SOCIAL + BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Goal Area 3

Every child, including adolescents, is protected from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and harmful practices

Compendium of SBC Best Practices

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Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements and lessons learned

Access the individual case studies by clicking on each item below:

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UNICEF Cuba Supports the Mídete Campaign for the Prevention of Violence Against Children and Adolescents

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

In 2021, UNICEF Cuba supported the Mídete (Measure yourself!) campaign to prevent violence against children and adolescents. The themes and content of the campaign were developed through a process of co- creation with a group of children and adolescents. Messages about the violence affecting children and adolescents to 559,969 people through 44 communication tools disseminated on social networks, focused on positive parenting, the responsible use of technologies and the prevention of gender-based

violence and sexual abuse with children. Almost 5,000 adolescents, about half of whom were women, acquired tools to prevent violence and resolve conflicts correctly, which they expressed through artistic works and communicative products generated by them. Ninety-four per cent of the adolescents who participated in the Mídete workshops showed that they were better prepared to prevent and confront gender violence in the digital age.

Context

The normalization of authoritarian and hierarchical parenting styles based on violent practices toward children and adolescents are related to an adult-centric and patriarchal culture that legitimizes a traditional conception of childhood and makes it difficult for children and adolescents to be treated as subjects of law. The 2019 Cuba Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey showed that 42 per cent of Cuban children and adolescents aged 1—14 have been subjected to some violent method of discipline and increase from 36 per cent in the 2014 MICS findings. In 40 per cent of homes where children and adolescents live, violent methods such as physical punishment and psychological aggression were used to correct perceived bad behaviour. In a third of those homes, youth were scolded using offensive words or disqualifications. The persistence of myths and beliefs that justify violence against children and adolescents (including gender-based violence) makes it difficult to prevent, report, and provide the necessary attention to children who suffered sexual abuse. The lack of support from parents and caregivers in digital environments also makes it difficult to protect children and adolescents from cyber violence, which has been increasing in Cuba since 2019.[1]

The prevention of violence affecting children and adolescents is a priority of UNICEF Cuba's Cooperation Programme (2020—2024). To address this component, Mídete (Measure yourself!), the first campaign in the country to focus on this problem, was created and implemented. Mídete seeks to 'de-normalize' violence affecting children and adolescents, promote positive parenting practices and the responsible use of social media, and prevent child sexual abuse and gender-based violence.

Strategic approach

Transforming behaviours in favor of a life without violence requires changing mindsets, beliefs, norms and behaviours that normalize the use of violence as part of parenting styles, educational practices and ways of relating to others. In 2021, UNICEF Cuba supported the Mídete (Measure yourself!) campaign to prevent violence against children and adolescents. The themes and content of the campaign were created through a process of co-creation with a group of children and adolescents. The audio-visual content was based on the realities and perspectives of the youth and went beyond only portraying corporal punishment as the key type of violence experienced by youth.

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Mídete convened 16 workshops for girls and boys from several Cuban territories where they were provided with tools and knowledge to prevent sexual abuse, promote the responsible use of social media, and question norms that naturalize the mistreatment of children and perpetuate gender stereotypes.

A multi-platform digital component (#Mídete) was launched by UNICEF Cuba in collaboration with Crianza Respetuosa. Parents, youth, and teachers can access resources (including games) to help mitigate challenging situations and develop non-violent disciplinary practices. The campaign emerged at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and has since offered

psychological guidance and psycho-emotional support for mothers, fathers and other caregivers of children and adolescents.

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Key achievements

- Messages about the violence affecting children and adolescents to 559,969 people through 44 communication tools disseminated on social networks, focused on positive parenting, the responsible use of technologies and the prevention of gender-based violence and sexual abuse with children.

- Sixteen workshops or training cycles that promoted behavioural changes in relation to violence affecting children and adolescents, with the participation of 383 people and various institutional players (including 234 children and adolescents).

- Four thousand five hundred seventeen adolescents, 2,393 of them women, acquired tools to prevent violence and resolve conflicts correctly, which they expressed through various artistic works and through communicative products generated by them.

- Ninety-four per cent of the adolescents who participated in the Mídete workshops showed that they were better prepared to

Messages about violence affecting children and adolescents disseminated to

559,969 PEOPLE

16 WORKSHOPS

or training cycles conducted

94%

of participating adolescents were better prepared

prevent and confront gender violence in the digital age.

- Publication of the first book on positive parenting in the country, available in

digital format; in 2022 12,000 copies were distributed at venues that enabled staff to raise awareness about non-violent discipline and provide quality exchanges with families in charge of raising children and adolescents.

Lessons Learned

1 Diversifying and complementing the strategies, channels or ways of eliciting and providing feedback guarantee greater inclusion of children, adolescents, mothers, fathers, other caregivers and key players in the participatory processes that promote respectful parenting and the right of children and adolescents to grow up without violence.

2 Addressing the problem of violence affecting children and adolescents requires gathering evidence and a more systematic and comprehensive communicative treatment.

3 Strengthening alliances with the media, other campaigns and related projects broadens the reach of messages that help to question and transform perceptions, norms and behaviours that sustain violence against children and adolescents.

4 Keeping a disaggregated statistical record of the people who participate in training or sensitization on respectful parenting or other topics related to the protection of children and adolescents helps to focus strategies to favourably impact the lives of those who need it most (e.g., prioritizing rural areas).

5 Give greater priority to participatory creative processes involving the intended audiences (e.g., children, adolescents, parents, teachers); their first-hand knowledge is invaluable and the process gives them a voice.

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Recommendations

1 Identify opportunities to integrate proposals from the Mídete campaign and the Crianza Respetuosa project in the planning of all the programmatic components of UNICEF Cuba (Health, Education and Protection), to expand the possibilities of reaching the intended audience, to sensitize key actors in the prevention and more comprehensive response to violence against children and adolescents, and to be able to mainstream protection issues. This will make it possible to optimize the financial resources available and complement the organization's work in the country.

2 Expand the campaign management team and its role in the strategic decisions that are made. Although it was a UNICEF Cuba campaign, the commitment and opportunities that arose from joint work with counterparts and strategic allies were key to its implementation.

3 Strengthen the capacities of UNICEF Cuba counterparts for preventing violence and caring for children and adolescents affected by violence. Mídete complements various initiatives that generate methodological tools, guides and innovative products for the Cuban context, which can in the future generate a multiplier effect and foster changes in attitudes and behaviours that favour the rights of children and adolescents to grow up and live free of violence.

4 Create a repository for all the materials produced by Mídete that can be accessed by others that want to develop a similar initiative.

Endnotes

1   United Nations Children's Fund, Encuesta de indicadores múliples por congolomerados: Informe de resultados de la encuesta, UNICEF, CUBA/MICS, December 2020, <www.unicef.org/cuba/media/3551/file/MICS6_Cuba-2019_compressed.pdf%20.pdf>.
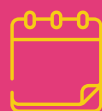
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UNICEF Dominican Republic's Social and Behaviour Change Strategy Promotes the Transformation of Social Norms that Drive Child Marriage and Early Unions

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

Dates of Activity
2018 to 2022

Duration
Five years

Budget
US$190,000 per year

The Dominican Republic has one of the highest rates of child marriage and early unions (CMEU) in Latin America. More than a third of all girls are married before the age of 18 years, mostly in the poorest areas. To shift the social norms that drive high social tolerance for CMEU, UNICEF Dominican Republic developed a Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) strategy to advocate for raising the age of marriage to 18 years, promote policies and services that address the drivers of CMEU, support girls' empowerment and generate an enabling environment for full compliance of girls and adolescents' rights. In 2020, the advocacy efforts of UNICEF Dominican Republic and its allies led the Government to declare the prevention of child marriage and adolescent pregnancy a national priority and to establish the Cabinet for Children and Adolescents, made up of the organizations responsible for social services for children and adolescents. By 2021, with technical support from UNICEF, the Dominican Republic officially launched a public policy to prohibit formal child marriage and coordinate all government interventions related to the prevention of and attention to early unions and teenage pregnancy.

1

🗨 Context

Latin America and the Caribbean are the only regions in the world where child marriages have not decreased in the last 25 years. This region ranks second in the world in the number of adolescent pregnancies. The Dominican Republic is among the top five countries with the highest rates of child marriage and early unions in Latin America. In 2019, 32 per cent of girls were married or in a union before the age of 18 years, and nine per cent before they turned 15 years old. Girls from the lowest socioeconomic quintiles (49 per cent), those who only completed primary education (65 per cent) and those living in rural and peri-urban areas (38 per cent) were most affected. Dominican girls who marry at an early age are more likely to suffer gender violence, drop out of school, have more children, and remain in poverty. Social and cultural practices that drive early unions are the main factors that contribute to its perpetuation. Child marriage puts girls' lives, health and development at risk, as well as limiting their future prospects.[1]

Prior to 2018, the issue of CMEU was typically not part of the public development agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean and was low on the public policy agenda of the LAC region countries. In 2017, the Joint Inter-Agency Program to End Child Marriage and Early Unions in Latin America and the Caribbean: 2018-2021 was launched with the aim of transforming gender norms, empowering girls, and promoting the legal and political reforms necessary to address CMEU. In 2017, the regional version of this programme was launched in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The programme goals were to align national legislation with international frameworks by raising the age of marriage to 18 years (without exceptions), promote policies and services that address the drivers of CMEU, break the silence and generate a regional platform of allies to strengthen evidence, advocacy and intersectoral coordination to fulfill girls' rights, and support girls' empowerment and transform harmful gender norms.[2,3]

♞ Strategic approach

In 2017, prior to developing a dedicated Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) strategy, UNICEF Dominican Republic supported a mass communication campaign to position the CMEU issue on the national public agenda. The campaign centered on *La Peor Novela* (The Worst Soap Opera), a television and YouTube-based soap opera that highlighted the downfall of women forced into early marriage.

Between 2018 and 2019, a knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) study was conducted in six areas of the country.[4] The mixed-methods study aimed to identify social and cultural drivers to

child marriage and early unions, and barriers to eliminate these harmful practices. The findings from the KAP study were used to develop a theory of change, based on a socio-sustainable model, and an SBC strategy to promote change of perceptions, behaviours and social norms that underlie CMEU.

The SBC strategy defined methodologies, actions, and key messages for promoting adolescent girls' empowerment and creating an enabling environment for achieving children's rights, by raising awareness among families, community leaders, civil servants and young and adult men. The key activities for achieving the goals of the SBC strategy were:

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- *Launching a joint Twitter campaign* by UN agencies and partners and other advocacy actions to support and advance legal reforms on the age of marriage in the Dominican Republic, that, in 2018, coincided with the debates about child marriage and early unions in Parliament.

- *Supporting Girls' Clubs* to give girls safe spaces to learn life skills, increase their self-agency, and reduce their vulnerability to early marriage or unions. Age-appropriate guides and educational resources were developed to raise awareness about the pitfalls of early marriage or unions, and to facilitate skills-building and other activities. During the COVID-19 pandemic (in 2021), the club activities were moved online. From 2022, in-person club meetings were held once again.

- *Launching Dueñas de su Futuro,* an online version of the Girls' Clubs with which girls could interact on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube and receive messages focused on their own future. The platform continues to serve as a repository for educational resources (e.g., the *El Porqué de las Cosas* video series), that challenge the social norms that underpin early unions.

- *Developing manuals and guides* with activities to raise awareness about the consequences of early unions to use with groups of adolescent girls, families and community leaders.

- *Developing a toolbox* focused on CMEU prevention and gender equality for use in formative sessions with high school students. An educational video and a guide were developed for school counselors. Pre- and post- tests were used to monitor changes in knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, and practices among sensitized students.

- *Supporting community dialogues* with local leadership and community members to raise awareness about CMEU among families, rooted in positive deviance.

- *Strengthening the capacities of civil servants of public institutions* to prevent gender violence and early unions in the health, education, social protection and protection against violence sectors.

- *Implementing campaigns on social media* with key messages aimed at adolescents that focus on questioning social norms that drive early unions.

🏅 Key achievements

- Political advocacy activities and the Twitter advocacy Joint campaign reached more than seven million people in 2021 and led to a reform of the Civil Code (Law 1-21) that prohibits child marriage before age 18.

- Advocacy by UNICEF led to the Cabinet for Children and Adolescents (established in 2020) mandate to prevent early unions and adolescent pregnancy. At the end of 2021, with technical support from UNICEF the country officially launched a public policy that coordinates all government interventions related to the prevention of and attention to early unions and teenage pregnancy.

- UNICEF supported the first intersectoral public programme for the prevention of child marriage and early unions, together with four public institutions that will reach nine areas between 2022-2025. This programme works on behavioural change with the Girls' Clubs, awareness raising for high school students, families, community leaders as well as young and adult men.

- The Girls' Clubs educational programme reached more than 580 girls and adolescents from prioritized sectors. These safe spaces helped to develop girls' life skills and sense of empowerment, fostered positive changes in self-efficacy, knowledge and attitudes, and encouraged them to reject early unions

and design their life project focused on their development.

- Posts from the Dueñas de su Futuro and Girls' Club online spaces were viewed by 2.9 million people, an increase of 47 per cent from December 2021 to December 2022.

- Since 2021, the early marriage prevention toolbox for high school students has been used as part of the Culture of Peace Strategy of the Ministry of Education curriculum. Between 2021 and 2022, UNICEF supported the scaling up of the toolbox use by training school counselors from the Ministry of Education to be 'technical multipliers'. One thousand two hundred school counselors received training and reached 80,000 high school students in 2021, and 65,000 in 2022, with messages about preventing CMEU.

- More than 300 civil servants from the Health, Education, Social Protection and Protection Against Violence sectors participated in training activities to strengthen their capacities on children's rights, gender equality and prevention of early unions within their institutions.

- UNICEF developed and currently maintains a set of resources (manuals and guides) to use for awareness-raising activities about the prevention of early unions with families, community leaders, and adolescent girls.

300 CIVIL SERVANTS
from the Health, Education, Social Protection and Protection Against Violence sectors participated in training activities

KAP STUDY
was conducted in six areas of the country

The Girls' Clubs EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME
reached more than 580 girls and adolescents from prioritized sectors

Lessons learned & Recommendations

1 Any strategy aimed at addressing and preventing CMEU must be evidence-based and start from a clear understanding of the social and gender norms and other structural drivers that underpin and reproduce this harmful practice.

2 CMEU prevention is a commitment to social change. It involves intensifying actions and making them more deliberate to reduce gender inequalities and violence and to promote more equitable and egalitarian societies (communities, environments), especially for girls and adolescents.

3 Addressing CMEU requires a systemic approach. The socioecological model provides a useful framework for identifying barriers and directing relevant interventions for each intended population group at different social ecological levels. The systemic approach requires programmatic congruence, multiple strategies, foresight, planning and perseverance.

4 The design of strategies for each population group of interest requires the participation of the intended group members. This participation takes time and requires patience. The time it takes to involve the population groups does not always coincide with the deadlines defined by accountability to donors or UNICEF's internal programming.

5 Specific sub-strategies for advocacy, alliances, social mobilization and communication for social and behavioural change are essential for CMEU prevention. These strategies should foster inter-sectoral and inter-institutional action.

6 The institutionalization and funding for CMEU prevention strategies and activities is key to the sustainability of activities and reaching the desired social and behavioural change outcomes. Institutionalization requires building lasting links with key public institutions, investing in capacity building for the technical staff of these institutions, and developing support strategies that enable the institution to take ownership of the strategies and drive the change process.

7 Implementing CMEU programmes and activities comes with challenges. It is important not to lose sight of the ultimate goal of CMEU prevention, i.e., that all girls and adolescents can achieve the highest level of fulfillment of their rights without being forced to comply with roles and mandates imposed by a patriarchal and adult-centric society.

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Endnotes

1   UNICEF Dominican Republic, 'Social and behavioral change – early unions', 2022.

2   UNFPA/UNICEF Latin America & the Caribbean Regional Office, 'Accelerate actions to end child marriage and early unions in Latin America and the Caribbean. Panama City, Panama: UNFPA and UNICEF', 2018, < www.unicef.org/lac/media/2371/file/PDF%20Accelerate%20Actions%20to%20End%20Child%20Marriage%20and%20Early%20Unions%20in%20Latin%20America%20and%20the%20Caribbean.pdf>.

3   UNICEF LACR, 'Child marriage and early unions in Latin America and the Caribbean: An alliance for the rights of girls', 2017, < www.unicef.org/lac/en/child-marriage-and-early-unions-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>.

4   UNICEF Dominican Republic, 'El matrimonio infantile y las unions tempranas: Estudio de conocimientos, actitudes,y practices en seis municipios de la República Dominicana', May 2019, < www.unicef.org/dominicanrepublic/media/2706/file/Publicaci%C3%B3n%20|%20El%20matrimonio%20infantil%20y%20las%20uniones%20tempranas:%20Estudio%20de%20conocimientos,%20actitudes%20y%20pr%C3%A1cticas%20en%20seis%20municipios%20de%20la%20Rep%C3%BAblica%20Dominicana.pdf>.

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UNICEF Indonesia Supports Student-Led Bullying Prevention Programme

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

Roots Indonesia, a school-based bullying prevention programme, was introduced in South Sulawesi Province in 2017, to create child friendly, safe, and supportive learning environments. Adapted from the North American programme called Roots, this initiative aimed to improve peer relationships and reduce bullying and violence incidents among junior high school students in targeted schools. UNICEF supported the piloting of Roots in the South Sulawesi and Central Java provinces and the national government to evaluate the programme and develop scale-up plans based on results. In 2018, more than 10,000 students were reached through government-led replications of the 2017 Roots Indonesia programme; 4,421 were reached in 2019. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection adapted a model like Roots Indonesia in seven additional provinces, training 280 students as agents of change in 2019.

1

Context

Three out of four children and adolescents that have experienced at least one type of violence in Indonesia reported that the perpetrators were their friends or peers. Overall, 41 per cent of students aged 15 years experienced bullying at least a few times per month.[1] Humiliating language, physical fights and harassment from other students are the most common factors students mention when characterizing their schools as unsafe.

Strategic approach

Roots Indonesia, a school-based bullying prevention programme, was introduced in South Sulawesi Province in 2017 to create child friendly, safe, and supportive learning environments. Adapted from the North American programme called Roots, this initiative aimed to improve peer relationships and reduce bullying and violence incidents among junior high school students in targeted schools. Specifically, the programme aimed to establish a more positive school climate through the participatory development of an anti-bullying policy; change social norms regarding bullying; and increase awareness and understanding among teachers of how bullying affects their students, as well as their ability to deal with bullying incidents through positive discipline.

Through the Roots Indonesia programme, 30—40 students in each target school were trained as change agents. They were identified using social network theory; this methodology guaranteed that the selected students would engage the entire student body. The change agents were taught to identify problems and initiate school anti-bullying activities. They participated in regular after-school sessions to identify problems in their schools and solutions to the problems. Students participated in every stage of the Roots programme, including design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The change agents were supported by young facilitators from local children's organizations. The activities culminated in a school-wide declaration against bullying that was implemented with school staff input. The students created posters and dramas to communicate the school anti-bullying agreement.

Student-led anti bullying activities in school were implemented in collaboration with civil-society.

⍟ Key achievements

- UNICEF supported the piloting of Roots in South Sulawesi and Central Java provinces and supported provinces and the national government to evaluate the programme and to develop scale-up plans based on results.

- More than 10,000 students were reached in 2018 and 4,421 in 2019, through government-led replication of the bullying prevention model designed and piloted in 2017.

- The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection adapted a model like Roots Indonesia in seven additional provinces, training 280 students as agents of change in 2019.

MORE THAN
10,000
students were reached in 2018 and

4,421
in 2019

280
students trained as agents of change in 2019

30—40
students in each target school were trained as change agents

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Lessons learned

1 Building strong relationships with school staff and engaging staff and principals from the initial phase of the programme is crucial for success.

2 It is critical to build school staff capacity on social network theory and peer nomination for the selection of the agents of change, as this is not a commonly used method for selecting students to lead activities in schools.

Recommendations

1 Adapt and scale-up the Roots Indonesia programme and either add or combine it with a programme that has a teacher training component to strengthen teachers' knowledge and self-efficacy on positive discipline.

Endnotes

1 Nationally representative data on bullying in Indonesian schools from PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) 2018.

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UNICEF Timor-Leste Improves Developmental Outcomes for Disadvantaged Youth

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

Dates of Activity
2014 to 2020

Duration
Six years

Budget
Not available

UNICEF Timor-Leste's *Hametin Família* (Strengthening Families) parenting programme was comprised of a non-targeted national-level multi-media campaign, targeted parenting programme sessions at the community level, and at least two follow-up home visits and support with high-risk families in addition to case management support. The aim of the programme was to empower parents and caregivers and promote positive practices to improve developmental outcomes for children and youth from disadvantaged communities in Timor-Leste.

The entry point for parent education support for vulnerable households was the Ministry of Social Solidarity's *Bolsa da Mãe* (Mother's Purse) conditional cash transfer programme. An endline assessment of the *Hametin Família* programme showed that the parenting programme activities contributed to significant, positive changes in parents' knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) between pilot areas and control areas, as well as positive shifts in parents' KAP between the baseline study and the endline study.

Timor-Leste regained its independence as a country in 2002, making it one of the world's youngest countries. By 2020, its population had increased by more than one-third, to about 1.3 million inhabitants, with children 0—17 years making up 42 per cent of the Timorese population. At the time that the *Hametin Família* parenting programme launched its first phase in 2014, Timor-Leste faced numerous challenges in early childhood care and basic education, especially in non-urban areas. School infrastructure and facilities were poor, teaching materials were limited, and the quality of teaching was low.[1] There were about 275,000 children between the ages of zero and eight years in the country. These years in a child's life are most critical for physical, social and cognitive development. In 2015, only 14 per cent of Timorese children were enrolled in pre-school, much lower than the 50 per cent targeted in the Timor-Leste National Education Strategic Plan 2011—2030. The highest school drop-out rates occurred in grades one and two, and at least 70 per cent of students could not read at all by the end of the first grade.[2] Following the Timor-Leste

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Government's commitment to improving young child development, the pre-school enrollment reached 24 per cent by 2019.

Hametin Família was a government programme co-developed by the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI), UNICEF Timor-Leste, and the NGO Ba Futuru, and launched in 2014. Inputs from, and consultation with, groups of individual stakeholders within government, and with development partners, INGOs and NGOs, stakeholders at the community level (e.g., village council members/community chiefs, small-village chiefs, women's representatives, teachers and traditional leaders) and parents provided the foundation for the programme. The rationale underlying the programme structure was derived from international research suggesting that positive and long-term impact on behaviours and practices within high-risk families requires extended contact time, and messages presented more than once and in more than one way.

The *Bolsa da Mãe*, 'Mother's Purse', conditional cash transfer programme was the entry point to the *Hametin Família* parenting programme for parents in vulnerable households. The Bolsa da Mãe programme targets poor and vulnerable households with children. The objectives of the programme are to help reduce poverty, promote attendance of nine years of compulsory basic education, and increase utilization of primary health care services. In order for households to receive programme benefits, they must comply with soft conditions related to education and health. In 2014, the programme provided a cash transfer in the amount of US$5 per child per month (for up to three children) to 55,488 vulnerable households. By 2022, parents and caregivers received US$20 per month for children, with an additional US$10 for a child with a disability.[3]

Strategic approach

The Hametin Família programme launched its first phase in 2014 and concluded its activities in 2019. The overall goal of the programme was to empower parents and caregivers and promote positive practices among them as the way to improve developmental outcomes for disadvantaged children in Timor-Leste.

The specific objectives were to (1) improve the knowledge, attitudes and practices of parents and other primary caregivers with regard to general positive parenting, early stimulation, child protection, alternative discipline, education, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation, health, birth registration and adolescent issues; and (2) foster the development of children, adolescents and young people up to the age of 18 through their parents' and caregivers' participation in the programme. The programme partners included UNICEF, Ba Futuru, Ministry of Health, Ministry of

Education, Ministry of Justice, Secretariat of State for Youth and Sports, and the Secretariat of State for Communications.

The first phase of *Hametin Família* began in 2014, with research that mapped existing parenting programmes, the needs of caregivers, and a partnership/stakeholder analysis. This research was used to identify the framework for the programme's caregiver education and support components. The second phase was conducted from 2015 to 2016. Findings from a baseline Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) study were used to inform the design and delivery mechanism of the Hametin Família parenting programme, including the development of the parenting education curriculum, youth theater guides, and media campaign. The design of Hametin Família programme followed social and behaviour change (SBC) principles, for example,

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ensuring consistent and repeated messaging across mediated and interpersonal channels; using two-way (dialogic) communication with community stakeholders; and contextualizing messages so that they are culturally and locally relevant.

Between 2017 and 2020, the programme was piloted in two administrative posts (Railaco and Uatucarbau) in two municipalities, Ermera and Viqueque. The aim was to reach all 87 sucos in these two targeted municipalities.[4] The programme was comprised of a non-targeted national-level multi-media campaign, targeted parenting programme sessions at the community level, and at least two follow-up home visits and intense support through case management when needed.

At the national level, a multi-episode radio drama and spot ads were broadcast twice per week with key messages about parenting and child development. The radio drama messages were repeated in materials (e.g., books, posters, banners) for parents. A youth theater company performed plays that amplified the key messages in community spaces every three months.

At the community level, ten parenting skills-building meetings were held (about one per month), facilitated by community members that were locally nominated. The topics for the sessions included general parenting, nutrition, hygiene, and child protection. These meetings were supported by a Family Support Team consisting of 5—10 local leaders and key influencer from the community. Peer support among parents grew organically out of the parenting sessions.

At the small-village (*aldeia*) level, members of the Family Support Team carried out home visits for vulnerable households (i.e., families with children with disabilities, teen parents, and others identified as needing additional support). Parents that were able to attend parenting sessions were encouraged to share their learnings in peer support group meetings. Between 2018 and 2020, a Father's Network was established in

Ermera municipality to enable fathers to share their positive practices with other parents through community dialogues and parenting session.

At the municipal level, the Child Protection Officer of the MSSI was responsible for coordinating the implementation of activities at the village level; they were responsible for writing monitoring reports and distributing programme materials throughout each municipality. At the administrative post level (between the municipal and village levels), MSSI staff and a trainer-mentor worked together to support the Family Support Team at the village level. In 2016, the Hametin Família programme formed a partnership with the community-based Alternative Preschool program, a UNICEF-supported initiative launched by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with local NGOs. The aim of the partnership was to boost the impact of the Hametin Família programme through improved linkages between adult education, early childhood development and child protection.

A mixed-methods endline study of the Hametin Família programme was conducted in 2020 to assess current understandings of parents' knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) related to parenting in Timor-Leste, and identify areas in which the Hametin Família programme had a positive effect on them. The study compared families that received the Hametin Família interventions with a control group that were not exposed to the Hametin Família activities.[5]

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Key achievements

The results of *Hametin Família* endline study suggested that the parenting programme activities contributed to significant, positive changes in parents' KAP between pilot areas and control areas, as well as positive shifts in parents' KAP between the 2015 baseline study and the endline study. Most notably:

- Overall, 91 per cent of respondents who participated in parenting programme activities were either satisfied or very satisfied with the community sessions; 91 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied with the home visits; 85 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied with the radio programme; and 88 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied with the fathers' network.

- There were large shifts in parents' perceptions of the value of early stimulation for children.

- There was an increase in the number of parents that have a child enrolled in school.

- There was in increase in the number of parents that help their children with homework.

- There was a strong sense of ownership by the government through the MSSI which coordinated the various stakeholders in the design of the activities and implementation and allocating the state budget to expand the implementation.

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91%

were satisfied or very satisfied with the home visits

85%

were satisfied or very satisfied with the radio programme

88%

were satisfied or very satisfied with the fathers' network

Lessons learned

1 **Involve the government/ministries as partners from the outset of programme design.** The MSSI was involved in all stages of programme planning, including the initial parenting capacity assessment, baseline survey, and later with the implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation process, as well as the coordination of stakeholder.

2 **Building government capacity to design and implement programmes can lead to programme sustainability.** In 2023, the MSSI used its own funds and resources to replicate the parenting programme in other municipalities.

Recommendations

1 Continue to invest in fathers' networks as a way to improve fathers' participation in child rearing.

2 Create additional programme events (e.g., community sessions, household sessions, and theatre sessions), to reach as many areas of the country as possible.

3 Provide more structural and economic support for children with disabilities to improve access to schools, teachers, and learning materials.

4 Demonstrate different early learning games and provide more information on the reasons to engage children in early stimulation.

5 Teach parents to use locally available materials to teach their children.

6 A scaled-up *Hametin Família* programme should carefully consider the role of radio and build radio programmes that support other aspects of the programme. Other media, particularly television, may have a role to play in the parenting programme, since a much larger percentage of people report that they watch TV than other media.

Endnotes

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SOCIAL + BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

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UNICEF Ukraine Uses Superheroes to Teach Children to Steer Clear of Landmines and Unexploded Devices

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

The 'Superteam against Mines' were called into action by UNICEF Ukraine to teach children critical safety behaviours to avoid landmines, unexploded ordinances, and other explosive remnants of war. UNICEF Ukraine developed a multicomponent edutainment campaign centred on the 'Superteam' superhero characters to teach children what to do if they come across explosive devices. The superhero adventures were played out in comic books, on social media, and were promoted in posters, leaflets, on stickers, t-shirts, and on school diaries and notebooks. The campaign reached 2.4 million children through

online activities. More than 500,000 children received comic books, posters, and stickers, and 200,000 children were engaged in direct training sessions between 2016 and 2017. Results of a post-campaign survey showed that knowledge and intentions to practice safe behaviours when coming into contact with mines increased by 12 per cent among children in affected areas. At least 15 per cent of children were able to identify risky areas. The percentage of teenagers that were able to identify suspicious and dangerous objects increased by 20 per cent.

Ukraine is one of the most mine-contaminated countries in the world. In 2014, armed conflict erupted in the eastern part of the country, affecting the lives of at least 580,000 children.

Families fled the fighting, and community spaces were used as battlefields. Families that returned to their communities were exposed to the dangers of landmines and other explosive devices left by the fighters. From April 2014 to August 2019, at least 1,059 civilians were killed or injured by unexploded ordnance (UXO) and landmine-related incidents, including 166 children. Community members, especially children, lacked knowledge about the dangers of landmines and other explosive devices. Children were particularly at risk of harm due to their innate curiosity and desire to play outside. Forty-five per cent of children ages six to 11 did not know the number to call to report a UXO, and 43 per cent were not able to recognize explosive remnants of war (ERW).[1]

In 2015, UNICEF produced booklets and brochures on basic mine safety rules. These materials failed to engage and motivate children to abide by the rules. Children also did not want to listen to their parents' warnings about the dangers of mines and UXOs. UNICEF Ukraine pivoted to a different approach. They developed a multicomponent edutainment campaign using comic book superhero characters to promote mine safety rules, and gamified the learning of rules via a web-based video game.

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The 'Superteam against Mines' campaign aimed to increase knowledge about the risks of mines and ERW among children, and motivate them to practice safety behaviours. Each superhero character was named after a key behaviour: Notice, Step Back, Report, and Don't Panic. The superhero campaign included digital promotion of mine safety rules through a website, social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube), printed comics, posters, stickers, and school diaries and notebooks. [2] A game was added to the website to make the learning experience more interesting for children. Site visitors could play the game as a way to test their understanding of mine safety. A video featuring Orlando Bloom, a Hollywood celebrity and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, talking about the importance of knowing basic safety rules in a conflict-affected environment was made available on social media channels and screened at children's move festivals.[3] An online survey was used to provide the UNICEF Ukraine team with feedback on the campaign. The survey was posted on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, for those exposed to the campaign messages.

To reach children offline, branded information products were printed, including leaflets, comic books, stickers, diaries and t-shirts. These printed products were also used during in-person training sessions with children living in the most conflict-affected areas. A series of three comic cartoon stories about three children living in an area where it is easy to encounter mines and ERW were also developed.[4] In each story the children are engaged in typical play activities like doing extreme sports, exploring abandoned houses, and walking in the woods, when they come across ERW. They characters model the behaviours that children should practice to avoid explosive devices, which are reinforced by the superheroes at the end of each episode.

UNICEF Ukraine formed partnerships with schools to hold in-person direct training for students, and with the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories, State Emergency Services and international non-profits working in the area of mine risk reduction. These partners helped to popularize the 'Superteam against Mines' and adopted the comic book for use in their own mine risk reduction trainings.

The edutainment campaign also enlisted youth bloggers to work with qualified professionals to produce 'MythBusters' videos that served to provide correct misperceptions about landmines and ERW, and to demonstrate the dangers of unexploded devices. A final component of the campaign was holding peer-to-peer (P2P) trainings sessions about mine safety rules for children ages 12 to 17 years, the ages when most youth challenge traditional sources of information. The trainings consisted of children teaching other children how to avoid landmines and ERW. Children selected to be P2P master-trainers were able to develop their leadership skills while working for the common good of children.

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Key achievements

- The 'Superteam against Mines' campaign reached 2.4 million children through online activities. More than 500,000 children received comic books, posters, and stickers, and about 200,000 children were engaged in direct training sessions between 2016 and 2017.

- The delivery of key mine safety messages through direct peers resulted in enhanced uptake and retention of messaging. For the first time during the conflict, children heard the key messages in a way different from 'boring' leaflets or military news.

- The post-campaign survey showed that knowledge and intended practice of safe behaviour when observing mines increased by 12 per cent among children in affected areas.

- The ability among children to identify risky areas increased by 15 per cent.

- The ability to identify suspicious and dangerous objects increased by 20 per cent among teenaged children living in affected areas.

- UNICEF Ukraine received multiple requests from government and non-government partners at the local and national levels for the comic books and other printed materials, training and video sessions.

" I met a lot of interesting people, became a confident speaker and understood that I can help at least some of my friends to stay alive in our conflictaffected region. "

-*Alina, one of the master trainers*

The ability among children to identify risky areas increased by 15 per cent.

MORE THAN
500,000
CHILDREN

received comic books, posters, and stickers

200,000
CHILDREN
WERE ENGAGED

in direct training sessions between 2016 and 2017

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Lessons learned

1 Using edutainment and web-based videos and games to appeal to youth is a more engaging mechanism for increasing risk perception among children than more indirect (e.g., brochures) and didactic (e.g., parents telling children to be careful) methods.

2 Gamifying information helps to deliver messages in a non-traumatizing way for children.

3 Consulting children about the edutainment content, and testing the products with representative samples of the intended audiences of children leads to end-products that are more appealing and appropriate for specific age groups.

Recommendations

1 Expand on the campaign by producing follow-up videos.

2 Expand peer-to-peer training sessions where children teach other children how to avoid landmines and other explosive devices.

Endnotes

1   United Nations Children's Fund, 'Superheroes against mines – an edutainment approach to engage children in mine safety: A case study', UNICEF, Ukraine, 2016.

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UNICEF Jordan Supports Creating Happy Homes through the Parenting Programme

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

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Brief summary

Dates of Activity
2018 to present

Duration
Five years

Budget
US$3 million

The Parenting Program is a low-cost programme aimed at enhancing positive parent-child relationships and changing negative parenting practices, with a primary focus on ending corporal punishment as a disciplinary method. The Parenting Program offers guidance to parents through different stages of the child's life, from newborn to 18 years of age. From 2018 to 2023, the Parenting Programme has reached more than 200,000 parents and caregivers throughout Jordan. At least 90 per cent of participants attended every session in the programme. Pre- and post- training assessments suggested that 95 per cent of the targeted population showed improved knowledge of positive parenting practices. The Parenting Programme has contributed to the creation of safe support groups for mothers and connected mothers to existing referral services as cash assistance and child protection.

1

Early childhood (from birth to age eight) is a critical period during which children's brains are developed. The quality of a child's early experiences depends on the care provided to them by their parents or caregivers.

Young developing children need healthcare, nutrition, protection from harm, a sense of security, opportunities for learning, and responsive caregiving (e.g., talking, singing and playing). Parenting practices, especially disciplinary responses, can affect a child's behaviour, and their psychological and social well-being. Disciplining children (i.e., the process of teaching them the values and normative behaviours of their social system) is one of the most important yet difficult responsibilities of parenting.

Forty per cent of Jordan's population is under 18 years old. A survey conducted in Jordan in 2019 showed that 76 per cent of Jordanian children were subjected to psychological punishment, 59 per cent were subjected to corporal punishment, and 13 per cent were subjected to severe physical punishment.[1] Most cases of punishment are unreported. While corporal punishment is prohibited in schools under the School Discipline Regulation, there is no explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in the home, in early childhood care facilities, and in day care for older children. Article 62 of the Jordanian Criminal Code allows discipline "within what is permitted by general custom," which describes a normative acceptance of violent disciplinary practices. Article 62 does not consider the psychological damage caused by the parents to their children which can be more severe than corporal punishment.

During the COVID-19 lockdown in Jordan, physical violence against children increased in 65 per cent of households. The most vulnerable children were the most affected by the pandemic; an increase in poverty rates among vulnerable families increased negative coping methods among parents, leading to an increase in punishment for their children.[2]

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Strategic approach

The Better Parenting Program (BPP) was first launched in Jordan in 1996. Since that time, the activities have been revised to improve the programme within an evolving Jordanian context. In 2019, UNICEF Jordan conducted an extensive, in-depth participatory review of the BPP with a range of national partners and revised the programme to align it with recent scientific developments in the field of early childhood development and positive parenting programmes, and with changes in the country context (e.g., an increase in the number of refugees). The revamped programme, Our Happy Home, incorporates significant scientific advances in parenting for children ages 0—18 years and builds on the lessons learnt from the implementation of the parenting programme over the years. The revised Parenting Program was adapted to the changing context of Jordan to better address the harmful social norm of using violent discipline with children at home.

The Parenting Program is guided by a theory of change that explicitly lays out the theoretical linkages between programme approaches and inputs, parental knowledge and behavioural outcomes, and child protection and developmental outcomes. The programme is delivered separately for parents and caregivers of children ages 0—9 years (Early Childhood Development), and one for parents and caregivers of children aged 10—18 years. Given that most pre-school aged children are cared for at home and do not attend formal early childhood education services, the goal of the Parenting Program is to empower parents to provide a nurturing, stimulating and protective environment at home. The programme is designed to be low-cost and easily delivered by trained non-professionals. It aims to improve positive parent-child relationships and interactions, which is an essential requirement for ensuring that children thrive and reach their

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full potential, from early childhood through adolescence. In addition to the programme goals, parents specify individual goals they would like to achieve through the Parenting Program. This goal-setting is done through an exercise in which parents list their best parenting practices as well as practices they would like to change or skills they would like to acquire. These lists are turned into goals that are reviewed mid-programme and at the end of programme to assess if the goals were met.

The current Parenting Program is implemented through Parent Groups that bring up to 15 parents together for a progressive series of thirteen structured, interactive, and participatory sessions. The parenting programme cycle is three months (12 weeks); participants attend a two-hour session per week. Parents are supported to adopt effective communication skills and apply positive, non-violent discipline with their children. The programme curriculum addresses several themes related to childcare and upbringing, for example, the importance of play, child protection, exploration, positive discipline, parent child communication and interaction, creating safe

thriving environments, protecting children, child and adolescent developmental stages and needs, gender roles and stereotypes, and more. The facilitator presents a situation each session to start the discussion among the group, and then facilitates the content of the session including engaging parents with group work.

The Parenting Program has been successful at integrating a "buddy system" to reinforce sessions and encourage participants to work together to support each other in between sessions. The programme includes raising awareness among parents about the need for self-care. In each session, time is spent at the end to promote the importance of self-care and focus on participants' own well-being as one of the main contributory factors to successful outcomes. A home practice is added to be implemented between sessions, for participants to practice new concepts and techniques through home-based homework assignments, which supports involving fathers in the programme's insights and benefits.

Key achievements

- The Parenting Program is implemented nationwide and has grown into a national network of partners.

- In 2022, the Parenting Program reached more than 200,000 parents and caregivers throughout Jordan.

- Ninety per cent of programme participants attended every parenting session.

- Ninety-five per cent of the targeted population showed improved knowledge about positive parenting practices.

- Ninety per cent of the participants reported that the programme contributed to their improved mental well-being, and that they found safe space in this programme.

- The buddy system created through the programme has raised awareness about the various self-care practices mothers and fathers can use.

- Engaging religious organizations and obtaining support from various government ministries has significantly added value to the programme and contributed to its reach and impacts.

> " My children remind me of the session every week. They say I haven't been yelling as much as before "

99%
of programme participants attended every parenting session

MORE THAN
200,000
parents and caregivers reached in 2022

- The Parenting Programme has created a solid referral mechanism for mothers to consult on other areas related to learning and social protection.

- The programme yielded indirect positive outcomes in terms of gender equality in areas such as intimate partner violence (IPV) and violence against women (VAW). For example, one woman participant said: "Not only has my relationship with my children improved, but also my relationship with my husband. I feel happier, calmer, and less burdened by issues with my children, resulting in a positive effect on my marriage." The unintended ripple effect demonstrates the potential for programmes to create broader positive impacts on gender equality beyond their initial scope.

Lessons learned & Recommendations

1 **Expand the Parenting Programme to digital platforms**: The Parenting Programme was delivered via digital platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns, and suspended once in-person activities resumed. The programme should be permanently expanded to include digital platforms to ensure those who cannot attend parent groups in person, can attend interactive sessions online. This is particularly relevant for women, who are restricted by gender norms within their communities.

2 **Step up efforts to break gender-normative parenting**: There remains a need to improve parents' understanding that positive parenting is not gender-specific and that parents should protect and advocate equally and equitably for their male and female children.

3 **Increase fathers' involvement in positive parenting**: To date, the programme has mainly targeted mothers. Structural adjustments to the programme and flexible implementation modalities can be made to ensure a higher level of fathers' participation.

4 **Develop and implement more effective and efficient qualitative tools** to better track the behaviour change resulting from parent involvement in the programme.

5 **Implement national positive parenting campaigns** (using the UNICEF parenting website, TV series, social media) during 'Parenting Month' in Jordan to raise awareness about positive parenting.

6 **Embrace a gender transformative approach** within the programme by strengthening content and facilitation methodologies on gender modules (i.e., increase content about harmful gender norms, roles and relations, and how to redistribute power, resources, and services more equally).

7 **Broaden the approach of the Parenting Programme** to include community engagement, family dialogues, and collaboration with local institutes, to widen the reach and ensure sustainability.

Endnotes

1   'Study: 81% of children in Jordan were subjected to violent punishment', Roya News, 17 June 2019, <https://en.royanews.tv/news/17823/Study--81--of-children-in-Jordan-were-subjected-to-violent-punishment>.

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SOCIAL + BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

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UNICEF Lebanon Uses Social Mobilization to Motivate Transformational Change for Children and Women through QUDWA Strategy

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

Dates of Activity
June 2020 - present

Duration
Seven years

Budget
US$1.8 million

QUDWA (Arabic for 'role model') is a national social and behaviour change (SBC) initiative to prevent child marriage, child labour and violence against girls, boys and women in Lebanon. QUDWA is comprised of mass and social media edutainment, community engagement and capacity building activities that support the creation of a conducive and protective environment where children and families can feel safe and thrive. The aim is to give communities ownership to uphold children's rights themselves, and to create individual and community social responsibility to act against violence. QUDWA initiatives have contributed to an increase in the engagement of child protection promoters in communities; these promoters have become co-investors in prevention efforts in the eight governorates of Lebanon.

Context

QUDWA was developed by UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) as part of Lebanon's Strategic Plan (2020-2027) for the Protection of Women and Children. The Strategic Plan focuses on strengthening MoSA's leadership and regulatory role in the field of child protection and protection against gender-based violence, while ensuring the necessary coordination and integration between the public and private sectors, including civil society. The aim of QUDWA is to translate the Strategic Plan into practices that ensure the delivery of comprehensive and quality services for target groups and strengthen the national system for the prevention and response to child protection violations and gender-based violence. The QUDWA strategy is designed to address the root causes of harmful practices against Lebanese girls, boys and women (e.g., child labour, child marriage), and encourage behaviours and norms that promote wellbeing, dignity and equality. The QUDWA programme was launched in 2020 and rolled out to all eight governorates of Lebanon in 2021.

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Strategic approach

In 2020, QUDWA was implemented as a pilot intervention in selected areas of the country in collaboration with dedicated partners. [1] The activities were implemented by 13 UNICEF Child Protection (CP) partners that worked around the clock to address harmful practices and key CP issues. UNICEF Lebanon provided capacity building opportunities to CP workers, regardless of whether they partnered with QUDWA, that motivated them to adopt the QUDWA approach. By 2022, the QUDWA strategy was rolled out by partners across Lebanon's eight governorates.

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قدوة
QUDWA

The QUDWA programme activities were tailored to reach specific audiences. The QUDWA activities include:

- **Bakir:** A 22-episode television series about a Lebanese family dealing with familiar struggles of daily life. The characters depict the hardships that lead to violence against girls, boys, and women, child marriage, and child labour. The series aired in March 2022 in prime time on LBC TV, followed by Al Jadeed in April, and MTV in September.

- **My Father's House:** A short drama featuring a Lebanese family trying to make ends meet and raise their children. The episode depicts the everyday challenges that families and children encounter and is intended to spark reflection and dialogue around social norms and common caregiving behaviours that may or may not be healthy for children. This drama was integrated into the caregiver's toolbox and used by partners in the outdoor cinema initiative (see below).

- **Community theatre:** Volunteers are trained to be agents of social change by engaging audiences in participatory theatre performances. The aim is to stimulate dialogue around the key QUDWA focal areas of child marriage, child labour, and domestic violence.

- **Puppet shows:** A set of QUDWA characters were developed with corresponding scripts and role-plays about child marriage, child labour and violence, appropriate for children and families. Discussions guidelines were created for frontline workers and communities to help initiate healthy and constructive dialogues about these topics.

- **Comic books:** A series of illustrated comic books were developed to engage children in contextualized storytelling that reflect Lebanon's community dynamics and social norms. The aim is to broaden the perception of what girls and boys can do and be.

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- **Interfaith documentaries:** A series of documentaries featuring interfaith teams of religious leaders highlighting successful initiatives to prevent and reduce violence against boys, girls and women, child marriage and child labour within their communities.

- **Community engagement:** Community 'safe spaces' were created where girls and boys can socialize with peers, engage in sports, and play before and after school, and on weekends. These spaces also serve as places where adults and families can meet to de-stress and exchange experiences. QUDWA also mobilized such key community influencers and socially networked individuals as barbers, beauticians, and religious leaders, to play a proactive role in preventing harmful practices against children and women. The influencers were trained to recognize signs of harm and provide referrals to services.

- **Capacity building:** Capacity building activities were conducted for UNICEF partners, UN agencies, local stakeholders and the Child Protection sector. Programme managers, team leaders and frontline workers were engaged to ensure that all practitioners involved in the implementation of the QUDWA strategy were aware of and able to apply the concepts, approaches and tools. Training-of-trainers (TOT) sessions and on-the-job coaching were provided to those that wanted to engage with QUDWA. A National QUDWA Task Force was set up and led to a rapid scale up of QUDWA initiatives throughout Lebanon.

- **Caregivers Toolbox:** The toolbox includes: shareable audible memes aimed at men; a human sized model of a child with removable Velcro patches to facilitate discussions about the seen and unseen effects of violence on the body; a Velcro timeline to help children and adolescents understand life stages, key milestones, and healthy development; a series of 3-7 minute videos about brain development and the importance of early childhood stimulation; 24 flashcards depicting scenes to prompt discussions about child marriage, child labour, healthy communication in families and avoiding violent discipline ; role-play scripts to encourage, for example, discussions about key milestones in teenagers' development and challenges caregivers may face while raising teenagers; colouring books to encourage parent-child play and development; a Trivia game; eight reusable wipe-clean posters; a playmat and sticker book that helps children learn about their bodies and their development cycle; an interactive journal to motivate adolescents to discuss their goals and mental health with caregivers; a board game about child marriage with information steps to reach a finish line.

- **Religious Leaders Engagement:** As part of the QUDWA Strategy, UNICEF Lebanon organized six participatory roundtable discussions with religious leaders throughout Lebanon. The purpose was to reflect on the role of religious leaders in promoting protective environments for women and children in the country. Attendees emphasized the importance of their sermons as platforms for dialogue around child marriage, child labour, and child disciplining methods. The roundtables were followed up with individual meetings with religious leaders and a general meeting to gather all interested parties in advocating for children's rights as part of a QUDWA RL network.

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🎖 Key achievements

QUDWA initiatives have reached the most vulnerable populations in Lebanon, enabling open discussions about sensitive topics. The key to the success of QUDWA is the sense of ownership it gives communities to act in ways that uphold children's rights. The social mobilization and community engagement initiatives are leading to the development of grassroots community-based networks (including caregivers, taxi drivers, pharmacists, religious leaders, barbers/beauticians, activities, mayors, business owners, and others), empowered to speak up on cases of violence around them and refer them to UNICEF-supported services.

Specific achievements from this initiative include:

1. QUDWA initiatives have contributed to an increase in the engagement of child protection promoters in communities. These promoters have become co-investors in prevention efforts in the eight governorates of Lebanon.

2. More than 800 QUDWA activities have been implemented.

3. Over 500 frontline workers and volunteers have been trained to carry out QUDWA activities.

4. More than 100,000 individuals have been reached directly with QUDWA messages, and over 500,000 reached through volunteers.

5. Over 12 million people have been reached through social media engagement, communication campaigns and the QUDWA TV Soap Opera series (Bakir).

6. More than 134 religious leaders from various sects participated in roundtable discussions about strengthening and taking a more active role in addressing child marriage, child labour, and violent disciplinary methods. Religious leaders unanimously agreed to follow up with in-depth workshops to generate content to support their efforts in addressing harmful practices. In June 2023, an interfaith network was established on children's rights, creating

opportunities to address harmful practices and negative social norms at scale and through the sectarian sector.

There has been increasing interest across different partners to increase investments in prevention efforts based on the QUDWA approach. Some partners have established SBC committees within their institutions to develop and implement similar initiatives across different programmatic interventions, while others are identifying dedicated focal points for SBCC.

100,000+
REACHED
directly with QUDWA messages

500,000+
REACHED
through volunteers

12 million +
REACHED
through social media, communication campaigns and the QUDWA TV Soap Opera series (Bakir)

Lessons learned

1 **Investment in capacity building is pivotal to ensuring impactful interventions.** Focusing on capacity building of QUDWA frontline workers ensured that they understood the strategy and their role in implementing it, which in turn helped to scale up activities. Engaging and training frontline workers on the QUDWA strategy led to exceeding the projected target of people reached by 49 per cent with the same financial resources, thus bringing in greater cost efficiency, higher reach and more impactful results for children and women.

2 **Investing in initiatives that focus on community empowerment yields returns:** The mobilization of many QUDWA role models led to a sharp increase in the identification and referral of CP and gender-based violence (GBV) cases. QUDWA prevention efforts need to be complemented with an equal scale up of CP and GBV services which is currently advocated for with donors.

3 **Working with religious leaders is key to strengthening child protection efforts.** Lebanon is a multi-theistic society and religious leaders tend to have a major influence on families and communities. Working closely with religious leaders and community influencers ensures that key messages reach families, especially the most vulnerable.

Recommendations

1 Invest in sustainable community driven interventions for children and women that enable them to be proactive about addressing violence.

2 Solicit buy in and ownership from child protection partners. Provide capacity building activities that enable communities to take the lead on interventions.

3 Invest in programmes that focus on increasing social responsibility of individuals within a community to amplify the result of changing traditional behaviours and social norms regarding children and women.

Endnotes

1 Examples of the QUDWA activities can be seen at https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/qudwa.

SOCIAL + BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

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UNICEF India Promotes Healthy COVID-19 Related Behaviours to Youth

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

Dates of Activity
August 2022 to January 2023

Duration
18 weeks

Budget
US$700,000 (approx.)

On 14 August 2022, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and UNICEF launched an 18-part television and YouTube series, entitled *Duur Se Namaste* ("Greetings from a distance" or DSN). This fictional edutainment soap opera highlighted the challenges for children and young people living in the "new normal" world. The characters promoted COVID-19 vaccination and the need to continue practicing preventive behaviours and provided tips for managing the mental health challenges of youth in a post-pandemic India.[1] The show was broadcast from 14 August 2022 to 15 January 2023. It has been viewed by about seven million television viewers, and by 3.8 million YouTube users. Most viewers found the soap opera informative and discussed the key messages with others.

Context

Many families have experienced a pervasive sense of loss due to COVID-19, including the loss of loved ones, social networks, jobs, and financial security. These feelings have impacted the quality of relationships among parents, children and siblings, and the education and mental well-being of children. In March 2020, schools across India were closed to curb the spread of COVID-19. Two years without being in a classroom, and without physical interaction with people outside their homes, has resulted in children losing the behaviours, and skills for engaging in public life. Many have lost their attention spans from over-exposure to digital devices.

Strategic approach

Duur Se Namaste is a television soap opera designed to address the effects of COVID-19 on children, by providing them with coping tools and modelling healthy behaviours as they readjust to their usual daily activities. The first episode of the Duur Se Namaste drama series aired on *Doordarshan* (India's public service television broadcaster) in a primetime slot on 14 August 2022. The show was broadcast every Sunday from 11 AM to noon, with repeat telecasts on Saturdays from six to seven PM. The soap opera format is familiar to Indian audiences. The main characters conveyed key COVID-19 related messages, including the importance of COVID-19 vaccination and combating vaccine hesitancy. Caregiver and other role-model characters portrayed such healthy behaviours and practices as psychosocial support for children and facilitating children's return to classrooms.

The show was also made available on the *Duur Se Namaste* YouTube channel. This digital component enabled audience to continue their engagement with the programme and characters through the U-Report chatbot, and reinforcing the messages and starting conversations to keep children healthy and thriving.[2]

An endline assessment was conducted through U-Report and complemented by telephone surveys conducted with the audience by on-the-ground outreach teams. Implementing partners across India collected telephone numbers of viewers with their consent to participate in telephone surveys about DSN. A random sample was selected from the lists of potential participants. They were asked to provide feedback on the show and assessed for their engagement and recall of messages. The

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data collection activities started in January 2023, after the broadcast of the show on television. Telephone surveys were conducted in two phases; phase one data was collected after the broadcast of Episode 16, and phase two data was collected after the broadcast of Episode 32. The respondents hailed from the Hindi speaking states where the outreach took place. The mean age of the respondent was 21 years. There was almost equal representation of men and women in the respondent pool.

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Key achievements

- To date, Duur Se Namaste has been seen by at least seven million *Doordarshan* viewers and more than 3.8 million YouTube users.

- 63 per cent of the soap opera's viewers said that they watched the series because they found it informative, and 64 per cent said that they discussed the edutainment drama with others.

- There have been about 84,000 unique viewers of the soap opera on the YouTube channel.

- The endline evaluation showed that the ratings given for the quality of DSN were higher than those of any other comparable show in India. More than 70 per cent of the respondents felt that DSN is more realistic, motivating, and educational than other serials, while around 53 per cent said it is more entertaining.

- 72 per cent of the respondents reported gaining new information from the serial. The endline respondents showed a marked improvement in their understanding of crucial information related to COVID-19. Respondents were also more aware of the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on children. Significantly more endline respondents talked about healthy food, exercising, and washing hands as ways of keeping themselves healthy post-COVID-19, and were also able to identify symptoms of mental stress.

7 million
DOORDARSHAN VIEWERS
and more than
3.8 million
YOUTUBE USERS

have seen *Duur Se Namaste.*

63% of the viewers found it informative

64% of viewers said that they discussed the edutainment drama with others

Lessons learned & Recommendations

The broadcast of the series on television and YouTube ended in January 2023. The monitoring and evaluation activities showed that it was possible to monitor people's response, obtain feedback and gage viewers' recall of messages in real time through YouTube and U-Report. This immediate feedback allowed for quick tweaks to the messaging on digital platforms. The main learning, as from previous edutainment initiatives, is that edutainment worked to increase knowledge about COVID-19 prevention. Specific lessons learned include:

1 **Binge-watching versus appointment viewing:** Adaptations must be made for young viewers whose television habits differ from those of many adults who are more familiar with appointment television. Appointment viewing meant that the viewer was invested and interested in the content because they chose to tune in, and then at regular intervals return to that content. Youth are more engaged with their mobile devices. As smartphone penetration increased and data charges plummeted, viewing habits in India have shifted to binge watching on various platforms. The crowded digital environment requires a different approach to edutainment, where content is both user-friendly and released all at once (as opposed to staggered release for appointment television) to keep youth engaged.

2 **Building relationships takes time:** Monitoring results for DSN showed that engaged viewers made the characters and the storylines a part of their lives. When viewers were asked if they discuss the show, its themes, and the characters with a friend, the percentage of respondents who answered in the affirmative rose through the four rounds of concurrent monitoring, from 69 per cent in the first round to 70 per cent in the fourth and final round. Discussion with a spouse increased from 23 per cent in the first round, to 28 per cent in the fourth round. Edutainment is most effective when the programme content sparks discussions with others. Although viewers were able to build relationships with the characters in just 36 episodes, more episodes would be ideal for enabling viewers to fully connect with the themes and move toward actual behaviour and social norm change.

3 **Recall with messaging:** Viewers tend to pick up only those messages that were personally relevant to them at that moment in time. DSN had multiple health promotion messages, including on COVID-19, mental health, nutrition, gender equality, and others. U-Report and qualitative assessments of viewers showed that their message recall shifted as the story progressed. For instance, episode 9—16 had a story arc on mental health among adults and the corresponding concurrent monitoring round had questions pertaining to it. In that concurrent monitoring round, message recall on mental health was high, and then fell in the subsequent round when the story had progressed. Another example is that the recall of caring for pregnant women with COVID-19 was poor across rounds, even though it was given a lot of air-time being a major plot point in the show. This could be because viewers did not find the information to be personally relevant. It is not only important to tailor health promotion messages to the specific needs and interests of the viewers but also to repeat key messages in creative ways throughout multiple episodes to reinforce their importance and increase information retention.

4 The new media and entertainment landscape with the proliferation of entertainment options makes Edutainment for health promotion a challenge. A cluttered environment calls for innovative solutions to reach out to the viewer through a mix of traditional and new media, digital and interpersonal campaigns.

Endnotes

1   UNICEF, 'UNICEF and the Ministry of Health launch the "Kindness is Contagious" campaign in Viet Nam', May 2020, <www.unicef.org/vietnam/stories/unicef-and-ministry-health-launch-kindness-contagious-campaign-viet-nam>

2   U-Report is a social messaging tool and data collection system developed by UNICEF to improve citizen engagement, inform leaders, and foster positive change. The programme sends SMS polls and alerts to its participants, collecting real-time responses, and subsequently publishes gathered data.
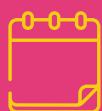
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SOCIAL + BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

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UNICEF Ethiopia Connects with Adolescents to Change Behaviours and Increase Agency

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

Dates of Activity
November 2019 to 2022

Duration
Three years

Budget
US$1,133,025.23

UNICEF Ethiopia in partnership with Girl Effect, a creative non-profit building youth brands and mobile platforms to empower girls, implementing a healthy lifestyle campaign targeting adolescents in Ethiopia. The *Yegna* (meaning "Ours" in Amharic) campaign encourages positive behaviour change and increased agency for girls by tackling real-life challenges through a TV drama, radio programmes, digital channels, music, and school-based clubs. *Yegna* is rooted in Ethiopian culture, and was created after listening to the challenges faced by thousands of Ethiopian girls in their everyday lives. Key messages focused on improving nutritional status, menstrual health and hygiene, sexual and reproductive health, access to and use of health services, and building self-esteem and agency, among adolescent girls. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Yegna* drama series was used to provide adolescents with relevant messages about COVID-19 prevention.[1] Since its first national television broadcast in 2019, the *Yegna* drama has become a household name in Ethiopia, captivating an audience of about 10 million. Seventy-eight per cent of viewers of the *Yegna* TV drama said that they learned something new from the show; 42 per cent said that they changed their behaviour as a result of watching the show.

Context

Undernutrition and poor dietary diversity affect large swaths of the adolescent and youth population in Ethiopia. Findings from a UNICEF-supported baseline study on adolescent nutrition, menstrual hygiene management, and utilization of adolescent-friendly health services in Ethiopia showed that about 83 per cent of girls consumed foods from less than five food groups and only 50 per cent consume animal-source foods. Norms around when and how often boys and girls eat showed that girls eat less food, less frequently, and have fewer options to eat a variety of foods, compared to boys who have greater access to food outside of the home. The study findings also highlighted that taboos around menstruation and menstrual hygiene management have restricted girls' mobility and caused shame and embarrassment. Many girls felt the need to manage their periods at home, depriving them of their education, and of the confidence to manage menstruation wherever they are. Girls felt that they could not adequately communicate with their teachers when they were having difficulty managing menstruation at school. Menstruation also signals a girl's readiness for marriage and childbearing in Ethiopian culture. Girls have little agency around when or who they marry. A girl that refuses marriage risks shame and ostracization from her family and community.[2]

The availability of quality youth-friendly health services has been a pressing issue throughout Ethiopia. The baseline study supported by UNICEF suggested that girls felt poorly treated by health care providers and health service facility staff, had low satisfaction with health service accessibility and health facility conditions, and perceived a lack of privacy and confidentiality related to their care.

Yegna is a media platform using music, radio, and digital channels, where storytelling is used to support in-school and out-of-school girls ages 10 to 19 years on their individual and collective journeys to adulthood. Girl Effect, a global NGO specializing in communication for adolescents, launched *Yegna* in Ethiopia in 2012. Since its launch, *Yegna* has become an authentically Ethiopian youth brand, including branded merchandise. The original campaign consisted of a radio drama, radio talk show, and music, all in Amharic (Ethiopia's national language). The content was produced by an all-female cast, and focused on the lives of five teenage girls with a strong friendship bond and a music band. The girls portrayed the typical challenges Ethiopian girls faced, and then produced music to help share their experiences. The intended audience for *Yegna* was girls ages 13 to 15 years old, but soon gained a wider following in Ethiopian communities. The first music single from the campaign received the national "Best Single of the Year Award". In 2019, *Yegna* introduced a gender-mixed cast and developed a new TV drama entitled "*Yegna* – The Story of All of Us", that continues to be nationally broadcast in multiple languages.

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Strategic approach

In 2019, the *Yegna* TV drama was first broadcast on national television, gaining popularity among urban audiences. Viewers were able to watch the episodes in three languages: Amharic, Afan Ormo and Tigrigna. The aim was to improve knowledge, perceptions and outcomes for nutrition, menstrual health and hygiene, and sexual and reproductive health; improve access to and use of health and nutrition-related goods and services; and to build the self-esteem and agency of adolescent girls. The drama included messages on menstruation, puberty, gender-based violence, gender equality and girls' empowerment, and other topics designed to motivate discussions between parents and children. Each subsequent *Yegna* series reinforced the key messages, added new messages (e.g., nutrition challenges among teenage mothers; cervical cancer, HPV, and the HPV vaccine) and used monitoring data to refine the messages and delivery mode (e.g., shortening episode length from one hour to 30 minutes in 2020). The *Yegna* drama series was also uploaded on a Yegna YouTube channel where adolescents could engage in online conversations about the drama series.

Ethiopian adolescents in rural areas did not have access to the *Yegna* TV drama. To address this gap, UNICEF and Girl Effect created the Yegna Rural Schools Programme, an educational initiative bringing the TV show to adolescents aged 13-15 studying in Ethiopia's rural regions and providing them with knowledge to help them with decision-making about critical issues at this pivotal time in their development. UNICEF purchased solar projectors to show shortened clips of the series in school clubs, targeting 28 schools in two regions. Teachers and principals were trained, and the initiative was launched in schools in the Oromia and Amhara regions. After watching an episode, talking guides led students and teachers through discussion about the content and the topic(s) highlighted in the show. These discussions were supplemented by fact sheets for discussion with parents. The rural schools programme created safe spaces where students could discuss topics featured in the series, from nutrition, to menstrual hygiene management, to toxic masculinity. A second phase of the programme was launched in 2022, in 13 schools of the Oromia region, building on the impact from the first year. A total of 1,170 students participated in the second phase.

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In November 2020, UNICEF Ethiopia supported a baseline study to determine what messages the *Yegna* activities could disseminate to reduce COVID-19 mortality and morbidity.[3] The baseline research also included questions about other topic areas relevant to the core intended audience of adolescent girls (e.g., menstrual hygiene, gender-based violence, mental health, and nutrition). Findings from the research showed that while 99 per cent of respondents knew about COVID-19 and methods for preventing the disease, only 37 per cent practiced regular hand washing, and only 40 per cent wore facemasks. The baseline assessment also revealed that more than half of the adolescent respondents (55 per cent) assumed that eating processed snack foods is healthy. The research highlighted the need to promote the adoption of key COVID-19 prevention behaviours, to increase the number of parents and children willing to return to school, and to enhance knowledge in the areas of nutrition, violence against women and menstrual hygiene management.

In 2020, UNICEF Ethiopia supported the development of a 20-week *Yegna COVID-19* campaign consisting of 20 public service announcements (PSAs) using the *Yegna* mixed-gender cast. The PSAs were broadcast weekly in three languages (Amharic, Afan Oromo, & Tigirigna), on both national and regional radio. From December 2020 to May 2021, video advertisements were created and broadcast on five TV stations, four radio stations, and via social media. The ads featured *Yegna* characters (influencers) that discussed the importance of not eating processed food (including fast food), menstrual hygiene and creating sanitary pads, excitement and anxiety of returning to school in COVID-19 times, and the importance of handwashing and regular physical exercise. The ads were aired more than 400 times on TV and radio. *Yegna* billboards showing *Yegna* characters with message about COVID-19 prevention (e.g., wear face masks and wash hands frequently), nutrition, menstrual hygiene, mental health, and not being fearful to report GBV, were placed in major cities of Ethiopia: Addis Ababa, Adama, Hawassa, Bahirdar. The aim of the *Yegna* campaign was to reach an audience of at least 15 million. Various social media channels were used to disseminate *Yegna COCID-19* campaign messagesincluding a *Yegna* YouTube channel, Telegram, and the UNICEF Ethiopia official Facebook page.

Key achievements[5]

Over the past three years, *Yegna* activities have reached 500,000 adolescents throughout Ethiopia and built a vast and loyal fan base. The TV drama has become a household name throughout the country, reaching almost 10 million viewers. Each *Yegna episode on the YouTube channel was viewed by* 200,000 to 650,000 viewers. Some of the achievements of the programme include:

- Forty-two per cent of viewers said that they changed their behaviour as a result of watching the show.

- More than 1,300 adolescents in Oromia and Amhara have taken part in the rural school-based *Yegna* programme.

- Fifty-two per cent of participants in Oromia that participated in the *Yegna* rural school programme talked to at least one family member using the programme's factsheets and manuals on the topics covered in the drama.[4]

- Students found the Yegna club was especially relevant for receiving new knowledge that helped them in their day-to-day life and that they felt would help them with their future success.

- Parents and teachers noted positive changes in the children who attended the rural school programme.

- Awareness and knowledge about cervical cancer and the HPV vaccine was higher among viewers compared to non-viewers of the *Yegna* TV drama.

- Those exposed to the *Yegna* in My Head campaign were more cautious about COVID-19 prevention. Hand washing and mask wearing increased over time.

- The frequency of eating processed foods and eating a more diverse diet changed for the better. Those exposed to the *Yegna* campaign were more likely to know that eating processed snacks is unhealthy and they reported eating less processed food.

- Those exposed to the *Yegna* campaign were more likely to know about producing reusable pads at home and using disposable or reusable pads interchangeably.

42%
of viewers said that they changed their behavior

Ads
were aired more than
400 times
on TV and radio

MORE THAN
1,300
ADOLESCENTS
have taken part in the Yegna program

Lesson learned

1 Conducting baseline research to understand the intended audiences' awareness, knowledge, perceptions, behaviours and norms associated with the health topics of interest is key to developing culturally and age-appropriate messages to motivate behaviour change.

2 Using edutainment/storytelling and characters played by famous Ethiopian actors that appealed to adolescents, made the Yegna TV programme more attractive and effective in captivating the attention of Ethiopian adolescents and motivating the desired change.

3 Using the existing *Yegna* brand was instrumental in enabling UNICEF to rapidly reach a wide audience with the key health messages based on evidence from the intended audience.

Recommendations

1 Ensure that the intended audience (in this case, adolescents) are actively engaged from the planning phase of the programme through to the evaluation in order to ensure greater engagement and ownership of the messaging

2 When designing a similar programme for adolescents, engage parents, caregivers, and teachers that play an important role in shaping the development and future of young people.

3 Use technology/social media to engage adolescents and motivate them to participate in online discussions and/or activities.

Endnotes

1   Funding support for this campaign comes from Global Affairs Canada.

2   Cader R., Eager R., Tenaw E., Cornelius A., *UNICEF Ethiopia adolescent nutrtion-WASH-education joint programme evaluation*, 3 June 2020.

3   A random-digit dialing survey was conducted with 705 individuals 15 years and older across Ethiopia. COVID-19 data were collected using a computer assisted telephone interview (CATI).

4   Girl Effect, 'The programme brining life-changing information to adolescents in rural Ethiopia', Girl Effect, 24 January 2022, <https://girleffect.org/the-programme-bringing-life-changing-information-to-adolescents-in-rural-ethiopia>.

5   United Nations Children's Fund, 'Yegna in My Head: Baseline and post-wave consolidated report', UNICEF, October 2021.

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UNICEF Mozambique Addresses Root Causes of Child Marriage

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

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Brief summary

Dates of Activity
2015 to present

Durationof Field Research
April 2016 to June 2017

Budget
US$120,0000

Context

Child marriage and teenage pregnancy remain major child protection issues in Mozambique. More than half of all girls are married before their 18th birthday, and about 14 per cent are married before they turn 15 years old. The northern provinces have the highest rates of child marriage among female aged between 20 and 24. Signs of puberty are regarded as an important biological and social landmark for determining the maturity of girls for marriage. Socio-cultural practices and beliefs about children's readiness for marriage after their traditional initiation rites,

contribute to high levels of child marriage. Bearing children at an early age is also a social burden which falls more on girls than on boys.

In July 2014, the Government of Mozambique launched a national campaign to prevent and combat child marriage at provincial level, and in December 2015 the first National Strategy to Prevent and Eliminate Child Marriage (2015—2019) was approved, headed by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare. As part of the national Strategy development process, formative research to understand the root causes of child marriage was conducted by UNICEF in Mozambique from April 2016 to June 2017. The formative research findings together with data from the SBC and social norms survey done in 2020—2022 is informing the Child Marriage programme which is part of the third National Action Plan for Children slated to be approved in 2023.

♞ Strategic approach[1]

The first activity of the formative research undertaking was to conduct a literature review of existing publications on child marriage, the strategies used to deal with child marriage, studies which analyzed social and gender norms and the social and economic barriers that foster child marriage at the community and institutional levels in Mozambique, in order to amass an evidence-base on which to build a national strategy to prevent and eliminate child marriage.

Field-level formative research was conducted to understand the underlying drivers, motivations, social-cultural, legal and economic reasons for marrying girls soon after puberty, and how girls feel about early marriage. A total of 86 in-depth interviews and 40 focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in four provinces, Manica, Nampula, Tete and Zambézia, with a total sample size of 406 individuals. Questions about positive deviance were purposively included in the data collection in order to determine existing solutions to eliminating child marriage. The interviews and FGDs were conducted in the language chosen by the interviewees. The research team included two local research assistants (two for each province and district) who supported the main researcher in conducting the interviews and FGDs.

The research results were triangulated, and the formative research report findings were discussed during a validation workshop attended by UNICEF and partners. Findings from this research were used to develop the national social and behaviour change strategy for eliminating child marriage in Mozambique.

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Key achievements

The research findings showed that the factors that contribute to the perpetuation of child marriage are numerous, multidimensional, and complex. For example, once a girl has her first period, she is considered a woman ready for marriage and having children –there is no "adolescent" period. There is a common perception that late marriage implies wasted opportunities related to having children so early marriage (at first signs of puberty) is considered ideal. Social pressure as well as self-determination and social prestige also perpetuate child marriage. Gaps in knowledge about the legal framework, attitudes and practices rooted in cultural traditions, unequal gender relations, poor and unequal access to information, education, and health services, and poverty are key to sustaining the practice of child marriage.

The research gave rise to specific recommendations for eliminating child marriage, namely provided more, correct, and easy-to-understand information about puberty, not as a marker of marriage eligibility, but as a time in a young woman's life that necessitates a period of growth toward biological and psychological maturity and readiness for marriage. More information is needed among the population of Mozambique to help shift the notion that a woman's fertility and fecundity are short-lived and limited, and change social norms (including shame, honor, blessings, prestige, etc.) that create pressures for a girl to be married early. The research findings uncovered positive deviants that perceived later marriage as a way to avoid the risks associated with child marriage, like complications during childbirth among physically immature girls. These positive deviants contributed to the development of a strategy to profile and highlight families of girls that do not marry before the age of 18 years.

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The research findings were used to develop an integrated package of SBC approaches and interventions, using community dialogues as a core intervention beginning in 2018. The focus of the activities was on access to protection, health and education and other basic services. UNICEF established a partnership with *N'weti*, a national non-governmental organization, to address gender and health issues. UNICEF also supported the Government to develop a national multimedia campaign to address child marriage, with the participation of high-level figures including the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Action, the First Lady, the chair of the Interfaith Council of Religions in Mozambique, teachers, and other stakeholders. In addition, UNICEF developed storylines about child marriage and initiation rites as part of a long-running national edutainment radio drama *Ouro Negro* and for community theatre, that kick-started the community dialogues to address gender and social norms around child marriage in target districts.

The engagement and discussions generated at societal level between 2017 and 2019 might have been hampered by the wake of Cyclone Idai in 2019, recent military conflict and the impact of COVID-19 prevention measures, including school closures, that led to an increase in teenage pregnancies, increased household poverty and families turning to coping mechanisms including child marriage.

Still, the combined advocacy efforts of UNICEF, UNFPA and civil society organizations led to the approval, in 2019, of a new law against child marriage. The research findings also informed a mentorship programme led by UNFPA under the Rapariga Biz UN Joint Programme for Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR) and inform the social and behaviour change programmes led by UNICEF. Together with the Ministry of Education and in coordination with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Gender and Social Action, the police and civil society organizations, UNICEF also developed a school-based mechanism to report and refer cases of violence and child marriage and provide access to legal and protection services.

86 IN-DEPTH NTERVIEWS

and

40 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDS)

were conducted **IN FOUR PROVINCES** with a total of

406 INDIVIDUALS

The research gave rise to specific recommendations for eliminating child marriage.

The findings uncovered positive deviants that perceived later marriage as a way to avoid the risks associated with child marriage.

⭐ Lessons learned

1 The formative research was instrumental for understanding the reasons given for marrying before the age of 18, who girls marry, and reasons for not marrying. The research highlighted such factors as social prestige and pressure related to initiation rites and honour, and economic reasons, for marrying early, and potential complications in pregnancy and childbirth, and the importance for a girl continuing her studies as reasons for not marrying. To engage with community gatekeepers in charge of the initiation rites, UNICEF and civil society organization have promoted several consultations at national, provincial and local levels but this requires a long term-programming to ensure sustainable social change.

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💡 Recommendations

1 UNICEF should invest in a deeper understanding of the interaction between gender and social norms, and how to reach 'critical mass' of champions required to trigger social norms change at scale to end child marriage.

2 UNICEF and its partners should continue to strategically ensure more systematic engagement of gatekeepers in charge of the initiation rites, as well as men and boys in preventing gender-based violence.

3 More investment is needed to strengthen and expand adolescent-friendly services.

Endnotes

1 The full formative research report can be found at: https://www.unicef.org/mozambique/media/4931/file/Publication%20Communication%20for%20Development%20Strategy%20for%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Elimination%20of%20Child%20Marriages.pdf.

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UNICEF Somalia Supports Communities Care Model to Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

UNICEF Somalia supported the integration of activities to eliminate female genital mutilation (FGM) into wider programmes that primarily focus on gender-based violence, such as the Communities Care: Transforming Lives and Preventing Violence Programme (CC Programme), which began in Somalia in 2013. The aim of the CC programme has been to engage and support communities to tackle gender-based violence (GBV) by changing individual behaviours, collective practices and widely held beliefs that contribute to violence against women and girls and limit the ability of survivors to seek support and assistance. When the CC Programme first began, discussions on sensitive issues, such as FGM and child marriage, were met with resistance. However, because the programme focuses on building relationships over time, rooted in community-led dialogue and the local identification of needs, priorities and solutions, the approaches taken are contextually appropriate, locally owned and locally supported. Community dialogues have provided opportunities to discuss societal expectations and norms, health concerns related to FGM, as well as the roles and responsibilities of different people Integrated programming has allowed for wider multi-sector engagement and the enhancement of coordination across a range of different stakeholders.

Context

Female genital mutilation (FGM) involves altering or injuring the female external genitalia for non-medical reasons. The practice poses serious risks to the health and wellbeing of girls and women and is widely recognised as a human rights violation. Although government and political actors have demonstrated a commitment to promote FGM bills and policy at the federal and Somaliland government levels,, the practice remains widespread throughout the country. The recent Somali Demographic and Health Survey (2020) showed an FGM prevalence rate of 99 per cent. Sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, including gang rapes, forced marriages and FGM are considered significant concerns across all federal states of Somalia.[1] The massive effort needed to reduce the practice is made more challenging by weak governmental authority amidst long-standing conflict, political instability and resource scarcity. Despite the federal government's efforts to strengthen child protection systems at all levels, governance and practice differ from region to region, and the practice of FGM is deeply embedded in social norms and practices within communities.

In this context, the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme was launched in Somalia in 2008 in a collaborative effort with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and various non-governmental organizations. To date, work related to FGM has been integrated into wider programmatic efforts such as those aimed at combatting gender-based violence (GBV). Embedding FGM into wider programming can be considered a promising practice in the Somalia context because it offers a less confrontational way of engaging communities and stakeholders on a very sensitive issue within the wider context of GBV, and, given that Somalia is a heavily resource-constrained environment, an integrated programming approach provides an opportunity to improve the appropriateness and sustainability of different interventions. By merging those programmes that have shorter funding timelines with others that have multi-year funding, it has been possible to build rapport with communities over time, an essential prerequisite to meaningful and lasting engagement and change.

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♞ Strategic approach

With support from UNICEF and UNFPA, a new national strategy was developed to inform efforts to combat FGM. The key pillars of the strategy included:

- A strong rights-based approach and high-level advocacy: human rights, women's rights, children's rights, and national policy and legislation.

- Maximizing the role of religious leaders, religious terminology, and religious and spiritual beliefs, as 72% of women believe that FGM is a religious requirement (DHS 2020).

- Addressing the medicalization of FGM and capitalize on the role of the MOH, the health sector, and health workers in the provision, prevention and treatment of FGM.

- Change the narrative and re-focus the message on Zero Tolerance of FGM given that there has been no reduction in overall prevalence.

- Accelerating community education, awareness raising and engagement to change social norms.

- Highlighting the importance of documentation and regular monitoring and evaluation to demonstrate programmatic and advocacy impacts over time.

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The programmatic efforts were integrated into wider programmes that primarily focus on GBV, such as the *Communities Care: Transforming Lives and Preventing Violence Programme* (CC Programme), which began in Somalia in 2013. The aim of the CC programme has been to engage and support communities to tackle GBV by changing individual behaviours, collective practices and widely held beliefs that contribute to violence against women and girls and limit the ability of survivors to seek support and assistance. When the CC Programme first began, discussions on sensitive issues, such as FGM and child marriage, were met with resistance. However, because the programme focuses on building relationships over time, rooted in community-led dialogue and the local identification of needs, priorities and solutions, the approaches taken are contextually appropriate, locally owned and locally supported. This is also the reason why taboo topics like FGM and Child Marriage could be discussed.[2]

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In 2013, Over a 15-week period, trained local facilitators brought together diverse groups of community members of all ages with different partners across multiple sectors (e.g., health, education) to discuss and reflect on their shared values, beliefs and aspirations. This approach provided a platform for communities to identify their own priorities which ultimately informed the programme design in each respective location. As the programme progressed, communities identified their priority needs, building on the discussions and exploring the social norms in their community that tolerate GBV, including FGM, and silence those who experience it. Dialogue was grounded in the everyday realities of women and girls in the community and stimulated discussion about what is relevant, their priorities, and what was important in their particular context. It localized shared ideals and values and enabled community members to work together to identify the collective actions needed to transform harmful social norms and practices. Linked to ongoing community level dialogue has been the identification of 'champions for change'. These 'champions' are usually identified in the course of community discussions and engagement both within the CC programme and through the work of the Community Based Child Protection Committees. These individuals usually include elders, religious leaders, adolescents (girls and boys), mothers, fathers, local authorities and others.

Considering the high prevalence of women who believes it's a religious requirement, faith leaders play a significant role in shaping everyday life at the community level and can play a critical role in the elimination of FGM. While 99 per cent of Somalis are Sunni Muslims, organizations working with religious leaders highlighted the need to contextualize differences in federal and non-federal religious groupings in the development of advocacy and dialogue (depending on the type of Sunni Islam practiced). This differentiation had implications for how to engage various Imams and Sheikhs, both in terms of their secular beliefs and approaches to governance.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) worked with midwifery training schools to de-medicalize FGM.[3] The medicalization of FGM was increasing in parts of Somalia (including Somaliland), especially in urban centres, and amongst the diaspora. This challenge highlighted the need to diversify messaging and approaches to combatting the practice, rather than the more historically-dominant method of focusing primarily on the health risks associated with traditional cutting techniques. The MoH developed modules on the anti-medicalization of FGM in the national midwifery curriculum.

Key achievements

- The Community Care evaluation performed in 2018 demonstrated shifts in gender unequitable norms.

- Integrated programming has allowed for wider multi-sector engagement and the enhancement of coordination across a range of different stakeholders, such as girls and boys, caregivers, elders, religious leaders, and service providers in the areas of health, education, police and others. This way of working is consistent with a 'systems strengthening' approach to child protection as opposed to an 'issue-based' approach, in which individual issues are addressed in isolation from each other and the broader social and economic context in which they are manifested.

- Community dialogues have provided opportunities to discuss societal expectations and norms, health concerns related to FGM, as well as the roles and responsibilities of different people, including girls, boys, caregivers, teachers, religious leaders and authorities and the role of religion in keeping girls and women safe and protected.

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Diverse groups
OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS

of all ages brought together to discuss and reflect on shared values and aspirations over a 15-week period

Integrated programming has allowed for wider multi-sector engagement

Community dialogues have provided opportunities to discuss societal expectations and norms

Lessons learned & Recommendations

1 There is value in taking a holistic approach to addressing FGM, both in terms of the framing of the issue as one that requires multi-sectoral collaboration, and the implementation of a broad range of programmatic approaches, for example, addressing the social norms. These combined efforts offer the most promise in terms of relevance and sustainability.

2 The need to contextualize approaches to addressing FGM is paramount. Although some efforts may be required at an overarching 'national' level, for example in policy and legislation, the Communities Care Programme demonstrated that different regions and communities may have different approaches to how they engage in dialogue and with whom. The flexibility of the model ensured that the programme was contextually relevant and appropriate and also increased a sense of ownership within families and communities.

3 Strongly linked to contextualization is the need to diversify approaches to FGM. In the past, programmes and messaging have been overly reliant on imported programmes insufficiently rooted in local realities or unable to adjust as necessary over time. Working with communities and supporting dialogue on sensitive issues requires taking an iterative approach that can be adapted over time.

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Endnotes

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2 Glass, N. et al., (2018) 'Evaluating the Communities Care Program: best practice for rigorous research to evaluate gender-based violence prevention and response programs in humanitarian settings', Conflict and Health, vol.12, no.5, 31 January 2018.

3 Medicalization is the situation in which health care professionals carry out FGM, whether in a health facility or at home or elsewhere, often using surgical tools, anesthetics, and antiseptics in the hope of mitigating immediate complications.

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UNICEF Uganda Supports a WhatsApp Coordination Mechanism to Prevent Cross-Border Female Genital Mutilation between Uganda and Kenya

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

Stopping cross-border female genital mutilation (FGM) is a rising priority for the Ugandan government. One widely identified area requiring improvement was information sharing, coordination of activities, and referral services for girls and women who are at risk of, or need support after, undergoing FGM. In April 2020, UNICEF Uganda supported the creation of a WhatsApp based coordination and communication mechanism on cross-border FGM between bordering districts in Uganda and Kenya, called the *Kenya Uganda anti-FGM Forum*. Local sub-county chiefs became administrators of the new WhatsApp group.

Administrators on both sides of the border moderate the platform. During the peak of the COVID-19 lockdown in March–June 2020, this platform was the only way for people to communicate with each other to understand what was happening to girls and young women who had left their communities and could not be traced. Between April and October 2020, the use of this collaborative WhatsApp platform enabled a total of 37 girls between the ages of 11-16 years to be intercepted in Kenya and returned to Uganda, without undergoing FGM, by the Kenyan authorities.[1]

Context

Female genital mutilation (FGM) involves altering or injuring the female external genitalia for non-medical reasons. The practice can pose serious risks to the health and wellbeing of girls and women and is widely recognised as a human rights violation. Uganda has the lowest rate of FGM in east Africa. In 2016, the national prevalence of the practice among girls and women 15-49 years was 0.32 per cent, a decline from 0.64 per cent reported in 2006.[2,3] These overall low rates mask significant variations in incidence across geographic regions and ethnic groups. The vast majority of FGM takes place in the regions of Karamoja and Sebei, where overall prevalence is reported to be 26.7 per cent.[4] Prevalence rates in some sub-counties are as high as 67.3 per cent (e.g., Tapac, Moroto District).

A combination of social, cultural, and economic factors, as well as traditional and/or religious beliefs motivate the practice in different families, communities and regions. These include beliefs about female cleanliness, purity and modesty and the importance of premarital virginity and marital fidelity.[5] Widely considered to be a necessary rite of passage into womanhood, FGM is often a prerequisite for marriage and is perceived as a way to overcome poverty in contexts where there are limited educational, economic and social protection opportunities for women.[6,7] The girls and women most likely to experience FGM are those who are very poor, about to be married or recently married, reside in rural areas, and/or have mothers who were themselves cut.[8] The high value placed on FGM means that girls and women experiencetremendous social and familial pressure to be cut; those who do not undergo FGM confront considerable stigma and ill-treatment.[9]

Uganda has been part of the [UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme to Eliminate FGM](#) since 2009 and recently completed its third phase (2018-2021). The Joint Programme aims for Uganda to be FGM-free by 2030 through a coordinated and multi-sectoral approach to FGM prevention. Part of this work involves using community-led approaches such as dialogues among adolescents and the use of role models. Community-to-community conversations, both in Uganda and across the border with Kenya, are also undertaken in order to build understanding about how to put an end to cross-border FGM.

In 2010 the practice of FGM was made illegal in Uganda, criminalizing those who cut, or attempt to cut girls or women, and those who seek to procure FGM on their own or others' behalf. This law has driven the practice underground. The threat of being apprehended has led Ugandan women to travel across the border to Kenya for FGM, where the practice is more affordable and of better quality than in Uganda.[10] In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in the number of Ugandan girls and young women crossing into Kenya to undergo FGM. Stopping cross-border FGM is a rising priority for the Ugandan government. One widely identified area requiring improvement was information sharing, coordination of activities and initiatives, and referral services for girls and women who are at risk of, or need support after, undergoing FGM.

Strategic approach

In April 2020, UNICEF Uganda supported the creation of a WhatsApp based coordination and communication mechanism on cross-border FGM between Moroto, Bukwo and Amudat Districts in Uganda and four neighbouring districts in Kenya (Alale, Kacheliba, Kongelai and Kapenguria). Maroto District took the lead, alongside the District Commissioner from West Pokot, in Kenya. Local sub-county chiefs became administrators of the new WhatsApp group, called the *Kenya Uganda anti-FGM Forum*. Administrators on both sides of the border moderate the platform. Membership in the WhatsApp group is diverse, including Community Development Officers and District Probation and Social Welfare Officers, village chiefs, and others. There are currently three sub-groups, one per district.

During the peak of the COVID-19 lockdown in March-June 2020, this platform was the only way for people to communicate with each other to understand what was happening to girls and young women who had left their communities and could not be traced. Community volunteers sought insights from families, friends and others and then provided local surveillance to inform members of the platform in other districts and across the border of the girls' who were going to undergo FGM, their planned travel route and any contacts that they might have at their destination and along the way. Surveillance volunteers along the route tipped off the local authorities so that girls could be stopped, provided with support, counselling, and any necessary medical care.

Communication was then made with the district authorities on the Uganda side the girls concerned were taken to a border point to meet a Probation and Social Welfare Officer, who then accompanied them to one of a few temporary rescue centres set up to provide interim care to girls fleeing FGM. All were provided with the opportunity to attend nearby primary schools, and provided with psychosocial counselling and connections to vocational and livelihood opportunities. They were also introduced to social workers and role models from the community in an effort to encourage them to see a different future for themselves – a future without FGM.

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Key achievements

- Between April and October 2020, the use of this collaborative WhatsApp platform enabled a total of 37 girls between the ages of 11-16 years to be intercepted in Kenya and returned to Uganda, uncut, by the Kenyan authorities.[11] The majority chose to remain at the rescue centre for an interim period, while outreach to their families was undertaken. Six girls chose to be immediately reunified with their parents and caregivers; five ran away from the centre (and efforts were made to establish why they did so, and what happened to them since).

- The platform continues to provide a surveillance function and to share information about FGM, and about other child protection threats and safety concerns, including child marriage.

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Use of this collaborative WhatsApp platform enabled a total of

37 girls
BETWEEN THE AGES OF 11-16 YEARS

to be intercepted in Kenya and returned to Uganda wihtout undergoing FGM

The platform continues to provide a surveillance function and to share information about FGM

Lessons learned & Recommendations

1   **It is important to coordinate interventions aimed at ending FGM and child marriage.** The WhatsApp platform can be used as an effective child protection surveillance tool.

2   **Approaches led by the discrict and administered and/or coordinated by the chiefs organizing these efforts are an essential and effective component of anti-FGM and anti-child marriage efforts.** Creating a community surveillance system and training its members strengthens their capacity to intervene in FGM cases and increases the likelihood of the abandonment of FGM and other child protection concerns, including child marriage.

Endnotes

1   Jjuuko D., Nakibuuka Mbonye P. 'Uganda-Kenya cross-border partnership rescues girls from female genital mutilation during COVID-19: Countries unite to keep girls uncut', UNICEF, 24 September 20202, <www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/uganda-kenya-cross-border-partnership-rescues-girls-female-genital-mutilation-during-covid>.

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3   Uganda Bureau of Statistics and Macro International Inc., *Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 2006*, UBOS and Macro International Inc., Calverton, 2006, <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR194/FR194.pdf>.

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5   Azeze GA.., Williams A., Tweya H., Obsa M.S., Mokonnon T.M., Kanche Z.Z., et al., 'Changing prevalence and factors associated with female genital mutilation in Ethiopia: Data from the 2000, 2005 and 2016 national demographic health surveys', PLoS ONE 15(9): e0238495, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0238495>.

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8   Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) and UNICEF, 'Female Genital Mutilation: Evidence from Uganda', UBOS and UNICEF, Kampala, 2020.

9   Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) and UNICEF, 'Female Genital Mutilation: Evidence from Uganda', UBOS and UNICEF, Kampala, 2020, pp. 27-9.

10   United Nations Population Fund, *Beyond the crossing: Female Genital Mutilation Across Borders, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia,Tanzania and Uganda*, UNFPA, New York, 2019, p. 25.

11   Jjuuko D., Nakibuuka Mbonye P. 'Uganda-Kenya cross-border partnership rescues girls from female genital mutilation during COVID-19: Countries unite to keep girls uncut', UNICEF, 24 September 20202, <www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/uganda-kenya-cross-border-partnership-rescues-girls-female-genital-mutilation-during-covid>.

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UNICEF Jamaica Supports School-Wide Positive Behaviour Intervention System

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

Between 2014 and 2020, UNICEF Jamaica supported piloting the School Wide Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support framework (SWPBIS). SWPBIS supports the development of prosocial skills and problem-solving techniques and promotes non-violent and positive discipline to reduce violence and misconduct in schools. It is comprised of three tiers of action, including school/classroom-wide actions focusing on all students and activities for specific smaller groups of students who need closer support. SWPBIS was piloted in 56 Jamaican primary and secondary schools with financial and technical support from UNICEF Jamaica and evaluated in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Youth (MoEY). Findings from the evaluation of the school-based programme showed that because of SWPBIS, students were more respectful of parents and teachers.

The UNICEF-funded national study *Investigating the Prevalence and Impact of Peer Abuse (bullying) on the Development of Jamaica's Children*[1] highlighted that 65 per cent of students have been bullied at some point, particularly children from the lowest grade levels. At least 80 per cent of school staff knew about children being bullied in their schools. Children in schools also face gang culture, online violence, harassment and suffer the consequences of the presence of drugs and weapons in school premises. Jamaica has endorsed the Safe to Learn Call to Action and is a Pathfinding country for the elimination of violence against children (EVAC). It has a National Plan of Action for Children and Violence (2018—2023), reviewed in 2018 with UNICEF support, which includes violence in schools. UNICEF is supporting the implementation of the Action Plan in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Youth (MoEY) and civil society organizations, to ensure safe schools. UNICEF Jamaica is also providing technical assistance to the National Violence Prevention Commission, established by the Prime Minister.

One of the key initiatives supported by UNICEF is the School Wide Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support framework (SWPBIS), which was piloted between 2015 and 2019 and is currently being scaled-up. SWPBIS supports the development of prosocial skills and problem-solving techniques and promotes non-violent and positive discipline to reduce violence and misconduct in schools. It is comprised of three tiers of action, including school/classroom-wide actions targeting all students and activities for specific smaller groups of students who need closer support.

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Strategic approach

SWPBIS is a student-centred, psychosocial support intervention that aims to bring together school communities to improve social, emotional, behavioural and academic outcomes for children and adolescents. It is a collection of practices, interventions and systems that enhance learning outcomes and promote positive and respectful relationships among peers and teachers. SWPBIS functions at three levels:

- Tier One School-wide (Mild) – disseminating information and lessons on positive behaviour to all students.

- Tier Two Targeted (Moderate) – providing specific support to at-risk children to better understand the challenges they face and provide preliminary support.

- Tier Three Intensive (Severe) – deals with children whose behaviour repeatedly falls short of school standards and can involve referrals to child counsellors or health and social services where appropriate and when available.

At the school level, the implementers involved students in identifying and understanding the culture of misconduct, violence and peer influence, and conducted capacity building sessions that focused on psychological well-being of teachers, students and parents. SWPBIS was piloted in 56 Jamaican primary and secondary schools with UNICEF financial and technical support. It comprised three tiers of action, including school/classroom-wide focusing on targeting all students and activities for specific smaller groups of students who need closer support. In 2021, a new free-to-access online programme and resources on 'Leadership for Safer Schools' was made available to school leaders as part of the EU-funded 'Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls', in partnership with the National College for Educational Leadership. It is now in its third cohort.

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Key achievements

The SWPBIS activity was evaluated in collaboration with the MoEYI. By 2018, 30,000 children and 6,000 teachers in the 56 schools were reached. Additionally, 100 national health and family life education officers were trained in the methodology. In 2019, the U.S. Agency for International Development supported another 217 schools to reach close to 30 per cent of schools in Jamaica. Schools successfully implementing SWPBIS reported improvements in attendance, behaviour and academic achievement. For example, simple initiatives such as introducing attendance cards helped Chester Castle All-Age School in Hanover raise attendance by 20 per cent. Between 2019 and 2020, a UNICEF-funded evaluation of the pilot phase was completed and is being used to guide the national scale-up of the SWPBIS framework.

Findings from the evaluation showed notable changes in behaviour in schools where there was a good buy-in from principals and staff. Children who took part in the evaluation reported that as a result of SWPBIS, they were more respectful of parents and teachers. In all but one region, teachers were viewed as the most supportive of good behaviour. The evaluation findings also indicated that many teachers were unwilling to take on the perceived added responsibilities of SWPBIS, as they felt overwhelmed by their current workload. The evaluation recommended a deeper focus on the underlying issues of challenging behaviour by students and addressing the psychological needs of teachers and parents, as well as the challenges children face in their community.

The evaluation results are now guiding UNICEF support for the SWPBIS scale-up across the country, which includes the updating and finalization of a Safe Schools Policy and the creation of Communities of Care staffed by guidance counselors, libraries and retired teachers to support psychological first aid efforts as needed in schools. A website on school safety initiatives in the country is also under development, to showcase good practices and serve as a reference and training resource to generate system-wide buy-in.

PILOTED IN
56
Jamaican primary and secondary schools

30,000
CHILDREN
and
60,000
TEACHERS
reached by 2018

100
national health and family life education officers trained

Lessons learned

1 Support from senior school leaders is an important driver of successful school-wide implementation.

2 The SWPBIS team should use the SWPBIS framework and examples of best practices to design a school's unique set of practices and tailor appropriate procedures to benefit the most boys and girls.

3 There needs to be a clear line of support from the senior policy level to minimize government bureaucracy and help generate system-wide buy-in.

4 The regular collection and analysis of data as well as the sharing of best practices within the education sector is critical to generating and sustaining successful implementation of the SWPBIS framework.

Recommendations

1 Establish a national, high level SWPBIS Task Force to guide all activities related to SWPBIS monitoring, evaluation and scale-up.

2 Each additional school should be supported to conduct an in-depth situational analysis to determine relevant, context-specific preconditions and the school's system readiness for the framework.

3 Standardize SWPBIS trainings to make them widely accessible.

4 Include monitoring and evaluation when planning for SWPBIS to better support advocacy, planning and reporting.

5 Standardize referrals to the health and social sectors as needed.

6 Share stories about the effects of SWPBIS schools so that additional schools are excited to join the "SWPBIS" movement.

Endnotes

1   United Nations Children's Fund, Investigating the prevalence and impact of peer abuse (bullying) on the development of Jamaica's children, UNICEF, July 2015, <www.unicef.org/jamaica/reports/investigating-prevalence-and-impact-peer-abuse-development-jamaicas-children>.

SOCIAL + BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

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UNICEF Lebanon Tackles Disability Stigma

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

Dates of Activity
2019 - ongoing

Duration
3.5 years

Budget
US$2.5 million

In 2021, the UNICEF Lebanon country office supported a revised disability inclusion approach that encouraged specialized disability organizations to build networks with formal public and private schools and non-formal education organizations. The approach ensured that children with moderate disabilities were partially or fully integrated in inclusive learning, while still receiving rehabilitation services at the specialized disability organization. As an immediate impact of the newly adapted disability strategy, by January 2022 at least 53 out of the 486 Children With Disabilities (CWDs) with severe to moderate disabilities were integrated fully into formal and non-formal inclusive education, while still receiving rehabilitation services from specialized

organizations. About 250,000 people were reached with messages about inclusivity through Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) activities supported by UNICEF Lebanon and implemented by partner organizations.

In 2017, 75 per cent of respondents in Lebanon thought that children with intellectual disabilities should not be integrated into society (25 per cent for physical disabilities). The underpinning behavioural and attitude change was therefore deemed as a necessary step to create an enabling environment for people with disabilities. In 2018, UNICEF developed a Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) strategy that is based on the socio-ecological

model and that equips key stakeholders with essential tools to promote positive attitudes and behaviours on inclusion. Every education partnership that provides services to children with disabilities (CWD) has a Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) component embedded. Since 2019, educations partners have been developing and rolling out SBC plans, leading to the transformation of the SBCC strategy into an SBC through the addition of a conceptual framework. In 2022, more than 100 SBC initiatives nationwide in collaboration with 132 local entities engaging more than 9,000 people on disability inclusion were conducted. SBC initiatives have been diverse in nature and speak to all levels of the Socio-Ecological Model (SEM), engaging children with disabilities themselves, their parents and peers, service providers, communities, local authorities and more! A pre-post quantitative assessment of SBC initiatives have shown an increase in positive attitudes towards inclusion in children without disabilities and caregivers of children with and without disabilities. Qualitative tools of assessment have also captured changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.

Context

UNICEF believes in the right of children with disabilities to be included in society and in inclusive quality education. The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office (LCO) committed in its Country Programme Document to mainstream the needs of children and youth with disabilities (CWDs) across programme outcomes. The main objective was to ensure that barriers to inclusion of CWDs in society were addressed and that CWDs had equitable access to basic services and needs. In 2017, the LCO partnered with five specialized disability organizations that provide rehabilitation, special education and parental engagement services to 400 refugee children with moderate to severe disabilities. For children with milder disabilities, UNICEF LCO worked with non-formal education partners to ensure the inclusion of CWDs in non-formal education, and with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) to increase the accessibly of CWDs in the public schools through the MEHE inclusive pilot schools.[1] In 2021, UNICEF shifted its disability inclusion approach with specialized disability organizations by implementing more inclusive modalities. The new strategy's objective is to improve the access of children with moderate disabilities to inclusive learning. Throughout the whole process, the underpinning behavioural and attitude change was deemed as a necessary step to create an enabling environment for people with disabilities. Therefore, every partnership on disability inclusion had an SBC component.
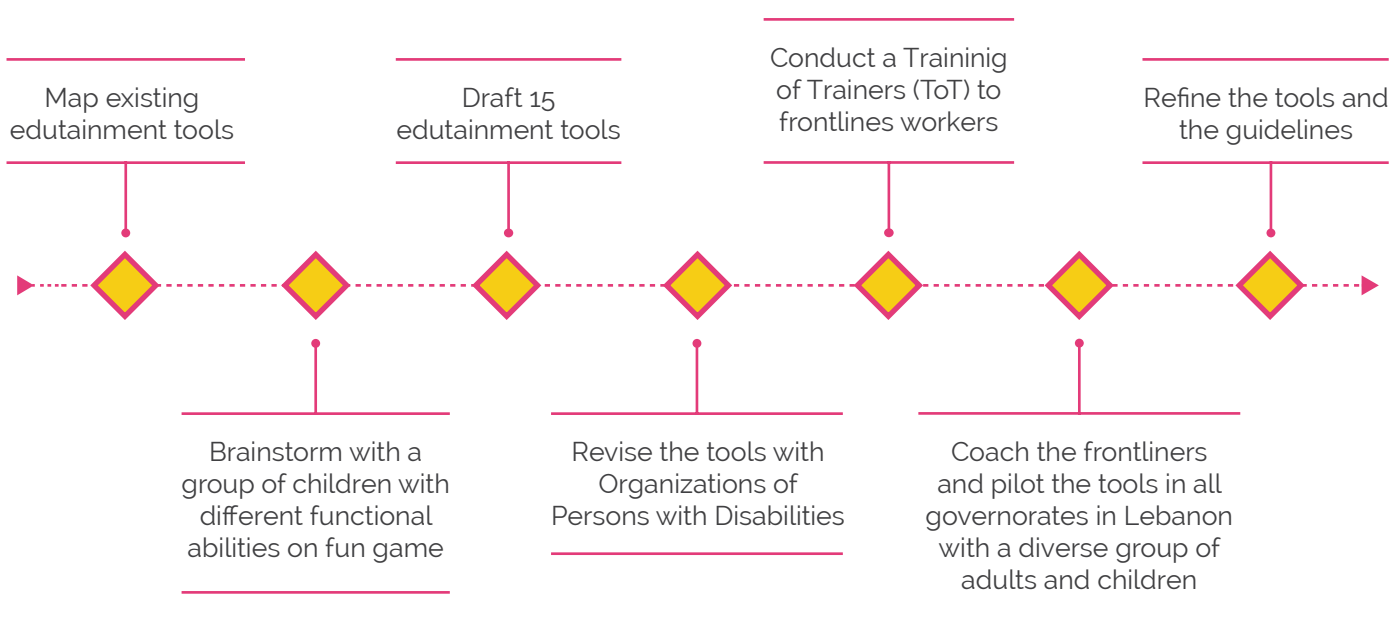
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♞ Strategic approach

Community engagement: In 2022, all partners were trained in the Community Engagement (CE) curriculum and were coached to develop community plans. Partners then engaged community members to identify problems and use available resources to plan and implement solutions on disability inclusion. Examples of initiatives conducted include the development of an inclusive garden and the building of a path to one of the biggest public beaches in Lebanon. Partners usually start with CE and use the community plans as a roadmap to design and implement capacity building, social mobilization and edutainment. Several of the identified problems from the community members that are highlighted in the community engagement include the lack of capacity of local institutions to include CWD, hence limiting the social inclusion of CWD. Therefore, employing a bottom-up approach, partners provide that capacity building local institutions such as social development centres, recreational centres, sports and summer clubs, theater clubs, scouts etc. to be able to be inclusive in their services. Partners refer children with disabilities to these services and provide coaching to the service providers. This results in continuous long-term positive social inclusion of CWD.

Social mobilization: Making inclusion everyone's business is key to SBC. Hence, partners conduct different social mobilization initiatives such as getting people together to conduct a street parade, conduct an inter-university competition on the best video for inclusion and train volunteers from the community and universities to co-implement community-based activities.

Edutainment: To move away from the traditional-style awareness sessions, education-entertainment formats are used to engage the community in creative and fun inclusive activities, increasing awareness and inclusive interactions in a gradual, natural, and subtle way. These types of activities are scarce, hence UNICEF developed 15 edutainment tools to be used by frontliner workers. A guide is being finalized and the participatory process was as follows:

Map existing edutainment tools

Brainstorm with a group of children with different functional abilities on fun game

Draft 15 edutainment tools

Revise the tools with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities

Conduct a Traininig of Trainers (ToT) to frontlines workers

Coach the frontliners and pilot the tools in all governorates in Lebanon with a diverse group of adults and children

Refine the tools and the guidelines

Key achievements[2]

A pre-post quantitative assessment of SBC initiatives has shown an increase in positive attitudes towards inclusion in children without disabilities and caregivers of children with and without disabilities. This has become a standard monitoring tool in the form of pre-post test on KOBO that all partners use in every activity they do. This data is directly inputted into two attitudinal indicators in the RWP monitoring plan. Sixteen innovative inclusive edutainment tools have been developed that frontliners can use to promote positive attitudes towards disability inclusion. Most Significant Change M&E tool has been piloted and captures important changes in knowledge, attitude and practices. The third layer of selection is at the community level where only at the end of the programme, all the stories that were chosen by the second layer go back to the community for them to select the story they found most significant.

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250,000
people were reached with messages about inclusivity

> " I finally saw my son happy because this activity made gave him an opportunity in life where he felt valuable and that he has an important role to play. "
>
> *-Lebanese mother from Beddawi*

> " The sessions and the guidance we took gave me great courage to stop the bullying. "
>
> *-44-year-old Palestinian woman living in Saida*

Lessons learned

1 Not all partners are ready to do SBC for disability inclusion. They need to show commitment and interest in SBC. Then, training is needed.

2 In-hand resources and guidance are needed. The CE curriculum and training was very useful as it unified our understanding of the CE process. Unified template was also very useful.

3 Unified key intervention guidelines were needed and provided partners with options for SBC activities. However, we need to keep space for the partners to innovate and pilot-test.

4 Small scale trial and error is okay.

Recommendations

1 Continue implementing and strengthening SBC for disability inclusion.

2 Ensure that the network of specialized disability partners continue to provide work efficiently and effectively with formal schools and non-formal education organizations, and with the whole community, to integrate children with moderate disabilities in inclusive education.

3 Incorporate an SBC component for partner organizations to complement the special services and create an enabling environment for inclusion of CWDs in communities.

4 Specifically address barriers and needs of girls with disabilities who are more vulnerable to violence and child marriage.

Endnotes

1 United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF Lebanon: Specialized Disabillity Organizations, UNICEF Lebanon, <www.unicef.org/lebanon/media/8486/file>.

2 Ibid.

SOCIAL + BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

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UNICEF Bhutan Raises Awareness About Violence Against Children

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

Dates of Activity
July 2022 – January 2023

Duration
6 months

Budget
US$600,000

In July 2022, Bhutan launched a six-month multi-sectoral pilot campaign to raise awareness about the prevalence of violence against children (VAC), and to address barriers preventing children and young people from utilizing child protection services. The campaign was led by the National Commission for Women and Children and implemented by a consortium of 17 governmental and non-governmental agencies through January 2023. The campaign co-occurred with the COVID-19 pandemic, so messages about COVID-19 prevention were included with the VAC campaign messages. The campaign activities reached at least 200,000 people in the three pilot districts, double the number of the intended target. At least 50,000 community influencers were trained and mobilised, and more than 395,000 people engaged with social media. Overall, the campaign yielded positive outcomes regarding improved knowledge, awareness, and perceptions of violence against children, but also highlighted the need for further efforts to address reporting barriers and promote positive discipline practices.

Context

Family structures in Bhutan are changing due to separation, divorce, stress, and violence. The traditional layers of protection provided by families and communities have been weakened. Normative practices that place children at risk for violence, for example child marriage and corporal punishment, persist throughout the nation. These social and cultural factors have contributed to an increase in incidents of violence against children in Bhutan over time, from 168 in 2018, to 970 in 2022.[1] The COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 onward has exacerbated acts of violence against children.

About six out of ten Bhutanese children between 13 and 17 years old have experienced at least one incident of physical violence. Parents, teachers,

adult caregivers and peers are among the common perpetrators of violence. Peer violence is endemic. At least 12 per cent of children experience sexual violence and almost 50 per cent of children report experiencing emotional violence. Verbal sexual harassment and neglect are commonly experienced by girls as well as boys. Children's exposure to pornography and access to internet also makes them vulnerable to online abuse. In the past four to five years, a child or young person in Bhutan experienced violence every 42 hours. Child labor and substance abuse among children and adolescents is also a critical concern in the nation.[2]

Neglect is the highest reported form of VAC reported (34 per cent), followed by emotional violence at 26 per cent and physical violence at 22 per cent. Sixty-eight per cent of the total reported cases were among girls and women. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, helplines in Bhutan saw an increase in the number of children and young people seeking mental health support services. In 2021, 1,067 children and young people sought counselling services for various mental health related issues, of which 598 were female, and more than 45 per cent were adolescents between 15 and 17 years old.[3]

Research on violence against children in Bhutan has shown that children and young people rarely disclose or report violence to adults or authorities. Although Bhutan's Child Care and Protection Act contains provisions pertaining to different forms of physical, sexual and emotional violence, as well as sexual harassment, usually only cases of physical battery and assault resulting in significant injury, and cases of child molestation and rape, are ever reported to the police. Non-consensual sexual touching, verbal sexual harassment and corporal punishment are generally considered an annoyance rather than a crime to be reported by adults or children.[4]

♞ Strategic approach

In July 2022, UNICEF Bhutan supported the launch of a six-month multi-sectoral and multi-pronged pilot campaign, *Rangge Buzhi, Rangee Norbu (Our Children, Our Wealth)*, to raise awareness about violence against children (VAC) in three districts – *Thimphu, Trashigang and Samtse*. The campaign included messages to motivate children, parents, and caregivers to seek services for VAC, to promote the importance of children's mental wellbeing, and to promote COVID-19 preventive measures. The campaign was led by the National Commission for Women and Children, and implemented by a consortium of 17 governmental and non-governmental agencies.[5] Schools, health workers, sports associations, civil society and religious organizations, and youth volunteers were engaged at the community level. Media outlets were also engaged to spread the word about ending VAC in Bhutan.

The campaign consisted of four phases, each with a distinctive theme. The first phase focused on messages that defined VAC, mental health, and psychosocial support, and highlighted how VAC and poor mental health can impact a child's wellbeing, especially during such challenging times as the COVID-19 pandemic. The second phase was centered on sexual violence. Phase three identified the harmful effects of physical violence by peers. The last phase highlighted the damage to children from online abuse. Each phase provided messages on how the specific type of violence affects children, and suggested actions that children, parents/caregivers, service providers and others can take to prevent and respond to the various type of VAC. A signature tune was created and used with all campaign materials to help the audiences identify the campaign.

The campaign was comprised of several social and behaviour change (SBC) activities for audiences at multiple social ecological levels (e.g., individual, community, and societal/institutional), and included the following outputs:

Individual Level Outputs

- Five thousand copies of an illustrated handbook (in English and *Dzongkha*) on ending violence against children were disseminated to schoolteachers, local leaders, religious leaders, social workers, media persons and other community influencers;

- Videos on sexual violence, peer violence, and positive/non-violent child discipline, were disseminated via mass media (aired on BBS

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the national radio and TV station) and shared on Facebook pages of collaborating partners including UNICEF social media sites.

Community Level Outputs

- Mobilization through faith-based organizations and religious leaders' networks to promote kindness, harmony and social cohesion, and to address COVID-19 and its shadow issues of VAC.

- Mobilization using community serving organization (CSO) and their networks. Three CSOs (RENEW, *Nazhoen Lamtoen, Tarayana*) conducted consultation and discussions with district officials and local government officials. Following the district level consultations, the CSOs conducted discussions with other influential people at the community level consisting of local leaders, community-based support service volunteers, youth volunteers, counsellors and community representatives and mobilized them to engage communities and families in their locality.

- Mobilization through schoolteachers, scouts, and youth volunteers. Bhutan's Ministry of Education and Skills Development's Department of Education and Programme Scouts and Sports Division carried out engagement session with scouts, schoolteachers, students and young people in 161 schools and youth centres in *Thimpu, Trashigang, Samtse*.

- Mobilization through disabled people's organizations (DPOs). Two DPOs (*Ability Bhutan Society* and *Draktsho*) engaged children with disabilities and their parents/caregivers to discuss and increase awareness about the risks of VAC and mental health, and how to seek support services;

Societal/Institutional Level Outputs

- A video with the Deputy Chief of Police of the Royal Bhutan Police Department discussing sexual harassment and abuse as a social system issue that needs to be addressed through coordinated societal efforts, and the need for reporting cases of abuse was disseminated through social media platforms as part of online advocacy that was held simultaneously with the SBC activities.

- Mobilization of the Bhutan Football Federation (BFF). The BFF launched the campaign as part of the 2022 national football championship matches. The BFF conducted sessions with players and officials and discussed how players could raise awareness about preventing and responding to VAC, promoting child mental health, and promoting and modelling COVID-19 preventive behaviours. The BFF involved local celebrities and popular sports personalities in advocating for children's safety and wellbeing. All players and match officials made a public pledge to fight to end VAC.

- World Children's Day events where the Government announced the roll out of an anti-bullying campaign in schools for the 2023 academic year and amplified VAC messages.

- Advocacy through mainstream media. Bhutan Broadcasting Service (the national TV and radio station) and *Kuensel* (the national print media) disseminated messages to raise public awareness about children's safety and wellbeing using various media formats (e.g., panel discussions; expert interviews, info blocks, teasers, radio dramas, jingles, docufilms, TV spots).

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Key achievements

The campaign activities reach at least 200,000 people in the three pilot districts, double the number of the intended target. At least 50,000 community influencers were trained and mobilized, and more than 395,000 people were reached via social media. Specific achievements included:

- The three CSOs engaged and mobilized about 13,000 community influencers in the three districts. The initiative also contributed to local leaders and volunteers at the community level setting up social media groups and child well-being committees to discuss children's issues. Some local leaders have made decision to incorporate child wellbeing as an agenda in their regular community development meeting. Likewise, the CSO partners have incorporated promotion of child wellbeing as part of their community engagement programmes.

- More than 29,000 students, schoolteachers and young people were engaged in the discussion and mobilized to reach other students and young people.

- The BFF has incorporated child wellbeing as part of their child safety training programme;.

- A UNICEF and BFF exhibition football match on World Children's Day (20 November 2022) was broadcasted live on the national TV and social media sites of BFF and UNICEF. More than 500 people were present at the event and more than 200,000 people were reach through the social media.

- More than 350 religious leaders from different faiths were engaged and mobilized to engage families and communities in three districts.

- About 250 children with disabilities, their parents and care givers were made aware of risks of violence and mental health on children and how to seek support services to prevent and respond to their concerns;

- BBS developed and aired more than 40 radio programmes in four languages (*Dzongkha*, English, *Nepali* and *Tsangla*), including panel discussions; expert interviews; info blocks; teasers; radio dramas; jingles on the types of violence and consequences on child development and how to prevent and respond and seek support services.

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- BBS TV developed and aired a 24 television programmes, including panel discussions, expert interviews, dramas, documentary films, TV spots and other entertainment-education programmes.

- On print media, Kuensel, the national newspaper published a special issue on VAC in August 2022. Kuensel also produced 10 short videos on different topics of violence and disseminated it on their social media channels.

- All the BBS programmes were re-shared on BBS social media sites.

- Helplines recorded a three-fold increase in calls during the campaign.

- Social media garnered more than 54 million impressions (the total number of times social media browsers were shown the campaign content); more than 395,000 users engaged with the social media content;

  - More children acknowledged the ability to report incidents of violence (85 per cent in March 2023 compared to 79 per cent in November 2022).

- Bhutanese people exposed to the campaign identified children with disabilities, children from lower-income or broken families, orphans, the LGBT+ community, and those vulnerable to mental health issues, as being at risk of violence.

- An experience sharing workshop was organized for Government, CSOs, UN and other stakeholders to share the lessons learnt from the campaign to amplify the need for strengthening joint multi-sectoral programming and mainstreaming SBC. Each implementing partner share their achievements, challenges and lessons learnt. More than 50 participants representing various agencies; two Honourable Members of the Parliament and UN RC's office attended the workshop.

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Campaign activities reached at least

200,000
PEOPLE

in the three pilot districts

AT LEAST
50,000

community influencers were trained and mobilized

MORE THAN
54 million

social media impressions

Lessons Learned & Recommendations

1 The campaign assessment revealed the need for effective reporting mechanisms and education efforts to address barriers to reporting VAC incidents; there was a persistent lack of knowledge about where to report cases violence, and fear of dealing with law enforcement and legal issues.

2 The campaign activities should be expanded beyond the three pilot districts to a nation-wide campaign.

3 The campaign messages should go beyond increasing awareness (although awareness about child protection policies still need improvement), to changing attitudes and practices (which take more time and repetition of messages).

4 UNCIEF Bhutan should continue to strengthen cross-sector, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and include new partners (e.g., with LGBTQIA+, Wangsel Institute of Deaf, Pema Secretariat and popular social media influencers), and continue to build the capacities of partners to support activities to eliminate VAC.

5 UNICEF Bhutan and partners should focus on the most vulnerable children, i.e., those at heightened risk of violence (e.g., effeminate boys, masculine girls, children with disabilities) and those that suffer significant harm.

6 Linkages should be created between violence against children (VAC) and violence against women (VAW) since the risk factors for perpetuating violence can be similar (e.g., alcohol use), and the violence can co-occur in the same space (e.g., at home).

7 The initiative contributed to improved understanding and commitment among government, non-government and UN agencies how complex issues like violence and mental health can be addressed as a whole society through joint multisectoral collaboration that complements one another for efficiency.

8 Funding for such initiative is a limitation for smaller countries. UNICEF regional SBC support was instrumental in implementing the campaign. Such regional support to smaller countries must continue.

Endnotes

1   United Nations Children's Fund, 'Results report: *Rangge* Buzhi, Rangee Norbu – Our Children, Our Wealth, a multisectoral social and behaviour change campaign to address violence against children', UNICEF Bhutan, 22 January 2023.

2   United Nations Children's Fund, 'Protection…For every child', UNICEF Bhutan, <www.unicef.org/bhutan/protection-%E2%80%A6-every-child>.

3   United Nations Children's Fund, 'Results report: *Rangge* Buzhi, Rangee Norbu – Our Children, Our Wealth, a multisectoral social and behaviour change campaign to address violence against children', UNICEF Bhutan, 22 January 2023.

4   United Nations Children's Fund, *Research on violence against children in Bhutan: A report*. National Commission for Women and Children, Royal Government of Bhutan and UNICEF Bhutan, 2016, <www.unicef.org/bhutan/media/341/file/Research%20on%20Violence%20Against%20Children%20in%20Bhutan.pdf>.

5   The agencies involved in the Campaign are National Commission for Women and Children; Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Department of Information Technology and Telecom, MoIC, *Dratshang Lhentshog*, Council for Religious Affairs in Bhutan, Royal Bhutan Police, *Tarayana* Foundation, RENEW, *Nazhoen Lamtoen*, Ability Bhutan Society, *Draktsho*, Bhutan Nun Foundation, Bhutan Broadcasting Service and UNICEF.

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SOCIAL + BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

unicef for every child

UNICEF Egypt Supports Positive Parenting and Girls' Empowerment Programmes to Promote Children's Rights

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

Dates of Activity
2018 to present

Duration
ongoing

Budget
US$5,000,000

UNICEF Egypt is implementing a comprehensive social and behaviour change (SBC) programme that focuses on the root causes of behaviours related to poor child development outcomes and gender discrimination. As part of this larger work, the UNICEF Egypt SBC team has been supporting two national-level evidence-based SBC programmes and *Dawwie* (the National Girls' Empowerment Initiative), with the aim of ensuring that children reach their full potential and achieve gender equity.[1] To date, these SBC programmes have been integrated into national institutions and have gradually been implemented to scale by different partners in Egypt. UNICEF's Positive

Parenting Programme has provided training on positive parenting behaviour for at least 10,000 service providers, engaged 1.5 million community members in face-to-face parenting-related interventions and enabled 15 million people to engage with positive parenting content online. The *Dawwie* community engagement programme has reached more than 33 million people and actively engaged 4 million. More than 450,000 individuals have been engaged through *Dawwie's* face-to-face activities, including skills building opportunities focusing on digital literacy, storytelling circles, intergenerational dialogues, and community events such as viewing clubs,

sport tournaments and dialogue with policy makers. More than 46 per cent of the 75,000 girls and boys aged 10—24 years old that have completed the Dawwie digital literacy training have demonstrated an increased understanding

of gender equality and agency. Dawwie has also been instrumental in catalysing intersectoral attention on the specific needs of girls, political support and coordination.

Context

Most children ages 1 to 14 years in Egypt (81 per cent) are exposed to violent disciplining methods.[2] Ninety-one per cent are subjected to various forms of psychological violence, and at least 78 per cent experience physical punishment. [3] At least 6 per cent of children 5—17 years perform child labour.[4] Gender inequality has also been a long-standing issue in Egypt. Entrenched social norms and attitudes, economic pressures, and structural forces are key factors that contribute to maintaining the status quo of ender inequality in Egypt.

UNICEF Egypt is focused on addressing the key drivers of poor child development outcomes, including poor parenting and gender discrimination against girls. The UNICEF SBC team used the Social Ecological Model (SEM) as its foundational framework for developing an integrated SBC programme including individual-level behaviour change interventions, social support activities, and coordination mechanisms for institutional level ownership and implementation at scale. Two key initiatives being managed by the UNICEF Egypt SBC team, in close coordination with relevant UNICEF and

government sectors, are (1) a positive parenting programme, and (2) a girls' empowerment programme. The two programmes are complemented by the systematic engagement of Faith Based Organizations, and by the SBC system strengthening work.

The UNICEF SBC team has been focusing on mainstreaming SBC indicators on positive parenting and girls' empowerment within the national M&E framework (in partnership with Ministry of Social Solidarity and Ministry of Planning and Economic Development), strengthening the use of RapidPro as tool to monitor the adoption of behaviours, supporting the development of a Media and Children's Rights Code of Conduct in collaboration with the Supreme Council of Media Regulation and SBC capacity building for key institutional partners. UNICEF Egypt's goal is to mainstream the integrated SBC model at the institutional level to reduce overall acceptance for practices that are harmful for children and to accelerate the adoption of behaviours promoting children's rights.

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Strategic approach

In 2019, UNICEF supported a formative research study to understand knowledge, attitudes, practices and social norms shaping parenting practices among Egyptian caregivers, and to identify best national and international practices. The study consisted of a systematic review of literature on positive parenting, and a knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) survey of 10,000 households. The survey findings showed that violent disciplinary practices were prevalent among Egyptian parents, participation in early childhood education was low, there were gendered inequalities within the family structure, and knowledge about positive parenting was low. The findings were used to develop the national Parenting Programme on positive parenting tailored to the Egyptian context, and integrated with the national cash transfer programme, *Takaful and Karama*, under the leadership of Ministry of Social Solidarity.

The Parenting Programme has been supported by an ecosystem of interventions including community engagement through viewing clubs and toy making festivals, the use of digital and social media platforms to engage parents, media advocacy, and content co-creation with the private sector with one of the largest media networks for a TV drama on positive parenting to model the desired parenting behaviours. The Parenting Programme focuses on engaging parents to adopt behaviours related to positive parenting and on providing support in the areas of health and nutrition, learning/cognition, social/emotional, and protection for children ages 0—18 months. The support is provided through service providers that regularly engage with parents of children in this age group. UNICEF Egypt supported the development of parenting programmes for alternative care, gender transformative parenting, and parenting for children with disabilities that were subsequently integrated into the annual workplans of the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS), Minstry of Health and Population (MoHP) and Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS). UNICEF Egypt also supported the digitalization of Parenting Programme components for easy access on Internet of Good Things (IoGT) and Learning Passport (in alignment with Egypt's digital transformation strategy). Additionally, to mitigate the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF Egypt worked with the Government of Egypt and other partners to engage youth networks and influencers, including media networks and private sector, in community engagement activities to support children's and families' resilience during COVID-19. By decree of Egypt's Prime Minister, and given the inter-ministerial nature of the programme, a National Committee for Positive Parenting was established in 2022.

In 2019, UNICEF also supported the Government of Egypt to launch *Dawwie* (meaning "loud voice with an impact and echo"), the first national girls' empowerment initiative. The aim of *Dawwie* is to promote girls' voices and facilitate their access to skills and essential services. *Dawwie* engages adolescent girls and boys in online and face-to-face activities that help them express themselves, accept diversity and equality, and foster engagement from their families and communities, leading to changes in the way society sees and talks about girls. *Dawwie* is comprised digital literacy skills development opportunities, storytelling (*Dawwie* Circles), community dialogue facilitated by viewing clubs, participatory theatrical performances, sports activities, intergenerational dialogue session between boys and girls and their parents, and opportunities to interact with decisionmakers at national and local levels. The initiative is led by the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) in partnership with National Council for Women (NCW), with technical support from UNICEF, and many other partners. In 2022, this Initiative was placed under the auspices of the First Lady of Egypt and has been implemented in over 21 governorates.

Key achievements

UNICEF Egypt's positive parenting programme activities have been adopted by, and integrated into, national institutions and initiatives, and are being scaled up by various partners. For example, the girls' empowerment programme is driving the National Investment Framework on Girls in Egypt, an accountability framework led by the National Council for Women and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood.

- At least 10,000 service providers have been trained on positive parenting behaviour change strategies to date.

- At least 10,000 volunteers were trained and active in community engagement on positive parenting during COVID-19.

- More than 500,000 parents participated in face-to-face positive parenting programme activities between 2020 and 2022.

- 1.5 million community members engaged in face-to-face parenting related interventions.

- 15 million people accessed positive parenting content online with and engagement rate between 7 and 9 per cent.

- *Dawwie* activities have reached more than 33 million people, and actively engaged 4 million to date; More than 450,000 individuals have been engaged through face-to-face activities;

- More than 46 per cent of the 75,000 girls and boys aged 10—24 years old that have completed the *Dawwie* digital literacy training have demonstrated an increased understanding of gender equality and agency.

Provided training on positive parenting behaviour for

AT LEAST
10,000

service providers

ENGAGED
1.5 million

community members in face-to-face parenting-related interventions

ENABLED
15 million

people to engage with positive parenting content online

Lessons learned

1 Designing an integrated SBC programme has been instrumental for mobilizing flexible medium-term financial resources for thematic interventions essential to planning and sustaining social and behavioural change interventions at scale.

2 Building cross-sectorial ownership of behavioural change interventions requires time and dedication. Planning for co-designing and trust building is essential to accelerate implementation for positive impacts.

3 Investing in coordination among relevant stakeholders is essential to implementing programmes at scale. The cross-sectorial nature of behavioural change intervention requires systematic and strategic coordination to leverage existing dynamics, opportunities and investments.

4 The possibility to engage and support institutional partners with the use of tech-based solutions such as RapidPro has been instrumental to create the space for longitudinal evidence generation opportunities and to introduce and to initiate the process to introduce SBC indicators within the institutional M&E system. This paves the way for sustainability and scale of the designed SBC programmes. How to systematically analyse and use the evidence generated remains an area of improvement.

Recommendations

1 Shift the planning focus from the materials to be produced to the processes that facilitate positive behaviour change.

2 Increase the visibility of activities to reach wider audiences and motivate change in the entire Egyptian population.

3 Invest more in overall programme coordination to facilitate the diffusion of positive parenting knowledge, attitudes, practices and social norms.

4 Indirect modalities to address sensitive behaviours, such as violence and harmful practices, come often with greater transformative value. Focusing on the positive rather than negative narrative is essential to drive the change.

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Endnotes

1   Positive parenting promotes a parenting style that is proactive, empathetic and mutually respectful, thereby helping to build stronger and healthier relations between parents and children.

2   United Nations Children's Fund, 'Egypt fast facts', UNICEF, 2022.

3   World Economic Forum, 'Insight Report: Global Gender Gap Report 2020', WEF, 2020, <www3.weforum. org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf>.

4   United Nations Children's Fund, 'Egypt fast facts', UNICEF, 2022.

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UNICEF Nepal Uses Radio Drama to Transform Gender Norms and Enhance Child Welfare

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

An entertaining fictional radio series, *Rope Guna Fal* ("You Reap What You Sow"), engaged an estimated 325,026 Nepalis every week between 2021 and 2022, at a cost of only US$0.91 per listener. Funded by UNICEF and The Kendeda Fund and produced in partnership with Antenna Foundation Nepal and Population Media Centre, the 104-episode story motivated social, behavioural, and normative change toward reducing and eliminating child marriage, improving adolescent sexual and reproductive health, and strengthening parenting skills to improve child well-being. All listeners surveyed agreed or somewhat agreed that their knowledge increased from listening to the radio drama. Ninety per cent of listeners reported a change in attitude, awareness of new issues, and reflection on social norms. Eighty-nine per cent of listeners reported a new behaviour change or maintenance of a recently changed behaviour.

Context

The Nepalese government has implemented various programmes and policies aimed at improving parenting education, child marriage, and adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH), including providing sex education in schools, increasing access to family planning services and information, and working to reduce stigma and discrimination. Cultural norms and traditional practices related to parenting, child marriage, and ASRH, however, pose significant barriers to improvement. The *Rope Guna Fal* ("You Reap What You Sow") radio drama series was created to bolster the Nepalese government efforts.

Strategic approach

UNICEF Nepal, in partnership with The Kendeda Fund, Antenna Foundation Nepal (AFN) and Population Media Center (PMC)-Nepal sponsored and developed the radio drama series *Rope Guna Fal* to challenge traditional gender norms and serve as an educational platform for parents and adolescents. A stages-of-change model was used as the foundation for developing the radio programme. The 104-episode series was broadcast two times per week throughout Nepal (with a focus on Karnali, Lumbini, and Sudur Paschim provinces) from September 2021 to September 2022, on Radio Nepal and 100 local radio stations. It was available through Facebook, YouTube, Hamro Patro, and 3-2-1 social media platforms. Episodes were also made available to hard-to-reach audiences (who were subscribers of Nepal Telecom) through the VIAMO toll-free instant voice response system, "Suchana ko Sansar".[1]

The key themes of the radio programme included parenting education, child marriage, and adolescent sexual and reproductive health. The themes were selected based on local needs. The primary intended audiences for the drama were adolescents and young people ages 13 to 24 years, and parents ages 25 to 45 years. The series was also designed to appeal to grandparents, guardian, and other caregivers. The characters served as role models to the *Rope Guna Fal* audience. Each episode closed with a quiz for audiences, with prizes (e.g., a recharge of Rs. 200 on the listener's mobile phone, courtesy of AFN) for those who got the answers right. This strategy was designed to motivate listeners to tune in and to reward them for their knowledge of the topic(s) at hand.

A cross-sectional quantitative survey was administered to a representative sample of individuals ages 14—49 who live within the broadcast area in all seven provinces of Nepal, from 14 October to 5 November 5 2022. Validation exercises were conducted throughout to test the accuracy and precision of survey data. Data collection in some areas was not possible due to landslides. The *Rope Guna Fal* assessment included a series of questions to assess the degree to which listeners felt they (1) became aware of new social issues, (2) gained knowledge, (3) changed their attitudes, (4) reflected on social norms in their community, (5) were inspired to change behaviour, and (6) were motivated to maintain changes they made.

Key achievements

- *Rope Guna Fal* engaged an estimated 325,026 Nepalis each week, with an average cost of only US$0.91 per listener.

- 100 per cent of listeners agreed or somewhat agreed their knowledge increased from listening to the radio drama.

- 90 per cent of listeners reported a change in attitude, awareness of new issues, and reflection on social norms.

- 89 per cent of listeners reported a new behaviour change or maintenance of a recently changed behaviour.

- More than half (54.5 per cent) of listeners told their friends and family about the show and discussed the issues it raised with them.

- Almost all listeners (95.5 per cent) said that they intend to stop child marriage in their family and community, compared to 78.9 per cent of non-listeners.

- Listeners were more than four times more likely than non-listeners to agree that their community expects them to support girls' completing their education before marriage.

- 93 per cent of listeners thought that husbands must care for pregnant women/ new mothers compared to 84 per cent of non-listeners (an important shift towards increased male involvement in parenting amongst listeners).

- Listeners were nearly four times more likely than non-listeners to report that they have taken actions to discourage child marriage.

- 83 per cent of listeners said that they have tried to improve child learning and development in their home compared to 69 per cent of non-listeners.

325,026
Nepalis engaged each week

cost of only
US$0.91
per listener

the
104-episode
story motivated social, behavioural, and normative change

100%
of listeners agreed or somewhat agreed their knowledge increased from listening to the radio drama

Lessons learned & Recommendations

1 Using radio as a channel for disseminating important information is critical for raising awareness, changing attitudes and motivating behaviour change in areas where radio dramas are known and liked, and where other media channels are hard to access. Always conduct a media landscape analysis prior to developing a radio drama to understand what other similar programmes or activities are being implemented prior to, or concurrently with, your intended radio intervention. Knowing what programmes may be competing with or complementing your radio messages will help to understand the audience's recall and reactions.

2 Conducting robust data collection activities is critical for monitoring activities and creating an evidence-base for understanding the effects behaviour and social norm change over time. For situations where listenership is less than 10 per cent, it may be wise to use a matched case-control study design, and to use radio call-in data, social media data, and other sources to identify a sample of "case" listeners to interview. Then enumerators could interview in the community to identify demographically matched non-listeners (the controls).

3 Collect qualitative data (e.g., interviews or focus group discussions) as part of an intentional mixed-methods assessment design. Findings from qualitative methods can help to contextualize and better understand why and how listeners responded to their *Rope Guna Fal* drama.

Endnotes

1   VIAMO is a global social enterprise that specializes in mobile engagement and Information and Communication Technology for Development.

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UNICEF Oman Develops Social and Behaviour Change Strategy to Address Early Childhood Development, Inclusion of Children with Disabilities and Violence Against Children

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

Dates of Activity
2020 to 2021

Duration
18 Months

Budget
Unknown

UNICEF Oman, in collaboration with the Sultanate of Oman Ministries of Education, Health, and Social Development, supported formative research to inform the development of a social and behaviour change (SBC) communication strategy for three programme areas: Integrated early childhood development (ECD), inclusion of children with disabilities (CWD), and violence against children (VAC). A comprehensive desk review was conducted to provide information on what is already known about these areas in the Omani context.

Qualitative studies were conducted to identify perceptions and attitudes on ECD, CWD, and VAC prior to developing the strategy. UNICEF Oman delivered a joint cross-sectoral SBC strategy for the Government of Oman and formed an SBC Taskforce to oversee and achieve the SBC activities in the strategy workplan. Social and behaviour change indicators were embedded into administrative data systems in three government ministries. UNICEF Oman also supported the launch of mass campaigns with Government of Oman.

1

Context

Early childhood development programmes are one of the most cost-effective ways to set the right foundation for children's health and education to increase skills, abilities and productivity of children. Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) is essential for all children to achieve their full potential. Children who do not receive adequate "nurturing care' (e.g., health, nutrition, early development, learning opportunities, care and protection) tend to have lowered cognitive, language and psychosocial outcomes which translates to lowered academic achievement in primary school. The 2014 Oman Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) showed that only 25 per cent of children under-five have three or more children's books. The percentage of children ages 36—59 months who are developmentally on track in at least three of the four domains (literacy-numeracy, physical, social-emotional, and learning) is 68 per cent.[1] While early childhood education services in Oman have expanded rapidly in recent years, participation in early childhood development programmes, particularly in nurseries and day care, is still relatively low, despite strong public commitment and widespread acknowledgement of the importance of a good start in life for social and economic development. Early childhood development services, such as kindergartens and nurseries, are mostly provided through the private sector and tend to be limited in remote areas. Enrolment in ECE for 3—5 year-olds was reported at 50 per cent during the 2017/18 school year.[2]

Inclusion of children with disabilities in preschools is limited.[3] According to a formative research study conducted in 2019 on perceptions around inclusion, parents of children with disabilities were concerned about the well-being of their children in school, given the stigma and discrimination that their children might face. Parents of children without disabilities and young people themselves expressed reservations on the benefits of inclusion and described their interaction with CWD as evoking pity or discomfort, with some even saying that CWD are "not normal." Some parents refused to have their children in inclusive classes with CWD.[4]

Violence against children is outlawed in all settings, including schools, by the Child Law of 2014. Yet, a significant proportion of children and young people are exposed to violence in schools, communities and families. Limited availability of recent prevalence data makes it difficult to gain a more complete understanding of the many dimensions and extent of this issue.

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Strategic approach

UNICEF Oman worked with the Programme Management Group (PMG) and the Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) Task Force, comprised of officials from the ministries of information, education, health, social development as well as the National Centre for Statistics and Information, on the development of a strategy to address ECD, inclusion of CWD and VAC. A formative research study was conducted to inform and guide the design and delivery of the strategy, beginning with a comprehensive desk review to provide information on what is already known about these areas in the Omani context. The review highlighted additional areas where information was missing, and these gaps also informed and guided the research inquiry and development of a qualitative study research protocol that focused on:

1. Obtaining a deeper understanding of knowledge and practices related to ECD/ECE, inclusion of children with disabilities, and violence against children and identifying any myths and cultural beliefs that influence caregiver behaviours.

2. Identifying common practices associated with child development, upbringing, and care in early years and exploring reasons behind low exclusive breastfeeding rates and early initiation of complementary feeding, and factors that contribute to resistance to exclusive breastfeeding.

3. Exploring the perceptions of the community on ECD and obtaining a better understanding of early schooling perceptions.

4. Exploring infrastructural, social, and cultural challenges to inclusion of children with disabilities.

Exploring knowledge and attitudes on positive disciplinary measures, identifying potential entry points and platforms for implementing a positive parenting programme, and exploring credible sources of information ECD/ECE, inclusion, and positive discipline.[5]

A strategy document was developed based on findings from the formative research. The overall communication goals of the strategy were to:

1. Contribute to the scaling up and strengthening of Oman's IECD and positive parenting interventions.

2. Contribute to the acceptance, scaling up and strengthening of inclusion of children with disabilities in the education system.

3. Contribute to improving awareness of parents/caregivers, teachers, communities and to foster an environment that will eliminate and stop violence against children in households and schools.

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♞ Strategic approach

Activities were planned on three levels: policy, service delivery and interpersonal. At the policy level, advocacy and high-level engagement activities were planned with senior officials, decision makers and media. At the service delivery level, activities aimed to enhance the capacity of health providers and educators on IECD, inter-personal communication (IPC), nutrition, ECE and early stimulation. A wide range of interpersonal level activities were planned, including:

- A national communication campaign on IECD targeting caretakers of children between 0—8 years, EVAC, and inclusion of CWD targeting caregivers between 0—18 years and influencers.

- Social mobilization activities in priority zones through identification and capacity building of local partners and NGOs.

- Awareness raising activities at pre-schools and schools.

- Celebrating International days in relation to IECD, EVAC, and CWDs.

- Engaging religious institutions to promote IECD, Nutrition, and preschool education.

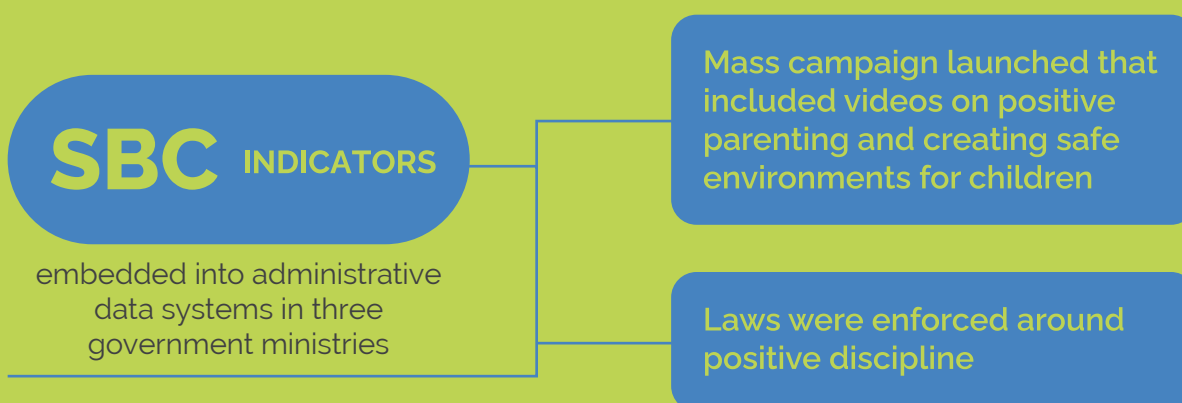- Research, monitoring and evaluation.

- Management and coordination.

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Key achievements

- UNICEF Oman delivered a joint cross-sectoral SBC strategy for the Government of Oman.

- UNICEF Oman formed an SBC Taskforce to oversee and achieve the SBC activities in the strategy workplan.

- Social and behaviour change indicators were embedded into administrative data systems in three government ministries.

- UNICEF Oman developed a training-of-trainers curriculum on how to counsel caregivers on IECD and nutrition and developed job aides and digital tools for health providers.

- UNICEF Oman supported the launch of a mass campaign (*Our Children, Our Priority)* with the Government of Oman, including videos on positive parenting and creating safe environments for children.

- Nutrition protocols and child feeding practices were developed and/or updated.

- Manuals for handling reported cases of violence, bullying and cyberbullying were updated.

- Advocacy was conducted for ensuring the opening of additional inclusive preschools and ensuring quality preschool education.

- Laws were enforced around positive discipline.

- Training for media personnel was conducted to highlight the importance of IECD and positive discipline for the future of Omani children.

- Capacity building sessions were conducted to train Health, Education, and Social Development focal points at the ministry level to communicate with the media about IECD, EVAC and inclusion.

SBC INDICATORS

embedded into administrative data systems in three government ministries

Mass campaign launched that included videos on positive parenting and creating safe environments for children

Laws were enforced around positive discipline

Lessons learned

1 A key challenge was getting the SBC Taskforce to implement SBC strategy activities. It may be necessary to create a higher-level governing structure to strengthen the implementation mechanism.

Recommendations

1 Generate more data to serve as evidence to improve the strategy.

2 Advocate for various ministry sectors to include more social indicators into their administrative data systems.

3 Add community engagement and community mobilization components to round out the strategy (it was missing from the initial strategy).

Endnotes

1 M&D Consulting, *Oman Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategy 2021-2024,* UNICEF Oman, 2021.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 M&D Consulting, 'Formative Research to Support Development of a C4D Programme with the Aim of Enhancing Practices in IIECD, Protection from Violence and Inclusion of Children with Disabilities', 2019.

5 Ibid.

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UNICEF Venezuela Implements *Jornadas* to Enhance Community Engagement for Child Protection

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

Dates of Activity
2019 to 2022

Duration

Budget

In 2019, UNICEF Venezuela engaged with communities to improve the child protection environment that was eroding due to the country's socioeconomic crisis and out-migration. In collaboration with implementing partners and community member 'co-designers', UNICEF created *Jornadas* ('Journeys' or 'Days with Children'), a programme to deliver essential information and services to vulnerable communities, including water, sanitation, health, nutrition, and education. Implementing partners and health professionals from the communities were trained on children's rights, child protection, WASH, nutrition and other critical healthcare services. Household surveys were used to solicit feedback to the *Jornadas* in order to improve the programme. In 2019, nineteen *Jornadas* were held in the states of Táchira, Bolívar, Zulia, and Miranda. The state offices invested a total of US$140,748, and 21,619 people benefited, including 11,958 boys, girls, adolescents, and women. The *Jornadas* encouraged the improvement of the quality of services through the training of service providers.

Context

In 2019, Venezuela was experiencing a socioeconomic crisis that directly impacted the country's children. Power outages disrupted the water supply, and fuel and cooking gas shortages were felt throughout the country. The crisis had repercussions on hygiene, health, nutrition and education, putting children at increased risk of diarrheal and vaccine-preventable diseases, hindering the production and consumption of food, and leading to school absenteeism and dropout. This rapid deterioration of a protective environment exposed children to family separation, gender-based violence, trafficking, child labour, sexual abuse and exploitation, mainly affecting women and girls and exposing them to the worst forms of child labour. It was estimated that 1.3 million children and adolescents required protection services, while more than one million children remained out of school. In that same year, there was a massive out-migration of Venezuelans (including skilled labour in critical areas) to neighbouring countries. The country had to address and resolve the urgent problems that affected the survival of households caused by the structural crisis in the country.

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Strategic approach

To respond to the critical needs of children and vulnerable populations, UNICEF Venezuela's C4D team, in collaboration with a set of allies, implemented 19 *Jornadas* in four priority states (Bolivar, Tachira, Zulia, and Miranda), bringing essential services to those communities.[1] The first step involved engaging the programme areas within the country office to work together (including pooling resources), uniting partners, and identifying geographic intervention priorities. Next, UNICEF Venezuela organized meetings with community leaders to identify specific challenges experienced by children, and their achievements in addressing community needs. This type of active listening allowed the UNICEF team to learn from the community, and understand their ways of working to achieve concrete results. The meetings also helped to identify other social challenges that were not on UNICEFs radar (e.g., the issue of lice among boys and girls and how it affected their self-esteem). Alliances with various service providers were formed to meet the needs of each community. The *Jornadas* involved 53 organizations in total. This group comprised government entities, NGOs, foundations, and various private sector organizations with corporate social responsibility programmes. All those involved, especially those from the selected communities, were trained to welcome their community with kindness while listening to them and promoting a dialogue that would consolidate bonds of trust and friendship.

The fourth step in UNICEF's response process was the design and implementation of the *Jornadas*. The *Jornadas* were held in centralized areas chosen by the community to facilitate access to anyone interested in participating. Before each service (e.g., vaccination, training, psychological or legal support) or product distribution (e.g., water treatment tablets, soap, micronutrients, deworming medication), each

group received messages that promoted such life-saving habits as hand washing and positive parenting. The designated day of activities included:

- Advice on the protection and rights of children
- Nutrition evaluations for children under-five
- Immunizations for children and adolescents
- Delivery of water and hygiene kits
- Recreational activities for children through using a recreational kit provided by UNICEF
- A teen pregnancy prevention workshop
- A child sexual abuse prevention workshop
- A workshop on schools as a protected and protective space
- Paediatric services
- Hand washing workshops
- Hairdressing services

The fifth and final phase of the *Jornadas* activity was the evaluation of the sessions that were carried out. The assessment included household surveys and surveys of Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) that measured the degree of satisfaction and other apparent needs of participants, and recording lessons learned that would improve subsequent *Jornadas*. A meeting with all the allies was held to analyse the data from the surveys and identify points to improve for the next *Jornada*. This evaluation process culminated in a report that was shared with the allies and communities.

Key achievements

1. In 2019, 19 *Jornadas* were held in the states prioritized by UNICEF Venezuela. The offices in Táchira, Bolívar, Zulia, and Miranda, were all involved and invested a total of US$140,748.

2. Twenty-one thousand six hundred nineteen people benefited from the *Jornadas*, including 11,958 boys, girls, adolescents, and women.

3. The initiative brought together all the necessary components for social transformation and sustainable behaviour change.

4. The *Jornadas* encouraged the improvement of the quality of services through the training of service providers.

5. The *Jornadas* motivated sustainability through public policymakers' involvement and media promotion.

6. The *Jornadas* inspired the interest in a similar initiative through a ship that provides services in isolated communities of the Delta Amacuro State. The Delta Amacuro Statis is located in the extreme east of the country, with a high population in a situation of vulnerability. The hospital ship is in operation under the coordination of the Ministry of the Power of Popular Health (MPPS) and has the technical support of UNICEF Venezuela, especially from the Field Office located in the State of Bolívar.

7. UNICEF Venezuela established communication channels via e-mail and telephone to receive information more quickly from the affected populations, leading to faster improvements in services.

State offices invested a total of

US$140,748

19 *JORNADAS*

implemented in four priority states

21,619

people benefited, including

11,958

boys, girls, adolescents, and women

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⭐ Lessons learned

1 Programme or activity planning should be community driven. Involving the community in the design process guaranteed a greater community commitment.

2 The ideal place to carry out a *Jornada* is where the community typically gathers (e.g., schools, churches, bus stations). On one occasion, a *Jornada* was held in the parking lot of a cheese factory.

3 The environment for the *Jornada* should be attractive to appeal to the entire community.

4 Paintings, children's games, and entertainers that provide information on the topics selected by the communities are great resources for motivating knowledge, attitude and behaviour change.

5 Monitoring and advocacy are essential components for the success of *Jornadas*. Those that participated in *Jornadas* were asked about the quality of the services and reminded of their rights in an effort to continually improve the quality of activities and advocate about rights.

💡 Recommendations

1 Conduct internal UNICEF discussions with all sections about contributing to, and participating in, *Jornadas*. Planning was carried out in partnership with the programmatic areas, where each one contributed proportionally with funds available for community actions. These discussions guided the selection of prioritized communities, the situation analyses of the territories where various programmatic areas were located, and facilitated the coordination of actions.

2 Ensure that activity planning is adaptable. In some cases, the activities proposed by UNICEF and partners at the national level did not correspond to the needs of the communities. The UNICEF plan was then adapted and the search for local allies was defined based on the dialogue established with the communities.

Endnotes

1   Fifty-three partners were involved, including state and municipal governments, UN agencies (UNFPA, IOM), the private sector (*Peluquería Salvador, Coramodio, Venamcham*), foundations (FUNDANAMO), and NGOs (AVESA, Red de Casas Don Bosco, HIAS).

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UNICEF Launches Initiative to Improve Social Norms Measurement and Programming

Key social and behaviour change (SBC) strategies, achievements and lessons learned

Brief summary

Dates of Activity
December 2019 – January 2023

Duration
3 years

Budget
Unavailable

For UNICEF's Child Protection (CP) Section, promoting positive social norms is now widely recognized as a key strategy to address the elimination of harmful practices (e.g., violence against children) and improving caregiving practices. There remains, however, limited robust information about how norms motivate action among various behavioural drivers, hindering the ability of programme implementers to show rigorous evidence of change. Similarly, there are also limited field tested tools related to measuring changes on these drivers and related social norms which compounds the capacity to measure such change. Measuring shifts in social and behavioural norms is a UNICEF priority underlying the development of evidence-based

social and behaviour change (SBC) programmes to strengthen both its programming as well as the capacity across the sector. A series of multi-year mixed-methods studies encompassing population-based surveys, anthropological and field observation qualitative research on different child protection topics were conducted across nine countries that resulted in the development of validated research tools and guides to measure social and behavioural norm change. This also included conducted developing grounded study findings in Child Discipline. Child Marriage, Sexual Violence, Intimate Partner Violence, Child Labour, Female Genital Mutilation, Child Feeding, and Xenophobia.

Context

The issue of measuring social and behavioural norms is particularly acute when examining discriminatory norms and social determinants that are at the root of harmful practices perpetuated across generations, such as child marriage, teenage pregnancy, female genital mutilation (FGM), child labour, violence, and poor education. Underlying such practices are a complex set of social and behavioural drivers that exist at the individual level (attitudes, beliefs, agency), the group level (community dynamics, social influences, norms), and within the broader enabling environment (government entities, structural barriers).

A significant number of UNICEF Country Offices across regions expressed the need for innovative and accessible guidance and tools that can provide programmatic and concrete ways of planning, delivering, and tracking progress while acknowledging the complexity of human behaviour at multiple levels (i.e., bridging complex theories with the reality of the field). To support country offices, UNICEF HQ invested in developing a strengthened conceptual and programmatic approach to measuring positive social and behaviour change, including launching the *Cross-Regional Social Norms Change Initiative on Harmful Practices* to develop a set of monitoring tools focused on social and behaviour change. The aim of this initiative was to move away from relying on basic prevalence data and anecdotal evidence toward obtaining an in-depth understanding of why people do what they do and put concrete values on the social and behavioural drivers.

Strategic approach

Building on work initiated in 2015 by the UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO) to measure social norms related to CP in Senegal, the UNICEF Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) and CP teams in the Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (MENARO) partnered with UNICEF HQ and nine country offices (Djibouti, Lebanon, Jordan, Mozambique, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Yemen and Zimbabwe) to develop a set of monitoring tools focused on social and behaviour change around child marriage, FGM and violent discipline. In December 2019, *Ipsos* (a global market research firm) was commissioned by UNICEF MENARO SBC to design:

- A conceptual framework on the drivers of SBC that is the theoretical basis for other tools;

- A practical guide for social norms programming; and

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- A monitoring toolkit on social and behavioural drivers of CP issues, including a) indicators for drivers of Child Marriage (CM), Child Discipline (CD), and FGM; b) questionnaires on CM, CD and FGM, in English, Arabic and French designed to be administered to caregivers of children; c) qualitative instruments (focus group discussion (FGD) and key informant interview (KII) guides); and d) a guidance tool on the use of the toolkit, including articulation between qualitative and quantitative research, and adaption of the questionnaires to specific contexts.

- Provide research findings and selected programmatic insights based on the results of the studies for integration for UNICEF country offices.

Ipsos conducted a desk review as a foundation for the tools and guidance development, and used cognitive and pilot testing to ensure that the tools were valid, appropriate, and easy-to-use. The research team largely targeted caregivers ages 18-49 by specific geographies and/or sociodemographic groups to understand social norms around the selected key child protection issues. In most circumstances, the Ipsos team used computer-aided in-person interviewing (CAPI) methodology to collect data on tablets and phones which had numerous advantages over traditional pen-and-paper methods including built-in logic, GPS, validity/consistency checks, and reduced data processing. For the qualitative aspect, in field observation and anthropological studies were conducted on selected areas of identified countries.

Key achievements

- Ipsos, in collaboration with UNICEF SBC teams at global regional level, successfully concluded the mixed-methods studies across the participating nine countries which is currently leading into the development of field tested and validated programme monitoring and population surveys research tools and guides to measure social and behavioural norm change.

- Several UNICEF country offices across the three regions are now interested in conducting surveys on these topics (CM, CD and FGM), as well as on additional Child Protection topics such as Sexual Violence, Domestic Violence, Child Labour, and Xenophobia, following the same approach.

- A UNICEF Workshop on Behavioural Surveys was held in Dubai, UAE on February 6th-10th 2023 to chart the path forward on the measurement, research, and evidence efforts in the area. This included the review and discussion of survey findings and programmatic insights with the participating countries staff, identifying ways to use the

research findings and workshop outcomes for programme strengthening, and to chart next steps for advocacy and dissemination with policymakers and key stakeholders.

Nine countries conducted a series of multi-year mixed-methods studies

The studies focused on

CAREGIVERS AGES

18-49

to understand social norms around selected key child protection issues.

Lessons Learned

1 **Conduct formative research**: Where program goals are nascent, formative research (often qualitative) is critical in ensuring the usefulness of indicator tracking.

2 **Streamline survey instruments**: Shorter survey instruments will reduce survey fatigue and improve respondent experiences.

3 **Conduct a formal pilot**: The formal pilot period for each survey instrument (n=90 for most) was critical not only for finalizing the questionnaire, but also for ensuring enumerator familiarity with research design and fieldwork plans, as well as comfort with sensitive topics and specific wording to measure challenging concepts. This phase is also key in finalizing customized quality assurance processes.

4 **Include participant-centered informed consent processes**: Collecting data from people residing in areas impacted by fragility, conflict, and violence is critical in developing an understanding of their lives and improving conditions in communities; however, these same environmental challenges also significantly impact the collection of these data. Enforcing an institutionally required conventional informed consent process (e.g., a signed document) can create barriers to participation among certain populations (e.g., low literacy; high distrust of perceived authority), leading to data that inaccurately represents populations of interest. In-depth understanding of the target population and research context is critical, which demands the involvement of local experts with extensive experience both in research ethics and in the needs of the community.

5 **Conduct follow-up research**: Qualitative follow-up research can support the exploration of seemingly contradictory quantitative findings and unpack the extent to which social desirability bias may have been present during quantitative data collection.

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Recommendations

1 Continue to refine the tools and guides to be more comprehensive and advanced, field-oriented and user-friendly.

2 Conduct additional analyses that focuses on contradictions and what they tell us about people (e.g. intention/action gap, biases, norms) or the collection mechanisms (sequencing, prompts, etc.)

3 Orient UNICEF Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) on the newly developed tools and methodologies.

4 Engage PM&E colleagues in participating country offices as partners to help translate the data.

5 Conduct internal advocacy to increase other sectors' ownership of the SBC tools, methodologies, and data.

6 Advocate for SBC data usage across different levels within UNICEF.

7 UNICEF HQ should assess the separate costing of qualitative and quantitative research components within the study and develop a brief costing tool that covers full implementation (including report writing, translation, etc.).

8 UNICEF regional offices and HQ should create a minimum bank of indicators that countries can use

9 UNICEF HQ should provide support on how to design country data strategies to get more rapid data.

10 Consider how rapid tools such as U-Report and the CRAs (Community Rapid Assessments) can be utilized for data collection as well as social mobilization.

11 Orient UNICEF LTA research entities on BDM and new SBC tools and methodologies.

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UNICEF Niger Supports Girls and Youth Empowerment Through Skills-Building Platform and Community Hubs

Key social and behavior change (SBC) strategies, achievements, and lessons learned

Brief summary

Dates of Activity
January-December 2022

Duration
12 months

Budget
655,327 USD

As part of the UNICEF 2019-2021 Country Programme, UNICEF Niger supported social and behavioural change interventions for youth and adolescents, including activities to change social norms that are harmful to girls and young mothers (e.g., arranged marriages). UNICEF Niger developed a digital mapping platform, installed on the Ministry of Youth and Sports server, that facilitated the registration of 5,315 youth-based associations in eight regions. The UNICEF Niger team set up 11 connectivity hubs equipped with 21 laptops and 22 desktops where adolescents and young people could build capacity and skills and co-create social innovations to improve

self-efficacy, transform negative social and gender norms and contribute to positive change in their communities. A national community-based approach was also implemented, Niya Da Alkaweli (Love and Promise), based on 16 norms and standards of quality community engagement, in four regions. About 2,200 adolescents and young people (986 girls and women) from 948 villages in the four regions were trained in community profiling, causal analysis, group problem-solving and facilitation of community assessments, and dialogues and planning of youth-led community engagement initiatives.

Context

In 2022, the population of Niger was 26.2 million, 47 per cent of whom were under the age of 14 years.[1] The majority (83%) of the population live in rural areas.[2] Patriarchal and hierarchical gender relations are the norm in the country's seven regions. Women and young people have little involvement in family decisions, which limits their access to social and economic services, hinders their survival and development, and affects their ability to adapt to crises and shocks.[3]

Niger has one of the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world. At least 85 per cent of women aged 20-24 in rural areas were married by the age of 18, compared to 43 per cent in urban areas.[4,5]   An estimated 28 per cent of girls are married before the age of 15. Child marriage is driven by gender inequality and the belief that women and girls are inferior to men and boys. Cultural norms give married girls a certain level of respect within society that they could not achieve if they were unmarried.[6] As part of the UNICEF 2019-2021 Country Programme, UNICEF Niger supported social and behavioural change interventions for youth and adolescents, including activities to change social norms that are harmful to girls and young mothers, for example, arranged marriages. UNICEF supported youth and adolescent civic engagement through empowerment and participation in inclusive and accessible spaces that ensured adolescents and youth (especially the most vulnerable) were accounted for and heard.

Since 2021, Niger's security challenges have displaced more than 3.7 million people (including two million children), exacerbated poverty, increased food insecurity, and created a situation of insufficient opportunities for young people. In May 2022, 759 primary schools and 34 secondary schools were closed nationwide due to the security situation, affecting more than 68,000 children, 48 per cent of whom were girls.[7] Only 27 per cent of females 15-19 years are literate, compared to 50 per cent of boys in the same age group.[8] Many girls drop out of school or are excluded due to an unsafe environment, placing them at higher risk of marrying young due to limited alternative options.[9]

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♞ Strategic approach

In 2022, UNICEF Niger initiated an inclusive youth movement to support programmatic priorities including the promotion of positive social and gender norms; climate action; promotion of peace and social cohesion; and generation of demand for basic social services (e.g., immunization, entrepreneurship). To support this youth movement, UNICEF Niger developed a digital mapping platform, installed on the Ministry of Youth and Sports server that facilitated the registration of 5,315 youth-based associations in eight regions.

The UNICEF Niger team set up 11 connectivity hubs equipped with 21 laptops and 22 desktops. The connectivity hubs are spaces where adolescents and young people can build capacity and skills (e.g., entrepreneurship, advocacy, leadership, non-violent conflict management), reflect on relevant issues, engage in decision-making with others, and by co-creating social innovations to improve self-efficacy, transform negative social and gender norms and contribute to positive change in their communities. In 2022, a national community-based approach, *Niya Da Alkaweli* (Love and Promise), based on 16 norms and standards of quality community engagement, was also implemented in four regions (Maradi, Zinder, Diffa and Tahoua). Almost 2,200 adolescents and young people (986 girls and women) from 948 villages in the four regions were trained in community profiling, causal analysis, group problem-solving and facilitation of community assessments, and dialogues and planning of youth-led community engagement initiatives.

Since 2017, Niger has been holding a five-day conference called the "Forum national pour l'autonomisation de la femme et des jeunes" (National forum for the empowerment of women and youth, or FONAF), a platform for showcasing and amplifying girls' experience and skills. This forum is attended by regional authorities, UN Women representatives, youth entrepreneurs from regions throughout Niger, and more than 500 exhibitors (e.g., a vegetable dying business, a pureed tomato enterprise, and a local spice dealer). In 2022, UNICEF supported the empowerment of young girls through capacity building on agri-food processing to allow young girls to develop their business and train their peers. During the 6th FONAF in 2022, young girls who received training during the 5th forum in 2021 shared their transformational journeys. The women shared their challenges marketing local products and were able to discuss solutions and strategies with decision makers and received support and advice from girls of the 2021 cohort. For example, in rural areas, households have vegetable gardens used for their daily subsistence, but most people have no refrigerator. The trained youth developed the idea of teaching female youth to process and conserve tomatoes as pureed or peeled to avoid waste and enable them to preserve their produce for 20 months without needing a fridge, and to save money and preserve the environment at the same time.

At the national level, UNICEF Niger supported the participatory development and the validation of the National Youth Policy and operational plan through a validation workshop. At the institutional level, The UNICEF country office supported the creation and operationalization of 13 frameworks to guide the coordination of activities for and with youth and adolescents (including those with disabilities) and monitoring implemented by youth movements. Niger also supported capacity building among local authorities and within communities (including religious leaders, local media, and local NGOs) to create an environment conducive to inter-generational dialogue, participation and engagement of adolescents and young people in community life, and to increase social accountability and social cohesion.

Key achievements

- At least 5,315 youth and sports associations were registered on the digital mapping platform which remains functional on the Ministry of Youth server.

- UNICEF supported 303 associations working to promote citizenship, culture of peace and youth leadership.

- With UNICEF's support, 15,586 girls and boys participated in the skills development, empowerment, civic engagement and/or employment training led by the Ministry of Youth with support from UNICEF. At least 6,395 youth (35 per cent girls) were trained on advocacy techniques, leadership, associative life and prevention and management of conflict through the associations.

- Over 7,000 young people and adolescents (30 per cent girls) developed various skills under the leadership of the Ministry of Youth.

- 360 individuals (women, youth, religious and traditional leaders, elected officials, refugees and people with disabilities) reported having developed the capacity to host community debates and dialogues.

- UNICEF's support to the FONAF contributed to empowering young women and girls, recognizing their value within the communities, and fostering women and girls' autonomy and self-efficacy; 237 young girls were trained specifically in agribusiness and vegetable dyeing.

- UNICEF supported 32 training sessions for youth and adolescents in simplified accounting and literacy in collaboration with regional youth directorates. 47 girls successfully completed the literacy and basic accounting training. Out of these 47, thirty girls from Gaffati, Koleram, Jirataoua and Doguerawa villages actively marketed their products.

- The youth entrepreneurship model has strengthened citizen engagement and motivated decision makers to support financing micro, small, and medium-size enterprises in Niger.

- 13 coordination and accountability frameworks were co-created with young people at the municipal level that reinforce the culture of including the voices of youth and adolescents in local governance.

- UNICEF supported the development and the validation of the National Youth Policy and action plan through a validation workshop.

5,315
youth and sports associations were registered on the digital mapping platform

7,000+
young people and adolescents participated in skills-development trainings

237
young girls were trained specifically in agribusiness

Lessons Learned

1 Young people's entrepreneurship can be an important lever for change, especially among young females.

2 As a result of UNICEF's support to the FONAF, girls' interest in entrepreneurship increased; many are successfully creating and managing micro-enterprises in Niger and changing the power dynamics in their family and in the community.

3 Girls that participate in entrepreneurial activities were regarded as role models by their peers and were able to share their experience with neighboring communities.

4 Girls' economic empowerment can be leveraged to abandon harmful practices such as child marriage and gender-based violence; parents that value a girl's productivity will allows her to delay marriage.

5 The trainings created a critical mass of young people and adolescents with the self-efficacy to act as leaders and contribute for social and gender norms transformation in their communities.

6 The establishment of coordination frameworks at the municipal developed with and for young people reinforced the culture of including the voices of adolescents and young people in decision-making and community development.

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Recommendations

1 The Ministry of Youth should prioritize the operationalization of the National Youth policy and action plan.

2 The Ministry of Youth should promote the digital mapping platform to grow the number of youth and youth associations registered to accelerate the spread of a youth-led social movement for social and behavior change.

3 The Ministry of Youth should strengthen initiatives or policies that focus on providing young women entrepreneurs in rural community with access to credit, vocational training, and literacy opportunities in collaboration with other relevant sectors.

4 The Ministry of Commerce and Industry should promote local consumption to boost the sales and the profitability of young women entrepreneurs.

5 The Ministry of Commerce and Industry to facilitate funding opportunities for startups and small and medium-sized enterprises and made accessible to young women entrepreneurs.

6 The Ministry of Commerce and Industry should further support young women entrepreneurs through agricultural and entrepreneurial public policies at the institutional level (e.g., abolition or reduction of the business tax for the first five years in business), and by creating pathways for young entrepreneurs to access appropriate local expertise, resources and support.

7 The Ministry of Commerce and Industry should incorporate the use of digital/ICT-based platforms and prioritize the digital transformation in business strategy and development. A digital mapping of the initiatives can contribute to greater visibility and influence of public policies supportive of girls' entrepreneurship.

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Endnotes

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