TECHNICAL NOTE ON SCALING UP EFFORTS TO END CHILD MARRIAGE: THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME APPROACH

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Globally, the decline in child marriage rates has accelerated over the past 10 years. However, the rate of progress remains far too slow to achieve target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): eliminating child marriage by 2030. Achieving impact at scale is not only crucial for meeting SDG target 5.3, but for the achievement of the SDGs in their entirety.[1]

This technical note aims to promote a common understanding of key concepts and to provide guidance on approaches to working at scale in the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Global Programme to End Child Marriage (the Global Programme). This note draws on literature about scaling up development programmes,[2] as well as strategies from Phase I of the Global Programme. In addition to supporting large-scale interventions through the various strategies described below, the Global Programme has an important role to play in strengthening the evidence base on scaling up gender-transformative interventions.[3]

DEFINING SCALE-UP

The Global Programme's multisectoral approach extends beyond ending child marriage to the promotion of gender-equitable institutions and norms that influence child marriage at all levels – from policies and laws, system strengthening and services, to support at the community, family and individual level. The Global Programme aims to accelerate large-scale change by focusing on interventions with potential for scaling up and expanding its geographic scope, thus reaching greater numbers of adolescent girls, their families and their communities.

The Global Programme draws on various scaling-up typologies and promotes the following scaling-up strategies:[4]

- **Horizontal scaling-up**, which is the replication of effective interventions, expansion of geographic coverage and increase of the target population reached.
- **Vertical scaling-up**, which institutionalizes specific proven or promising approaches and innovations in government policies and systems.

- **Use of media platforms to widely disseminate ideas, information and innovations.**
- **Engagement or partnerships with networks, organizations or social movements** that can help reach and mobilize large constituencies of people with shared interests and willingness to act.
- **Grafting**, which adds additional components to existing large-scale government or donor initiatives.

POTENTIAL PATHWAYS TO SCALE GLOBAL PROGRAMME INTERVENTIONS

This section has three subsections – one for each pillar of the Global Programme. Each subsection highlights the most relevant scale-up strategies for the corresponding pillar.

PILLAR 1 **Adolescent girls at risk of and affected by child marriage are effectively making their own informed decisions and choices regarding marriage, education, and sexual and reproductive health.**

- Intensive support to the most marginalized girls
- Family and community environment

Horizontal scaling-up

How can it be used in the Global Programme?

- **Support to girls:** Community-based life skills and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) programmes for the empowerment of adolescent girls are a popular strategy and have been scaled up horizontally through replication by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and service providers. In some cases, these programmes have been adapted and incorporated into the education system.
- **Community and interpersonal dialogue**[5] and group education are widely used as tools to promote social and behaviour change, alternatives to child marriage, the rights of adolescent girls and gender equality. While programming that takes a gender-transformative approach has increased over the past two decades, most of these programmes remain small in scale.[6] The most common approach to scale has been horizontal expansion and replication through NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs).

Examples:

- BRAC, the world's largest NGO by some measures, has designed a low-cost girls' empowerment intervention called Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents, which UNFPA and UNICEF have supported in Sierra Leone and Uganda. The programme has been streamlined for scale with a well-defined intervention model consisting of safe spaces for social connection, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and economic empowerment (financial literacy, livelihood skills and microfinance).

- The five ALIGN case studies provide examples and lessons from efforts to scale up the community-based programmes of Tostan, Stepping Stones, SASA!, IMAGES and GREAT.[7] They show that scaling social change programmes is not linear but requires multiple, long-term strategies with substantial investments in local expertise.

- In Nepal, a social and financial skills training package for adolescents, called Rupantaran (meaning 'transformation') is being widely implemented. The Rupantaran curriculum is used by the Nepalese government, United Nations agencies, Scouting organizations, and local and international NGOs across the country. This ensures that messaging is consistent across partners and in line with international and national guidelines.

WHAT IS NEEDED TO GO TO SCALE?

✔ An understanding of the scalable, fixed core of the effective model, and peripheral elements that can be adapted for easier scale-up.

✔ Adequate human and financial resources for implementation, learning and adaptation.

✔ Structures/institutions to support large-scale implementation, including technical support and management capacity.

✔ Engagement of local partners in scale-up to build on their expertise (rather than starting from scratch).

✔ Quality control, including monitoring fidelity to the core model.

CHALLENGES

✔ Oversimplifying the model to facilitate scale-up may reduce impact and exclude marginalized populations. For example, life skills and CSE programmes that have demonstrated impact have been fairly intensive and may not be deliverable in school contexts with the same intensity. In addition, school-based life skills and CSE programmes do not reach the most vulnerable out-of-school adolescent girls.

✔ Cutting costs while aiming to reach large numbers in a short time may compromise the effective and ethical scale-up of social norms programming.[8]

✔ Limited pool of human resources with the required skills and experience.

✔ Local resistance to the programme and lack of local ownership.

Use of media to widely disseminate ideas

How can it be used in the Global Programme? Broadcast, print and social media can be used to reach large numbers of people with information about child marriage and gender equality, to improve knowledge and attitudes, and spread behavioural innovations. Media and technology can complement community-based social and behaviour change initiatives to raise awareness. They are powerful tools that can be designed to challenge traditional gender norms and to model gender-equitable norms and behaviour patterns. There is growing evidence of the potential of media to influence gender norms through messaging about gender equality and through popular entertainment programmes that offer alternative models of gender relations.[9]

Examples:

- The Ouro Negro programme in Mozambique, supported by the Global Programme, uses radio drama, call-in shows, street theatre and social media to advance children's and adolescents' rights, gender and social and reproductive health issues. The radio component has 3–4 million weekly listeners, 70 per cent of whom reported relevant behaviour change after listening to the programme.

- In Bangladesh, the Ichhe Dana television drama and social media strategy discuss the rights of children and adolescents with a focus on child marriage. The series has more than 6 million regular viewers across Bangladesh.

- Uganda, Mozambique and Sierra Leone use the U-Report mobile text messaging platform to reach more than 200,000 adolescents with adolescent-friendly health information, and to dialogue on child marriage.

WHAT IS NEEDED TO GO TO SCALE?

✔ Existence of a variety of media channels at low cost.

✔ Understanding the digital divide by type of media and developing alternative strategies to ensure marginalized and hard-to-reach populations are reached.

✔ Monitoring reach and recall of messaging.

CHALLENGES

✔ Media-based communication strategies may be effective to raise awareness, but insufficient on their own to transform gender norms and prevent child marriage.

✔ Outcomes of social and behaviour change communication strategies are difficult to evaluate.

Engagement or partnerships with networks of organizations and social movements

How can it be used in the Global Programme? Forming coalitions with networks of women's, youth and faith-based organizations can help the Global Programme engage existing constituencies for gender transformation and ending child marriage.

Examples:

- In **Burkina Faso**, the Global Programme supports the National Coalition Against Child Marriage, which brings together more than 60 national CSOs raising their collective voice to support the implementation and scaling-up of the National Strategy to Prevent and Eliminate Child Marriage. The Coalition has conducted advocacy and mobilized law enforcement and communities by engaging opinion leaders, media, youth and women leaders at the national level.

- In **India**, the Global Programme supports Partners for Law in Development, a legal resource group pursuing the realization of social justice and equality for women, to engage CSOs working with adolescents across the domains of health, education, sexuality and child protection. To date, over 100 CSOs have been engaged through consultative dialogues and capacity-building.

- In **Sierra Leone**, the Global Programme is partnering with the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, which has played a key role in negotiating peace and facilitating dialogues among sectors in the country. As a result, religious leaders are raising awareness about the negative effects of harmful practices, including child marriage, and advocating for the implementation of policy frameworks addressing the rights of girls and boys.

- In **Zambia**, the Global Programme is partnering with the CSO Coalition on Ending Child Marriage as a strategic advocacy actor in implementation of the National Strategy to End Child Marriage and its costed National Action Plan. The Coalition has been instrumental in the development and implementation of policy and legal frameworks at the national and provincial levels, and has contributed to the creation of accountability mechanisms such as monitoring and evaluation and communications strategies.

WHAT IS NEEDED TO GO TO SCALE?

- ✔ Organized social movements and networks of grassroots organizations.
- ✔ Powerful and charismatic community leaders and influencers.
- ✔ Funding matched to purpose.
- ✔ Transparency in relationships.

CHALLENGES

- ✔ Identifying suitable rights-based, large-scale movements and networks.
- ✔ Harmonizing agendas, communication and messaging.
- ✔ Complex dynamics and relationships between governments, civil society, people's movements and the United Nations system.

PILLAR 2 Relevant sectoral systems and institutions effectively respond to the needs of adolescent girls and their families in targeted Global Programme areas.

- System strengthening
- Poverty drivers

Vertical scaling-up

How can it be used in the Global Programme? Large-scale results can be achieved through system-wide interventions that guarantee basic rights to education, health, safety and gender equality. Such interventions may include school-based life skills and comprehensive sexuality education, gender-responsive curricula, adolescent-friendly health services, and services for survivors of violence against women, girls and boys.

Examples:

- In **Bangladesh**, the Global Programme institutionalized life skills education in the national education system and skills-based education and alternative learning programmes for out-of-school adolescents in the education SWAp (Sector Wide Approach).

- In **India**, the Global Programme influenced West Bengal's 'Kanyashree Prakalpa' scheme that reaches 4.3 million girls through conditional cash transfers to incentivize their continued education and prevent child marriage.

WHAT IS NEEDED TO GO TO SCALE?

- ✔ Existence of strong administrative and programme delivery systems.
- ✔ Political will to use government resources.
- ✔ Attitudes and skills of frontline workers and managers.
- ✔ Technical support structures and capacities, including intermediary agencies.
- ✔ Monitoring of the application of national policies and of the appropriation of public funds for intended purposes.

CHALLENGES

- ✔ Limited capacities and financial resources of education and health systems.
- ✔ Limited coverage and financing of social protection programmes.
- ✔ Lack of flexibility and resistance by government departments to change curriculum, sexuality education, or adolescent reproductive health services; or to adapt conditionalities of social protection programmes, etc.
- ✔ System-level change may take a long time in low-income countries.
- ✔ Lack of synergy between large-scale system-wide initiatives and complementary community-level investments.

Grafting

How can it be used in the Global Programme? Grafting additional components onto existing large-scale government and donor-funded programmes can make them more gender responsive and contribute to greater gender equality.

Examples:

- In **Ghana**, the Global Programme integrated messaging on child marriage and early unions into existing work with the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG) – the largest NGO in Ghana providing SRH services.[10] The integration of child marriage and early unions as issues not only introduced new messaging into the programming but also enhanced a focus on contraceptive access for younger females, such as unmarried girls to prevent pregnancy and subsequent union, and married girls to delay second and even first births.

- Also in **Ghana**, the Global Programme identified communities benefiting from the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty 1000, a government-run unconditional cash transfer programme aimed at reducing poverty, increasing consumption and improving child nutrition. The Global Programme set up safe spaces in these communities, targeting marginalized girls and providing life skills training and SRH information.

- Other institutional examples include the World Bank-UNFPA partnership on the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend project, with one of the three pillars focusing on girls' education and empowerment, because of their critical role in reducing child marriage, delaying pregnancy, and helping countries tap into their youthful populations for economic development.

WHAT IS NEEDED TO GO TO SCALE?

- ✔ The existence of suitable large-scale government and donor-funded programmes and a readiness of the 'owners' of these large programmes to partner with other actors such as the Global Programme.
- ✔ Intermediary structures and agencies to provide additional technical support for implementation at scale.
- ✔ Identifying simple additions and alterations that can generate results on ending child marriage without interfering with original programme objectives.
- ✔ Quality control, including monitoring fidelity to the core model.

CHALLENGES

- ✔ Competing objectives and/or lack of commitment to gender equality in the large-scale programme.
- ✔ Lack of flexibility and resistance by governments or other programme 'owners' to provide adequate support for the new programme component.

PILLAR 3 Enhanced legal and political response to prevent child marriage and to support pregnant, married, divorced or widowed adolescent girls.

- Laws and policies
- Data and evidence

Vertical scaling-up

How can it be used in the Global Programme? Large-scale results for gender transformation can be supported through legislative reforms for gender equality (e.g., laws related to inheritance, marriage, divorce, labour and workplace, social protection, etc.) and through gender-responsive budgeting. Legal reform on the minimum age at marriage can signal to the wider population what is socially acceptable, and support new norms and behaviours. Gender-responsive budgeting is critical to ensuring that adequate funding is available for the strengthening of systems, provision of services, and implementation of strategies and action plans at subnational level.

Examples:

- Global Programme countries have supported national action plans to end child marriage. These plans are platforms for coordinated and collective actions to leverage public financing, legislative reform, efficient implementation at decentralized level, and government accountability.

- In **Bangladesh**, the Global Programme supported local administration and law enforcement officials to better understand applicability of the special provision permitting marriages below the age of 16, and the process for applying the provision.

WHAT IS NEEDED TO GO TO SCALE?

- ✔ Stable, functional legal systems and political institutions.
- ✔ Political will to allocate and use government resources.
- ✔ Technical support structures and capacities, including intermediary agencies.
- ✔ Monitoring of the application of national policies and of the appropriation of public funds for intended purposes.

CHALLENGES

- ✔ Low transparency and accountability in political institutions and legal systems.
- ✔ Lack of fiscal space and lack of political will to allocate public financial resources, particularly to benefit the most marginalized population groups.
- ✔ Political and ideological resistance to gender- transformative policies and legislation.
- ✔ Lack of commitment/interest in data and evidence-based policymaking.

ENDNOTES

1   Zamboni, Karen, et al., 'Assessing scalability of an intervention: why, how and who?', *Health Policy and Planning*, vol. 34, no. 7, 1 September 2019, pp. 544–552.

2   Cooley, Larry, and Johannes F. Linn, *Taking Innovations to Scale: Methods, applications and lessons*. Results for Development Institute, Washington, D.C., 2014, <www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/v5web_R4D_MSI-BrookingsSynthPaper0914-3.pdf>; Banerji, Annie, ' 'Game-changer' phone app aims to end child marriage in Bangladesh', *Reuters*, 7 May 2018, <www.reuters.com/article/us-bangladesh-gender child/game-changer-phone-app-aims-to-end-child-marriage-in-bangladesh-idUSKBN1I8029>; United Nations Population Fund West and Central Africa Regional Office, *Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD),* UNFPA WCARO, Dakar-Ponty, 2016, <https://wcaro.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/SWEDD_ENG.pdf>; The World Bank, *Tejaswini: Socioeconomic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls & Young Women*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2020 <http://projects.worldbank.org/P150576?lang=en>; World Health Organization, *WHO Technical Brief No.3: Scaling Up Health Services: Challenges and choices, WHO*, Geneva, 2008, <www.who.int/healthsystems/topics/delivery/technical_brief_scale-up_june12.pdf>; Cislaghi, Beniamino, et al., 'Changing Social Norms: The importance of "organized diffusion" for scaling up community health promotion and women empowerment interventions', *Prevention Science*, vol. 20, no. 6, 12 February 2019, pp. 936–946, <www.tostan.org/wp-content/uploads/Cislaghi2019_Article_ChangingSocialNormsTheImportan-1.pdf>.

3   See UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, Publications Catalogue 2016–2017: Investing in knowledge for ending child marriage, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), New York, 2018, <www.unicef.org/media/63661/file and https://www.unicef.org/protection/files/Global_Programme_Publications_Catalogue_2016-2017%281%29.pdf>.

4   Four types of scaling-up have been identified by the World Health Organization: Simmons, Ruth, Peter Fajans, and Laura Ghiron, eds., *Scaling Up Health Service Delivery: From pilot innovations to policies and programmes*, World Health Organization, Geneva, 2007 <www.who.int/immunization/hpv/deliver/scalingup_health_service_delivery_who_2007.pdf>.

ExpandNet describes four key forms of scale-up, and we have seen organizations conducting all four: Bajenja, Ellen, and Alice Welbourn, 'Social Norms Change at Scale: Insights from *Stepping Stones*', *CUSP 2018 Case Study Collection*, Case Study No. 4, Community for Understanding Scale Up, 2018, <http://raisingvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/4.Insights-from-Stepping-Stones_interactive.FINAL_.pdf>.

IMAGE conceptualizes and applies scale-up in five ways: Muvhango, Lufuno, 'Social Norms Change at Scale: Insights from IMAGE', *CUSP 2018 Case Study Collection*, Case Study No. 2, Community for Understanding Scale Up, 2018, <http://raisingvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/2.Insights-from-IMAGE_interactive.FINAL_.pdf>.

5   Resources on scaling up community-based social and behaviour change approaches include the following: The Evidence Project, *Policy Brief: Using data to target and scale-up girls' support programs and child marriage prevention*, Population Council, Washington, D.C., October 2017, <http://evidenceproject.popcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Ethiopia-Berhane-Child-Marriage-Policy-Brief-1.pdf>; Gillespie, Diane, Gannon Gillespie, and Molly Melching, 'Social Norms Change at Scale: Insights from Tostan', *CUSP 2018 Case Study Collection*, Case Study No. 5, Community for Understanding Scale Up, 2018, <http://raisingvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/5.Insights-from-Tostan_interactive.FINAL_.pdf> and <www.alignplatform.org/resources/social-norms-change-scale-insights-tostan>; *Guidelines for adapting Stepping Stones*, Salamander Trust, London, 2017, <http://steppingstonesfeedback.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/SalamanderTrust_Adaptation_Guidelines_Stepping_Stones_-2017FINAL.pdf>; Lundgren, Rebecka, 'Social Norms Change at Scale: Insights from GREAT', *CUSP 2018 Case Study Collection*, Case Study No. 1, Community for Understanding Scale Up, 2018, <http://raisingvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/1.Insights-from-GREAT_interactive.FINAL_.pdf>; *Do's and Don'ts for At-Scale Nutrition Social and Behavior Change Communication*, USAID, Washington, D.C., n.d., <https://www.spring-nutrition.org/sites/default/files/events/ashleys_slides_for_aug_31_webinar-at_scale_nutrition_sbcc.pdf>; Bajenja, Ellen, and Alice Welbourn, 'Social Norms Change at Scale: Insights from *Stepping Stones*', *CUSP 2018 Case Study Collection*, Case Study No. 4, Community for Understanding Scale Up, 2018, <http://raisingvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/4.Insights-from-Stepping-Stones_interactive.FINAL_.pdf>; Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change, *Considerations for Scaling Up Norms-Shifting Interventions for Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health*. Working Paper, Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., 2019, <https://www.alignplatform.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/lc_scale_up_final_rev20190805_eng.pdf>.

6   The Evidence Project, 'Gender Transformative Approaches', <http://evidenceproject.popcouncil.org/technical-areas-and-activities/gender-transformative-approaches>, accessed 8 April 2020.

7   See the case studies published by the Community for Understanding Scale UP (CUSP) on the ALiGN (Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms) website: <www.alignplatform.org/resources/social-norms-change-scale-insights-great>, accessed 8 April 2020.

8   Muvhango, Lufuno, 'Social Norms Change at Scale: Insights from IMAGE', *CUSP 2018 Case Study Collection*, Case Study No. 2, Community for Understanding Scale Up, 2018, <http://raisingvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/2.Insights-from-IMAGE_interactive.FINAL_.pdf>.

9   Overseas Development Institute, *How do gender norms change?*, ODI, London, 2015, <www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9817.pdf>.

10 PPAG is the largest non-governmental SRH service provider in Ghana, delivering services and programmes through 1,356 service points, including 11 permanent clinics, 54 mobile clinics and over 1,000 community-based service points.