areas of strengths of the BCO and UNICEF’s overall comparative advantages to holistically integrate gender in the next country programme cycle. The present evaluation of Gender in the country programme emphasized on the need of the office to review the integration of gender and its positioning moving forward towards a more gender integrated approach adopted across the BCO.

As one of the key cross-cutting themes of the CP 2017-2020, there has been significant progress in achieving gender equality standards such as allocation of dedicated technical resource placed at the country office. Nonetheless, further focused initiatives are to be implemented to promote better integration of gender inclusive design in both policy and programmes. Harmful gender stereotyping begins before the age of ten, therefore the need for early targeting is emphasized for gender programming of the office.

Gender as a social problem must be internalized to be integrated across all section initiatives. Given the country context of Bangladesh where predominantly strong male dominant social norms prevails, there is a significant opportunity to widely contribute on positive gender outcomes.

**Strategic Recommendations**

**Key finding:** The results of gender-based programming is not recorded in RAM and the accountability structure is not clearly outlined in the BCO.

- **Recommendation:** Enable Gender to be measurable as a result in RAM: Implementation of a Convergent Gender work plan that is amenable to be measured and evaluated in CMT/accountability of each section needs to be led by the leadership of the country office. Gender focused programme workplans should include specific gender indicators across Country Programme Strategy Notes and ToCs which are further reflected in the Results Assessments Module and synthesised with the report’s dashboard of the office. Priority focus to include gender results and/ integrate gender components across the Annual work plans for all sections.

**Key finding:** With a high turnover of human resources, adequate support system from the gender resource team has been limited to ensure the expectations of including institutional integration of gender responsive programming.

- **Recommendation:** Ensure effective use of human resources and expand the gender architecture as required. To ensure effective utilisation of a P4 level, full-time Gender Specialist and field office-based gender focal point, it is necessary to expand and establish a larger gender architecture to ensure availability of requisite human resources to help with inter-sectoral gender integration. To further facilitate implementation of this recommendation, focus on gender as a cross-cutting function must be strategically prioritised into future work plans across sections in consultation with planning and SPEAR.

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120 Gender stereotypes begin at age 10, Lanks Belinda, JohnsHopkins, 2018
Key finding: There is limited accountability present in upholding gender integration as a core policy within the organization.  

- Recommendation: Adherence to an accountability framework to assess performance in Gender as a cross-cutting area. Formulate a uniform gender responsive accountability structure that will be followed by all sections both at the BCO and field office. The Gender accountability to be implemented in the CO must have clearly defined roles and responsibilities of sections and visible across both design and results of interventions. Structured time commitment for gender focal points to be followed for gender focused activities within the office at the national and subnational level.

Key finding: In addition to the implementation activities conducted, there are instances where advocacy for vulnerable groups including women and girls facing discriminatory practices are found not adequately represented in the interventions made in the present country programme

- Recommendation 1: Prioritize role as a policy and advocacy leader and expand work on relevant policy dialogues required for promotion of gender integrated programmes. Reinforce articulation of the Country Office’s policy stands with respect to gender within its partners and stakeholders. This is relevant as it will strengthen the role of UNICEF across various platforms and collectives. This clarity on role is expected to contribute towards collaborative action and joint programming to address gender issues in the country other than child marriage.

- Recommendation 2: Reinforce and expand efforts towards promotion of gender-responsive legal frameworks and institutional mechanisms. This may include areas of intervention such as women and girls’ safety and protection including out of school children, equitable access to resources and services, reduce the risks and vulnerabilities of women and girls and equal opportunities across domains with deterrence and prevention measures, social support, and implementation provisions.

Operational Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Strengthen technical knowledge and capacity on Gender to help sections independently drive gender integrated programming

- Standardized and compulsory staff training module on gender with periodic follow up and post assessment analysis to be implemented both for internal team members at the COs, Field Offices as well as the involved partners engaged in upstream and downstream interventions. Implement both pre and post assessment of trainings and gender focused workshops to track progress, learning curves and effectiveness of results of the same with respect to knowledge, attitude, practice around gender issues within the office

- The annual performance assessment of staff to include gender as a critical component which will map results and programming initiatives conducted or supported by an individual. This is aimed to influence an incentive-based approach to increase adoption of gender integrated perspectives for both policy and programme implementation across sections.

Recommendation 2: Implement dedicated institutional mechanisms for evaluation of gender for the next country programme

- Include results of sectional gender analysis to inform designs for the next country programme. This could be included as part of the annual review of the same to primarily help contribute to the understanding the bottle necks and challenges involved.

Recommendation 3: Develop institutional mechanisms for effective implementation of gender integration

- Ensure dedicated budget and resources for gender equality, gender mainstreaming and both gender integration across both institutional and programmatic interventions.

Please refer to segment 2.5 from Section 2 where this has been further elaborated.
• Encourage cross-sectoral meetings to work on gender issues. Promote cross-sectional gender training such as Gender and Child-Protection, Gender and Climate Change, Gender and Nutrition. This is aimed to trigger faster pick of more cross-sectional gender programming.

• Encourage and promote adoption to sex-disaggregated and gender inclusive methodology for data collection amongst all sections and among partner

Recommendation 4: Strengthen the work on engaging men and boys in gender equality programing within sectors

• Promote intentional shifts in gender roles and expectations through innovative intervention designs. Produce and build discussion forums in addition to Adolescent Clubs and actively involve men and women in dialogues about structural transformation against discriminatory community practices.

• Promote interventions on improving active participation of men and adolescent boys in gender programmes. Such programmes may include or involve the traditional processes involved in early gender socialization at household level, nature of father's engagement in the social role internalization of boys and girls and role of religious/community elders, etc.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen Partnership and promote joint-programming with UN agencies and other organizations.

• Country Office to take steps to foster the One-UN reform forward and encourage and build strategic partnerships with government stakeholders with other development partners including UN agencies based on mutual strengths and learning

• Foster strong partnerships/engagement with women civil society and organizations to address harmful practices, gender norms and adolescent girls’ empowerments.
Creating relationships
Building value