

UNFPA-UNICEF  
GLOBAL PROGRAMME  
TO END CHILD MARRIAGE

# ACT NOW:

Accelerating gender equality  
by eliminating child marriage  
in a pandemic

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2020



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UNFPA-UNICEF **GLOBAL PROGRAMME TO END CHILD MARRIAGE**

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The Global Programme to End Child Marriage is generously funded by the Governments of Belgium, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom, the European Union through the Spotlight Initiative, and Zonta International.

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# PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Programme/project name	UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage
<b>Donors</b>	Governments of Belgium, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom, the European Commission and Zonta International
<b>Contributions to Global Programme valid in Phase II</b>	UNICEF and UNFPA: EUR 8,000,000 from Belgium CAD 30,000,000 from Canada US\$ 646,840 from Italy EUR 30,000,000 from the Netherlands NOK 276,700,000 from Norway US\$ 1,485,000 from Zonta International EUR 6,375,062 from the European Commission EUR 7,500,000 from the European Commission (Spotlight Initiative)
<b>Global Programme funds used to date</b>	Phase I UNICEF: US\$ 51,421,765.47 as at 31 December 2019 UNFPA: US\$ 32,413,294 as at 31 December 2019 Phase II UNICEF: US\$ 8,640,253.09 from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020 UNFPA: US\$ 5,287,586 from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020
<b>Balance forwarded to 2021-2023</b>	UNICEF: US\$ 14,823,639.36 as at 31 December 2020 UNFPA: US\$ 15,117,139 as at 31 December 2020
<b>Duration of grants</b>	UNICEF SC160258 pass-through: 15 March 2016 to 31 December 2023 SC160614 EU: 24 November 2016 to 23 September 2020 UNFPA UCJ18 UNICEF to UNFPA: 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2023
<b>Report type</b>	Progress – Headquarters Regional offices of South Asia, West and Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, and Middle East and North Africa Country offices of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia, and Yemen
<b>Reporting period</b>	1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020
<b>Report due date</b>	31 May 2021
<b>Report prepared on</b>	31 May 2021
<b>Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets and UNICEF and UNFPA Strategic Plan priorities</b>	SDG 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation UNICEF Strategic Plan Outcome P6: Increased national capacity to provide access to child protection systems that prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. Output P6.b.4 Countries (of those with child marriage prevalence is 25% or higher) with national strategies or plans on child marriage with a budget. UNFPA Strategic Plan Output 6: Young people, in particular adolescent girls, have the skills and capabilities to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health and rights, and well-being Output 9: Strengthened policy, legal and accountability frameworks to advance gender equality and empower women and girls to exercise their reproductive rights and to be protected from violence and harmful practices Output 12: Strengthened response to eliminate harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and son preference

<b>Focus population</b>	<p>Adolescent girls at risk of and affected by child marriage</p> <p>Adolescent boys, families, traditional and religious leaders, community groups, and other influencers</p> <p>Sectoral systems and institutions (education, health, child protection, gender-based violence, social protection)</p> <p>Government and civil society organizations, regional and global institutions</p>
<b>Programme partners</b>	<p>In the 12 focus countries, the Global Programme works with governments at both national and subnational levels, regional bodies engaged in relevant initiatives, academic institutions, international and national non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, religious communities, faith-based organizations, the private sector and the media</p>
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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACRL	African Council of Religious Leaders
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
CAG	Community action group
CBO	Community-based organization
COVID-19	Novel Coronavirus disease 2019
CRANK	Child Marriage Research to Action Network
CSO	Civil society organization
EAC	East African Community
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FGM	Female genital mutilation
GBVIMS	Gender-Based Violence Information Management System
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IHME	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation
ILO	International Labour Organization
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MIS	Management information system
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Program
RAHU	Reach a Hand Uganda
REPSSI	Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative
SAA	Social Analysis and Action
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SACG	South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SAEP	Standardized Adolescent Empowerment Package
SAIEVAC	South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SOGI	Sexual orientations and gender identities
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Country Framework
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WBCPCR	West Bengal Commission for the Protection of Child Rights
WHO	World Health Organization

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Trends in child marriage

In the last decade, the marriages of some 25 million girls have been averted thanks to the decline in the prevalence of child marriage globally from nearly 1 in 4 to 1 in 5 girls being married before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. However, this remarkable accomplishment is now under threat. COVID-19 has upended the lives of children, adolescents and families across the globe, and adversely affected programmes to end child marriage. An additional 10 million girls are at risk of becoming child brides before the end of the decade, child marriages that otherwise might have been averted.<sup>1</sup> One year into the pandemic, urgent action is needed to prevent and mitigate the toll of COVID-19 on children, adolescents, and their families.

The COVID-19 pandemic is raising the risk of child marriage through five main pathways:

1. interrupted education
2. economic and food insecurity
3. disruptions to programmes and services
4. adolescent pregnancy, and
5. death of a parent or primary caretaker

Most child marriages due to COVID-19 are expected to occur in the near term among older girls. However, the impact of the pandemic is likely to be felt for at least another decade, also raising the risk of child marriage.

## Key accomplishments

Building on the achievements of Phase I (2016-2019), Phase II of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage (the Global Programme) was launched in 2020 with an emphasis on gender-transformative approaches and human rights-based programming, strengthened global partnerships and a clearly defined learning agenda. As a result, the Global Programme has reaffirmed its global convening role, including by ensuring that child marriage remains prominent on the intergovernmental agenda especially in the critical period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Notably, in 2020, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a new resolution on child, early and forced marriage.<sup>2</sup> The resolution was co-led by Canada and Zambia and co-sponsored by 114 countries and: (a) highlights concerning trends in child, early and forced marriages emerging in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (underpinned by early estimates produced by UNFPA on the potential impact of the pandemic on child marriage); (b) recognizes child, early and forced marriages as an abuse of human rights and a major obstacle to the fulfilment of women's and girls' potential by putting an end to their education, resulting in health complications and putting them at higher risk of encountering discrimination and violence throughout their lives; (c) underscores that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these effects; and (d) calls upon the international community to take concrete action to

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