

VOLUME II - CASE STUDY REPORTS

Formative Evaluation of Gender Transformative Programming through Investment in Adolescent Girls' Leadership in Eastern and Southern Africa

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VOLUME II

Case Study Reports

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Case Study Reports

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THIS REPORT

This report comprises Volume II of the Formative Evaluation of Gender Transformative Programming through Investment in Adolescent Girls' Leadership in Eastern and Southern Africa. The Formative Evaluation is made up of three Volumes:

- Volume I: The Main Report
- Volume II: Case Study Reports
- Volume III: Annexes

CONTENTS

Malawi Desk Review	6
Mozambique Country Case Study.....	32
Namibia Country Case Study.....	64
Tanzania Desk Review.....	96
Uganda Country Case Study.....	116
Zimbabwe Desk Review.....	177

ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Adolescent boy
ADAP	Adolescent Development and Participation
AG	Adolescent girls
AGYW	Adolescent girls and young women
AHLIV	Adolescents Living with HIV
APM	Adolescent panel member
ASCHA	Associação Socio Cultural Horizonte Azul
ASHR	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health
AVI	Adolescent Volunteer Initiative
AYAC	Adolescent and Youth Advisory Committee
BEAD	Basic Education and Adolescent Programme
CAY	Children, Adolescents and Young People
CCW	Community Child Care Worker
CM	Child Marriage
CO	Country office
Coalizão	Associação Coalizão da Juventude Moçambicana
CoCP	Champions of Child Protection
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
CP	Child Protection
CPD	Country programme document
CRG	Children's Reference Group
CSD	Child Survival and Development Programme
CSO	Civil society organisation
ECM	Early Child Marriage
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
ESAR	East and Southern Africa region
ESARO	East and Southern Africa Regional Office
EQ	Evaluation Questions
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict Affected Situations/ States
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
G-ANC/PNC	Group Ante Natal Care and Post Natal Care (G-ANC/PNC)
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender based violence
GEG	Girls Empowering Girls
GEI	Girls' Empowerment Index
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GPECM	Global programme to End Child Marriage
GROW	Goal Reality Options Will
GRREAT	Girls Reproductive Health, Rights and Empowerment Accelerated in Tanzania
GT	Gender Transformative
GTA	Gender Transformative Approaches
GTP	Gender Transformative Programming
HCD	Human Centred Design
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
HOPEM	Rede Homens Pela Mudança
HP	Harmful practices
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation

IRB	Institutional review board
IP	Implementing Partner
i-UPSHIFT	Integrated UPSHIFT
JP	Joint Programme
JPGGE	Joint programme on girls education
KII	Key Informant Interview
Kutenga	Associação Kutenga
Linha Fala Criança	Associação Linha Fala Criança
LST	Life Skills Tool Kit
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MCO	Malawi Country Office / Mozambique Country Office
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MER	Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
MGCAS	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
MINED	Ministry of Education and Human Development
MISAU	Ministry of Health
MJCR	Ministry of Justice Constitutional and Religious Affairs
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
MTR	Mid-term review
NCO	Namibia Country Office
NGO	Non-governmental organization
Nweti	N'weti Comunicação para a saúde
RAAG	Regional Adolescent Advisory Group
RBP	Rapariga Biz programme
SAAJ	Youth-friendly services
SDDirect	Social Development Direct
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEJE	State Secretariat for Youth and Employment
SFH	Society for Family Health
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SP	Social Policy Programme
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TCO	UNICEF Tanzania Country Office
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UCO	Uganda Country Office
UN	United Nations
VAC	Violence Against Children
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
VSL	Village savings and loans
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WLO	Women Led Organisation
YAC	Youth Advisory Committee
YAPS	Young People and Adolescent Peer Support (YAPS)
YPE	Youth Peer Educator
YSLA	Youth Savings Loans Associations

CASE STUDY REPORT

Malawi

Desk Review



CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
BACKGROUND	9
PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE	9
METHODOLOGY	10
KEY FINDINGS	11
CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNED	28
ANNEXES	30

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The desk review was conducted and prepared by Lucia Soldà, with quality assurance by Jo Feather, from Social Development Direct (<https://www.sddirect.org.uk/>), between March and August 2023.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evaluation purpose, focus and methods

This desk review is part of a wider formative evaluation of UNICEF's gender transformative programming in Eastern and Southern Africa, with a focus on investment in adolescent girls' leadership, agency, and voice.

Malawi was selected as one of the three desk review case studies, to contribute to the regional evaluation's assessment of the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of gender transformative adolescent girls-focused programming. This report presents findings from a desk-based analysis of documents and a small number of virtual consultations with key informants across the Malawi Country Office, including UNICEF staff, staff from UNICEF partners, and adolescent girls engaged in UNICEF programming. The review is not meant to be a comprehensive, standalone evaluation report but will be used as part of the analysis for the regional evaluation report.

Key findings are outlined below, with a more detailed analysis and evidence presented in the relevant sections of the report.

Key findings

Relevance

In the current country programme document (2019-2023), adolescent-focused work falls under the outcome for school-age children rather than a specific adolescent outcome, and focuses on providing alternative learning opportunities, life skills, and integrated social services to adolescents. The review found mixed findings around UNICEF's strategy and practices in terms of engaging AGs at various stages of programming and policy formulation. Some notable examples of adolescent engagement were found, but these appear to be ad hoc events rather than part of a comprehensive strategic approach. This may be due to a lack of ownership or strategy on adolescent engagement across sectors within the Country Office. Some examples have been found of adolescent engagement by the Country Office in the development of country-level strategic documents, although limited in scope. Examples of adolescents', in particular girls', engagement in the work of the Country Office were found in the review across the programme cycle, however with variable degrees of 'meaningfulness'.¹ The Country Office has made efforts to consider insights from adolescents in the initial design and rollout of programmes and seems quite flexible in adapting programme delivery to respond to the evolving needs of adolescents, which are captured through feedback loops and implementing partners. While views from adolescents are also sought in the design of successive phases of ongoing programmes, adolescent girls' participation in the implementation and monitoring of programmes seems to be limited. Most programmes and interventions under review targeting adolescent girls across different sectors show evidence of taking into consideration, and adapting programme implementation, to recent shocks, shifts and trends that impact gender outcomes for adolescent girls, including COVID-19 and climate change.

Coherence

¹ The evaluation is using the following definition of meaningful involvement and participation of adolescents: *Throughout an intervention, adolescents are given a safe and inclusive space to form and express their views. They can express their views freely. The audience listens to their view. Their view has influence and is acted on appropriately.* (Formative Evaluation of GTP in ESAR. Inception Report, 2023, SDDirect)

UNICEF Malawi's current country programme document was developed under Gender Action Plan 2 which did not have as strong a gender-transformative lens as its successor. It remains to be seen how the new country programme document (2024-2028) will align with UNICEF's Strategic Plan, Gender Action Plan 3 and the Adolescent Girls Strategy. Similarly, UNICEF Malawi's current Gender Equality Strategy is aligned to Gender Action Plan 2 and, while having a strong focus on adolescent girls, it does not mention gender-transformative programming.

Some programmes under review explicitly state their alignment to the goal of achieving gender transformative outcomes through adolescent girls-programming, acknowledging UNICEF's mandate and comparative advantage in programmes to transform gender discriminatory roles, expectations, and practices.

On the one hand, the evaluation found little evidence of collaboration and coherence to advance gender transformative programming for adolescent girls across sections/sectors within the country office. On the other hand, Malawi appears to be a strong example of inter-agency coordination and joint and/or multisectoral programmes, including for programmes comprising interventions targeting adolescent girls to increase their voice, leadership, and agency. Joint programmes which are designed and delivered so that different agencies' comparative advantage is clear seem to have the potential to lead to stronger outcomes, including in terms of gender transformation. There is mixed evidence of success for delivery models of joint programmes.

Effectiveness

The evaluation found some examples of adolescent-focused programmes mainstreaming gender transformative approaches but the integration of gender, and in particular gender transformative interventions, has been inconsistent. There are different levels of understanding of gender transformative approaches among the country office staff, which leads to their limited institutionalisation across programming.

Strong examples of mainstreaming of gender-transformative approaches into multi-sectoral interventions were found across sectors including education, climate action, health/HIV, SRHR, water, sanitation, and hygiene/menstrual hygiene management, violence against women and girls, women economic empowerment, nutrition, social accountability, social behaviour change communications. Promising approaches and activities have been found which seek to transform social norms and opportunities for adolescent girls individually and at community levels that could support gender-transformative outcomes. Many projects' interventions show potential for addressing barriers that may limit AGs' voice, agency, and leadership, even though they might not intentionally or explicitly aim at gender transformation.

Efficiency

Most programme proposal templates include gender (and often equity) considerations. However, no detailed budgets or financial reporting were provided that would allow a precise analysis and afford a complete picture of financial resources allocated by the country office to gender transformative programming specifically aimed at increased adolescent girls' voice, leadership, and agency. Some topline figures are available but unfortunately do not provide enough detail to determine whether sufficient resources have been allocated to gender transformative programming.

While there is evidence that some programmes collect baseline data to monitor their impact, monitoring systems seem to be mostly output-based and gender transformative programming monitored predominantly at activity level. Documents reviewed showed that data is not often disaggregated by gender, or by age, or other identity characteristics. Most indicators across programmes reviewed focused on quantitative measurements which are not always effective in capturing transformative

outcomes. Only one evaluation and one mid-term assessment were shared by the country office which does not allow for a comprehensive assessment of how far the country office regularly embeds evaluations of gender-transformative programming, and resources them, in order to demonstrate attributable impact.

Sustainability

Some examples of sustainability considerations were found in programme documents reviewed. Sustainability in UNICEF programming in Malawi focuses on establishing partnerships with government and civil society partners who can continue activities after project closure and around sustainable changes resulting from community awareness raising, safe spaces and mentoring interventions. Most programmes under review are implemented by civil society partners and in collaboration with government, which could potentially build ownership, capacity, and resources to support government scale up or take up by other partners.

Exit strategies for most programmes under review were not provided by the country office, and it is unclear whether programmes have developed exit strategies and they were not shared, or whether they do not exist.

Impact

Most of the programme documents consulted did not include evaluations or evaluation findings, therefore there is limited evidence on the impacts of gender transformative programming. There are some examples of potential gender transformative impact emerging from the review of selected programme documents. Impacts include:

- increased capacity of adolescent girls to speak out for themselves, challenge negative social norms and harmful practices and demand their rights and access to services, through mentorship programmes, platforms for adolescent girls' participation, and teen clubs, and empowerment training;
- changes in attitudes and behaviours negatively impacting adolescent girls, including those of boys and at community levels through mentorship programmes and awareness raising;
- adolescent girls taking leadership roles in their communities through awareness raising and empowerment interventions;
- Increased empowerment economic empowerment and participation of adolescent girls, through youth clubs and training;
- Increased numbers of communities adopting by-laws in support of girls' education, with the potential of ultimately strengthening the position of girls in their adult life, through engaging parents and local communities.

Conclusions & lessons learned

There is evidence that some programmes implemented by UNICEF Malawi Country Office, in particular joint programs targeting adolescent girls, are contributing to increasing girls' voice, agency, and leadership working both at the individual and community levels. These mainly focus on addressing harmful gender norms impacting adolescent girls (including engaging boys and men), on placing girls in better position to take up leadership roles and to take informed decisions about their lives (including their health), and on improving girls' economic positions (including through better education opportunities and entrepreneurship activities and training). Most of the other programme documents provided by the country office and reviewed did not seem to include intentional gender-transformative programming elements focusing on adolescent girls, and less so specifically aimed at increasing their

voice, leadership, and agency, even when they have AGs as their main target group. Some lessons are identified in the closing section.

BACKGROUND

Malawi ranks 169 out of 189 countries in terms of [Human Development Index](#). In terms of indicators related to women and girls status, the country is characterised by a high prevalence of violence against women and girls, including sexual initiation rituals, child marriage, sexual and gender-based violence and intimate partner violence ([UNICEF Malawi](#), 2020). There are also a number of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) issues affecting women and girls in Malawi, with a higher HIV prevalence among women and girls than men and high rates of teenage pregnancies ([UNICEF Malawi](#), 2020). Child marriage rates are higher for girls than for boys, and a disproportionate share of youth who married between before 18 either did not attend school or are illiterate. ([UNICEF Malawi](#), 2022). Malawi is characterized by significant gender disparities and ranks 142 out of 170 countries in the [Gender Inequality Index](#). Gender inequalities are deeply rooted in cultural and social norms, which limit the realization of women and girls' rights, empowerment, and decision-making (JPGE III Programme document, 2020).

External factors impacting outcomes for adolescent girls include:

- Cyclical cyclones and flooding, with the latest ones being Tropical Cyclone Freddy in February-March 2023, Storm Ana in January 2022, and Cyclone Gombe in 2022. ([WHO](#), 2022). Disasters exacerbated pre-existing gender inequalities and caused disproportionate impacts on food security, health, education, social protection, livelihoods, and the overall physical and mental wellbeing of girls. Girls relocated in camps are heightened risk of physical and sexual violence, have limited access to education and sexual and reproductive health services, and are at higher risk of teenage pregnancies (Spotlight Initiative Annual Report, 2023).
- The deadliest outbreak of cholera (since March 2022) in the country's history, which, with women and girls being overburdened with work as the primary caregivers, negatively affect girls' education and women's economic empowerment.
- Soaring inflation in 2022 increasing the risk for girls of being withdrawn from school and forced to marry at an early age to reduce household costs (Spotlight Initiative Annual Report, 2023).

PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

Purpose and audience

The purpose of the Regional Evaluation is to understand how current programming, investments and practices to invest in adolescent girls' leadership, voice and agency are shaping UNICEF's gender transformative programming (GTP) approach in ESAR over the coming years. The evaluation is country-focused, and uses country case studies as illustrative examples to inform the planning and programming of GTP through Investment in adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership in ESAR.

This case study is contributing evidence to support to the regional evaluation's assessment of the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of gender transformative adolescent girls-focused programming. This report presents findings from a desk-based analysis of documents and a small number of virtual consultations with key informants across the Malawi Country Office, including UNICEF staff, staff from UNICEF partners, and adolescent girls engaged in UNICEF

programming. The review is not meant to be a comprehensive, standalone evaluation report but will be used as part of the analysis for the regional evaluation report.

While the case study note is primarily intended to be used to inform the regional report, it will be of interest to both the Country and Regional UNICEF teams as a standalone review of adolescent focused programming in Malawi. We also hope that findings will be shared back to the adolescents, young people and partners who supported the data collection where relevant. The evaluation team will ensure regional findings are shared back with the Regional Adolescent Advisory Group.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the desk-based case study are aligned with the overall evaluation objectives, and they are to:

- Provide a preliminary assessment of UNICEF's GTP in Malawi vis-à-vis issues of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact with a specific focus on programming investing in girls' voice, agency and leadership
- Explore the evidence for whether interventions currently being implemented or in the pipeline are evaluable, whether or not the programmes are adequately defined and their results verifiable.
- Identify key lessons and the most impactful approaches with regards to gender transformative adolescent focused programming

METHODOLOGY

Data collection methods/analysis and sampling

The desk-based review was carried out between the end of March and end of June 2023, and whilst the time frame was quite protracted the days allocated to the task were minimal². Malawi was selected as one of the three desk-based reviews during the inception phase, based on a set of criteria agreed in consultations with the regional team, and the evaluation reference group, with the aim of seeking a balanced and diverse set of case studies across different contexts. The Malawi case study represents the following characteristics:

- Low-income country with relatively high UNICEF country office budget;
- Programmes with a primary or strong focus on adolescents, including joint programmes, targeting adolescent girls, including the *Spotlight Initiative*, *2gether 4 SRHR*, *Joint Programme on Girls Education*, and a promising programme on climate action (*Green Girls* programme);
- Indications of availability of evaluations and data;
- Reportedly active U-Report programme in the past.

55 documents were reviewed (see Annex 1 for the full list of documents consulted) and included both those that were publicly available and documents provided by the in-country UNICEF evaluation focal point(s). This was complemented by a small number of virtual consultations (key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGD) – see Table 1 below. The data was coded against the evaluation questions agreed with the Evaluation Reference Group at Inception Phase. It was then analysed to identify key trends and patterns for each evaluation questions and for triangulation.

Table 1: Respondents for the Malawi desk review

In-country stakeholders	How	Job titles
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² Approximately 8 days were allocated for the desk review, including interviews, analysis and report writing.

Civil society organisation partners, youth networks and adolescent girls and boys	1 FGD	Four adolescent girls from the <i>Green Girls</i> Platform in Phalombe District
UNICEF Country Team	1 FGD	1. Head of evaluation, research, knowledge management 2. Adolescent Specialist 3. Programme Officer Child Protection
UNICEF Country Team	1 FGD	4. Nutrition Specialist SACA Unit 5. Head of SACA Unit, Nutrition Specialist 6. Nutrition Officer, SACA Unit
Other United Nations (UN) agencies (joint programme partners)	1 KII	7. FAO – Coordination specialist
Total number of respondents		11 (10 female, 1 male)

There are some limitations to the desk review. There were delays in the receiving relevant documents from the Country Office (CO) resulting in an extended timeframe, partly due to a change of appointment of key UNICEF staff and waiting for new gender specialist to come in post. Another limitation relates to the responsiveness of UNICEF implementing partners, which resulted in only one informant being available for consultation. To mitigate these delays we extended the timeframe and followed up our requests with the team, however we still did not receive some key document related to budgets and M&E. We were able to access some publicly available documents, but which had limited relevance to the evaluation.

Ethical considerations

As this was a desk-based review which involved minimal primary data collection the ethical risks were considered low, however as with all our evaluation and research work we are guided by a set of ethical principles. The principles translate into a number of practical measures to ensure confidentiality, informed consent, data protection, reduction of direct and indirect risks to interviewees, safe and meaningful participation.

All participation was done on a voluntary basis and based on informed consent. Personal information is treated confidentially, and the privacy and anonymity of participants is preserved. We will not include any names of any participants consulted with to ensure this is upheld.

KEY FINDINGS

Overarching question

Evaluation Question (EQ) 1. To what extent are UNICEF East and Southern Africa Region (ESAR) COs investing in adolescent girls' voice, agency, and leadership as a central approach within this gender transformative programming?

Some of UNICEF COs flagship, joint programmes targeting adolescent girls (AGs) – in particular the *Spotlight Initiative* and the *Joint Programme on Girls Education* - have gender transformative (GT) components with the potential to increase girls' voice, leadership, and agency. The programmes under review which demonstrate potential to increase girls' voice, leadership and agency focus on addressing

harmful gender norms impacting AGs at the individual and community level (including engaging boys and men), on placing girls in better position to take up leadership roles and to take informed decisions about their lives (including their health), and on improving girls' economic positions (including through better education opportunities and entrepreneurship activities and training). Most of the other programme documents provided by the CO and reviewed did not seem to include intentional gender-transformative programming (GTP) elements focusing on AGs, and less so specifically aimed at increasing their voice, leadership, and agency, even when they have AGs as their main target group (e.g., nutrition programmes).³

Relevance

EQ 2. To what extent are country programmes/projects designed to address the specific needs of adolescent girls in the region?

The current Country Programme Document (CPD) (2019-2023) shifted from a sectoral approach to a more comprehensive cross-sectoral/multi-sectoral approach. The current CPD does not have a separate component on adolescents or adolescent girls – adolescent girl-related work falls under the "school-age children" (6-18 years) outcome.⁴ There does not seem to be a specific focus on older adolescents (19-year-olds). Framing all adolescent-focused work under a category of 'school age children' may miss out opportunities to address the specific needs of younger children, younger adolescents, and older adolescents across their life cycle. The components relevant to AGs are:

- providing alternative, non-formal or second-chance learning opportunities for out-of-school children and adolescents, including teen mothers;
- children and adolescents learn life skills and are empowered to become agents of change;
- young adolescents (10-14 years) achieve essential learning outcomes and practise life skills, are safe from exploitation, harmful practices and violence and benefit from integrated social services;
- providing integrated social services to keep girls in secondary schools through interventions such as: violence prevention and response; the provision of the human papillomavirus vaccine to girls; menstrual hygiene management and sexual and reproductive health; HIV prevention, testing, counselling and links to treatment, and micronutrient supplementation; supporting girls and boys to become agents of change in schools and communities.

Under a different outcome ("child-friendly, inclusive and resilient communities") the CPD envisages that "youth engagement, including through U-Report, will strengthen their voice and participation in decision-making."

Meaningful engagement of adolescent girls in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and policies

The review found mixed findings around UNICEF's ambitions and practices in terms of meaningfully engaging AGs at various stages of programming and policy formulation. Some notable examples of

³ Examples include the following programmes/projects: *Strengthening the Resilience of Poorest Families in Malawi Through Savings & Loans Groups* by Find your Feet; *Building Resilient Health Systems for improved service delivery in Malawi* by the Malawi Red Cross Society; *Scaling up nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive interventions for reducing stunting in Nsanje and Phalombe districts* by The Hunger Project Malawi; *Risk Communication and Community Engagement in Nutrition for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 and Community engagement for the prevention of malnutrition* by the Story Workshop Educational Trust; *Support Stunting Reduction* by World Relief International; *Providing support to Gender Responsive Programming Services for Secondary Schools in Malawi* by the Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi.

⁴ The MCO mentioned that this was a deliberate choice to cover all children, including adolescents and young people over 19 years who are still in secondary school.

adolescent engagement have been found in the document review and through consultations, but these appear to be standalone/ad hoc events, rather than part of a comprehensive strategic approach. This might be due to a reported lack of leadership or strategy on adolescent engagement across sectors within the Malawi Country Office (MCO).

In terms of engaging adolescents in the development of country-level strategic documents and including interventions centred around AGs' needs, there seem to be promising examples although limited in scope. For example, the new CPD (2024-2028) which is in development is being informed by the “Voices of Children and Adolescents in UNICEF’s Country Program Document” (2023), conducted by University of Malawi on behalf of UNICEF to explore and foreground voices of children and adolescents on the quality of child rights in Malawi, with the intent of contributing to UNICEF’s new CPD and support the formulation of appropriate interventions.⁵ No evidence was shared about UNICEF consulting with adolescent girls and boys in the development of the current CPD (2019-2023). The CPD presents adolescent-related data related to the selected programmatic focus and priorities on adolescent birth rate, undernutrition in AGs, HIV infection rates in AGs, school dropout, child marriage, risk of violence, and analyses the barriers impacting children’s school enrolment, including barriers relevant particularly for AGs, including inadequate menstrual hygiene management, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and social norms that devalue girls’ education and support child marriage and early pregnancy. While the Country Office has identified girls’ and boys’ participation in decisions affecting their lives as a guiding principle, AGs were not engaged in the development of the UNICEF Malawi Gender Equality Strategy (2019 – 2023). However, UNICEF Strategy Note on the pillar of work for school-age children under the CPD (2018) highlights UNICEF’s support to the rights of children to participate to decisions affecting their lives and be heard via “different mechanisms and fora, such as the Youth Parliament; Teen Clubs for children living with HIV; Student Councils and Reflection Action Circles in the *Safe Schools* programme; Rights Clubs; Girls’ Clubs; media groups”. Nonetheless, the same Strategy Note (2018) finds that “there is a lack of space and time at all levels for children and adolescents to have their voices consistently heard, including their opinions, concerns and ideas, and to be enabled to take leadership as agents of change.”

Examples of adolescents’, in particular girls’, engagement in the work of the MCO have been found in the review, demonstrating different degrees of meaningfulness across the programme cycle, as outlined below.

MCO has made efforts to consider insights from adolescents in the initial design and rollout of programmes. Evidence was found that specific programmes targeting youth, including to increase their voice, leadership, and agency, have consulted adolescents in relation to programme design. Interviewees confirmed that most programmes inform adolescents when programmes are rolled out, and undertake some kind of consultations with adolescents, mostly through their partners, ahead of new programmes and during implementation. An example of this were consultations for the formulation of the *Afikepo* programme, when district-level consultations were held with district youth officers representing young people, who they had reportedly consulted before. A staff member of a UN partner co-implementing the *Afikepo* programme confirmed that it targets AGs by design, and that they conduct community- and district-level consultations. The *Spotlight Initiative* consulted adolescent girls and young women about the structures that were being set up at community level at the start of the programme. All the three phases of the *Joint Programme on Girls Education (JPGE)* have reportedly undertaken some kind of assessment/baseline, for example through Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices surveys. JPGE I’s final evaluation (2019) found that while “the programme reached schools where the needs were highest”, and targeting was “very relevant to the needs of girls in general”, awareness of parents was not sufficiently addressed to ensure gathering their full support to their daughters, and the incorporation of boys as an important group to support girls’ education was not

⁵ One of findings was that children demand a wider implementation of community-based interventions which focus on retaining girls in school and specifically by-laws against early child marriages (with 98 percent of girls in community decision making structures wishing issues of the girl child to be a priority in communities).

considered." MCO staff mentioned that across programme a trend appeared in which boys "might be left out" of programming as there is no clear strategy on engaging boys.

MCO seems to be quite flexible in terms of adapting programme delivery to respond to the evolving needs of adolescents, which are captured through feedback loops. Examples of this come from the nutrition programming which responds to issues arising from district implementation/development plans, and these would have involved consultations with youths in districts areas of focus. A concrete example is how, based on adolescents' requests in terms of the appearance of iron-folic acid supplement tablets, UNICEF changed the aspect of the tablets which would hopefully lead to an increase in the uptake. Similarly, based on adolescents' feedback about their livelihood needs, UNICEF staff attached other programmatic component to the nutrition interventions on entrepreneurship. *Afikepo* seeks the views of adolescents (both boys and girls) throughout implementation through U-Report. The *Spotlight Initiative* engages with adolescent girls and young women as beneficiaries, for example through the *Ifenso Tingathe (We Too!)* platforms⁶, and through implementing partners who monitor the evolution of AGs' needs. The *Spotlight Initiative's* annual report (2022) stated that community feedback sessions are standard practice during monitoring visits whereby a concerted effort is made to amplify community members' voices during focus group discussions to identify ways to improve interventions. *JPGE III* also consulted AGs as respondents at different stages of the programme through a Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices survey to understand girls' needs and to more effectively design strategies to increase demand and improve access to quality inclusive and equitable education.

Views from adolescents are also sought in the design of successive phases of programmes.

During the community level consultations for *Akifepo's* successor programme, adolescents were consulted on how they take part in the programme, and their feedback on the Adolescent Groups component of the programme was integrated in the new phase. The design of the latest iteration of *JPGE III* was informed by an assessment which – while not clear whether it consulted AGs – found that most of the out-of-school girls targeted by the functional literacy programme were parents, so the next phase of the programme incorporated childcare to address those needs.

AGs participation seems to be more limited in the implementation and monitoring of programmes. UNICEF staff consulted explained that there is generally no active involvement of adolescents in data collection, although they are sometimes consulted as respondents/sources of information in evaluations and are engaged as respondents through U-Report. UNICEF staff noted that MCO leveraged the results of U-Report polls for re-programming through partnership agreements with partners, and in concept notes for resource mobilisation, though no concrete examples were provided. The *Fun and Funky Fusion Approach* is a positive example of MCO attempting to build the capacity of adolescent girls and boys in data collection, research, and evaluation in schools, which has been developed and piloted as a model with the University of Malawi, for which UNICEF staff noted that the MCO won a Global Knowledge Management Inspiration Award. The model uses university student artists to share learning and dissemination of research and evaluation reports with adolescent girls and boys in schools on key issues emerging from UNICEF reports impacting adolescents.

Respondents to an online survey⁷ conducted for the *Spotlight Initiative's* mid-term assessment (2021) indicated that adolescent girls and young women participate in the implementation and monitoring of the programme (75% and almost 70% of respondents respectively) but were less involved during the design stage (less than 55% of respondents). AGs insights on this emerged through the consultations of AGs participating in the *Green Girls Platform* programme, which aims to help young women and girls deepen their understanding and amplify collective voices on issues that affect them and has as one of the

⁶ *Ifenso* platforms are school and community-based empowerment and social accountability platforms empowering adolescent girls and boys with gender-related information including prevention of SGBV and case reporting, and to hold duty bearers accountable on gender-related issues and ensuring that the voice of girls is heard in decisions at school level (*Spotlight Initiative's* mid-term assessment, 2021).

⁷ Respondents included government officials, UN staff and implementing partners.

objectives to enhance their leadership through climate change education. Four girls were interviewed as part of this desk review, and were asked to reflect on their level of participation in the programme through the [Hart ladder of participation](#). Initially all participants placed themselves at the highest level of the ladder. However, after deeper reflection, three out of four changed their minds, with two placing themselves at the lowest ladder of participation, mentioning that sometimes adults take decisions for them as they do not have leadership skills, and because the young people are not in charge of the activities. In particular, the girls mentioned that while they had started activities on their own focusing on raising awareness with peers on child abuse and climate action, when UNICEF came onboard and started to support them (through capacity building and materials), they no longer feel in charge of activities.

In terms of enhancing AGs' meaningful participation, one member of staff reported that there would be potential for AGs' voices to emerge much more strongly through partners in reporting and that there are platforms set up through the Spotlight Initiative – such the AGs' *Ifenso Tingathe (We Too!)* platforms – which seem promising avenues for UNICEF's engagement with AGs, but whose potential is still untapped. Examples of further engagement could include partnering with them for implementation, as many AGs are volunteers and mentors in their communities, and engaging the Children' Parliament more meaningfully, particularly bringing the girls' voices out more. It was also noted that UNICEF needs to be more systematic and intentional about meaningful engagement with AGs.

Finally, in most consultations and documents reviewed, no distinctions between boys and girls and among different age groups have been made when talking about meaningful engagement, including consulting adolescents frequently resulting in a homogenous grouping of different ages and genders.

Consideration of recent shifts and trends in gender outcomes for adolescent girls in programming

Most programmes and interventions under review targeting AGs across different sectors show evidence of taking into consideration, and adapting programme implementation, to recent shifts and trends that impact gender outcomes for AGs. Some examples of how programmes adapted to climate change shocks and the COVID-19 pandemic are shared below.

Climate Change:

- The pre-COVID-19 CPD considers the effects of climate change (droughts and floods) and the impacts it has had on adolescent girls, who adopt negative coping mechanisms, or are at greater risk of early marriage, sexual exploitation, or child labour, in formulating the areas of intervention for the CO. Teams across MCO sectors should take these into consideration and aim to address these issues across their work.
- In *Spotlight Initiative* districts affected by the floods, UNICEF was able to reach adolescent girls and young women with mental health and psychosocial support and to respond to violence, especially in camp settings, in emergency context through partners.
- MCO interviewees noted that the *Green Girls Platform* adapted its focus on climate action after the cyclone hit, and AGs made suggestions on how to adapt the programme given some of the AGs were displaced in camps. UNICEF explained they took these suggestions on board, leveraging the girls' presence in the camps to engage them in the cyclone emergency response.
- UNICEF staff mentioned that, during the latest floods, they conducted a focus group discussion with AGs in camps/affected communities about community-based complaint mechanisms to understand their preferences and attitudes towards reporting mechanisms – which was critical to adapt them and make them more accessible. As a results, UNICEF now has a component working with the Human Rights Commission to do an assessment of the challenges AGs face in terms of reporting, which will produce recommendations. UNICEF staff mentioned that MCO partnered with the women-led organisation Gender Coordination which is working with adolescent girls and young women addressing challenges faced by women and girls during floods, with some of the activities hinged on gender transformative social behaviours change

interventions. Safety audits and gender analysis of Cyclone Freddy also informed advocacy work with districts councils and the Department of Disaster Management Affairs

In terms of adaptation during COVID-19, some programme documents (such as the programme document for *Learning Never Stops Malawi*) show how MCO considered the challenges presented by COVID-19 to AGs, especially those in poorer households, those in early unions, adolescent mothers and youth with disabilities, such as a rise in gender-based violence (GBV) and domestic violence, an increase of child marriages and early and unintended pregnancies. **Many programmes under review were able to adapt their interventions and delivery modes, including by delivering some programmes activities virtually and through radio.** For example, as part of an intervention aimed at providing antiretroviral therapy, psychosocial support, and contraceptives during the COVID-19 pandemic to HIV-positive adolescents and adolescent mothers, UNICEF in collaboration with an implementing partner shifted to virtual engagement sessions to engage adolescents on SRHR, HIV, SGBV, sexual exploitation and abuse, and reinforcing remote support via e-mail and phone conversation. The *Afikepo* programme's social behaviour change communications component was adapted to remotely reach adolescents who were out-of-school during COVID-19. *JPGGE II*'s implementation shifted due to COVID-19, including adaptation of modalities to deliver intensive SRHR and SGBV mentorship sessions and the Empowerment Transformation skills, and expanded use of radio programs. Staff noted that adaptation was possible due to their flexibility and constant engagement and good relationship with implementing partners (not limited to quarterly reports) and AGs themselves, they have been able to adapt to evolving contexts and shocks such as COVID-19 – for example consulting adolescent girls and boys through implementing partners on how they wanted their engagement to change with COVID-19. Another notable effort of adaptation to COVID-19 can be found in nutrition-programming, UNICEF supported the adaptation of global nutrition guidance in terms of breastfeeding in the context of COVID-19 and raised awareness, training to extension workers and provided counselling to mothers. Finally, the Gender Programmatic Review (2022) highlights how UNICEF was able to adapt to COVID-19 to mitigate its impact on girls' education, supporting the delivery of emergency and non-emergency education services to almost four million children (56% girls), with over 200 thousand girls having completed a *Safe School*'s empowerment transformation and active citizenship training to protect themselves from violence and demand protection services in ten targeted districts.

In terms of adaptation of MCO work to shifts and trends that impact gender outcomes for AGs, MCO interviewees mentioned some potential in adapting some well-function interventions, such as the Children's Corners and Safe Spaces for women and girls, to other challenges (such as cholera). This desk review has not been able to determine the extent to which these interventions could be adapted, and further research would be needed, but suffice to say the country office is considering opportunities for adapting and learning from experiences.

Coherence

EQ 3. To what extent do adolescent girl focused interventions (both within UNICEF and external) align with UNICEF strategies, and global policy commitments, to support girls' leadership and agency through gender transformative programming in ESAR?

The Country Programme Document (2019-2023) was developed under GAP (Gender Action Plan) 2 (2018-2021) before the GAP 3 (2022-2025) and the Adolescent Girls Strategy (2022 – 2025) were developed. GAP 2 (2018-2021) includes five targeted priorities on empowering AGs but does not situate this in a gender-transformative lens as strongly as its successor document. UNICEF Malawi's CPD (2019-2023) outcomes broadly cover all five priorities in the GAP. It remains to be seen how the new

CPD (2024-2028) will align with UNICEF's Strategic Plan (2022-2025), the current GAP 3 (2022-2025), and the Adolescent Girls Strategy.⁸ The Country Programme (2019-2023) evaluation (2023) recommended to "build on the gains made by sustaining and strengthening the institutionalization of gender, as well as inclusion, to ensure alignment of the Country Programme with the agenda of the new UNICEF Gender Policy and GAP 3."

Similarly, the UNICEF Malawi Gender Equality Strategy (2019 – 2023 - aligned to the CPD) is aligned to the GAP 2, and while it does not mention gender-transformative programming (only gender-mainstreaming, -sensitivity and -responsiveness), it has a strong focus on AGs, aligning with the five priority areas.

Some programmes under review explicitly state their alignment to the goal of achieving GT outcomes through AGs-programming, acknowledging UNICEF's mandate and comparative advantage in programmes to transform gender discriminatory roles, expectations, and practices. For example, this is clear in the *Spotlight Initiative* documents highlighting the intention to leverage its expertise, experience, and accumulated knowledge to lead on the implementation of Pillar 3 on "Gender equitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours are promoted at community and individual levels to prevent violence against women and girls and harmful practices" (*Spotlight Initiative's* mid-term assessment, 2021). These aim to address discriminatory policies and the socialisation processes and narratives that define gendered roles and practices, supporting girls and boys through adolescence to adopt and shape more equitable gender norms and behaviours. It also includes prevention and protection services to address harmful practices, as well as the implementation of integrated interpersonal and media-based behaviour and social change platforms.

EQ 4. What have been the areas and ways of cooperation with other UN entities and other donor/ development partners regarding gender-transformative programming with and for adolescent girls in ESAR?

The evaluation found little evidence of collaboration and coherence across sections/sectors within MCO on efforts to advance GTP for AGs. Despite the existence of a MCO Adolescent Task Team comprising programme staff from various sectors with the goal of bringing convergence on adolescent work, including on gender transformation issues, interviewees suggested that the approach to working with adolescents at the CO is fragmented, with a lack of clarity about when and how to integrate adolescents into programming. Adolescent programming does not fit clearly under only one section/sectors, as many issues affecting them are cross-sectoral in nature, resulting in a lack of ownership of this work across sections/sectors. As an example, the health section developed a screening tool to identify and assess specific risks and vulnerability for adolescent girls and young women in Malawian contexts, but it is unclear (including staff) whether it is cross-sectoral or not. The lack of coherence on adolescent programming is also related to the absence of a joint strategy on engaging boys. Interviewees noted opportunities that could come with developing a more coherent approach to adolescent programming within the MCO, and some existing and effective external and internal tools and models were highlighted (e.g., the *Children Corner*) as potential approaches that could be adapted in consultations with other sectors. A more coherent and coordinated approach would improve the understanding across the MCO of what types of adolescent programming is being done and help to reduce siloed working.

In terms of collaborating with implementing partners on gender-transformative programmes, the Gender Programmatic Review (2022) of the current CPD highlighted that among capacity building and training

⁸ The new CPD (2024-2028) was finalised after the case study report was completed but was brought to the attention of the evaluation team, who were unable to review it in depth due to the timing.

activities for staff and partners, a Gender Transformative Training was delivered to UNICEF partners in 2021.

Malawi appears to be a strong example of inter-agency coordination and joint and/or multisectoral programmes, including for programmes comprising interventions targeting AGs to increase their voice, leadership, and agency. Examples include:

- UNICEF has worked closely with the WFP and FAO in the delivery of programs on adolescent nutrition, including on the *Afikepo* programme (with FAO). However, a clear GT focus does not seem to emerge as strongly in *Afikepo*.
- UNICEF delivers, together with UNFPA and WFP, and the Government of Malawi, the Norwegian-funded JPGE (in its third phase) spanning the provision of school meals, the improved delivery and quality of education, protection services, life skills, and comprehensive adolescent sexual reproductive health education. JPGE I's evaluation found that the joint and multisectoral approach facilitated a combination and better use of resources and enabled addressing a complex issue like girls' education and empowerment in a holistic manner.
- The *Spotlight Initiative* is a partnership between the European Union Delegation in Malawi and four recipient organisations (UNICEF, UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA), which as per an annual report, "allows the country programme to be more effective, efficient, and innovative in its delivery" on violence against women and girls (VAWG) programming (*Spotlight Initiative Annual Report*, 2020). The *Spotlight Initiative* also involves 50 other partners and stakeholders, including UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNHCR, the Government of Malawi and quasi-governmental Entities, nongovernmental organisations, civil society organisations, traditional and religious leaders, media houses, academia, and crucially, women, girls, and their communities.
- Malawi is part of the Swedish-funded regional multi-country integrated *2gether 4 SRHR* programme on SRHR, HIV and SGBV, delivered by UNICEF, WHO UNAIDS, UNFPA. Unfortunately, no documents were provided by the MCO on the programme.

Where joint programmes are designed and delivered so that different agencies' comparative advantage is clear, these have the potential to lead to stronger outcomes, including in terms of gender transformation. UNICEF staff identified as a success factor in the joint delivery of *Afikepo* that, in the programme, agencies' mandates are clear and distinguishable, with UNICEF delivering the utilisation component for FAO's nutrition interventions. Staff acknowledged that there is much more value to work with other United Nations agencies. Similarly, in *JPGE*, it is clear what each agency delivers, including on the ground, so there are little "politics" involved. The *Spotlight Initiative*, despite being designed as a model that "impels and supports agencies to leverage each other's capacities and expertise" (*Spotlight Initiative Annual Report*, 2019), it does not seem to really apply the *Delivering as One* approach – to ensure technical coherence and inter-agency cohesion – in practice. Staff noted that implementing United Nations agencies work in siloes, partly due to perceptions that the agencies hold about other agencies' mandates (for example, on whether adolescent programming falls under UNICEF or UNFPA),⁹ with clashes over different areas of work, and competition around/scramble for resources.

In terms of **delivery models in joint programmes**, from staff consultations it seems there are mixed experiences with dedicated roles coordinating on behalf of all the UN implementing agencies. This delivery model has proven successful in *JPGE*, which has the same structure replicated at the district level, however, it does not seem to have worked as effectively in the *Spotlight Initiative*.

Effectiveness

EQ5. To what extent have UNICEF East and Southern Africa Regional Office's adolescent girls focused programmes and interventions mainstreamed gender

⁹ Mandates of the other recipient organisations seems more straightforward.

transformative programming, contributing to increasing their voices, agency, and leadership, in current planned programmes?

The evaluation found some examples of adolescent-focused programmes mainstreaming gender transformative approaches. The evaluation of the CDP (2019-2029) (2023) found that the country programme “has integrated gender, with some gender transformative interventions, though inconsistently”. The Gender Audit of the Country Programme in 2016 found gender work to be mostly ad-hoc, with limited institutionalisation of gender responsive workflows along the entire programme cycle – from data collection and analysis to programme development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.

There are different levels of understanding among Malawi CO staff of GTP which leads to limited institutionalisation of gender transformative approaches in all programming, despite training 24 staff having received training on GTP programming in 2021 (Country Programme (2019-2023) evaluation, 2023). This is partly due to high staff turnover. In terms of UNICEF partners’ understanding of GTP, staff from a United Nations agency implementing a join programme with UNICEF mentioned that the involvement of adolescent boys in programme activities was positive as “they are the ones who will make decisions for the family,” and he said that the programme target AGs because “they tender the house.” This does not show an understanding of or intention to addressing social norms around gender roles, around housekeeping and intra-household decision making. Interestingly, the GAP 3 gender continuum was used by the Gender Programmatic Review’s author to assess the interventions under each Gender Result Area, but it is unclear on what basis the author classified interventions along the continuum, e.g., some interventions are assessed as transformative by virtue of reaching a high number of girls or based on the scale of a programme (see the Gender Programmatic Review, 2022).

The documents review and interviews conducted identified strong examples of MCO mainstreaming GT approaches into multi-sectoral interventions, including in education, climate action, health/HIV, SRHR, water, sanitation, and hygiene/menstrual hygiene management, VAWG, women economic empowerment, nutrition, social accountability, social behaviour change communications. Examples of interventions by MCO that use GT approaches include activities that instil positive masculinities and behaviours in male learners, as well as changing cultural norms related to menstrual health and hygiene. However, the desk review was unable to ascertain whether there was a consistent approach within the MCO across all its programming in terms of addressing structural roots of gender roles, norms, and attitudes, with social behaviour change activities being effective in influencing social norms and behaviours at the individual/community level, but less effective at transforming gender norms (Country Programme (2019-2023) evaluation, 2023).

Promising approaches and activities seeking to transform social norms and opportunities for AGs individually and at community levels that have been adopted by some programmes implemented by MCO and that could support GT outcomes include:

- The *Green Girls Platform* aims to empower AGs to be effective agents of change within their communities and schools in flood-affected districts through access to climate change capacity building opportunities, safety, and protection services. Some of the AGs who are part of the initiative described it as “girls taking care of the environment”, for example through planting trees and cleaning markets, combined with peer-activities on SRHR awareness to prevent teenage pregnancies and child abuse.
- The *Positive Prevention of Adolescents living with HIV* project implemented targeted activities for girls to achieve greater participation in teen clubs for empowerment.
- *JPGE II* employed a combination of strategies: community mobilization, engagement and awareness to support and implement actions that contribute to the fulfilment of girls’ education;

social behaviour change communications to change behaviours to eliminate harmful social and cultural practices, and change social norms and address structural inequalities; standardisation of by-laws related to education promoted and the process facilitated by the Chief Council for girls' education; influential leaders and gatekeepers including religious leaders and traditional counsellors reached to support girls' education; community theatre and radios to raise awareness and highlight the value of education. *JPGGE III* particularly aimed at adopting a more GT approach to transform discriminatory gender norms and practices affecting girls' and boys' education – with the latest annual report claiming that “all programme interventions promote gender transformation by taking into consideration roles, needs and opportunities for both girls and boys and instilling gender equality values” (*JPGGE III* Narrative Progress Report 2022, 2023). *JPGGE III* maintains the focus on girls while at the same time ensuring that roles, needs and opportunities of boys are analysed and considered as well, and that they are actively engaged so they can be champions in promoting gender equality. For example, interventions that aim at promoting access to essential services (e.g., nutrition through school meals, youth friendly health services), and improvement in teaching and learning, equally target both girls and boys and deconstruct some negative gender and social norms. Activities that promote empowerment and engage and discuss key issues among peers, for example through clubs and youth groups, see active participation of boys, not only as champions to support girls' education but also to ensure they have a safe space to air their own concerns and needs.

- The *Spotlight Initiative* in Malawi appears to have adopted a range of transformative approaches at the individual and community levels, including on awareness raising, working on negative social norms, promotion of positive masculinities for male engagement, document included the following components, safe spaces for girls and young women, mentoring, sexual and reproductive health, social behaviour change communications. The *Spotlight Initiative's* latest annual report (2023) outlined the latest interventions addressing social norms and ultimately leading to gender transformative outcomes for AGs. These are a combination of individual, community and policy-level interventions, and engaging men and boys on positive masculinities.

At the *individual* level, the *Ifenso Tingathe (We too Can)* platforms targeting in and out of school adolescent girls and boys, supports the empowerment of girls and boys to effectively report SGBV and provide a platform for dialogue around issues affecting adolescent wellbeing, life skills and livelihoods. Over 12,000 girls and 8,400 boys who partake in these platforms are empowered with knowledge about their rights, SGBV case reporting, how to say no to child marriage and other harmful practices and behaviours. The transformational potential of *Ifenso Tingathe* platforms lies on the strengthened accountability demanded to duty bearers by girls, who are demanding their rights and contributing to solutions to end VAWG at school and community level (*Spotlight Initiative* Annual Report, 2023). The *Spotlight Initiative* supported mentors and mentees from 447 safe spaces to conduct 89 dialogue sessions with 17,654 leaders and influential persons. The girls and young women advocated for issues related to support of the leaders on eliminating VAWG and gender equality (including the *Safe Space* mentorship programme) and addressed barriers to the redress of SGBV cases and harmful practices.

At the *community* level, *Spotlight Initiative* led SGBV awareness raising activities through songs, drama, art competitions, open-air meetings, poems, dance, music, radio jingles, and print media on how to challenge harmful social norms and report SGBV.

The *Spotlight Initiative* mentored men and boys to embrace behaviours and attitudes that correspond to positive masculinities, with boys linked to the *Safe Space* mentorship programme playing a supportive role for the mentors and mentees, “allowing them to do their work without fear of backlash from men and boys in the communities” (*Spotlight Initiative* Annual Report, 2023). The programme also engaged pastors, sheikhs, and *HeForShe* champions on male engagement and positive masculinities. These in turn formed *He4She clubs* and *STAR Circle* groups that promoted positive masculinities with

community leaders and members through *bawo* (a traditional game) competitions and awareness meetings. Other interventions included “male to male” dialogues on rape and negative masculinities to encourage young men and boys to become agents of change, rather than preparators or bystanders, and training of boys on positive social and gender norms, how to report VAWG and what to expect from the process of making such reports. Reportedly, the boys and young men have learned to recognize violence, abuse, and exploitation in their school environments and in their communities so they can stand up to VAWG.

- The *Afikepo* programme uses a care group model¹⁰, with adolescent groups including out-of-school girls and specific activities including SRHR (prevention of teen pregnancies)
- Although the desk review has been unable to verify whether this programme was implemented as designed, the proposal for the project *Accelerating Girls’ Education: Focusing on Access, Retention and Learning* (2021) has a special focus on early adolescents, providing SRHR education to prevent early pregnancies and enhancing girls’ participation and strengthening transferable and life skills acquisition with the goal of increasing their safety from exploitation, harmful practices, and violence. The programme also addresses root causes of negative gender norms by removing gender biases and stereotypes around women’s leadership in teaching and learning materials and training teachers in gender responsive pedagogies and mentoring to support girls. Activities aimed at empowering girls to challenge their social cultural norms, develop their transformative leadership skills, and build their confidence, communication, and conflict resolution skills included girls boot camps, “girl for girl” groups, bringing girls’ voices in School Management Committees, mentoring, and girls’ leadership conferences.
- UNICEF Malawi Annual Report (2021) states that, as a result of UNICEF’s water, sanitation, and hygiene work in schools to ensure girls do not drop out and a girls’ empowerment initiative providing mentoring and coaching to AGs receiving scholarships, nearly 3,430 girls were expected to complete secondary education in 2021. At the time of preparing this desk review the evaluation team has been unable to ascertain whether this has been achieved or not.

Programme documents reviewed show that many projects’ interventions (especially those addressing social norms negatively affecting AGs) show potential for addressing barriers that may limit AGs’ voice, agency, and leadership, even though they might not intentionally or explicitly aim at gender transformation. Examples of interventions designed to challenge negative gender norms, and men and women’s traditional roles, in nutrition, economic empowerment and civic involvement of AGs are listed below. No further documents were available to assess their effectiveness:

- The joint *Afikepo* programme aims at empowering young AGs so that they decide on what is needed to enhance their nutritional status and that of their children. *Afikepo* also uses Village Savings and Loans (VSL) schemes to improve access to loans at the household level to increase women and girl’s economic empowerment. Initially the VSL did not target AGs, but now they participate as well, which provides them with great opportunity for financial autonomy especially for out-of-school girls, who produce crops as income-generating/entrepreneurial activities. Staff mentioned that male participation was promoted in the programme through male champions, to make sure girls can take up leadership roles without interference. Other projects combining economic empowerment with other interventions (including on leadership) are: a Farmers Union of Malawi’s multi-sectoral nutrition programme with AGs (10-19 years) as target and including VSLs and leadership capacity building sessions to enable AGs to equally participate in the household and community decision making; a World Relief International’s stunting project targeting men to shift norms around AGs’ participation in decision making processes at household level, and targeting AGs to take part in adolescent VSL groups.

¹⁰ Care groups are made up of volunteer, community leaders who attend meetings, learn about nutrition and then share that knowledge with other households in their communities ([FAO, 2022](#)).

- A Creative Centre for Community Mobilisation project ensures that youth networks have an intentional focus on adolescent mothers so they can use their platforms to provide feedback on health-related issues.
- The one-year *Learning Never Stops Malawi* programme document outlines several GT activities aimed at empowering out of school AGs to return to schools, targeting both AGs individually and mobilising their communities to transform negative attitudes, norms, and perceptions on girls' education, and building the capacities of teachers to better support girls going back to school.

The Country Programme (2019-2023) evaluation (2023) recommends prioritis(ing) girls' leadership and agency, including by strengthening 'gender and technology', and gender transformative cash transfer."

Programmes for which more documents were available for review are predominantly multi-agency and multi-sectoral. The Gender Programmatic Review highlighted that many issues such as prevention of child marriage, initiation ceremonies, GBV, or sexual abuse, require multi-sectoral interventions.

Efficiency

EQ 6. To what extent has UNICEF allocated adequate resources to adolescent girls programming that is gender transformative and supports their leadership and agency in ESAR?

Most of programme proposal templates include gender (and often equity) considerations. However, no detailed budgets or financial reporting were provided that would allow a precise analysis and afford a complete picture of financial resources allocated by MCO to GT programming specifically aimed at increasing AGs' voice, leadership, and agency. No evidence was found of the budget allocations for intersectional dimensions, such as budget lines for ensuring accessibility for girls with disabilities. This was further reinforced in the Country Programme (2019-2023) evaluation (2023) which identified the lack of financial reports based on equity and gender-targeting as one of the areas for improvement.

Some topline figures are available and provided below, which unfortunately do not provide enough detail to determine whether sufficient resources have been allocated to GTP.

- Financial resources seem to have increased in the three iterations of the *JPGE*. *JPGE I* had a budget of USD 19 million (*Spotlight Initiative* Country Programme Document, 2018). This resource allocation was found appropriate by the final programme evaluation (2019), with most of the funds directly benefitting marginalised groups (vulnerable children, households, and poor communities in hard-to-reach places). According to narrative programme reporting, *JPGE II* had a budget of over USD 21 million and *JPGE III* has a budget of over USD 40 million. Budget lines associates with gender-related work, which is not necessarily GTP, are:
 - AGs (in-school) receiving iron folic acid supplementation: USD 417,946.
 - AGs (out of school) receiving comprehensive adolescent nutrition package: USD 112,078.
 - 20 Latrines integrated with menstrual hygiene management facilities rehabilitated: USD 255, 000
 - Mother groups continued to make, and train girls in making, local sanitary pads for menstrual hygiene: USD 77,680.
 - SRHR Mentorship sessions for girls (in and out of school) through *Safe Spaces*: USD 88,600.
- The joint *2gether 4 SRHR* programme (2018-2021) had a budget of USD 3 million.

- The total approved budget as per *Spotlight Initiative* Country Programme Document is almost USD 21 million. In terms of human resources, UNICEF has budgeted for the equivalent of 3 full-time positions spread across 15 staff members, including a full-time programme officer on protection and justice, and a communication for development specialist (70%).
- The programme document of the one-year *Learning Never Stops Malawi* programme, categorised by UNICEF and UNESCO, in terms of gender marker, as a “project that contributes significantly to gender equality”, had a budget of USD 700,000 (half of which for UNICEF), of which 30% earmarked to activities that promote gender equality. Activities covered with this funding targeting AGs aimed at: increasing AGs’ access to learning; empowering AGs, especially those who dropped out, to go back to school; contributing to changing negative norms among the communities to effectively support girls’ education; and improving the learning environment for AGs.
- The *Afikepo* programme (2017-2023) has a budget of USD 45 million but it is unclear from the budget whether specific budget was allocated for GT interventions targeting AGs.

EQ 7. To what extent do UNICEF programmes’ monitoring, reporting and evaluation (MER) systems explicitly, or implicitly address gender transformative programming with a view to generating evidence on UNICEF and public sector performance?

While there is evidence that some programmes collect baseline data to monitor their impact, monitoring systems seem to be mostly output-based and GT programming monitored predominantly at activity level, based on the review of programme and reporting documents. Examples of indicators in the *Spotlight Initiative* are “# people reached by campaigns challenging harmful social norms and gender stereotyping”, or “# communities with advocacy platforms established and/or strengthened to promote gender-equitable norms, attitudes, and behaviours”, rather than aiming to measure actual changes in attitudes and behaviours (*Spotlight Initiative* Country Programme Document, 2018).

The programme document for *Addressing the Gender Challenges in Emergency Preparedness and Response in Cyclone Freddy affected areas* (2023) includes an indicator on “adolescent girls, women and their respective organizations are actively engaged in the design and delivery of programmes”, rather than reflecting on the outcomes of their engagement. While the *Spotlight Initiative*’s programme document (2018) included plans to collect baseline data on SRHR, SGBV, and harmful practices, and qualitative data to inform the status of harmful practices and other factors contributing to SGBV and SRHR, it is unclear whether this happened. *JPGI III* carried out a baseline survey in 2021-2022 and a separate Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice baseline study to collect information on indicators that are not routinely measured by national systems or programme monitoring tools and to capture the knowledge, perceptions and practice of learners, parents, community and school-based structures around access to inclusive quality education, alternative learning pathways and social services provided at the school platform such as school meals, sexual and reproductive health services, adolescent nutrition and hygiene services.

Documents reviewed showed that, often, data is not often disaggregated by gender, or by age, or other identity characteristics. The Country Programme (2019-2023) evaluation (2023) found that MCO reporting (RAMs) omitted gender disaggregated data which was a “concern for other evaluations too.”

Most indicators across programmes reviewed focused on quantitative measurements which are not always effective in capturing transformative outcomes. The Country Programme (2019-2023)

evaluation (2023) found that the focus of data collection was “on mere gender responsive programming, as opposed to gender transformative programming, and that “most indicators have not focused on qualitatively tracking gender transformative results to reveal actual changes to norms, attitudes, and practices that the interventions are triggering.” Examples of indicators that, even at the output level, could to some extent track GT outcomes related to AGs’ voice and agency in using social accountability mechanisms were found in a Development Communications Trust’s project document (2021):

- “# documented cases of girls, boys, women and men accessing and utilizing available social accountability reporting mechanisms at community level to report on the Social Cash Transfer Programme-related fraud, bribery, corruption and poor quality of service provision”;
- “# documented cases of complaints on the Social Cash Transfer Programme raised by women, girls, boys and men through social media platforms, programme case management protocols and public hearings to expand Grievance Redress Mechanisms”.

Embedding and resourcing of evaluations of gender transformative programming in order to demonstrate attributable impact.

Only one evaluation and one mid-term assessment were shared by the MCO which does not allow for a comprehensive assessment of how far the MCO regularly embeds evaluations of GT programming, and resources them, in order to demonstrate attributable impact. Recent publicly available evaluations commissioned by the MCO do not cover GT programming. However, most evaluations included gender/gender and human rights considerations, which do provide some analysis of the issues, albeit at a fairly superficial level. Few examples found as part of the review are:

- *JPGGE I* was evaluated by the WFP’s decentralised evaluation function, through a quasi-experimental approach. The evaluation mentions that the *JPGGE* partners adapted their approach for the second phase based on the observations the challenges they identified. These include the additional role modelling of girls (by engaging professional women teachers, police, and military women officers) to strengthen the position and debating power of girls in the community. The evaluation itself captured learning around the delivery of awareness raising activities, leadership training (including girls’ empowerment), and SRHR activities with boys and girls, recognising that only targeting girls is not sufficient to achieve GT outcomes. The evaluation of *JPGGE II* was not carried as originally planned due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The *Spotlight Initiative* had a mid-term assessment and planned for a final evaluation which would facilitate a harmonised approach to resource mobilisation for phase III. The European Union Delegation had expressed their support for mobilising resources both internally as well as with European Union Member States. The *Spotlight Initiative’s* Annual Narrative Report 2021 (2022) mentioned that an assessment of the Safe Space component of the programme was carried out, but no report was shared for inclusion in the desk review.
- No formal evaluation of the one-year *Learning Never Stops Malawi* programme was envisaged, however the proposal stated that lessons learned would be compiled. No document was provided for the desk review to enable a review of lessons learned.

The Strategy Note on school-age children pillar under the CPD claims that UNICEF aims to adapt, implement, and evaluate evidence-based programming that includes young adolescent girls and boys and caregivers with the goal of developing more gender equitable relationships, transforming harmful notions of masculinity and femininity, and, in so doing, improving sexual and reproductive health outcomes. Evidence for how far this has achieved has not been provided to the desk review.

Sustainability

EQ 8. To what extent are the positive changes and effects of gender transformative programming on adolescent girls' leadership and agency sustainable at the national level, and/ or likely to be scaled up by government, or civil society?

Some examples of sustainability considerations were found in programme documents reviewed. Sustainability in MCO programming focuses on establishing partnerships with government and civil society partners who can continue activities after project closure and around sustainable changes resulting from community awareness raising, safe spaces and mentoring interventions. Some examples of sustainable community-level change, including awareness raising, girls' empowerment, and mentoring interventions are:

- The *Spotlight Initiative* mid-term assessment (2021) found, in terms of sustainability of the project, that 100 community youth volunteers had been trained in *Empowerment Transformation Training* with the aim of changing mindset of men towards women in fighting against GBV. However, UNICEF staff noted that are not tracking the girls within the cohorts who graduate from *Spotlight Initiative* activities, and noted the programme should keep in touch with them to both leverage their role and track the impact of those changes. According to a Safe Space assessment mentioned in the *Spotlight Initiative* 's Annual Narrative Report 2021 (2022), the graduated mentees continue to contribute to the network by getting involved in mentoring and engaging newer mentees - leading to a growing network of girls who are standing together against VAWG in their communities.
- *JPGE I*'s final evaluation found that the synergistic approach of preventing pregnancy through empowerment and awareness raising activities and access to youth friendly health services with a focus on out-of-school girls to address current as well as future contexts – hinting at sustainability in the chosen approach. *JPGE III*'s outcome 3 reflected the importance of focusing on the sustainability of the programme from a community (by engaging parents and communities) as well as institutional perspective (with the goal that the multi-sectoral approach modelled by the *JPGE* would be mainstreamed within the wider policy and programmatic landscape in the longer term and beyond the programme).
- *Afikepo*'s sustainability of the programme is based on four key aspects, of which one is empowering communities, and in particular women of reproductive age and AGs to decide on and take care of their future, with a special emphasis on intra-household decision making powers and a comprehensive learning curriculum.

An example of a programme placing emphasis on activities continuing after the closure of the programme is the *Positive Prevention of Adolescents Living with HIV* programme, which reported that all sites chosen for mentorship of Teen Club, sexual and reproductive health, SGBV and Young Motherhood programming continued to receive mentorship over time with less on-site support as they gained capacity to ascertain sustainability (*Positive Prevention of Adolescents Living with HIV* programme quarterly report, 2022).

Exit strategies for most programmes under review were not provided by MCO, and it is unclear whether programmes have developed exit strategies and they were not shared, or whether they don't exist. *JPGE I*'s final evaluation found that the lack of sustainability may have been influenced by the lack of an exit strategy.

Finally, emphasis on GTP for sustainability was placed by the evaluation of the Country Programme (2019-2023) conducted in 2023, which noted that “deliberately and consistently implementing gender transformative and socially inclusive programming at scale, as well as institutionalizing it in workflows, is what will ensure sustainable and comprehensive programming that 'leaves no one behind'.”

Systems and partnerships to build ownership, capacity and resources to support programmes' scale up by government or take up by other civil society partners.

Most programmes under review are implemented by civil society partners and in collaboration with government, which could potentially build ownership, capacity, and resources to support government scale up or take up by other partners. The *Spotlight Initiative* had worked closely with the Government of Malawi, particularly with Line Ministries and local authorities in the districts to build ownership and sustainability. According to the *Spotlight Initiative's* Annual Report (2020), the fact that district councils were actively engaged in the design of interventions allowed the programme to bring in contextual knowledge and greater understanding of community needs in each district, while ensuring buy-in, ownership, and leadership of the programme by district authorities, and contributing to enhanced sustainability of results. On the one hand, UNICEF staff noted that structures and networks developed under the *Spotlight Initiative* are built within government structures and within their mandates, and the programme works to ensure the platforms keep meeting in the communities using their own money, and the districts have capacities to continue providing services after the end of the programme. For example, the programme works at the policy level to ensure the Ministry of Finance disburses funds to the Ministry for Gender and those funds trickle down to district councils. UNICEF staff noted how the programme works with child protection/extension workers (some are volunteers, some are government workers), with the aim of their work being sustained as it already falls under the government's mandate. However, in contradiction to the above, the *Spotlight Initiative* mid-term assessment (2021) reported government mentioning that "unfortunately, government agencies are not fully involved as key players. There are seemingly parallel structures instead of using the existing structures that would ensure sustainability of outcomes beyond the programme life cycle". This exemplifies the importance of working closely with the government when aiming for the sustainability and scale up of programmes – to which MCO clearly subscribes and commits to, putting a lot of effort to ensure these partnerships are strong. The programme also places emphasis on the engagement of grassroots organisations as part of the sustainability strategy (Annual Report, 2022)., with UNICEF staff mentioning that the programme has built community-based organisations' capacity with training of trainers and created a network would ensure they continue coaching each other. The desk review has not been able to confirm the extent to which any of this has led to sustainable results. At the policy level, the *Spotlight Initiative* finalized and validated the National Male Engagement Strategy through the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare.

An example of promising practice for programme sustainability is to hold participatory consultation exercises with community and local government to explore options for sustainability from the outset. The document review found that this approach was adopted by the *Spotlight Initiative*, which, according to an annual report (2022), conducted consultations with programme participants, as the basis for the phase II sustainability strategy, as well as joint implementing partners assessments to determine which implementing partners would continue in Phase II, and which required targeted capacity building in line with the *Spotlight Initiative* Malawi Grassroots Action Plan. Unfortunately, the research team was unable to validate how successful it has been in sustaining some aspects of the programme. However, ensuring sustainability planning is built into programme design from the outset and involving community and district level stakeholders is likely to lend itself to greater chance of success.

Impact

EQ 9. To what extent are new or planned interventions likely to lend themselves to achieving higher level change for adolescent girls in future?

Most of the programme documents consulted did not include evaluations or evaluation findings, therefore there is limited evidence on the impacts of GTP. There are some examples of potential gender transformative impact emerging from the review of selected programme documents:

Increased capacity of AGs to speak out for themselves, challenge negative social norms and harmful practices and demand their rights and access to services, through mentorship programmes, platforms for AGs' participation and teen clubs, and empowerment training:

- According to a *Spotlight Initiative's* Annual Narrative Report (2022), an assessment of the *Safe Space* mentorship programme found that girls are more empowered to report violence and challenge negative social norms that promote harmful practices such as GBV, child marriage and teenage pregnancies. Other positive impacts reported is the avoidance of unwanted pregnancies by AGs by accessing family planning methods, the return to school of AGs from safe spaces, AGs being empowered to seek help after experiencing SGBV and to reporting cases of domestic violence to their mentors or authorities, even in instances where communities have attempted to shield perpetrators. The desk review has been unable to ascertain the methodology used for this assessment so can only report the findings shared by the programme in the annual report.
- UNICEF staff mentioned *Spotlight Initiative's Ifenso Tingathe (We Too!)* platforms for GBV prevention and reporting, and case management, as an example of impact on AG's voice and agency. AGs, empowered to be able to advocate for themselves with duty bearers, mobilised community leaders and other girls and did a march/petition to district council to obtain bylaws on child marriage.
- *JPGE I* final evaluation (2019) found that girls in *JPGE* schools were more empowered and better able to know and access their rights, although no hard evidence was provided to support this.
- *JPGE II's* final programme report (2022) claims that the mentorship programme provided an opportunity for girls and boys to discuss sexual and reproductive health, human rights and GBV issues in safe physical and emotional spaces, so they can make healthy and informed decisions and seek services when needed.
- The Gender Programmatic Review (2022) notes the over two hundred thousand girls who have completed a safe school's empowerment transformation training and active citizenship training now have improved confidence and skills to protect themselves from and report violence, to challenge the social and cultural norms that perpetuate violence, and demand protection services.¹¹
- The *Positive Prevention of Adolescents Living with HIV* project¹², which placed emphasis on the creation of demand for postpartum contraception (health talks during young motherhood clinics focused on contraceptives) saw the percentage of young mothers getting postpartum contraception significantly increasing from roughly 67% to roughly 90%.

Changes in attitudes and behaviours negatively impacting AGs, including those of boys and at community levels through mentorship programmes and awareness raising:

- According to its final evaluation (2019), *JPGE I* did not reach the target of less than 4% of girls agreeing that it is justifiable that a partner/husband hits or beats his wife/partner under certain circumstances (this is a proxy indicator adopted by the programme to measure the empowerment and awareness of the girls). Significantly more girls in *JPGE* schools found it acceptable than those in non-intervention schools (roughly 11% vs 4%), nonetheless, there was an improvement from the baseline, and it was larger for *JPGE* schools.
- Changes in gendered social norms effected by transformational gender approaches challenging attitudes and beliefs in the *Safe School* are starting to be visible, with boys

¹¹ The document does not clarify over which period.

¹² Virtual SRHR teen clubs to ensure HIV positive adolescents and adolescent mothers continue receiving antiretroviral therapy, psychosocial support, and contraceptives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

respecting and protecting girls more through empowerment transformation trainings (Country Programme (2019-2023) evaluation, 2023). z

Increased participation – AGs taking leadership roles in their communities through awareness raising and empowerment interventions:

- *JPGE II* contributed to the awareness raising and empowerment of girls and encouraged them to take on leadership positions in the community and in school clubs; almost 90% of clubs were found to have female leaders in *JPGE* schools, against almost 70% in non-supported school (*JPGE II* final programme report, 2022).
- In *Afikepo*, AGs took up the leadership of groups, they increased their skills, and were empowered to demand what they need. UNICEF staff believe that the entrepreneurial components attached to the nutrition programming, and for example the SRHR components (even if this would not fall under UNICEF's mandate) have the potential to have effected transformative change (for example to prevent teenage pregnancies while increasing nutritional knowledge and skills).

Increased empowerment economic empowerment of AGs through youth clubs and training. The Gender Programmatic Review (2022) claimed that the adolescents and youth who participated in the UNICEF-supported youth clubs economic empowerment activities, active citizenship and transferable skills training are in a better position to create economic empowerment activities for themselves.

Increased numbers of communities adopting by-laws in support of girls' education, with the potential of ultimately strengthening the position of girls in their adult life, through engaging parents and local communities. *JPGE II*'s Outcome 5 ("parents and local community engaged in education") saw the percentage of targeted communities implementing community by-laws in support of girls' education increasing from 63.2 to 98% (*JPGE II* final programme report, 2022).

CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNED

There is evidence that some programmes implemented by UNICEF Malawi Country Office, in particular joint programs targeting adolescent girls, are contributing to increasing girls' voice, agency, and leadership working both at the individual and community levels. These mainly focus on addressing harmful gender norms impacting adolescent girls (including engaging boys and men), on placing girls in better position to take up leadership roles and to take informed decisions about their lives (including their health), and on improving girls' economic positions (including through better education opportunities and entrepreneurship activities and training). Most of the other programme documents provided by the country office and reviewed did not seem to include intentional gender-transformative programming elements focusing on adolescent girls, and less so specifically aimed at increasing their voice, leadership, and agency, even when they have AGs as their main target group.

Lessons identified include:

- Align gender-transformative ambitions of the new UNICEF Malawi Country Programme Document and Gender Equality Strategy to UNICEF's Strategic Plan, GAP 3, the Adolescent Girls Strategy and the new Gender Policy;
- Promote a more systematic and coherent approach and strategy towards adolescent-focused work (in particular targeting adolescent girls) across UNICEF Malawi teams and sectors, reducing siloed working;
- Institutionalise gender transformative programming across all UNICEF sectors, including through training to staff and implementing partners;
- Continue focusing on girls while including boys and men and promote positive masculinities and shifts in discriminatory social cultural norms;

- Leverage the role of adolescent girls who are already part of programmes to expand reach and impact (e.g., cohorts of AGs who have undergone mentoring) and track the longer-term gender outcomes;
- Include indicators – including qualitative – in MER systems to track gender transformative results, including increased adolescent girls' leadership, voice, and agency, and measuring shifts in gender norms, attitudes, and practices;
- Commission evaluations to rigorously assess the effectiveness of different models/approaches implemented in achieving gender transformative outcomes for adolescent girls;
- Ensure engagement with AGs at all stages of the policy and programme cycle is meaningful and not tokenistic;
- Track spend on age-disaggregated gender transformative programming;
- Develop exit strategies from the design stage.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. List of documents consulted

	Document title	Document description
1	1. 2018-PL5-Malawi-CPD-ODS-EN	Country Programme Document (2019-2023)
2	27. Clean Copy-Final Report-Gender Programmatic Review1	Gender Programmatic Review (2022)
3	Gender Strategy final 28Feb 2019.rtf	CO Gender Strategy
4	UNICEF Malawi Annual Report 2021 (full)	CO Annual Report 2021 (full)
5	Country Office Annual Report 2022 (summary)	CO Annual Report 2022 (summary)
6	2. Find Your Feet Programme Document SLG.Final.docx	Programme document: Find your Feet
7	3. Malawi Spotlight Country PROGRAMME DOCUMENT FINAL OSC APPROVED	Programme document: Spotlight Initiative
8	3. AR2019_MALAWI_spotlightinitiative_FINAL	Annual Report: Spotlight Initiative (2019)
9	3. Spotlight Initiative Malawi Annual Report 2020.pdf	Annual Report: Spotlight Initiative (2020)
10	3. Annual Narrative Programme Report 2021	Annual Report: Spotlight Initiative (2021)
11	3. Spotlight Initiative Malawi Annual Report 2022.pdf	Annual Report: Spotlight Initiative (2022)
12	3. Spotlight documentation report Africa and LA	Spotlight stories of change 2021 (Africa and LAC)
13	3. Spotlight Meta Review Report Draft - for comments	Spotlight Initiative, draft meta review on Phase I (Africa and LAC), Nov 2021
14	3. Spotlight Initiative Malawi MTA.pdf	Spotlight Mid-term Assessment Report using ROM review (2021)
15	4. MRCS Report final May 2022	Final report: MALAWI RED CROSS SOCIETY 2022 UNICEF COVID FINAL REPORT - "Building Resilient Health Systems for improved service delivery in Malawi"
16	5. New Year 4 SUN Proposal_revised210622	Proposal: scaling up nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive interventions for reducing stunting in Nsanje and Phalombe districts
17	6. MCO ConceptNote_VINA 28022023_Clean	Proposal: VINA 2023-2025
18	7. PD - CRECCOM - final (1)	Programme document: CRECCOM
19	8. PD - DCT - Social Accountability - final	Programme document: DCT
20	9. PD - FUM - Nutrition - signed.pdf	Programme document: FUM
21	10. PD - SWET - COVID Nutrition - Final.docx.pdf	Programme document: SWET
22	11. PD - WRI - Nutrition - signed.pdf	Programme document: WRI
23	12. Proposal_Malawi_GirlsEducation_2021.pdf	Programme proposal: Malawi Girls Education (2021)
24	13. Strategy Note -School-Age Children.docx	Strategy Note for school-age children pillar (2018)
25	14. AIR_UNICEF_Malawi_ShockresponsiveSP_InceptionReport_clean.docx	Study to inform future programming
26	15. Approved SDG Accelerated fund proposal.pdf	Programme document: Learning Never Stops Malawi
27	16. Adolescent girls interventions during covid-19MalawiInputs.docx	Document on several COVID-19 interventions
28	17. FAWEMA GRP 2022 Report.docx	Training Report on the Support to Provision of Gender Responsive Programming Services for Secondary Education
29	18. Malawi JPGE Phase I Final Evaluation Report V 6 June.pdf	JPGE 1 2014-2017: final evaluation
30	18. JPGE II Final Narrative Programme Reporting_MPTFO_JMW10.pdf	Final Programme Narrative Report: Joint Programme on Girls' Education II (2020 and 2021)
31	18. JPGE III Proposal Document_Final Draft_20 Nov 2020.docx	Proposal: Joint Programme on Girls' Education III
32	18. SDG_AF 2022 Narrative Reporting-JPGE-Final.pdf	Narrative Progress Report: Joint Programme on Girls' Education III (2022)

33	19. Living school proposal- German.docx	Project proposal: Living Schools
34	19. UNICEF German - Living Schools Project Funding proposal (26 May 2021) (002).docx	Concept note: Living Schools
35	21. UNICEF-GGP Concept Note.docx	Concept Note - Green Girls Platform - Girls' leadership in climate action and disaster risk reduction
36	22. TOR AGYW targeting and referral for HTS approved version.pdf	TOR for Consultancy
37	23. Quariry Assurance Framework - TOR 8 April 22 (002).pdf	TOR for Consultancy
38	24. Adolescents living with HIV.UNICEF REPORT Q4-Baylor Malawi 27012022.pdf	Quarterly Report: Adolescents living with HIV
39	25. AFIKEPO FINAL PRODOC UNJP MLW 071 EC .pdf	Programme document: Afikepo
40	25. Afikepo - Current Status of Implementation of Key Productive Structures as of June 2022 (1).pdf	Programme implementation map: Afikepo
41	25. Afikepo NSA Quarterly Report- Oct _Dec 2022 FAO UNICEF (1).pdf	Progress Report: Afikepo (last quarter 2022)
42	25. KAP 2022 Report _Clean.pdf	KAP survey on maternal, adolescent, infant and young child nutrition and care practices, water and sanitation, and nutrition-sensitive agriculture for Afikepo project.
43	26. Compendium of SBCC Summit Abstracts Accepted from UNICEF ESAR.pdf	SBCC Summit Abstracts
44	28. AGYW Referral Form _V2.pdf	Screening tool to identify and assess specific risks and vulnerability for Adolescent Girls and Young Women In Malawian contexts
45	28. HTS Referral and Linkages Tool Revised Malawi - March 2023 AA FS cleaned version April 03.docx	Guidance to use the adolescent girls and young women screening tool
46	29. Voices of children and adolescents consultation 23 February 2023 .pdf	Research report
47	30. Adolescent IFA Intervention FINAL Report 05062022wk (002) .pdf	Evaluation report
48	CP (2019-2023) evaluation	Evaluation report
49	Evaluation of maternal, newborn and child survival programme in high intervention districts in Malawi	Evaluation report
50	Developmental evaluation of phase II journey towards structurally facilitated integration	Evaluation report
51	Evaluation of UNICEF's work on cash transfer programming in emergencies	Evaluation report
52	Summative Evaluation of Impact of using Drones on Population Health and Other Outcomes	Evaluation report
53	Real Time Evaluation (RTE) of COVID-19 Crisis Response in Malawi	Evaluation report
54	Evaluation of the Community Led Total Sanitation and Hygiene Programme Phase I: (Qualitative and Secondary Quantitative Analysis)	Evaluation report
55	MLW PCA2023282_SPD2023357 - signed effective 8th May to 31 August-14 37_15	Programme document "Addressing the Gender Challenges in Emergency Preparedness and Response in Cyclone Freddy affected areas"

CASE STUDY REPORT

Mozambique

Country Case Study



CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	34
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	35
CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY	41
KEY FINDINGS	43
CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED	60
ANNEXES	62

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We would also like to express our gratitude to the many stakeholders, including UNICEF and UNFPA staff, Mozambican civil society implementing partners and the participants who agreed to be interviewed who generously gave their time to share their experiences and information.

Girls not women

“You are a fighter, mother,
you took care of a child that the father barely cared about his existence.
You had to go through rejections within your society
They gave you names that hurt your heart and laughed at you as if you were on a stage in full
performance
No one ever asked what was wrong with you
And even your parents didn't care about your dreams and the life that you wanted for yourself
They watched your dreams drown in those tears of yours and never did anything about it
In fact, they did, they forced you to live with a man you barely knew in exchange for material goods
And you were sexually violated and beaten in exchange for values
That was your value
And everyone saw
And everyone turned their backs and closed their doors on you
Your parents are to be blamed
They told you, marriage is a job
And they took you to the man's home to make ends meet”

Poem by Jordão Lino (Adolescent Panel Interviewee)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case study is an integral part of UNICEF regional evaluation with the objective to understand how current programming, investments and practices to invest in adolescent girls' leadership are shaping UNICEF's gender transformative programming (GTP) approach in Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), covering the period from 2018 to 2022.

Mozambique Country Office (MCO) identified three joint United Nations programmes that are relevant to this evaluation that showcase the investment that the Country Office (CO) has been doing to contribute to adolescent girls and young women's (AGYW) voice, agency and leadership and the extent to which they have been making progress regarding gender transformative programming. These are:

- the Global programme to End Child Marriage
- Rapariga Biz programme
- the Spotlight Initiative

All three programmes are implemented in partnership with other sister agencies such as UNFPA, UN Women, UNDP and UNESCO together with implementing partners that include Government Institutions as well as Civil society organisations (CSOs).

The Global programme to End Child Marriage (GPECM) was implemented between 2016-2019 and was renewed in 2020 - 2023 in Nampula province. It aims to address harmful practices and norms with a focus on child marriage of adolescent girls (10-19 years old) by empowering adolescent girls and boys through media engagement in media clubs and production of adolescent-led media programmes on behaviour change on child marriage, adolescent sexual and reproductive health rights (ASRHR), violence against children (VAC) and other issues concerning adolescents' wellbeing. It works through a mentorship programme for girls and boys to promote role modelling on positive masculinity in communities and schools and economic empowerment. This programme sets a clear intention to be gender transformative and has set technical notes¹³ and processes such as the Gender Transformative Accelerator¹⁴ with key priorities and a roadmap to become more gender transformative.

Rapariga Biz programme (RBP) had its 1st phase implemented between 2016-2019 with an extension to 2022 in Zambezia and Nampula provinces. The program focuses on the promotion and protection of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) of AGYW (10-24 years old) with the view to empower them to exert their rights in making informed decisions concerning their SRHR. The programme uses the mentorship approach to empower girls to make informed decisions regarding their Sexual and reproductive health (SRH), demand for and uptake of essential SRH services with the involvement and boys and men to strengthen their SRH. It also empowers adolescent girls (AGs) by training them as counsellors of the SMS Biz platform¹⁵ to support their peers by providing information and refer them to youth friendly services.

The Spotlight Initiative (SI) programme in Mozambique was implemented from 2018-2020/2022 in Gaza, Manica and Nampula provinces. Focuses on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and harmful practices (HP) of adolescent girls and young women (10-24 years old), with transformative prevention and integrated response. It also uses the mentorship approach to empower girls for the prevention of child marriage and gender-based violence, and male engagement on positive, non-violent masculinities and for gender equality and economic empowerment.

The three programmes have been addressing gender issues at different levels of the socio ecological model with the view to increase AGYW's knowledge, skills awareness of rights, and empower them to

¹³ UNFPA-UNICEF; Technical note on Gender Transformative Approaches in the Global programmes to End Child Marriage Phase II: A Summary for Practitioners (2020).

¹⁴ UNFPA-UNICEF; Gender Transformative Accelerator, Mozambique Country Report (2021)

¹⁵ SMS Biz is UNICEF's free digital youth engagement tool that promotes de participation and counselling of adolescents and young people on SRH and HIV/AIDS prevention.

voice their concerns, agency and capacity to make informed decisions while working to transform social norms, attitudes and behaviours at individual, family and community levels.

Methodology

The evaluation approach is based on two core methodologies: i) outcome harvesting against the gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) continuum and ii) participatory, youth friendly approaches. The outcomes were harvested through qualitative data collection methods, which included CO document review, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs) and adolescent panel interviews.¹⁶ These were further mapped against the evaluation matrix and the GESI continuum to explore the views and experiences of different stakeholders in different contexts.

The field work was conducted between April - July 2023 in two districts of Nampula province (Namialo and Monapo) respectively.

The evaluation consulted a total of 59 people (41 women and 18 men) which comprised 11 KIIs with UNICEF staff, UNFPA and implementing partners from CSOs. In addition, 3 FGD were conducted with a total of 20 girls and 10 boys, and 14 interviews (10 girls and 4 boys) conducted by 4 members (3 girls and 1 boy) of the adolescent panel.

Key findings

With regards to the AGs participation in the various programme cycles of the three programmes considered for this case study, it was noted that **adolescent girls are the ones implementing the programmes** as can be seen in the main programme approaches such as mentorship for girls and boys (all programmes), radio engagement (GPECM and SI), SMS Biz (RBP). Similarly, girls also participate in monitoring and evaluation as participants and implementers of the programmes. Furthermore, adolescent girls attend annual event, forums and conferences where they voice issues concerning their lives and influence decision makers with the view to influence policy changes (GPECM and RBP).

However, the same cannot be said with regards to their participation in the project and programme design. **This case study did not find any examples of adolescent girls participating in the design of the programmes.** Nonetheless, the CO is making efforts to change this with the recent inclusion of youth organisation in the second phase of, for example, RBP. Furthermore, the three programmes are grounded in robust analysis based on studies, research, surveys, monitoring and evaluations and experiences based on previous and current projects/ programmes which involve young people and appear to be addressing their needs.

Adolescent girl focused interventions appear to be coherent and aligned with UNICEF's Strategies and Global commitments given that are informed by a Gender Action Plan and Strategy (2022–2026) aligned with UNICEF Global Strategic Plan (2022-2025), Gender Action Plan (2022-2025) and Gender Policy (2021- 2030). The Gender Action Plan and Strategy aims to i) strengthen interventions tackling structural changes that accelerate gender equality and empowerment of girls and women as grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child rather than engaging primarily in programmes focused on girls and women as beneficiaries; ii) strengthen the integration of gender equality into UNICEF's work on gender, to advance women empowerment and realize the rights of all children and; iii) the achievement of gender equality goals in conjunction with partners and national stakeholders, as outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In addition, **all joint programmes have coordination mechanisms that provide space for improved collaboration and coordination related to programmatic issues and implementation.** The Spotlight Initiative has a steering committee co-chaired by the Resident Coordinator and the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Action and a United Nations programmatic coordination team (UNICEF,

¹⁶ Adolescent Panel composed by 4 members (3 girls and 1 boy) to interview their peers who've participated in UNICEF programmes.

UNFPA, UN Women and UNDP) chaired by UNFPA. RBP has a steering committee at the national level and multi-sectoral committees at all levels providing a strategic mechanism for leadership and coordination of the implementation of the programme under the leadership of the Government through the Secretariat of State of Youth and Employment. The GPECM holds regular coordination meetings with technical representatives from the donor group on ending child, early and forced marriage, has two multi-sectoral coordination groups on youth and gender respectively involving donors, United Nations agencies and Government counterparts, with recurrent bi-monthly coordination meetings taking place between UNFPA and UNICEF.

GTAs are being used in adolescent focused programmes with the view to strengthen girls' voice, agency, and leadership as a catalyst for their inclusion and participation across all sectors and contexts. This is done through supporting innovative and safe platforms and spaces, both offline (girls and boys mentorship sessions) and online (SMS Biz and radio programmes), to build girls' skills and capacities to lead, influence change, voice their opinions and be empowered. As a result, the joint programmes have made extensive and significant contribution to AGYW voices and agency at the individual and family levels. In addition, it has contributed to AGs leadership and decision-making at the community level where adolescent girl mentors work with community leaders to address sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender-based violence (GBV), VAC and child marriage and are role models, respected by their peers. However, the same does not occur within the organisation that they are part of, where 85% of the youth (FGD) feel that adults make decisions, young people are consulted and informed and 65% feel that they are assigned tasks and informed how and why they are involved in a project. Furthermore, the three programmes are engaging boys and men, through boys' mentorship, interpersonal, intergenerational and community dialogues with the view to shifting gender norms and challenge the imbalance of power and privilege conferred on men and boys to the detriment of girls. In addition, community dialogues are also key to discussing and addressing harmful social norms and practices around child marriage, VAC and to identify local solutions to eliminating harmful social norms and practices associated with child marriage.

The joint programmes are addressing gender issues related to ASRHR, GBV, HP/child marriage and therefore do have budget and resources allocated to them. In addition, the CO dedicates at least 15 per cent¹⁷ of its institutional budget to gender equality, by supporting boys and girls. However, according to KII and FGD participants the resources available are insufficient to achieve gender transformative programming given the profound changes that need to happen. **With regards to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, most of the indicators are quantitative which do not capture the attitude, beliefs and practices changes that are needed to measure social norms and behaviour change over time.**

UNICEF Mozambique implements its joint programmes in partnership with both government institutions such as the State Secretariat for Youth and Employment (SEJE), Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Action (MGCAS), Ministry of Health (MISAU), Ministry of Education and Human Development (MINED) and Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs (MJCR) as well as CSOs such as community radios, Coalizão, ASCHA¹⁸ and Nweti¹⁹. **A key component of the partnership is UNICEF's investment in strengthening partners capacity to both improve the quality of implementation as well to contribute to the sustainability of operations and activities without further UNICEF support.** Government Institution staff from different Ministries, at National, Provincial and District level had their capacity strengthened to deliver quality services and it is anticipated that these benefits will have lasting impact, although this case study was not able to ascertain how effective this capacity strengthening has been. In addition, CSOs seek additional donor funds to continue to implement programmes to ensure the continuity of the work in the communities. Similarly, by strengthening

¹⁷ Lara Burger; Gender programmatic Review - Mozambique Country Office (2021).

¹⁸ ASCHA is an association of young people, in particular young girls, who militate on behalf of the women human rights. It has a feminist identity, still under construction.

¹⁹ Nweti is an organization operating in the area of communication for health, using communication for social and behavioural change aiming to contribute to better health for Mozambican citizens and communities.

community structures capacity and ownership of the community leaders and community committees to challenge socio and cultural norms regarding harmful practices such as child marriage and gender based violence, key informants believe these programmes have the potential to contribute to sustainable changes in the community mindset and socio and cultural norms.

Conclusion

UNICEF CO's joint programmes appear to be contributing to increasing girls' voice, agency and leadership at the personal, family and community levels. Girls participating in the programmes express feeling more confident to voice their views in the family and community; to make decisions about their SRHR and to report cases of harassment, GBV and forced unions. In addition, girls reported feeling better equipped with skills to improve their potential for employment, which is intended to strengthen their agency to make decisions about their SRHR and live free from GBV/forced unions. Furthermore, **the programmes are challenging gender norms by addressing stereotypical female activities by engaging boys to share household and family responsibilities therefore challenging gender roles and power dynamics.** In addition, the CO is challenging socio-cultural harmful practices such as forced union and GBV with some evidence emerging of more people willing to report such cases leading to changes in the acceptability of harmful practices and GBV.

Lessons learnt

- **Importance of setting clear intentions.** GTP needs to be intentional and understood by all stakeholders, including the implementing organisations. It helps to set clear plans, approaches and indicators to measure change over time.
- **Importance of working at all levels of the socio-ecological model.** For GTAs to be successful they need to operate at different levels of the socio ecological model with the view to addressing the barriers and behavioural gaps in the environment that limit girls being able to exercise their voice, leadership and decision making in relation to their rights and influence different members at the family and community levels.
- **Importance of working with and in a balanced way with boys and men.** Gender relations are informed by unequal power relations that benefit boys and men in detriment of girls and women. Therefore, to challenge power dynamics in gender relation, programmes should continue focusing on girls while including boys and men and promote positive masculinities and shifts in discriminatory social cultural norms.
- **Importance of adequate resourcing for adolescent girls programming.** For structural changes to happen, there is a need to invest resources, both financial as well as human which are not always available. Therefore, depth is often better than breadth, particularly in terms of scope, and this may require a shift in thinking in terms of how resources are spread so that limited resources can influence bigger changes.

BACKGROUND

Mozambique is ranked 138th in the Gender Inequality Index and 185th in the Human Development Index according to the latest UNDP Human Development Report (2022). The country has a young population, with 45% of the population aged 0-14 (2020)²⁰. In addition, 51.4% of the 30.37 million inhabitants (2019)²¹, are women. This group is the most vulnerable which can be reflected, among other factors, in the:

- i. High illiteracy rates among the young people - 22.9% for boys and men compared with 39.7% among girls and women, with completion rates for education at 41.1% (primary); 22.5% (secondary), 1.2% (higher education/degree or above). In addition, 28.1% have not completed any school level and 16.2% are neither studying nor have an employment;²²
- ii. High rates of early marriage/forced unions observable in the fact that 53% of women aged 20-24 married before the age of 18 and 16.8% before the age of 15 positioning Mozambique in the rank amongst the countries with the highest rate of child marriage in the world;²³
- iii. High rate of early pregnancies with 46.4% of adolescents between 15 and 19 years old that started having children and 40.2% of women aged 20-24 who gave birth before 18 years contributing to high risks for maternal morbidity and mortality as well as obstetric fistula;²⁴
- iv. High levels of violence against women, particularly among adolescent girls and young women, with 40% of women aged 15-49 having experienced emotional, sexual or physical violence in the 12 months prior to the survey;²⁵
- v. Limited access to and uptake of sexual and reproductive health services evidenced by high rates of teenage pregnancy and low contraceptive prevalence rate of 25% (34% in urban and 22% rural areas).²⁶ This is particularly relevant given that the demand for modern contraceptive methods has increased to 59% of women of reproductive age (15-49) and yet the unmet needs remain high at 23%.²⁷ The low use of SRH services, is of concern since Mozambique has supportive policies regarding youth access to family planning services, with no legal restrictions on access due to age or spousal or parental consent, and service providers are obligated to provide family planning services to youth without prejudice/bias;
- vi. There are only 300 youth friendly health services (SAAJ)²⁸ that belong to the Ministry of Health and are staffed by nurses that provide first line care, information and counselling on SRHR, HIV/AIDS and family planning;
- vii. Out of 23 integrated service centres for GBV survivors only seven are fully operational and there are none in most of the targeted provinces (Manica, Nampula, Zambezia and Cabo Delgado) in 2019;²⁹
- viii. Youth unemployment varies with roughly 8% unemployment in rural areas and 36% in urban areas, however these figures mask a high underemployment rate (80%) with young women suffering from the highest level of unemployment.³⁰

The limited access to services and resources and exposure to harmful social and cultural practices such as initiation rites,³¹ lobolo,³² early/forced union/marriage and gender-based violence are rooted in the patriarchal system and gender inequality and discrimination. This in turn disempowers and hinders AGYW from achieving their full potential, perpetuating cycles of poverty with negative impact on their well-being and social and economic development.

²⁰ Energypedia, Moçambique: Informação sobre o País, [link](#): accessed on 10 June 2023

²¹ Ibid.

²² Statistics National Institute, Household Budget Survey, 2019/20.

²³ World Health Organization: Mozambique Contraception within the context of adolescents' sexual and reproductive lives: Country profile, [link](#): accessed on 9 September 2023

²⁴ World Health Organization: Mozambique Contraception within the context of adolescents' sexual and reproductive lives: Country profile, [link](#): accessed on 10 June 2023.

²⁵ [Link](#); accessed on 15 May 2023.

Responding to the above, the country has made great progress approving policies, strategies, and legislation relevant to youth and gender issues in the areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights, child marriage and gender-based violence. Among several are the National Strategy to Prevent and Eliminate Child Marriage (2016); the Law for the Prevention and Combat of Premature Unions (2019); the Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy and Strategy for Adolescents and Youth (2001); the Decree 435/2018 revoking the decree 39/2003 that ordered the transfer of pregnant girls to night shifts (2018); the Strategy for Gender Inclusion in the Health Sector (2018-2023); the Family Law (2004); the Law Against Domestic Violence (2009); the National Plan for the Prevention and Fight against Violence against Women (2018); the National Gender Policy and Implementation Strategy (2018), a multisectoral mechanism to combat violence (2012) as well as a multisectoral referral mechanism of prevention, reporting, referral and response to violence against children in school (2022). It further demonstrates its commitment by signing and ratifying regional and international priorities, with emphasis on the International Convention on the Right of the Child (1994); the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1998); the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979); the Ministerial Commitment on Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for Adolescents and Young People in Eastern and Southern Africa (2013); the Agenda of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Beijing Plan of Action (1994); the Sustainable Development Goals (2015); the Maputo Protocol (2003) and the Southern Africa Development Community Gender and Development Protocol (2008).

Purpose and audience

The purpose of the Regional Evaluation is to understand how current programming, investments and practices to invest in adolescent girls' leadership, voice and agency are shaping UNICEF's gender transformative programming (GTP) approach in ESAR over the coming years. The evaluation is country-focused and uses country case studies as illustrative examples to inform the planning and programming of GTP through Investment in adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership in ESAR.

This case study is contributing with evidence to support the regional evaluation's assessment of the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of gender transformative adolescent girls-focused programming. This report presents findings from the Mozambique Country Case which reviewed documents and held interviews and focus group discussions with key informants across the Country Office, including UNICEF staff, staff from UNICEF partners, and adolescent girls and boys engaged in UNICEF programming. The case study is not meant to be a comprehensive, standalone evaluation report but will be used as part of the analysis for the regional evaluation report.

While the case study note is primarily intended to be used to inform the regional report, it will be of interest to both the Country and Regional UNICEF teams as a standalone review of adolescent focused programming in Mozambique. We also hope that findings will be shared back to the adolescents, young

²⁶ [Link](#); accessed on 15 May 2023.

²⁷ [Link](#); accessed on 31 May 2023.

²⁸ UNFPA Report on Needs Assessment of programme Geração Biz (2015 data).

²⁹ UNFPA, "Eu não conseguia reconhecer o meu próprio rosto." Empoderada a recuperar a sua identidade.(2019) [link](#) accessed on 9 September 2023

³⁰ [Link](#).

³¹ Initiation rites is a traditional practice used to mark and celebrate the transition from childhood to adulthood as well as an educational experience that introduces and reinforces gender norms and expectations and has the power of social inclusion or exclusion. Boys are taught that to be 'true men/good men' they must be heads of the family, owners of family property, intolerant of rebellious attitudes expressed by their wives, and they legitimately hold the power to make decisions and maintain the family order.

³² Lobolo represents the transfer of wealth from the groom's family to the bride's, to acknowledge the costs of raising her and to formalize her transfer to the groom's family lineage. It solidifies the reassignment of the woman and the fruits of her productive and reproductive labour and her offspring to her husband's family.

people and partners who supported the data collection where relevant. The evaluation team will ensure regional findings are shared back with the Regional Adolescent Advisory Group.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the desk-based case study are aligned with the overall evaluation objectives, and they are to:

- Provide a preliminary assessment of UNICEF's GTP in Mozambique vis-à-vis issues of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact with a specific focus on programming investing in girls' voice, agency and leadership
- Explore the evidence for whether interventions currently being implemented or in the pipeline are evaluable, whether or not the programmes are adequately defined and their results verifiable.
- Identify key lessons and the most impactful approaches with regards to gender transformative adolescent focused programming

CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

The evaluation approach was based on two core methodologies: i) outcome harvesting against the GESI continuum and ii) participatory, youth friendly approaches. The outcomes were harvested by employing both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including document analysis that reviewed UNICEF's country and programme documents, reports, plans, strategies, policies, evaluations and research. The document analysis provided key evidence against the evaluation questions and indicators in the evaluation matrix (Annex 2) as well as through stakeholder engagement that included key informant interviews, focus group discussions and adolescent panel interviews which were further mapped against the GESI continuum to explore the views and experiences of different stakeholders in different contexts. Finally, the process was adapted to focus on outcomes related to adolescent leadership, voice and agency with the potential and intention to be gender transformative and it was not limited to a set of fixed results or indicators.

Timeframe

The evaluation covered the period from 2018 to 2022 aiming to understand how current programming, investments and practices to invest in adolescent girls' leadership are shaping UNICEF's gender transformative programming approach in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The field work was conducted between April – July 2023 and covered two districts of Nampula province (Namialo and Monapo) respectively.

Stakeholder Sampling

Stakeholders were purposively selected and recommended by UNICEF CO programme staff and included a total of 11 people (8 women and 3 men) comprising of five UNICEF staff, two United Nations agencies and four implementing partners from CSOs. Most interviews (9) were carried out virtually due to people's location at the time of the interview or preference of the key informants. In addition, three FGDs were conducted with a total of 20 girls (one FGD in Monapo and another in Namialo districts composed of 10 people each) and 10 boys (Monapo district) aged 11-20 years, who have participated in UNICEF programmes designed to support adolescent leadership, voice and agency and selected based on their intent to be gender transformative. Given that the evaluation focused primarily on adolescent girl's voice, agency and leadership, the evaluation skewed the sample more towards girls. All participating young people were purposively sampled in consultation with UNICEF MCO and implementing partners. A similar approach was implemented in the identification of the adolescent panel members.

Finally, an adolescent panel composed of four members (three girls and one boy) aged 10-19 years old based in each of the selected districts and who are familiar with UNICEF programmes (involved as a

participant, in a facilitator or leadership role), with basic literacy skills as well as with facilitation/interviewing skills, were selected and tasked with interviewing four of their peers each. After the selection, the group had an orientation session to introduce them to the evaluation and train them to conduct the interviews. The orientation session, discussed, among others, the purpose of the evaluation, methodology, selection criteria, interview process, and piloted the interview guide. The adolescent panel interviewed a total of 14 people (10 girls and 4 boys) age 10 –19 years old, in and out of school, involved in UNICEF programmes and at the end participated in a discussion of the findings.

In-country stakeholders	How	Job titles and number
Adolescent girls and boys, participating in UNICEF programmes	4 Adolescent panel members	4 (3 girls and 1 boy)
	Adolescent panel interviews – 14 (Adolescent Panellists interview 4 young people each)	14 (10 girls and 4 boys)
	3 FDGs - approx. 10 people	30 (20 girls and 10 boys) aged 11 – 20 years
CSO partners	2 Coalizão	Programme Director Provincial Delegate
	1 International Child Development programme	Focal Point
	1 ASCHA	Executive Director
Government representatives	People reached either were unavailable or did not respond	Rapariga Biz programme Coordinator (SEJE) (MGCAS)
UNICEF Country Team	5 KIIs	Child Protection Specialist Adolescent Development Specialist Gender Specialist Community Development Specialist Social and Behaviour Change Officer
Other United Nations agencies where relevant (JP partners)	2 UNFPA	Team lead GPECM Team lead of youth
Total number of respondents		59

Ethical considerations

All our evaluation and research work is guided by a set of ethical principles. The principles translate into a number of practical measures to ensure confidentiality, informed consent, data protection, reduction of direct and indirect risks to interviewees, safe and meaningful participation.

All our research is informed by ethical and safety considerations for research and informed by the UNEG Ethical Guidelines, WHO's ethical research guidance,³³ UNICEF Ethical Guidelines and standards for research and evaluation and Ethical Research Involving Children, UNICEF Guidance on Gender Integration in Evaluation.

The national consultant conducting the data collection for this case study attended an online workshop, which covered all ethical principles and procedures in the evaluation. The training included SDDirect's safeguarding policies, including how to report suspected safeguarding concerns and how to act if a participant discloses situations of violence and/or abuse.

³³ See [UNEG Code of Conduct for UN evaluation](#) (2008) and WHO (2016) [Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Intervention Research on Violence Against Women](#) and [UN Protocol on SEA](#)

We produced a data collection manual for the adolescent panel members to use when conducting their research and they received training and support from the National Consultant to ensure they were safe and adhered to our ethical and safeguarding principles and processes while conducting data collection activities.

We secured Regional Ethical clearance for the evaluation which included primary data collection in the three case study countries. In addition, we explored the requirements for country specific ethical clearance and for the case of Mozambique there was not a requirement to secure IRB approval.

All participation was done on a voluntary basis and based on informed consent. Personal information is treated confidentially, and the privacy and anonymity of participants is preserved. We will not include any names of any participants consulted with to ensure this is upheld.

KEY FINDINGS

Overarching question

Evaluation Question (EQ) 1. To what extent are UNICEF East and Southern Africa Region (ESAR) COs investing in adolescent girls' voice, agency, and leadership as a central approach within this gender transformative programming?

Through the three joint programmes UNICEF Mozambique has been greatly contributing to AGs voice, agency and leadership. There has been great investment in empowering AGs to be able to make informed decision regarding their SRHR, access youth-friendly services and fight against GBV/HPs such as forced unions and violence against children, as evidenced by FGD participants:

"Since I joined the radio, I am a reference in my community, I'm heard, I can influence change and help my peers and make decisions about my life" (boy, 18)

"Before I was afraid to walk at night by myself due to the street harassment but now, I'm not and I stand up for myself. I feel confident not only to refuse forced union situation, to denounce situations in which girls might be at risk of a forced union as well as to refer them to the social services that they might need" (girl, 15)

"I'm a leader because a leader is someone who influences others and as activists/mentors are a reference and influence others given that the girls in the community and schools are inspired by us" (girl, 17)

"Leaders are those who solve problems, and I was responsible for managing the group and supporting them in solving problems" (girl, 19)

This is a result of the three programs implement strategies which:

- i) place girls at the centre of programming efforts; building their skills and agency to open alternative life choices;
- ii) provide gender responsive information and services including education and about their sexual and reproductive rights;
- iii) engage men and boys for gender equality and in this case by using methodologies that support them to question and recognise issues of masculinity, that are harmful for themselves and their relationships as well as their privilege and power with the view to become gender agents for gender equality;
- iv) mobilize communities, systems and networks, including through effective communication strategies to demonstrate positive attitudes towards and investment in adolescent girls and;

- v) build strong institutional partnerships with government, civil society and private sector.

It is worth noting that the GPECM, has developed specific technical notes³⁴ to guide gender transformative programming. In addition, following the evaluation of the first phase of the GPECM (2016-2019), the CO undertook a Gender Transformative Accelerator Initiative³⁵ (2021) with the engagement of sectoral experts and participation of implementing partners to assess priority areas for improvement in phase II (2020-2023). Three areas were identified as priorities with action plans in place to improve strategies for girl's agency, skills and economic empowerment and sustainability or for challenging power dynamics by addressing masculinities when engaging boys and men as well as community mobilization also addressing masculinities and positive parenthood with family models that challenge gender roles and unequal power dynamics.

Furthermore, a country-wide gender programmatic review³⁶ was done in 2021 which provided recommendations from the lessons learnt on how to become more gender transformative in its implementation. Due to the synergies between the programmes (SRHR, GBV and HP), the priority areas identified during the gender transformative accelerator under the GPCM were extended to RBP and SI. A similar situation arose with the GPCM which uses learning from implementing transformative approaches in other programmes such as the mentorship approach and community dialogues.

Given the complexity of gender issues, the CO recognises that a gender transformative approach calls for a holistic and multisectoral intervention working across the socio ecological model. In this respect, the three programmes reviewed in detail for this case study follow a holistic approach addressing different levels of the socio ecological model such as:

- i) policy level through advocacy for legislative and policy frameworks;
- ii) institutional level by strengthening the capacity of service providers and therefore increasing accessibility, quality and acceptability of the services particularly focusing on education, health (SRHR including HIV/AIDS), VAC and GBV;
- iii) community level, interpersonal level and individual level by transforming social and cultural norms, attitudes and behaviours at individual, family and community levels through social mobilization and by empowering girls and women through increase in knowledge, education and skills that leads to agency and empowerment to make informed decisions, prevent SGBV, HP, access services, economic empowerment together with engaging boys and men while strengthening the capacity of CSOs and government institutions.

It is important to note that although not all programmes work at the interpersonal level, the three programmes reviewed work at the policy, institutional, community and personal level and AGYW development and empowerment is at the centre of all of them.

Relevance

EQ 2. To what extent are country programmes/projects designed to address the specific needs of adolescent girls in the region?

Meaningful engagement of adolescent girls in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and policies

Project/ programme design

The case study did not find examples of adolescent girls being consistently involved in needs assessment or in the development of the Country Programme Document, however programmes appear to be grounded in robust analysis based on studies, research, surveys, monitoring and

³⁴ See the technical notes in the table of documents reviewed.

³⁵ Gender Transformative Accelerator Tool of the Global programme to End Child Marriage produced by UNFPA-UNICEF in collaboration with Collective Impact to assess the extent to which the programme is gender transformative and identify priority areas to invest.

³⁶ Lara Burger; Gender programmatic Review – Mozambique Country Office (2021).

evaluations and experiences from previous and current projects/ programmes which have involved young people and therefore appear to be catering for their needs. This was reinforced through the focus group discussions, highlighting issues which are being addressed by the programmes.

“The main issues faced in our communities are access to education, forced unions, early pregnancies and lack of employment” (girl, 15)

In the interviews conducted by the adolescent panel members the large majority of the interviewees said that the lack of education, forced union, early pregnancy, GBV and lack of viable economic options were the key problems in their communities:

“We have serious problems of alcohol and drug abuse due to lack of employment. Lack of employment or economic opportunities is also a cause of school dropouts and forced unions given that even in the cases where the parents don’t want to give their daughter’s into marriage, they have no options because they don’t have the means to keep them in school and can’t provide for them and in the cases whereby the girls finish school, they don’t have viable economic options to sustain themselves” (boy, 19)

According to United Nations, KIIs with implementing partners and participants in the FGD, girls and boys, did not participate in the needs assessment, in the country programme documents (CPDs) or project/ programme design which might be due to the insufficient time built into the deadlines to involve them. Likewise, joint multi- country programmes, at times, are top down (GPECM) which leaves little space to engage them.

One member of the FGD with young people said:

“When I was selected, I was explained what the programme was about, benefited from a week training to understand what I needed to do, how to select girls for the mentorship sessions, how to conduct the sessions as well as the thematic areas to discuss” (girl, 17)

Another mentioned:

“When I joined the radio everything had been decided. I was explained what the project was about and undergo training to become a presenter (boy, 13)

The country office (CO) is aware of this gap and is making efforts to engage girls in the needs assessment:

“We (now) have a Training of Trainers toolkit for AGs empowerment which is being rolled out. We first did a needs assessment that involved them, their views were integrated in the design and after that, we did a validation process with them to make the necessary adjustments and now we are training the partners” (United Nations KII)

“Under the ‘Fun do’³⁷ - having fun while doing something fund, we involved the youth to get their contributions regarding the most relevant skills for them in their context linked to employability” (United Nations KII)

This is further reinforced by a CSO partner, who confirmed “we were involved in the design of the second phase of the RBP”.

Implementation

The projects/ programmes are largely implemented in partnership with young people who are members of youth organisations.³⁸ As an example, the programmes use the mentorship approach

³⁷ Fun Do – generation unlimited under the SGDs (2030) to build 2021 century employability skills.

³⁸ **All youth implementing the programs are members of registered organizations, some youth organizations such as Coalizão, Linha Fala Criança and ASCHA others not such as Nwety and radio programs. The mentors are members of Coalizão are trained and they work with girls at the community level (mentees) which are not members of Coalizão.**

whereby girls who are members of organisations such as Coalizão receive training to strengthen their knowledge, social networks, leadership, decision making skills, economic empowerment and access to information on issues regarding child marriage, sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence. In turn they work with other girls at the community level, through mentorship sessions that take place in safe spaces to empower them with knowledge, strengthen their agency and capacity to make informed decisions regarding their SRHR, GBV and HP; support them to access SRHR in youth friendly clinics (SAAJ), mobile clinics and school health corners dedicated to providing SRHR; GBV responsive services as well as to report child marriage cases and access to relevant social services. Furthermore, the mentors assist in the civil registration process of out of school girls, given that without it, girls might not have access to services such as education as well as support their re/integration in schools.

Adolescent girls and boys, also actively participate in community radios and are supported through media skills training, interviews, public speech, scripts production, and Vox pop to produce and present programmes on the different thematic areas while others are trained to provide counselling and support to their peers through SMS Biz (SRHR) platform.

“When I joined the programme, I was trained in different thematic areas. I learned how to do mentorship, select participants, conduct the sessions as well as support vulnerable groups to access the needed services. I’m happy to be able to support girls to leave forced union and go back to school as well as accessing other social services” (girl, 17)

“I was trained in public speech, do interview and Vox pop and now I present the programmes which are heard by my fellow peers and its contributing to increase awareness on the programme topics” (girl, 15)

Monitoring and Evaluation

Girls participate in monitoring and evaluations largely as respondents given that they are the primary participants and implementers of the programmes. As indicated by the following quotations from CSO partners:

“During the implementation, monitoring and evaluations, we listen to what young people say and integrate with the view to become more responsive to their needs and achieve the intended results” (CSO KII)

and another added:

“We are not involved in the design/elaboration of the project, but we are involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes where we contribute with recommendations and afterwards a follow up plan to implement the recommendation. As an example, in 2022 there was a decrease in users of the SMS Biz³⁹ platform and the youth recommended us to hold a contest to motivate participation. We did a contest and offered mobile phones which contributed to the increased in users” (CSO youth representative KII)

This was further referred in the FGD as an experience that some have, participating in monitoring and evaluation, not only of UNICEF programmes but also of other implementing partner organisations. FGD participants explained:

“We have monitoring and evaluation and at times the issues that we raised get addressed, but not always” (boy, 15)

“We raised some of the constraints that we face when doing our work, mostly related to insufficient resources, but so far nothing changed. We still struggling to implement some

³⁹ SMS Biz uses the U-Report platform, which is a free SMS social monitory system that promotes de participation and counselling of adolescents and young people on SRH and HIV/AIDS prevention. It was designed to help AYP express the problems they face in their communities and help consolidate responses to these problems.

activities because we need, for example, to achieve an x number of beneficiaries but we don't have sufficient resources for that" (girl, 16)

Moreover, **SMS Biz has been traditionally used by the CO to hear from youth directly through regular polling and surveys** therefore contributing to getting their views to improve the programme implementation.

There were no examples of young people involved as data collectors or participating in the analysis or sensemaking of monitoring or evaluation data.

Policy

As far as policy participation is concerned, UNICEF works with youth organizations such as Coalizão⁴⁰, Parlamento Infantil⁴¹ and ASCHA and uses annual event, forums and conferences, national and provincial, where **girls attend to voice issues concerning their lives and influence decision makers with the view to influence policy changes**. As an example, Coalizão and ASCHA are members of the Coalition for the Elimination of Child Marriages (CECAP) that led the advocacy for the approval of the Legislation on child marriage (GPECM). In addition, annually, during the international youth day and the international day of the girl child, girls participate in a series of workshops regarding the situation of girls in Mozambique, share ideas and opinions on different thematic areas and make recommendations. Platforms such as the youth observatory⁴² are also used by the young people to promote their contributions to the implementation of national plans, policies, and priorities. For instance, the Youth Observatory gave a series of considerations to the Government in order to ensure that the youth benefit from the development of the country.

Consideration of recent shifts and trends in gender outcomes for adolescent girls in programming

COVID-19 had a major impact in the joint programmes given that it contributed to rise in GBV cases and reduced access to SRH services, and UNICEF adapted programmes accordingly. Due to the pandemic, measures such as prevention of groups with more than five people, SRH services, in particularly youth friendly services were disrupted to cater for the pandemic response. As alternatives to ensure the continuity of programme activities, few strategies were adopted such as massive and creative use of social media. Activities done in groups up to 25 people such as AGs mentoring sessions and community dialogues, were reduced to smaller groups of five. SMS Biz played a crucial role in passing the messages. In addition, mentoring sessions were done using community radios whereby the mentors would go to the radios and conduct the sessions making the content more accessible to non-members of the mentorship sessions. The programmes also boosted the mentors' knowledge and skills in the use of digital platforms that resulted in short videos being shared through social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp groups regarding information on SRH services, GBV in collaboration with young artists.

⁴⁰ Coalizão da Juventude Moçambicana is a non-profit youth organisation that supports adolescents to become active agents of change. The organisation works to ensure that young people can fully exercise their sexual and reproductive rights. A key organisational focus is on developing activities that empower girls in order to reduce the prevalence of child marriage and teenage pregnancy.

⁴¹ Children's Parliament is a mechanism created by the Government in partnership with civil society to ensure the inclusion of children in the search for solutions that affect them, allowing them to enjoy the right to freedom of expression and to express their thoughts and desires.

⁴² Youth Observatory is a platform that provides space for the youth to lobby, advocate and actively participate in public decision-making and influencing decision-makers to increasingly involve youth in national development agenda. It also enables a space to strengthen network/alliances and monitor and evaluate the level of compliance with youth-targeted interventions implemented by the government, private sector and other non-state actors.

“During COVID-19 the SMS Biz platform played a crucial role to pass on messages because we couldn't get groups together for mentoring sessions. We also included COVID-19 specific topics besides dating, sexuality, violence, HIV” (United Nations KII)

“Mentoring sessions were done through community radio stations; social networks: short videos on Facebook, information about SRHR services, GBV – collaboration of young artists/influencers who pass on the messages” (CSO KII)

In addition, radio programmes included COVID-19 prevention while the RBP mentors received personal protective equipment to safely provide information on COVID-19, SRH, and GBV prevention.

Another strategy used to mitigate the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 in the communities was to support girls and young women with business kits and support saving groups to migrate to digitalization (using mobile money) to avoid in-person gatherings of girls and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Furthermore, RBP provided psychosocial support to girls and young women via phone, to deal with the additional stress and challenges caused by the pandemic while AGs living in internally displaced people resettlement centre in Nampula benefited from mentorship programme.

With regards to the budget, the SI Programme redirected a total of USD 831,000 to the COVID-19 adaptation plan which was allocated to ensure continuation of life-saving services, including equipping government teams in the health, social action, police and justice sectors with personal protective equipment and hygiene materials, providing cell phones, vehicles and additional mobile clinics to public institutions while delivering online training to service providers and promoting existing hotlines to report cases of violence. In addition, the money was allocated to support targeted messaging adapted to the COVID-19 situation on prevention of GBV, engaging community leaders and promoting peer support groups while also working with women to access services that provide economic empowerment and employment support. Whilst this was not necessarily in support of adolescent girl programming it does demonstrate the flexibility and adaptation by the CO during this crisis.

However, though the programmes managed to adapt with the view to reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 with regards to the demand, there were challenges with the response given that the youth friendly services were the ones to be sacrificed to support the COVID-19 response. One key informant said:

“We created a lot of demand, but the supply side is weak not only from the point of view of availability of human resources but because the gender and youth sectors are the first to be sacrificed during emergencies. As an example, youth friendly centres/services were on hold to provide COVID-19 response/services” (United Nations KII).

The country has also been affected by armed conflicts escalating to different areas in the central provinces of Sofala and Manica and an increase in extremism and violence in the oil- and gas-rich northern province of Cabo Delgado which exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and an increase in displaced people, which extended to the neighbouring provinces of Nampula. Joint programmes interventions, particularly in Nampula, were adapted to include displaced persons in the target districts.

Coherence

EQ 3. To what extent do adolescent girl focused interventions (both within UNICEF and external) align with UNICEF strategies, and global policy commitments, to support girls' leadership and agency through gender transformative programming in ESAR?

MCO has been making great progress to integrate GTAs into girl-focused programming and implementation, including policy and advocacy. The CO collaborates within Joint United Nations Programmes with Government and Civil Society Organisations including organisations representing women and adolescent girls to transform gender inequitable attitudes, beliefs, and practices at individual, interpersonal, community, and societal levels via strategies such as:

A CO Gender Action Plan and strategy (2022–2026) was designed that builds upon lessons learned through the implementation of the CPD (2017- 2021) and the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the CO Gender programmatic Review (2021). The action plan is aligned with UNICEF global Strategic Plan (2022-2025), Gender Action Plan (2022-2025) and Gender Policy (2021-2030) with, among others, the following strategic focus:

- i) strengthen interventions tackling structural changes that accelerate gender equality and empowerment of girls and women as grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child rather than engaging primarily in programmes focused on girls and women as beneficiaries;
- ii) strengthen the integration of gender equality into UNICEF's work on gender, to advance women empowerment and realize the rights of all children;
- iii) better alignment of UNICEF's programming with its advocacy on the centrality of women and girls' rights and well-being, and childhood investments in gender equality and the contribution to lifelong positive outcomes for children and their communities;
- iv) the achievement of gender equality goals in conjunction with partners and national stakeholders, as outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

EQ 4. What have been the areas and ways of cooperation with other United Nations entities and other donor/ development partners in regard to gender-transformative programming with and for adolescent girls in ESAR?

The joint programmes have coordination mechanisms that provide space for improved collaboration and coordination related to programmatic issues and implementation, according to people consulted with for this case study.

Spotlight Initiative (SI) has a steering committee co-chaired by the Resident Coordinator and the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Action and includes: Representative of the European Union Delegation in Mozambique; One representative from an EU member state; Representatives of five key sectoral Ministries i.e. Health, Interior, Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs, Education and Human Development and Youth and Sports; Senior Representatives of the four RUNOs; Three representatives from women's civil society organizations/networks with a strong track record of working on ending violence against women and girls, members of and nominated by the National CSO Reference. The programme also has a United Nations programmatic coordination team (UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women and UNDP) chaired by UN Women. The evaluation has not explored how effective this mechanism has been.

Similarly, Rapariga Biz programme (RBP) also has a steering committee at the national level in which all partners and the government participate. The leadership sits with the Government through the Secretariat of State of Youth and Employment, with the participation of representatives from the ministries of Health; Education and Human Development; Gender, Children and Social Action; and Justice Constitutional and Religious Affairs, CSO and United Nations agencies implementing the programmes. Given that the implementation is happening through its multi-sector structures at national, provincial and district levels, there are multi-sectoral committees at all levels providing a strategic mechanism for leadership and coordination of the implementation of Rapariga Biz. The United Nations agencies (UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO and UN Women) provide technical assistance and leadership within the scope of their respective comparative advantages, and through partnership with civil society partners.

The Global Programme to End Child Marriage (GPECM) holds regular coordination meetings with technical representatives from the donor group 'High-Level Policy Group (HLPG) on ending Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM)', which constitutes the Governments of Sweden, Canada, the Netherlands, UK and Finland. Among these, Canada, the Netherlands and UK are the global GPECM donors, while Sweden and Canada fund the sister programme Rapariga Biz, with a key focus area to end child marriage. The programme also has two multi-sectoral coordination groups on youth and

gender respectively involving donors, United Nations agencies and Government counterparts, with recurrent bi-monthly coordination meetings are taking place between UNFPA and UNICEF.

Given that the GPECM is implemented by UNICEF and UNFPA there is a clear alignment on the need to be more gender transformative with the view to bring about the changes that they would like to see in the programmes. These are further extended to the other two programmes. As an example, under the GPECM, UNICEF together with UNFPA did the gender transformative accelerator with the view to identify the key areas that will create the most impact. Based on the action plan that resulted from that process, they have been working together to make sure that there is complementarity. Furthermore, acknowledging the importance of shifting to positive models of masculinity and changing gender socialization for boys and young men, UNICEF and UNFPA joined forces for a multi-level approach, articulated around:

- i) a strategic reflection with implementing partners around progresses and challenges in this area, and identification of effective approaches; and
- ii) capacity building of partners staff in the provinces to ensure that unconscious bias on gender roles is addressed and interventions at community level are shaped to engage men and boys for gender equality, girls' empowerment and the eradication of child marriage.

In addition, UNICEF and UNFPA conducted joint workshops on how to shape interventions aimed at promoting a positive, nonviolent, and equitable model of masculinity among men and boys at community level. An initial workshop with implementing partners, highlighted the importance for comprehensive interventions where mentoring/behaviour change of men and boys are coupled with a multigenerational dialogue on shifts in masculinity.

There were limited examples⁴³ of similar processes being done at the other two programmes (RBP and SI) whereby all sister agencies do similar processes as presented above which was suggested by some key informants as a result of perceived competition, different priorities and need for visibility by some agencies as well as interpersonal relationships between the team leads. As referred by both a respondent from a civil society partner and one from the United Nations.

"There is a bit of competitiveness between some agencies which at times leads to lack of complementarity. The programme design is well done but the implementation is sometimes confusing with, per example, different partners using different tools to do the same work" (CSO KII)

"The extent to which collaboration works has to do with the relationship between people involved in the programmes from the different agencies" (United Nations KII)

Nonetheless, there is convergence between the programmes given that all contribute to the same results such as ending child marriage, SRHR and GBV. As an example, the GPECM key complementary initiative with SI is the province/district of convergence (Nampula/Angoche). The SI has an important social behaviour change communication component as well as engagement with adolescents which has helped increase demand for GBV services. Another programme with geographical convergence and several complementing interventions is RBP which builds on a holistic and multi-sectoral approach and has at its core a peer-to-peer mentorship programme. The programme has a strong linkage with ASRHR services due to its involvement of youth friendly health service centres (SAAJ) and school health corners. Other components in RBP with strong linkages to GPECM include community engagement through community dialogues on harmful practices; economic empowerment of girls and young women; and involvement of men and boys through boys' mentorship. In cases where both programmes implement similar activities, e.g. boys' mentorship, these are implemented in different districts or locations to ensure there is no overlap.

There is also a high level of complementarity between UNICEF and UNFPA partners in the implementation of the programmes. As an example, Coalizão mentors are invited to participate in

⁴³ No evidence in documents reviewed or interviews conducted.

the community radio programmes. The ASCHA mentors also refer GBV/forced unions cases to the International Child Development Programme (ICDP)⁴⁴ which is a programme partner that does case management, focused on the survivor, from registration, referral, follow-up till closure:

“We are forming practical partnership with Nweti and ASCHA because each one was working in their own way, had their own cases, managed their own cases and now we are trying to work in collaboration. Now I make referrals of the girls that we support to ASCHA so that they can be involved in and benefit from the mentorship groups” (CSO KII)

Finally, it's worth noting the interest and role of donors, such as the Government of Canada, in supporting GTAs. As mentioned by a United Nations key informant, *“it also helps to push GTAs when there is the support of the donors, which is the case of Canada”*.

There needs to be an intentional focus and alignment among of implementing organisations in order to ensure a gender transformational approach. UNICEF and UNFPA are extremely well aligned and investing in strengthening their partners capacity to use GTAs. Therefore, there is an opportunity to use the evidence and experience resulting from the use of GTAs to influence their sister agencies. Similarly, both agencies are well placed to lobby the Government of Canada to advocate and influence other donors to push for GTAs and resources.

Effectiveness

EQ 5. To what extent have UNICEF East and Southern Africa Regional Office's adolescent girls focused programmes and interventions mainstreamed gender transformative programming, contributing to increasing their voices, agency, and leadership, in current planned programmes?

UNICEF Mozambique is promoting and strengthening girls' voice, agency and leadership as a catalyst for their inclusion and participation across all sectors and contexts. This is done through supporting innovative and safe platforms and spaces, both offline (mentorship sessions – all programmes) and online (SMS Biz – RBP and radio programmes - GPECM), to build girls' skills and capacities to lead, influence change, voice their opinions and be empowered.

The CO has made extensive and significant contributions to increasing AGYW voices and agency. As mentioned by FGD participants:

“I used to be shy; was afraid to speak in public but since I've joined the programme, I'm more confident to speak my mind. My parents and community members respect me and I'm a role model in my community” (girl, 17)

“I can make my own decisions, whereas before I depended on my mother and brother, now I can impose my own limits” (girl, 18)

“I make decisions on my own, I am respected, and my decisions are considered in the family; I now participate in decision making processes of important things in my house; I decide when to marry because no one is forced to marry and to use my money” (girl, 17)

In addition to having the power to make decisions at the individual and at the family levels, AGs feel that they are leaders and have the power to make decisions at the community level where they implement the programmes and, in that capacity, do what is deemed necessary to influence behaviour change and achieve the programme results. As an example, one FGD participant said:

“When I find a forced union/GBV case I make decisions about how to proceed and take the cases to the responsible leaders and authorities; I also support girls to access SAAJ” (girl, 19)

⁴⁴ ICDP is an organization committed to work for the benefit of children, youth and families worldwide towards a more peaceful and violence free society.

However, with regards to their participation and leadership at the organisational level, young people feel that there are different degrees of engagement. On the one hand, they feel that adults make decisions, young people are consulted and informed and have space to contribute.

"We can suggest teams, write the script and present with the support of the adults" (FDG girl, 14)

On the other hand, they feel that are assigned tasks and informed how and why they are involved in a project.

"There's a new component of the programme where we need to make a list of people with needs (ex. registration of girls that need integration in school, "survey" on fistula cases for support) but then the support to them comes late or never comes or at least they are not fully informed and, in this case, we face repercussions at the community level such as distrust. This wasn't part of the initial agreement and was added on without consulting us and we just need to do" (girl, 17)

"Now they say that we need to take pictures for evidence and people need to sign lists which leads to people thinking that we are going to offer something when we have nothing which also affects negatively our work given that people stop coming to the sessions because they think that we took whatever was due to them; and we also don't have phones with good quality to take pictures" (girl, 18)

"Aunt X decides each week what topic will be presented, she writes the script, and we present" (girl, 14)

In this regard, the programmes could improve the way the youth participates and trust that the investment done in strengthening their capacity equips them to take the lead and make decisions.

Regardless, most AGs referred that there is a possibility of moving roles within the organisation although at times they are not aware or clear of the criteria.

"I had the opportunity to become a programme supervisor and supported other girls to reach the goals" (FDG, girl, 19)

"We have the opportunity to move from peer educators (volunteers), when there are vacancies at the organisational level, and become staff (ex. coordinators)" (FDG, girl, 19)

"We don't know what the criteria is to move from mentor to supervisor. We just see some being promoted but we are not clear of the criteria's" (FDG, girl, 17)

It is important to note that although the efforts to give priority to the mentors when there are vacancies in the respective organizations is positive, there is a need to ensure the criteria for recruitment is well understood to avoid the sense of distrust and feeling that some are benefiting just because the bosses like them and not based on their capacity to do so.

The three joint programmes are engaging men and boys, as well as broader community members, in promoting positive masculinities and shifts in discriminatory social norms. As an example, the GPECM partnered with ASCHA, a feminist youth organization, as well as Kutenga⁴⁵ and HOPEM⁴⁶ which work on challenging gender power dynamics and promote positive masculinities. This strategy is further applied by the partner Nweti during the intergenerational and community dialogues with men, as illustrated through these quotations:

⁴⁵ Kutenga is an organization focused on health promotion, community education with a focus on the rights of adolescents and youth. It prioritizes access to information, protection, participation and ensures the involvement of adolescents and youth.

⁴⁶ HOPEM is a network of men working with men with the purpose of raising awareness of men around gender issues and masculinities.

"I learned about positive masculinities for boys to engage in what are supposed to be women's activities (washing dish, cooking, childcare)" (boy, 15)

"I learned about positive masculinity to avoid making women suffer and to takes care of the family and share domestic activities" (boy, 13)

"During the monitoring it was interesting to listen to parents said that they were surprised that their sons are now doing domestic tasks at home due to their participation in the boys' mentorship sessions" (xx)

"For the first time we saw a theatre play whereby boys interpreted women, dressed and had their mannerisms without being afraid of being perceived as less of a man. That it's a big change particularly in remote areas" (United Nations KII)

UNICEF CO is contributing to increasing girls voice, agency and leadership at the personal, family and community levels. Girls both in FGD as well as the ones interviewed by the adolescent panel reported feeling more confident to voice their views in the family and community; to make decisions about their SRHR and to report cases of harassment, GBV and forced unions and feel equipped with skills with potential to give them advantage to employability which will strengthen their agency to make decisions about their SRHR, live free from GBV/forced unions. The joint programmes are contributing to challenge gender norms regarding stereotypical female activities by engaging boys to share reproductive responsibilities therefore with the potential to challenge gender roles.⁴⁷ Finally, the CO is challenging socio-cultural harmful practices such as forced union and GBV through community dialogues with more people willing to report such cases leading to changes in the normalization and acceptability of harmful practices and GBV.⁴⁸

Effectiveness of different models/approaches in contributing to gender transformative outcomes

According to CSO key informants there is no common understanding regarding what a gender transformative approach is and both UNICEF and UNFPA are providing capacity building for their implementing partners (CSO and Government institutions) including religious leaders and traditional leaders, to ensure alignment in understanding as well as to build their capacity to advise and implement a gender transformative approach on SRHR, GBV and early marriage programmes.

"There is no clear understanding on gender let alone gender transformative approach" (CSO KII)

"There is an alignment at the regional and national officers, at least the personnel that had the training on GTAs and work in those areas" (United Nations KII)

"There is an alignment between the United Nations agencies that benefited from the GTAs trainings, UNICEF and UNFPA, as well as their implementing partners" (United Nations KII)

The CO uses a combination of approaches to contribute to gender transformative outcomes at different levels of the socio ecological model in all programs.

The **mentorship approach** is the central approach used for improving adolescent girls and young women's knowledge, capacity and agency, and constitutes a core element of the **safe space model** (mentorship, safe space and girls' social network). The approach aims to provide the most vulnerable girls and young women between 10-24 years with skills, empowerment, social networks, leadership, decision making skills, economic empowerment and knowledge and access to information on sexual reproductive health and rights. This is now being used with boys to contribute to changes in gender and masculinity norms, in order to motivate boys to recognize and challenge the imbalance of power and privileges conferred on them to the detriment of girls, as well as to address the social pressure and

⁴⁷ RBP Annual report (2021) and GPECM Annual Narrative Report (2022).

⁴⁸ RBP Annual report (2021); SI Annual Narrative programme Report (2020) and GPECM Annual Narrative Report (2022).

penalties they suffer when they do not comply with the norms of dominant masculinities. In addition, the GPECM introduced are **interpersonal dialogues** whereby girls and boys sit together and unpack some of the themes discussed separately in the mentorship sessions. Similarly, male engagement is also done through **intergenerational dialogues** bringing together adolescent, young people and community elders to discuss issues affecting the wellbeing of adolescents, addressing harmful practices and changing harmful social norms linked to child marriage and violence against girls.

The **child-to-child media engagement** is an approach that strengthens adolescent girls' and boys' knowledge, skills and capacity to produce and present peer-to-peer radio programmes with the view to promote gender equality and ending violence against women and girls/HP and voice issues of relevance and that concern them therefore becoming agents of change.

SMS Biz and Linha Fala Criança led by trained adolescents to support peers on SRHR information, counselling and service referrals to SRHR youth friendly services and VAC and in this case, youth being agents of change with more empathy, free from gender biases and expectations and in a non-judgmental manner.

The **Community dialogue is a key approach to engage with men and women** in the community to discuss and address harmful social norms and practices around child marriage, VAC and to identify local solutions the elimination of harmful social norms and practices associated with child marriage. This is done through trained religious leaders and traditional leaders, including 'matronas dos ritos de iniciação'⁴⁹ on prevention of GBV and child marriage/forced unions.

Families, community members and leaders, religious leaders, parents, midwives, boys and men have played a critical role in promoting an enabling, free and safe environment for increased participation of girls and young women and ensuring they enjoy their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Therefore, the involvement of these actors in the programme have shown to be key to address the barriers and behavioural gaps in the environment surrounding girls and young women at the community related to SRHR.

Multi-sectoral approach vs targeted gender-transformative programming

The three joint programmes use a multi-sectoral approach at different levels of the socio ecological model contributing at the individual level to girls' empowerment to make informed decisions regarding their SRHR, to denounce GBV and potential forced unions while challenging socio-cultural norms and changing HP that put AGYW at risk of forced union, VAC and GBV at the family and the community level. In addition, **at the institutional level the programmes contributed to strengthen the government institutions capacity to deliver services of quality while approving law and policies.**

The evaluation of the GPCM 1st phase (2016-2019)⁵⁰ together with the CO gender programmatic review⁵¹ demonstrated that the programme/CO needed to go a bit further to achieve more gender transformative outcomes particularly in relation to challenging power dynamics. As a result, the GPECM did a Gender Transformative Accelerator (2021)⁵² to identify the programme areas that needed improvement, namely i) girls' skills, agency and economic empowerment; ii) masculinities and engaging men and boys and iii) community mobilization.

⁴⁹ 'Matronas dos ritos de iniciação' are the women who orient girls during initiation rites, particularly in Nampula province.

⁵⁰ Gender Transformative Accelerator Tool of the Global programme to End Child Marriage was produced by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) headquarters' offices in collaboration with Collective Impact.

⁵¹ Lara Burger; Gender programmatic Review – Mozambique Country Office (2021)

⁵² Gender Transformative Accelerator Tool of the Global programme to End Child Marriage was produced by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) headquarters' offices in collaboration with Collective Impact.

- i) **Girls skill, agency and economic empowerment** was identified as a key area due to the fact that although the programme supports girls through the life skills for education programmes addressing transferable skills, financial literacy, vocational training for girls, among others, to foster girls' retention in schools, many girls are out of school without employment nor training therefore in need of support to transition to employment to reduce the chances of being forced to child marriage. Hence the further integration of the economic empowerment in the programmes (GPECM and RBP).
- ii) **Masculinities and engaging boys and men in a more transformative way** was a result of the recognition that although girls are at the centre of the programmes and therefore were being empowered to have their voices amplified, lead and make decisions regarding their SRHR, access, use and control of their resources, among others, work with boys was done as secondary audiences. This means that although girls were empowered and the programmes were challenging gender perceptions and expectations regarding AGs roles, the same programmes did not challenge nor influenced changes in the power dynamics in the gender relations with their male peers which is critical for the full exercise of their agency at all levels. This is particularly relevant given that early adolescence is a period of increased expectations not only for girls but also boys where the latter are socialized as the primary breadwinners and to adhere to socially constructed and often stereotypical norms that perpetuate gender inequalities. As a result, there was a need to creatively promote spaces (boys' mentorship) for boys to reflect on, recognise and re-examine the current harmful models of masculinity and manhood that are harmful for themselves and their relationships. Furthermore, there was also a need to re-examine their privilege and the power they wield in society, given that they and still hold most negotiating and decision-making powers so that they become change agents for gender equality, without detracting from efforts and resources to support girls, and along with empowering girls and improving the status of women. This created synergies with Rapariga Biz and its being implemented in the three programs.
- iii) **Community dialogues**, it was noted that the interventions frequently focused on older men (religious leaders, community gatekeepers, policemen, etc.) whose perceptions and attitudes regarding gender roles have already been shaped. As such, although there were changes regarding the social cultural norms such as forced union and GBV, there were no changes in gender stereotypical roles, norms, harmful masculinities and power dynamics in gender relations given that girls are still expected to get married and have children at a later age and be responsible for the reproductive role while the male is still perceived as the family provider. Therefore, using the same approach to challenge harmful models of masculinity and manhood with this group will create an enabling environment for the new generation to have more equitable gender relations. This is also being implemented in the three programs.

Furthermore, **the Gender Transformative Accelerator report also refers the fact that there was a great focus on working with girls at the personal level and there was a need to make sure to target their interpersonal relationships** given the asymmetries of power and access to resources to promote equitable gender attitudes which has been included in the programs. As one of the key informants mentioned:

"We have- espaço da malta - where boys and young men meet and reflect on masculinities, gender, social norms, transformative deconstructing toxic masculinities and another one which is - fala minha irmã - for girls. After working with both separately, we then join them in for interpersonal dialogue around a bonfire where the two discuss to unpack the issues and find common ground".

This space has the potential to contribute to the creation of new and healthier gender relations whereby girls and boys have the space to reflect on femininity/masculinity and reimagine their relationships free

from violence, grounded in dialogue and shared power and free from the private/public and other binaries.

In addition, **intergenerational dialogues that involve bringing together adolescents, young people, parents and community elders to discuss issues affecting the wellbeing of adolescents, addressing harmful practices and changing harmful social norms linked to child marriage and violence against girls were introduced.** These dialogues also empower parents and families to be able to have constructive and respectful dialogues as well as provide support.

“Parents and guardians have the view that a girl from 12-18 years old cannot use the family planning method because she has no boyfriend, husband and is not a widow; they do not want to accept that we are in the 21st century and things are changing; they think that women only have sex after marriage; they do not want to talk about sexual health because they find it offensive and teenagers feel intimidated” (FGD, girl, 18)

“After the adult groups and the boy’s sessions, there is room for an open fire where parents and children talk and discuss about the various issues” (CSO KII)

Parents are key for an enabling environment and to support their children’s decisions. If parents are not onboard and with the same understanding both, girls and boys, will face difficulty to implement the changes that they want to see. Therefore, these dialogues have the power to create new ways of interaction also grounded in dialogue and respect between parents and their children whereby the latter feel supported to make their own decisions.

The joint programmes demonstrate that multi-sectoral approaches implemented at the different levels of the socio ecological model have the potential to contribute to gender transformative outcomes. However, it seems that in order to address power dynamics there is a need to be **intentional given that it ensures that effective approaches are in place and aligned to bring about the desired change.** The evaluation did not provide enough evidence to conclude that stand alone GTAs are more or less effective than the multi sectoral approach. However, we can infer that the main difference between a multisectoral approach vs a targeted gender transformative programme lies in the fact that the latter has a clear intention to reshape unequal power relations by attempting to question and change/reshape rigid gender norms and imbalances of power that advantage boys and men over girls and women. It moves beyond individual self-improvement among girls and women towards redressing the power dynamics and structures that serve to reinforce gendered inequalities at all levels. Therefore, specific approaches are put into place to bring about change such as the inclusion of mentorship for boys to address masculinity as well as in the community dialogues.

Efficiency

EQ 6. To what extent has UNICEF allocated adequate resources to adolescent girls programming that is gender transformative and supports their leadership and agency in ESAR?

The joint programmes are specifically designed to address gender inequality such as ASRHR, GBV, HP such as forced unions and women empowerment with resources put towards to change gender norms, practices and behaviours⁵³ however the evaluation was unable to ascertain the extent to which this reporting is disaggregated and trackable. 33% of the SI is allocated to changing norms and behaviours regarding GBV while 30% is for provision of quality essential services for GBV survivors.⁵⁴ In addition, the CO dedicates considerable technical and financial resources in support of programmes that are gender transformative and at least 15% of its institutional budget appears to be allocated gender equality, by supporting boys and girls.⁵⁵ However,

⁵³ Lara Burger, Gender programmatic Review-Mozambique Country Office (2021).

⁵⁴ Spotlight Initiative country programme document, Mozambique (2021).

⁵⁵ Lara Burger, Gender programmatic Review-Mozambique Country Office (2021).

according to key informants, gender transformative approaches have not always been addressed sufficiently due to limited budgeted.

“Resources are not sufficient to be gender transformative. For example, as long as poverty is not addressed with sustainable economic empowerment approaches, we will continue to have the same problems that we are trying to address (forced union/GBV)”

“To influence behaviour change in remote areas, there are many costs, and we don’t cover the costs of ex. transportation though the distances are big”

“The funds are not sufficient for the demands of transformation; it is important not only to stay in the villages but to reach other more remote points to reach the most vulnerable”

“The organizations capable of doing this work (GTAs) are based in the capital. We look in the provinces and many do not respond to the criteria of the United Nations and the cost increases with setting up offices in the province - operational and administrative costs”

With regards to the diversity, United Nations and CSO key informants agreed that there are challenges with addressing issues such as HIV/AIDS, disability and LGBTQI+ due to the fact that they are perceived as taboo, with a lot of myths and discrimination surrounding them. It’s still not easy for a person to reveal hers/his HIV status or if its LGBTQI+ with fear of being discriminated. Furthermore, families hide people with disabilities due to shame or other factors linked to witchcraft. However, there is a recognition of these challenges, and the CO appears to be making progress in this regard. Some examples include: UNICEF’s created an adolescent and youth advisory group that includes representatives from minority and marginalised groups (disability, HIV-AIDS, albinos, LGBTQI+) for policy advocacy and development of strategies including the new end child marriage strategy; supported training of sign language interpreters and deployed to health centres; supported TV Surdo by training adolescents with disabilities in television production, who in turn produced programmes to raise awareness about the rights of young people with disabilities while trying to engage LGBTQI+ organizations to be more inclusive; mainstreaming disability in radio spots, videos and posters on early learning, parenting, child protection, and COVID-19 prevention and training government partners on disability inclusion. In addition, the CO developed partnerships with organisations for disabled people and supported the development and strengthening of the Disability Working Group to mainstream inclusion into humanitarian assistance. It also assisted in research and lessons learned on barriers that People with Disabilities were facing in accessing humanitarian assistance.⁵⁶

EQ 7. To what extent do UNICEF programmes’ monitoring, reporting and evaluation (MER) systems explicitly, or implicitly address gender transformative programming with a view to generating evidence on UNICEF and public sector performance?

In as far as M&E systems are concerned, UN key informants shared that they face **difficulties in monitoring and evaluating the impact of their work on gender norms and/or gender socialization processes due to the fact that they don’t account for attitudes, beliefs and practices**. As one key informant mentioned:

“Looking at the indicators they are concerned with numbers and not quality and working on human development takes more time”.

Another added:

“Current indicators can demonstrate trends of the change but along the process we need indicators for impact and outcome. As an example, there was a meeting with parents to hear from them what they see in their children and they said they were surprised because their children, boys, didn’t want to wash dishes before but now, after participating in the boy’s

⁵⁶ Lara Burger, Gender programmatic Review-Mozambique Country Office (2021).

mentorship, and now they are help their sisters; but there is no indicator to measure that". Another added that "we discuss a lot about the indicator. We asked to revise the indicators because are global and not always enable to show the impact at the country level; There is a lot of things that we do but the indicators do not reflect".

Therefore there is a need to integrate attitude indicators, monitoring change intentions, practices and outcomes, and monitoring people's perceptions of gender norms⁵⁷ over time.

There is technical support available for GTAs. As one key informant said:

"The CO dedicates considerable technical and financial resources in support of programmes that are gender transformative, but measuring results remain weak".

A gender programmatic review (2021) was done that used a GTAs lenses and together with a Gender transformative Accelerator (2021) resulted in the changes introduced so that the programmes are more gender transformative. No other evaluations were shared for this case study.

Sustainability

EQ 8. To what extent are the positive changes and effects of gender transformative programming on adolescent girls' leadership and agency sustainable at the national level, and/or likely to be scaled up by government, or civil society?

MCO works with both government institutions as well as CSOs. A key component of the partnership is investing in strengthening their capacity so that activities will be implemented with good quality but also that there they will be able to continue after UNICEF's involvement ceases. A few examples include, strengthening the capacity of staff, both male and female, from public institutions such as Ministry of Gender, Youth, Education, Health, Police, Justice at different levels on gender sensitive planning and budgeting, child friendly procedures, conflict resolution and mediation, legal framework, among others; support to ministry of education in the establishment of a referral and reporting mechanism for violence against children (VAC) in schools as well as strengthening the multisectoral coordination and response mechanism at provincial and district level which increased the capacities of service providers on integrated and quality service provision. In addition, a training of trainers for partner organisations on male engagement and positive masculinity was conducted along with a training on gender and masculinities for implementing partners of both UNFPA and UNICEF and key government representatives.⁵⁸ These training were designed to discuss and reflect with members from the different organisations on the consequences and negative impact of gender inequality and toxic masculinity. The aim was to jointly design a strategy to promote dialogues and other interventions that challenge and demystify norms, taboos, myths and socio-cultural values that reinforce and/or legitimise gender inequalities, harmful masculinities and violation of human rights, in particular those of women and girls. The evaluation has only seen the ToRs and a report of the training and is unable to assess the impact of the training or whether a strategy was developed and implemented as a result.

However, the Government is very dependent on external resources and has limited resources with the Gender and Youth sectors being the first sectors to be 'sacrificed' when an emergency response is needed. As a consequence, most implementing partners do not have faith in the government continuing its support. This is made worse by the high rotation rate of staff which leads to constant need to train new staff.

With regards to the CSO, given the investment done in strengthening their capacity, they ought to be well positioned to continue the work at community level. As an example, a key informant mentioned:

"We build our partners capacity; partners are strengthening their partnerships and have approaches that they can share with each other and create synergy. Having a pool of partners

⁵⁷ Lara Burger, Gender programmatic Review-Mozambique Country Office (2021).

⁵⁸ GPECM Annual Narrative Report (2022).

that can strengthen each other's in terms of capacity, approaches, join forces and work together therefore strengthens the sustainability component".

Another added:

"We are empowering youth associations at the community level and in this way preparing young people as human resources at the district level and when another programme comes along, they can work with them, get funds, and job opportunities while implementing the skills that they acquire to keep influencing change".

Also the work done at the community level, in partnership with the community leaders which are the guardians of the socio and cultural norms, will carry on given that has to do with changes in mindsets and the socio and cultural norms. As one key informant referred:

"In Manica, after the community dialogues, they made the community plan, and the community leaders are responsible for its implementation- they continue to meet with people outside of the programme activities. Therefore, there is a possibility of implementing initiatives even without the presence of the organizations; we just need to involve the right people".

Another added:

"Once new norms are in place, it's easier, with the support of the leaders, to sustain the changes".

And other said:

"Leaders who are champions, reference in their community are showing support and making sure that HP, GBV, etc. cannot happen in their communities. When they find families where there are cases of HP they act, and people also have the courage to go to the leader's house to denounce because they know that the leader will do something about it. These changes will sustain and be passed from generation to generation as not acceptable".

Moreover, community and religious leaders are now working together with civil society organisations and community-based organisations to prevent child marriage and GBV, serving as linkages between families and referral services.

MCO also works to strengthen the capacity of other community level systems. For example, the CO trained the Community Child Protection Committees and School Councils to be able to identify and handle cases of sexual violence and child marriage. These are community based and therefore well positioned to carry on the activities once UNICEF is no longer a partner.

Mentors mentioned that they continue with the sessions during the holidays so that even without the programmes they would still continue to run sessions with the groups, although it wouldn't be as consistent as it is at the moment, because they would need to combine this with other activities to sustain themselves economically.

Some of these approaches are already being scaled up.⁵⁹ For example the community dialogue methodology used in GPECM in Nampula has been scaled up in two other provinces (Manica and Gaza) under the Spotlight Initiative. The adolescent engagement component is also being scaled up as part of the partnership with ASCHA in Gaza (Spotlight Initiative). UNICEF has scaled this to Nampula province using seed funding from GPECM along with Navarra Government and Rapariga Biz funding.

The joint programmes don't appear to have clear exit plans or sustainability strategies in place for when UNICEF is no longer a strategic partner. There is need to consider the design of clear exit plan for the joint programmes.

⁵⁹ GPECM Annual Narrative Report (2022).

Impact

EQ 9. To what extent are new or planned interventions likely to lend themselves to achieving higher level change for adolescent girls in future?

As previously referred under EQ5, **the mentorship approach together with the child-to-child media engagement, have proven to be successful in contributing to AGs voice, agency and leadership** while SMS Biz has also been successful in contributing to AGs voice and agency with regards to SRHR, GBV and HP, particularly forced unions. These challenge gender expectations, roles and stereotypes regarding AGs given that voice, leadership and agency are perceived as male traits.

Equally successful, are the community dialogues both in creating an enabling environment for AGs to use their voices, lead and make decisions regarding their rights, as well as to influence change in social and cultural norms such as GBV/HP. However, they were limited in their ability to challenge the power dynamics in gender relations which resulted in the integration of boys' mentorship and discussions of masculinities within the community dialogues which have the potential to challenge the gender expectations, roles and the public/private divide and lead to more equitable relations between boys and girls. In addition, the interpersonal and intergenerational also provide an opportunity to challenge the power dynamics among gender relations therefore, not only operating at the individual level but also at the interpersonal and intergenerational spheres. This is particularly relevant given that families are also influenced by gender relations and the changes that adolescent girls and boys go through to create new, more respectful and equitable gender relations need to be mirrored and supported at the family levels to be sustained.

MCO Gender Action Plan and Strategy provides a gender responsive and transformative road map with strategic interventions and in indicators, though the latter are mostly quantitative.

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

UNICEF CO's joint programmes⁶⁰ appear to be contributing to increasing girls' voice, agency and leadership at the personal, family and community levels. Girls participating in the programmes express feeling more confident to voice their views in the family and community; to make decisions about their SRHR and to report cases of harassment, GBV and forced unions and report feeling better equipped with skills to improve this potential for employment, which is intended to strengthen their agency to make decisions about their SRHR and live free from GBV/forced unions. Furthermore, **the programmes are challenging gender norms by addressing stereotypical female activities by engaging boys to share household and family responsibilities therefore challenging gender roles and power dynamics.** In addition, the CO is challenging socio-cultural harmful practices such as forced union and GBV with some evidence emerging of more people willing to report such cases leading to changes in the acceptability of harmful practices and GBV.

Lessons learnt

- **Importance of setting clear intentions.** GTP needs to be intentional and understood by all stakeholders, including the implementing organisations. It helps to set clear plans, approaches and indicators to measure change over time.

⁶⁰ While the case study is focusing primarily on the 3 joint programs that were highlighted for the case study, the CO has subsequently highlighted other areas that they believe are working in a gender transformative way including, among others, the MHMH in WASH and Education and the care component of the Child grant. The case study is not able to comment on the extent to which these are transformative, and these will need to be reviewed in specific programmatic evaluations.

- **Importance of working at all levels of the socio-ecological model.** For GTAs to be successful they need to operate at different levels of the socio ecological model with the view to addressing the barriers and behavioural gaps in the environment that limit girls being able to exercise their voice, leadership and decision making in relation to their rights and influence different members at the family and community levels.
- **Importance of working with in a balanced way with boys and men.** Gender relations are informed by unequal power relations that benefit boys and men in detriment of girls and women. Therefore, to challenge power dynamics in gender relation, programmes should continue focusing on girls while including boys and men and promote positive masculinities and shifts in discriminatory social cultural norms.
- **Importance of adequate resourcing for adolescent girls programming.** For structural changes to happen requires intensity in design and delivery. Therefore, depth is often better than breadth and this may require a shift in thinking in terms of how resources are spread to ensure that limited resources influence bigger changes.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. List of documents consulted

Title	Author	Year
Mozambique Country programme Document	UNICEF	2022
UNICEF Country Office Annual Report	UNICEF	2019
UNICEF Country Office Annual Report	UNICEF	2020
UNICEF Country Office Annual Report	UNICEF	2021
UNICEF Country Office Annual Report	UNICEF	2022
GPECM Annual Narrative Report	Country Offices	2021
GPECM Annual Narrative Report	Country Offices	2022
ECM Strategic Narrative Mozambique	Country Offices	
GPECM-Mozambique Country programme	Country Offices	2018
Quality Assurance Checklist For Gender Integration in programme Document's	UNICEF	
Mozambique TOC -GPECH Phase II	Country Offices	
Technical Note on GTA in the GPECM Phase II: A summary for Practitioners	UNICEF and UNFPA	2019
Technical Note on Adolescent Girl Responsive Systems	UNICEF and UNFPA	2019
Technical Note on Life Skills programmes for Empowering Adolescent Girls: Notes for Practitioners on what works	UNICEF and UNFPA	2019
Leaving No one Behind: Technical Note for the GPECM	UNICEF and UNFPA	2019
Technical Note on Adolescent Girls Empowerment Through life Skills in the GPECM	UNICEF and UNFPA	2019
Technical Note on Partnering with Men and Boys to End Child Marriage in the GPECM	UNICEF and UNFPA	2019
Technical Notes on Gender Norms - GPECM	UNICEF and UNFPA	2019
Action for Girls and Young Women on SRHR Annual Report	UNFPA, UNICEF, UN WOMEN, UNESCO	2020
Guião para as Mentorais Biz – Guião Prático para uma Boa Mentoria		2017
Action for Girls and Young Women on SRHR Annual Report	UNFPA, UNICEF, UN WOMEN, UNESCO	2021
Masculinidades Iguais – Trabalhando com meninos e homens para alcançar a Igualdade de Género	UNICEF	2022
Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Girls and Women – Country programme Document (Mozambique)	UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNICEF	2018
Spotlight Initiative Annual Narrative programme Report	UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNICEF	2018
Spotlight Initiative Annual Narrative programme Report	UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNICEF	2019

Spotlight Initiative Annual Narrative programme Report	UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNICEF	2020
Spotlight Initiative Annual Narrative programme Report	UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNICEF	2021
Spotlight Initiative Annual Narrative programme Report	UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNICEF	2022
Caderno Didático para Mentoradas Violência Baseada no Género	Spotlight Initiative	202
Manual dos Círculos de Interesse	Ministério da Educação e Desenvolvimento Humano	2016
MCO Gender programmatic Review	Lara Burger	2021
Mozambique Country Report- Gender Transformative Accelerator	UNICEF and UNFPA	2021
MCO Gender Action Plan and Strategy (2022-2026)	UNICEF	2022
UNICEF Gender Action Plan (2022-2025)	UNICEF	2022
UNICEF Strategic Plan (2022-2025)	UNICEF	2022
UNICEF Gender Policy (2021-2030)	UNICEF	2021
Atitudes e Experiência de Raparigas em Idade Escolar em Relação a Gestão da Higiene Menstrual em Moçambique	Katia Munguambe, et al.	2019
24-Month Impact Evaluation of The Child Grant 0-2 Component in Nampula Province in Mozambique (2019-2021)	UNICEF	2022
Report on Gender Dimensions Related to Immunization (Gurue and Lugela)	Mario Lemos	2022
Gender Review of the Mozambique's Civil registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems	Patricia Carvalho	2022

CASE STUDY REPORT

Namibia

Country Case Study



CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	65
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	66
PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE	69
CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY	70
KEY FINDINGS	73
CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED	87
ANNEXES	89

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The evaluation team wishes to thank the UNICEF Namibia team and, in particular, the Country Office team members who made themselves available to contribute to this evaluation with valuable information, sharing contacts and also with logistical support for the field visits. We would like to thank the four adolescent panel members who conducted interviews to enrich the data.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the many stakeholders, including UNICEF staff, Namibian civil society implementing partners and the participants who agreed to be interviewed who generously gave their time to share their experiences and information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Namibia's Country Office (NCO) identified five adolescent programs that it believed to be the most relevant to this evaluation.

- **UPSHIFT** is a social innovation and entrepreneurship programme designed to build skills and create opportunities for marginalized adolescents. This program uses learning techniques that show young people how to understand community challenges, design, and build impactful solutions in the form of products and services.⁶¹
- **Skills4Girls** is a girl centred programme, which aims to see more meaningful participation and inclusion of girls. The program introduces, encourages, and supports girls to undertake science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)-related technical and vocational education and training (TVET) courses and offers training in digital and financial literacy. Girls in the programme also have improved access to sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services and information.⁶²
- **Galz and Goals** is part of UNICEF's broader Sport for Development agenda aimed at empowering children and adolescents with life skills thereby building resilience and providing access to services through sports. Galz and Goals is implemented in close collaboration with the government.⁶³ Through football Galz and Goals challenges gender norms, promotes respect and fights discrimination against girls.

Other programs listed included the **Adolescents Living with HIV (AHLIV)/Teen Clubs**⁶⁴ and the **Children's Parliament**.

Adolescent program participants most frequently named unemployment and its social consequences (including drug and alcohol abuse, mental health issues and teenage pregnancy) as the issue that affected them the most severely. Skills4Girls and UPSHIFT targets marginalized and vulnerable adolescents with interventions that aim to address unemployment by providing young people with 21st century skillsets – skillsets that can be transformational for girls.⁶⁵

UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls are programmes which report to prioritise meaningful participation (document review and key informant interviews (KIIs)) and UNICEF NCO flags these two programs specifically as

⁶¹ The program was piloted in the Khomas region in 2021. It was expanded to Omaheke and Kavango East in 2022 and 2023. [Physically Active Youth](#) is the civil society organisation (CSO) implementing partner for UPSHIFT Namibia in Khomas region and Project Hope is the partner implementing in Kavango East and Omaheke region. The program is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Sports, Youth and National Service in all the regions.

⁶² 2022 saw a piloting phase of the program in the Khomas and Omaheke regions (to understand feasibility, need/uptake/ interest). Plans to expand are underway. Society for Family Health (SFH), a local non-governmental organisation (NGO), was the implementing partner that saw the pilot implemented in the Khomas and Omaheke regions.

⁶³ At a national level, the project supports the Ministry of Sports, Youth and National Service to engage various sports federations, sports unions, and sports clubs to adopt the sport for development approach and a child safeguarding policy; this includes rolling out the child safeguarding in sports training to Ministry of Sports, Youth and National Service affiliates. Over 10 years, UNICEF has supported this programme, which at the peak of its implementation was reaching over 5,800 in- and out-of-school adolescent girls from 14 communities all over the country. A strengthened partnership between Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service can increase the programme reach and ensure that it is implemented on a broad scale in all schools throughout the country.

⁶⁴ UNICEF supports the Ministry of Health and Social Services to implement the Teen Club service delivery model for Adolescents living with HIV. In 2010, UNICEF Namibia started supporting the government to respond to the growing need for adolescent-focused services for AHLIV through a Teen Club Approach. To date, UNICEF together with the CDC and other partners, has supported the establishment of over 330 Teen Clubs supporting adherence, retention into care and viral load suppression for over 11 000 ALHIV in all 14 regions of Namibia.

⁶⁵ Skills4Girls provides training in financial and digital literacy and supports girls in STEM-related TVET courses. UPSHIFT focuses on social innovation (introducing new concepts, products, and services) and entrepreneurship skill sets.

setting the direction they want all future programming to go (mentioned in two out of four KIIs with the UNICEF Country Team).

This case study looked at how UNICEF engaged young people throughout the programmes to gauge the extent to which adolescent participation had been meaningful. During the design phases of UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls, young people were consulted through workshops which took a Human Centred approach to program design. Processes sought to ensure that the realities and needs of young people were at the centre of the programs. These consultations resulted in planned program activities and strategies being adapted to meet the needs of the girls. As a result, UPSHIFT shifted its focus from supporting young people in solving issues around climate change to focus more on issues around education, health, and child protection. Skills4girls saw peer facilitation activities (training and outreach) being included in the Skills4Girls activity plan. Adolescent girls (AG) indicated that they not only wished to receive training in digital and financial literacy, but also that they would benefit from the opportunity to train others. UPSHIFT established a Youth Advisory Committee that supported the program to set up a mobilisation and screening process for participant recruitment. Skills4Girls asked participants to design their own logo. Examples were given of how AGs were offered platforms to share their experiences of the programs for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) purposes.

The case study looked at the extent to which the country program is aligned to the Gender Action Plan, national and global policies and commitments. References to the UNICEF gender strategies in KIIs was limited to discussions around the importance of disaggregated data. Besides the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), only national plans and goals were listed in programme documents and in KIIs concerning how adolescent programming is aligned with plans and policy. Collaboration with other United Nations agencies was flagged by NCO and partners (during KIIs) as needing improvement. No joint adolescent or gender programming is being implemented through UNICEF and other United Nations agencies.

Adolescent programs UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls were found to be working most effectively on an individual level. These programs are seeing to increase confidence, ambition, innovation, and problem-solving skills as reported by the AG participants themselves.

The evaluation team was able to explore the extent to which these programs are supporting increases in AGs voice, agency, and leadership and whether they are having transformational impacts on wider eco-systems (family mentioned frequently) and structures that surround the individual beyond the program “safe spaces”. These discussions often included consideration of how best to engage families and communities around gender and cultural norms to support transformational change. This is discussed further in the body of the report.

Skills4Girls and Galz and Goals are primarily focus on girls, but there is no evidence that these programmes are truly gender transformational. While gender transformation is an aspiration of the UPSHIFT programme there are minimal elements or programme components in place specifically transform gender relations and to measure that change. It was reported by the NCO that they are aware that these programs are not effectively implementing gender transformative programming (GTP). This is something they plan to address for the upcoming country programme document.

The evaluation looked at understanding of GTP among the staff and collaborators. Despite GTP being rarely cited (in neither program documents nor KIIs), the concept appeared to be understood by key NCO staff and implementing CSO partners (focal points or program managers/designers). It was concluded however (during KIIs) that understanding of GTP can be improved and further capacity is needed to see more effective implementation of GTP for adolescents and ultimately successful implementation of the Gender Action Plan 2022-2025 and the Adolescent Girls Strategy 2022 - 2025.

BACKGROUND

The review of program documents and the various consultations with UNICEF NCO staff, implementing partners and adolescent participants has revealed three key issues, faced by Namibian AGs, which were the focus of UNICEF adolescent programs. These were unemployment, gender-based violence (GBV) and teenage pregnancy (and other SRHR related issues).

Unemployment

Namibia is an upper middle-income country with a population of 2.6 million. It is a young population, with 66% below the age of 35. The youth unemployment rate was at 46.1% by the end 2017⁶⁶ and according to the National Planning Commissions' Targeted Review Report on Youth unemployment (2021), 35% of respondents have no formal education. In the Omaheke region, unemployment stands at 50.2% among women compared to 30.5% among men. In the Khomas region, the rate is 32.7% for women and 30.3% for men. Several factors contribute to the high unemployment figures in Namibia. These include limited access to adequate education and training, a slow economy that struggles to create sufficient job opportunities⁶⁷ and skills mismatch (where skills possessed or opportunities available do not align with labour market demands). The adolescents targeted by the programs under this evaluation mostly come from marginalized and vulnerable communities, facing high levels of poverty, inequality, crime, and social exclusion. This has affected their overall wellbeing and mental health. These are all consequences of unemployment and issues listed by young people consulted.

Gender Based Violence

The government of Namibia has adopted and ratified international and regional human rights frameworks including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Maputo Protocol and the Southern Africa Development Community Declaration on gender and development. However, translation of policy frameworks into concrete policy actions remains a major challenge. The Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare has established the GBV and human rights cluster to coordinate the implementation of the GBV Plan of Action (2019-2023).

Sexual and gender-based violence remains a persistent challenge in Namibia, with an increasing incidence of intimate partner violence, sexual violence and femicide. Many local NGOs and CSOs (including Women's Action for Development in 2014; Women's Solidarity in 2019; #Shutitalldown movement and coalition in 2020) have called the Namibian President to declare a state of emergency over high rates of violence against women.

Namibian GBV prevalence figures show that among 18-24 year-olds, more than one in four females (28.7%) and three in ten males (30.4%) experienced any violence (sexual, physical and emotional) in the past 12 months. These figures come from the most recent Violence Against Children and Youth Survey (VACS, 2019). The 2019 Namibia VACS assessed the experiences of females and males ages 13-24 through a nationally representative sample of households. This survey found that when considering sexual violence in childhood, among 18-24 year-olds, about one in ten females (11.8%) and one in 13 males (7.3%) experienced sexual violence before age 18. Further, nearly one in four females (23.8%) and males (22.6%) experienced physical violence in childhood by a parent, caregiver, or other adult relative. Among 13-17 year-olds, more than one out of three females (34.2%) and males (35.5%) experienced any violence in the past 12 months.

⁶⁶ Namibia Labour Force Survey 2018.

⁶⁷ The Omaheke region has the highest number of severe poverty and the highest numbers of illiterate people (64,4%) in the country.

Of concern, among 13-17-year-olds, 36.6% of females and 26.0% of males endorsed one or more attitudes supportive of domestic violence. Among 13-17-year-olds, 45.8% of females and 52.8% of males endorsed one or more traditional gender, sexual behaviour, and violence norms. Among 18-24-year-olds, 23.1% of females and 22.5% of males endorsed one or more attitudes supportive of domestic violence. Among 18-24-year-olds, significantly more males than females (56.4% versus 42.9%) endorsed traditional gender, sexual behaviour, and violence norms.⁶⁸

Teenage Pregnancy and SRHR

The national adolescent pregnancy rate is at 19%. This means that one in five adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 years have been pregnant.⁶⁹ The adolescent pregnancy rate in the Omaheke region is 36.3%. Pregnancy accounted for 17% of overall female school dropouts in the 2021 data.⁷⁰ Poverty and adolescent pregnancy is often interlinked. Girls from economically disadvantaged backgrounds usually have limited access to education, healthcare, and supportive social services. Pregnancy can trap young people in cycles of poverty. The estimated number of teenage pregnancies doubled in Namibia in 2020, almost certainly a result of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. Unintended pregnancies among adolescent girls are an indication of the levels of risk they are in with regards to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. Adolescent girls are among the most vulnerable populations for HIV infection in Namibia. Some 30% of total new infections are among young women (15-24 years old).⁷¹

PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

The purpose of the Regional Evaluation is to understand how current programming, investments and practices to invest in adolescent girls' leadership, voice and agency are shaping UNICEF's gender transformative programming (GTP) approach in ESAR over the coming years. The evaluation is country-focused and uses country case studies as illustrative examples to inform the planning and programming of GTP through Investment in adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership in ESAR.

This case study is contributing evidence to support to the regional evaluation's assessment of the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of gender transformative adolescent girls-focused programming. This report presents findings from the Namibia Country Case which reviewed documents and held interviews and focus group discussions with key informants across the Country Office, including UNICEF staff, staff from UNICEF partners, and adolescent girls and boys engaged in UNICEF programming. The case study is not meant to be a comprehensive, standalone evaluation report but will be used as part of the analysis for the regional evaluation report.

While the case study note is primarily intended to be used to inform the regional report, it will be of interest to both the Country and Regional UNICEF teams as a review of adolescent focused programming in Namibia. We also hope that findings will be shared back to the adolescents, young people and partners who supported the data collection where relevant. The evaluation team will ensure regional findings are shared back with the Regional Adolescent Advisory Group.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the desk-based case study are aligned with the overall evaluation objectives, and they are to:

⁶⁸ Includes participants who endorsed one or more of the following: a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife if she: goes out without telling him; neglects the children; argues with him; refuses to have sex with him; burns the food.

⁶⁹ <https://namibia.unfpa.org/en/news/teenage-mother-tells-her-story-5#:~:text=Namibia%20has%20a%20young%20>

⁷⁰ Education Management Information 2021 Report [EMIS 2021 FULL ONLINE.pdf](#)

⁷¹ https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/data-book-2022_en.pdf

- Provide a preliminary assessment of UNICEF's GTP in Namibia vis-à-vis issues of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact with a specific focus on programming investing in girls' voice, agency and leadership
- Explore the evidence for whether interventions currently being implemented or in the pipeline are evaluable, whether or not the programmes are adequately defined and their results verifiable.
- Identify key lessons and the most impactful approaches with regards to gender transformative adolescent focused programming

CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

Timeframe

January – March 2023: Inception and planning

Evaluation orientation for both the national consultant and the NCO. Meetings were held with the NCO and information collected for a brief on the country case study for the final inception report to be submitted to the Health Media Lab institutional review board (IRB). It was agreed that Ethical Clearance for the evaluation would be requested from the Ministry of Health and Social Services despite warnings that the procedure could take up to three months. The paperwork requested by the Ministry included a full project proposal. The application for ethical clearance was therefore put on hold pending IRB approval. In the meantime, the evaluation team completed the final regional inception report.

April – May 2023: Ethical approval and data collection planning

On 5 April the IRB granted ethical approval. The approved and final inception report was used to draft and submit a Namibian focused evaluation plan/ proposal that could be submitted to the Ministry of Health and Social Services. On 22 May ethical clearance was granted and the primary data collection phase could begin in Namibia. This involved the collection of program documents for the desk review; planning for field trips; scheduling and preparing for Adolescent Panel Members (APM) selection and training, KIIs and Focus group discussions (FGDs).

June 2023: Primary data collection and preliminary results analysis

The desk review was completed, KIIs conducted and FGDs with adolescent program participants facilitated. The Adolescent Panellists were trained, and they conducted peer interviews. Data cleaning, sorting, and coding began in order to submit preliminary results.

July – August 2023: Final interviews conducted, results analysed, and case study report drafted and submitted

Document Review

The documents reviewed (see list annex 1) were sourced from the NCO and from implementing partners. The documents were read through the lens of the evaluation matrix and against the evaluation questions. Most documents came from adolescent focused projects/programs including UPSHIFT, Skills4Girls, Galz and Goals Sport 4 Development.

Adolescent Panel Members

Through consultation with the NCO, it was agreed that two young people (one adolescent girl and one adolescent boy (AB)) from the Omaheke region and two AGs from the Khomas region would be selected as the Adolescent Panel Members (APMs). APMs were to be selected from a pool of UPSHIFT participants. Programs UPSHIFT, Skills4Girls and Galz and Goals are all located (or have been implemented) in the Omaheke and Khomas region. Omaheke is home to many of Namibia's most vulnerable and marginalised communities.⁷² Young people reached through the APMs peer interviews

⁷² According to the latest Namibian National household survey the region has the highest number of people living in severe poverty and the highest numbers of illiterate people (64,4%) in the country. The adolescent pregnancy rate is 19% nationally with Omaheke region having the second highest rate (36.3%) in the country.

in the Omaheke region came from rural and isolated communities. Those reached in the Khomas region came from more urban backgrounds.

APM Selection Challenges and Opportunities

APM members and peers selected for interviews all had to come from one adolescent programme, namely UPSHIFT. This was the only program under implementation at the time of the evaluation.⁷³

UPSHIFT is being implemented in three regions; Khomas, Omaheke and Kavango East. Originally, the NCO suggested that APMs should be selected from the Omaheke and Kavango East regions, while FGDs could be conducted in Khomas to capture the different experiences across all three regions. However, the timing was such that the primary data collection phase (including training and mentoring the APMs and supporting them in their interviews) fell onto the months of June and July. This was because Ethical Clearance from Ministry of Health and Social Services was granted at the end of May. School exams took place in first few weeks of June and partners strongly recommended that young people should not be distracted from their preparations. From mid-June to mid-July it was school holidays in Namibia. Many young people travel with their families or go to visit relatives in rural farming areas over this time and, without the structure of school in session, it would have been challenging to coordinate the young people needed to participate in the evaluation. It was therefore decided that two APMs should be selected from the Khomas region. The National Coordinator lives in Windhoek and so she was able to arrange for the training and follow up meetings directly with the Khomas based APMs. In this way, the sessions could work around the availability and schedule of the young people over a couple of weeks, as opposed to fitting it into a few days on a trip to the Northern region.

In the Omaheke region, UPSHIFT hosted a “boot camp” training exercise during the second week of June. This event brought young people to Gobabis from rural communities and settlements from across the region. During this week event the implementing partner agreed to accommodate the training of the APMs and one FGD with participants. Gobabis is only a few hours’ drive from Windhoek, so the national consultant was able to drive to meet the APMs and provide them with training and support. She did two trips to Gobabis over a two-week period.

Adolescent Panel Member Training and Support

APM training packs were printed and prepared (providing data collection tools; information and consent documents, including voice recorders) and orientation and training with an adolescent girl (aged 19) and boy (aged 17) was facilitated at Kalahari Convention Centre on 12 June in Gobabis. APMs were then equipped and asked to conduct part-one of their first peer interview, so that two days later a feedback/validation process could be facilitated. This validation process was to ensure that APMs had understood their assignment and were collecting and recording data correctly. It also provided an opportunity to assess if any follow up information was needed from peers in part-two of their interviews. On 20 June the national consultant travelled back to Gobabis for a second check-in/ feedback session with the APMs.

The same processes were facilitated in the Khomas region with support from implementing partner Physically Active Youth. Orientation/training processes with two APMs (AGs both aged 16) were conducted on 16 June in Windhoek, and the feedback and validation processes on 23 and 29 June.

Peer interviews

Parental (in cases when respondents were under 18) and participant consent was collected prior to all interviews. The forms were administered by the APMs with the support of implementing partners. On 24 June all peer interview recordings were submitted from the Omaheke region, and, on 30 June, all peer interview recordings were submitted from the Khomas-based APMs.

⁷³ UNICEF is in process of reestablishing Gals and Goals after disruptions caused by COVID-19. The pilot for Skills4Girls came to an end in 2022 and has not started up again. The Children’s Parliament program was also disrupted by COVID-19 and has also not yet started with sessions.

Key Informant Interviews

Respondents from CSOs, government and other United Nations agencies were identified by the NCO. After initial introductions were made from either the adolescent programs focal point or officer, or the gender focal point, the national consultant was able to schedule the interviews directly with key informants' offices.

Focus Group Discussions

The NCO with support from implementing partner Project Hope set up the FGD in Omaheke with UPSHIFT participants. NCO adolescent programs focal point introduced the national consultant to implementing partners Namibian Football Association (Galz and Goals) and Society for Family Health (Skills4Girls) to set up FGDs at their premises in Windhoek (Komas Region). The implementing partners supported with collection of parental consent (via signed forms) and participant consent was collected prior to the group discussions by the national consultant.

In-country stakeholders	How	Job titles and number
Adolescent girls and boys, participating in UNICEF programmes	Peer interviews by four APMs	13 peer interviews (10 AGs and 3 ABs) - Omaheke region: 1 AG and 1 AB interviewed 4 AGs (aged 16, 17, 17, 19 – one living with HIV) and 3 ABs (aged 15, 17, 19) - Komas region: 2 AGs interviewed 6 AGs (aged 16, 16, 17, 17, 19, 19 – one living with disability)
	FDGs	Three FDGs with 15 AGs and 6 ABs: - UPSHIFT: 5 AGs and 6 ABs - Skills4Girls: 5 AGs - Galz and Goals: 5 AGs
CSO partners	KII and group Interviews	Three KIIs: - Project Hope – Omaheke UPSHIFT Project Lead - Society for Family Health – Skills4Girls Project Lead - Society for Family Health – Procurement and Logistics
Government representatives	Group interviews	Two group interviews: - Ministry of Youth, Sports and National Services (Komas) - Ministry of Youth, Sports and National Services (Kavango East)
UNICEF Country Team	KIIs	Four KIIs: - Deputy Representative - Social Behaviour Change Specialist/ Namibia Gender Focal Point - Adolescent Programs Focal Point - Advocacy, Communication & Partnership Specialist
Other United Nations agencies where relevant (joint programmes partners)	Group interviews	Three group interviews: - Programme Specialist: Gender (UNFPA) - Programme Specialist HIV Prevention & FP (UNFPA) - Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive programs officer (UNFPA)

Ethical considerations

All our evaluation and research work is guided by a set of ethical principles. The principles translate into a number of practical measures to ensure confidentiality, informed consent, data protection, reduction of direct and indirect risks to interviewees, safe and meaningful participation.

All our research is informed by ethical and safety considerations for research and informed by the UNEG Ethical Guidelines, WHO's ethical research guidance,⁷⁴ UNICEF Ethical Guidelines and standards for research and evaluation and Ethical Research Involving Children, UNICEF Guidance on Gender Integration in Evaluation.

The national consultant conducting the data collection for this case study attended an online workshop, which covered all ethical principles and procedures in the evaluation. The training included SDDirect's safeguarding policies, including how to report suspected safeguarding concerns and how to act if a participant discloses situations of violence and/or abuse.

We produced a data collection manual for the adolescent panel members to use when conducting their research and they received training and support from the National Consultant to ensure they were safe and adhered to our ethical and safeguarding principles and processes while conducting data collection activities.

We secured Regional Ethical clearance for the evaluation which included primary data collection in the three case study countries. In addition, we explored the requirements for country specific ethical clearance and secured ethical clearance from the Namibian Ministry of Health and Social Science.

All participation was done on a voluntary basis and based on informed consent. Personal information is treated confidentially, and the privacy and anonymity of participants is preserved. We will not include any names of any participants consulted with to ensure this is upheld.

KEY FINDINGS

Overarching question

Evaluation Question (EQ) 1. To what extent are UNICEF East and Southern Africa Region (ESAR) COs investing in adolescent girls' voice, agency, and leadership as a central approach within this gender transformative programming?

The NCO is doing important work with adolescents and the positive effects on the lives of young people was evident in this evaluation. UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls are two adolescent programs that have seen meaningful participation of adolescents prioritised in design and implementation.

The NCO has several adolescent focused programmes, a couple of which are primarily focused on girls (Skills4Girls and Galz and Goals) but none of which identify strengthening voice, agency and leadership as a primary goal or outcome of the programmes. Some partners interviewed shared the opinion that programs do have gender transformative outcomes. However, these adolescent programs do not measure gender transformative outcomes in Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) systems.

⁷⁴ See [UNEG Code of Conduct for UN evaluation](#) (2008) and WHO (2016) [Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Intervention Research on Violence Against Women](#) and [UN Protocol on SEA](#)

“In the implementation of these programs it is sometimes not labelled as a gender transformative approach, but it is about facilitating meaningful participation and voice for young people, which is a key component of transformation. It then becomes about empowerment and redefining those harmful social norms” – (CSO partner KII)

“Gender Transformative programming might not come out explicitly as such, but when you look at the work that we are doing; assuring bodily autonomy; trying to address and raise awareness around cultural and harmful practices and norms, this work is gender transformative” – (UN Partner KII)

The transformational intention of the programmes evaluated were found to be working mostly on an individual level.

“Agency, voice, participation, and leadership alone will not translate into transformative results. Because these young people are living within a system. It will only work if their voices bringing about systematic changes; changes that are meaningful, lasting, and sustainable” – (UN partner KII)

References to programs/programming being gender transformative are few and far between. When the concept or term is used, it does not often include a description of *how* programming can be understood as transformative. The excerpt below was the only time that the term ‘gender transformative’ was found in a program document (narrative progress report).

“UNICEF and partners realise the potential UPSHIFT has to be gender-transformative through its programme, but also through the problems the young people identify and their proposed solutions. Hence UNICEF decided to open up UPSHIFT for both girls and boys, keeping gender-sensitivity and gender equality as a key consideration” (UPSHIFT narrative report)

Relevance

EQ 2. To what extent are country programmes/projects designed to address the specific needs of adolescent girls in the region?

Young people listed unemployment most frequently as the issue that affects them the most severely, together with the social issues that are associated with high levels of unemployment. Experiences of hunger and poverty were frequently shared, as were issues related to alcohol and drug abuse. It was evident through the interviews that social exclusion and a sense of hopelessness affecting mental health was a main concern for many of the young people. Teenage pregnancy was an issue frequently brought up by the girls.

“If not for this program my path would have gone a different way. It kept me off the streets, it gave me something positive to do; it made me focus more on what I want to do; it gave me something to look forward to rather than doing what is not right; alcohol, drugs all that stuff” – AB, 16 (UPSHIFT, peer interview, Omaheke Region)

“The norm was, grade 10; that’s it; you start having boyfriends and eventually babies; where we grow up, that is the norm, that would have been my life” – AG, 19 (Skills4Girls, FGD, Khomas Region)

“There is no proper education; so the situation that I have seen is that many young ones are now in the streets and are in bars and are dropping out of school because of poverty just because there is no money and no food at home. This program was a very good idea because it will help many [onto the] correct path; especially if they are being trained. Through this then they can come up with ways to bring bread to the table” – AG, 17, UPSHIFT, Omaheke Region (peer interview)

When asked what kind of interventions that they believed the youth in their community needed many of the adolescent respondents identified youth centres with libraries and sport facilities. This question was frequently answered in the same way; that young people need spaces, places and activities that keep them engaged, motivated and safe.

In response to this, Galz and Goals promotes participation in sports activities as part of a broader Sport for Development agenda aimed at empowering adolescents with life skills, building resilience, and access to services, including SRHR services. Health education topics are incorporated into the Skills2Life training for coaches. HIV testing is made available at football festivals and community program launch events. Future plans for the program aim to strengthen collaboration with stakeholders, with expertise in the areas of HIV/AIDS education and testing, sexual reproductive health education, family planning, protective services.

Galz and Goals addresses some of the young people's needs as described by them. This includes the need to be 'kept busy' and 'off the streets' (engaged, motivated and safe). Past participants who were part of a FGD expressed the belief that Galz and Goals program kept them from falling pregnant. Galz and Goals does not directly address unemployment by capacitating adolescents with entrepreneurial and innovation skills like the UPSHIFT program, nor does it provide AGs with specific transformative skills sets like the Skills4girls program.

UPSHIFT is implemented differently in each region and is designed to adapt to the specific contexts of the different adolescent programme participants. In the Khomas region, young people reached have better access to technology. Mobilisation and screening processes can take place online or through schools.

In the Omaheke and Kavango East regions, reaching the most vulnerable and economically disadvantaged young people was made a priority in the mobilisation, screening, and selection strategy. Young people in these regions do not generally have access to technology. Many are isolated in rural settlements and often have lower education and poor English skills. It was shared that oral interviews give program staff engaged in screening processes a clearer idea of applicant's backgrounds. Target results tabled in final programme reports quantify the number of adolescents and young people reached and trained. More information (backgrounds, HIV status etc.) on which adolescents are being reached was found during KIIs.

"[discussion on mobilization] implementers of the UPSHIFT program should really go to the communities and speak to the applicants. It's different than them applying at school, filling in an application form. We give each applicant a 10-minute screening interview. Did you eat today? What did you eat last night? How many people share your room? Certain things give you a true reflection of what is really going on. And also, when you talk to them in a confidential space, they are free to open up. So I think that the mobilization strategy is key in reaching your target"
– (CSO implementing partner, KII)

"[discussion on selection] we target the marginalized (the homeless, disabled, those not attending school, living with HIV) but criteria also included those demonstrating social innovation and a wish to help and uplift the marginalised in the community – CSO implementing partner (KII)

Girls targeted by the Skills4girls program were among the most vulnerable in their communities (the pilot for this program was implemented in the Khomas region and the Omaheke region). The Skills4Girls Assessment and Eligibility Screening Tool included the following criteria for selection consideration:

- Has applicant lost one or both parents/caregivers?
- Are they living in a poor household?
- Are they living in a child-headed household (meaning a household headed by a child under the age of 18)?
- Is the girl living in a household headed by an elderly caregiver (60 years or older, with no caregiver in the household between 18 and 59 years of age)?

- Is the applicant a learner mother/ teen mother (preferably those that are more disadvantaged, e.g., a single mother with limited support).
- Has the girl been exposed or has experienced any form of GBV (referral by Life skill teacher/Social worker/community liaison Officer (Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare)).

FGDs with participants from Skills4Girls and Galz and Goals revealed that girls would like to see their programs address mental health more directly. More than half of peer interviews (7 out of 13) showed that participants from the UPSHIFT program have similar needs and ideas.

“There is not enough education on mental health. Depression is not a bad thing. What I mean by that is, once you understand that you are depressed it means that you are holding emotions within yourself. Young people are then engaging in dangerous activities and bad behaviours but then, if you understand you are suppressing emotions then you can change your behaviours. This education is not out there in the community. If you are struggling with anxiety, who is teaching this in the community?” – AG, 17, UPSHIFT (peer interview)

“If I have a problem with always looking down on myself; these are life skills, these are things that are not in our community, and the community needs these things. Adolescents need to understand that there are things they can and cannot control. Who is teaching us this? Besides “know how to abstain from sex, ABC, teenage pregnancy” – yes, yes, yes - we understand that. But I need to get the right mind-set, in order to do the right actions; how do you teach me to do the right actions if I do not have the right mind set?” - AB, 19, UPSHIFT, (peer interview)

Mental Health came up in two out of three of the FGDs. AGs felt that, although the program does not directly address mental health, the programs which they participate in have provided safe spaces for them to be themselves and to feel a part of a safe caring community. Through these discussions, participants shared how being a part of these program communities has improved their wellbeing. Program facilitators interviewed agreed that they spend a great deal of time talking with participants and helping them to work through personal issues. These findings suggest that the programs (UPSHIFT, Skills4Girls and Galz and Goals) have provided a support system and a safe space for participants which they do not have at home or at school.

Nine of the thirteen UPSHIFT participants interviewed considered that the program has given them a sense of purpose, hope, and a vision for their futures. Similar experiences or views were shared by participants from the girls involved in the Galz and Goals FGD, and very strongly from the girls involved in the Skills4Girls FGD. It was clear from the discussions that having a sense of purpose has greatly improved the wellbeing and confidence in these AGs.

Meaningful engagement of adolescent girls in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and policies

UPSHIFT Namibia reported that a curriculum customization workshop was held to adapt the generic UNICEF UPSHIFT curriculum for the Namibian context. This workshop was held in Windhoek in December 2020 and took cognizance of existing program gaps which had been identified. Stakeholders included local social innovators, institutions, youth led organizations and the youth themselves. Below are comments from young people who attended the workshop, as reported in UPSHIFT program documents (Narrative report).

“I was happy to be part of the UPSHIFT workshop and to add my voice, because most of the time young people from the informal settlements like myself don’t get a chance to be part of these workshops. UPSHIFT will be very helpful, because in the communities right now, there’s a lot of willing young people, who are starting to unleash their potential, and are speaking out against what they do not stand for and if UPSHIFT can reach out to these young people who are in the process of finding themselves, it will be very impactful and it will allow them to lead the change they wish to see in their communities” – Age 21

“Being part of the UPSHIFT workshop was a great experience for me. I am excited about UPSHIFT starting in Namibia because this is what we as young people need. I believe UPSHIFT will be an open platform to help us (the youth) achieve positive social change in our communities” – Age 19

In the Omaheke region, UPSHIFT implementing partner Project Hope established a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) consisting of 15 Members (of which seven were girls) from all seven constituencies. According to the Terms of Reference for the YAC, provided by Project Hope, the goals for establishing the council are 1) To create a platform for the meaningful engagement of youth to shape, influence, and participate in the UPSHIFT program, and 2) to help upscale UPSHIFT program in Omaheke Region. Unfortunately, the YAC activities were not budgeted for and, accordingly, implementers found it difficult to carry out their tasks. It was reported during a KII that implementers have remained in touch with the chairperson and vice chairperson of the YAC who “helped shape our Mobilization and Screening strategy and they also assisted in getting community vehicles for this”.

Skills4Girls reports that consultations with adolescent girls and young women in the Khomas and Omaheke regions were conducted to collect their input in the “design and development of the programme components and delivery mechanisms”.⁷⁵ In April 2022 (during program inception phase), 28 girls participated in a human-centred design workshop. The workshop resulted in the girls contributing to the content and suitability of the training materials. Sixty-five adolescents (20 boys, 45 girls) participated in programme planning and review meetings for the Skills4Girls programme in 2022.⁷⁶ This included regional inception meetings in February, stakeholder consultations in March, stakeholder validation meetings in April, training material validation meetings in September and a mid-year review meeting in November. Details on what was included in program design and implementation as a result of adolescent engagement is not reported in program documents, but a KII revealed that peer facilitation training activities were included in the program as a result of engaging young people in the design stage.

It is the opinion of members of the NCO that the human-centred design approach, which was used by both the UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls programs to encourage meaningful participation, could benefit other program areas within UNICEF Namibia. It was felt that the human-centred design workshop held during design phase for Skills4girls ensured that “the girls’ lived realities, ideas and experiences are at the heart of the program” and “that the program is responsive to the needs and realities of the girls”.⁷⁷

The Galz and Goals Sports for Development Program was introduced in fourteen communities for over a decade, starting in 2009. Respondents from the Galz and Goals FGD could not recall a time when they had been asked what issues affect them, what kinds of programs they need or how they would like to see programs implemented. The implementing partner Namibian Football Association and the NCO both agreed with this finding showing awareness that there is a need to increase meaningful participation. It has however been decided for future project plans that girls would be included in regional committees established in each town where Galz and Goals is being implemented, to oversee the programme/league.

The ways in which programs engaged AGs and ABs in evaluation processes was also looked at. The Galz and Goals program invited AG participants to share their own stories of change. Cameras were provided to them to capture their stories from their own perspectives. UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls conducted interviews with participants during program evaluation stages to include stories of change in the final evaluation reports.

Consideration of recent shifts and trends in gender outcomes for adolescent girls in programming

⁷⁵ Skills4Girls Overview for 23.03.2022 Stakeholder Workshop Khomas (PowerPoint).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Skills4Girls Final Report 2022.

Programs like Skills4Girls and UPSHIFT are responding to the realities brought about by high levels of unemployment and the lack of opportunities available to young people in Namibia.⁷⁸ These programs are responding by creating opportunities for young people to expand their skill sets. Their participation in the programs has led to increased levels of ambition and self-efficacy in young people.

“Our president said that the government is not going to be providing jobs for us; so, we have to do it ourselves” – AG, 19, UPSHIFT, Omaheke Region (peer interview)

The evaluation considered the ways in which adolescent programs are addressing climate change and related environmental issues. A UPSHIFT program proposal states that the purpose of the program is to *“develop the resilience of communities in climate, energy and environment through solutions, products and services created by young people”* and *“to promote climate change advocacy by adolescent girls and young people”*. Final program reports and KIs show that although the program promotes innovation and encourages young people to think about and find solutions for climate change (and responsible energy use), these themes are not central to programming. It was reported (in final narrative report) that, while climate, energy and environment remain important considerations for UPSHIFT in Namibia, the human-centred design approach/process completed with adolescents during the inception phase of UPSHIFT exposed *“the need to open UPSHIFT up to other cross-cutting areas such as education, health and child protection, with a continued focus on gender and empowerment of vulnerable populations”*.⁷⁹

The Skill4Girls program mentions climate change and resiliency only once as follows *“if girls are equipped with STEM and transferable skills, they can contribute to their own community’s resilience to climate shock and disaster risk reduction, adopting more sustainable low-carbon lifestyles”* (Narrative progress report). Galz and Goals future project plans as set out in the ways forward section of the latest narrative report, include activities to support the use of sport for adolescent and youth action on climate change. This includes awareness, advocacy, and youth-led community action to address climate change.

The Galz and Goals and the Children’s Parliament programs were both interrupted by COVID-19 and are yet to start up activities again. Globally, COVID-19 brought about a realisation that there is a need to strengthen alternatives to face-to-face programming. UNICEF UPSHIFT, as a program being implemented in multiple countries, is encouraging the digitization of the program. In the Khomas region, the UPSHIFT implementing partners have made use of online tools and spaces to be used for participant mobilisation, application, and recruitment processes. UNICEF is also in discussion with the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture concerning the digitisation of UPSHIFT. UNICEF Namibia and Sierra Leone have engaged in south-south learning aimed at understanding the process and value of integrating UPSHIFT into the learning passport. The aim is to have a digital version of e-UPSHIFT accessible online and offline. This would revamp the UPSHIFT delivery model in Namibia to a school-based, teacher-led model with an associated blended (face-to-face and self-paced) learning approach supported by digital content.

Coherence

EQ 3. To what extent do adolescent girl focused interventions (both within UNICEF and external) align with UNICEF strategies, and global policy commitments, to support girls’ leadership and agency through gender transformative programming in ESAR?

The evaluation team considered the extent to which UNICEF Namibia’s adolescent programmes aligns with that of UNICEF’s Strategic Plan (2022 – 2025). UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls are the most closely aligned with the plan’s Goal Area 2 (every child learns and acquires skills for the future). Skills4Girls,

⁷⁸ Unemployment in Omaheke region amongst women is at 50%, compared to 30% amongst men.

⁷⁹ UPSHIFT: Innovation for Resilience; Second progress report; 01 November 2021 – 31 October 2022.

UPSHIFT and Galz and Goals can also be said to be working toward Goal Area 3 (every child is protected from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect, and harmful practices). All three programs can report to be broadly working towards Goal Area 5 (every child has an equitable chance in life).

Program documentation (proposals and narrative reports) promotes the Skills4Girls and UPSHIFT programs as responding to the SDGs (with specific mention of SDG4 and targets 4.3 and 4.4).⁸⁰

The policies and plans mentioned the most in policy documents (narrative reports, proposals, and stakeholder presentations) were National Strategies and Plans.

Skills4Girls and UPSHIFT programs were promoted to align with:

- National Development Plan 5 states that young people should be empowered and have adequate opportunities to participate in the economy and has targets to increase the youth development index.⁸¹ Skills4Girls and UPSHIFT are both programs that increase skills aimed at promoting either employability (marketing, administration, social media skills through UPSHIFT and digital and financial literacy, STEM through Skills4Girls) or entrepreneurship and social innovation among young people;
- The Harambe Prosperity Plan which targets the most marginalized and has goals around innovation for social issues and eco-friendly solutions for climate change. UPSHIFT is particularly well aligned with this national plan, as UPSHIFT's main purpose is to increase social innovation and social entrepreneurship, designed to build skills and to create opportunities for marginalized youth and adolescents.

The four main goals of Vision 2030 Namibia. Which include a vibrant and internationally competitive economy; a secure and cohesive society; and greater opportunities for social and economic mobility and prosperity. As above, UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls are both interventions intended to equip young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with skills and opportunities.

EQ 4. What have been the areas and ways of cooperation with other United Nations entities and other donor/ development partners in regard to gender-transformative programming with and for adolescent girls in ESAR?

The gender theme group, currently chaired by UNDP was established to support agencies mainstream gender. The current work plan of the gender theme group mostly focuses on addressing the needs of the government (e.g. participating in coordination mechanism such as the GBV Cluster Group or Gender Permanent Task Force) to implement government gender policies and plans.

Namibian United Nations agencies are coming to the end of the 5-year country program and are in the process of planning for the next cycle. The NCO and United Nations partners shared during KIIs that they plan to improve the ways in which they collaborate and work together. Currently there are no joint programmes in gender or with adolescents being implemented.

"We will have to work more together, more joint programs, more collaboration with the other agencies, otherwise we will continue to work in silos. We often have the same target groups and similar goals" – (UN partner, KII)

UNICEF is in conversation with UNDP on how best to collaborate, as synergies are evident in programming. Most notably, UNDP is currently running an employment centred program called

⁸⁰ SDG4 focuses on "Quality Education." Its primary aim is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Target 4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education. Target 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship.

⁸¹ Similar objectives around youth empowerment will undoubtedly feature high on the agenda in the forthcoming National Development Plan 6 (National Development Plan 5 covered 2018-2022).

Accelerator Labs with links to sexual reproductive health and has program goals aligned with sustainable livelihoods for women and youth.⁸²

Collaboration with the government

UNICEF NCO works closely with government at national, regional and constituency levels. Strong relationships with the government are understood by the NCO (via KIIs) to be integral to the successful implementation for all programs. Government partners are key partners for all adolescent programs under review through this evaluation (including UPSHIFT, Skills4Girls, Galz and Goals, Children's Parliament).

UNICEF supported capacity-building activities for teachers and facilitators from the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture and Ministry of Youth, Sports and National Services to support the rollout of the Skills4girls program⁸³. The training sessions focused on the following topics: TVET; Financial and Digital Literacy; and SRHR.

Galz and Goals is partnered with the Namibian Football Association and the Ministries of Health and Education who provide guidance on education, child protection and healthcare.

A government representative from the Ministry of Youth, Sports and National Services interviewed stated that their mandate is to empower young people and that UPSHIFT "fits into this mandate as it aims to prepare young people from grass root level to become leaders".

Effectiveness

EQ 5. To what extent have UNICEF East and Southern Africa Regional Office's adolescent girls focused programmes and interventions mainstreamed gender transformative programming, contributing to increasing their voices, agency, and leadership, in current planned programmes?

Skills4Girls, UPSHIFT and Galz and Goals are all programs that focus on gender equality and the empowerment of vulnerable populations. Monitoring, evaluation and learning systems do not collect data on how programs are increasing voice, agency, and leadership. The section below unpacks how the UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls programs are contributing to increased voice, agency, and leadership in AG participants.

UPSHIFT

Although this program is offered to both boys and girls, more girls are deliberately recruited as a way of recognising and addressing the fact that girls are disproportionately affected by gender.

Transformation working on an individual level include appears to have increased self-efficacy, confidence, and employability. Girls report increased knowledge and are equipped with skills to meaningfully participate in their economic future. AGs also view UPSHIFT as a safe space that improves their wellbeing.

Activities supporting agency and voice in AGs:

- Adolescent participants are asked to identify the issues and problems in their own communities and are supported to find solutions. The programming is designed to *support* the AG to develop *their* idea / solution into a successful venture (product or service);

⁸² Accelerator Lab has different targets to UNICEF's UPSHIFT program and provides medium and small-scale loans for young people that *already have established businesses* where UNICEF's UPSHIFT is focused on the most vulnerable who are still at idea stage.

⁸³ Through this support, UNICEF supported the capacity building of teachers, parents, and mentors 480 (425f, 105m) while 25 adolescent girls and young women were trained as peer-peer facilitators on the various training curricula for the Skills4Girls programme.

- Adolescents are equipped with skills to speak in public, to pitch and defend their ideas in front of large groups of people and judges, as evidenced by these quotations from young people.

"I felt empowered. I felt seen. I felt relevant. I felt like my crazy thoughts and crazy ideas were like coming to life. It wasn't just imagined but it could happen. UPSHIFT gave me that opportunity that I can change crazy ideas into something relevant".

"All the decisions were made between my partner (business) and me; we had to consult upshift and see what they think; but in the end they said it is your decision; it is your business. I got a chance to experience; am I making the right choices; am I using the knowledge that I gained correctly".

Activities supporting leadership in AGs. Adolescents are mentored and equipped with skills to run their own businesses; a process that is supporting increased leadership, as confirmed by AG participants themselves during Peer interviews.

"I have to lead my team; lead my partners; lead the members, everyone involved in my business; that's how I have become a leader through the programme"

Skills4Girls

Skills4Girls is a girl-centred approach that targets vulnerable and marginalised AGs. Transformational outputs are mostly on an individual level (increased knowledge, employability, voice, and agency) but the program does engage society, and especially the private sector, to invest in AGs. Girls also have increased awareness on their rights and access to SRHR information and services. The program aims to directly address gender norms that can impede socio-economic progression of girls in Namibia by providing her with specific transformative skills sets and gender responsive education. (STEM, financial and digital literacy). AGs in a FGD reported that they found the program space to be "safe" (from discrimination, judgement, violence). Many shared how the program had provided them with mental health support and improved their wellbeing and outlook onto their own futures.

Activities supporting Agency and Leadership in AGs. Peer facilitation training activities resulted in AG participants being equipped to facilitate trainings on digital and financial literacy. AGs described how the responsibility of identifying and organising peer groups to train in their own communities increased their confidence and leadership skills.

"I was very shy, and I was an introvert but then I stood in front of those people and felt the boldness in me coming out"

Effectiveness of different models/approaches in contributing to gender transformative outcomes

GTP is a concept understood by some key UNICEF NCO staff and partners, but there is a need to build capacity wider and to increase understanding across the NCO and with all partners. Namibia's adolescent programming is working on the continuum towards being gender transformative. Programs considered by the evaluation team, including Galz and Goals, UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls are challenging stereotypes and are building confidence, self-efficacy, and the skills of girls. These programs are providing safety and supporting girls in ways that increase voice and agency.

It was suggested during several KIIs (5 out of 8) that the NCO, government, and other key partners could benefit from capacity building and further learning in the concept of GTP.

"Ministry of Gender, understood as a coordinating body, can do more to make sure that the gender transformative agenda is amplified. But capacity is needed. We want to build the capacity of our partners and to ensure that we all share the same vision" – NCO staff

"...it's from building capacity of partners to have the same understanding and agree with and have the same goal. Then we will see the transformation because, right now, I think programming in Namibia is very gender responsive and not gender transformative" – NCO staff

"It's more sharing information and not making adolescents or young people the centre of their own decisions. It's always somebody deciding for them; what's best for them. And I think young

people can bring to the table some of the solutions. I think our partners also need to see it that way” – NCO staff

Some KIIs cautioned that, whilst programs may be creating safe spaces that are encouraging critical reflections on gender roles, norms and behaviours among girls and boys, these changes may not be translating in changes in participant’s family or community life. In other words, it is less clear if programs are addressing systematic and structural barriers (with limited changes related to gender and social norms) found in communities, schools, and homes.

“We still have to do more investment in gender work. It won’t come automatically because of our social norms. Social norms are a big barrier for transformation. But the good thing is that young people are very resilient now and very forward thinking. They are more open than their parents. So I think we have to do a lot of investments at different levels so that we can really see that transformation in Adolescent programming” – CSO implementing partner (KII)

“There’s this constant conflict that I picked up when you engage young people. I want to study engineering. I do not want to marry. I don’t want to have children before I’m 30. But, in her family, everybody had a child at 20 and they are worried that they will get pressure; you know, from the social norms. What they are exposed to through UNICEF programs, UNFPA programs, are not always aligned with family and community. So they actually sit with a lot of internal conflict in what is expected from them and what they can do for themselves” – (NCO staff, KII)

Traditional gender norms and roles are widespread across the country, and it is not surprising that some staff and partners hold these same views across organisations and programs.

“I fear that in the long run it (empowering girls through GTP) will have a negative effect on especially family dynamics. The man is supposed to be the head of the household, supposed to, you know, be on top of his game, be the provider. But now, we are pushing for what? For the females, young girls or woman to be empowered to take charge of their lives? You know, to provide for themselves. Meaning that the male might not be able to provide. Gender roles might fade. I mean yeah, in the long run, the element that may be missing is gender education” – (Government Partner, KII)

Efficiency

EQ 6. To what extent has UNICEF allocated adequate resources to adolescent girls programming that is gender transformative and supports their leadership and agency in ESAR?

Approximately USD 901,453.00 (55%) of the budget, between 2019 to 2023, was specifically used for adolescent programming, as shown in the table below.

	Adolescent Programming (ALHIV/UPSHIFT/Skills4Girls) (USD)
2019	242,848.00
2020	93,106.00
2021	112,470.00
2022	241,383.00
2023	211,646.00
TOTAL	901,453.00

Total amounts received and spent from the beginning 2020 and the end 2022 on the three programs, Galz and Goals, UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls as reported in progress reports are as follows. Whilst it is

useful to have these total figures available no further detail or breakdown has been provided to know how this money was allocated to specific gender transformative interventions, or groups of young people.

Programme	Donor	Timeframe	Budgetary details
Galz and Goals	Swedish National Committee for UNICEF Secondary donor: German National Committee for UNICEF	October 2020 – 30 June 2023	Fund received: USD 330,491.64 Programmable Expenditure during reporting period (31 December 2022): USD 305,238.66
UPSHIFT	German National Committee for UNICEF	October 2020 – 30 June 2023	Contributed Amount: USD 678,554.92 Funds used to date (31 October 2022): USD 117,127.52
Skills4Girls	SDG4 Fund	December 2022	Total Budget USD 130,000.00 (100% utilisation rate)

EQ 7. To what extent do UNICEF programmes' monitoring, reporting and evaluation (MER) systems explicitly, or implicitly address gender transformative programming with a view to generating evidence on UNICEF and public sector performance?

It was reported during KIIs with NCO staff and implementing partners that effort and technical support in recent years has gone towards improving the M&E systems of government and CSO partners to ensure that disaggregated data is collected accurately.

"It is very difficult, I must say, to get segregated data from the ministries and partners. We have to guide them. Help them with templates that already have the segregation and it makes it easier for them. How many boys and girls were there? What were the age groups? (NCO staff KII)

The evaluation looked at the monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks and tools for Skills4Life and UPSHIFT. The framework for UPSHIFT includes target indicators that count individuals reached or trained⁸⁴ through the program as well as number of products, ideas, concepts, and services promoted. The final report for Skills4Girls shares disaggregated data broken down into adolescent girls, boys and teachers, trainers, mentors, parents, community members reached by the program.

"We always report on gender and disability. Other quantitative measures include number of participants from marginalised communities, number of participants with children, education level obtained" (Implementing Partner CSO)

The NCO admitted that preparing the data for this section of the evaluation was a useful exercise for the office in terms of learning where to strengthen data systems (email communication with CSO). The below analysis was prepared for the purposes of this evaluation.

Adolescents reached with gender breakdown:

⁸⁴ # of UPSHIFT facilitators in pool (m/f/x), # of mentors and coaches involved (m/f/x), # of organisations implementing UPSHIFT, # of private sector partners engaged, # of private sector partners engaged, # adolescents and youth indirectly reached, # of adolescents and young people trained in social innovation and enterprise development, # of 'UPSHIFTers' who developed and pitched their ideas/ products, and services., # of 'UPSHIFTers' receiving seed funding).

- The NCO has been reporting on this indicator with the following results: number of interventions with a gender sensitive focus in 2019 – 1, in 2020 - 2, in 2021 – 3, in 2022 – 5 (this is not adolescent specific)
- The following data shows adolescents reached with some of the programmes over the years (2020 is missing)

2022	Upshift - 320 Skills4Girls – 875 (100% female) Galz and Goals – 23,773 (51% female) (via training of trainers)
2021	Early and unintended pregnancy campaign – 10,000 (100% female) UPSHIFT – 55 (32 female, 23 male)
2019	Galz and Goals – 4000 (100% female) Teen clubs – 3000 (majority female)

CO team members expressed that there was a need to do more than just capturing disaggregated data when addressing harmful norms in order to better understand the gendered realities of participants. The different needs and experiences of young boys and girls, at different ages, were not captured in any of the M&E systems or documents reviewed. UNICEF Namibia CO wanted to highlight that they acknowledge a gap with implementing systems to capture the specific and nuanced gender dynamics at play and that action is required to improve this. Further it was acknowledged that in order to understand how gender is working and evolving across various development stages, it is important that approaches and M&E systems consider gender in intersectional terms (including age and disability).

Sustainability

EQ 8. To what extent are the positive changes and effects of gender transformative programming on adolescent girls' leadership and agency sustainable at the national level, and/ or likely to be scaled up by government, or civil society?

Collaboration with government is a key sustainability strategy for all UNICEF Namibia adolescent programs. When asked about sustainability and scale up plans for UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls, UNICEF CSO staff mentioned how closely UNICEF works with the government to ensure that “*UNICEF programs line up with their mandate*” (CSO KII). In this way achievements can be counted against government targets. It was mentioned by a few CSO staff (three out of four KIIS) that Namibia’s enabling legal and policy frameworks on gender equality creates a conducive environment to see government willing to work with UNICEF. This notion was also found in program documents. Below is an excerpt from a UPSHIFT proposal (2020) under the heading *scale up and sustainability*.

“UNICEF works to support the Government in the delivery of the existing government commitment to a rights-based approach to service delivery, as presented in the Fifth National Development Plan (NDP5) and the respective Ministerial Strategic Plans. The most effective inter-ministerial coordination mechanism established over the last two years, the National School Health Task Force will be engaged for ownership of the project.”

Many interviewees believed that the young people who successfully complete the UPSHIFT program are better equipped as change makers in their own communities and potentially for society at large.

“UPSHIFT is designed to help young people to assess their needs and devise strategies for their own upliftment. When compared to other government youth empowerment programs, in the end, this is a much more sustainable approach” (Government representative, KII)

“UPSHIFT develops life skills and other technical skills. This includes empowerment so girls trust themselves, gain the ability to share issues and to find solutions themselves, to work with a group of peers, to raise issues of concern. These are the elements which take the outcomes of a successful programme towards being sustainable” (NCO staff, KII)

Galz and Goals has been in Namibia for over 12 years. Expansion has seen the Galz and Goals programme introduced in new communities, building capacity for coaches and sports administrators, supporting HIV awareness and access to HIV, and delivering SRHR services for adolescents. These activities undertaken in partnership with the Ministry of Sports, Youth and National Service, Ministry of Health and Social Services and the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture.

Impact

EQ 9. To what extent are new or planned interventions likely to lend themselves to achieving higher level change for adolescent girls in future?

FGDs with AGs from Skills4Girls, peer interviews with participants from UPSHIFT and KIIs with NCO and implementing partners staff revealed that the UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls programs are mostly seeing transformative outcomes on an individual level. Examples of where programs are working included:

- Increased confidence; often associated with improved public speaking, articulation, and negotiation skills, but also in self-confidence (often describes as newfound realisation that they are capable of achieving dreams and that they can add value to community and society);
- Increased ambition; often associated with realisations made through program participation that working hard is important. This theme can be closely linked to experiences shared that describe increased levels of positive mind-set and hope for the future in situations that were otherwise often described as 'hopeless';
- Increased innovation and problem solving; especially when talking about making positive changes in own communities.

"Back then (before joining program); let me say; the intention of being in school was just to finish school; other than that I was just waking up and going to school; I had no drive; my participation actually changed my mind set. Lately, now, not a day goes by without me thinking about how I am going to implement this idea. Now, I think ahead. And to be honest; my grades have improved, because I want to pursue this idea; and the only way I can do that; is by working hard" – AB, 18 years, UPSHIFT

"I felt empowered. I felt seen. I felt relevant. I felt like my crazy thoughts and crazy ideas were like coming to life. It wasn't just imagined but it could happen. UPSHIFT gave me that opportunity that I can change crazy ideas into something relevant" – AG, 17 years, UPSHIFT.

The below listed impact themes were also in the UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls programs as well as in the Galz and Goals program.

- Greater awareness and knowledge of rights. Examples were shared that they felt increased agency or ability to articulate and claim rights at home, in school and within communities.
- Increased safety. This was described in both the physical sense and in the ways that the programs created safe spaces to be honest, free, open and themselves. Participants often described their programs as a 'home' or a 'family'.

"UPSHIFT made it feel like home – a free space and safe space to get away from who we thought we were" – AG, 17 years

Examples of leadership were less apparent in the data. The most obvious examples were found in UPSHIFT participants, whose ideas and business plans had progressed beyond pitching stages. Through an elimination process, final participants receive seed money to start their ventures. Participants describe this process as empowering and it appears that participation has been meaningful, promoting increased agency and leadership.

"All the decisions were made between my partner (business) and me; we had to consult UPSHIFT and see what they think; but in the end they said it is your decision; it is your business.

I got a chance to experience; am I making the right choices; am I using the knowledge that I gained correctly” – AG, 19 years

“It wasn’t really something they put on me; but obviously through my business I automatically become a leader; because I have to lead my team; lead my partners; lead the members, everyone involved in my business; that’s how I have become a leader through the program” – AG, 17 years

Strategies whereby the Galz and Goals, UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls programs will be moving beyond working on an individual level towards transformation on systems and structures is not clearly indicated in the program plans made available for the evaluation. Both Galz and Goals and Skills4Girls have indicated new plans to engage boys, men and communities in ways that have not yet been done. These activities could see more changes on a systems/structural level.

The question of male engagement came up a great deal. Many believed that more must be done to engage men, boys, family, and community structures to address harmful norms and to achieve increased sustained and meaningful gender transformation (i.e. changes beyond the individual level onto the systems and structure level). The status of boys in Namibia was debated among AGs in the Galz and Goals FGD:

“I think it is important to talk to boys; so that boys learn how to talk to and speak to girls. In a boy’s mind he just thinks a lady is supposed to do this, a lady is supposed to do that, because his mother did that. But he has to see that women can play soccer. The boys don’t get courses, they just play soccer, they don’t get taught how to treat a lady. There is a lot of abuse in the country, and I think that is a result of boys not knowing what they should do” – AG, 17 years, Galz and Goals (FGD)

“Personally, I think raising awareness on gender equality does not mean we do not support men, or we do not support boys. For so many years women have had to fend for themselves, and it is finally our chance for opportunity. And we are doing a good job at taking up that space, so why take away from the girl child, when she already didn’t have it in the past, so for me, I do not think we should be taking away from the girl in order to give to the boy because the boy has already. And he keeps on getting” –19 years, Galz and Goals (FGD)

“We cannot take from the girl; we should be investing more in the girl or in another girl in another area. Girls who live in coastal or rural areas have even fewer opportunities. Whatever it is that we give to a boy we are taking away from a girl” – AG, age unknown, Galz and Goals (FGD)

Program plans for beyond 2022/23 for adolescent programmes Galz and Goals, UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls were reviewed. The team was not able to identify clear transformative goals or systems designed to monitor and evaluate the ways in which future programs will be increasing AGs agency, voice, and leadership. Below are some of the details as set out in program reports. The following does not show evidence that future programming will effectively move programming towards becoming more transformative. However, the NCO shared with the national consultant that the country team has become aware of this, through processes involved in supporting this evaluation, and that they will be reconsidering plans.

Plans for Galz and Goals

The most recent progress report submitted in March 2023 includes a *way forward* section. The program plans to support the implementation of an intervention called ‘Coaching Boys into Men’ aimed at addressing some of the root causes of GBV. This is a prevention programme that trains and motivates sports coaches to teach their young male athletes healthy relationship skills.

Other plans for future programming include supporting the expansion of training on safeguarding children in sport and the strengthening of capacity within the Ministry of Sports, Youth and National Service and the Namibian Football Association to implement the Sports4Development programmes.

There are also plans to develop a mechanism aimed at obtaining feedback from stakeholders, including adolescent girls in the program. Plans have also made space to include AGs in regional committees running the program/league in each town. During the FGD, Galz and Goals participants expressed a wish to be involved in project design and implementation. These new mechanisms and structures could introduce more opportunities for this in the future.

The AGs expressed a need for increased mental health support and education in programming. Strengthening these aspects in the Galz and Goals program were not mentioned in the project plan documents reviewed but follow up inquiries with implementing partner Namibian Football Association confirmed that “education on mental health and referrals to mental health services is definitely something we have been working on and will continue to strengthen”.

Plans for UPSHIFT

Beyond June 2023, additional funding will be required to allow UPSHIFT to reach more adolescents and young people in and out of school. Plans to reach more young people include implementing a blended delivery of the UPSHIFT program. This plan includes face-to-face activities and the setting up of an online and offline digital version of the programme. This blended approach would be less costly, and the hope is (by the NCO) that it will reach more adolescents and young people and communities than UPSHIFT is reaching now.

Plans for Skills4Girls

Plans for 2023 and beyond include refresher training for peer facilitators, more training and workshops for girls on STEM/TVET, financial and digital literacy and supporting girls in STEM and TVET mentorship programme. Plans also include activities aimed at engaging boys, teachers, parents, and communities in gender and cultural norms to support transformational change. These include leveraging partnerships to create opportunities for on-the-job learning for girls in the programme through the private sector.

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

This case study looked at how UNICEF engaged young people throughout the programmes to gauge the extent to which adolescent participation had been meaningful. During the design phases of UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls, young people were consulted through workshops which took a Human Centred approach to program design. Processes sought to ensure that the realities and needs of young people were at the centre of the programs. These consultations resulted in planned program activities and strategies being adapted to meet the needs of the girls.

We explored the extent to which the Country Office is aligned to the Gender Action Plan, national and global policies and commitments. References to the UNICEF gender strategies in KIIs was limited to discussions around the importance of disaggregated data. Besides the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), only national plans and goals were listed in programme documents and in KIIs concerning how adolescent programming is aligned with plans and policy. Collaboration with other United Nations agencies was flagged by NCO and partners (during KIIs) as needing improvement. No joint adolescent or gender programming is being implemented through UNICEF and other United Nations agencies.

Adolescent programs UPSHIFT and Skills4Girls were found to be working most effectively on an individual level. These programs are seeing to increase confidence, ambition, innovation, and problem-solving skills as reported by the AG participants themselves.

The evaluation team was able to explore the extent to which these programs are supporting increases in AGs voice, agency, and leadership and whether they are having transformational impacts on wider eco-systems (family mentioned frequently) and structures that surround the individual beyond the program “safe spaces”. These discussions often included consideration of how best to engage families

and communities around gender and cultural norms to support transformational change. This is discussed further in the body of the report.

Skills4Girls and Galz and Goals are primarily focus on girls, but there is no evidence that these programmes are truly gender transformational. While gender transformation is an aspiration of the UPSHIFT programme there are minimal elements or programme components in place specifically transform gender relations and to measure that change . It was reported by the NCO that they are aware that these programs are not effectively implementing gender transformative programming (GTP). This is something they plan to address for the upcoming country programme document.

The evaluation looked at understanding of GTP among the staff and collaborators. Despite GTP being rarely cited (in neither program documents nor KIIs), the concept appeared to be understood by key NCO staff and implementing CSO partners (focal points or program managers/designers). It was concluded however that understanding of GTP can be improved and further capacity is needed to see more effective implementation of GTP for adolescents and ultimately successful implementation of the Gender Action Plan 2022-2025 and the Adolescent Girls Strategy 2022 - 2025.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. List of documents consulted

Title	Author	Year
Innovation for resilience: Empowering young girls and women through social innovation to drive Climate, Energy and Environment resilience in Namibia UPSHIFT Proposal	UNICEF Namibia	2020
German National Committee for UNICEF SC190663 and SC200880 UPSHIFT: Innovation for Resilience First progress report 01 October 2020 – 31 October 2021	UNICEF Namibia	2021
One page proposal on ALHIV_UPSHIFT_ U-Report	UNICEF Namibia	2020
German National Committee for UNICEF; SC190663 and SC200880; UPSHIFT: Innovation for Resilience; Second progress report; 01 November 2021 – 31 October 2022	UNICEF Namibia	2022
2023.03.21 UPSHIFT Program Update Donor Copy	UNICEF Namibia	2021
UPSHIFT ME Framework	PAY (Implementing Partner)	2022
UPSHIFT PHASE 1 - Social Innovation Skills Manual		
UPSHIFT Phase 2 - Social Venture_0 Facilitation Manual		
Skills4Girls Implementation Plan	SFH Namibia	2021
Skill4Girls Programme Report (21.12.2022)	UNICEF Namibia	2022
Call to Implementing Partners_Expression of Interest_Skills4Girls	UNICEF Namibia	2021
Participant Eligibility Assessment Tool-Skilss4Girls-	SFH Namibia	2022
Peer Facilitation Report Skill4Girls	SFH Namibia	2022
Skills4Girls Final Report	SFH Namibia	2022
Skills4Girls Overview for 23.03.2022 Stakeholder Workshop Khomas (PowerPoint)	SFH Namibia	2022
Strategic Plan for the Galz and Goals Sports for Development Program 2018 – 2022	UNICEF Namibia	2018
SC181016 Final Narrative Report Final 29.03.2023	UNICEF Namibia	2023
Sport to Life: A manual for Coaches	UNICEF	No Date
Submitted Proposal: Sports4Development_Skills4Girls	UNICEF Namibia	2023
Concept Note_Galz and Goals Programme	UNICEF Namibia	2020
Galz and Goals booklet	UNICEF Namibia and NFA	2019
Galz & Goals – Young Girls Changing Lives_Info Pamphlet	NFA	No date
Children's Parliament of Namibia: Concept Note	UNICEF Namibia	No date

Annex 2. List of key informants and adolescent panel members

Name		Title	Date and Location
Key Informant Interviews (TOTAL 12)			
UNICEF Country Team			
1	Gregor von Medeazza	Deputy Representative Namibia	14 June Zoom
2	Cathline Neels	Social Behaviour Change Specialist/ Namibia Gender Focal Point	9 June Windhoek, Furstenhof Hotel
3	Bravo Linosi	Adolescent Focal Point	19 June Zoom
4	Juditha Leketo Matjila	Advocacy, Communication & Partnership Specialist	23 June Zoom
Government Representatives			
5	Hilya Imene Edward Siwiya	Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service UPSHIFT Partners in Khomas and Kavango East regions	8 June Zoom
CSO Partners			
6	Titus Mwahafa	Project Hope UPSHIFT (Omaheke)	20 June Kalahari Convention Center, Gobabis (Omaheke Region)
7	Aini Paulus Matius Mabuta	Society for Family Health Skills4Girls (Omaheke) Procurement and Logistics (Khomas)	3 July Society for Family Health Offices, Windhoek (Khomas Region)
Other United Nations agencies			
8	Letisia Alfeus Grace Hidinua Kakuna Venokulavo	Programme Specialist: Gender (UNFPA) Programme Specialist HIV Prevention (UNFPA) Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive programs officer (UNFPA)	17 July UNFPA Offices, Windhoek (Khomas Region)
Focus Group Discussions (TOTAL 21)			
1	UPSHIFT Participants 5 AGs 6 ABs		14 June Kalahari Convention Centre, Gobabis (Omaheke Region)
2	Galz and Goals Participants 5 AGs		27 June Namibian Football Association Head Offices, Windhoek, (Khomas Region)
3	Skills4Girls Participants 5 AGs		3 July Society for Family Health Offices, Windhoek (Khomas Region)

Adolescent Panel Members (TOTAL 4)		
1	Tresa Shikuvetepo AG, 19, UPSHIFT Omaheke Region	Training and Orientation 12 June Validation and Feedback Session 1 14 June Validation and Feedback Session 2 20 June
2	Auwanga Enkali AB, 17, UPSHIFT Omaheke Region	Kalahari Convention Centre Gobabis (Omaheke Region)
3	Jennifer Shiiken AG, 16, UPSHIFT, Khomas Region	Training and Orientation 16 June Validation and Feedback Session 1 23 June Validation and Feedback Session 2 29 June
4	Maria Nangolo, AG, 16, UPSHIFT, Khomas Region	Village Cafe Windhoek (Khom Region)
Peer interviews (conducted by Adolescent Panel Members) TOTAL 13		
	3 ABs (aged 15, 17, 19) and 4 AGs (aged 16, 17, 17, 19 – one living with HIV)	Interviews (two sessions for each respondent) conducted in the Omaheke Region between 13 and 24 June
	6 AGs (aged 16, 16, 17, 17, 19, 19 – one living with disability)	Interviews (two sessions for each respondent) conducted in the Khomas Region between 17 and 30 June

Annex 3. GESI Framework

Based on our initial review of UNICEF documentation and key informant interviews (KIIs) during the inception phase, as well as drawing on external documents and SDDirect's previous work, the below definition of a gender-transformative approach was used in this evaluation:

Definition of Gender Transformative Approach

A gender transformative approach addresses the root causes of gender and social inequality by transforming unequal gender norms with the aim to change structural power and social relations.

It is underpinned by intersectional analysis, and places adolescent girls in their diversity at the heart of an intervention, enhancing their relative position at the individual and group levels, as well as institutional, policy and structural levels.

Adolescent girls' leadership, voice and agency is promoted in a meaningful and sustainable manner, with evidence of their involvement in decision making and leadership spaces.

The GESI Continuum

Based on the above definition of a gender-transformative approach, a GESI Continuum⁸⁵ was developed which was used in the analysis. The GESI Continuum defines different levels of gender and social inclusion approaches, from GESI exploitative to GESI transformative.

Examples of behaviors which might occur at each level are included.

⁸⁵ Adapted from SDDirect's Moser Framework.

Examples of behaviours:

Gender Exploitative	Gender Unaware	Gender Sensitive	Gender Responsive	Gender Transformative
Reinforces or takes advantage of existing gender inequalities and stereotypes.	Fails to acknowledge the role of gender or social exclusion. Does not necessarily do harm but likely to indirectly support the status quo.	Examines gender considerations and adopts an approach that address the practical needs of adolescent girls.	Addresses strategic gender and inclusion as a core focus. Empowers adolescent girls to make active choices, to build their access to rights and awareness.	Addresses the root causes of gender and social inequality by transforming unequal gender norms with the aim to change structural power and social relations. It places adolescent girls at the heart of an intervention, enhancing their relative position at the individual and group levels, as well as institutional, policy and structural levels. Adolescent girls' leadership, voice and agency is promoted in a meaningful and sustainable manner.
Adolescent boys are given leadership positions on the project whilst girls are excluded due to harmful social norms which say that girls are not leaders.	Adolescent girls are largely absent from the project, and where they are present, they do not actively participate in the same way as boys. Nobody questions why this might be.	It is recognised that adolescent girls are being left out because meeting times clash with when they need to help at home. Meeting times are rescheduled to be at a time more convenient for them.	Safe spaces are created for adolescent girls in the form of girls' clubs, where they have their own space to build awareness of their rights and discuss issues affecting them.	Training with adolescent boys promotes positive masculinity and shifts harmful social norms. Adolescent girls have meaningful leadership positions, which include decision-making.

CASE STUDY REPORT

Tanzania

Desk Review



CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	96
BACKGROUND	99
METHODOLOGY	100
KEY FINDINGS	101
CONCLUSIONS & CONSIDERATIONS	113
ANNEXES	115

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evaluation purpose, focus and methods

This desk review is part of a wider formative evaluation of UNICEF's gender transformative programming in Eastern and Southern Africa, with a focus on investment in adolescent girls' leadership, agency, and voice.

Tanzania was selected as one of the three desk review case studies, to contribute to the regional evaluation's assessment of the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of gender transformative adolescent girls-focused programming across the UNICEF Tanzania Country Office (TCO). This report presents findings from a desk-based analysis of documents and a small number of virtual consultations with five key informants across the Tanzania Country Office, including UNICEF staff, staff from UNICEF partners. The review is not meant to be a comprehensive, standalone evaluation report but will be used as part of the analysis for the regional evaluation report.

Key findings

Overarching question

Evidence was found that TCO is investing in girls' voice, agency and leadership at the both the Country Office level and within several girl-intentioned programmes. However, it is not clear that adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership is the central approach to gender transformative programming by TCO. Whilst girls' voice, agency and leadership is important at the individual level of gender-transformative programming, the others levels of the socio-ecological model are recognized as just as important by TCO.

Relevance

The evaluation found examples of robust analysis of the specific needs of adolescent girls being undertaken and informing programme design, but there are few examples of adolescent girls being meaningfully engaged in the design of new programmes. Evidence was also found of adolescent girls being consulted in relation to programme implementation. However, it was noted by interviewees that meaningful engagement of adolescent girls in both programme design and ongoing implementation was not carried out consistently, and that this was an area for improvement.

Evidence was also found of adolescents being consulted in relation to TCO strategy, although the evaluation cannot comment on how meaningful the young people found their engagement since this was not available in the documentation shared. An example from the Girls Reproductive Health, Rights and Empowerment Accelerated in Tanzania (GRREAT) programme showed young people engaged as active participants in programme monitoring and evaluation.

The COVID-19 pandemic did not emerge strongly as a recent shift for adolescent girls' outcomes. Several interviewees highlighted the major shift in the political environment surrounding adolescent girls due to the recent Presidency of Samia Suluhu Hassan and how UNICEF TCO has been responding to this.

Coherence

The Tanzania CPD (2022-2027) recognises that UNICEF TCO must accelerate integrated, gender-transformative programming, especially around the rights of adolescents and children. The Tanzania CO Gender Strategy (2018) is aligned with UNICEF's global Strategic Plan (2018 – 2021) and global Gender Action Plan (2018-2021).

The Gender Programmatic Review (2023) finds that TCO demonstrates its commitment to gender programming through the considerable resources allocated across all sections to conduct gender studies and analyses and engages in a wide range of comprehensive gender-responsive and/or gender-sensitive programmes. Gender transformative programming is also found in several sectoral or cross-sectoral programmes.

There is no dedicated joint programme among UN agencies specifically on gender equality, but the CO collaborates with UNFPA on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and on child marriage with UNFPA and UN Women. There appears to be collaboration with partners such as UNESCO, World Bank, USAID, Plan International, FCDO, on a Technical Working Group on Adolescent Education. Staff from the Child Protection sector have been attending the Development Partners Group (DPG) on Gender Equality co-chaired by UNFPA and UNWOMEN in the absence of a Gender Specialist in post. TCO has established strong partnerships with women and/or girl-led organisations over the years.

Effectiveness

This evaluation found some examples of adolescent girl focused programmes that are mainstreaming gender-transformative programming, with the GRREAT and EAGLs programmes as particularly strong examples.

However, the concept of gender-transformative programming is not always familiar to UNICEF TCO staff or their partners. A gender assessment for the GRREAT programme with a limited number of stakeholders found that there are varied, and often low, levels of understanding of gender-transformative programming amongst TCO staff. Understanding of gender-transformative programming is lower amongst UNICEF's partners and the government than UNICEF TCO staff.

Key contributory factors for successfully mainstreaming gender-transformative programming have been identified in this evaluation as: staff capacity and technical leadership on gender-transformative approaches; senior buy-in and accountability; resources; donor requirements.

This case study was not able to gather enough evidence to make a judgement on whether there are differences in outcomes between a multisectoral approach and a more targeted approach.

Efficiency

Interviewees noted that resources are always a constraint and one of the main barriers in doing more on gender-transformative programming. However, with limited resources TCO has still been able to undertake some gender-transformative activities.

A budget analysis of TCO's budget finds that 30.8% is allocated towards gender-responsive or transformative programming. However, the Gender Programmatic Review (2023) indicates that this is potentially lower in reality. The tagging system relies on staff having a full understanding of the Gender Equality Markers which is not always the case.

Sustainability

Several examples were found of programmes with sustainability strategies, such as the Integrated Adolescent Girls programme. The close-out report of the 2gether4SRHR programme reflects on the measures which were adopted to ensure transitioning of responsibilities and for sustainability. The EAGL programme is in line with the government's education policies. The GRREAT midline assessment includes a standalone 68-page Scalability Assessment which analyses the scalability of four interventions, finding that there are strong enabling factors to drive the scale-up of interventions, and that system strengthening is at the centre of each intervention's approach.

In general, a lack of resources within government was recognised by interviewees as being a challenge for sustainability. Strong relationships with government stakeholders were seen as an enabler.

Impact

In terms of different approaches to gender transformative outcomes, the GRREAT Promising Practices report highlights six promising practices being implemented under the GRREAT programme:

1. **The girls' empowerment index (GEI)** to measure girls' empowerment across seven domains, including proxies for girls' voice, agency and leadership.
2. **Using a multisectoral approach** to apply shared approaches to tackle root causes of health and empowerment, and work across both the supply and demand chain for adolescent sexual and reproductive health rights health services.
3. **Engaging with parents and caregivers** to leverage their influence and role as change agents, and challenge harmful norms.
4. **Economic empowerment approaches** such as the GROW (Goal-Reality-Options-Will) leadership training and associated Youth Savings Loans Associations (YSLAs), as well as empowering vulnerable youth through training them on the production of reusable sanitary pads.
5. **Investment in boys to support girls' empowerment** has led to improved boys' knowledge and sense of responsibility on sexual and reproductive health issues, and an improved awareness of gender inequalities and harmful gender norms.
6. **The pairing of Youth Peer Educators (YPEs) and community health workers / community health volunteers** to support adolescents to engage in health seeking behaviour and access health and other social services in their community.

Additionally, engaging with men and boys was highlighted in two interviews. The Gender Programmatic Review found there is still an 'ad-hoc' approach to engaging men and boys, although efforts are in process across all sectors.

Conclusions & considerations

Considerations identified for TCO to continue to strengthen their gender-transformative work are:

- Ensure that adolescent girls are consistently meaningfully engaged in policy and programming.
- Strengthen coordination with other UN agencies on adolescent girls.
- Consider additional training for staff and partners on gender-transformative approaches.
- Prioritise resources for gender-transformative programming, and ensure that budgets are tagged appropriately and consistently.
- Continue to get the basics right on monitoring and reporting gender (i.e. collecting sex and age disaggregated data) whilst also scaling up strong approaches to monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) (e.g. the GRREAT gender assessment and the Girls' Empowerment Index).
- Continue to work closely with government partners on sustainability strategies and embed these from the design stage.
- Scale-up the promising approaches to gender-transformative programming identified on the GRREAT programme and continue documenting and sharing learning on what works for gender-transformative programming.

BACKGROUND

The United Republic of Tanzania is a lower-middle income country in East Africa. It is ranked 160 out of 191 in the Human Development Index, indicating low human development (in terms of health, education and income).

With a median age of 17 years, Tanzania's population is among the youngest in the world (UNICEF Every Adolescent Girl Learns (EAGL) proposal 2021). About 12 million individuals are adolescents (10-19 years), an age group expected to reach 30 million by 2050. Harmful gendered social norms persist, with particular negative effects on adolescent girls.

Some key statistics on the situation of adolescent girls in Tanzania include:

- The completion rate for girls in secondary education is just 27% and 15% of girls are absent in primary education.⁸⁶
- 19% of women (over 15 years) have been married before the age of 18.⁸⁷
- 27% of girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are either pregnant or have had a child.⁸⁸
- 87.9% of children experience physical violence in schools.⁸⁹
- 4 in 10 women aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence, and 17 percent sexual violence.⁹⁰
- Women spend 4.4 hours per day on unpaid care and domestic work.⁸⁷
- 59% of girls and 50% of boys (age 15-19 years) justify beating a wife for certain reasons.⁸⁸

Purpose and audience

The purpose of the Regional Evaluation is to understand how current programming, investments and practices to invest in adolescent girls' leadership, voice and agency are shaping UNICEF's gender transformative programming (GTP) approach in ESAR over the coming years. The evaluation is country-focused and uses country case studies as illustrative examples to inform the planning and programming of GTP through Investment in adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership in ESAR.

This case study is contributing evidence to support to the regional evaluation's assessment of the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of gender transformative adolescent girls-focused programming. This report presents findings from a desk-based analysis of documents and a small number of virtual consultations with key informants across the Tanzania Country Office, including UNICEF staff, staff from UNICEF partners, and adolescent girls engaged in UNICEF

⁸⁶ UNICEF (2023) The State of the World's Children 2023: Statistical Tables, *Table 11 – Education*, <https://data.unicef.org/resources/dataset/the-state-of-the-worlds-children-2023-statistical-tables/>

⁸⁷ OECD (2022) SIGI Country Report for Tanzania, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/fbf25837-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/fbf25837-en>

⁸⁸ United Republic of Tanzania (2016) 2015-16 TDHS-MIS Key Findings, <https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/SR233/SR233.pdf>

⁸⁹ HakiElemu (2020) The State of Violence Against School Children in Tanzania Mainland, <https://tenmet.or.tz/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/VACis-Brief-Updated.pdf>

⁹⁰ World Bank (2022) Tanzania Gender-Based Violence Assessment : Scope, Programming, Gaps and Entry Points, <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099155003312242676/p17605107388b40600a73a0ef1c83555589>

programming. The review is not meant to be a comprehensive, standalone evaluation report but will be used as part of the analysis for the regional evaluation report.

While the case study note is primarily intended to be used to inform the regional report, it will be of interest to both the Country and Regional UNICEF teams as a standalone review of adolescent focused programming in Tanzania. We also hope that findings will be shared back to the adolescents, young people and partners who supported the data collection where relevant. The evaluation team will ensure regional findings are shared back with the Regional Adolescent Advisory Group.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the desk-based case study are aligned with the overall evaluation objectives, and they are to:

- Provide a preliminary assessment of UNICEF's GTP in Tanzania vis-à-vis issues of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact with a specific focus on programming investing in girls' voice, agency and leadership
- Explore the evidence for whether interventions currently being implemented or in the pipeline are evaluable, whether or not the programmes are adequately defined and their results verifiable.
- Identify key lessons and the most impactful approaches with regards to gender transformative adolescent focused programming

CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

Data collection methods / analysis and sampling

The UNICEF Tanzania Country Office (TCO) was chosen as a desk-based review during a mapping exercise as part of the evaluation inception phase. Key reasons for its selection were that there was strong data available from TCO, several girl-intentioned programmes and it complemented the other selected country offices in terms of similar/differing contexts (e.g. income level, Human Development Index, not experiencing institutional or social fragility).

This case study is based on a document review and a small number of key informant interviews. The data collection took place from the beginning of May to end of June 2023, and whilst the time frame was quite protracted the days allocated to the task were minimal⁹¹. All data collection was desk-based.

43 documents were reviewed (see Annex 1 for details). The documents were sent by UNICEF Tanzania staff and included programme documents such as proposals, workplans, and evaluations, as well as several country-level documents such as the UNICEF Tanzania gender strategy and a gender review of UNICEF Tanzania.

Five key informant interviews took place virtually for a maximum of 1 hour. UNICEF Tanzania identified the most relevant people to speak to. As shown in the table below, four were with UNICEF Tanzania staff and one was with an implementing partner. Efforts were made to also speak to UN agency

⁹¹ Approximately 8 days were allocated for the desk review, including interviews, analysis and report writing.

partners, but we were unable to secure an interview in the available timeframe. These interviews complemented the desk review by filling in information gaps and providing a deeper understanding of gender-transformative programming by UNICEF Tanzania.

In-country stakeholders	Job roles / organisation and number
CSO partners, youth networks and adolescent girls and boys	1. Restless Development
UNICEF Tanzania staff	2. Adolescent Development Specialist 3. Education Officer 4. Education Specialist 5. Gender Consultant (Contract with UNICEF TCO)
Total number of respondents:	5

Ethical considerations

As this was a desk-based review which involved minimal primary data collection the ethical risks were considered low, however as with all our evaluation and research work we are guided by a set of ethical principles. The principles translate into a number of practical measures to ensure confidentiality, informed consent, data protection, reduction of direct and indirect risks to interviewees, safe and meaningful participation.

All participation was done on a voluntary basis and based on informed consent. Personal information is treated confidentially, and the privacy and anonymity of participants is preserved. We will not include any names of any participants consulted with to ensure this is upheld.

KEY FINDINGS

Overarching question

EQ1: To what extent are UNICEF ESAR COs investing in adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership as a central approach within this gender transformative programming?

Evidence was found that UNICEF Tanzania is investing in girls' voice, agency and leadership at the Country Office (CO) level. The UNICEF Tanzania Adolescent Empowerment framework 2022-27 has the ambition that “adolescent boys and girls are supported and meaningfully engaged to be real game changers”. A Girls' Empowerment Index has been developed by the CO to measure changes in girls' empowerment (including proxies for voice, agency and leadership) (see EQ 7 for more details). There are two indicators in the new Country Programme Document (CPD) which focus on adolescent girls (see EQ 7 for more details).

Evidence was found that UNICEF Tanzania is investing in girls' voice, agency and leadership within several programmes. The new Integrated Adolescent Girls programme includes a focus on empowering adolescent girls to have opportunities for skills development and employability and access to platforms to raise their voices for change, alongside working with the community and the enabling environment to address harmful social norms and practices such as child marriage. The GRREAT programme focuses on addressing and strengthening the supply and demand sides of adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (ASRHR) provision and utilization in ways that respond directly to the needs of adolescent girls. A key strategy throughout the GRREAT programme is the role of adolescent girls as agents of change. The programme aims to strengthen the capacity of adolescent girls to voice their opinions about problems they are facing as well as provide opportunities to create and implement their own innovative solutions that will address issues they are facing around ASRHR. The Every Adolescent Girl Learns (EAGL) programme aims to improve equitable access to learning and skills development for adolescent girls to advance their empowerment and access to decent work. This includes an objective that adolescent girls (in and out of school) have increased knowledge and skills to make their voices heard in decision-making processes and issues that affect them.

However, it is not clear that adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership is necessarily the central approach to gender transformative programming by TCO. The Gender Transformative Programming in Tanzania document finds examples of elements of gender transformative programming across all sections. Most of the examples outlined focus on community level initiatives, enabling environment initiatives or working with men and boys, rather than examples of programming focused on girls' voice, agency and leadership.

Whilst girls' voice, agency and leadership is important at the individual level of gender-transformative programming, the others levels of the socio-ecological model are recognised as just as important by TCO. In interviews, when discussing improvements in gender-transformative programming, working at the individual level of the socio-ecological model (i.e. where voice, agency and leadership sits) was not emphasised any more than the other levels of the socio-economic model (i.e. the interpersonal, community, systems/institutions, policies/legislative, and engaging men and boys levels). For example, doing more to engage men and boys was highlighted by two interviewees as an area that TCO should do more on. The GRREAT programme was identified as a strong example of gender-transformative programming because it focuses on all levels of the socio-economic model (including, but not limited to, girls' voice, agency and leadership at the individual level).

Relevance

EQ2. To what extent are country programmes / projects designed to address the specific needs of adolescent girls in the region?

Robust analysis of the specific needs of adolescent girls in the region

Robust analysis of the specific needs of adolescent girls is undertaken and informs programme design. However, few examples were found of adolescent girls being meaningfully engaged in the design of new programmes. Gender analysis and reviews are undertaken across sections, for example the recent gender review of the simplified birth registration system in Tanzania and the gender analysis of out of school children in Zanzibar (Burger 2023).

Strong analysis of the specific needs of adolescent girls is included in several programme proposals (e.g. EAGL, GRREAT and the Integrated Adolescent Girls' Empowerment Programme), as well as during project implementation. For example, the EAGL proposal includes a situation analysis of adolescent girls, including in terms of a skills gap in the labour force, the challenges of girls' education particularly in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM subjects), and key barriers (e.g. traditional attitudes and practices, exposure to physical violence and abuse, poor school infrastructure) preventing adolescent girls from accessing learning and skills development. The remainder of the proposal clearly responds to the barriers identified in the situation analysis. Under the Educate A Child (EAC) programme, a comprehensive gender analysis was undertaken in 2022 to examine the social, economic, and cultural drivers that are leading to girls and boys dropping out of schools in Zanzibar. The objective was to identify the root cause of the issue, so that 'gender transformative' interventions can be designed to address them. The WASH section has supported the Ministry of Health to conduct a study of adolescent girls' perceptions of the provision of MHH services in schools.

Meaningful engagement of adolescent girls in programme design, implementation, M&E and strategy

Evidence was found of adolescent girls being consulted in relation to programme design. The GRREAT programme proposal includes a 62-page Annex of a gender analysis of adolescent girls in Tanzania. The analysis is based on a literature review and consultations with adolescents (aged 10-19 years old). The consultations were designed to be fully participatory and human-centred (e.g. Role Model exercise, River of Life exercise) and involved 231 adolescents (55% girls) in both sex-disaggregated and unisex formats. The GRREAT gender analysis includes a series of recommendations to be addressed, either directly through the Global Affairs Canada proposal, indirectly addressed through UNICEF and UNFPA complimentary activities, or to be supported by other development partners.

Evidence was also found of adolescent girls being consulted in relation to programme implementation. Under the EAGL programme, UNICEF recently facilitated a girls' lead dialogue on STEM for 180 adolescent girls, and 30 adolescent boys (from secondary schools in Kigoma, Tabora, and Songwe) participated in a dialogue on the challenges for STEM learning. During the EAGL inception phase, 330 adolescent girls from 3 regions in the mainland (180) and Zanzibar (150) participated in consultations on STEM.

However, it was noted by interviewees that meaningful engagement of adolescent girls in programme design and ongoing implementation is not carried out consistently, and that this is an area for improvement. Although adolescent girls may on occasion be consulted for programme design, during the implementation phase, adolescent girls tend to be seen as programme beneficiaries, rather than having a more substantial role in the direction of the programme. Interviewees claimed that whilst adolescents may give feedback via U-Report or in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) as part of programme evaluation activities, this is not always done systematically and the consultation is likely be more tokenistic or extractive, rather than carried out in a truly meaningful way.

Evidence was also found of adolescents being consulted in relation to TCO strategy. As part of the development of UNICEF Tanzania's new country programme document (CPD) 2022-2027, in July 2021 the education section consulted with various stakeholders including school children from Dar es Salaam (urban) and Mbeya region (rural). A total 50 (25 girls, 25 boys) school children aged 10-16 years were consulted on education and SRHR priorities for the next five-year programme in Tanzania. In February 2022, the education sector led a 2-day conference bringing together government stakeholders and more than 70 in- and out- of school children and adolescents (sex disaggregation not provided) for a consultation on education reforms. Whilst it is promising that consultations with young people at a strategy level are taking place, the evaluation cannot comment on how meaningful the young people found their engagement since this was not available in the documentation shared.

During the GRREAT midline assessment, the assessment team undertook adolescent-led consultations with 26 adolescent girls and 19 boys across Mbeya, Songwe and Zanzibar. The purpose of these meetings was to check selected questions in the Girls' Empowerment Index survey tool for comprehension, sensitivity and age-appropriateness, including concepts such as 'girls' empowerment', 'gender norms' and 'harmful cultural practice'. Based on adolescents' feedback, no changes were made to the relevant questions tool, but it was recommended that enumerators aim to build up a strong rapport with adolescents prior to conducting the surveys to build trust. This feedback was taken on board and shared to enumerators during their training sessions. This is a positive example of meaningful engagement of adolescents in programme monitoring and evaluation.

Consideration of recent shifts and trends in gender outcomes for adolescent girls in programming

In terms of recent shifts responded to by TCO, the COVID-19 pandemic did not emerge strongly. The 2gether4SRHR proposal (2021) includes some contextual analysis of COVID-19, but not in relation to the specific needs of adolescent girls. Two interviewees discussed how UNICEF shifted their activities to respond to COVID-19, for example by working with the government to disseminate the school curricula over radio. It was noted that schools were only shut in Tanzania for 3-months due to the pandemic, which may be why COVID-19 related shifts in outcomes for adolescent girls did not come through more prominently in the data collection.

Several interviewees highlighted the major shift in the political environment surrounding adolescent girls due to the recent Presidency of Samia Suluhu Hassan. President Samia is Tanzania's first female President who has been serving since March 2021. During her presidency, she has overturned a policy excluding girls who are pregnant from attending school effectively forcing them to drop out. UNICEF Tanzania had been advocating for this change, with others, for a long time and it is seen as a major win for adolescent girls, and gender equality. UNICEF is now working with the government to re-enrol girls, but there are complex barriers to overcome. For example, these girls now often have childcare responsibilities alongside their studies and may feel shame in joining grades with much younger classmates, so evening classes may be more suitable, but these carry additional risks including to their safety. It was noted that UNICEF Tanzania should continue to work on this issue, including advocacy work to ensure that the Education Act is amended (rather than just the policy) so that it is more difficult to reverse if the political situation changes again.

Coherence

EQ3. To what extent do adolescent girl focused interventions (both within UNICEF and external) align with UNICEF strategies, and global policy commitments, to support girls' leadership and agency through gender transformative programming in ESAR?

The Tanzania CPD (2022-2027) recognises that UNICEF TCO must accelerate integrated, gender-transformative programming, especially around the rights of adolescents and children. It states that *"UNICEF will seek to empower Tanzanians at family, community and national levels to address harmful social norms, including discriminatory gender norms and those related to violence against children. Gender socialization and positive masculinities for men and boys will be promoted. All programming will aim to remove the structural barriers to gender equality"* (p.6).

The Tanzania CO Gender Strategy (2018) was developed to accelerate gender equality results through its country programme (2016-2021) and is aligned with UNICEF's global Strategic Plan (2018 – 2021) and global Gender Action Plan (GAP) (2018-2021). Since the commencement of the latest global Gender Action Plan (2022-2025), no new TCO Gender Strategy has been developed, but there has been a Gender Programmatic Review (2023) which assesses TCO's alignment with the latest GAP3.

The Gender Programmatic Review (2023) finds that TCO demonstrates its commitment to gender programming through the considerable resources allocated across all sections to conduct gender studies and analyses, and engages in a wide range of comprehensive gender-responsive and/or gender-sensitive programmes. Gender transformative programming is also found in several sectoral or cross-sectoral programmes, with examples of those performing 'exceptionally well' being identified as:

- Menstrual health & hygiene interventions and adolescent girls' participation and voice in community water committees.
- Education sector initiatives to integrate gender into policy efforts, gender reviews of out of school children, and education and skills building for adolescent girls including those no longer in formal education.
- Social protection interventions which are advancing gender-responsive policy solutions coupled with Cash Plus interventions (e.g. adolescent nutrition and social behaviour change programmes targeting fathers).
- Social behaviour change interventions in the Child Protection section, including community dialogues and working with religious and traditional leaders to prevent violence.
- In the Innovation section, young people have designed innovative solutions for the day-to-day challenges they face, with programmes such as SmartGirlz and Grow Leadership offering opportunities for girls to excel in the world of ICT.

The Gender Programmatic Review (2023) briefly evaluates TCO's performance against the institutional standards outlined in GAP3.

- **Gender analysis in all contexts:** This is taking place, with several recent examples.
- **Gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation and measurement:** It is common practice for most sections to sex-disaggregate data for monitoring and evaluation purposes, however some challenges remain. These include quality assurance of the sex-disaggregated data, a lack of understanding for the reason behind collecting age- and sex-disaggregated data, short programme cycles, and challenges in emergency settings. There are gaps in terms of systematic collection of qualitative evidence.
- **Investing in gender equality results:** The CO invests in achieving gender results in several ways, for example with the selection of two gender-responsive indicators in the new CPD that support the GAP's Adolescent Girls' Leadership and Well-being results, the new appointment of a gender specialist, the allocation of around 30.8% of the total CO budget towards gender-responsive or transformative programming.
- **Partnerships:** The CO has established strong partnerships with women and/or girl-led organisations over the years.
- **Interagency coordination:** There is no dedicated joint programme among UN agencies on gender equality, but UNICEF collaborates with UNFPA on SRHR and on child marriage with UNFPA and UN Women.

EQ 4. What have been the areas and ways of cooperation with other UN entities and other donor/ development partners in regard to gender-transformative programming with and for adolescent girls in ESAR?

The Gender Programmatic Review (2023) notes that there is no dedicated joint programme among UN agencies specifically on gender equality, but UNICEF

coordinates efforts related to GBV, VAC, SRHR, HIV, nutrition, maternal and child health and climate change in the next UNSDF (2022-2027) for Tanzania. The CO collaborates with UNFPA on SRHR and on child marriage with UNFPA and UN Women. The 2gether4SRHR programme was an example of UNICEF working with UNFPA, WHO and UNAIDS. The four agencies worked jointly on three objectives related to SRHR, each with the own complementary activities in a joint workplan. However, the programme was only implemented in Tanzania for 9-months (Tanzania joined the regional programme towards the end of the programme cycle) and there was a limited budget to split between the four agencies, so there's little evidence available on how well the collaboration worked in practice.

UNICEF TCO is also collaborating with other UN entities and development partners on policy.

UNICEF is currently technically and financially supporting the coordination and implementation of the government's new National Accelerated Action and Investment Agenda for Adolescent Health and Well Being (NAIA-AHW) 2021/22– 2024/25, working with UNFPA, WHO and UNAIDS. This year, as part of the Education Development Partners Group (EdDPG), UNICEF will support a gender analysis of the education sector in line with Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP). The findings will inform the education sector on any key gender transformative action to be undertaken in alignment with revised education and training policy.

In terms of working groups, due to a gap in the Gender Specialist role, staff from the Child Protection sector have been attending the Development Partners Group (DPG) on Gender Equality co-chaired by UNFPA and UNWOMEN. There also appears to be collaboration with partners such as UNESCO, World Bank, USAID, Plan International, FCDO, on a Technical Working Group on Adolescent Education. This working group meets quarterly to share progress on what each partner is doing on adolescent education and share areas of convergence, such as gender-transformative education and safe schools. The group hold joint meetings with the government.

The Gender Programmatic Review (2023) finds that TCO has established strong partnerships with women and/or girl-led organisations over the years. Examples of these at the national level are: The Benjamin Mkapa Trust, Digital Opportunity Trust, Femina Hip Ltd, Clinton Health Access Institution, and R-Labs. TCO also has strong relationships with the government. The Minister of Health has requested UNICEF to support the preparation of National MHH guidelines which is underway. Draft guidelines will be in place by mid-October 2023.

Effectiveness

EQ5. To what extent have UNICEF ESARO's adolescent girls focused programmes and interventions mainstreamed gender transformative programming, contributing to increasing their voices, agency and leadership, in current planned programmes?

The evaluation found some examples of adolescent girl focused programmes that are mainstreaming gender-transformative programming. UNICEF's Gender Transformative Programming in Tanzania paper describes key components and characteristics of gender-transformative approaches and programmes adopted by UNICEF TCO across gender socialisation and norms, WASH, education, health, child protection, working with men and boys. For example, under WASH, school WASH clubs provide a platform for girls and boys to learn together about general hygiene and menstrual health, whilst girls are further educated on how to safely use and dispose of sanitary material and use the MHH rooms in school. In addition, a mobile phone period tracking application called OKY was launched for adolescent girls in Tanzania, supporting girls with context-tailored information on MHH and allowing them to track their menstrual periods. UNICEF TCO is also supporting the development of national guidelines and toolkits for MHH education. In UNICEF-supported regions there is a mandatory quota for women to not only

participate in community water committees but also serve in leadership roles. UNICEF is also supporting the participation of girls in the bi-annual meetings as well as during the implementation of WASH and climate mitigation-related programmes at the community level (i.e. increasing girls' agency and voice). The GRREAT and EAGL programmes are particularly strong examples of a programming taking a gender-transformative approach.

Familiarity with the concept of gender-transformative programming

However, GTP is not always familiar to UNICEF TCO staff and their partners. The GRREAT midline assessment (2022) includes a standalone gender assessment. The assessment is based on data collected during a three-day Gender-Transformative Accelerator workshop with technical experts from UNICEF Headquarters and UNFPA Headquarters, supplemented by data from 41 key informant interviews conducted with stakeholders working on the GRREAT initiative, and 30 focus groups with rights-holders and duty-bearers in Tanzania. The gender assessment found understanding of 'gender-transformative programming' to vary greatly between GRREAT stakeholders. No single informant interviewed had a clear and complete understanding of the term or what is needed for programming to be truly gender-transformative, although some stakeholders – notably UNICEF and UNFPA staff – had clearer and more complete understandings than others. However, no respondent gave an answer which indicated a complete understanding of the term 'gender transformative' and whilst UNICEF and UNFPA generally held more advanced conceptualisations of 'gender-transformative programming', they also reflected that their knowledge of the term, and what it takes for interventions to be gender-transformative, was evolving.

Interviewees for this case study similarly noted that there are varied, and often low, levels of understanding of gender-transformative programming amongst TCO staff and that more training is needed. One interviewee noted that TCO staff face a particular challenge in understanding how to operationalise gender-transformative approaches. Two interviewees noted that although gender-transformative programming and GAP3 may not be well understood amongst UNICEF staff, that doesn't mean that staff aren't undertaking gender-transformative programming and contributing to the GAP.

Understanding of gender-transformative programming is lower amongst UNICEF's partners and the government. An example was given of a workshop with 10 government staff, whereby only 1 government staff member had any understanding at all of gender-transformation, whilst most had never heard of the term.

Key contributory factors

Key contributory factors for successfully mainstreaming gender-transformative programming have been identified in this evaluation (via both interviews and the document review) as:

- **Staff capacity and technical leadership** on gender-transformative approaches: As detailed above, there are varied, and often low, levels of understanding of gender-transformative programming amongst TCO staff which can hinder full implementation of gender-transformative programming.
- **Senior buy-in and accountability:** TCO senior staff are generally supportive of gender-transformative programming, and this is a key enabler.
- **Resources:** Adequate budgets are needed, for example to ensure that MER systems are assessing gender-transformative impacts effectively.
- **Donors:** Sometimes it is requirements from donors which drive more gender-transformative approaches.

A multi-sectoral approach versus targeted gender-transformative programming

This case study was not able to gather enough evidence to make a judgement on whether there are differences in outcomes between a multisectoral approach and a

more targeted approach. Examples of multi-sectoral programmes were found in GRREAT, EAGL and OOSC whilst programmes such as 2gether4SRHR are targeted programmes. Interviewees felt that multi-sectoral programmes are more likely to be successful as the issues are all related.

Efficiency

EQ 6 To what extent has UNICEF allocated adequate resources to adolescent girls programming that is gender transformative and supports their leadership and agency in ESAR?

Interviewees noted that resources are always a constraint and one of the main barriers in doing more on gender-transformative programming. However, with limited resources TCO has still been able to undertake some gender-transformative activities. Mainstreaming gender-transformation across all policy and programming was indicated as a means to doing more with limited resources. This needs all staff to have a basic understanding of gender-transformation (which is not always the case, as outlined under EQ5) rather than a central gender staff member/team reviewing everything with a gender lens. The need to work with and leverage partners who may have more resources, and to show results which can be scaled up, was also noted as important when working with limited resources.

The Gender Programmatic Review (2023) finds that TCO demonstrates its commitment to gender programming through the considerable resources allocated across all sections to conduct gender studies and analyses, as well as at the outputs level.

According to an analysis of the TCO CPD's outputs against Gender Equality Markers (Principal, Significant, Marginal or None), in 2023 74% of the CPD's output level activities were tagged as Significant (where an output makes a significant contribution to advancing gender equality and/or the empowerment of girls and women). However, the Gender Programmatic Review (2023) found that some output indicators tagged as Significant did not actually meet the Significant level and should have been tagged Marginal or None. There were also examples found of output indicators tagged as Significant where they should have been tagged as Principal.

A budget analysis of Tanzania CO budget finds that 30.8% is allocated towards gender-responsive or transformative programming. However, the Gender Programmatic Review (2023) indicates that this potentially is lower in reality. The tagging system relies on staff having a full understanding of the Gender Equality Markers which is not always the case.

No similar analysis was found in terms of budgets allocated or set aside for adolescent girls programming specifically. No evidence was found of the budget allocations for intersectional dimensions, such as budget lines for ensuring accessibility for girls with disabilities.

EQ 7 To what extent do UNICEF programmes' monitoring, reporting and evaluation (MER) systems explicitly, or implicitly address gender transformative programming with a view to generating evidence on UNICEF and public sector performance?

Monitoring and reporting on gender transformative outcomes

At the CO level, monitoring and reporting on gender results are improving. The new CPD includes two new gender-responsive indicators that support the GAP's Adolescent Girls' Leadership and Well-being results. While gender is mainstreamed in other sectoral indicators, the two new indicators focus

on adolescent girls: (1) Alternative pathways and skills development for adolescent girls, and (2) SRHR services, awareness and empowerment for adolescent girls.

Interviewees were all in agreement that there was more to be done in terms of monitoring and reporting on gender transformative outcomes on programmes. Currently, most programmes are only measuring the reach of different activities and not how gender transformative these activities are. It is common practice to sex-disaggregate this type of data for monitoring purposes, but the quality of the data is occasionally questionable, and the reason for collecting sex-disaggregated data is not always understood by staff (Burger 2023). Furthermore, the 2018 TCO Gender Strategy notes that when sex-disaggregated data is being collected, it is not being used strategically, and it is not clear whether this has changed over the past five years⁹².

The GRREAT programme demonstrates a promising example of more meaningful monitoring and reporting on gender. To measure the change in overall the overall empowerment level of girls (the ultimate outcome/impact level change of the programme), a Girls' Empowerment Index (GEI) is being used, adapted from Oxfam's "[A 'how to' guide to measure women's empowerment](#)". It was constructed for the baseline assessment, tracking ten domains of change amongst a survey sample of 816 girls aged 10-19 years old residing in the selected study areas, and this version is being used for the midline and endline assessments for GRREAT.

The GEI has been refined and adapted, led by UNICEF Tanzania based on feedback from thematic sections in UNICEF Tanzania, ESARO Gender and Adolescent Working Group, HQ multi-sectoral working group, DAPM and Innocenti. The refined version will be used in the integrated adolescent girls programme and is available for adoption within Tanzania and by UNICEF globally. As a result of the refinement process, the domains have been reduced from 10 to 7 and the number of questions has been reduced from 50 to 37. The seven domains in the GEI are:

- Self-confidence and esteem
- Personal freedom
- Freedom from gender-based violence
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Social capital
- Leadership and influence
- Economic empowerment

In addition to the questions asked in order to understand girls' empowerment across the seven domains, a series of questions are asked in order to be able to disaggregate the data, including by the respondents' location, age, education level, occupation, marital status, number of children and level of digital access. There are also optional questions to be included depending on context based on the Washington Group Questions (disability), migratory status, HIV status and income level of the household.

The domains on self-confidence and esteem, personal freedom, and leadership and influence are well placed to measure changes in girls' voice, agency and leadership. However, this tool is not set up to measure gender-transformation. As a tool which only looks at changes at an individual level, it is not able to capture whether there are more structural changes occurring due to an intervention. The Integrated Adolescent Girls programme is also planning to use the GEI to track changes in empowerment of adolescent girls.

⁹² No others details have been provided about other forms of disaggregation by age, or other identity characteristics

Interviewees noted barriers to doing more on MER of gender-transformative programming included a lack of necessary skills, a lack of capacity within small evaluation teams, short funding periods, and the cost involved with setting up more complex MER systems.

Embedding evaluations of gender transformative programming and resourcing them

Evaluation documents were shared for the CASH Plus programme, Stawisha Maisha nutrition programme and GRREAT. **Only the GRREAT evaluation documents had a strong focus on evaluating gender transformative programming.**

The GRREAT midline assessment includes a 60-page Gender Assessment which assesses four GRREAT interventions against UNICEF's gender equity continuum, including an assessment against the different levels of the socio-economic model (Girls' Skills, Agency & Empowerment; Gender Norms & Inequalities; Family & Community Mobilisation; Systems and Services; Policy & Structural Change, and Institutional Partnerships; Addressing Masculinities & Engaging Men and Boys). The assessment is based on a desk review of programme documents, a three-day [Gender-Transformative Accelerator](#) workshop with technical experts from UNICEF Headquarters and UNFPA Headquarters, 41 key informant interviews conducted with stakeholders working on the GRREAT initiative, and 30 focus groups with rights-holders and duty-bearers in Tanzania. Comprehensive qualitative analysis was conducted, with key themes and content mapped out for each of the four interventions across the six levels of the socio-ecological model, and a score (1 = gender unequal, 5 = gender transformative) was assigned for each intervention at each level of the socio-economic model. These scores were averaged to determine each intervention's final placement on the gender equity continuum.

All four GRREAT interventions (1) Training and mobilization of community health workers, 2) Youth Peer Education, 3) Adolescent and youth friendly health services, 4) Life skills training for teachers) were determined to be operating at the gender responsive (score = 4) level, with different levels of the socio-ecological model scoring from gender aware (score = 3) to gender transformative (score = 5).

Sustainability

EQ 8 To what extent are the positive changes and effects of gender transformative programming on adolescent girls' leadership and agency sustainable at the national level, and/ or likely to be scaled up by government, or civil society?

Programme sustainability strategies

Several examples were found of programmes with sustainability strategies, although the strategies were not shared for the desk review. Evidence was found that the Integrated Adolescent Girls programme has included a focus on sustainability after the 2-year programme from the outset. There are plans to undertake a lessons learned study, which will include answering "Can the model be replicated and scaled up using government system in other areas?", as well as collaborating with other UN agencies to replicate the programme model and to build capacity for parenting programmes that contribute to the national "*Familia Bora, Taifa Imara*" parenting framework and can be replicated easily and cost-effectively.

The close-out report of the 2gether4SRHR programme reflects on the measures which were adopted to ensure transitioning of responsibilities and for sustainability. These included strong engagement with the regional government and contribution to regional priorities, and working with local NGOs to build their capacity to deliver programmes more effectively to support the regional government to achieve positive outcomes for adolescents and young people. However, it is also important to note

that the programme was only implemented in Tanzania for 9-months, which is a very short timeframe to be able to sustain transformative outcomes after project close.

Systems and partnerships to build ownership, capacity and resources to support government scale up or take up by other partners

The GRREAT midline assessment includes a standalone 68-page Scalability Assessment which analyses the scalability of four interventions. Aware of the risks to sustainability which can be posed when donor-funded programmes come to an end, the assessment is intended to inform stakeholders' understanding of what it would entail to take these interventions sustainably to scale in Tanzania. The assessment is intended to have policy implications, informing the future work of the Government of Tanzania, the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, and partners like UNICEF and UNFPA on SRHR and nutrition in Tanzania.

The Scalability Assessment finds that there are strong enabling factors to drive the scale-up of interventions, for example adolescent issues are increasingly important on the national and international agenda. System strengthening is at the centre of each intervention's approach and is recognised as a key component of planning for scale up.

Interviewees also gave evidence that the GRREAT programme is taking steps to ensure sustainability. The GRREAT programme has been working closely with local government since the start of the programme. For example, the Young Peer Educators who have been trained under the GRREAT programme are now reporting to the local government and engaging in community roles. Health facilities have changed their operations to be more adolescent friendly after engaging with the GRREAT programme, for example by extending their opening hours, and this is likely to be sustained after the programme closes.

The EAGL programme also has elements of sustainability and scale up of gender-transformative programming in the education sector. EAGL is in line with the government's education sector plan (2022-2027); the revised draft Education and Training Policy and revised education curriculums. EAGL is also linked to the 2021 Re-entry Policy Guidelines (Government Circular 02 of 2021, and Guidelines) for the re-entry of students that dropped out of school, who are often girls due to pregnancy.

The TUSEME ('Let's Speak Out') programme was founded in 1996 by the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and was taken forward by various funders (including UNICEF TCO) over the years and expanded across the region, before closing in 2015. TUSEME was a school-based gender and empowerment peer education and skills building with a key objective of promoting equitable participation between boys and girls through affirmative action for developing leadership skills for girls (girls' voice, agency and leadership). An interviewee discussed that there were a lot of examples of the success of the TUSEME programme, and that there is currently appetite from the government for it to be restarted. An evaluation of the programme in 2015 found that it had not been scaled sufficiently and therefore it was not continued. However, now the government have asked UNICEF to redesign the programme to make it less costly and so easier for the government to sustain in the future with government funding. This is an example of UNICEF and the government working together to overcome constraints to sustainability of gender-transformative programming.

In general, a lack of resources within government was recognised by interviewees as being a challenge for sustainability. Strong relationships with government stakeholders were seen as an enabler.

Impact

EQ 9. To what extent are new or planned interventions likely to lend themselves to achieving higher level change for adolescent girls in future?

The most impactful gender-transformative approaches or models

In terms of different approaches to gender transformative outcomes, the GRREAT Promising Practices report (part of the midline assessment) highlights six promising practices being implemented under GRREAT which show successful outcomes that can be documented, shared widely for potential adoption by others, and used for advocacy to support scale up.

The six promising practices identified are:

1. **The girls' empowerment index (GEI):** This is a form of measuring girls' empowerment under the GRREAT initiative across seven domains (formerly ten for the baseline assessment). The GEI allows evaluators to measure girls' empowerment effectively and measure change across a programme effectively and clearly. The methodology and the method by which empowerment is expressed is easily replicable across similar programmes. It includes proxies for girls' voice, agency and leadership.
2. **Multisectoral approach:** With various inputs, objectives and stakeholders spanning several sectors, the multisector approach seeks to address the myriad social determinants of adolescent health and female empowerment. Ultimately, the multisectoral approach generates positive outcomes by applying shared approaches to tackle root causes of health and empowerment, and working across the supply and demand chain for adolescent sexual and reproductive health rights health services. These outcomes are underpinned by an ability to draw on the strengths of different partners and agencies, and a strong political buy-in from key, complementary government ministries.
3. **Engaging with parents and caregivers** is a promising practice as it leverages their influence and role as change agents and serves to challenge harmful norms. This has led to improved parenting practices, including increased listening and communication between parents and children, increased awareness of the fact that boys and girls deserve equal opportunities, and strengthened understanding on Violence Against Children and Gender-Based Violence.
4. **Economic empowerment approaches:**
 - a. GROW leadership training and associated Youth Savings Loans Associations (YSLAs) garnered significant external interest and recognition. The focus on marginalised 15-19 girls and the integrated approach at the intersection of income-generating activities, innovation, and digital skills led to a positive mindset shift, with increased adolescents' confidence in their own capabilities and capacities. Adolescent girls were empowered to develop promising solutions to adolescent sexual and reproductive health and nutrition challenges, and the formation of YSLAs led to life changing impacts and economic empowerment.
 - b. Integrating livelihoods (exemplified by the menstrual health and hygiene capacity building approach) focuses on empowering vulnerable youth through training them on the production of reusable sanitary pads. It is a particularly promising approach, with factors contributing to its success including cost sharing with the government, the involvement of men and boys, and its unique positioning within the national market. In the mainland, this intervention has led to the empowerment of out of school adolescents and awareness raising on menstrual health and hygiene amongst duty bearers and boys.
5. **Investment in boys to support girls' empowerment** has led to improved boys' knowledge and sense of responsibility on sexual and reproductive health issues,

and an improved awareness of gender inequalities and harmful gender norms. The involvement of boys was particularly successful when local authority figures including community leaders and teachers were encouraging their participation, and when they participated in activities that presented opportunities for them, such as livelihood activities.

6. **The pairing of YPEs and community health workers / community health volunteers** is an initiative to support adolescents to engage in health seeking behaviour and access health and other social services in their community. The pairing supports community health by both stimulating demand for services, offering positive environments for health consultations, and creating effective referral pathways for adolescents. The pairing is also having positive outcomes for YPEs, who are benefitting from the flow of information and thus building capacity. What makes the pairing a promising practice is the support of health seeking behaviours among beneficiaries, addressing harmful masculinities and ultimately strengthening the demand-side of health access among beneficiaries.

An impactful approach not mentioned elsewhere which came up in two interviews was engaging with men and boys. The Gender Programmatic Review found there is still an 'ad-hoc' approach to engaging men and boys, although efforts are in process across all sectors. In the social behaviour change sector, too many programmes still deal with men and boys as 'secondary audiences'. In a society where males still hold most negotiating and decision-making powers, it is highly likely that attempts to change the narrative around gender equality are likely to fail if they remain such an audience.

The GRREAT midline Gender Assessment found that the Youth Peer Education Programme (a GRREAT intervention) is transformative in its work to engage men and boys, doing so beyond their traditional roles and evidentially influencing attitudes among men and boys on matters like family planning. The Learning package for teachers on life skills is also engaging men and boys to tackle norms and perceptions around what work should be completed by boys and girls, emphasising, for example, that housework should not be the sole responsibility of women.

The interviews further identified that boys have been successfully engaged in the GRREAT programme to understand their role in ending GBV, teenage pregnancies and to support their peers on menstrual hygiene. They are said to be role models in their communities, and they encourage their peers to respect girls. In order to avoid backlash from boys, lessons give space for boys and girls to reflect on gender norms and whether these are right or wrong. In this way, boys and girls to come to their own conclusions, rather than feeling like they are being told to think about gender in a certain way. The GRREAT programme is engaging with 10-19 year olds, and it is not clear whether the age of boys within this age bracket has any bearing on the success of engaging with men and boys.

CONCLUSIONS & CONSIDERATIONS

At TCO, girls' voice, agency and leadership is not necessarily recognised as the central approach to gender-transformative programming, but instead is one important element, along with others across the socio-ecological model (e.g. engaging with men and boys, working with communities etc.). The GRREAT programme is a particularly strong example of a programme with gender-transformative elements across the socio-ecological model.

Considerations for TCO to continue to strengthen their gender-transformative work are:

- Ensure that adolescent girls are not just consulted, but also meaningfully engaged at all stages of the policy and programme cycle.
- Strengthen coordination with other UN agencies on adolescent girls and gender-transformative approaches.

- Consider additional training for staff and partners on gender-transformative approaches, focusing on operationalisation.
- Prioritise resources for gender-transformative programming, and ensure that budgets are tagged appropriately and consistently. Consider tracking spend on age-disaggregated gender transformative programming.
- Continue to get the basics right on monitoring and reporting gender (i.e. collecting sex and age disaggregated data) whilst also scaling up strong approaches to MER. For example, consider replicating the GRREAT midline assessment for other programmes (including the gender assessment and scalability assessment) and continue strengthening the Girls' Empowerment Index for use on other programmes and in other contexts (whilst recognising that it only looks at changes at an individual level and therefore is not set up to measure gender-transformation in its entirety).
- Continue to work closely with government partners on sustainability strategies, and embed these from the design stage.
- Scale-up the promising approaches to gender-transformative programming identified on the GRREAT programme, and continue documenting and sharing learning on what works for gender-transformative programming.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. List of Documents Reviewed

1. UNICEF Tanzania (2018) Gender Strategy
2. UNICEF (2021) Gender Equality Promising Practices in UNICEF Programming in Tanzania
3. UNICEF Tanzania (2021) EAGL proposal
4. Ruddy (2018) Stawisha Maisha baseline
5. Kajula (2021) Stawisha Maisha endline review
6. Stawisha Maisha Design for PSSN II: scaling up coverage, intensifying impacts
7. UNICEF - With and for adolescent girls, PPT
8. Integrated Adolescent Girls Programming Proposal Tanzania
9. BUDGET: Integrated Adolescent Girls Programming Proposal Tanzania
10. The 2gether 4SRHR Programme: Tanzania Close-Out Report
11. UNICEF Office of research (2018) CASH PLUS Model: Baseline Report
12. UNICEF Office of research (May 2020) CASH PLUS Model: Midline Report
13. CASH PLUS - round 3 report (December 2020)
14. Adolescent girls programme - Quarterly update May 2023
15. JOINT UN SRHR PROPOSAL
16. JSF-ESA Workplan 2021
17. GRREAT baseline report (2020)
18. GRREAT Programme Brief
19. GRREAT Project Proposal for Global Affairs Canada (2017)
20. GRREAT Project Proposal - Annex 3 Gender Analysis (2017)
21. GRREAT Performance Measurement Framework (2019)
22. GRREAT Baseline brief
23. GRREAT midline gender assessment (2022)
24. GRREAT Promising Practices (2022)
25. GRREAT Scaleability Assessment (2022)
26. Gender Transformative Programming in Tanzania (2023)
27. Gender Review Report (March 2023)
28. EPRI (2023) Investment case for the expansion of Stawisha Maisha and Ujana Salama
29. Children and Young People Consultative Meeting Report to Improve National Education Curriculum, 02-03 February 2022
30. UNICEF Tanzania Adolescent Framework infographic
31. Children and Young People Consultative Forum To Provide Comments And Opinions on the Review of the National Educational Curriculum, Edema, Morogoro.
31. Children, Youth and Teachers Consultation In Mbalizi – 23rd July 2021
32. Annual Report for EAGL 2022-2023
33. GRREAT Midline Report
34. GRREAT Midline Assessment for validation PPT
35. GRREAT Brochure 2020
36. GRREAT Y1 Annual Narrative Report May 2020
37. GRREAT Y2 Annual Narrative Report May 2021
38. GRREAT Y3 Annual Narrative Report
39. UNICEF Out of School Children Executive Summary Jan2023
40. UNICEF Out of School Children Gender Analysis Final Report Jan2023
41. Evaluation of TUSEME Programme in Tanzania
42. Girls Empowerment Index Tanzania 8th June 2023 (DRAFT)
43. ONGEA Campaign Evaluation Survey Report

CASE STUDY REPORT

Uganda

Country Case Study



CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	117
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	118
BACKGROUND	123
PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE	123
METHODOLOGY	124
KEY FINDINGS	127
CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND CONSIDERATIONS	170
ANNEXES	173

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We are also grateful to the Civil Society Organizations that are implementing partners of the UCO, namely; Trailblazers Mentoring Foundation (TMF), War Child Canada, Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL), and The Recreation Project (TRP) that coordinated some of the evaluation activities. . We further appreciate the four Adolescent Panel Members (APs) who collected data from fellow adolescents and the adolescent girls and boys that directly participated in the evaluation through Focus Group Discussions.

Lastly, the UNICEF Uganda Country Representative is highly appreciated for all the support offered to the evaluation team, through the UCO evaluation focal persons.

We hope the findings of this evaluation will facilitate improvements in Gender Transformative Programming within the UCO.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case study report represents the findings from the Uganda country case study and is not meant to be read as a standalone evaluation report and is an integral part of the UNICEF ESA regional evaluation with the objective to understand how current programming, investments and practices to invest in adolescent girls' leadership are shaping UNICEF's gender transformative programming⁹³ (GTP).

UNICEF's Gender Policy (2021–2030) commits UNICEF to working actively to remove the underlying structural barriers for gender equality, such as harmful social norms and gendered power systems, which perpetuate inequalities. UNICEF's Gender Action Plan (GAP- 2022–2025), has five goal areas. These include: (a) Quality maternal health care, nutrition, and HIV testing; (b) Gender-responsive education systems and equitable access to education for all; (c) Addressing violence against girls, boys, and women, as well as harmful practices; (d) Equitable water, sanitation, and hygiene systems; and (e) Gender-responsive social protection systems.

Evaluation Focus and Purpose

The purpose of this regional evaluation is for UNICEF ESARO to understand how current programming, investments, and practices in adolescent girls' leadership, voice and agency are shaping their gender transformative programming approach in the ESAR region.

The evaluation was conducted in 21 countries in the ESAR and focused on programs that targeted adolescent girls in both the development and humanitarian contexts. The countries where the evaluation was conducted included Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The countries selected for in-depth country case studies were Mozambique, Namibia and Uganda.

Methods

A comprehensive review of documents was undertaken to provide broad insights into GTP within the UCO. More information was obtained through consultation from Key Informants (KIs), within UNICEF, other UN partner Agencies (UN Women, UNFPA), and Government stakeholders from Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD). Other key informants included the UCO Implementing partners namely, Trailblazers Mentoring Foundation (TMF), War Child Canada, The Recreation Project (TRP) and Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL). Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with adolescent girls and boys who directly participated in the adolescent-focused interventions of the UCO. For the 21 countries, the evaluation team designed a survey tool at the regional level to generate views about the performance of GTP in the ESAR region.

Sampling

For the in-depth case study in Uganda, interventions were sampled purposively from the four UCO Programmes for in-depth analysis. These included (i) Child Survival and Development (CSD) (ii) Basic Education and Development (BEAD) (iii) Child Protection (CP) and (iv) Social Policy (SP). From the CSD programme, the interventions sampled included the Young People and Adolescent Peer Support (YAPS) model and the Group Ante Natal Care and Post Natal Care (G-ANC/PNC) model implemented by the MoH. The BEAD programme sampled interventions included the Life Skills Toolkit (LST), i-UPSHIFT and David Beckham UNICEF Fund. The Adolescent Volunteer Initiative (AVI), the Global Programme to End Child Marriage (GP-ECM), and the Joint Programme to End Female Genital Mutilation (UNJP-FGM) were sampled from the Child Protection program. From the Social Policy Programme, the Girls Empowering Girls (GEG) and the Children's Reference Group (CRG) interventions were sampled.

⁹³ Gender Transformative Programming (GTP) addresses the causes of gender-based inequalities and works to transform harmful gender roles, norms and power relations.

Performance Rating

The rating of performance for this case study evaluation includes “*large extent*, *moderate extent*, and *low extent*”. **Large extent** implies that there is credible evidence to demonstrate that a certain GTP aspect has been implemented or has been achieved. **Moderate** means that there is relatively some evidence that a GTP aspect has been implemented or achieved, while **low extent** implies that there is scanty evidence to support the implementation or achievement of a certain GTP aspect.

Summary of Findings

A detailed analysis of the adolescent programs implemented by the UCO found that to **a large extent**, the UCO is investing in adolescent voice⁹⁴, agency⁹⁵ and leadership⁹⁶ as central approaches within GTP, however; the focus, scale of implementation and achievements varied on a scale. Comparatively, the voice and leadership aspects of GTP were achieved on a much higher scale of implementation compared to “agency”. The focus on tackling the harmful gender social-cultural norms and practices varied across the different programmes, sampled for this evaluation.

Relevance⁹⁷

The UCO has to a **large extent** designed its programmes based on a thorough understanding of the country’s context, but more particularly the challenges facing adolescent girls. The challenges include among others, poverty, school dropout, limited life and employability skills, and sexual violence manifesting in child marriage, teenage pregnancy, motherhood, and forced marriages. Other adolescent challenges include higher HIV and AIDS among the youth and adolescents, and limited access to adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services, among other challenges.

The Girls Empowering Girls (GEG) social urban protection intervention; implemented in Kampala City by Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA) aims to empower vulnerable adolescent girls and boys aged 10-19 with different skills for vulnerability and poverty reduction. i-UPSHIFT social innovation and skills training approach was designed to enhance the agency of the Out-Of-School (OOS) adolescent girls and boys for employment creation and social community development.

The Life Skills Toolkit (LST) was designed to enhance the life skills of the adolescent girls and boys, while the Adolescent Volunteer Initiative (AVI) has a critical mass of peer leaders and advocates that voice out the concerns and issues affecting adolescent girls in different contexts of the country. The Young People and Adolescent Peer Support (YAPS) and the Group Ante Natal Care and Post Natal Care (G-ANC/PNC) models implemented by the MoH were designed to positively respond to adolescent needs and challenges related to HIV and AIDS, maternal health and nutrition respectively. An in-depth analysis of these interventions and others discussed subsequently in the main body of the report, reveals the UCO’s commitment to supporting the young people to address these needs.

Coherence⁹⁸

The UCO has to a **large extent** aligned its adolescent girl-focused interventions to the UNICEF Strategic Plan (2022-2025), Uganda National Development Priorities (NDP III) and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of achieving gender equality, education, and health, among others. Similarly, the UCO’s GTP interventions are guided by UNICEF Gender Action Plan 3 (2022-2025), Gender Policy (2021-2030) and UNICEF’s Adolescent Strategy, all of which guide and strongly commit to the implementation of GTP interventions by UNICEF.

⁹⁴ The ability to express views freely, and for them to be heard.

⁹⁵ The capacity to make decisions about one’s own life and act on them to achieve a desired outcome, free of violence, retribution or fear.

⁹⁶ The ability to express views freely, and for them to be heard, and their views acted upon by the relevant stakeholders.

⁹⁷ Extent to which country projects or programmes are designed to address the specific needs of adolescents.

⁹⁸ Extent to which adolescent girl focused interventions both within UNICEF or external align with UNICEF strategies and global policy commitments to support girls’ agency and leadership through gender transformative programming.

Further, the UCO subscribes to the broader United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF); a core instrument for providing a coherent strategic direction for UN development activities by all UN entities at the country level. Evidently, the UCO's adolescent programs align with UNSDCF's three Strategic Priority areas of transformative and inclusive governance, shared prosperity in a health environment, and human well-being and resilience. The Country Programme Document (CPD-2021-2025) core indicators, strategically align with those indicated in the UNSDCF for implementation. At the regional level, the UCO Adolescent programs are aligned with UNICEF ESARO regional strategies in the different sectors of education, health, and social protection, among others.

Effectiveness⁹⁹

The UCO is on course to achieving the objectives of GTP. **Largely**, there have been concerted efforts by the UCO to mainstream GTP in its interventions, also reflected in the Country Programme Document (CPD, 2021-2025)-in outcomes 3 and 4. At the programme implementation level, however, the GTP elements are mainstreamed on a varying scale. Comparatively, the Child Protection (CP) programme presents more strengths in its focus on GTP compared to other programmes.

With an in-depth analysis of the programmes, their contribution to enhancing the voice, agency and leadership of adolescent girls within GTP, was rated **moderate overall** due to variations in the implementation of Gender Transformative (GT) aspects, among the different programme. Comparatively, the aspects of voice and leadership are more pronounced in implementation and achievement, compared to "agency". The UCO needs to design strategies that tackle the harmful gender, socio-cultural norms, and practices, across all programmes, as a priority.

Variations in conceptualization of the GTP as a concept was observed among some of the UCO staff and IPs. Further, prioritization of GTP was found to vary among the joint strategic partners the UCO worked with. Different partners have different priorities and mandates in programme delivery, and this makes it difficult to spontaneously rally their interests to the current trend in GTP.

The UCO has designed adolescent-friendly approaches that have facilitated effective adolescent participation in the GTP interventions within the UCO. The approaches include; (i) Empowerment of adolescent girls focusing on the 21st-century skills development (ii) Agency enhancement through volunteer-led action, (iii) Deliberate programming to address the specific needs of adolescent girls, and (iv) Systemic meaningful engagement through establishment of structures adolescent girls and boys to participate in decision making. The Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) approach is cross cutting in all programmes. All adolescent and GTP interventions within the UCO are implemented using a cross-sectoral approach with teams from different programmes supporting others to achieve adolescent goals and outcomes.

Efficiency¹⁰⁰

About resource allocation for adolescent girls' programming, to **a large extent**, the UCO has been more intentional about adolescent girl programming. Substantial resources have been allocated for the implementation of adolescent programmes, though there is no specific budget line item for GTP. For the Country Programme 2016 – 2020, the UCO delivered gender-focused interventions amounting to approximately USD 164,536,362 (49% of overall funds). Of this, USD 92,788,663 was geared at catalysing efforts towards adolescent development and participation. Similarly, for the current Country Programme 2021 – 2025, the Country Office as of June 2023, had invested approximately USD 112,770,146 (54% of overall funds utilized) to gender-focused interventions. Of this, USD 95,374,531 is geared towards strengthening adolescent development and participation.¹⁰¹ The UCO has demonstrated their efficient use of resources through the demonstration of the current cross-sectoral GTP results impacting positively on adolescent girls and boys.

⁹⁹ Extent to which UNICEF girls focused programmes and interventions mainstream gender transformative programming to contribute to increasing voice, agency, and leadership in the current planned programmes.

¹⁰⁰ The extent to which the resources were cost effectively utilized to achieve GTP results within the UCO.

¹⁰¹ UNICEF Insight Reports (2016-2023), Global Data Integrated system.

Monitoring and Evaluation

To a **large extent**, the UCO's M&E system addresses GTP indicators in the system at different levels. Analysis of the outcome indicators in the CPD (2021-2025) reveals that GTP outcomes were prioritized; reflected in outcomes 3 and 4, and the respective output indicators. At the programme level, the GTP indicators are mainstreamed but on a varying scale, with some programmes having more clearly defined indicators than others. This obtaining, the M&E section of the UCO has a mechanism for monitoring, reporting, and evaluating both the CPD and programme indicators for evidence building.

Sustainability of GTP interventions

The extent of sustainability varied among the different implementing partners of the UCO. The Government sectors are likely to sustain the GTP outcomes invented by the UCO due to the institutionalization approach. The sampled key UCO collaborative sectors of education, health and social protection, have GTP interventions that have been mainstreamed in their relevant departments and programmatic areas.

Sustainability by CSOs / IPs of the UCO, is likely to be minimal due to heavy reliance on UNICEF funding for implementation of GTP interventions. The IPs that were interviewed revealed that none had innovatively developed more projects or leveraged more resources to continue with the implementation of GTP interventions. None of the four IPs had either a sustainability plan or exit strategy for the projects they have implemented with UNICEF support. This therefore puts the sustainability of GT results by the IPs at risk.

Further, the evaluation hardly accessed a documented strategy in the UCO, which will aid in consolidating all the GTP results, and best practices realized from the implementation of GTP interventions.

Impact

1. The joint effort by UNICEF thematic programme officers from BEAD, CP, SP and the SBC teams, among others, in collaboration with Government sectors like the MoES (Gender Unit), contributed to the teenage mothers and pregnant girls to re-enrol back into schools. UNICE supported the MoES to develop the National Guidelines for school re-entry of teenage mothers, and the management and prevention of teenage pregnancy in school settings. Presently, these guidelines have contributed to a positive belief that pregnant girls and child mothers can be rendered another opportunity, to pursue their education careers¹⁰².
2. The life skills and the mentorship approaches delivered through the UCO programmes, have built confidence and self-esteem among adolescent girls and boys. In the FGDs and through adolescent panel member, the adolescents testified to this result.
3. There has been increased awareness about child violence, and the negative impacts of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child marriage among adolescents and targeted communities. This has been through the UNICEF and UNFPA Global Programme to End Child Marriage (GP-ECM), the UN Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation (UNJ-FGM) and the UN Spotlight Initiative.
4. Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) interventions, which include awareness creation, and provision of Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) facilities in schools, have gained prominence. In most of the Ugandan societies, MHM presents as an issue that "cannot" be discussed in public, however, the UCO has supported interventions to make MHM known to the public and the support needed for adolescent girls. The development of the draft MHM Strategic Plan in the MoES was supported by the UCO.

GTP Implementation Gaps in the UCO.

¹⁰² MoES KI respondent.

The key gaps to GTP observed in the UCO include the varied understanding of the GTP concept among some of the UNICEF staff and the collaborating stakeholders. Further, there is varied mainstreaming of GT interventions into the different programmes. The entrenched traditional cultural norms in families and societies have affected the progress of the UCO in the enhancement of agency among adolescent girls and boys. There is varied prioritization of GT outcomes for adolescent girls among the different strategic partners involved in the joint adolescent programming. While UNICEF prioritizes so, other partners have varied priorities.

Considerations for the Country Office

1. The UCO could conduct refresher GTP capacity enhancement initiatives for effective mainstreaming and implementation of GT interventions and outcomes for adolescent girls across programmes.
2. The Adolescent Development Manager could conduct programmes review (for CSD, BEAD, CP, and SP) with the respective programme staff, to reflect on the extent to which GT activities, strategies, output, and outcome indicators, are sharply designed to contribute to GT outcomes in the UCO. Measures to further strengthen the three aspects of voice, agency and leadership of adolescent girls should be central in the review.
3. Strategies to tackle the harmful gender, social cultural norms, practices, and unequal power relations affecting adolescent girls could be strengthened and implemented cross-cuttingly by all programmes and sectors supported by the UCO, e.g., education, health, child and social protection.
4. The UCO staff could strategically position themselves as agents that will influence a shift in gender programming from being ultimately responsive to transformative as well. This can be achieved through joint programming and engagement with other strategic partnerships, as evidenced by the CP programme.
5. There is need for the UCO in collaboration with the ESAR to review, analyse and allocate more targeted resources for effective implementation of GT outcomes.
6. The UCO could document a strategy for sustaining the GTP outcomes and best practices achieved by the UCO.

BACKGROUND

By mid-2021, Uganda's population was at 42.9 million. Adolescents aged 10-14 years of age constitute 14.2% of the population, while those aged 15-19 constituted 11.4%.¹⁰³ More adolescent girls (25%) than adolescent boys (11%) aged 13-17 reported experiencing sexual violence in the year 2015.¹⁰⁴ By age 15, 22.6% of females in Uganda have had sexual intercourse, whereas 53% are married by the age of 18. An estimated 25% of Ugandan teenagers become pregnant by the age of 19.¹⁰⁵

There was an increase of 22.5% in pregnancy among girls aged 10-24 years from March 2020 (80,655) when the government announced the COVID-19 lock down and June 2020 (98,810).¹⁰⁶ Teenage pregnancy among girls aged 10-19 increased from 350,000 annually from the year 2016 to 2020 (before the COVID-19 lockdown), to 378,790 by 2021-during the COVID-19 lock down. This translated into 31,565 pregnancies every month, which translated into 1,052 pregnancies daily.¹⁰⁷ Teenage pregnancy accounts for 40% of school dropouts in Uganda¹⁰⁸, while child marriages account for (28%) of Uganda's school dropouts.¹⁰⁹ In 2020 teenage pregnancy accounted for 22.3% of school dropouts among girls aged between 14 to 18 years. Only 8% of the girls that dropped out of school received a second chance to re-enrol.¹¹⁰

In the year 2016/17, out of the 2.8 million children estimated to be out of school, 1.6 million were aged 13-16, while 1.2 million were aged 17-18.¹¹¹ An estimated 41% of youth in Uganda, most girls, are not in education, employment, or training. Every fourth adolescent in Uganda is out of school.¹¹² 37% of all new HIV infections reported annually are among AGYW aged 15-24.¹¹³ Regarding life skills, about 2% of adolescents are proficient in problem-solving, and 53% can recognize the existence of a problem from one perspective and act on that to identify a possible solution. At least 19% are proficient in self-awareness, while 6% are proficient in collaboration.¹¹⁴ Adolescent girls in schools have limited knowledge of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) and have limited access to decent WASH facilities.¹¹⁵ In a study by SNV, 70% of adolescent girls indicated menstruation affecting their optimal education performance, while 77% indicated missing average of 24 school days per year.¹¹⁶

Uganda is the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa. Out of 1.7 million refugees, the majority of these are adolescents and youth.

PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

¹⁰³ Uganda Bureau of Statistics, Census and Population Projections Reports (2021).

¹⁰⁴ Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Violence against Children in Uganda: Findings from a National Survey (2015).

¹⁰⁵ Uganda Demographic Health Survey 2016/17.

¹⁰⁶ Ministry of Health Management Information System (2020).

¹⁰⁷ Ministry of Health, District Health Information System (2021).

¹⁰⁸ Ministry of Education and Sports, Sector Analysis Report (2019).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ <https://www.lasvolta.it/4048/uganda-a-disruptor-to-girls-education-the-case-of-teenage-pregnancies>.

¹¹¹ Ministry of Education and Sports Education Management Information System 2016/17, and Education and Sports Sector Analysis Report (2019).

¹¹² UNICEF Country Office, Summary of the Skills for Life and Work for Adolescents and Youths in Uganda (2021-2025).

¹¹³ 2023 MOH Spectrum estimates.

¹¹⁴ Regional Educational Learning Initiative, Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa: Uganda Report (2022); UNICEF 2 pager Life Skills Programme document.

¹¹⁵ Ministry of Education and Sports, Situational Analysis Study on Menstrual Hygiene Management in 14 districts of Uganda (2020).

¹¹⁶ The Netherlands Development Organization and IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, Study report on Menstrual Management in Uganda (2012).

Purpose

The purpose of the regional evaluation was to understand how current programming, investments, and practices to invest in adolescent girls' leadership, voice and agency are shaping UNICEF's gender transformative programming (GTP) approach in the Eastern and Southern African Region (ESAR) over the coming years. The evaluation was country-focused and used country case studies as illustrative examples to inform regional analysis about the performance of GT Programming with a focus on adolescent girls within the ESAR.

This case study is contributing with evidence to support the regional evaluation's assessment of the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of gender transformative adolescent girls-focused programming. This report presents findings from the Uganda Country Case which reviewed documents and held interviews and focus group discussions with key informants across the Country Office, including UNICEF staff, staff from UNICEF partners, and adolescent girls and boys engaged in UNICEF programming. The case study is not meant to be a comprehensive, standalone evaluation report but will be used as part of the analysis for the regional evaluation report.

While the case study note is primarily intended to be used to inform the regional report, it will be of interest to both the Country and Regional UNICEF teams as a standalone review of adolescent focused programming in Mozambique. We also hope that findings will be shared back to the adolescents, young people and partners who supported the data collection where relevant. The evaluation team will ensure regional findings are shared back with the Regional Adolescent Advisory Group.

Objectives and Scope

The specific objectives of the country case study were aligned with the overall regional evaluation objectives, and included the following;

1. To provide a preliminary assessment of UNICEF's GTP in Uganda vis-à-vis issues of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact with a specific focus on programming investing in girls' voice, agency, and leadership.
2. Explore the evidence for whether interventions currently being implemented or in the pipeline are evaluable, whether the programmes are adequately defined and their results verifiable.
3. Identify key lessons and the most impactful approaches with regards to gender transformative adolescent focused programming

The case study was conducted in Uganda, with UNICEF Country Office (UCO) and focused on interventions implemented by the UCO to enhance adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership as central approaches within GTP.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The in-depth case study for Uganda was conducted using different qualitative methods. These were adopted for purposes of generating more descriptive and in-depth information from the different stakeholders about the status of GT implementation for adolescent girls in the UCO. The strategies adopted included documents review, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with the UNICEF staff, other UN Agencies, government officials from the sampled ministries of Education, Health, and Gender, Labour and Social Development. Other sources of information included, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with adolescent girls and boys, and Adolescent Panel (AP) interviews.

Sampling strategies

A non-probability sampling technique (purposive sampling) was adopted for the evaluation. The districts that were sampled were those with a heavy presence of adolescent programmes and GT approaches. The key informants were purposively sampled based on their designation and roles played in UNICEF GTP either directly or indirectly. The FGD and AP interview stakeholders were selected based on their direct participation in UNICEF adolescent programmes. Gender and disability inclusion considerations were made in the selection of both FGD and AP respondents from the different adolescent groups aged 10-19.

Geographical scope for Primary Data Collection

Primary data was collected both physically and virtually from the districts of Isingiro, Gulu, Amudat, Adjumani, and Kampala City. Physical interviews were conducted through FGDs by the consultant, while the AP interviews were conducted with support from older adolescents aged 16-19. Virtual interviews were conducted remotely with some of the key informants from the UCO, government officials, and other UN Agencies (UN Women and, UNFPA).

Table 1: Geographically sampled districts for the evaluation

S/N	Programme(s)	Programme interventions	Selected district(s)	Location	Type of interview
1	BEAD Programme	Life Skills Tool Kit (LST), i-UPSHIFT	Isingiro District	Western Uganda	AP interviews, key Informant Interviews (KIIs)
			Gulu District	Northern Uganda	FGD, KIIs
2	Child Survival and Development (CSD)	YAPS & G-ANC/PC Models	Kampala	Kampala	KII KII
3	Child Protection (CP)	Adolescent Volunteer Initiative (AVI)	Adjumani District	West Nile	KIIs
			Amudat	Karamoja sub region	KIIs
4	Social Policy	GEG & CRG	Kampala	Kampala City	AP, FGDs, KII

Data Collection Tools

- Documents Review:** UNICEF Country Office provided programme documents that focused on adolescent-girl programming. These included the CSD, SBC, BEAD, CP, SP and M&E documents. Other documents were accessed from the UNICEF website links. These were reviewed to analyse aspects of voice, agency, and leadership integration within adolescent girl programming in the UCO. Reports of the Government and CSOs were reviewed, in addition to the documents shared by the UCO, to facilitate the in-depth analysis of the relevance and alignment of UNICEF GTP to the country context and adolescent needs.
- Key Informant Interviews:** KIIs were conducted with six key programme thematic staff from the UCO. Three government officials from the Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) were also interviewed. Other respondents included the four UNICEF implementing partners, namely; War Child Canada in Isingiro District (one KI), and the Recreation Project (TRP) in Gulu and Adjumani Districts (two KIIs).

Other implementing partners (IPs) included Trailblazers Mentoring Foundation (TMF) implementing UNICEF programmes in Kampala, Amudat and Kaabong Districts in Karamoja sub region (three KIIs), and Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL) operating in Kampala District (1 KI). Two other key informants were interviewed from UN Women and UNFPA operating in Karamoja sub region, including (Amudat and Kaabong Districts) where joint programmes with UNICEF have been implemented. These include the European Union Spotlight Initiative, and the Global Programme to End Child Marriage (GP-ECM) and the Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation (UNJP-FGM). A total of 18 key informant interviews were conducted in total.

3. **Adolescent Panel Interviews:** this was a youth friendly approach that was adopted to ensure participation of adolescents in the evaluation. AP members comprising of three girls and one boy, were identified with the help of the UCO and their IPs to support in primary data collection from fellow adolescents. A criterion for identification and selection of such adolescents was developed by the consultants and agreed upon with the UCO. This included history of participation in UNICEF programmes, age (older adolescent 16-19 years), education background and basic skills in interviewing. The young people were given an orientation of the evaluation by the national consultant, using the manual developed by the consultants.

The adolescents were trained on data collection tools and ethical and safeguarding principles of the consulting firm, SDDirect. Two girls were identified from the GEG intervention in Kampala City, while another one girl and one boy were identified from Nakivale Refugee Settlement camp in Isingiro District from i-UPSHIFT intervention. Each of the adolescents interviewed two fellow adolescents identified by themselves: (six girls and two boys in total), over a period of two-four weeks using a phased interview approach. The APs were conducted in Kampala city and Isingiro District.

4. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** these were conducted by the National Consultant with adolescent girls and boys aged 10-19 as respondents. In Kampala city, one FGD was conducted with ten adolescents (five girls and five boys), while another was conducted in Gulu District with eight adolescents (four girls and four boys). All FGDs were conducted by the national consultant.

Table 2: A summary of stakeholders interviewed

In-country stakeholders	How	Total No. respondents
Adolescent girls and boys participating in UNICEF programmes	Peer interviews - 4 Adolescent Panellists interview - 2 young people each	8 (6 girls, 2 boys)
	2 FGDs - approx. 10 people	18 (9 girls, 9 boys)
Civil society organisations partners	4 KIIs	7 (4 women, 3 men)
Government representatives	3 KIIs	3 (1 woman, 2 men)
UNICEF Country Team	6 KIIs	6 (4 women, 2 men)
Other United Nations agencies where relevant (joint programmes partners)	2 KIIs	2 (women)
Total number of respondents		44

Data Analysis

Qualitative data was coded based on the planned themes and emerging findings. A comparative analysis of findings per theme was made by the consultant from all the information sources. This facilitated data authentication that has been presented in this report. Findings have been presented in tabular form, in graphs, in text and in direct voice quotations.

Ethical and safeguarding considerations

All evaluation and research work are guided by ethical principles. The principles translate into several practical measures to ensure confidentiality, informed consent, data protection, and reduction of direct and indirect risks to interviewers and interviewees. This evaluation was informed by the general ethical and safety considerations for research, including the SDDirect safeguarding policy. Other safeguarding practices were adopted from the UNEG Ethical Guidelines, WHO's ethical research guidance,¹¹⁷ and UNICEF Ethical Guidelines and standards for research and evaluation. Other safeguarding documents included Ethical Research Involving Children and the UNICEF Guidance on Gender Integration in Evaluation.

The national consultant who conducted the data collection for this case study participated in an online workshop, which covered all ethical principles and procedures for the evaluation. The training included SDDirect's safeguarding policies, including how to report suspected safeguarding concerns encountered during the evaluation. This too included guidance on required actions to be taken if a participant disclosed an incident of violence and/or abuse either before or during the interview.

A data collection manual was produced for the adolescent panel members to guide them in their data collection. These too received training and support from the National Consultant to ensure their safety and adherence to ethical and safeguarding principles and processes during data collection.

Regional Ethical clearance was obtained for the evaluation, permitting primary data collection in the three case study countries. Further, ethical clearance from an accredited institutional research board (IRB) - Makerere University Social Sciences Research Ethical Committee (MAK SS REC) was sought and obtained. The Evaluation protocol along with the ethical clearance was also submitted to the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology for approval and Registration. Consent was sought from all respondents (both adults and adolescents)-through the signing of consent forms prior to conducting any interview.

Confidentiality was observed during data collection, information analysis and reporting. Participation in interviews by all respondents was voluntary and was based on informed consent. Personal information has been treated confidentially, and the privacy and anonymity of participants upheld during this report drafting.

KEY FINDINGS

The Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2022-2025 recognizes that harmful gender, social and cultural norms, and practices, have often affected adolescent girls' empowerment and wellbeing. As such, UNICEF's global Adolescent Strategy 2022-2025, situates UNICEF's work with and for adolescent girls, by addressing the critical importance of dismantling the power structures, institutions, and dynamics that hold adolescent girls back. The Strategy centres girls' voice, agency and leadership in effectuating change, alongside increasing access to quality services.

¹¹⁷ See UNEG Code of Conduct for UN evaluation (2008) and WHO (2016) Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Intervention Research on Violence Against Women and UN Protocol on SEA.

Overarching question

Evaluation Question (EQ) 1. To what extent are ESAR Country Offices investing in adolescent voice, agency, and leadership as a central approach within this gender transformative programming?

Gender Transformative Programming according to UNICEF ESARO, is central to this evaluation. As such, it is paramount to discuss its constituents more comprehensively to effectively guide analysis from the data collected. According to UNICEF's GTP technical note, a GT approach attempts to promote gender equality by; (i) Fostering critical examination of inequalities and gender roles, norms and dynamics, (ii) Recognizing and strengthening positive norms that support equality and an enabling environment, and (iii) Promoting the relative position of women, girls and marginalized groups and transforming the underlying social structures, policies and broadly social norms that perpetuate and legitimize gender inequalities¹¹⁸. Gender responsiveness **Gender Responsiveness** on the other hand, acknowledges and considers addressing women's and men's needs.

*In the context of this evaluation, **Voice** is the ability to express views freely, and for the adolescents to be heard, while **Agency** is the capacity to make decisions about one's own life and act on them to achieve a desired outcome, free of violence, retribution or fear. **Leadership** refers to Empowerment of adolescents to exercise authority over themselves and/or others.*

To respond to the overarching question of whether the UCO is investing in adolescent voice, agency and leadership, as central approaches within GTP, it is important to take a detailed analysis of the UCO's programme structure or design. This will aid in comprehending the objectives, strategies, activities, and the output and outcome indicators, and how these relate to GTP.

Structure / Design of programming in the UCO

UNICEF Country Office operates as one "Country Programme". The UCO's programme implementation is thus guided by a well-structured guiding framework, called the CPD that was designed jointly with the Government of Uganda (GoU). The document contains details of the broader programmes currently implemented by the UCO, including the strategies and the desired outcomes. The CPD too contains a brief description of the Theory of Change (ToC), and the M&E framework to be adopted by all programmes¹¹⁹. A highly participatory midterm review and independent evaluation of the 2016–2020 country programme, including its learnings, informed the development of the current country programme.

Underpinning the UCO's work is the Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP) strategy which is a cross sectoral programme priority in the CPD. The programme interventions supporting the achievement of ADAP include the Child Survival and Development Programme (CSD), Basic Education and Development (BEAD), Child Protection (CP), Social Policy (SP) and the SBCC.

Important to note that although the CPD refers to the above as "programmes", at operational level, these are referred to as "outcomes" to be achieved by the country programme. The cross-cutting pillars of M&E, SBCC, among others, presented under "programme effectiveness", were designed to ensure that the UCO is efficiently coordinated, managed, and supported to meet quality programming standards in achieving results for children¹²⁰.

¹¹⁸ UNICEF; Technical Note on Gender Transformative Approaches in the Global Programme to End Child Marriage, Phase II; A Summary for Practitioners.

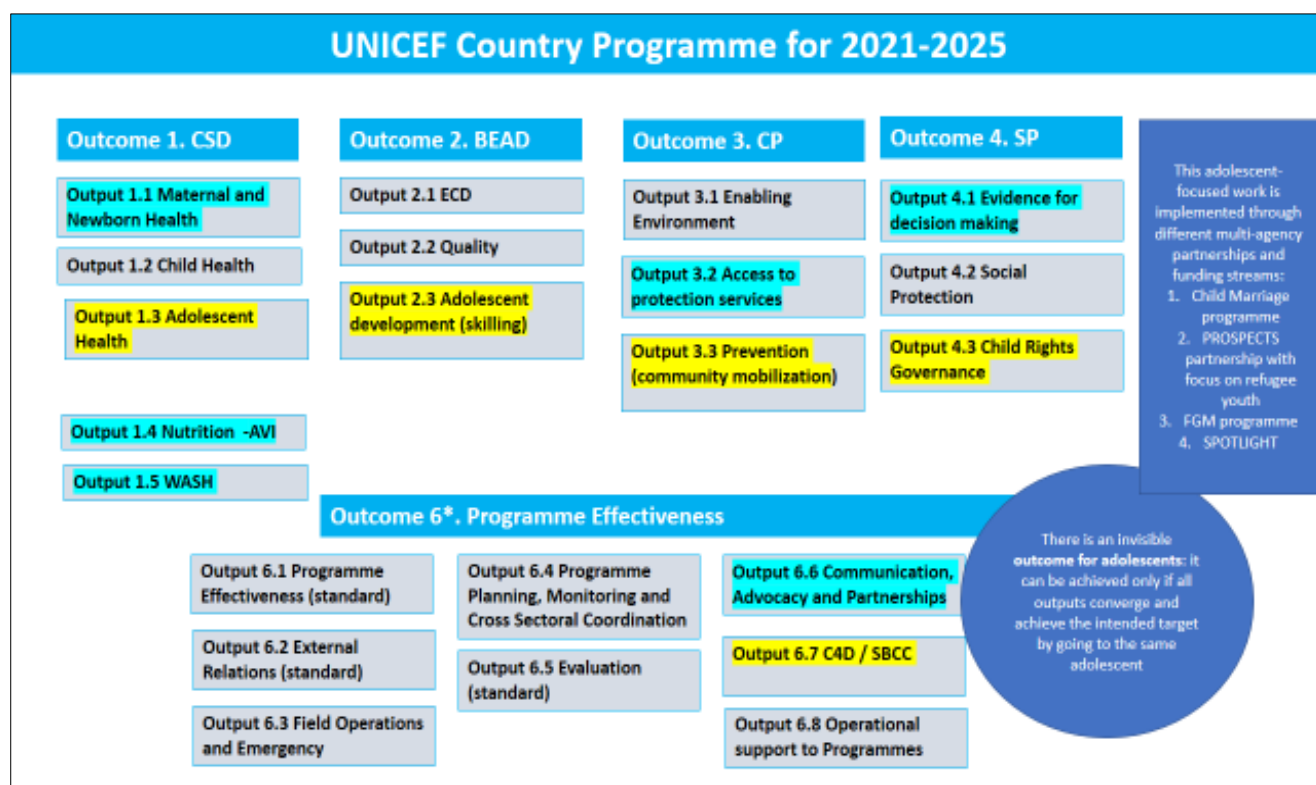
¹¹⁹ UNICEF Country Programme Document (CDP)-Uganda; 2021-2025.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

The CPD highlights the following strategic shifts in the implementation of their country programmes relevant to this evaluation; (i) A strategic prioritization of the most vulnerable children, (ii) Greater investment in Communication for Development (C4D) to promote child-supportive practices and social norms; and (iii) Stronger multisectoral support for the cross-programme priorities of ECD, adolescent development, gender, and integrated humanitarian-development responses¹²¹. In all programme components, UNICEF systematically adopts a gender-sensitive life-cycle approach and adolescent programming elements to achieve maximum scale and synergy of high-impact interventions.

In the UCO, Uganda adolescent empowerment work is led by a cross-sectoral effort including the works led by Child Protection, BEAD, Social Policy, Child Survival and Development and SBC teams.

Fig 1: current outlook of UNICEF Country Programme 2021-2025.



Source: Presentation by UNICEF Country Programme 2021-2015; Basic Education and Adolescent Programme (BEAD)

In figure 1 above, the programmes are presented as outcome areas, implemented in 29 most vulnerable and deprived districts of Uganda. Each of these have respective outputs implemented by the UCO. The outputs highlighted “in yellow and green” are those that are directly related to the GTP evaluation. On the extreme right-hand side of the figure (rectangular shape) are adolescent programmes implemented through partnerships, while the (circular shape) demonstrates the convergence in programme implementation. That is to say; outputs converge to achieve the intended target by implementing interventions around the same adolescent. A detailed description and analysis for each programme and the sampled outputs/ interventions is provided below:

Programme / Outcome 1: Child Survival and Development (CSD)-2021-2025

The aim of the programme is to ensure that by 2025, new-borns, children and adolescent boys and girls, especially the most disadvantaged and those living in humanitarian situations, have access to, use quality integrated-health, nutrition, and HIV services, in a more nurturing, protective and clean environment. In the CSD programme, the UCO commits to supporting adolescent boys and girls to

¹²¹ Ibid.

receive comprehensive prevention interventions to reduce HIV incidence and early pregnancies. Other components of CSD include a package of high-impact nutrition interventions for infants, children, adolescents and women of reproductive age.¹²²

Sampled CSD programme Outputs /Interventions

From the CSD programme, output 1.3 on adolescent health was sampled for further analysis. The interventions sampled include differentiated peer-led health and HIV service delivery models for adolescents. These include the Young People and Adolescent Peer Support (YAPS) Model, and the Group Antenatal Care and Post Natal Care GANC/PNC Model implemented by the Ministry of Health (MoH) with support from UNICEF. The models are analysed in terms of how they interact with adolescents to contribute to the Gender Transformative (GT) aspects of voice, agency, and leadership.

i. Young People and Adolescent Peer Support (YAPS) Model:

The YAPS Model was introduced in Uganda in 2018, after the recognition by the MOH that the HIV clinical cascade for adolescents and young people (10-24 years) living with HIV was lagging in national targets. By the close of 2018, about 127,000 adolescents aged 10–19 years were living with HIV in Uganda¹²³. The MoH with funding support from the Global Fund, SIDA and USAID, piloted and adopted the YAPS Model that was adapted from the Zvandiri Community Adolescent Treatment Supporters (CATS) model in Zimbabwe. The model has been adopted by MoH in the implementation of the HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment Programme for young people.

The 2018/2020 National Consolidated guidelines for preventing and treating HIV in Uganda, recommended a Peer-led approach to enhancing Adolescent HIV outcomes, premised on WHO guidance for adolescent health programming. As such, the adaptation of the YAPS Model was aimed at strengthening peer support interventions for Adolescents and Young People (AYP) living with HIV to increase their identification, linkage into care, retention, adherence and viral suppression.

This enables the engagement of AYP aged 18-22 years, to provide HIV prevention, care, treatment, and support services to their peers across the 95-95-95 fast track cascade. It also targets AYP aged 10-24 and involves an intensive capacity building and mentorship program. The intervention uses a multi-sectoral approach with strong linkages and collaboration with other line like MoGLSD, MoES.¹²⁴ The model is implemented in over 320 high-volume health facilities spread over 72 districts across the country, with the trained YAPS, helping over 25,000 AYP to improve their treatment outcomes for the HIV¹²⁵.

The current HIV programme for adolescents implemented by the MoH through the YAPS model has enabled adolescent girls to access HIV information, social protection, and care and treatment from health service providers. So far, **1141** YAPS aged 18-24 have been recruited, more than 65% of whom are girls.¹²⁶ These reach out to their peers and share HIV information on prevention, care, and treatment, including offering Psychosocial support services (PSS). The YAPS has an electronic (E-Peer) support mechanism through which they engage fellow adolescents and youths living with HIV.

On the UNICEF website¹²⁷, a story is shared of how the Gender Officer at USAID RHITES, responsible for implementing the Programme in the North Lango sub-region, worked with 89 YAPS, to support over 3,000 AYP living with HIV in 29 health facilities from 9 districts. The Officer further notes the YAPS boosts the confidence of other adolescents living with HIV and supports drug adherence¹²⁸. The UCO

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ UNICEF Country Office Annual Report 2018. Kampala: Author; 2019.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/9000-30-two-years>; accessed 7th October 2023.

¹²⁶ Government key informant.

¹²⁷ <https://www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/peer-peer-support-brings-positive-outcomes-among-adolescents-northern>; accessed 7th October, 2023.

¹²⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/peer-peer-support-brings-positive-outcomes-among-adolescents-northern>; accessed 7th Octobe, 2023.

has supported life skills training, and Social Behavioural Change strategies, among others, to enhance the effectiveness of the model.

According to a respondent from the MoH, originally, the ministry did not have a dedicated structure of adolescents to reach out to other young people, however currently, the YAPS structure has become a “game changer.” It has boosted the confidence of adolescents to live positively and survive in this challenging world. The YAPS model has been adopted by the MoES in schools and is helping young adolescents’ access HIV information, including management practices for HIV in school settings.

Analysis

The YAPS Model yielded a vibrant group of adolescents who have engaged fellow peers on HIV and its management practices. The voices of adolescents living with HIV are expressed through physical engagements and online platforms, e.g., the E-Peer support mechanism. Further, it is acknowledged that through the YAPS model, peer leaders have been “borne”, however, information is scanty about how the YAPS have been instrumental in tackling the negative beliefs and perceptions affecting adolescent girls and boys living with HIV. According to the NAFOPHANU (2020)¹²⁹ Stigma index survey, stigma and discrimination is still a challenge for People Living with HIV (PLHIV). Of the 1,398 respondents, 99.71% acknowledged that taking Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) was good but feared someone learning of their HIV status. Another 17.58% of respondents were aware of family members who made discriminatory remarks or gossip, while that of non-family members was at 26.23%¹³⁰.

ii. The Group Ante Natal Care and Post Natal Care Model (G-ANC/PNC)

In Uganda, the Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) suffer significant vulnerabilities. For instance, 17.2% of all maternal deaths are among adolescents, 60% of pregnant women attending antenatal care are AGYW, while 90% of new HIV infections among pregnant women are among AGYW. The commonest causes of mortality among AGYW are pregnancy related¹³¹. The Uganda PMTCT Impact Evaluation conducted by MoH revealed the low access to viral load testing for pregnant adolescent girls rated at 23% in the 10 DREAMS sampled districts. Other findings included sub-optimal maternal Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) adherence, and Gender Based Violence (GBV), which was associated with Mother to Child Transmission (MTCT)¹³².

Informed by some of the findings above, the MoH adopted the G-ANC/PNC Model which is linked to the DREAMS project and the YAPS Model. Ministry of Health- Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT)¹³³ program piloted the model¹³⁴ for AGYW in 33 health facilities in 21 districts of Uganda between 2018 and 2020. The main objective of the model is to provide Maternal and Child health services including PMTCT, from the antenatal period throughout breastfeeding in an adolescent and youth-friendly manner, with sufficient opportunity for information sharing and learning to improve their health outcomes. The specific objectives include (i) To improve maternal and infant outcomes among pregnant AGYWs, (ii) To reduce MTCT among HIV positive pregnant and lactating AGYWs, (iii) To reduce new infections among the HIV negative AGYWs, and (iv) To delay subsequent Pregnancy (Family planning)¹³⁵.

The Model is operated within national frameworks such as; the National Adolescent Health Framework, and the National Adolescent Health Policy Guidelines and Service Standards, among others. The model supports operationalizing the MoES Guidelines for the re-entry of pregnant and child mothers into school offering a systemic approach for adolescents to access sexual reproductive health information

¹²⁹ National Forum of People Living With HIV/AIDS Network in Uganda (NAFOPHANU) 2020; PLHIV Stigma Index Survey.

¹³⁰ Data accessed was not disaggregated by age.

¹³¹ Presentation by GANC/PNC Coordinator, Ministry of Health.

¹³² *ibid*

¹³³ *ibid*

¹³⁴ ANC/PNC Group Care is where pregnant and breastfeeding AGYW receive MCH/PMTCT health services and education in a group setting together with other peers characterized by similar gestation ages or age groups irrespective of HIV status.

¹³⁵ Responsive RH/PMTCT services for pregnant and breast-feeding Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW); Group ANC / PNC Implementation Guidance; STD/ACP-Ministry of Health Uganda (2022).

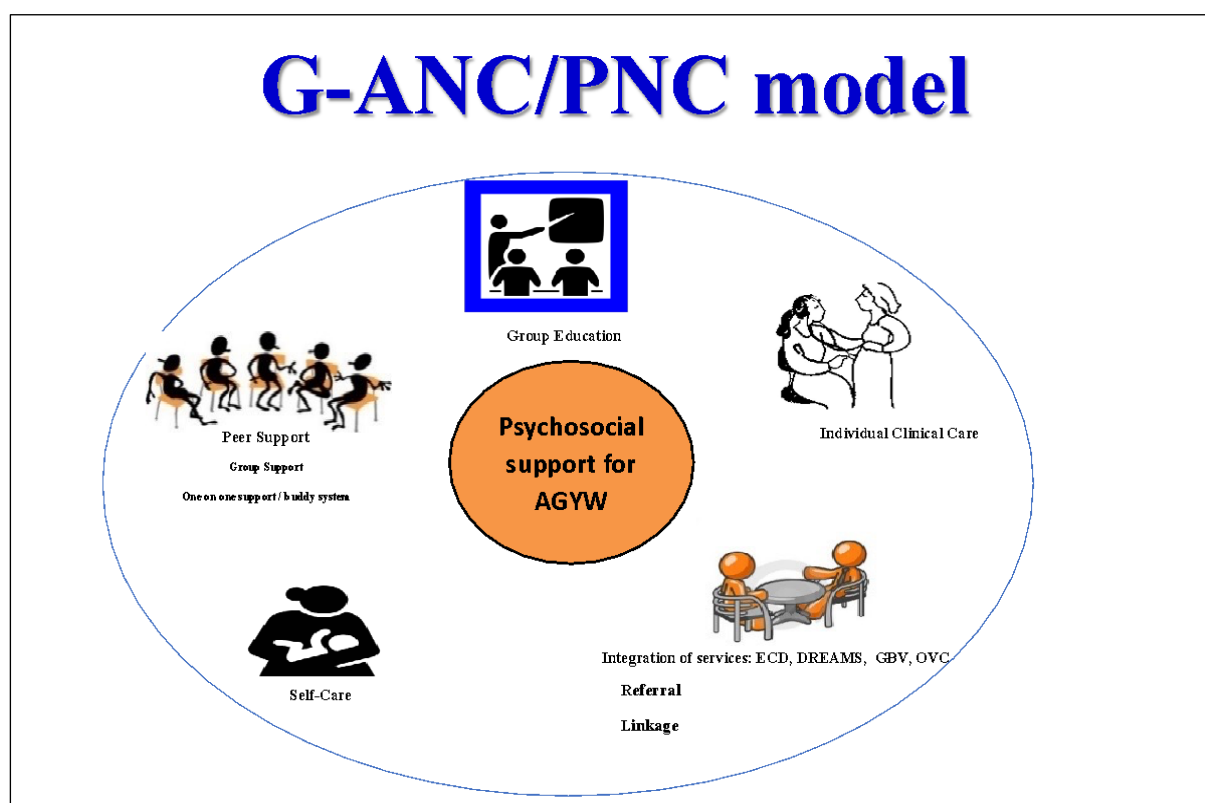
and services. The G-ANC/PNC Model embraces five general strategies in its implementation namely; peer support, group education, individual clinical care, integration of services (referral and linkage) and self-care.

Specifically, within the model is a basic service delivery mechanism designed for adolescents. This includes; (i) A designated day for adolescents to access antenatal and postnatal services, (ii) The Peer led mechanism where adolescents are supported by their peers to access and utilize services. Other approaches include; (iii) the linkage to other support services in the community based on individual needs, and (iv) Psychosocial ANC/PNC Groups that provide guidance and counselling plus other PSS services to AGYW. These groups are disaggregated by age and gestation period¹³⁶.

Operationally, at the initial individual ANC/PNC visit, all subsequent MCH/PMTCT care is provided in a group setting¹³⁷ with most of the time dedicated to facilitated discussions. Topics on behavioural change, HIV prevention and risk reduction interventions, business skills, life skills, adherence to HIV treatment, EMTCT, prevention of teenage pregnancy, Gender Based Violence (GBV) and psycho-social support, among others, are offered through the model. Some of these services are provided by the DREAMS and YAPS teams as referral and linkage services.

Individual clinical care is provided at a private space which is set up within the group setting. Upon identification of health needs, mothers are referred to receive the identified additional services. The health facility in-charge and Group ANC/PNC Focal persons utilize fora like the Quarterly Village Health Team (VHTs) meetings, outreaches, community dialogues and stakeholders' coordination meetings to introduce the model and other interventions to adolescents and other community members.

Fig 2: the G-ANC/PNC Model (MoH)



Source: Group ANC /PNC Implementation Guidance; STD/ACP-MoH Uganda (2022).

¹³⁶ Ibid

¹³⁷ HIV-positive AGYW are discharged from their groups when their babies reach 18 months of age, while HIV-Negative AGYW are discharged when their babies are 12 months old.

Among the achievements of the model include better maternal and infant outcomes among pregnant AGYW, completion of ANC attendances, and improved adherence to HIV treatment. The pairing of Peers (based on HIV status) improved retention in care, and the approach improved cohesion among AGYW and psychosocial support through experience sharing¹³⁸. From the months of October – December 2020, for instance, 286,287 AGYWs were enrolled into peer groups¹³⁹.

Analysis

The model is virtuous and clearly demonstrates the agency and leadership aspects of gender transformation. The peer leaders have transferred knowledge, skills, and provided psycho-social support and other services to fellow adolescents. The life skills strategy has enabled the AGYW to make decisions and act about their lives; a case of improving individual adherence to HIV treatment by those living positively to enhance their survivability. This noted, the model least communicates about to what extent it has been applied to benefit AGYW grappling with negative cultural and gender stereotypes about their HIV status and teenage motherhood.

Programme Outcome 2: Basic Education and Adolescent Development (BEAD)

According to the CPD, the aim of the programme is to ensure that by 2025, girls and boys 3 to 19 years of age achieve age-appropriate learning outcomes. In the context of this evaluation, the programme seeks to achieve accelerated progress by empowering adolescent girls and boys with life skills, active citizenship and/or employability skills. It is through the programme that out-of-school children and adolescents are provided with relevant, second-chance, or alternative learning opportunities. Further, the programme ensures that schools are encouraged to innovate and engage with communities to promote learning attendance and achievement (including strategies and approaches to make schools safe from violence)¹⁴⁰.

By design, one of BEAD's principles focuses on gender-responsive Social Behavioural Change (previously referred to as Communication for Development). This pillar aims to facilitate effective participation, mobilization, and engagement of stakeholders to positively shift gender, social and cultural norms affecting adolescent girls and boys in the different societies. The programme brings life to the Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP) strategy that underpins UNICEF programmes.¹⁴¹

Sampled BEAD Programme Outputs and Interventions

From the BEAD Programme, *output 2.3* on Adolescent Development was sampled for deeper analysis. The output hosts the Life Skills Toolkit (LST), School Clubs, i-UPSHIFT, and the Peer to Peer (P2P) approach that facilitates adolescent engagement with the different stakeholders. Just like the CSD, the implementation of the BEAD is cross-sectoral and deploys the SBCC and the P2P approach in its implementation. For purposes of this evaluation, the Life Skills Toolkit (LST), i-UPSHIFT approach and the David Beckham UNICEF Fund, 2018-2023 as outputs of ADAP, are analysed in detail.

i. The Life Skills Toolkit (LST)

The BEAD programme recognizes the need for life skills for adolescent girls and boys in the 21st century. UNICEF technically supported the development of the structured Life Schools Toolkit (LST) through the

¹³⁸ Responsive RH/PMTCT services for pregnant and breastfeeding Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW); Group ANC / PNC Implementation Guidance; STD/ACP-Ministry of Health Uganda (2022).

¹³⁹ Presentation by GANC/PNC Coordinator, Ministry of Health.

¹⁴⁰ UNICEF Country Programme Document (CDP)-Uganda; 2021-2025.

¹⁴¹ UNICEF Country Office Programme Strategy Note; Country Programme Document 2021–2025; Basic Education and Adolescent Development Outcome (2019)

MoES in 2012-2022.¹⁴² The Toolkit contains 7 modules and 39 sessions, and not only builds core 21-century skills, but further provides information on important topics such as violence prevention, financial literacy, SRHR, and MHM. The toolkit has been adopted by the MoES in 738 schools, and the modules are delivered through the school clubs' platform. One of the modules in the toolkit focuses on developing community projects. In this module, the young people in the clubs identify problems, make decisions and design projects or activities that they can implement in school or out of school, to exercise their agency.

In the school clubs, the adolescent girls and boys are encouraged to express their views freely (**voice**), while being listened to by the school administration, including teachers. UNICEF Country Office has taken teachers through an intensive training on adolescent centred approaches and facilitation skills. Last year in 2022, about 42,500 adolescents participated in life skills training sessions. Of those, 17,839 were girls, and 24,661 were boys.¹⁴³

UNICEF supported the MoES to develop the *National School Club Guidelines* to legitimize and operationalize the school clubs. Through FGD consultations, the adolescent girls and boys indicated achieving much of the self-esteem and confidence from the school clubs. These were beneficiaries from the GEG and i-UPSHIFT interventions.

ii. i-UPSHIFT Approach

This is a 21st-century skills approach¹⁴⁴ that UNICEF introduced in Uganda for the Out-Of-School (OOS) adolescent girls and boys. The "approach" adopted the Human-Centred Design (HCD) methodology and boot camp format for delivery of skills to adolescents. The i-UPSHIFT approach supports adolescents' agency through enabling them to identify problems at community level, and developing innovations or social enterprises that are seed funded by the UCO, to contribute to addressing the identified community problems.

I-UPSHIFT "approach" has life skills and mentorship components integrated into its design. The first mentorship programme takes two weeks, while the 2nd takes place over two months. It involves a four-day boot-camp where participants meet to reflect on their progress and share innovations and ideas. The "approach" provides seed funding of \$100 to adolescents to help them implement their ideas. It further provides the opportunity to showcase the young people's innovations at an annual Youth Innovations Summit. The best team receives between USD 500-1000, as a second phase of seed funding to turn their idea into an income generating social innovation. The UCO works with the MoGLSD through non-formal education skilling centres, and the MoES through the Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Centres to provide vocational and employability skills to adolescent girls and boys.

Analysis

The approach was more intentional on "agency" in its design through the adoption of the social innovation model and the Human Centred Design (Design). The group enterprise strategy enhanced the "leadership" aspect; however, the enhancement of the "voice" aspect seems minimal within the approach.

iii. David Beckham UNICEF Fund, 2018-2023

The intervention is implemented in the West Nile sub region, in Adjumani district. The overall aim of the intervention is to have a well-functioning child protection system that links both the school going children

¹⁴² The Life Skills Tool Kit offers the following 10 competencies to the adolescent girls; (i) Communication and Expression, Identity and self-esteem, (iii) Leadership and influence, (iv) Problem solving and managing conflict, (v) Coping with stress and managing emotions, (vi) Cooperation and Team work, (vii) Empathy and respect, (viii) Hope for the future and goal setting, (ix) Critical thinking and decision making and (x) Creativity and Innovation.

¹⁴³ UNICEF Country Office Basic Education and Adolescent Development Programme (2021-2025); Summary of the Skills for Life and Work for Adolescents and Youths in Uganda (2021-2025).

¹⁴⁴ Programme in this case refers to a specific training that takes place within different formal and non-formal spaces for both in-school and out-of-school adolescents.

and the communities where they live. Such a system is envisaged to help children go back and stay in school and have a well-resourced and safe protective school environment within the community. The project connects well with the community role is adolescent transformation.

Output 3 of the programme is to ensure that community members (including religious/cultural leaders) parents, guardians and caregivers have adequate knowledge that influences a positive attitude towards girls' education. These are further trained to have knowledge of how to support adolescent girls to stay in school. The project has 18,667 adolescents as direct beneficiaries (70% girls and 30% boys).¹⁴⁵

As part of the strategies for addressing the harmful gender and social-cultural barriers facing adolescent girls in accessing formal and non-formal education opportunities, the UCO supported the rollout of adolescent-led peer-to-peer campaigns. The UCO 150 (69 girls and 81 boys) as adolescent peer advocates to support in engaging fellow adolescents and their caregivers about the importance of education.

The campaigns aimed to help out-of-school adolescents, especially child mothers, to go back to school or join other alternative learning platforms. UNICEF trained the adolescent peer advocates in Social Behavioural Change, Peer-to-Peer (P2P) approach, and adolescents led the peer messaging for the programme.

The adolescent peer advocates were assigned to engage fellow adolescents with the help of district officials who were also trained on how to conduct effective back-to-school campaigns. As a result of the P2P 'Go Back to School' campaign, 1,914 (913 boys and 1001 girls) were profiled for return to schools and joining alternative education programme. Of these, 914 were child mothers, 87 were pregnant girls, 793 were boys who got married, and 120 were boys who dropped out of school for other economic reasons.¹⁴⁶

Worthy to note is that the implementation of BEAD has been cross sectoral and has utilized similar strategies of adolescent development and participation, the P2P, and SBC to achieve the three aspects of voice, agency, and leadership in varying magnitudes.

Analysis

Ultimately, the BEAD programme was designed to achieve age-appropriate learning outcomes (UNICEF, CPD 2021-2025), and equip adolescents with 21st century skills, but not to achieve gender transformative outcomes as a priority. This noted, the programme is acknowledged for implementing strategies for achieving the GTP aspects of voice, agency, and leadership, however, the scalability of the "agency" strategies is required. Evidently, the FGD interactions with the adolescents that benefitted from the LST and i-UPSHIFT, revealed limitations regarding decision-making at both family and societal levels. The adolescents indicated that they were freer to make and implement decisions and act on them at the school and group levels, compared to family and societal levels.

Programme / Outcome 3: Child Protection (CP)

The aim of the programme is that by 2025, children in Uganda will be free from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation, including harmful practices. The programme seeks to achieve accelerated progress by ensuring that: children, their parents, duty-bearers and peers are more aware of their rights and obligations, are able to report violations and are knowledgeable about how to access child-protection services.¹⁴⁷ The programme further aims to ensure that parents practice positive parenting and are responsive to child-protection threats. It seeks to have communities that are intolerant of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, and build a strong social movement against it. The CP prioritizes the key child-protection services in the sectors of health, education, Justice, Law and Order (JLO, and social welfare, that should be made more child-friendly, accessible and linked¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴⁵ Progress report to the UK National Committee for UNICEF / David Beckham UNICEF fund (2023).

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ UNICEF Country Programme Document (CDP)-Uganda; 2021-2025.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

Sampled CP programme Outputs / Interventions

From the CP programme, two outputs were sampled for analysis. These included *output (3.2) of access to protection services and output (3.3) on prevention*. The priority interventions for analysis included the Volunteer Action Initiatives (AVI) which advocates for children's rights and end to violence against children, and the joint UNICEF interventions that include the Global Programme to End Child Marriage (GP-ECM), and the UN Joint Programme to End Female Genital Mutilation (UNJ-FGM).

i. The Adolescent Volunteer Initiative (AVI)

UNICEF Country Office seeks to achieve programming with and for adolescents. Critical to this goal is enhancing adolescent participation in the UNICEF programming cycle and in activities that contribute directly or indirectly to their well-being. ADAP hosts the Adolescent Volunteer Initiative (AVI) - an adolescent-led group that implements its activities using the approaches of SBCC and advocacy. AVI works with a group of 10-19-year-old girls and boys, to establish an active, skilled, empowered, and dedicated force of adolescent volunteers, serving as change agents in their communities. The AVI mainly operates in West Nile, Tooro, and Karamoja sub regions. In the AVI roadmap 2021-2025, there is an objective of creating opportunities for participation and providing platforms for discussing harmful gender social and cultural norms and practices by adolescent girls and boys, which is explicitly a gender transformative objective.

One of the outcomes the AVI seeks to achieve is the promotion of adolescents' participation and civic engagement. UNICEF has so far recruited and trained more than 900 adolescent volunteers covering six districts in the West Nile sub-region (Arua, Adjumani, Yumbe, Koboko), Karamoja sub-region (Amudat, Kaabong) districts and the Tooro sub-region. Apart from Tooro, the volunteers in the six districts mentioned, presently constitute 65% girls and 35% boys; and of these, 40% (364) are between 10-14 years and 60% (536) are aged 15-19 years.¹⁴⁹

In 2021-2022, adolescent volunteers, including adolescent girls, led community action on a range of issues including disability inclusion, nutrition, specific adolescent health matters, and the return of children to school. One of the volunteers Peer2Peer actions by adolescent girls and boys focused on the return of teenage pregnant girls and child mothers back to school. Their action contributed to the implementation of the national *campaign "Protect the Girl, Save the Nation"* which was launched in December 2021 by the First Lady, Prime Minister, and the Vice President of the country. The adolescents' volunteer action contributed to the return of close to 900 teenage pregnant girls and child mothers in selected sub-counties of five Karamoja districts¹⁵⁰.

The adolescents adopted the National Multisectoral Communication for Development strategy (C4D) for engagement with fellow adolescents and the local leaders about the challenges they were experiencing. Through participation in community safety mapping exercises, intergenerational dialogues, radio talk shows, and budget conferences, the volunteers have been able to reach over 3,579 adolescents, 1,538 leaders and 1,320 caregivers with messages highlighting adolescent challenges.¹⁵¹

Analysis

The AVI has a clear demonstration of all the three gender transformative elements of voice, agency and leadership. The decision by those that had dropped out of school to go back to school was an agency issue, while the voice and leadership aspects were demonstrated through engagements by the adolescent peer leaders with different volunteers.

ii. Global Programme to End Child Marriage (ECM) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The global UNICEF/UNFPA joint programmes to end child marriage and FGM have been the flagship programme interventions in Uganda for the past 10 years. Programme interventions on child marriage

¹⁴⁹ UNICEF Country Office, Revised Road Map for the Adolescent Volunteer Initiative (2021-2025).

¹⁵⁰ Information note; ESARAO GTP Evaluation, UNICEF Country Office, 2023.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

and FGM is a priority for UNICEF and UNFPA, reflected in the organization's strategic plan for 2022–2025 at both impact and outcome levels. UNICEF contributes to Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) 5, target 3.

In Uganda, UNFPA and UNICEF, implement the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (UNJP-FGM) and the Global Programme to End Child Marriage (GP-ECM) under the leadership of the MOGLSD at the National level. Other implementing stakeholders include the District Local Governments at district and Sub Country level, in collaboration with other line ministries like MoES, MoH, the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOs), and Civil Society Organizations. This is aimed at promoting a multisectoral approach to addressing the challenges of child marriage.

The 2 global programmes are implemented cross-sectorally with BEAD, and Social and Behaviour Change teams, adopting the following strategies: (i) Empowerment of adolescent girls, (ii) Social norms change, (iii) Provision of Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health Services, (iv) Evidence generation, (v) Legal and policy dialogue and advocacy, and (vi) Partnership building and collaboration. The key interventions implemented under the 2 programmes include;

1. Community engagement and dialogues with various social networks and individuals including development of messages on gender-based inequalities, harmful gender norms and power imbalance.
2. Integrated multimedia campaigns using radios, Television (TV), and social media platforms for information dissemination and awareness raising on social norms and genders influencing FGM and Child Marriage (CM).
3. Men and boys' engagement to initiate and promote open discussions on negative gender and social norms, beliefs and attitudes that drive FGM and child marriage inherent in a patriarchal society such as Uganda.
4. Empowerment of adolescents with comprehensive and appropriate information, including training on life skills to facilitate amplification of the voice and agency of adolescents' girls, and for making informed decisions on their development including on issues relating to FGM and child marriage.
5. Generational dialogues to initiate processes of social change in keeping with communities' sense of identity and pride.
6. Gender transformative parenting to build knowledge, skills and competencies of parents and care givers on positive parenting, including social and gender norms influencing violence against children, CM, FGM and GBV.

The two global joint programmes have reached over 1,423,377 adolescent girls (aged 10-19) including those with disability and have improved their life skills and knowledge on sexuality education interventions in the programme areas. The programmes supported 40,889 girls (aged 10-19) to enrol and/or remain in primary or secondary school. A total of 2,607,058 women, men, girls, and boys have participated in group education/dialogue sessions on consequences of, and alternatives to child marriage, FGM and the rights of adolescent girls, gender roles and rights.

The participation of boys and men in educational dialogues addressing negative impacts of harmful masculinities and restrictive gender norms reached 928,000 persons. A total of 5, 485,744 individuals (boys, girls, women, and men) have been reached by mass media (traditional and social media) focusing on messaging about child marriage, the rights of adolescent girls, and gender equality.

In the MoES, UNICEF has supported large scale interventions on Child Protection through awareness creation, conducting trainings on prevention of Violence against Children in Schools (VACiS), and supporting the development of national guiding documents and strategic frameworks to end violence against children. One such is the National Strategic Plan to end violence against children in schools, and the Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response (RTRR) Guidelines to VACiS, which have been adopted in schools nationally¹⁵²

¹⁵² MoES, GTP Evaluation respondent.

Analysis

There is evidence that some of the programmes like the (UNJP-FGM) and the (GP-ECM) implemented within the CP Programme had strong intentions for implementing the most critical gender transformative output, of tackling the harmful gender, social -cultural norms and practices that affected adolescents' development. The voice, leadership and agency aspects were exercised through the peer leaders, including agency. This thus sets a strong foundation for the programme to strengthen such transformative outputs among adolescent girls and boys.

Programme / Outcome 4: Social Policy (SP)

The aim of this programme is that by 2025, child-sensitive evidence and analysis inform more effective and efficient planning, budgeting, and implementation of programmes for reducing child deprivation, inequities, and gender inequalities, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized children and adolescents. The programme seeks to achieve accelerated progress by ensuring that social protection systems are expanded and target the most vulnerable and deprived children and that child-rights advocacy, reporting and governance systems are strengthened¹⁵³.

Sampled SP programme Outputs / Interventions

From the SP programme, two outputs have been sampled for analysis. These include output (4.2) Social Protection and output (4.3) Child Rights Governance. The priority interventions for analysis include the social empowerment and protection interventions, and the child rights and advocacy rights initiatives.

i. Girls Empowering Girls (GEG) Approach

The GEG approach is the first UNICEF urban social protection approach in Uganda that directly targets adolescent girls aged 10-19, both in and out of school. The approach is coordinated by the Government of Uganda's Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). TMF and UYDEL are implementing the approach on behalf of UNICEF Country Office. The GEG approach has 3 components:

1. The mentoring component involves lead and peer mentors that pass on life skills to the adolescent girls. Each peer mentor is assigned 15-17 girls for mentoring per cohort. The mentoring takes place both at individual and group level, through both in-school and out-of-school clubs. Through regular mentoring, the girls develop social competencies for self-resilience, self-esteem, consciousness, rational decision making, and become motivated to do stay in school. From the GEG approach, a total of 810 girls completed primary school in 2022. Of these, 112 were formally out-of-school girls that were supported to return to school. The lead mentors have a mentorship manual to facilitate life skills delivery to the learners. Parents and local leaders are engaged by the lead mentors to value and support girl child education and to adopt better family care parenting practices.
2. Cash Transfers: this is non-conditional stipend financial support extended to the girls to enable them to meet their needs. Currently, there are 3000 girls registered under GEG in nine parishes, and 21 schools in Kampala City. A total of 1,453,259, 750UGX (396,199.49USD) has been distributed to date as cash transfers to the adolescent girls both in and out of school, including adolescents with disabilities (53 girls currently).
3. Referrals: this is a grievance mechanism that was developed by the project to enhance social protection for the girls. UNICEF works closely with KCCA and with the IPs to empower girls report cases of violence perpetuated against them. Different service providers in the health sector (health centres), psycho-socio support counsellors, police and courts of law work together to protect and respond to the cases of violence reported by the girls. Among the implementation approaches adopted by GEG include mentorship by trained mentors that offer

¹⁵³ UNICEF Country Programme Document (CDP)-Uganda; 2021-2025.

the life skills package, vocational skilling approach, community dialogue and parental engagement.

Analysis

The GEG approach, shows that the aspects of voice, agency and leadership were integrated in the design. The **voice** aspect was partly expressed through their school clubs and group mentorship sessions. **Agency** was expressed through making own decisions about continuing with school and initiating small income generating enterprises by a few girls using the GEG transfers. The GEG Policy Brief Roll-out (2023) included examples of girls that had initiated small business enterprises e.g., hair dressing and tailoring, to enable them to earn a living. **Leadership** for the GEG approach manifested in the girls taking up leadership positions at school level through participation in school-based advocacy activities, school clubs and the prefects' body.

Although there is a platform for voice expression, including opportunities for exercising leadership and agency in GEG, these have not been utilized maximally by the adolescent girls to advocate against the harmful cultural practices and social norms that affect them. The platforms and opportunities have been more utilized for responding to the strategic needs of the adolescent girls and boys.

ii. The Childrens' Reference Group (CRG)

The Childrens' Reference Group (CRG) was formed and launched in November 2022 by the MoGLSD with technical support from UNICEF. The CRG operationalizes the National Child Protection Policy (2016) and was established as a platform for children, including adolescents, to meaningfully engage in decision-making on issues concerning their lives. The CRG is composed of 25 members who serve a 2-year tenure and are currently undergoing trainings to enhance their capacity to advocate for their rights. The first training was conducted in January 2023.

Although the CRG is still in its infancy stage, it is a promising group that is hoped to amplify the voice, spearhead leadership and advocate for issues that affect children and adolescents¹⁵⁴. By evaluation time, the CRG was still undergoing a series of capacity-building activities, to enable them to engage decision-makers at the national level, including those in Parliament about issues affecting children and adolescents.

Cross-cutting Programme Implementation Strategies

In the implementation of all the above programmes, the UCO adopts cross-cutting strategies stated under different outputs. These include among others; output 6.4 (programme planning, monitoring, and cross-sectoral coordination), output 6.5 (evaluation), output 6.6 (communication, advocacy, and partnership) and Output 6.7 (Communication for Development –C4D and Social and Behavioural Change-SBC). All these are contained in outcome 6 of the programme effectiveness pillar in the UCO.

Overall analysis

To a large extent, the UCO is investing in adolescent voice¹⁵⁵, agency¹⁵⁶ and leadership¹⁵⁷ as central approaches within GTP, however, the focus, scale of implementation and achievements varied on a scale. Comparatively, the aspects of voice and leadership are on a much higher scale of implementation compared to "agency". The focus on tackling the harmful gender social-cultural norms and practices varied across the different programmes, sampled for this evaluation.

¹⁵⁴ Information note; ESARAO GTP Evaluation, UNICEF Country Office, 2023.

¹⁵⁵ The ability to express views freely, and for them to be heard.

¹⁵⁶ The capacity to make decisions about one's own life and act on them to achieve a desired outcome, free of violence, retribution or fear.

¹⁵⁷ The ability to express views freely, and for them to be heard, and their views acted upon by the relevant stakeholders.

Relevance

EQ 2. To what extent are country programmes/projects designed to address the specific needs of adolescent girls in the region?

As indicated in the background section of this report, the key challenges affecting adolescent girls in Uganda include income poverty due to lack of employability skills, school dropout, limited life skills, sexual violence, HIV/AIDS, limited access to adolescent sexual reproductive health services and poor MHM practices. Other challenges include harmful gender, social, cultural norms and practices such as FGM, child marriage, forced marriages, limited freedom of expression and negative attitudes toward girls' education in some contexts.

1. Through approaches like **GEG**, and through mentorship and cash transfers, the education, life skills and livelihoods of adolescent girls have been partly addressed. The vocational skilling component integrated into the GEG approach has enabled adolescent girls to acquire skills for the establishment of income generating activities to address their poverty situation.

"My mentor referred me to the UYDEL Centre, where I learned hairdressing. I am now able to plait people's hair and earn some money. This along with the GEG's cash transfer was used to buy a pig. It gave birth and I sold the first piglet and bought a goat. This goat also delivered, but I decided to keep the kids. More GEG cash transfers helped me to buy feeds and chicken which am rearing currently" (16-year-old female GEG participant)¹⁵⁸

2. In the i-UPSHIFT approach, the grants support has enabled the adolescent girls and boys to idealize and implement their innovations for self-employability. Since its inception, 70 youth-led innovative solutions to community issues have been developed by 'i-UPSHIFTers' in the first pilot year of the program. In Gulu FGD, there were testimonies of girls who have continued to earn some income through vegetable Kitchen gardening and liquid soap making. Similarly, in the Nakivaale Refugee Settlement in Isingiro District, similar testimonies were shared by some of the adolescent panel interviewees:

"In the Refugee Settlement here, our biggest problem is lack of employment, poor sanitation, alcohol and drug abuse, and lack of business skills among youths and adolescents. The youths are idle. Through i-UPSHIFT, we were trained in child protection, entrepreneurship, and business skills, and now my group is engaged in beekeeping, but we need more capital to manage our enterprise better. Other groups are engaged in liquid soap making and they are earning some little money" (17-year-old male adolescent panel interviewee in Isingiro District-Nakivaale refugee settlement).

3. In the BEAD programme, one of its major components is life skills. BEAD has provided leadership for the institutionalisation of life skills in schools through the co-curricular space. Mid-year results for 2023 indicated that 36,583 adolescents (21,949 girls, 14,634 boys) from 848 schools benefited from structured life skills sessions and voice expression through the school clubs.
4. Similarly, the ADAP strategy has provided a civic engagement space for the adolescent volunteers to engage with local leaders and parents about issues affecting adolescents (such as school dropout and teenage pregnancy). For 2023, a total of 1000 adolescent volunteers/Peer advocates were trained and led a peer-to-peer campaign that resulted in the re-enrolment of 5,973 out of school children including child mothers and pregnant girls back to school as per recently approved re-entry guidelines for child mothers into school.

¹⁵⁸ UNICEF Country Office, *Girls Empowering Girls - Uganda's First Urban Social Protection programme for Adolescent Girls in Kampala; Programme Scale –Up Phase 2 (GEG Policy Brief Roll Out-Key lessons learned)* (2023).

5. The current HIV programme for adolescents implemented by the MoH through the Young People and Adolescent Peer Support (YAPS) model has enabled the adolescent girls' access to HIV information, social protection, and care and treatment from the health service providers. The YAPS has an electronic (E-Peer) support mechanism through which they engage adolescents and youths living with HIV to access HIV information and services.
6. Further, in the Karamoja sub-region, UNICEF and other partners like UN Women and UNFPA have implemented joint programmes aimed at addressing the different adolescent girls' challenges. These include the UNSpotlight Initiative for addressing violence against women and girls, and the Global Programme to End Child Marriage and FGM in Amudat and the rest of the Karamoja sub region.

Analysis

*Based on the discussion above, the UCO has to a **large extent** designed programmes and projects that address the specific needs of adolescent girls in the country. The most outstanding needs addressed include the support towards adolescent girls' education and school re-entry to minimize school dropouts. Other achievements include the delivery of the much needed 21st century skills (life and employability skills) which are pivotal for adolescent girls to navigate through current life challenging situations.*

Whether adolescent girls are meaningfully engaged in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and policies.

In the context of this evaluation, meaningful engagement and participation of adolescents *refers to a situation where throughout an intervention, adolescents are given a safe and inclusive space to form and express their views.* They can express their views freely; the audience listens to their views and their views have influence and are acted on appropriately.

Programme Design

As to whether adolescent girls have been meaningfully engaged in the design of the UCO programmes, there were varied responses among respondents. Of the 17 key informants that responded to this question (i.e., UNICEF office, IPs, other United Nations agencies and government sectors, eight believed that adolescent girls have been meaningfully engaged in project and programme design.

A case in point: a skills mapping report (2021) was accessed by the National Consultant evidencing consultation with adolescent girls aged 10-19 prior to designing i-UPSHIFT, and the vocational skilling component in the formal and non-formal education institutions. This too applies to the cross-cutting life skills component for all and programmes. Through the assessment, it was revealed that many adolescent girls lacked the 21st century skills-more so the life skills, digital and transferable/employability skills and that teachers lacked the capacity to deliver these skills to learners. These findings informed the review of the Life Skills Toolkit which was later adopted by the MoES in schools. The draft Life Skills Toolkit was pilot-tested for two years with the young people, and their ideas and feedback informed its finalization.¹⁵⁹ Further, one of the UNICEF respondents shared that the i-UPSHIFT approach was designed with a group of young people in 45 countries. It is their ideas that UNICEF adopted to design the approach. Adolescents have often been consulted in the design of Social Behavioural Change (SBC) peer-to-peer messages.

In the Government's health sector, adolescents participate actively in health provision through the YAPS Model. The young people living with HIV engage fellow youths and adolescents on issues of HIV disclosure, stigma, and service provision. They are directly involved in service provision through information sharing and counselling of their peers living with HIV.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Government key informant.

¹⁶⁰ Government key informant.

Policy Development

The evaluation found that prior to the development of the country and sector-based policies, guidelines and frameworks, adolescents are often consulted using different mechanisms, e.g., direct adolescent engagements, through surveys, School Clubs, and the U-Report. This was echoed by two respondents from UNICEF, one government official, and one implementing partner. Findings revealed that more of the policy development support has been with the education sector, and moderate with the health (MoH) and social protection sectors (MoGLSD). According to one of the government respondents, young people were consulted before developing the guidelines for the senior women and men teachers.¹⁶¹

Policy documents UNICEF has supported to development with the consultation of adolescents include National Strategic Plan to Eliminate Violence Against Children in Schools, National Guidelines for Formation of School Clubs, National Guidelines for Prevention and Management of Teenage Pregnancy in School Settings, National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy, National Sexuality Education Framework, the Life skills Toolkit, National School Re-Entry Guidelines, and the Draft MHM Strategic Plan, among others. Some of the spaces through which the adolescents are engaged as shared by some of the UNICEF staff and government key informants include school clubs, consultancy surveys, and direct consultations through the national and district-level engagements.

Some respondents shared that UNICEF had not consistently involved adolescent girls in all stages of the project cycle. Although adolescents are consulted through needs assessments, surveys and direct engagements, most of the mandate to design projects including developing the respective objectives, outcomes and activities are developed by adults.

“On a scale of 1-10, I would say we are at 6. We have been doing much of tokenism, that is, we have to do it because it's a donor requirement. The adolescents have not many times led the talking about their issues, we lead the talking and programming as adults. There's often no representation of adolescents at the decision-making table” (UNICEF respondent)

“On meaningful participation, we are not yet, but on the verge to getting there. We could be having our staff that understand meaningful participation differently. For example, if one called about 50 girls for a meeting and they sat there among members present, one would think that is meaningful participation, but it's more than this. We do a lot of talking than adolescents” (UNICEF respondent)

Much as we've been talking about meaningful participation of adolescents on issues that affect them, I think it has not been meaningful. The adolescents in much more privileged positions benefit more from the engagements at the expense of others in the rural, and hard to reach areas” (Government official)

While the above were the adults' perspectives about meaningful participation, adolescent girls and boys shared their views through the FGDs and adolescent panel interviews. Of the 18 adolescent girls and boys engaged through FGDs using the participation ladder game that had 8 levels of participation described in the foot note,¹⁶² the majority (12 of them) indicated being at level 4 (young people are

¹⁶¹ Senior men and senior women teachers are a gender structure within Uganda's education system. These are specifically appointed by the school administration to attend to the social, economic (to some extent), physical and emotional well-being of the school learners and are recognised at national level. There are national guidelines for the implementation of roles and responsibilities of Senior Women and Senior Men teachers housed by the Ministry of Education and Sports.

¹⁶² **Level 1** – manipulation: adults use young people to support their own projects and pretend they are the result of young peoples' inspiration.

Level 2 – decoration: young people help implement adults' initiatives.

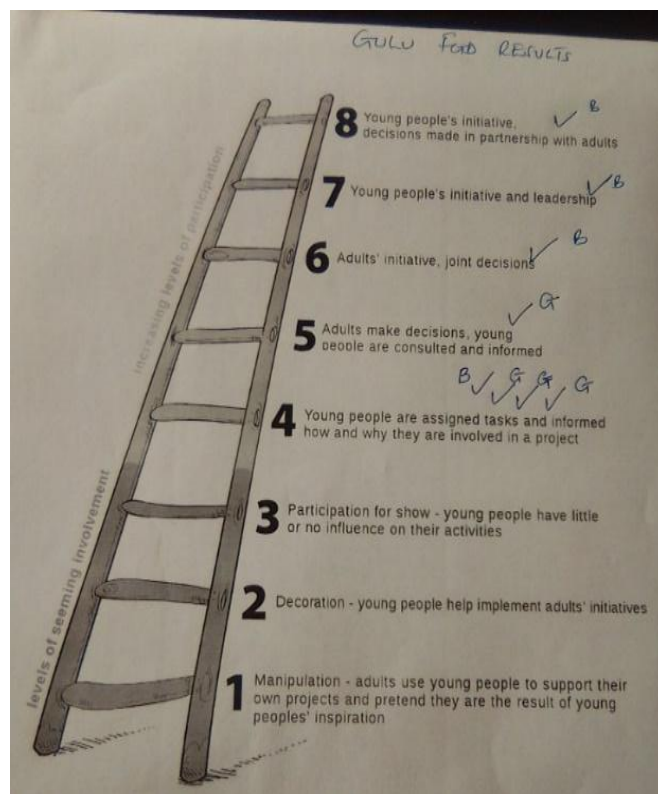
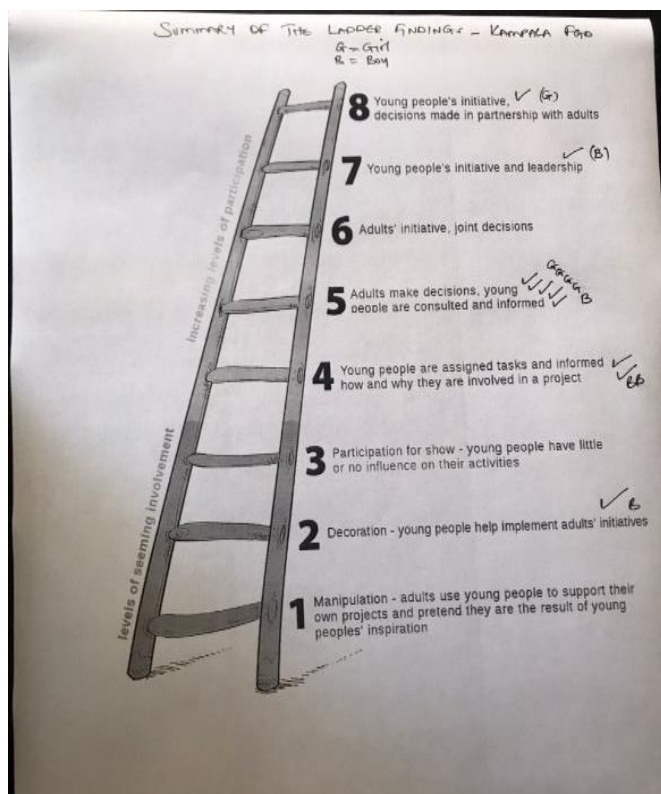
Level 3: participation for show: young people have little or no influence on their activities.

Level 4: young people are assigned tasks and informed how and why they are involved in the project.

Level 5: adults make decisions, young people are consulted and informed.

assigned tasks and informed how and why they are involved in the project), and level 5 (adults make decisions and young people are consulted and informed).

"I generally feel we're at level 5 because adults make the decisions, then we're informed, and we follow what they want us to do," said one of the girls in the FGD aged 13 years."



While the majority of adolescents ticked level 4 and 5, there were those that ticked level 8 for reasons.

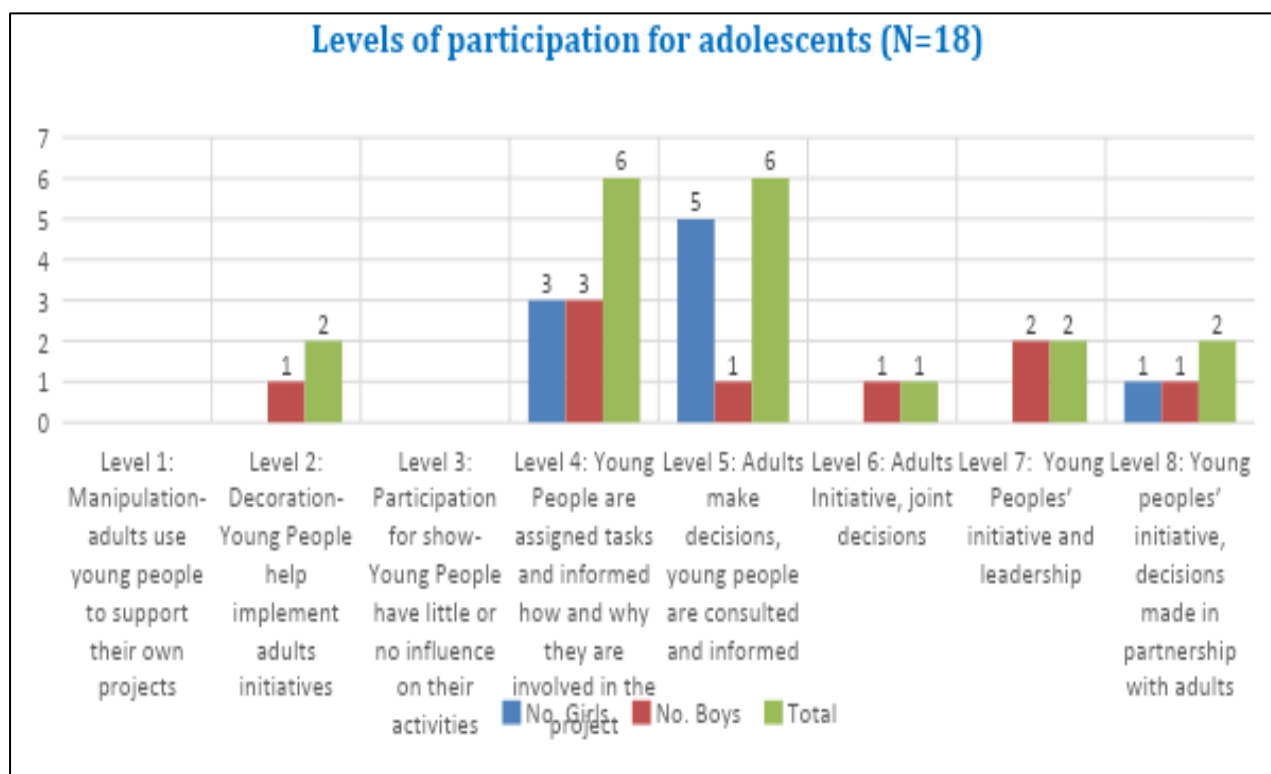
"I ticked level 8 because I belong to one of the i-UPSHIFT groups, and I am the chairperson of that group. UYDEL told us to identify problems in our community and we identified the problem of poor sanitation. So, they told us to think how we can solve that problem. We thought and I brought out up the idea of making a bio digester because we have the bio-degradable materials in our community. I also brought an idea of constructing a rubbish pit using plastic bottles. People would collect these bottles from the rubbish pit for recycling. When I shared the two ideas, we agreed as a group to take on the idea of a bio digester because first of all it will be producing gas, and that gas does not pollute the environment. We shall be getting rid of community waste at the same time, but we shall also use the waste as manure, so our environment will be clean. So UYDEL has bought our idea, but we are still under the boot camp. So, if at all my group wins, we shall be given some money to implement our idea" (14-year-old adolescent girl FGD respondent, Kampala)

Level 6: adults initiatives and joint decisions

Level 7: young peoples' initiative and leadership

Level 8: young peoples' initiative, and decisions made in partnership with adults.

Figure 4: a graphical presentation of the participation ladder game for the adolescent girls and boys
(Source: Adolescent girls and boys FGD findings, UNICEF GTP Formative Evaluation, July 2023)



Eight adolescent respondents aged 13-19 were engaged through the adolescent panel interviews, on the same topic of meaningful participation. While four of these indicated having been meaningfully involved in identifying their own activities through the i-UPSHIFT approach, another four did not feel meaningfully involved because they never participated in the design of GEG activities.

Programme Implementation

Regarding implementation, the responses varied among the 17 key informants that responded to this question, (i.e. UNICEF staff, IPs, government and other United Nations agencies). While **nine (53%)** believed that adolescent girls were actively involved in the implementation of UNICEF's programmes, 47% believed that adolescent involvement in implementation was minimal. Respondents who acknowledged the involvement of adolescent girls shared examples of peer adolescent leaders who are actively engaged in different UNICEF interventions, e.g. AVI, GEG, and the EU Spotlight Initiative, among others. In i-UPSHIFT, the young innovators implemented their ideas that were funded by UNICEF, while at the school level, adolescent girls were involved in club leadership activities.

Respondents who felt that adolescent girls were not actively involved in implementation, explained that many times it is the adolescent leaders who are allocated roles and responsibilities to support with project implementation. The respondents indicated that project implementation by adolescents needed to be more intentional at the project design level, with the scale or magnitude of involvement well defined.

Involvement in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of UNICEF programmes

Of the 17 key informants that shared their responses, nine of them (53%) indicated that many of the adolescent girls were not actively involved in the monitoring of UNICEF programmes. According to some respondents, it is a few adolescent peer leader groups (e.g. peer advocates, peer educators, and club/group leaders) that were actively involved in monitoring UNICEF activities. Regarding involvement in project evaluation, this was believed to be on the *lowest scale*. Adolescents were often consulted

during project evaluations by adults, but were least involved in designing evaluation aspects, actual data collection, and offering recommendations to improve programming after evaluations. Even then, most times, findings from the evaluations were not shared with adolescent girls as feedback.

Analysis

*From the findings above, it is concluded that to a **moderate** extent, adolescent girls' programmes engaged girls meaningfully in the design, implementation and in M&E of programmes. Comparatively, the adolescent girls were more involved at the project design level through consultations, moderately involved in project implementation and monitoring, and less involved in project evaluation processes and activities.*

Whether the UCO considered recent shifts and trends in gender outcomes for adolescent girls in programming

In Uganda, the outbreak of COVID-19 had a toll on all sectors of the country, but more so on the education, health, and social protection sectors. According to UNICEF, the government and UNICEF implementing partners' respondents, the current COVID-19 outbreak increased teenage pregnancy. As indicated in the background of this report, teenage pregnancy for the young girls aged 10-19 increased from 350,000 in 2016 to 2020 (before the COVID-19 lockdown), to 378,790 by 2021-during the COVID-19 lockdown. This translated into **31,565** pregnancies every month, which translated into 1,052 pregnancies daily.¹⁶³

This influenced more targeted programming for adolescent girls by UNICEF to support those who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy. The current implementation of the GEG, i-UPSHIFT, adolescent maternal health, and other Child Protection interventions among others, were partly informed by the COVID-19 aftermath. UNICEF was intentional in incorporating cross-cutting components of life skills, SBC, mentoring and peer-to-peer approaches in all programmes to enable the adolescent girls to re-enrol into schools through the "Go Back to School" Peer-led campaigns.

As part of the adaptation strategies after COVID-19, the UNICEF Country Office supported a phased approach to safe school re-opening in February 2021. During the pandemic, UNICEF provided home-based learning and distance education programmes (virtually) to adolescent girls and boys. Also incorporated were radio talk shows addressing the protection needs of children by parents and other stakeholders. UNICEF supported the MoES and district local governments with the review and implementation of the education sector *COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan*. UNICEF's regional expertise was leveraged to provide the MoES and MoH with a roadmap to re-opening of schools and support the vaccination of teachers. UNICEF supported the review of The Guidelines for Prevention and Management of Teenage Pregnancy in School Settings in Uganda (2020).

An example of positive outcomes from these efforts, and particularly in Karamoja sub-region, includes a noticeable increase in the number of girls that sat for primary leaving exams in 2020 after COVID-19 schools re-opening. For example, the year 2018: girls 2,178, boys 3,615; the year 2019: girls 2,150, boys 3,545; the year 2020: girls 2,551, boys 3,509. This increase for girls was partly attributed to UNICEF support through direct community and parental engagement and the adolescent peer advocates and adoption of the SBC strategies.¹⁶⁴ The advocates reached 30,000 peers with Go-Back to School messages; (16,483 girls, and 13,517 boys).¹⁶⁵

As part of community engagement, training on positive parenting and key family care practices was conducted for 330 champion parents (198 males, 132 females) in the eight districts of Karamoja. In all the Districts, parent champions developed commitments and actions to support the re-entry of child mothers and pregnant girls in schools within their communities, a practice that was rare within the sub

¹⁶³ Ministry of Health District Health Information System-2 (2021).

¹⁶⁴ UNICEF Country Office, *Promoting Access to Quality and Equitable Education for Karamoja Children – Irish Aid 10th Progress Report* (2022)

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

region. In 2021, 927 pregnant girls and child mothers were profiled for re-entry into formal and non-formal education by peer advocates and educators.¹⁶⁶

By July 2022, across the Karamoja sub-region, UNICEF, with support from Irish Aid, had re-enrolled **134** pregnant girls, and **268** child mothers to school under the 'Protect the Girl Child, Save the Nation' campaign". A total of 519 adolescent girls benefitted from the skilling pathways.¹⁶⁷

1. The **GEG approach** has continued to provide guidance and counselling to young adolescents, skilling opportunities, and cash transfers to meet their socio-economic and basic needs. Some of the girls that had dropped out of school have been able to enrol back to school.
2. The **i-UPSHIFT approach** responded to COVID-19 by adopting the socio-economic innovation model for out-of-school adolescent girls and boys to create jobs for them through their own innovations (part of socio-economic resilience). This has been coupled with the integration of life skills and some vocational skills to boost self-esteem, confidence, and employability.
3. The **BEAD programme, through its cross-sectoral interventions such as the adolescent volunteer initiatives, and SBC among others, have** supported adolescent girls and boys that had dropped out of school to enrol back in school. This has been combined with life skilling and advocacy activities by the Peer advocates as part of resilience building. The YAPS model has been strengthened to support young adolescents and young people living with HIV enrol for care and treatment from health facilities. Similarly, implementation of the GANPC/ PNC Model has been supported by the UCO to promote adolescent maternal health and access to care and treatment for the young mothers living with HIV.
4. **UNICEF's strengthened need** to have guidelines on school re-entry and management of teenage pregnancy in school settings was a response strategy to COVID-19 that affected young girls.
5. COVID-19 presented an emerging trend that required a shift in programming to address the issues adolescent boys faced because of the pandemic. Many became child fathers, dropped out of school, engaged in criminal activities, and alcohol and drug abuse. A more *intentional integration* of adolescent boys was undertaken in the programmes above, including in GEG which had been originally designed for adolescent girls only.

Analysis

*The evaluation finds that to a **large** extent, UNICEF Country Office considered the recent shifts and trends in gender outcomes for adolescent girls in their programming. The most outstanding trend for which a shift in programming has been observed is that of COVID-19, where UNICEF adjusted their interventions to address the issues the pandemic caused to the adolescent girls and boys, one of which was school dropout and teenage pregnancy.*

Coherence

EQ 3. To what extent do adolescent girl focused interventions (both within UNICEF and external) align with UNICEF strategies, and global policy commitments, to support girls' leadership and agency through gender transformative programming in ESAR?

Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

The UCO has ensured that their programming aligns well with the global development goals, e.g., the SDGs. UNICEF adolescent maternal health and nutrition programmes contribute to SDG Goal 3 of ensuring healthy lives and promotion of well-being for all at all ages. The education programmes align with SDG Goal 4 of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

The SDG indicators UNICEF Country Office programmes contribute to include: “by 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship (indicator 4.4). By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable” (indicator 4.5). The UNICEF i-UPSHIFT and GEG interventions are well aligned to SDG indicator 4.4, while the BEAD programme is aligned to SDG indicator 4.5.

The social protection programmes, e.g., GEG for adolescent girls align with Goal 5 of the SDGs - achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, while indicator 5.3 – aims to eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and FGM. Specifically, UNICEF’s joint programmes to end child marriage and FGM were designed in line with SDG indicator 5.3, with the aim to achieve gender transformative results. SDG indicator 5.5 aims to achieve women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life. The joint Spotlight Initiative programme was designed in line with SDG indicator 5.5.

Alignment with National Government Strategies and Frameworks

The GoU prioritizes adolescent programming demonstrated by the development and operationalization of the national Multi-Sectoral Framework for adolescent girls, (2018-2023). National instruments such as the National Adolescent Health Framework, National Adolescent Health Policy Guidelines and Service Standards, Guidelines for Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy in school settings, National Multi-Sectoral Communication for Development (C4D) Strategy for Adolescent Girls (2017/18 - 2021/22), among others, all aim to nationally improve adolescent outcomes.

In view of the above, the UCO’s interventions align with the national adolescent aspirations. The UCO’s interventions address some of the bottlenecks highlighted in the *National Multi-Sectoral Coordination Framework for Adolescent Girls* (2017/18-2021/22). The framework highlights the need for interventions on nine bottlenecks: HIV, teenage pregnancy, violence against children, sexual and gender-based violence education retention and transition, prevention of child marriage and economic empowerment for adolescent girls. The bottlenecks in the framework are the same that the UNICEF current GAP 3 commits to address both globally and nationally. The Social Behavioural Change strategy is in line with the current National Multi-Sectoral Communication for Development (C4D) Strategy for Adolescent Girls (2017/18 - 2021/22).

Alignment with UNICEF Strategies

At the UNICEF level, adolescent programmes align with the current GAP 3 (2022-2025), the UNICEF Adolescent Girls Programme Strategy (2022-2025) and the UNICEF Gender Policy (2021-2030). Specifically, the GAP (2022-2025) recognizes that harmful social norms, including discriminatory norms related to age and gender, often stand in the way of adolescent girls’ empowerment and well-being.

The Adolescent Programme Strategy situates UNICEF’s work with and for adolescent girls, by addressing the critical importance of dismantling power structures, institutions, and dynamics that hold adolescent girls back. The UNICEF GAP delivers a very powerful and energizing proclamation that strongly justifies the implementation of GTP, including by the UNICEF Country Office: “*UNICEF will promote girls’ leadership, voice and agency...as a catalyst for their inclusion and participation across all sectors and contexts*”. (UNICEF GAP, 2022-2025). The subsequent analysis shows the relation between UNICEF’s GAP 3 and the national interventions supported by the UCO.

1. GAP Goal Area 1-Health: Quality Maternal Health Care and Nutrition, and HIV Testing, Counselling and Care.

UNICEF country office supported Uganda’s MoH to develop the *National Guidelines on Maternal, Infant, Young Child and Adolescent Nutrition* in 2021, for adolescent girls aged 10-19, and women of reproductive aged 15-49. This was done in partnership with WHO, UNHCR

and USAID. Similarly, the Uganda National Obstetric Haemorrhage Intervention Framework was developed with support from UNICEF, targeting the same categories of adolescents and adult women. UNICEF Country Office is supporting the MoH to implement the YAPS and the GANC/PNC models to facilitate improvement in adolescent health outcomes.

2. **GAP Goal Area 2-Education: Gender responsive education systems and equitable access to education for all.**

UNICEF Country Office supported the review of the *National Guidelines for Prevention and Management of Teenage Pregnancy in School Settings (2020)*. This was aimed at providing an opportunity for teenage mothers and pregnant girls to re-enrol into schools. In many communities of Uganda, teenage pregnancy “marks” an end to a girl’s education with a perception that such a girl is wasted. Through UNICEF’s support of the second chance education arrangement, such beliefs have been challenged. To keep these young mothers in school, the life skills package has become imperative to help them regain their self-esteem and confidence.

Menstrual Hygiene Management: Poor MHM is among the factors that have perpetually kept adolescent girls out of school. This is manifested through absenteeism during menstrual periods and eventual drop out from school. UNICEF Country Office has intervened by strengthening the Gender Unit of the MoES to create awareness and train stakeholders about MHM in school settings. Further support has been realized in the development of the *Draft MHM National Strategic Plan* that will strengthen MHM programming in the country.

The UCO has supported the development of the MHM Toolkit that has training materials, the development of key MHM messages, and the making reusable pads by girls and boys. The UCO’s support of MHM interventions has enhanced the appreciation of MHM as a public health issue that is discussed publicly, and interventions designed both nationally and sub-nationally to respond to the girls’ MHM needs.

Support to WASH Interventions: UNICEF Country Office has further supported the MoES to construct gender-responsive WASH facilities (including changing rooms and incinerators) in schools to promote adolescent health. WASH Clubs have been formed in schools to promote open discussions about WASH issues affecting adolescent girls and boys, and these have received several trainings from UNICEF.

The Club members are trained using the Life Skills Toolkit to enhance their creativity and problem-solving skills. In the past 2 years (2021-2022), over 50 WASH facilities including latrines, incinerators, changing rooms and hand washing facilities have been provided in the most vulnerable schools by the UCO. Specifically, facilities like changing rooms were not of consideration in the school designs, until the UCO and other partners promoted MHM in the country and the need to provide such critical facilities for adolescent girls in schools. Currently, the MoES infrastructural designs contain MHM WASH facilities e.g., incinerators and changing rooms, among others.

3. **GAP Goal Area 3: protecting every adolescent girl from violence, exploitation, and abuse– and preventing harmful practices, such as FGM, child marriage and early unions.**

Violence against children manifests in different ways. In Uganda, it is through child marriages, FGM, and sexual violence affecting adolescent girls. UNICEF Country Office has supported the Gender Unit of the MoES to prevent violence against children in schools. UNICEF supported the development of the *National Strategic Plan to End Violence against Children in Schools*. This was supplemented by the support to develop the Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response (RTRR) Guidelines that have been popularized in schools and have enhanced the reporting of cases of violence against children. The UCO further supported the development of the National Strategy to End Child Marriage and this is being implemented by the government

and other stakeholders. A manual on how to effectively investigate gender-based violence and violence against children by police officers has been developed with support from the UCO.

Summary Case example of the BEAD programme

The programme aims at accelerating Uganda's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by contributing to SDG 4 (Promoting lifelong learning) and SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) in both humanitarian and development contexts. The BEAD programme is aligned with Goal Area 2 of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021 (Learning) as well as the global UNICEF Education Strategy and Generation Unlimited (GenU). The BEAD component is also aligned to the UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Priority 3, Quality Education and Priority 4, Results for Adolescents. Furthermore, the BEAD programme contributes to the UNICEF Gender Action Plan (GAP) by promoting inclusive education policies and programmes, as well as developing capacity for gender-responsive school environments (at the primary and secondary level), with a special focus on keeping girls safe in school.

Analysis

Analysis of the interventions above, indicates that to **a large extent**, UCOs adolescent girl-focused interventions align strongly with UNICEF strategies, and the national and the global policy commitments to support girls' leadership and agency through gender transformative programming in the ESAR.

Whether GTP approaches are consistently integrated in UNICEF's girl-focused programming and implementation, including policy and advocacy

There are four cross sectoral programme implementation approaches adopted by the UCO for girl-focused programming, including for policy and advocacy. These focus on skilling adolescents, enhancing their agency through (volunteer-led action), empowering of the most marginalized, and creating of platforms for the engagement of decision makers by the adolescent.

1. Empowerment of vulnerable adolescent girls with 21st-century skills

This approach focuses on developing the 21st-century skills of adolescent girls to build their resilience, self-confidence, and other soft skills that enable them to act on issues concerning their lives. The skills further enable the adolescent girls to contribute to the development of their communities as well as prepare them for a successful transition to life and work, personal growth, and employability. In the implementation of this approach, UNICEF supports the development of multiple skills-training programs¹⁶⁸ within formal and non-formal education spaces for the rural and urban adolescent girls and boys.

Examples of program interventions supporting the operationalization of this approach include the Life Skills Toolkit (LST) and the i-UPSIFT "program". Through the LST, the adolescents gain confidence to engage decision makers in the respective contexts (e.g., schools), on issues affecting adolescents. The i-UPSHIFT social innovation approach enables adolescents to identify community issues through engagement with community leaders and other stakeholders.

The approach is implemented under Output 2.3 of the BEAD programme that focuses on Adolescent Development. It is further implemented under the Child Protection Programme (CP) under output 3.3 which adopts skills as a strategy for Child Marriage prevention and girls' empowerment. It is also implemented under the Social Policy Programme (SP), under output 4.2 which focuses on Social Protection. The GEG is implemented under output 4.2 of the SP.

2. Enabling the agency of adolescent girls and boys for volunteer community action and social impact

¹⁶⁸ Training programme in this case refers to a specific training that is taking place within different formal and non-formal spaces for both in-school and out-of-school adolescents.

This approach focuses on providing capacity and opportunities for adolescent girls and boys to lead community peer-to-peer action as volunteers, on issues affecting their lives. It is believed that the adolescent volunteers' movement can bring change that adolescents desire to attain in their lives and societies and can thus be agents of development in their communities. This approach is in line with the global strategy of UNICEF on parenting adolescents and young people and promoting their unlimited talent through civic engagement and meaningful contribution.

An example of a program intervention supporting the operationalization of this approach includes the Adolescent Volunteer Initiative (AVI). A group of adolescents engage local leaders and advocate for their fellow adolescent girls on issues affecting them. The return to school of teenage pregnant girls and child mothers is a key gender transformative action led by the AVI. In many Ugandan societies, such girls are considered “wasted”, and rarely are they accorded a second opportunity to pursue their education career. The BEAD Adolescent Development (AD) team, and the SBC teams both lead in the implementation of the P2P approach adopted by the AVI. The Ministry of Health (MoH) adopted the same model in the implementation of their interventions, that is to say; the YAPS model (for HIV) and the GANC/PNC model for the promotion of adolescent maternal health, nutrition, and HIV prevention.

3. Programming to address the specific needs of adolescent girls as the most affected demographic group in specific issue areas

The approach focuses on addressing the specific vulnerabilities of adolescent girls to allow them to fulfil their potential. This program approach takes adolescent girls as a specific target group given their disadvantaged position within the specific issue area such as girls' education, FGM and child marriage, among others. Example of a program intervention supporting the operationalization of this approach is the Girls Empowering Girls (GEG) which targets 10–19-year-olds. GEG aims to address financial barriers and poverty-related factors that push urban poor adolescent girls to drop out of school.

Results to date include 53 adolescent girls with disabilities supported through the program (14 in school and 39 out of school). Another 27 teenage mothers have been supported by the program, through the provision of cash, mentorship, and referral to critical services. Further, 26 urban refugee adolescent girls are being supported by the program, while 698 adolescent girls were supported to complete primary school in 2022. In 2023, UNICEF plans to model social protection pathways for the transition of girls to secondary education¹⁶⁹.

The approach is gender transformative as it has promoted social protection for girls and promoted inclusiveness by providing an opportunity for adolescent girls and boys with a disability to become more relevant in society. The belief that children with disabilities are “irrelevant” still lingers in most societies hence depriving such children of opportunities to advance in life. The approach has empowered teenage mothers both socially and economically through the provision of education and cash grants for economic advancement. In terms of implementation. The BEAD and Social Policy Programmes are benefitting from this approach.

4. Establishment of structured platforms under local governments for systematic meaningful engagement of adolescent girls and boys in the decision-making processes

This systematic platform was formed to enable a selected group of adolescent girls and boys to discuss the most urgent issues that concern adolescents in Kampala. The Childrens' Reference Group (CRG) was further formed to bring issues identified to the attention of authorities and policymakers, represent the voices of their peers in this process, and advocate for solutions to specific issues that they define as priorities. Although by the evaluation team, the CRG had not conducted formidable engagements with decision makers, it is a promising structure that is likely to contribute to the achievement of voice, agency and leadership for adolescent girls and boys.

Other cross-cutting approaches adopted and contribute to GTP achievements

1. **Support to policy development and review:** this is a non-individual based and institutional strengthening approach to gender transformation. UNICEF Country Office has

¹⁶⁹ Information note; ESARAO GTP Evaluation, UNICEF Country Office, 2023.

supported the development of Uganda's policy framework and the establishment of government institutions to implement a gender responsiveness and transformation agenda. UNICEF has deployed financial and technical human resources into policy development to legitimize and create an enabling environment for the implementation of adolescent interventions in the country. The Gender Unit in the MoES was established through UNICEF Country Office support and has continued to fund and offer technical support to the unit.

2. **The Multi-Sectoral and partnership approach:** this is an institutional approach that aims to strengthen collaboration and coordination across sectors and other institutions to ensure the needs of adolescent girls are addressed in a more holistic manner. UNICEF Country Office has worked with the education, health, and social protection sectors in the country to achieve strengthened gender programming for adolescent girls. Similarly, UNICEF has worked with both local and international CSOs to support advocacy work and implementation of adolescent programmes in different contexts.
3. **Community Dialogue and Parental Engagement Approach:** the approach has been applied at both family and community levels by UNICEF staff, CSOs/IPs and adolescent peer groups. Parents are engaged in norms and attitudinal change for the advancement of adolescent girls, while local leaders have been engaged to offer support and leadership to the adolescent programmes implemented in their localities. The approach of working with parents to engage **fellow parents, guardians and caregivers as role models** have been piloted in Karamoja sub region and is positively impacting parents' attitudes toward the education of their children. This is evidenced through many of them supporting their daughters to return to school.
4. **Social Behavioural Change (SBC) approach:** This is one of the cross-cutting strategies that has various interventions implemented by the UCO. The strategy is aimed at leveraging the power of community dialogue and participation, mass media and digital platforms to reach out to a variety of stakeholders on issues affecting adolescents including those that are policy related. The strategy recognizes the power of interpersonal communication and the critical influence of social networks and movements in positively influencing the behaviour of communities, including young people. Social Behavioural Change has been adopted by the Government under The Multi-Sectoral Communication for Development of Adolescent Strategy that speaks to bottlenecks researched and listed in The National Multisectoral Framework for Adolescent Girls.

Analysis

The four approaches discussed above about girl focused programming clearly demonstrate the prioritization of the aspects of voice, agency and leadership, however, in the context of this GTP evaluation, there will be a need to strengthen interventions aimed at tackling or dismantling underlying structural barriers, such as harmful social norms and gendered power systems, that perpetuate inequalities among the adolescent girls.

EQ 4. What have been the areas and ways of cooperation with other United Nations entities and other donor/ development partners regarding gender-transformative programming with and for adolescent girls in ESAR?

Cooperation has been in the areas of joint programming/ planning, resource mobilization, implementation, and effective coordination. The current HIV YAPS and the GANC/PNC Models adopted by the MoH have been funded by PEPFAR, Global Fund, CHAI, Mothers to Mothers, PATA, VIV Foundation, and other partners including UNICEF. The programmes are aimed at improving access to information and services for HIV (care and treatment) and improving maternal health and nutrition for adolescent girls.

The EU/UN Spotlight Initiative Programme (2019-2023) was implemented by 7 UN entities and in partnership with 12 government ministries, departments, and agencies, and 35 civil society and

grassroots organisations. Some of the UN Agencies include UNDP, UN Women, UNHCR, UNICEF, and UNFPA whose different components are managed by different UN agencies.

The goal of the Spotlight Initiative is for all women and girls, particularly those most vulnerable, to live a life free of violence and harmful practices, including child marriage and FGM. The programme was built around six pillars developed after an extensive global theory of change exercise. The project was later contextualized to the Ugandan through a highly collaborative process with the government, civil society partners, the private sector, religious and cultural groups, and other key actors.

UNICEF was the lead agency for Pillar 3 (Violence prevention for social norms change) which focuses on coordinating interventions by all the participating UN agencies to employ multiple strategies to promote social change. This focused on promoting favourable social norms, attitudes, and behaviours at institutional, community, and individual levels to prevent Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG). Social change initiatives involved the implementation of multi-pronged prevention initiatives that mutually reinforced each other, and included analysis of power and gender norms, to effectively shift individual and socio-cultural norms. This intervention facilitated engagement with different social networks including community elders, young people (girls and boys) and other community members.

The EU/UN Spotlight Initiative enhanced legislative and policy framework, strengthened government institutions, and contributed to violence prevention and social norm change in communities where it was implemented. It strengthened women's movement and civil society engagement.

1. **Global Programme to end Child Marriage and FGM** implemented jointly by UNICEF and UNFPA. The programme targets adolescents aged 10-19, with adolescent girls as the priority target population. It aimed to support interventions to end child marriage and abandonment of FGM in communities where it was practiced; a case of the Amudat district in Karamoja sub-region.
2. **Newly developed is the Uganda United Nations Adolescent and Youth Joint Programme (2023-2025)** involving 13 United Nations agencies (UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, UNAIDS, UNDP, ILO, FAO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UN Women, and UNIDO) among others. The programme is aimed at enhancing adolescent and youth participation in the different aspects that affect their lives. The United Nations technical lead in this programme is UNFPA, while UNICEF will take the lead in the implementation of Outcome 2 – Education and Skilling. UNFPA will take the lead in the implementation of the Health and Social Protection outcome, while UNDP will take the lead in the Climate Change outcome. The project will only be implemented in Uganda under the current National Development Plan (III) framework. Adolescents and young people will be represented through the National Youth Council and the National Students Association.
3. **Multi-year, multi-agency and multi-sectoral PROSPECTS partnership involving UNICEF, International Labour Organization (ILO), UNHCR, World Bank (WB) and IFC:** One of the focus areas of PROSPECTS partnership is building skills of adolescents and young people, from Learning-to-Earning, with a specific focus on refugee adolescents. UNICEF, UNHCR, and ILO work closely within this partnership for adolescent empowerment through the creation of a multiple pathway approach to skilling. This starts from foundation skills and continues to transferable and employability skills, including 21st century skills, innovation and entrepreneurship skills, and digital skills. Adolescent girls have been a particular focus of this joint programme as well.

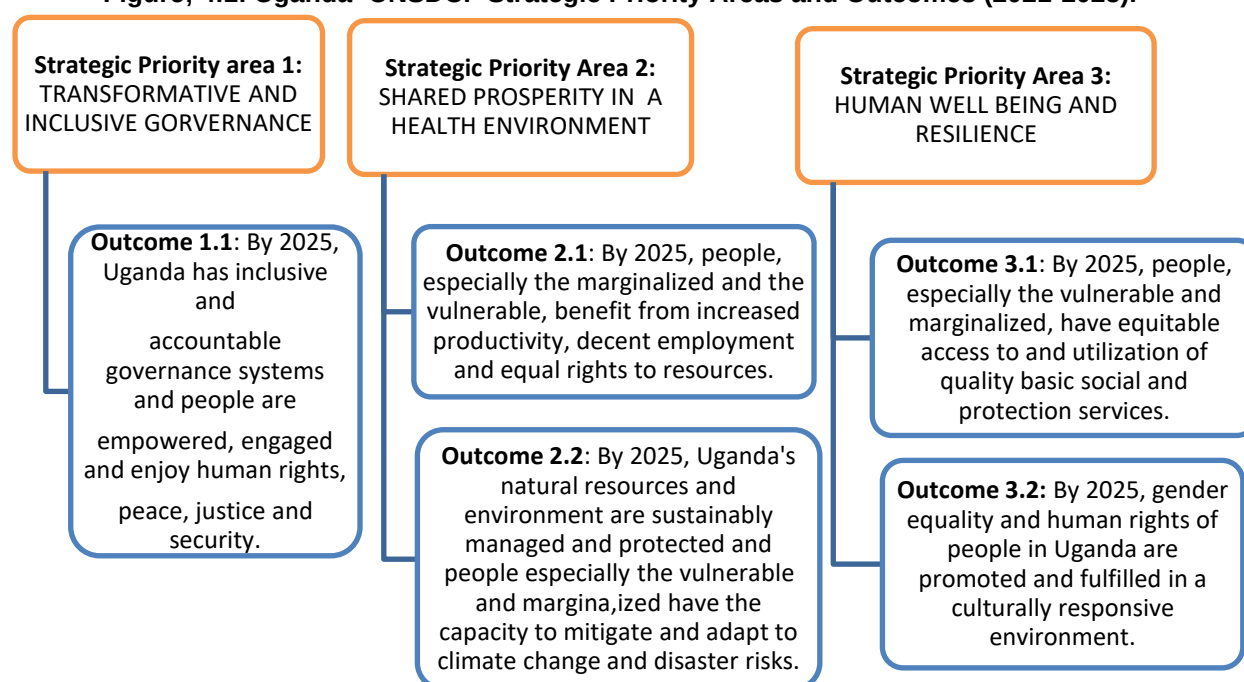
Analysis

Evidently, the joint programmes above contain Gender transformative initiatives that were designed to be implemented jointly through partnership. This builds a strong foundation for UNICEF to exploit to influence and strengthen GTP within partnership interventions. It was however observed that the above joint programmes were not primarily focused on achieving gender transformation alone as a priority by all partners. The programme designs depict a combination of both gender responsiveness and transformation initiatives that were to be achieved through their implementation. This confirms the complementarity of the gender transformative and responsive initiatives in effectuating positive change for adolescent girls.

Mechanisms for United Nations entities to collaborate and coordinate in ensuring a coherent approach to GTP

Globally, UN Agencies have well-structured coordination frameworks, some of which are implemented at the country level. The United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDCF) for instance, is a core instrument for providing a coherent strategic direction for UN development activities by all UN entities at the country level. In view of this, the UN entities in Uganda developed their UNSDCF to be implemented in the period (2021-2025). The Framework brings together over 30 UN Agencies and aims to support Uganda in achieving the 2030 agenda and enhancing coordination, transparency, and efficiency, to achieve the Uganda Vision 2040, and the third National Development Plan (NDP III) 2020/21-2024/25. The Cooperation Framework employs three mutually reinforcing forms of implementation, namely: results-focused programming, capacity development and coherent policy support.

Figure; 4.1: Uganda- UNSDCF Strategic Priority Areas and Outcomes (2021-2025).



Source: Uganda, UNSDCF (2021-2025).

With reference to the Framework above, the Strategic Priorities are interrelated and multisectoral and thus embody strengthening and creating new and innovative partnerships to achieve them. In this lens, UNICEF through its adolescent programming, is directly contributing to the implementation of the three strategic areas. Empowering adolescent girls and boys to effectively engage with duty bearers through their peer leaders, contributes to achieving accountable governance systems and a just society for all (Strategic area 1), including for adolescent girls. Similarly, the skilling programmes offered by UNICEF to both adolescent girls and boys, aim to enhance their employability and competitiveness in the job market, regardless of gender (Strategic area 2) for socio-economic transformation.

UNICEF's current Gender Action Plan (2022-2025) with its core gender transformative objective, strongly aligns with Strategic Area 3 and its respective outcome areas, namely, (3.1 and 3.2). These focus on achieving human well-being and resilience in a culturally responsive environment. Indeed, some of the programmes implemented jointly by UNICEF, UNFPA, and UN Women (among others), like the Global Programme to End Child Marriage, the Joint Programme to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and the UN Spotlight Initiative, aim to support vulnerable categories of people

including the young women and adolescent girls achieve development and their rights in a culturally secure environment.

From a coordination perspective, UN Agencies have structures at national and regional levels. At the national level, the UN Resident Coordinator coordinates all UN agencies' work in the country. The Resident Coordinator is supported by regional and area coordination structures that play a similar role in monitoring and coordinating UN Agencies' work, including programmes at a more contextual and sub-national level. For instance in Karamoja, there is the UN Area Coordination (UNAC) structure for the whole of Karamoja sub-region, led by the UN WFP. The regional office comprises Teso districts, Karamoja, Bugisu, Sebei, and Tororo. All UN agencies operating in that region are accountable to the UNAC. UN agencies meet every last Thursday of the month to discuss issues concerning their programmes. There is always a representative from each of the UN agencies in the UNAC meetings.

The Spotlight Initiative for instance is coordinated by the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator, supported by a Spotlight Coordinator at the national level, and the field coordinator under the office of the UN Resident Coordinator based in the regional office of Karamoja. Within the joint Spotlight Initiative, there were respondents who were particularly gratified by the current GTP trend taken by UNICEF:

"I am happy that UNICEF took a transformative approach towards addressing FGM issues in Amudat. Many times, the girls have always been rescued and kept in safer shelters and then taken back to school, but in so doing, the root cause of the problem will not have been addressed. So, engaging the elders, FGM cutters and other community members about the dangers of FGM and the need to abandon it is remarkable, and I think that is a very commendable intervention on the side of UNICEF" (United Nations Partner agency respondent)

Although there is collaboration and coordination among the different UN agencies, some of the respondents noted the tendency to collaborate more when there is an ongoing programme and the moment it elapses, the collaboration lessens. The respondent noted that there is a lack of a deliberate joint learning initiative or platform amongst UN agencies and their Implementing partners. It was further shared by the respondent that rarely do UN agencies convene to share impacts and best practices from a particular joint programme, to enable them to plan for the next activities that would strengthen their collaboration. The strength is that some UN agencies leverage each other's technical expertise and resources.

Overall Analysis

The collaborative efforts by UN Agencies in adolescent girls' programming are highly commendable. It has been however noted that the agencies coordinate and collaborate not solely for purposes of achieving gender-transformative outcomes for adolescent girls, but rather, each delivers their programme components based on their mandate. Each of the UN agencies have different mandates that they aspire to fulfil through joint programming, and therefore it is difficult to adopt a particular UN Agency strategy or plan as central to their programming.

Regarding overall coherence, it is deduced that UNICEF Country Office programmes, priorities, commitments, and implementation strategies have been largely coherent with the global, national and UNICEF aspirations (both internally and externally). The above analysis clearly demonstrates the UCO's flexibility towards programming through analysis of both the external and internal programme and policy environments in which they operate.

Effectiveness

EQ5. To what extent have UNICEF East and Southern Africa Regional Office's adolescent girls focused programmes and interventions mainstreamed gender transformative programming, contributing to increasing their voices, agency, and leadership, in current planned programmes?

Mainstreaming of GTP in UNICEF Country Office

Effective mainstreaming begins with a harmonized understanding of the core issue to be mainstreamed. The evaluation explored the extent to which UNICEF staff conceptualized GTP including its mainstreaming. Interaction with the UCO staff revealed that, of the 6 respondents, 3 were able to define GTP as per the operational definition of this evaluation. Similarly, among the implementing partner respondents, 2 out of 7 were able to provide a definition of GTP. With this unharmonized understanding of GTP, it would be difficult to mainstream it coherently and cross-cuttingly in most of the adolescent girl-focused interventions and achieve its outcomes.

Further, although the current GAP (2022-2025) focuses on achieving GTP, some of the staff interviewed shared their views below, some of which relate to challenges in GTP programming;

“Honestly, I would be lying that all of us understand GTP the same way. This is a newer concept that people need to understand better” (UNICEF respondent)

“I wouldn’t say our stakeholders and partners understand and can define GTP correctly. Even in UNICEF internally, we’re still grappling with what it is really. It started with gender empowerment, then gender mainstreaming, and now we’re talking about Gender Transformation. I know that we are all in agreement that the adolescent girl should be at the centre of our programming, but that does not really mean gender transformation” (UNICEF respondent)

“Yes, GTP is an area we have heard about for so long and we assume we know. Certainly, refreshers would be most useful. We could also strengthen our coordination across sectors and leverage each other’s support and resources. For example, health, education, social protection” (UNICEF respondent)

“I don’t believe in addressing root causes for gender inequality. I believe that the best we can do is to address proximate causes. We can yet reduce the degree of social norms or turn social norms from negative to positive. I think that’s not a job for three-four years, it’s a job for ten years and more” (UNICEF respondent)

“Practically, shifting gender norms may be difficult because this is something that people built and have cherished for years. Shifting power relationships might be an uphill task” (UNICEF respondent)

“Based on the definition of gender transformative programming, we’re not yet fully there as a program. We are very much in the domain of gender responsiveness; we are aspiring towards gender transformative programming” (UNICEF respondent)

Whether girl-focused programmes and interventions were contributing to voice, agency and leadership in the current programming

Analysis of this aspect depends on how different programme originators comprehended and appreciated the aspects of *voice, agency and leadership as core aspects of GTP*. This comprehension determines the design of interventions, objectives, activities, strategies and output and outcome indicators of a particular programme. When responding to the overarching question for this evaluation in the first sections of this report, the nature of UCO programmes and respective interventions has been elaborately discussed and their performance. Under the current question therefore, the analysis is skewed towards a deeper analysis of the three aspects of *voice, agency and leadership*, within the context of GTP.

Voice

In the context of this evaluation, *voice* is the ability of adolescents to express their views freely, and for them to be heard and acted upon. Guided by this definition, it has been established that the current UNICEF Country Programme has tried to ensure adolescent girls are able to express themselves in different ways and through various platforms as described below:

1. The U-Report platform is a multi-sectoral platform where some adolescent voices are expressed and heard, however, it has been more of an adult space with limited direct engagement of adolescents. One of the challenges has been that many adolescents (more so the younger adolescents aged 10-14) do not necessarily have access to phones, and this limits

their direct engagement and voicing out their concerns using the platform. A case analysis was made about the U-Report below.

U-Report as an engagement space for adolescents. This is a platform for engaging youth voices for positive social change. The platform has 609,615 'U-Reporters' overall in the engagement space (67% male and 33% female). Of these, adolescents aged 10-19 constitute less than 10% (aged 0-14=1%, aged 15-19=5%). The engagement is UNICEF-led, where they pose some issues that they would like the U-Report users to respond to. In April 2023 for instance, UNICEF engaged the U-Report users about child marriage and the best way to end the practice in Uganda. A total of 34,231 U-Reporters responded (71% male and 29% female). In terms of age groups, those that were aged between 0-14 constituted 1%, and those aged 15-19% were 6%.¹⁷⁰ The analysis drawn from this case scenario is that the platform provides the adolescents space to engage and express their views and voice, however, the adolescent users of the platform constitute less than 10% overall, and most users are male. In essence, more needs to be done to ensure that the U-Report platform is adolescent led and more adolescent girls need to be engaged to utilize the platform.

2. As part of the **peer-to-peer** campaigns and engagements, a group of adolescent girls and boys engage adults on different issues, e.g., education, FGM, health, Child marriage, and other harmful cultural practices among others. In Karamoja sub-region in Amudat District, adolescents have taken the initiative to report girls being forced to undergo FGM to local council leaders. The leaders have often mobilized themselves with police and have arrested the FGM cutters and the parents and aligned them before the justice system.¹⁷¹ The peer-to-peer strategy has been integrated into all UNICEF programmes like CSD, BEAD, CP, and SP.
3. At the school level, the school club platforms are where adolescent girls and boys deliberate on issues affecting them. These are brought to the attention of senior men and senior women teachers and the school administration to create a safe and conducive environment for the learners. Some of the issues reported by teachers on the U-Report platform are generated from the adolescent school clubs. The BEAD programme uses the school club's platform to engage adolescent girls at the school level.
4. Through music, dance and drama, adolescent messages are well refined and packaged for communication to adults through the social mobilization strategy. A community dialogue with a few members with positions of responsibility is arranged afterward for adolescent leaders to engage with them about issues affecting their well-being. This is largely adopted by the BEAD and CP programmes.
5. The Children's Reference Group platform was launched last year (2022) with the MoGLSD and KCCA. The group was formed to advocate for the rights of adolescents and other issues that affect them. The group had not yet started engaging decision makers by evaluation time but is a promising platform for voicing out issues affecting adolescents and influencing policy.
6. The Sports for Development platform developed by MoES together with UNICEF builds cohesion, teamwork, and mutual trust among adolescents. Sports are organized with intentional messages developed with adolescents to communicate to the adults before, during and after the sport. The strategy has been largely adopted by the BEAD programme.

"I think we have performed well when it comes to voice in our programming. At least, we try to listen to the adolescent needs, understand the challenges adolescent girls face and then respond accordingly" (UNICEF respondent)

Agency

For purposes of this evaluation, *agency* refers to the capacity to make decisions about one's own life and act on them to achieve a desired outcome, free of violence, retribution, or fear.

¹⁷⁰ <https://ureport.ug/opinions/>; accessed 27 July 2023.

¹⁷¹ UNICEF key informant.

In the current UNICEF programming, the opportunity for adolescent girls to make decisions about their own lives and act on them has been through school clubs. In these spaces, life skills are passed onto adolescent girls and boys to enable them to make their own decisions about life and act on them. During the FGDs and Adolescent Panel interviews, it was revealed that although UNICEF engaged with out of school adolescent girls and boys to go back to school, it was their own decision to go back to school. UNICEF supported their dreams to come true through the mentoring sessions, offering life skills and cash transfers to some of them; a case of GEG.

Other programmes where the aspect of adolescent agency is addressed include the CSD programme through the YAPS and GANC/PNC peer leaders, the Child Protection Programme through the AVI, and Social Policy programme through the GEG intervention. In the BEAD programme, through i-UPSHIFT, adolescent girls and boys identify challenges in the communities where they live and identify their own solutions and innovations to address the problem. UNICEF provides grants to young people to implement their ideas/innovations. In so doing, the adolescents implement their own decisions. In other interventions, like GEG, adolescents implement decisions largely initiated by adults. Taking the example of the peer advocates, volunteers, and peer educators, some of the activities they do are determined and assigned to them by adults.

“With regard to the agency, we have not performed so well because community and societal norms, gender stereotypes, values and cultures have been a big barrier. Even when adolescent girls decide, they cannot act on their own. The adults must give them permission to do so. The culture of adults listening to their children is very weak in Uganda.” (UNICEF respondent)

“Agency is not yet realized. Adults determine the programme activities, and the adolescents and youths implement.” (Government respondent).

“On a scale of 1-10, I would rate ourselves at 4 or 5. The cultural aspect is holding adolescents back. The culture of adults listening to children or adolescents is still weak. I believe if we can strengthen the voice first, and leadership, then we'll be able to achieve the agency outcome.” (UNICEF respondent).

Adolescents' perspectives of agency

In the two FGDs conducted with 18 participants, there were different categories of respondents. The FGD in Kampala had ten respondents who were in primary schools and were GEG participants (70%) aged 11-15. The Gulu FGD had eight participants and included mainly out-of-school older adolescents aged 17-19 all of whom participated in the i-UPSHIFT programme, (63 % of whom were former street children). Further, the FGD adolescents in Gulu were in a post war conflict context that presented numerous challenges, compared to Kampala City where there has been some level of stability. In Kampala, three girls were from i-UPSHIFT and 7 from GEG, while in Gulu, they were all i-UPSHIFT participants.

According to the FGD findings, there were different spaces where the adolescent girls and boys made decisions and acted on them (agency). The highest number of adolescent girls and boys (17, eight girls and nine boys), indicated exercising their agency through the non-governmental organisation/UNICEF space. In this space, adolescents were accorded an opportunity to share their views, some of which were acted upon by the respective IPs and the school administration.

The second highly ranked space was school, where the adolescents chose the school activities to participate in (eight girls, eight boys), while the third highly ranked space was the community where adolescents took part in community activities (eight boys and six girls). The health care and family spaces were the lowest where adolescents exercised their agency. For the healthcare space, adolescents indicated a lack of information about where to seek sexual reproductive health services. In the home space, adolescents could not make their own decisions due to the tradition of adult dominance in decision-making in that space. According to the FGD respondents, in the home space, children, adolescents and youths were not listened to by adults.

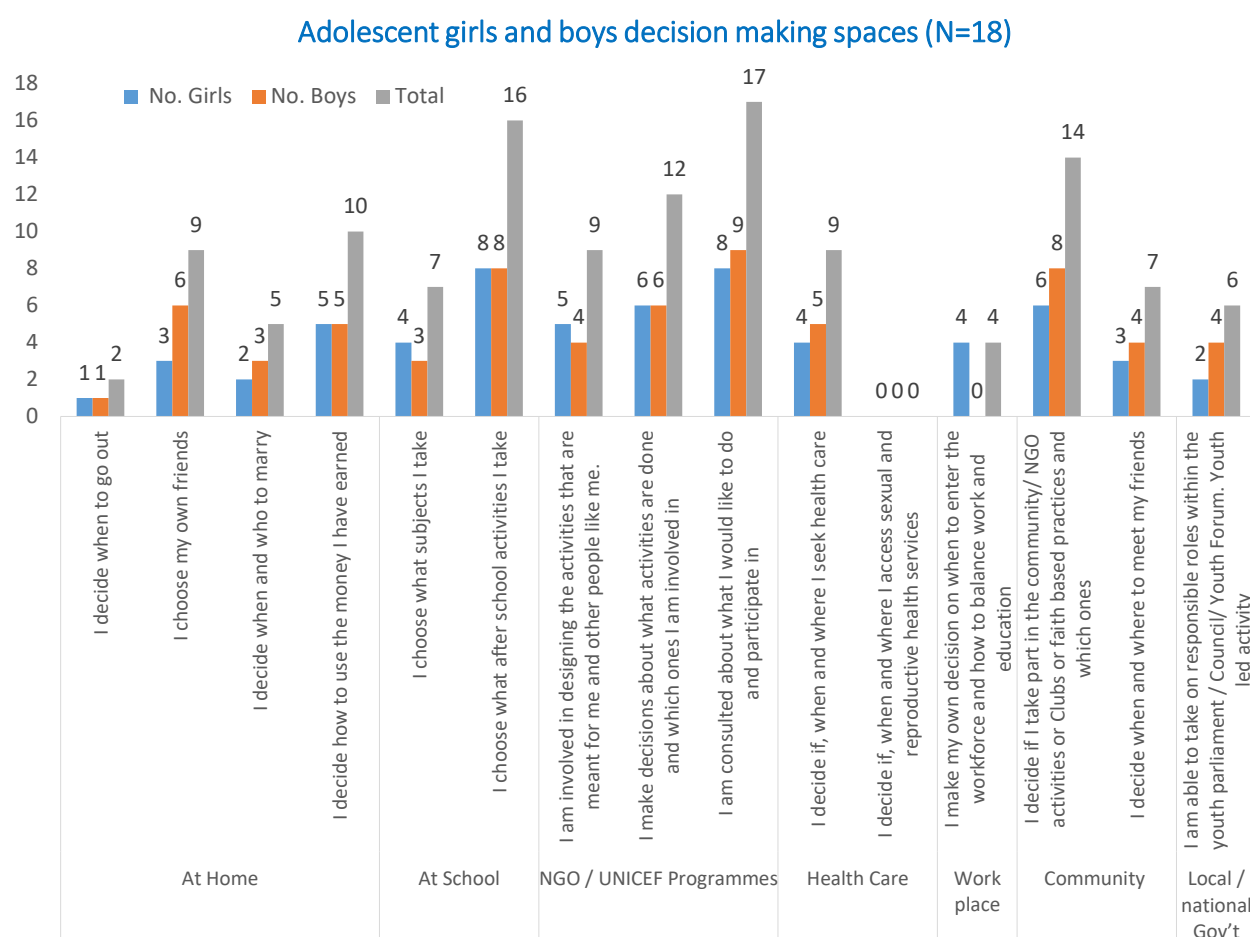
“At home, we cannot make our own decisions. Adults make decisions all the time because they think that what they think for us is right and it will always work. Little do they know that the world

has changed, and children can make the right decisions too.” (GEG adolescent girl in the age range of 11-15 years, Kampala)

“My participation in the boot camp opened my mind about so many issues that personally affected me and the community at large. It taught me to often identify problems affecting me and act on them by myself. I also liked the pitching events. I like the fact that we were coming up with solutions and implementing them.” (i-UPSHIFT adolescent girl within the age range of 16-19 years in Nakivaale refugee settlement, Isingiro District)

The evaluation further found that agency among the FGD respondents was more exercised by i-UPSHIFT participants, compared to those that were in the GEG intervention. This is because, i-UPSHIFT was developed with a strong foundation on agency compared to GEG. I-UPSHIFT provided an opportunity for adolescent participants to identify and decide which activities (socio-economic enterprises) to implement on their own, with seed funding support from UNICEF. Comparatively, the boys had more capacity to make own decisions in the different spaces and act on them compared to the girls, as these were under more protection by their parents and guardians.

Figure 5: summary of adolescent girls’ and boys’ agency/decision making in Kampala and Gulu FGDs



For the interviews conducted by the adolescent panel members, six out of the eight respondents that including six girls and two boys indicated not being able to make decisions at home. The finding was shared by five girls and one boy aged 13-19. Four girls aged 13-15 indicated being freer to make decisions at school.

Leadership

As per the evaluation's inception report, adolescent *leadership* is defined as adolescents being empowered to exercise authority over themselves and/or others. Although this was the operational definition, the concept of leadership was perceived differently by some of the UNICEF staff.

"This was the first area of concentration by UNICEF at the beginning of the 2000s, but when the concept of participation was brought on board, it was perceived that once one gives a capacity for voice and agency, including a platform for exercising it, then leadership becomes a practice." (UNICEF respondent)

"We have converted the whole ideology of leadership. Anyone who is involved in expressing their voice on a particular issue is exactly a leader." (UNICEF respondent).

The opinions above justify the need for UNICEF to harmonize the programmatic definition of leadership in line with GTP. According to findings from the FGDs and key informant interviews, the leadership aspect has been demonstrated in the four programmes. These include BEAD (through the school clubs, i-UPSHIFT), CSD (YAPS and G-ANC/PNC Models), CP programme (AVI, UN joint programmes to end child marriage and FGM), Social Policy (GEG, CRG), all driven by the ADAP strategy. The school clubs have been an effective platform for exercising leadership, mainly through the environmental clubs, Health, Human and child rights clubs and debating clubs, among others. Through such clubs, some of the few adolescent leaders have been able to advocate for better services on behalf of others.

"I advocated for safe water for drinking at school because the available water source had broken down and needed to be repaired. Our Head teacher was able to repair the water source at the school" (GEG adolescent girl respondent aged 11-15, Kampala)

"I was a speaker for my group in i-UPSHIFT, but I was surprised at myself. Little did I know that I could speak well in front of people and that I had the courage to do so. I always got feedback from my friends that I played my role well" (i-UPSHIFT Adolescent girl within the age range of 16-19 years in Nakivaale refugee settlement, Isingiro District)

In the GEG and i-UPSHIFT interventions, the national consultant engaged the FGD participants about the different leadership positions they held in the different programmes. Of the 18 participants, 13 (72%) held leadership positions as indicated in table 3 below. Of these, seven were girls (54%), while 46% were boys.

Table 3: Adolescent Leadership roles in the GEG and i-UPSHIFT (Source: UNICEF GTP Formative Evaluation – Uganda case study -Gulu and Kampala FGDs; July 2023)

S/N	FGD Location	Sex	Role/Position	Programme interventions	Age Range
1	Kampala	F	Head Girl/ Uganda's Ambassador-WEB Safe and WISE Children's Advisory Council	GEG	11-15
2	Kampala	M	Chairperson of the boy champions also Head Boy	GEG	11-15
3	Kampala	F	Group leader for the Innovators Group, member of the STEM Club in one of the Secondary Schools	i-UPSHIFT	11-15
4	Kampala	F	Health Prefect (primary school)	i-UPSHIFT	11-15
5	Kampala	M	Sanitation prefect	GEG	11-15
6	Gulu	M	Group Leader	i-UPSHIFT	17-19
7	Gulu	M	Group Marketer/Finance	i-UPSHIFT	17-19
8	Gulu	M	Farm Manager	i-UPSHIFT	17-19

9	Gulu	M	Group Mobilizer	i-UPSHIFT	17-19
10	Gulu	F	Group Secretary	i-UPSHIFT	17-19
11	Gulu	F	Team Leader/secretary	i-UPSHIFT	17-19
12	Gulu	F	Group Leader/Secretary	i-UPSHIFT	17-19
13	Gulu	F	Group Leader/ Secretary	i-UPSHIFT	17-19

Analysis

UNICEF Country Office has made concerted efforts mainstream the aspects of voice, agency and leadership within their adolescent girl programmes and interventions. Although these have been implemented on a varying scale, the UCO is on the right track with GT programming and is likely to achieve higher results if the three aspects are much more strengthened, before the elapse of GAP 3 implementation.

Effectiveness of different models/Approaches in contributing to gender transformative outcomes

UNICEF has adopted different models and approaches for the implementation of GTP. The approaches have been applied at different levels, i.e., national, sub-national, school, community, family, and individual levels. Analysis of the models and approaches mostly shows that, these have been effective in contributing to gender outcomes in various contexts, however, the scale of benefits in line with gender transformation has been moderate overall.

The following are the key contributing factors for the changes so far realized regarding GTP, as shared by the key informants from the UCO, government sector respondents, other UN agencies and CSOs/ implementing partners.

1. The political will from the Government of Uganda to ensure that the lives of adolescent girls and boys are transformed through policy development to contribute to the growth of the national economy, currently and in future.
2. UNICEF's commitment to adolescent girl programming through vigorous resource mobilization.
3. UNICEF's development of adolescent and youth-friendly approaches, models and strategies that have contributed to the socio-economic development of adolescent girls and boys in different contexts.
4. Willingness of the young people to participate in mentorship and gender transformative programming.
5. The partnership strategy for working with government and non-government structures and institutions has enabled the UCO to reach out to many adolescents.
6. The process of working with young people to build an understanding of what they need leading to the development of the peer-led approach to GT.
7. UNICEF adoption of the multi-sectoral programme planning and implementation approach which has enabled adolescents to benefit from the UCO programmes holistically.
8. UNICEF's collaboration with other UN agencies and development partners for joint resource mobilization and implementation of adolescent programmes, with gender transformative initiatives.
9. UNICEF's strategy of designing adolescent development models and approaches that are applicable to all contexts (humanitarian, conflict, and development contexts).

Weaknesses and Challenges to GTP

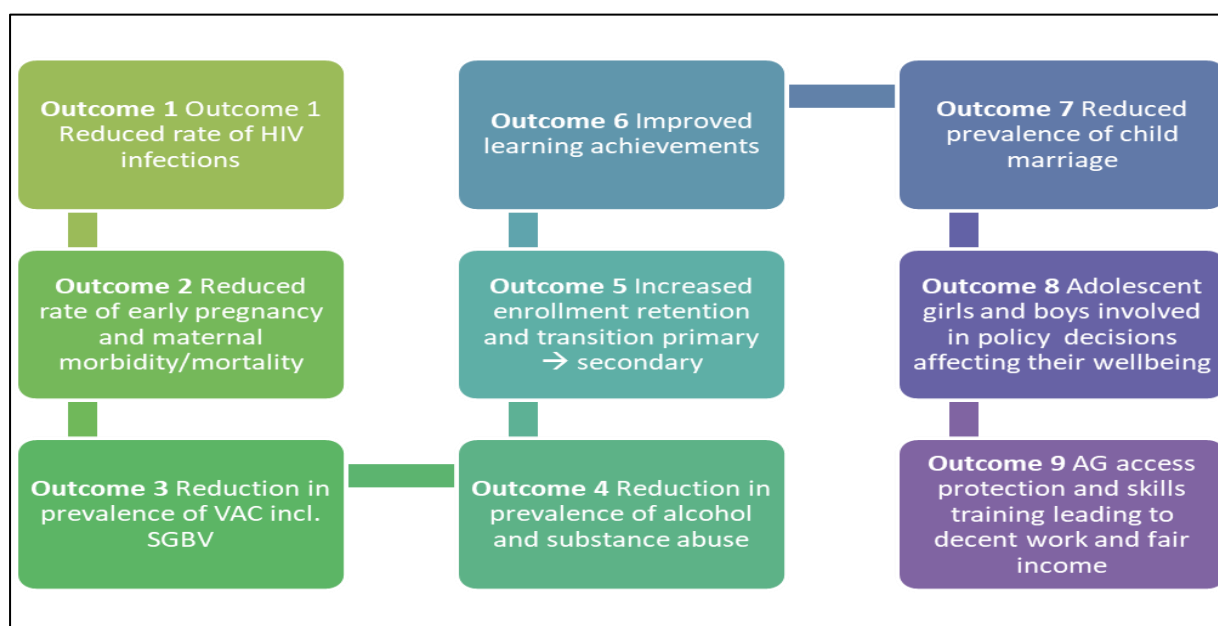
The entrenched traditional cultural norms in families and societies have affected the progress of the UCO in the enhancement of agency among adolescent girls and boys. There is varied prioritization of gender transformative outcomes for adolescent girls among the different strategic partners involved in joint adolescent programming. While UNICEF prioritizes so, other partners have varied priorities.

1. Varied understanding of the Concept of GTP internally among UNICEF staff and other stakeholders they work with. There have been limited trainings on GTP so far.
2. Further, there is varied mainstreaming of GT interventions into the different programmes. Some of the programmes have exhibited more strength in GTP than others.
3. The inclusiveness aspects for adolescents with disabilities have been moderate. This category of persons, including the refugee adolescent girls are more disadvantaged and could be more targeted by the UCO to attain Gender Transformative results that could be scaled up by other partners.
4. Limited platforms for adolescents to express themselves at the Local Government level where they would be seen actively engaging with their leaders and views acted upon. This affects the sustainability of GTP at the local level.
5. The entrenched traditional cultural norms in families and societies have relatively affected the progress of the UCO in the enhancement of agency among adolescent girls and boys.
6. There is varied prioritization of gender transformative outcomes for adolescent girls among the different strategic partners involved in joint adolescent programming. While UNICEF prioritizes so, other partners have varied priorities.

Multi-sectoral approach vs targeted GTP approach

In Uganda, the UCO has worked closely with different Government sectors of Education, Health, Justice, Law and Order (JLO) and Social Protection (MoGLSD) sectors, to improve the lives of adolescent girls and boys. UNICEF's adolescent interventions are guided by the National Multi-Sectoral Framework for Adolescent Girls (2018-2023) which supports the achievement of national aspirations for adolescents and youths. The framework consolidates adolescent needs from all sectors and summarizes them into 9 key adolescent investment areas to be implemented by Government and its partners. The UCO supports the Government in the implementation of this National Coordination Framework and results defined within its scope.

Fig 5.1: National Multi-Sectoral Framework for Adolescent Girls (2018-2023)



Source: UNICEF Country Office; Information Note for UNICEF ESARO Evaluation (2023)

The framework contains outcome indicators on Education, health, social protection, and policy which requires different government sectors to effectively coordinate with other partners to address adolescents' needs. Internally within UNICEF, implementation of the different interventions within the framework is cross-sectoral and convergent in nature.

In essence, the teams from the different programmes; e.g., Child Protection, Child Survival and Development (CSD), BEAD, and Social Behavioural Change (SBC), among others, work together to achieve the framework outcomes. The UCO has implemented the framework outcomes in collaboration with the MoES, MoH and MoGLSD. Similarly, the UCO has worked at sub-national level with the different District Local Governments to implement interventions in both the development and humanitarian contexts.

When compared to targeted GT programming, the multi-sectoral approach has ensured that adolescent girls are supported and transformed more holistically by different sectors and actors based on their needs. For instance, social and economic needs are intersectional and one single sector may not be able to address most of the needs of adolescent girls. Taking the example of the GEG intervention, the Education component in GEG is the mandate of the MoES to implement, the health services provision is the mandate of the MoH, while income generation, social protection and cultural aspects are under the mandate of the MoGLSD. This multi-sectoral programme approach has helped to maintain the adolescent girls and boys in the GEG programme, and their needs addressed holistically.

UNICEF's support for MHM interventions in the country from *Strategic Plan Development* to awareness creation and supporting the provision of adolescent girl-friendly WASH facilities in some schools is a positive multi-sectoral gender transformative intervention. It falls within the education, health, and social protection sectors of the country. Menstrual Hygiene Management has improved the UNICEF-targeted schools because of the multi-sectoral arrangement.

Analysis

To a large extent, there are more benefits from implementing gender transformative programmes using a multi-sectoral approach compared to targeted GTP.

Efficiency

EQ 6. To what extent has UNICEF allocated adequate resources to adolescent girls programming that is gender transformative and supports their leadership and agency in ESAR?

There is no specific budget allocated for implementing GT programmes in the UCO. The resources are allocated for the implementation of broader gender outputs and outcomes. Currently therefore, it is difficult to determine the extent to which resources have been allocated for specifically GTP to support leadership and agency for the adolescent girls. There is, however, a big budget for adolescent participation as highlighted below:

1. For the Country Programme 2016 – 2020, the country office delivered gender focused interventions amounting to approx. USD 164,536,362 (49% of overall funds). Of this, USD 92,788,663 was geared at catalysing efforts towards adolescent development and participation.¹⁷²
2. For the current Country Programme 2021 – 2025, the Country Office as of June 2023, had invested approx. USD 112,770,146 (54% of overall funds utilized) to gender focused interventions. Of this, USD 95,374,531 is geared at strengthening adolescent development and participation.

With specific reference to the GEG programme, by 2023, UNICEF had spent a total of UGX 1,453,259, 750 (USD 396,199.49) in cash transfers to adolescent girls, both in and out of school.

Intersectionality in Resource Allocation

There is no specific tool for tracking expenditure on adolescent girls with disabilities, refugee girls, and adolescent girls in hard-to-reach areas. UNICEF Country Office has adopted the inclusive approach for their programming and therefore these categories of people are included in most programmes as

¹⁷² UNICEF Country Office Planning, Finance and M&E reports

participants. This implies that accountabilities for programme performance are inclusive of the different categories of adolescent girls including those mentioned hereof.

Consideration of gender and age dimensions

Regarding this aspect, the gender aspect is considered in programme design, and this justifies the fact that most reports have gender-disaggregated data. The reflection of ages is considered at programme design and reporting stages. For example, the GEG intervention targets 10–19-year-olds. The adolescent volunteers in the ADAP **presently constitute 65% girls and 35% boys and of these, 40% (364) are between 10-14 years and 60% (536) are aged 15-19 years**.¹⁷³

Whether there are resources to specifically Target Adolescent Girls within GTP

It is difficult to identify the amount of specific resources that have been allocated to adolescent girls within GTP girls. Programmes are developed holistically including all activities, and therefore resource allocation and expenditure are reported according to the activity implemented, and not disaggregated by participant group. To demonstrate this challenge, one of the UNICEF respondents said:

“The first challenge is that there is no direct funding for GTP. The funding we get is sometimes cross-cutting. Gender issues are not clearly understood and prioritized. When I talk about maternal and child health, they will give me that money because it is clearly understood. When I talk about nutrition, they will give me that money, but if I talk about gender and nutrition, not many will understand me and the relationship between those two concepts. Little do they know that gender issues are a barrier to accessing nutrition for the mothers and adolescent girls. So, unless I hide my gender inside that nutrition, I'm not going to get that funding” (UNICEF respondent)

UNICEF Country Office allocates resources for adolescent girls programming in the following ways:

1. Supporting Policy development in favour of the adolescent girls (School Re-Entry Guidelines, Guidelines for Prevention and Management of Teenage Pregnancy in *school settings*, *Draft MHM Strategic Plan*, among others).
2. Supporting adolescent Programme development, interventions, and strategy implementation e.g., GEG, ADAP, i-UPSHIFT, Life Skills Toolkit, and adolescent-led models e.g., YAPS and G-ANC/PNC models, among others. In the years 2016-2020, the UCO spent USD 92,788,633 on adolescent development and participation (49%) of the Country Office's overall budget, while in the 202-2025, the resource envelope has increased to USD 95,374,531 (54%) of the overall budget.
3. Construction of WASH interventions in some schools for better menstrual hygiene management and access to safe drinking water in schools.

Overall Analysis

To a large extent, the UCO has allocated adequate resources for adolescent girls' programming but not specifically for GTP. Resources are spent under a broader umbrella of Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP) and Gender, but not solely for adolescent girls' GTP interventions that support their leadership and agency in the ESAR.

Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

EQ 7. To what extent do UNICEF programmes' monitoring, reporting and evaluation (MER) systems explicitly, or implicitly address gender transformative programming with a view to generating evidence on UNICEF and public sector performance?

¹⁷³ Adolescent Volunteer Initiative-UNICEF, *Volunteer Led Transformation: Revised Road Map for the Adolescent Volunteer Initiative (2021-2025)*

A review of the UNICEF and implementing partners' reports revealed that some GTP indicators were integrated into the M&E system as indicated in table 4 below. The thematic officers and IPs are required to report about these as Standard CPD Indicators. Some of the indicators have some GTP aspects reflecting the voice, agency, and leadership aspects of GTP.

Evidence of data generation for Public Sector Performance

In the CPD document (M&E section), the UCO commits to supporting the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) as well as line ministries for routine administrative data systems. Consultation with key informants from the line Ministries of Education and Health revealed that UNICEF has supported them by developing simple databases for recording the progress of the different interventions they support. It is from the line Ministries that some information is fed to UBOS for sectoral performance analysis. In the health sector for instance, the YAPS and G-ANC/PNC data, including that from the USAID-funded DREAMS and RHITES HIV Programmes, has been used to inform national progress assessment and response to HIV interventions in the country.

Programme Monitoring

UNICEF programme monitoring as indicated in the CPD consists of physical programmatic visits, monitoring of key indicators contained both in the CPD and specific programmes, partner reporting, as well as third-party. In partnership programmes, indicators are developed jointly and monitored based on the agreed upon indicators and desired outcomes. It is a mandatory responsibility for programme implementers to report on the planned indicators, regardless of whether gender is transformative or not. There are no specific incentives for reporting about gender transformative outcomes within the UCO, as it is obligatory by all those implementing the different interventions. As stated by UNICEF and partner key informants, a budget is provided by the UCO for monitoring of activities implemented by the Country Programme.

The outcomes of the country programme are monitored through surveys, and other mechanisms, like the U-report, physical FGD consultations and partner reports. The finding is in line with the findings from FGDs where the adolescent girls testified to their activities being monitored by the UCO and through the IPs.

Evaluation

As stated in the CPD, the M & E section of the UCO conducts quarterly, mid-year and annual programme reviews, both internally and with partners to assess the progress that informs strategic programme decisions. A case in point is the current GTP evaluation, with impact stories drawn from the different existing reports and website links. The M & E Section has an Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, which is complemented by a costed evaluation plan, and these articulate all priority monitoring, research, and evaluation activities. In the period 2021–2025 for instance, the CPD committed the UCO to conduct four evaluations in health systems-strengthening, WASH, school as an integrated platform for service delivery and child-protection systems-strengthening. Important to note is that the standard indicators to be monitored, reported about, and evaluated, are contained in the CPD M & E framework (pp 12-17), and have both the outcome and indicative output indicators for all programmes.

Table 4: The Country Programme Indicators; (CPD 2021-2025)

UNICEF CPD Outcome Indicators (2021-2025)	Indicative programme output relevant to GTP	Related UCO Programme	Comment
	Evaluation		

1. By 2025, newborns, children, and adolescent boys and girls, especially the most disadvantaged and those living in development and humanitarian situations as well as urban settings, have increased access to and use of quality integrated health, nutrition, HIV and early stimulation services and benefit from a more nurturing, protective and clean environment.	1.3. By 2025, the Government and stakeholders at the national and subnational levels will have increased capacity to expand and sustainably provide, while families and communities will have an increased capacity to demand, a package of quality services for adolescent boys and girls, including programmes aimed at preventing HIV, establishing healthy lifestyle behaviours and diets and reducing harmful exposures and risk-taking.	Child Survival and Development (CSD).	The indicators resonate with the YAPS and the G-ANC Models that have boosted the agency and leadership among the adolescent girls and boys.
	1.4. By 2025, the Government and stakeholders at the national and subnational levels will have increased capacity to expand and sustainably provide, while families and communities will have an increased capacity to demand, a package of high-impact nutrition interventions for infants, children, adolescents and women of reproductive age.		
	1.5. By 2025, the Government and stakeholders at the national and subnational levels will have increased capacity to sustainably increase access to and the use of quality/safe drinking water, improved sanitation and positive hygiene practices in rural and poor urban households and communities as well as institutions.		
2. By 2025, girls and boys aged 3 to 19 progressively achieve age-appropriate learning outcomes.	2.3. By 2025, adolescent girls and boys will be empowered with life skills, active citizenship and/or employability.	BEAD	The indicators correspond with the Life Skills Toolkit, School Clubs and i-UPSHIFT interventions that have enhanced the voice, leadership and agency of the adolescent girls both in and out of school.
3. By 2025, children in Uganda, especially the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian situations, are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, including harmful practices, and	3.1. Strengthened legislative, policy, budgetary and institutional frameworks that protect children from all forms of violence in Uganda by 2025	Child Protection (CP)	The indicator relates to the CP interventions (AVI, G-ECM, UNJP-FGM, and EU/UN Spotlight Initiative, that have GTP elements that relate to tackling the harmful gender, social-cultural norms and practices that affect adolescent girls
	3.2. Children, families and communities have the capacity to identify risks and prevent and respond to all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children by 2025.		

realize their right to a legal identity.	3.3. Children and their families are accessing quality multisectoral protection services including birth registration by 2025.		
4. By 2025, child- sensitive evidence and analysis inform more effective and efficient planning, budgeting and implementation of programmes for reducing child deprivation, inequities and gender inequalities, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized children and adolescents.	4.2 Strengthened national capacity to support the implementation of the National Social Protection Policy framework through contextualized interventions in urban areas and along the humanitarian-development continuum 4.3 Enabling environment for child rights governance that includes strengthening the capacity of national institutions, civil society and other key stakeholders to advocate for children, while advancing child rights and participation.	Social Policy (SP)	The outputs are directly related to the Social Protection interventions such as the GEG that has economically and socially empowered the in and Out of school adolescents and has enhanced leadership through the group formation strategy.
5. By 2025, the UNICEF Uganda country programme is efficiently designed, coordinated, managed and supported to meet quality programming standards in achieving results for children.	5.3. Programme planning, monitoring, cross-sectoral coordination and donor relations 5.4. Evaluations 5.5. Communications, advocacy and partnerships 5.6. Communication for Development	Programme Effectiveness	This is the basis for cross-sectoral programme development, implementation and evaluation strategies for the UCO.

Analysis of the indicators above reveals that both the outcome and output indicators in the CPD were well formulated, and they directly relate to the UCO Programmes currently implemented. Some of the indicators are gender transformative in nature.

Programmes indicator analysis

A brief analysis of some of the indicators specified for the four programmes in the UCO, revealed that they have some embedment of GTP indicators, however, these varied across the different programmes. Outstandingly, however, all the indicators relate to gender aspects and are more skewed to adolescent girls as a priority. See indicators below.

Table 4.1: Core Programme Indicators

S/N	UCO Programme	Indicators
1	Child Survival and Development (CSD)	- Increased proportion of women receiving at least four antenatal visits [disaggregated by age to cover the adolescent age-band]. - Increased access to antiretroviral therapy for children and adolescents living with HIV. - Improved access to quality maternal and adolescent friendly services (live births attended by skilled health personnel).
2	Basic Education and Adolescent Development (BEAD)	- Reduced out-of-school rate for girls and boys of primary and lower secondary school age. - Increasing the number of adolescents and young people who participate in or lead civic engagement initiatives

3	Child Protection (CP)	Strengthened capacity of government and communities to protect women and children from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect, and harmful practices such as gender-based violence, Child Marriage, female genital mutilation, among others.
4	Social Policy and advocacy	Increased access to gender responsive social protection/assistance for adolescent girls.

Embedding and resourcing of evaluations of gender transformative programming in order to demonstrate attributable impact

Currently, there is some evidence that the UCO and the IPs have documented some GTP impact stories (as annexed) however, these are “scattered” in different documents. There are no exclusively allocated resources for GTP impact documentation.

Analysis

To a large extent, the UCO’s M & E system addresses gender transformative indicators in their system at different levels. Analysis of the outcome indicators in the CPD (2021-2025) reveals that gender transformative outcomes were prioritized; reflected in outcomes 3 and 4, and the respective indicative output indicators. At programme level, the gender transformative indicators are mainstreamed but on a varying scale, with some programmes having more clearly defined indicators than others.

Sustainability

EQ 8. To what extent are the positive changes and effects of gender transformative programming on adolescent girls’ leadership and agency sustainable at the national level, and/ or likely to be scaled up by government, or civil society?

In the context of this GTP formative evaluation, *sustainability* refers to the extent to which the positive changes and effects of GTP are likely to be continued and or scaled up by the UCO and its implementing partners. At the national level, UNICEF has embraced the strategy of integrating of GTP aspects into the National Policy Documents using a sectoral approach (MoES, MoH, and MoGLSD). UNICEF is working with the Government to support improvement in the policy environment that aims to achieve gender responsiveness and transformation in a more sustainable way.

Through the institutionalization approach, the Life Skills Toolkit was adopted by 738 schools across 23 districts in 2022. In 2020 in the Karamoja sub region 80 schools (64 primary and 16 secondary) had integrated life skills in their improvement work plans.¹⁷⁴ Teachers have been trained to deliver the structured life skills sessions to the learners through the school clubs as a safe space for adolescents to learn. UNICEF has ensured that vocational skilling for adolescent girls and boys is adopted in the technical and vocational education and training centers institutions and the Non-Formal Education Centres under the MoGLSD.

A scan was taken through some of the specific interventions to assess whether they had sustainability strategies. In the AVI revised roadmap (2023-2025), there is an intentional objective of providing a platform for adolescents to talk about how to transform power relations, harmful social norms and practices affecting girls, in a way that will ensure all girls in Uganda are meaningfully skilled. Although this objective relates to GTP, a review of the Road Map document revealed that the sustainability strategies were not documented. Similarly, the i-UPSHIFT Scale Up Strategy (2023-2025) lacks a documented subsection on sustainability strategies for the intervention. This is an area that needs reflection in the current programming.

At the civil society level, the evaluation found that there was a heavy reliance on UNICEF funding and therefore may be difficult for the four interviewed Implementing partners to sustain the gender transformative outcomes so far attained. No sustainability strategies or plans were shared with the

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

evaluation team to demonstrate how they planned to scale up and sustain gender-transformative outcomes now and in the future.

Whether there are systems and partnerships to build ownership, capacity, and resources to support programmes' scale up by government or take up by other civil society partners.

1. **Institutionalization strategy:** UNICEF has been supporting gender mainstreaming trainings through the MoES in schools and teacher training institutions. The Gender Unit of the MoES has often mobilized resources from other donors and development partners outside UNICEF, (e.g., from UN Women, UNFPA, Irish AID, UNESCO, etc) to implement gender interventions in schools as one of the sustainability strategies.
2. **Partnership arrangements:** There has been joint programming among UN agencies, and these have often collaborated with government Ministries. The EU /UN Spotlight Initiative that was due to end in July 2023 was under the sector lead of the MoGLSD. The Education Plus programme has the leadership of the MoES from the government side, while the recently developed UN Adolescent and Youth Joint Programme is under the sector lead of MoGLSD too.

Overall Analysis

Sustainability of GTP interventions in terms of positive changes and effects is likely to vary among the UCO stakeholders. While Government sectors are likely to sustain the GT interventions through their institutionalization and multi-partnership approach, the IPs may not be able to do so. This is partly attributed to funding challenges and the lack of a documented sustainability strategy for their interventions.

Impact

EQ 9. To what extent are new or planned interventions likely to lend themselves to achieving higher level change for adolescent girls in future?

The new jointly designed programme like the UN Adolescent and Youth Joint Programme (2023-2025) involving 13 United Nations agencies is likely to influence high-level change for adolescents. The programme is aimed at enhancing adolescent and youth participation in the different aspects that affect their lives. Adolescents and young people will be represented through the National Youth Council and the National Students Association. Similarly, the multi-sectoral PROSPECTS partnership programme is likely to positively impact on the adolescent girls too. Adolescent girls have been a particular focus of this joint programme.

Impacts identified from the interventions

1. The joint effort by UNICEF thematic programme officers from BEAD, ADAP and the SBC teams among others, contributed to the teenage mothers and pregnant girls to re-enrol back into schools. See the story below from TMF, one of the IPs of UNICEF.

“Last year (2022), UNICEF recruited 750 peer advocates/educators who were taken through a series of training including those on life skills. These were young people aged 10 to 19 who supported UNICEF in disseminating the MoES School Re-entry Guidelines for Pregnant Girls and Child Mothers. Through their peer-to-peer action, the 750 peer advocates were able to map their fellow young people, particularly the pregnant girls (who were mostly adolescents) and child mothers who had dropped out of school. The peer advocates took the adolescents' profiles and approached their parents to support their children by enrolling them back in schools and or in skilling centres. UNICEF was able to support the re-enrolment of 1,290 pregnant girls and child mothers in Karamoja sub-region alone.”

2. The Life skills and the mentorship delivered through UNICEF programmes have built confidence and self-esteem among adolescent girls to engage national, and local leaders and parents about some of

the issues affecting them. The impacts of the life skills and the P2P approach are demonstrated in the impact story from TMF and War Child Canada;

“My friend had stayed home for two years without going to school. I kept telling her that school is very important, and she said if I wanted her to return to school, I talk to her father to pay her school fees again. I went I met her father, and I requested him to pay Natali’s school fees. He told me let me think about it, but he finally paid, today Natalie is in senior two at old Kampala secondary school” (Trailblazers Mentoring Foundation Impact Stories).

“i-UPSHIFT improved my critical thinking skills, including the way I stand in front of people and talk. I am now confident and can express myself without thinking that maybe my ideas are wrong. I have learnt to believe in myself; however, our confidence needs to be tested outside the refugee settlement and see if we can influence any change. Here in the camp, people are traumatized by war and can accept anything” (i-UPSHIFT Adolescent girl within the age range of 16-19 years in Nakivaale refugee settlement, Isingiro District).

3. There has been increased awareness about the Child violence, and the negative impacts of FGM and child marriage among adolescents and targeted communities. Through the UNICEF and UNFPA Global Programme to End Child Marriage (GP-ECM), the UN Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation (UNJ-FGM) and the UN Spotlight Initiative, awareness about the three forms of injustice has been raised. Positive impacts of reduced cases of violence against women, including FGM, have been realised in different parts of the country, e.g., the Sebei and Karamoja sub-regions.

4. Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) interventions, which include awareness creation, and provision of Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) facilities in schools, have gained prominence. In most Ugandan societies, MHM presents as an issue that “cannot” be discussed in public, however, the UCO has supported interventions to make MHM known to the public and the support needed for adolescent girls. The development of the draft MHM Strategic Plan in the MoES was supported by the UCO.

Adolescents' Perspective of Impact

During interaction with the adolescent girls and boys in the Focus Group Discussions in Kampala and Gulu, they shared some of the positive impacts that had accrued to them as a result of participating in the UCO programmes. The socio-ecological model was applied by the national consultant to aid in assessing the changes that have happened at the different levels. Findings revealed that most impacts for the adolescents had happened at the personal level, evidenced by the number of participants in Figure 4 below. The most mentioned impact was that of improvements in self-esteem and confidence and being able to return to school. At the school level was the impact of active participation in school clubs, while at the family level, a few adolescents (two of them) indicated being trusted and listened to by parents.

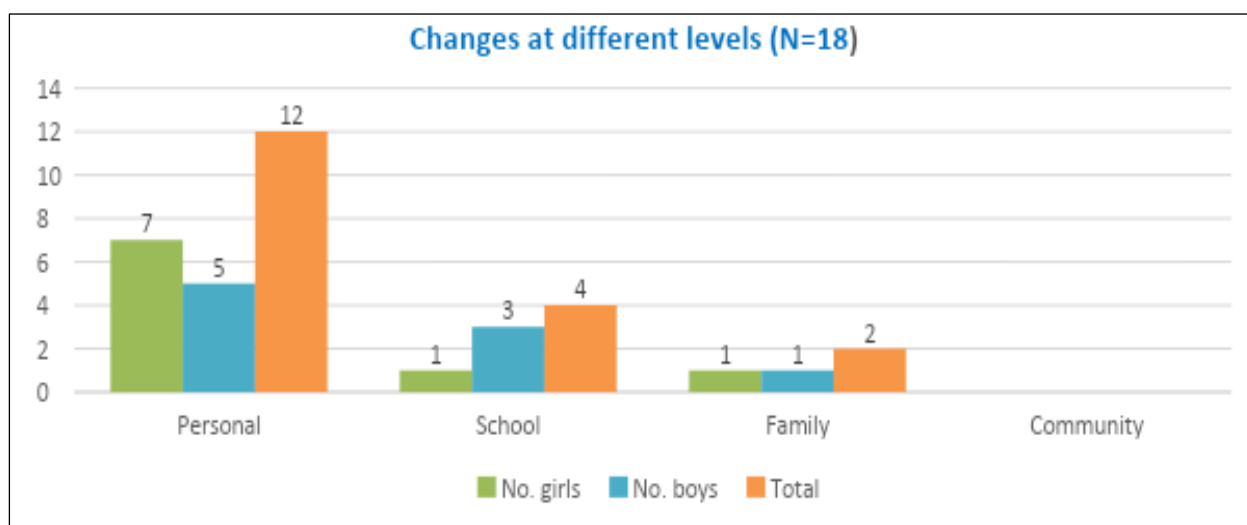


Figure 6: Adolescent changes at the different levels (Source: FGDs-Kampala and Gulu, July 2023)

Further analysis of findings from the eight adolescent panel interviews that were conducted by fellow adolescents in Kampala and Isingiro district, revealed similar results. Six of the eight adolescents aged 13-19 shared that the changes happened more at a personal level.

Overall analysis

Analysis of the planned and existing interventions found that to a large extent, these are likely to facilitate higher level change for adolescent girls in the future.

CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND CONSIDERATIONS

This section of the report discusses the conclusions from the case study evaluation in relation to Gender Transformative (GT) programming for adolescent girls in the ESAR and specifically the UCO. The lessons learnt from the implementation of the interventions drawing on the analysis of the evaluator are also discussed as the recommendations to improve GT programming by the UCO.

Conclusions

The conclusions are informed by the overarching evaluation question and the other corresponding evaluation questions relating to relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, M&E, sustainability, and impact.

Overarching finding

The evaluation found that to **a large extent**, the UCO has invested in adolescent girl programming, however, the investment has so far yielded moderate results on the aspects of girls' voice, agency and leadership overall, as a central approach within GTP. Comparatively, the aspects of voice and leadership are on a much higher scale of achievement compared to "agency".

Specifically, the different voice expression platforms, have been moderately used by adolescents to challenge harmful gender, social-cultural norms and practices affecting them. Agency achievement is partly affected by; (i) Intervention designs-some of which are more agency-oriented than others; a case of i-UPSHIFT and GEG; (ii) The traditional dominance of adults in the decision-making space at the family and societal level compared to children and adolescents. For the *leadership* aspect, adolescent girls have demonstrated their capabilities, but this needs to be more reflected and strengthened towards tackling the harmful norms and practices threatening their well-being and participation in development.

Relevance

To a large extent, the UCO has designed its programmes for adolescent girls based on a thorough understanding of the country's context in relation to adolescent programming. Some of the challenges facing adolescent girls like; poverty, school dropout, limited life and employability skills, child marriage, teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS, among others, are being addressed through the four UCO programmes namely; CSD, BEAD, CP and SP.

Coherence

The UCO has to a **large extent** aligned its adolescent girl focused interventions to the UNICEF Strategic Plan (2022-2025), Uganda National Development Priorities (NDP III) and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There is alignment of the UCO programmes to UNICEF Gender Action Plan (2022-2025) and Gender Policy (2021-2030). Similarly, the UCO operations are guided by the broader United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF); a core instrument for providing a coherent, strategic direction for UN development activities by all UN entities at the country level. Further, the UCO adolescent programmes are aligned to UNICEF ESARO regional strategies in the different sectors of education, health, and social protection, among others.

Effectiveness

UNICEF Country Office is on course to achieving the objectives of GTP. **Largely**, there have been concerted efforts by the UCO to mainstream gender transformative programming in their interventions, also reflected in the Country Programme Document (CPD, 2021-2025)-in outcomes 3 and 4. The UCO was robust in designing adolescent-friendly approaches that have facilitated their effective participation in the adolescent interventions. These have facilitated the achievement of the current GT results so far. The approaches include; (i) Empowerment of adolescent girls focusing on the 21st-century skills development (ii) Agency enhancement through volunteer-led action, (iii) Deliberate programming to address the specific needs of adolescent girls, and (iv) Systemic and meaningful engagement through the establishment of structures adolescent girls and boys to participate in decision making. The UCO's overall contribution of the programmes to enhancing the voice, agency and leadership has been rated moderate overall, with the voice and leadership aspects featuring prominently in implementation and achievements, compared to "agency".

Efficiency

No specific amount of resources were found to have been allocated specifically for GTP implementation, due to the integrated nature of their programme designs. **Largely**, however, there is evidence that the UCO is strong on adolescent girl programming and has consecutively over 50% of its budget to adolescent programmes. Gender interventions are implemented within this resource framework. To demonstrate the UCO's prioritization of gender and adolescent programming, for the current Country Programme 2021 – 2025, the Country Office as of June 2023, had invested approx. USD 112,770,146 (54% of overall funds utilized) to gender-focused interventions. Of this, USD 95,374,531 is geared at strengthening adolescent development and participation. The UCO has demonstrated its efficient use of resources through the demonstration of the current GT results.

Monitoring and Evaluation

To a large extent, the UCO's programmes monitoring, reporting and evaluation (MER) systems explicitly, address gender transformative programming with a view to generating evidence on UNICEF and public sector performance. The UCO has aligned its gender transformative programme outcome indicators to national priorities (NDP III), UNICEF CPD (2021-2025), the UNCSD (2021-2025), UNICEF ESARO and the respective Sustainable Development Goals on gender equality, skills empowerment, health, and WASH. The M & E section of the UCO has a mechanism for monitoring, reporting, and evaluating both the CPD and programme indicators, including those that are gender transformative in nature. All implementing partners including the UCO staff mandatorily report about the performance of their respective indicators.

Sustainability

While the UCO has designed promising GTP interventions, their sustainability is likely to vary among the implementing partners. The Government sectors are likely to sustain the GT interventions through their institutionalization and multi-partnership approach compared to the IPs. This is partly attributed to the IPs not having sustainable funding for their programmes. The IPs further lack a documented sustainability strategy for the GT interventions supported by the UCO. This is likely to diminish the visibility of the positive results so far attained through GT programming.

Lessons Learned

1. Effective mainstreaming of gender transformative interventions into the Country programmes depends on the harmonized understanding of the key concepts among UCO staff and implementing partners. This has an implication for the design of activities, outcomes and output indicators that directly and strongly relate to gender transformation.
2. Implementing gender transformation as a cross-cutting issue among the different sector interventions of education, health, child and social protection, presents a high possibility of achieving gender transformative outcomes on a large scale.
3. In Gender Transformative Programming within the ESAR, the achievement of the “agency” aspect is partly affected by the prevailing gender, social-cultural norms and practices that tend to shrink the adolescent space in decision-making at the household and societal levels.
4. Both gender-transformative and gender-responsive programming complement each other to improve adolescent outcomes relating to their development, participation, and well-being.
5. Adoption of the multi-sectoral, cross-sectoral and adolescent-led approaches and initiatives is central to achieving gender-transformative outcomes for adolescent girls and boys.
6. Availability of the Government will and enabling policy framework facilitates easier and more effective implementation of adolescent interventions in the country.

Considerations

1. The UCO could prioritize conducting refresher GTP capacity development initiatives for effective mainstreaming and implementation of GT interventions in the UCO. A review of the current GAP (2022-2025), the CPD, the UNICEF Adolescent Girls Programme Strategy (2022-2025), and the UNICEF's Gender Policy (2021-2030) with the programme thematic staff in the UCO is highly recommended. The documents have sturdy content on GTP that the thematic staff need to adopt.
2. The Adolescent Development Manager could consider conducting a programmes review (for CSD, BEAD, CP and SP) with programme staff to reflect on the extent to which gender transformative activities, strategies, output and outcome indicators are sharply designed to contribute to GTP outcomes in the UCO and ESAR. Strategies to strengthen the voice, agency and leadership of adolescent girls and boys should be central in the review.
3. Similarly, there is need to strengthen gender transformation as a cross cutting priority component to be implemented by the different sector staff in education, health, child and social protection. The aspect.
4. The UCO could strategically position themselves as agents that will influence a shift in gender programming from being responsive to transformative as well. This can be achieved through joint programming and engagement with other strategic partnerships.
5. Although adolescent participation and development is central to the UCO's programming, this should be reviewed to ensure that adolescents participate actively in all stages of project and programme development; that is to say; planning, implementation and monitoring, and evaluation. An adolescent feedback mechanism should be prioritized in the UCO programming.
6. The UCO is urged to develop a strategy for documentation of best practices and sustainability of the GTP outcomes implemented by the UCO.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. List of Documents Consulted

1	Title	Author	Year
2	ADAP Project Summary report	Trailblazers Mentoring Foundation	2023
3	Adolescent Volunteer Initiative – Volunteer Led Transformation: Revised Road Map for the Adolescent Volunteer Initiative	UNICEF Country Office	2021-2025
4	Basic Education and Adolescent Development Programme –BEAD; Summary of the Skills for Life and Work for Adolescents and Youths in Uganda	UNICEF Country Office	2021-2025
5	Building Back Equal, with and For Adolescent Girls; A Programme Strategy for UNICEF	UNICEF Country Office	2022-2025
6	District Health Information System-2 of Ministry of Health	Ministry of Health	2021
7	Education and Adolescent Development Programme –ADAP-(UNICEF Country Office-2021-2025); Summary of the Skills for Life and Work for Adolescents and Youths in Uganda	UNICEF Country Office	2021-2025
8	Girls Education Strategy Review Report	Ministry of Education and Sports-Uganda	2019
9	Girls Empowering Girls-Uganda First Urban Social Protection Programme for Adolescent Girls in Kampala; Programme Scale Up-Phase 2 (GEG Policy Brief Roll Out-Key Lessons Learned)	UNICEF Country Office	2023
10	HIV IMPACT Assessment Summary Sheet:	Uganda Population-Based HIV-Impact Assessment	2022
11	https://ureport.ug/opinions/	UNICEF Country Office	Accessed 27 July 2023
12	Integrated UPSHIFT-(i-UPSHIFT) Scale Up Strategy	UNICEF Country Office	2023-2025
13	Education Management Information System Report	Ministry of Education and Sports	2016/17
14	Ministry of Education and Sports Sector Analysis Report	Ministry of Education and Sports	2019
15	Violence against Children in Uganda: Findings from a National Survey	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and UNICEF Country Office	2018
16	Ministry of Health Management Information System (HMIS) - Report	Ministry of Health	2020
17	National Multi-sectoral Coordination Framework for Adolescent girls	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development	2017/18-2021/2022

		and UNICEF Country Office	
18	National Multi-sectoral Coordination Framework for Adolescent girls	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and UNICEF Country Office	2017/18-2021/2022
19	Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa	RELI	2022
20	Revised Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of teenage pregnancy in school settings in Uganda.	Ministry of Education and Sports	2020
21	Situational Analysis Study on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in 14 districts of Uganda	Ministry of Education and Sports	2020
22	UNICEF Country Office-Promoting Access to Quality and Equitable Education for Karamoja Children; Irish Aid-11 th Progress Report	UNICEF Country Office	2022
23	Two (Pager summary of the Life Skills Education Programme-part of the Education and Adolescent Development Programme.	UNICEF Country Office	2023
24	Census and Population Projections Report	Uganda Bureau of Statistics	2021
25	Uganda Demographic Health Survey	Ministry of Health	2016/17
26	Uganda Police Force Annual Crime Report	Uganda Police	2020
27	L2E Multiple Pathways in Uganda summary document-Education and Adolescent Development Programme	UNICEF Country Office	2021-2025
28	UNICEF Gender Action Plan	UNICEF	2022-2025
29	UNICEF Gender Policy	UNICEF	2021-2030
30	UNICEF Project Progress Report-Schools as an Integrated Platform for Protection and Empowerment of Adolescent girls in Adjumani district of West Nile; (the 7 fund David Beckham foundation); progress report to the UK National Committee for UNICEF/David Beckham UNICEF fund; 31 March 2023	UNICEF Country Office	2023
31	UNICEF Strategic Plan	UNICEF	2022-2025
32	UNICEF Country Office Programme Strategy Note; 2021–2025 Country Programme Document; Basic Education and Adolescent Development Outcome (2019) –submitted to ESARO	UNICEF Country Office	2021
33	UNICEF Country Office-Promoting Access to Quality and Equitable Education for Karamoja Children; Irish Aid-10 th Progress Report	UNICEF Country Office	2022

Annex 2. Stakeholders Interviewed

S/N	In-Country Stakeholders Category	Title	Organization/ Programme
Unicef Country Team			
1	Key Informant	Adolescent Programme Manager-UNICEF Country Office	UNICEF Country Office
2	Key Informant	Program Analyst-in Charge of Protection, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	UNICEF Country Office
3	Key Informant	Social Behavioural Change Specialist	UNICEF Country Office
4	Key Informant	Education Specialist-In Charge of Life Skills Education	UNICEF Country Office
5	Key Informant	Child Protection Specialist in Charge of Prevention of Violence Against Children, Harmful Practices and GBV Risks Mitigation and Response	UNICEF Country Office
6	Key Informant	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	UNICEF Country Office
Other United Nations Agencies			
7	Key Informant	Programme Specialist-Ending Violence Against Women and Girls-Head of Sub Office - Moroto	UN Women
8	Key Informant	Programme Analyst GBV and Harmful Practices-Moroto District Office	UNFPA
Government Representatives			
9	Key Informant	Gender Technical Advisor	MoES
10	Key Informant	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development	MoGLSD
11	Key Informant	MoH	MoH-HIV programme
Unicef Implementing Partners (CSOs)			
12	Key Informant	Executive Director-UNICEF IP	TMF
13	Key Informant	Monitoring and Evaluation	TMF
14	Key Informant	Programme Officer	TMF
15	Key Informant	Uganda Youth Development Link-Senior Programme Officer-GEG Focal Point Person-UNICEF IP	UYDEL
16	Key Informant	War Child Canada-Isingiro	War Child Canada
17	Key Informant	Interim ED-The Recreation Project (TRP-ED)	TRP
18	Key Informant	Programme Coordinator-TRP	TRP
Adolescent Panels (Ap) Interviewers			
1	AP Interviewer	GEG Participant (Kampala)	TMF
2	AP Interviewer	GEG Participant (Kampala)	TMF
3	AP Interviewer	i-UPSHIFT (Gulu)	TRP
4	AP Interviewer	i-UPSHIFT (Gulu)	TRP

Adolescent Panel Interviewees			
1	AP Interviewee	GEG Participant (Kampala)	TMF
2	AP Interviewee	GEG Participant (Kampala)	TMF
3	AP Interviewee	GEG Participant (Kampala)	TMF
4	AP Interviewee	GEG Participant (Kampala)	TMF
5	AP Interviewee	i-UPSHIFT Participant (Isingiro-Nakivaale Refugee Settlement camp)	War Child Canada
6	AP Interviewee	i-UPSHIFT Participant (Isingiro-Nakivaale Refugee Settlement camp)	War Child Canada
7	AP Interviewee	i-UPSHIFT Participant (Isingiro-Nakivaale Refugee Settlement camp)	War Child Canada
8	AP Interviewee	i-UPSHIFT Participant (Isingiro-Nakivaale Refugee Settlement camp)	War Child Canada
Focus Group Discussion Participants - Kampala			
1	FGD Participant	GEG Participant	TMF
2	FGD Participant	GEG Participant	TMF
3	FGD Participant	GEG Participant	TMF
4	FGD Participant	GEG Participant	TMF
5	FGD Participant	GEG Participant	TMF
6	FGD Participant	GEG Participant	TMF
7	FGD Participant	GEG Participant	TMF
8	FGD Participant	I-UPSHIFT/GEG Participant	UYDEL
9	FGD Participant	I-UPSHIFT/GEG Participant	UYDEL
10	FGD Participant	i-UPSHIFT/ GEG Participant	UYDEL
Focus Group Participants - Gulu			
1	FGD Participant	i-UPSHIFT Participant	TRP
2	FGD Participant	i-UPSHIFT Participant	TRP
3	FGD Participant	i-UPSHIFT Participant	TRP
4	FGD Participant	i-UPSHIFT Participant	TRP
5	FGD Participant	i-UPSHIFT Participant	TRP
6	FGD Participant	i-UPSHIFT Participant	TRP
7	FGD Participant	i-UPSHIFT Participant	TRP
8	FGD Participant	i-UPSHIFT Participant	TRP
Total: 44 participants			

CASE STUDY REPORT

Zimbabwe

Desk Review



CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	178
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	179
BACKGROUND	182
METHODOLOGY	183
KEY FINDINGS	184
CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNED	199
ANNEX 1. LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	201

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evaluation purpose, focus and methods

This desk review is part of a wider formative evaluation of UNICEF's gender transformative programming in Eastern and Southern Africa, with a focus on investment in adolescent girls' leadership, agency, and voice.

Zimbabwe was selected as one of the three desk review case studies, to contribute to the regional evaluation's assessment of the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of gender transformative adolescent girls-focused programming across the UNICEF Zimbabwe Country Office. This review draws on a desk-based analysis of documents and virtual group interviews with 8 key informants, including UNICEF Country Office staff, staff from CSO partners, and members of the Country Office's Adolescent and Youth Advisory Committee.

Key Findings

UNICEF Zimbabwe is investing in youth and adolescent voice, agency and leadership at the country level, however, it is difficult to distil the extent to which this investment is geared specifically towards adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership, or engages with adolescent girls as a key priority group. This is because many of the programmes reviewed focused on both boys and girls and whilst disaggregated data is provided in some programmes, gender or sex disaggregated data was not available for the different stages of the project cycle. Similarly, elements of strengthening voice, agency and leadership are referenced in programmes and strategies, however the extent to which this has been a central approach of gender transformative programming for the Country Office is unclear.

Relevance

The desk review found evidence of where the specific needs of young people were sought and addressed by UNICEF Zimbabwe country programmes, projects and partnerships across various stages of the project cycle. However, a disaggregated focus on adolescent girls is not consistently evident from the data collected.

Youth are featured across all UNICEF Zimbabwe programmes and projects reviewed, largely as project participants or as respondents for data collection, and in some examples as active implementers. There is limited sex disaggregation in any of the projects reviewed, so this review cannot comment how far girls have been specifically engaged.

There are multiple examples from the Adolescent and Youth Advisory Committee which demonstrate key participation and involvement of youth at different stages of the project cycle, including programme monitoring. However, this review is unable to comment on how this involvement has influenced or adapted programme design, reporting, monitoring and evaluation or budgeting.

Across the data collected, there appears to be consistent integration of youth inclusion and participation across programmes, with examples of youth voice being sought and recorded.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of climate change and emergencies both emerge as recent shifts and trends which have informed the design of UNICEF Zimbabwe programmes.

Coherence

The Country Office Gender Action Plan (2022) clearly sets out an intention to ensure programme interventions are both gender responsive and gender transformative and is closely aligned to the global GAP III framework.

At the policy level, there is a clear commitment to and understanding of the importance of ensuring a specific focus on adolescent girls, as per the global GAP III, however how far this extends into

programmes is not evident from the documents reviewed. An Adolescent and Youth Strategy 2023-2026 has been developed which demonstrates a clear commitment to meaningfully engage adolescent girls and boys and young women and men. There is a clear strategy identified for participation and civic engagement that highlights the role of adolescent and youth in that approach. As this is a new strategy and no reviews or evaluations have yet taken place it remains to be seen how effective implementation has been, but as a strategic intention this is promising.

Effectiveness

UNICEF Zimbabwe has applied a Human-Centred Design approach in the majority of the programmes reviewed for this case study. While this approach has transformative elements, and applies intersectional and participatory methodology, it does not apply an explicitly gender lens. As such it is difficult to determine how effective it is in contributing to gender transformative outcomes.

The Country Office compiles a Gender Cross-cutting workplan which identifies all activities which contribute to gender outcomes. Many of these activities sit across the gender transformation continuum, from gender aware though to gender sensitive and responsive. It is not possible to assess whether these activities are gender transformative, although some of them are clearly designed to be, for example, *'Engage Adolescent boys and girls in groups to promote open dialogue on gender, VAC, & SGBV to facilitate Social and Behaviour Change (peer to peer support)'*, which has the potential to be gender transformative but that largely depends on how it is being implemented.

The Country Office addresses gender programming through both multi-sectoral and targeted approaches. Not enough evidence was provided for the review to ascertain whether these approaches were achieving gender transformative outcomes.

Efficiency

Limited documentation related to budgets or financial reports was provided for this case study. Where there has been evidence provided of active and meaningful participation of adolescent girls at the activity-level, no indication of scale, budget or relevant disaggregation has been provided to accurately measure, address or finance the differing needs of women and girls in all their diversity. Some programmatic feedback identifies challenges in terms of inadequate resources, time and to adequately support gender and intersectional dimensions in activity implementation.

Relatedly, this review was unable to comprehensively determine how gender transformative approaches or programming are monitored, evaluated or learned from in the UNICEF Zimbabwe Country Office, and what incentives are in place for teams to include this.

Sustainability

Lots of examples of partnerships and cooperation are prevalent across documents reviewed for this case study, yet there are limited descriptions of systems, tools, or practices put in place for partners to build ownership, capacity and resources to support scale up or implementation.

The Human-Centred Design approach applied to the majority of UNICEF Zimbabwe programming places affected population groups at the centre of identifying and solving challenges affecting them, providing an explicit opportunity for understanding and influencing sustainable social and behaviour change.

There is clearly a sustainability ambition, and long-term goals are sometimes outlined in programmatic documents, however, sustainability strategies do not appear to be routinely developed as part of the project design or considered a key element of programme planning and implementation. The Zimbabwe Country Office employs a system strengthening approach, as discussed further in the main report under coherence and partnership, that is working to build the capacity of existing community and government structures and systems as a key part of their approach to sustainability. No sustainability or exit strategies were shared as part of the desk review for this case study.

Impact

While participation, engagement and examples of youth voice being emphasised are evident from documents reviews and interviews conducted, it is difficult to comment on the impact of distinctive models, programmes or activities in relation to improving adolescent girls' agency and leadership in Zimbabwe. Some examples of promising practice emerge from the case study, including the Champions of Child Protection model, participatory approaches, and the Adolescent and Youth Advisory Committee.

Conclusions & lessons learned

There is evidence that some programmes implemented by UNICEF Zimbabwe are contributing to adolescent and youth voice, agency and leadership, and by extension adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership. This is primarily reflected at the individual level, with some examples at the community level, and mainly focus on addressing harmful social practices, and increasing education and awareness to support decision making. Moving forward, the country office can continue to strengthen their work by developing gender-targeted programmes which meaningfully engage and support adolescent girls, and prioritise resources (including time, staff, and budget) to achieve this. In this way, the country office can strengthen commitment and alignment with UNICEF's Adolescent Girls Strategy.

BACKGROUND

Zimbabwe is a lower middle income country in Southern Africa, ranking 146 out of 191 on the [Human Development Index](#) (indicating low human development in terms of health, education and income).

Harmful and gendered social norms are prevalent in the country, with particular negative effects on adolescent girls. The [Demographic Health Survey of 2015](#) indicates that more than 1 in 3 women in Zimbabwe have experienced physical violence since the age of 15. At the same time, there is an increase in the percentage of women who report ever having experienced violence in their lifetime (from 29.9% in 2010 to 34.8% in 2015). The [UNICEF Zimbabwe Country Office](#) have identified key statistics that exemplify the risks to adolescent girls in-country:

- 1/3 women (aged 20-24) married before age 18, with child marriage rates driven by poverty and fuelled by social norms
- High proportion of girls dropping out of secondary education due to poverty, teenage pregnancy, early marriage, school related GBV, parents' prioritisation of boys education over that of girls, and insufficient gender-sensitive infrastructure in schools
- Adolescent girls and young women are twice as likely to contract HIV than males

The COVID-19 pandemic and the protracted emergency of Cyclone Idai (2019) have aggravated existing and ongoing challenges in the country, but particularly heightened domestic and gender-based violence, violence against children, and mental-health and psychosocial-support needs ([UNICEF Zimbabwe, 2022](#)).

Purpose and audience

The purpose of the regional evaluation is to understand how current programming, investments and practices to invest in adolescent girls' leadership, voice and agency are shaping UNICEF's gender transformative programming (GTP) approach in ESAR over the coming years. The evaluation is country-focused and uses country case studies as illustrative examples to inform the planning and programming of GTP through Investment in adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership in ESAR.

This case study is contributing evidence to support to the regional evaluation's assessment of the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of gender transformative adolescent girls-focused programming. This report presents findings from a desk-based analysis of documents and a small number of virtual consultations with key informants across the Zimbabwe Country Office, including UNICEF staff, staff from UNICEF partners, and adolescent girls engaged in UNICEF programming. The review is not meant to be a comprehensive, standalone evaluation report but will be used as part of the analysis for the regional evaluation report.

While the case study note is primarily intended to be used to inform the regional report, it will be of interest to both the Country and Regional UNICEF teams as a review of adolescent focused programming in Zimbabwe. We also hope that findings will be shared back to the adolescents, young people and partners who supported the data collection where relevant. The evaluation team will ensure regional findings are shared back with the Regional Adolescent Advisory Group.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the desk-based case study are aligned with the overall evaluation objectives, and they are to:

- Provide a preliminary assessment of UNICEF's GTP in Zimbabwe vis-à-vis issues of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact with a specific focus on programming investing in girls' voice, agency and leadership
- Explore the evidence for whether interventions currently being implemented or in the pipeline are evaluable, whether or not the programmes are adequately defined and their results verifiable.
- Identify key lessons and the most impactful approaches with regards to gender transformative adolescent focused programming

CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

Zimbabwe was selected as one of the three desk-based reviews during the inception phase of this project, based on consultations with the regional team and the evaluation reference group, and as a result of the following characteristics:

- Lower middle income country, with a high UNICEF Country Office budget, and a large proportion dedicated for Adolescent Development and Participation in current CPD
- Relevant programmes, including joint programmes, of interest: child parliaments in joint/global programmes (Spotlight, 2gether4SRHR, Zvandiri global model on peer support including for pregnant and parenting adolescent girls, enabling policy environment, strong Child Protection programming, presumed availability of evaluations (Spotlight MTR),
- Active U Report programme

The desk-based review was carried out between April and July 2023, and whilst the time frame was quite protracted the days allocated to the task were minimal¹⁷⁵. The review was based on a document review of programme reports and documents, complemented with a small number of KIIs. Overall, 29 documents were shared by the country office and reviewed; thematically covering education, WASH, nutrition, youth participation, gender, child protection, social and behaviour change, disability inclusion, health and sexual and reproductive health and rights. There was a wide range of types of documents mainly produced between 2021 and 2023, including End-Line Reports; Situational Analyses; Sector-specific Gender Analyses (i.e. education sector); Curricula materials; Facilitator Manuals; Training of Trainer Manuals; Field Reports; Participant Reports; and Guidelines. Not all documents submitted for review had clear associations with CO programming, partnerships or planning, as such it was challenging to link efforts or intentions with implementation or practices.

Documents shared were those produced and led by UNICEF, but also some produced by programmatic and regional partners, including INGOs, CSOs and government ministries (see list of documents reviewed).

Two group interviews took place virtually, each lasting approximately 1 hour. The interviewees were identified through the document review, and in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Country Office. As outlined in the table below, one group interview involved UNICEF Zimbabwe staff and CSO partners, and the second was with the CO Adolescent and Youth Advisory Committee. Efforts were made to speak with other implementing partners; invitations were sent and followed up on but were not responded to.

In-country stakeholders	Stakeholder group / job roles and number
UNICEF Country team and CSO partners	1. UNICEF CO 2. CSO

¹⁷⁵ Approximately 8 days were allocated for the desk review, including interviews, analysis and report writing.

	3. CSO	
	4. CSO	
Youth networks and adolescent girls and boys	5. AYAC Member 1 6. AYAC Member 2 7. AYAC Member 3 8. AYAC Member 4	
Other UN agencies (JP partners)	N/A	
Total number of respondents per desk review country		8

Ethical considerations

As this was a desk-based review which involved minimal primary data collection the ethical risks were considered low, however as with all our evaluation and research work we are guided by a set of ethical principles. The principles translate into a number of practical measures to ensure confidentiality, informed consent, data protection, reduction of direct and indirect risks to interviewees, safe and meaningful participation.

All participation was done on a voluntary basis and based on informed consent. Personal information is treated confidentially, and the privacy and anonymity of participants is preserved. We will not include any names of any participants consulted with to ensure this is upheld.

KEY FINDINGS

Overarching question

EQ1: To what extent are UNICEF ESAR COs investing in adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership as a central approach within this gender transformative programming?

While UNICEF Zimbabwe invests in adolescent and youth programming and initiatives, it is difficult to distil the extent to which this investment is geared specifically towards adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership or engages with adolescent girls as a key priority group. In part, this is because there was only one document reviewed which engaged girls exclusively (*National Assessment on Adolescent Pregnancies in Zimbabwe, UNICEF, 2023*). Instead all other documents and programmes engaged with youth or adolescent girls and boys together as a group and without explicit disaggregation (i.e. in budgeting, resource allocation, or scale of investment). A general list of the adolescent and youth programmes and documents reviewed and referenced throughout this case study are as follows:

- Social and Behaviour Change Project. Plan International Zimbabwe & UNICEF.
- Prevention of Violence Against Children (VAC) through challenging social norms that condone/promote violence against children. Plan International Zimbabwe & UNICEF
- Exploring Shifting Norms and Behaviour Changes through Voices of Children Living with Disabilities. Enhancing Community Voices Trust, Norad, UNICEF.
- Ministries Capacity Challenge for Violence Against Children. Plan International Zimbabwe & UNICEF.
- Development of Disability Inclusive and HIV Sensitive Parenting ToT Manuals. UNICEF & Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare.
- Gender in Emergency Preparedness Workshop. UNICEF.
- Adolescent and Youth Advisory Committee. UNICEF.

Despite the difficulty of assessing the extent of explicit investment in adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership, some evidence can be inferred, for example through data collected concerning the *Social and Behaviour Change project with Plan International Zimbabwe, Gender in Emergencies*

Response Workshop, Prevention of Violence Against Children (VAC) through challenging social norms that condone/promote violence against children and through the CO's Adolescent and Youth Advisory Committee (AYAC).

Gender transformative programming is mentioned across programmes and documentation produced by the UNICEF country office and its partners, however it is unclear how this approach is implemented in practice and therefore what the corresponding scale of investment is. This is the case for:

- Gender Transformation and Disability Inclusion Guidelines. Youth Advocates (n.d.)
- Plan International Prevention of Violence Against Children (VAC) through challenging social norms that condone/promote violence against children Programme Document. UNICEF (2020)
- Plan International Ministries Capacity Challenge Violence Against Children. UNICEF (2022)
- End of term evaluation report: Prevention of Violence against children through challenging social norms that condone/ promote violence against children. Plan International Zimbabwe (2021)

Looking ahead, the UNICEF Zimbabwe Country Office has demonstrated commitment to meaningfully engaging young people and adolescents, including girls. This is outlined in the *Adolescents and Youth Strategy: 2023 to 2026*. According to the theory of change stipulated here, “if adolescents and youth, especially young girls, are increasingly empowered and equipped with knowledge, skills and opportunities to become socially and economically resilient AND are meaningfully engaged and empowered as change agents AND an enabling policy and legislative environment is created and sustained; THEN adolescents and youth will be able to reach their full potential.” This demonstrates strong understanding of the importance of engaging adolescents as change agents, including adolescent girls. While the strategy emphasises that the AYAC will be the main instrument for participation throughout UNICEF Zimbabwe work, it also proposes the possibility of introducing national internships as a way of encouraging participation and a gender targeted intervention called ‘Skills4Girls’ “which will provide girls and young women with opportunities to transform and empower their lives by overcoming gender barriers that limit aspirations and opportunities”. No further evidence has been provided to demonstrate how these initiatives are taking place. Interestingly, while the strategy pulls out the significance of girls aged 10-24, little to no mention is provided of how adolescent girls will be especially supported or meaningfully engaged, rather a separate adolescent girl strategy is mentioned (but was not reviewed as it was not provided to the desk review team).

Relevance

EQ2. To what extent are country programmes / projects designed to address the specific needs of adolescent girls in the region?

The desk review found examples of where the specific needs of young people were sought and addressed by UNICEF Zimbabwe country programmes, projects and partnerships across various stages of the project cycle. However, a disaggregated focus on adolescent girls is not consistently evident from documents reviewed or interviews conducted.

The *Prevention of Violence Against Children (VAC) through challenging social norms that condone/promote violence against children (2020)* which was designed and implemented by Plan International Zimbabwe, featured a peer mentorship model using the Champions of Child Protection (CoCP) approach – an interactive and peer-led approach that supports youth (boys and girls) voice, agency and leadership in community structures. Modules delivered by the peer mentors did address the specific needs of adolescent girls in the region, such as “being assertive, being gender aware, being body confident, being informed about sexual and reproductive health, enjoying sexual and reproductive health, living free from GBV, being economically empowered, living free from child marriage” and for

the boys topics “like being responsible about regarding sexuality, being non-violent in personal relationships and being a champion to of change committed to gender equality” (*Plan International Social Norms Programme Document, UNICEF, 2020*). However, this awareness of distinct gender and intersectional needs was not applied to all aspects of the project, i.e. programme budgeting or monitoring and evaluation. In fact, the only gender-specific indicator for this programme focused on boys (% of boys aged 11-17 who believe when a girl says no to sex she mean it), while all other indicators recommended disaggregation by age, sex and disability. As a result it is difficult to determine the extent to which the project addressed the specific needs of adolescent girls.

More work in this area can be seen through the key participation of girls in the Country Office’s *Adolescent and Youth Advisory Committee (AYAC)*, which relies on adolescent girls’ voice, agency and leadership without specifically drawing on these as indicators for monitoring or budgeting. The group have been engaged in monitoring and evaluation work, producing the *February Field Visit Feedback Report* which provided some recommendations for UNICEF and programming, including “(1) UNICEF should engage adolescents and youth from planning stage to ensure meaningful participation; (2) UNICEF should design and implement programs that target the drug and substance abuse amongst children and adolescents in Zimbabwe; (3) UNICEF programs should aim for a wider coverage of service provision to ensure that children and adolescents in hard-to-reach areas can also access the services without spending a lot of money for transport”. While such reporting and recommendations are expected from AYAC members, it is unclear based on the data collected how the UNICEF CO responded or acted upon these recommendations. Other work with AYAC members, including 2023 annual planning, demonstrates the centring of youth voice, agency and leadership, without disaggregating or detailing for adolescent girl’s voice, agency and leadership. Female interviewees from AYAC indicated feeling empowered within and beyond UNICEF programming (i.e. in other social structures such as home, school), yet there is no formalised approach in capturing this information or therefore measuring these indicators for adolescent girls. As a result it is hard to determine how adolescent girls’ voice, agency and leadership are measured or how the information that is captured informs the design of programmes/ projects for adolescent girls in the region.

Programme documents also highlight the compounding and intersecting vulnerabilities of adolescent girls in different contexts, such as the *Gender in Emergency Preparedness Workshop*. Reports produced by youth participants – first person narrative reports which reflect on their involvement and participation at the workshop – and interviews show how adolescents and youth (boys and girls, including AYAC members) were engaged and participated in the workshop. Yet it is unclear how adolescent girls’ voice, agency and leadership was prioritised in this project. Lastly, *Exploring Shifting Norms and Behaviour Changes through Voices of Children Living with Disabilities* demonstrated an individual impact on participants’ voice and agency through their participation in the project, with the report sharing quotes by youth participants (girls and boys) on how the process affected them and made them feel. However, it is unclear if this was a specific priority for the project, and whether the design sought to address this specifically for girls.

Initiatives implemented more recently could support efforts in this area, such as the AYAC (introduced in 2022) and the *Adolescents and Youth Strategy: 2023 to 2026*. The latter mentions an intended gender targeted intervention called ‘Skills4Girls’ “which will provide girls and young women with opportunities to transform and empower their lives by overcoming gender barriers that limit aspirations and opportunities”. No further evidence has been provided to demonstrate how this initiative will take place. The strategy also references a separate adolescent girl strategy (but was not reviewed as it was not provided to the desk review team).

Meaningful engagement of adolescent girls in the design, implementation, M&E of programmes and policies

Youth are featured across all UNICEF Zimbabwe programmes and projects reviewed, largely as project participants or as respondents for data collection, but also as a demographic reference point for policy

and strategic work, or sector-specific research. There is no sex disaggregation in any of the projects reviewed, so whilst we cannot ascertain how far girls have been specifically engaged it is evident that the participation of young people is prioritised across the programme cycle.

For instance, strategic work or sector-specific analyses typically demonstrate a policy-level or systems-level focus, and repeatedly refer to engagement of girls more broadly, yet they are not involved in the work themselves (see *A Situational Analysis towards Developing an Early Warning System for Preventing Girls' Dropout from Secondary Education in Zimbabwe (2020)*; *Gender Analysis of the Education Sector in Zimbabwe (2023)*; *Disability Inclusion Social and Behaviour Change Strategy: Zimbabwe 2022-2023 (2022)*; *Mapping and Analysis of Government Programmes, Strategies and Plans that aim to end SGBV, HP and strengthen SRHR in Zimbabwe (2020)*). This demonstrates a consistent awareness of gender disparities and needs in data collection and dissemination for policy and programme ideation and development. Generally, this is referenced by drawing on gender analysis data, international best practices on gender responsive systems, and producing gender-specific recommendations, without involving young people in the strategic or analytical work. For example, *A Situational Analysis Towards Developing an Early Warning System for Preventing Girls' Dropout from secondary Education in Zimbabwe (2022)* provides a gender analysis of the school dropout factors in Zimbabwe to inform system development; sought regional and international best practices in gender responsive school systems; and proposed interventions and mitigations to reduce dropout, especially by girls. The methodology focused on collecting data from key stakeholders with links to girls' education, such as INGO Staff, CSO Staff, Government stakeholders, Donor Institutions and Teacher Associations – with no specification of young people being involved. The *EMCAD Mapping and Analysis of government Programmes, strategies and Plans that aim to end SGBV, HP and strengthen SRHR in Zimbabwe (2023)* and Zimbabwe Spotlight Initiative's *Baseline Survey Report for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (n.d.)* followed a similar methodology as well.

Some strategic work or sector-specific analyses do draw on adolescent girls for primary data collection, for instance the UNICEF *National Assessment on Adolescent Pregnancies in Zimbabwe (2023)* interviewed a total of 1418 adolescent girls (40% aged 10-14 years, and 60% aged 15-19 years), and participated in focus group discussions (FGDs). The study sought to evaluate adolescent girls' knowledge on SRHR, HIV testing, sexual activity, pregnancy experiences, and drivers of adolescent pregnancy in order to “develop detailed profiles of a cohort of adolescents who experienced pregnancy before the age of 20, to provide a deeper understanding of their experiences and needs and map the much-needed support to tackle adolescent pregnancy.” Beyond data collection however, adolescent girls did not participate in any other area of the assessment. This was also the case in *A Situational Analysis Towards Developing an Early Warning System for Preventing Girls' Dropout from secondary Education in Zimbabwe (2022)*.

Youth participation, voice and engagement emerged repeatedly in the programme-level documents, either through data collection means (i.e. FGDs and KIIs with children and adolescent youth) or participatory engagement (i.e. workshop attendance and contribution to final reporting), but not necessarily in analysis, needs assessment and MEL. Several strong examples at programmes-level of meaningful participation in implementation include:

- *Social and Behaviour Change Project with Plan International (2022)*: This project sought to transform youth behaviour and understandings of health, nutrition and wellbeing. Featuring a youth led advocacy component to support demand for essential services, including the Champions of Child Protection (CoCP) model, teen mother champions were trained and tasked to conduct sessions on early childhood development through community mobilisation work.
- *Prevention of Violence Against Children (VAC) through challenging social norms that condone/promote violence against children with Plan International (2020)*: Also featuring the CoCP model, peer mentors in this project were trained to deliver a curricula of modules on child rights, building gender sensitivity and specifically challenging behaviours, beliefs and attitudes that promote violence against children. The peer mentors led sessions for separate age groups

(11-14 and 15-18 years old) with separate girls' and boys' groups for most of the sessions except specific modules on dialoguing gender that brought together both girls and boys.

- *Gender in Emergency Preparedness Workshop*: Led by UNICEF Zimbabwe's Gender Unit, an assessment was done to inform the development of training materials, workshop content and facilitation approach; a questionnaire was shared with potential participants (including young people) to determine baseline knowledge. At the workshop itself, interviewees commented on the diverse ages of participants – which featured ministry and CSO stakeholders as well as members of UNICEF Zimbabwe's *Adolescent and Youth Advisory Committee* (see below). The UNICEF and CSO staff interviewed believed it was beneficial to have a range of ages and stakeholders, including youth, involved to get different perspectives on issues such as SRHR and disabilities. After the workshop, all youth participants were requested to submit participant reports, a standard practice of the country office, especially when engaging young people. These first-person narrative reports submitted by adolescents provide insights and reflections, and recommendations. This demonstrates key consideration of youth at different stages of the project cycle. However, it should be noted that beyond the workshop content covering gender transformative approaches, there is no distinct evidence that adolescent girls themselves were engaged in a gender transformative manner through this workshop, or that the participant reports informed any changes to design, implementation, or M&E of programmes and policies.

While these examples demonstrate a focus and consideration of adolescent voice, the emphasis on agency and/or leadership is less apparent. Recently, UNICEF Zimbabwe has made efforts to address this at an organisational level through the development of AYAC and the *Adolescents and Youth Strategy: 2023 to 2026*.

- *Adolescents and Young People Advisory Committee*: Developed in 2022, AYAC demonstrates more strategic and systemic engagement with youth aged 10-24. AYAC is intended to provide UNICEF Zimbabwe with a better understanding of aspirations and experiences of adolescents and youth in Zimbabwe by providing invaluable inputs for UNICEF programming, from ideation and planning, to implementation, and monitoring and evaluation phases. Currently, AYAC is composed of 18 members based across the country, 7 members are boys and 11 are girls (age disaggregation was not provided). Since 2022, the group have been engaged in monitoring and evaluation work, producing a field report based on three site visits. AYAC members were also engaged during 2023 annual planning, ensuring the Committee's aspirations were featured in budgeting and programmatic work. Overall, this demonstrates the centring of youth voice, agency and leadership, without disaggregating or detailing for adolescent girl's voice, agency and leadership. While female interviewees indicated feeling empowered within and beyond UNICEF programming (i.e. in other social structures such as home, school), there is no formalised approach in capturing this information or therefore measuring these indicators for adolescent girls. As a result it is hard to determine the extent to which girls especially are meaningfully engaged in the design, implementation, or M&E of AYAC.
- *Adolescents and Youth Strategy: 2023 to 2026*: The theory of change stipulates, "if adolescents and youth, especially young girls, are increasingly empowered and equipped with knowledge, skills and opportunities to become socially and economically resilient AND are meaningfully engaged and empowered as change agents AND an enabling policy and legislative environment is created and sustained; THEN adolescents and youth will be able to reach their full potential." This demonstrates strong understanding of the importance of engaging adolescents, including adolescent girls, as change agents and strategically promoting their "space, voice and influence." It will be useful to measure this engagement as the strategy progresses.

Recent shifts and trends in gender outcomes for adolescent girls considered in programming

Some specific programmes and documents highlight shifts and trends that impact gender outcomes for adolescent girls. The most consistent themes mentioned are Covid-19, climate change and emergencies (see *Prevention of Violence Against Children (VAC) through challenging social norms that condone/promote violence against children (2020)*; *UNICEF Zimbabwe Adolescents and Youth Strategy 2023 to 2026*; *UNICEF National Assessment on Adolescent Pregnancies in Zimbabwe (2023)*; *Youth Advocates Gender Transformation and Disability Inclusion Guidelines (n.d.)*; *Social and Behaviour Change programme (2022)*; *UNICEF Zimbabwe Human Centered Design capacity building and integrated COVID 19 demand creation (2022)*; *Child Protection and HIV Sensitive Disability Parenting: Final Report on development of Disability Inclusive and HIV Sensitive Parenting ToT Manuals (2022)*).

Some less frequent themes include the rapid digitalisation of the education space and the impact of HIV (see *Child Protection and HIV Sensitive Disability Parenting: Final Report on development of Disability Inclusive and HIV Sensitive Parenting ToT Manuals (2022)*; *UNICEF Adolescents and Young People Advisory Committee February Field Visit Feedback Report (2023)*; *Youth Advocates Gender Transformation and Disability Inclusion Guidelines (n.d.)*).

- Links between Covid-19 and SRHR: UNICEF Zimbabwe and partner documents captured and emphasised the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on women and girls, especially the impact of lockdown on GBV, health and education (i.e. Youth Advocates, Plan International Zimbabwe, Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare). Specifically, these assessments indicate the need to address GBV and SRHR, including access to family planning, in response to a sharp increase in teen pregnancies and child marriage resulting from repercussions of Covid-19. For instance, the *UNICEF National Assessment on Adolescent Pregnancies in Zimbabwe (2023)* identified root causes leading to adolescent pregnancy, particularly in wake of Covid-19, with key national drivers being economic recession leading to poverty, unemployment, depletion of family savings, falling prices of agricultural produce, and migration of parents and caregivers, as well as increased prevalence of gender based violence experience by adolescent girls and young women globally as a result of the lockdowns and increasing levels of poverty.
- Impact of climate change and emergencies: The impact of emergencies, including those caused by climate change, was mentioned several times, as well as their disproportionate impact on women and girls. This disparity was a key focus of the *Gender in Emergency Preparedness Workshop*, with interviewees explaining the workshop focused on responding to real lived experiences rather than theoretical/ academic training. This was also supported by the two participant reports submitted by AYAC youth participants. Interviewees from the *Adolescent and Youth Advisory Committee* also described their involvement in public-facing work concerning climate change and emergencies: “we reported on how climate change is affecting the child, and actually it was not an adult who would present the actual information and the factual evidence to the journalist – it was a young person, a person who id directly involved in the affected area by these climate induced shocks and emergencies.”

For the most part these themes have not emerged as a result of programmes shifting, but rather are part of the original programme's thematic focus and objectives (i.e *Social and Behaviour Change programme* sought to inform adolescents on health and behaviour in response to impacts of Covid-19 and lockdowns). It is therefore unclear how or to what extent programmes have reacted or changed thematically in response to emerging trends in relation to economic, socio-political, legal or cultural drivers as they occur.

Coherence

EQ3. To what extent do adolescent girl focused interventions (both within UNICEF and external) align with UNICEF strategies, and global policy commitments, to support girls' leadership and agency through gender transformative programming in ESAR?

The Country Office Gender Action Plan (2022) clearly sets out an intention to ensure programme interventions are both gender responsive and gender transformative and is closely aligned to the global GAP III framework.

At the policy level, there is a clear commitment to and understanding of the importance of ensuring a specific focus on adolescent girls, as per the global GAP III, however how far this extends into programmes is not evident from the documents reviewed. An Adolescent and Youth Strategy 2023-2026 has been developed which demonstrates a clear commitment to meaningfully engage adolescent girls and boys and young women and men. There is a clear strategy identified for participation and civic engagement that highlights the role of adolescent and youth in that approach. As this is a new strategy and no reviews or evaluations have yet taken place it remains to be seen how effective implementation has been, but as a strategic intention this is promising. The same strategy does mention a separate adolescent girl strategy (but was not reviewed as it was not provided to the desk review team), as well as broad alignment to Sustainable Development Goals. Other documents which make this broad link to SDGs include the *Youth Advocates Gender Transformation and Disability Guidelines* (nd). SDG 5 on Gender Equality, is specifically mentioned in the *End of term evaluation report: Prevention of Violence against children through challenging social norms that condone/ promote violence against children* (Plan International Zimbabwe, 2021). Here, the report states the project is in alignment with SDG 5 as "the project aimed at reducing harmful practices such as utilization of violent means of discipline, and absent parenting hence its relevance" and features target 16.2 on ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere and eliminating all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Other documents which also mentioned this SDG include *Gender Analysis of Education Sector in Zimbabwe* and *Mapping and Analysis of Government Programmes, Strategies and Plans that aim to end SGBV, HP and Strengthen SRHR in Zimbabwe* (2020) and Zimbabwe Spotlight Initiative's *Baseline Survey Report for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls* (n.d.). Where documents focused on disability inclusion, there was also mention of SDG 3 on Health and Wellbeing (see *Independent assessment study of disability inclusion in services at community level in Zimbabwe* (2022) and Zimbabwe Spotlight Initiative's *Baseline Survey Report for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls* (n.d.)).

While these references demonstrate alignment to international commitments, it is difficult to assess how well these have been consistently integrated across programming and implementation.

Across the data collected, there is consistent and coherent integration of youth inclusion and participation across all programmes within and external to UNICEF (with repeated examples of youth voice being sought and recorded). However, this work is not consistently disaggregated by gender or age groups. As a result, it is unclear whether GTP approaches for girl-focused programming are therefore consistently integrated.

EQ 4. What have been the areas and ways of cooperation with other UN entities and other donor/ development partners in regard to gender-transformative programming with and for adolescent girls in ESAR?

Examples of UNICEF cooperation with other UN agencies and development partners include mention of technical or financial acknowledgements, for example:

- *Gender Analysis of Education Sector in Zimbabwe*: Outlines development partners, i.e. INGOs and donor agencies in Zimbabwe's education sector, including UNESCO, UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF. Document states that these development partners have access to best practices in other countries, innovative strategies, and research on gender and education that can be drawn on. The Gender Analysis seeks to interview these stakeholders.

- *Guidance and Counselling and Life Skills Education: Grade 7 Module:* Acknowledgements include mention of UNESCO, UNICEF and UNFPA, thanking them for their technical and financial support.

UNICEF and CSO stakeholders who participated in a group interview mentioned that “work with partners is driven by a gender transformative lens”, however it was unclear how this was operationalised in practice. Interviewees explained that the Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe receives funding by UNICEF for its work on gender and child protection, which has a strong focus on emergencies and preparedness. The links between women’s rights, gender equality, rights of children and child protection were heavily emphasised, with the coalition therefore focusing on (i) legal measures which can support violence prevention; (ii) issues limiting the potential and empowerment of women (especially around GBViE response); and (iii) women’s leadership and role in decision-making spaces. A request was made to the interviewees to supply further documentation on how partnerships are operationalised, and where agreements are in place other than for funding, but none was received.

It should be noted that government financing and resource allocation towards gender-specific budgeting or programming in Zimbabwe is limited. The *Mapping and Analysis of Government Programmes, Strategies and Plans that aim to end SGBV, HP and Strengthen SRHR in Zimbabwe (2020)* reveals that “Although Ministries have relevant strategies and plans, they lack sufficient resources to roll out their intended programmes. Limited investment has been noted mostly with the (i) VFU, (ii) pre-service and in-service training of teachers to deal with GBV, SRHR and HP issues, and (iii) social welfare (especially cash transfers, education and medical support).” Relatedly, the government response on GBV has been “vastly reliant on donors, UN agencies and NGOs, as inadequate funding has been put across to relevant Ministries in dealing with GBV and SRHR. This has led to civil society coming in to support and in the process of eclipsing government partners.”

See EQ 8 on CSO and INGO partnerships for more insight on efforts to coordinate at programme-level to build ownership, capacity and resources for national implementation.

Effectiveness

EQ5. To what extent have UNICEF ESARO’s adolescent girls focused programmes and interventions mainstreamed gender transformative programming, contributing to increasing their voices, agency and leadership, in current planned programmes?

The Country Office compiles a Gender cross-cutting workplan which identifies all activities which contribute to gender outcomes. Many of these activities sit across the gender transformation continuum, from gender aware though to gender sensitive and responsive. It is not possible to assess whether these activities are gender transformative, although some of them are clearly designed to be, for example, ‘Engage Adolescent boys and girls in groups to promote open dialogue on gender, VAC, & SGBV to facilitate Social and Behaviour Change (peer to peer support)’, which has the potential to be gender transformative but that largely depends on how it is being implemented.

UNICEF Zimbabwe has applied a Human-Centred Design (HCD) approach in the majority of the programmes reviewed for this case study (see *National Assessment on Adolescent Pregnancies in Zimbabwe*; Social and Behaviour Change Project; *Human Centred Design Capacity Building and Integrated Covid-19 Demand Creation*; *Disability Inclusion social and behaviour change strategy: Zimbabwe 2022-2023*). HCD has transformative elements, and applies intersectional and participatory methodology, yet does not apply an explicitly gender lens.

For instance, the *Human Centred Design Capacity Building and Integrated Covid-19 Demand Creation Workshop Report* involved Youth Ambassadors of Zimbabwe (boys and girls) “to assess the Covid-19 perceptions among youth” and “identify underlying drivers and barriers related to demand and uptake for Covid-19/ SRH prevention and services amongst youth.” 24 Youth Ambassadors of Zimbabwe (YAZ) attended a 4-day HCD capacity building workshop, which involved mapping key influencers, developing

personas, and conducting a rapid inquiry using participatory research methods. The findings from this work informed the development of a youth-led multimedia social behaviour change strategy. This participatory approach demonstrates the key role of adolescents and youth, and how their voice, agency and leadership have influenced strategic development. Yet, while adolescent girls have been engaged as part of the CO's Human-Centred Design process in this project, the lack of disaggregation makes it difficult to measure explicitly the extent of their engagement and whether increases/ changes to their voices, agency and leadership have occurred.

Similarly, documents which reference the socio-ecological framework as a model acknowledge the distinct impacts on adolescent girls without providing an indication of how changes to voice, agency and leadership take place. For instance, *A Situational Analysis towards Developing an Early Warning System for Preventing Girls' Dropout from Secondary Education in Zimbabwe (2020)* features a section on 'socio-ecological factors to dropout' and looked at "individual, family, community, national and the geographical and ecological factors to dropout." It suggests "that teachers, workload and overall school environment contributes to girls' dropping out" and "the majority of the dropout cohort [boys and girls] faced challenges in meeting school fees and cost of materials, their treatment if fees have not been paid or they do not have the stationery required in school, triggered negative attitudes towards school." The key informant interviews which complemented the situational analysis targeted stakeholders who work on developing girls' agency and leadership (i.e. INGOs and CSOs such as World Vision, FOST and Plan International Zimbabwe) without directly engaging youth themselves, there was also no indication of how this research aims to change adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership.

Effectiveness of different models/ approaches in contributing to gender transformative outcomes

Adolescent and youth participation is a clear overarching strategy for UNICEF Zimbabwe, and Human-Centred Design (HCD) emerges as the most commonly used approach by the Country Office across the programmatic work reviewed. HCD places affected populations at the centre of identifying and solving challenges affecting them for sustainable social and behaviour change. Through participatory practices, HCD focuses on *how* and *why* people do or do not engage with specific services or engage in specific behaviours. This process seeks to identify underlying drivers and barriers for desired behaviours and identify solutions collectively with potential users / participants in the project or service being designed and respond accordingly.

A core strength associated with this approach is the structured and participatory process for working directly with users (i.e. young people and adolescents) to address demand-related challenges associated with social norms and quality of services. This typically comes in the form of workshop-style settings to bring together a diverse range of stakeholders to collaborate on an issue. HCD has been used to encourage an intersectional approach, for instance when engaging children with disabilities and caregivers of children with disabilities, alongside key national stakeholders as in the *Disability Inclusion Social and Behaviour Change Strategy: Zimbabwe 2022-2023 (UNICEF & NORAD)*.

As HCD does not apply an explicit gender lens, it is difficult to determine how effective it is in contributing to gender transformative outcomes.

Differences in planned, intended or achieved outcomes between a multi-sectoral approach and targeted gender-transformative programming

Both multi-sectoral and targeted approaches to programming were referenced in the documents reviewed for this case study. However, there was limited evidence of these approaches aiming to be explicitly gender transformative. Some detail is provided here to show how and where these approaches were referenced, and where the GTP link is challenging.

Six of the documents reviewed for this case study either recommend or evidence a multi-sectoral approach to Youth programming in Zimbabwe across Education, Health, Child Protection and Governmental work (see *Independent assessment study of disability inclusion in services at community*

level in Zimbabwe; *Spotlight Initiative's Baseline Survey Report for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls; Mapping and Analysis of Government Programmes, Strategies and Plans that aim to end SGBV, HP and Strengthen SRHR in Zimbabwe; National Assessment on Adolescent Pregnancies in Zimbabwe; Plan International Ministries Capacity Challenge Violence Against Children; Adolescents and Youth Strategy: 2023 -2026*). For example, UNICEF Zimbabwe's *Adolescents and Youth Strategy: 2023 -2026* "recommends a multi-sectoral service delivery that is integrated, adolescent-friendly and scalable." Policy-level work, such as sectoral and landscape analyses within Zimbabwe also indicate the government's multi-sectoral approach to addressing harmful social norms, GBV, gender inequality, and SRHR through engagement with a range of ministerial, UN, INGO and CSO implementation partners. While there was limited available documentation to compare the planned, intended and achieved outcomes within multi-sectoral UNICEF programming and operations, the challenges of the governments multi-sectoral approach were outlined in *Mapping and Analysis of Government Programmes, Strategies and Plans that aim to end SGBV, HP and Strengthen SRHR in Zimbabwe (EMCAD, 2020)*. Here it becomes evident that there are gaps in coordination and collaboration; limited evaluation activity; a lacking centralised GBV Management Information System; a lack of costed implementation frameworks; resource constraints; donor reliance; low coverage; lack of inclusivity; policy inconsistencies; and limited capacities of existing structures. While the multi-sectoral approach is referenced in these documents (including the associated challenges), there is no mention of this approach planning, intending or achieving gender transformative outcomes. As such, it is difficult to state whether this approach is more likely to identify or achieve these outcomes than other programme models.

The only programmes which stated a targeted gender-transformative approach reviewed for this case study appear to be the *Gender in Emergencies Response Workshop*, the *Prevention of Violence Against Children (VAC) through challenging social norms that condone/promote violence against children w/ Plan International* (see section 2 for a description of the targeted approach) and the *Social and Behaviour Change project w/ Plan International Zimbabwe* (see section 5.1 for a description of the targeted approach). Although the workshop is not clearly linked to a specific programme, data collection repeatedly referenced this workshop and the gender transformation goals it sought to achieve, as such it is included here. Interviewees explained that the Workshop was the first in an intended series, with the objectives of "(i) strengthening gender integration amongst different stakeholders (including WLOs); (ii) increase knowledge on emergency preparedness and response; and (iii) establish sustainable partnerships between UNICEF and WLOs". Youth participants, including AYAC members, attended and participated in the workshop, submitting Participation Reports at its conclusion. While the workshop was informed by a needs assessment and youth participation reports, it is unclear how affected the design, implementation, budgeting or M&E of the workshop. Moreover, the range of sessions covered in the workshop demonstrates an informal/ad-hoc approach; i.e. discussing the gender continuum, tools and methodological approaches to data collection in emergencies (i.e. Rapid Gender Analysis, FGDs, KIs), and a demonstration of how to join the UN portal for partners. Interviewees emphasised that the intention of the workshop was to be gender transformative, so that attendees could be better informed and prepared for future emergencies, however this is difficult to ascertain in its planning, or achievements. A request was made to the interviewees to supply further documentation on the workshop, including how the outcomes of the needs assessment and final workshop report, but none was received.

The workshop appears to contrast with the more formalised approach and methodology of the *Prevention of Violence Against Children (VAC) through challenging social norms that condone/promote violence against children w/ Plan International* and the *Social and Behaviour Change project w/ Plan International Zimbabwe*. Based on the documentation made available, it remains difficult to determine evidence of outcomes of multi-sectoral versus targeted programming as neither undertake a gender transformative approach for adolescent girls, and the targeted approaches have differed across projects.

Efficiency

EQ6. To what extent has UNICEF allocated adequate resources to adolescent girls programming that is gender transformative and supports their leadership and agency in ESAR?

Limited documentation concerning budgets or financial reports were provided for this case study. Where there has been evidence provided of active and meaningful participation of adolescent girls at the activity-level, no indication of scale, budget or relevant disaggregation has been provided to accurately measure, address or finance the differing needs of women and girls in all their diversity.

Based on the programmatic information reviewed, it is clear that UNICEF Zimbabwe is allocating significant resources towards projects which socially and systemically address violence against children and harmful social norms. For instance, UNICEF Zimbabwe is committed to 90% of financing for the *Prevention of Violence Against Children (VAC) through challenging social norms that condone/promote violence against children with Plan International* (USD921,995.20) and 89% of financing for the *Enhancing the capacity of key line ministries to actively challenge harmful social and gender norms that condone violence against children with Plan International* (USD119741.00). However, there is no explicit indication of gender or intersectional dimensions integrated into resource allocation or budget reporting for either project. Similarly, the *UNICEF Zimbabwe Adolescents and Youth Strategy: 2023 to 2026* forecasts a total budget need of USD2.5m for the four year period, with plans to mobilise funds from donors, development partners, funds, trusts and the aid agencies of various governments. Yet, there is no distinction in the strategy of how resources will be allocated for adolescent girls, or to gender-transformative programming in order to address gender disparities – instead, the strategy is focused on adolescents more generally. Interviewees did indicate that UNICEF's Gender Unit has its own budget for tackling gender issues, however no further information was supplied to assess the budget planning or allocation (or whether this referred to a central or regional Gender Unit). While it is likely that adolescent girls will benefit from aforementioned programmes and strategies, and the scale and level of ambition of funding is notable, the lack of gender or intersectional dimensions incorporated into budget planning or financial reporting is in misalignment with a gender transformative approach.

Based on the document review, it is evident that time and programme resources are allocated towards participatory approaches, including Human Centred Design workshops, which apply intersectional and inclusive practices. However, no specific figures were available to gauge their significance. For instance, in Gender and Disability Inclusive documents youth with disabilities, their caregivers and other key stakeholders were brought together using multi-day HCD workshops to address their intersecting and different needs (i.e. *Disability Inclusion Social and Behaviour Change Strategy*, *Child Protection and HIV Sensitive Disability Parenting* and *Exploring Shifting Norms and Behaviour Changes through Voices of Children Living with Disabilities*). Again, while these approaches benefit adolescent girls, there has been no explicit evidence of how gender dimensions are considered when allocating these resources.

Some programmatic feedback provide examples of challenges that were identified in terms of inadequate resources, time and to adequately support gender and intersectional dimensions in activity implementation:

- *Social and Behaviour Change (UNICEF Zimbabwe and Plan International)* provided Teen Mother Champions and Peer Mentors with training, yet these participants needed more support in terms of coaching and mentorship, especially to strengthen synergies with other stakeholders to deliver peer training (and support sustainability and local uptake).
- Similarly, the timeline for the *Exploring Shifting Norms and Behaviour Changes through Voices of Children Living With Disabilities Project (2022)* project was reduced from 5 months to 3 months, which triggered a hectic pace for delivering and executing final activities in a meaningful manner.
- *Save the Children Spotlight Virtual Donor Visit (2021)* noted there was "Limited budget for the scope of the project with the budget missing allocations for critical areas like the bus fares for CCWs."

- *End of term evaluation report: Prevention of Violence against children through challenging social norms that condone/ promote violence against children (Plan International Zimbabwe, 2021)* described how the project was affected by budget cuts initiated by UNICEF, which affected the implementation of major activities.

EQ7. To what extent do UNICEF programmes' monitoring, reporting and evaluation (MER) systems explicitly, or implicitly address gender transformative programming with a view to generating evidence on UNICEF and public sector performance?

Limited evidence was provided to comprehensively determine how gender transformative approaches or programming are monitored, evaluated or learned from in the UNICEF Zimbabwe Country Office, and what incentives are in place for teams to include this.

Where monitoring and evaluation was mentioned, approaches sought to be both qualitative and quantitative, (i.e. key stakeholder focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, pre and post-tests) to explore changes in social norms, behaviour, and attributions for change. The *Plan International Ministries Capacity Challenge VAC (2022)* did emphasise that "Plan will provide strengthened capacity in gender responsive M&E", which was the sole mention of a gender focused M&E strategy, in the documents reviewed.

Monitoring and reporting on relevant indicators linked to gender transformation repeatedly emerges as a recommendation from programme reports. As a result, it does not appear as an action currently undertaken, but something recommended for future programming, for example:

- *Child Protection and HIV Sensitive Disability Parenting ToT Manuals (2022)*: Proposed scaling strategy includes indicator suggestions: i.e. registering participants and disaggregating information by gender, age and disability.
- *Disability Inclusion social Behaviour Change Strategy: Zimbabwe 2022-2023*: activities recommend inclusion of Children with Disabilities, and indicators seek to measure their participation at events, i.e. "engagement of boys, girls and key influencers in community dialogue(s)."
- *Adolescents and Young People Advisory Committee (2023)*: the group have been engaged in monitoring and evaluation work, producing a field report based on three site visits. This *February Field Visit Feedback Report* provided some recommendations, including (1) UNICEF should engage adolescents and youth from planning stage to ensure meaningful participation; (2) UNICEF should design and implement programs that target the drug and substance abuse amongst children and adolescents in Zimbabwe; (3) UNICEF programs should aim for a wider coverage of service provision to ensure that children and adolescents in hard-to-reach areas can also access the services without spending a lot of money for transport.

Other work with AYAC members, including 2023 annual planning, demonstrates the centering of youth voice, agency and leadership, but without disaggregating or specifying adolescent girl's voice, agency and leadership. While female interviewees indicated feeling empowered within and beyond UNICEF programming (i.e. in other social structures such as home, school), there is no formalised approach in capturing this information or therefore measuring these indicators for adolescent girls. As a result it is hard to determine what incentives are in place for monitoring and reporting on gender transformative outcomes.

Evidence of embedding evaluations of gender transformative programming, and resourcing them to demonstrate attributable impact

Limited evidence was provided to comprehensively determine how the UNICEF Zimbabwe Country Office embeds evaluations of gender transformative programming in order to demonstrate attributable impact, and how they are resourced.

Where evaluation indicators were mentioned, they are not explicitly linked to gender transformative programming. For example:

- UNICEF Zimbabwe's *Adolescent and Youth Advisory Committee Field Visit Feedback Report* was submitted as a form of participatory MEL, however it is unclear how this report has been used. The report does feature an indicator on children's voices in UNICEF programming – however this indicator is not disaggregated by gender or age and features general project feedback without using a consistent approach to measurement.
- In the *Plan International Ministries Capacities Challenge VAC (UNICEF, 2022)* the majority of indicators stipulate the need to disaggregate by sex and age. There is one specific performance indicator focused on adolescent girls: 'number of adolescent girls that received prevention or care intervention to address child marriage'. However it is unclear how the programme approaches this as government ministries appear to be the core programme participants.
- In *Prevention of Violence Against Children (VAC) through challenging social norms that condone/promote violence against children (2020)* the majority of indicators stipulate the need to disaggregate by age, sex and disability, for instance *number of adolescent mentors with increased knowledge (disaggregated by age, sex and disability)*". In the same programme, it was interesting to note that there was one indicator focusing on specific outcomes for boys (% of boys aged 11-17 who believe a girl says no to sex, she means it) and no specific indicators on girls (all other indicators grouped girls and boys together with the recommendation for sex disaggregation). While the focus of the indicator assesses the issue of consent, and social norms which can increase adolescent girls' risk of violence and harassment, a similar indicator could have been selected for adolescent girls to ensure a balance and equal representation of girls and boys in the data. Efforts to include more indicators on adolescent girls would also support formalised efforts to taking a gender transformative approach.

Sustainability

EQ8. To what extent are the positive changes and effects of gender transformative programming on adolescent girls' leadership and agency sustainable at the national level, and/ or likely to be scaled up by government, or civil society?

The Zimbabwe Country Office employs a system strengthening approach, working in partnership to build the capacity of existing community and government structures and systems as a key part of their approach to sustainability. There is clearly a sustainability ambition, and long-term goals are sometimes outlined in programmatic documents, however, sustainability strategies do not appear to be routinely developed as part of the project design or considered a key element of programme planning and implementation. No sustainability or exit strategies were shared as part of the desk review for this case study.

The Human-Centred Design approach applied to the majority of UNICEF Zimbabwe programming places affected population groups at the centre of identifying and solving challenges affecting them, providing an explicit opportunity for understanding and influencing sustainable social and behaviour change.

Evidence from the *Gender Transformation and Disability Guidelines (nd)* produced by Youth Advocates Zimbabwe shared more explicit transformative intentions to sustainability goals, with strategic intentions to have long term impact and sustainability. The Guidelines state "Transformative change is change that is sustainable and long-lasting, and which fundamentally challenges and shifts power as well as systemic and structural inequalities. Transformative change ensures that those most impacted by an issue can exercise choice, access, and agency to address it. Central to this thought is Youth Advocates' strength in advocacy and influencing at community and national structures." While this intention is important, the evaluation has not been able to evidence how this approach has been put into practice.

Systems and partnerships in place to build ownership, capacity and resources to support government scale up or take up by other partners

Lots of examples of partnerships and cooperation are prevalent across documents reviewed for this case study, yet there are not many descriptions of systems/ tools/ practices put in place for partners to build ownership, capacity and resources to support scale up or implementation. In some instances, partnerships and collaboration with key stakeholders is mentioned, and yet the systems or uptake thereof is not clear, for example:

- *Child Protection and HIV Sensitive Disability Parenting Training of Trainers Manual*: This manual lists targeted stakeholders (Ministry of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare; Ministry of Health and Child Care; Civic Society Organisations; Community Leadership; Organisations of Persons with Disabilities) and implementing partners (Zimbabwe Parents of Handicapped Children Association (ZPHCA); JF Kapnek Trust; Africaid; Plan International Zimbabwe; and Ministry of Health and Childcare). But no reference or approach to supporting partners to take ownership or scale up the material is included.
- *Social and Behaviour Change (UNICEF Zimbabwe and Plan International)*: For effective implementation and sustainability, the government stakeholders who were part of the trainings were tasked to continue supporting the mentors and enhancing their skills to utilize the skills gained during the training. While this is set out in the End-line report, there is no information on the monitoring or uptake of this recommendation after the programme.¹⁷⁶
- *Gender in Emergency Preparedness Workshop*: Interviewees explained that the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCOZ) receives funding by UNICEF for its work on gender and child protection, which has a strong focus on emergencies and preparedness. The links between women's rights, gender equality, rights of children and child protection were heavily emphasised, with the coalition therefore focusing on (i) legal measures which can support violence prevention; (ii) issues limiting the potential and empowerment of women (especially around GBViE response); and (iii) women's leadership and role in decision-making spaces. Information and material from the workshop supports these efforts, with plans for the training to be integrated into the organisational work of the WCOZ and their networks. However, interviewees emphasised that sustainability cannot be achieved with only one workshop; "translating the knowledge received into doable actions will require continuous investment." While future workshops are intended to take place, and UNICEF seeks to continue their dialogue and partnership with WCOZ, the scale of investment and scope of work remains unclear.
- The *Plan International Ministries Capacities Challenge VAC (UNICEF, 2022)* programme appears to address sustainability gaps that were made evident from earlier programming; chiefly that government ministries primarily responsible for Violence Against Children prevention currently have minimal strategies for continuity and ownership over the CoCP and Positive parenting models. This gap was attributed to the ministries having limited technical and financial capacity to directly implement the two models. The document therefore proposes that (1) direct funding provided to the government will foster leadership and ownership over the models, and (2) availing technical cross-sectoral expertise from Plan International Zimbabwe will support institutional capacity, effective implementation and monitoring. In addition to ministry stakeholders, the population focus of this programme includes 4,000 adolescent girls and 4,000 parent/caregivers, with performance indicators seeking to measure the number of adolescent girls who receive prevention or care intervention to address child marriage. While

¹⁷⁶ The author of the desk review followed up with the country office and attempted to schedule an interview with Plan International Zimbabwe, however no update was received.

it's unclear how these adolescent girls will be engaged beyond being beneficiaries, UNICEF Zimbabwe is financing this programme, so it would be interesting to clarify how the Country Office is considering the role of adolescent girls and whether they will be involved to help the ministries build ownership, capacity and resources to support government scale up.

Impact

EQ 9. To what extent are new or planned interventions likely to lend themselves to achieving higher level change for adolescent girls in future?

While participation, engagement and examples of youth voice being emphasised are evident from document reviews and interviews, limited data has been shared on the impact of distinctive models, programmes or activities in relation to improving adolescent girls' agency and leadership in Zimbabwe. For example, participation reports produced by adolescent participants for the *Gender in Emergency Preparedness Workshop* demonstrate meaningful participation and reflections from youth. The reports indicate a valuing of adolescent voice in the overall reporting/ monitoring process, however there are no indications of where these participants have increased/ changed agency or leadership opportunities as a result of the same programme. This is also the case for the *February Field Visit Feedback Report* produced by AYAC members which featured some recommendations for UNICEF and programming. Overall, it is unclear how these reports are used i.e. as an indicator for adolescent/ adolescent girl participation? As an opportunity for adolescents/ adolescent girls to influence programmatic design? As a result, it is difficult to determine the gender transformative impact of this approach.

This review cannot conclusively comment on the impact of different models, due to the absence of impact evaluations shared with the desk review that provided evidence of gender transformative impacts, and therefore there are some examples of promising practices emerging that are worth noting:

- The CoCP model in the *Social and Behaviour Change Project (UNICEF Zimbabwe & Plan International Zimbabwe)* and *Prevention of Violence Against Children (VAC) through challenging social norms that condone/promote violence against children (UNICEF Zimbabwe & Plan International Zimbabwe)*: The Peer mentorship model of this approach has elements which have a likelihood of being gender transformative, such as the youth training to deliver curricula to their peers, the agency and leadership to organise and deliver the curricula modules, engaging with different stakeholders working to address systemic change (i.e. Community Health Workers and Community childcare workers). The *Social and Behaviour Change End-line Report (UNICEF Zimbabwe & Plan International Zimbabwe)* demonstrates 40% increase in the number of children, adolescents, and young people (CAY) with improved attitudes and practices in critical change areas such as violence, gender equality, and sexuality by receiving the Champions of Child Protection Intervention. The same report indicated a 10% increase in the use of non-violent methods of discipline against children by parents/caregivers. The evaluation findings show that the project was "largely able to empower girls and boys and address their priority needs" with significant changes reported on assertiveness and the ability to speak on issues that affected them, as well as their perceptions and understandings of gender stereotypes. This continues to support the likelihood of the CoCP approach being gender transformative.
- KIs and FGD data shows how the participation and engagement of youth in meetings for the *Exploring Shifting Norms and Behaviour Changes through Voices of Children Living with Disabilities* had a positive impact of the project on girls at an individual level. While at baseline most participants expressed negative or hesitant emotions, by the third session they appeared more confident, expressing happiness that they had been able to speak freely and appreciation that they had been involved/ heard by adult stakeholders and other children with disabilities. While this example demonstrates some changes, it is not clear how or whether transformative

change has been achieved, and whether there were specific activities in the meetings which helped achieve the individual outcomes.

- Interviewees from the *Adolescent Youth and Advisory Committee* highlighted how involvement in UNICEF programming has positively impacted them; the opportunity to receive training, work with like-minded youth and partake in project work (such as programme monitoring) has led to increased awareness of children's rights and how to advocate for them. All of the interviewees shared examples of leadership opportunities through AYAC, using their voice and agency to train others on topics such as youth advocacy and sexual health. When discussing decision-making, and the spaces where they feel confident to make decisions that affect their lives, the majority of interviewees expressed confidence in doing so across social, familial and communal contexts beyond UNICEF-associated work, and felt equipped with knowledge from their work in AYAC to understand their rights and educate their families and communities as well. One interviewee noted change in their family as a result of their engagement with UNICEF, sharing their family have "also been open to learning about things" such as climate change and gender issues, and now "some of my family members [are] reading more and actually coming towards me and saying hi? Did you see the quota analysis that was released by so, so organization on gender equality in Zimbabwe?". They surmised that "it's interesting for me to see that one person's engagement with UNICEF can then feed a whole interest from a whole family to also rally behind."

CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNED

There is evidence that some programmes implemented by UNICEF Zimbabwe are contributing to adolescent and youth voice, agency and leadership, and by extension adolescent *girls'* voice, agency and leadership. This is primarily reflected at the individual level, with some examples at the community level, and mainly focus on addressing harmful social practices, and increasing education and awareness to support decision making. At a policy level, there is a commitment and understanding for adolescent girls to be specifically targeted, however this does not necessarily extend into programme documents.

Moving forward, the country office can continue to strengthen their work by linking the policy level recommendations with programme design and implementation, for example by developing gender-targeted programmes which consistently and meaningfully engage and support adolescent girls throughout the project cycle. Resources to achieve this, including time, staff, and budget, should be prioritised accordingly.

Some other lessons identified include:

- Strengthen the Country Office's strategic commitment and alignment with UNICEF's Strategic Plan, GAP 3, and the Adolescent Girls Strategy.
- Seek opportunities to proactively promote informed gender transformative programming with all partners, including government stakeholders who are looking to INGOs for expertise
- Promote a more systematic and coherent approach to disaggregating adolescent and youth-focused work by gender
- Undertake a gender assessment of Country Office programming to inform gender transformative opportunities
- Close the feedback loop between youth reporting and adapt programming to ensure youth engagement is meaningful
- Ensure key indicators are featured in MER systems to track gender transformative results, including increased adolescent girls' voice, agency and leadership

- Learn from programmes where individual-level change is evidenced and interrogate how this can be adapted to other levels of the socio-ecological framework
- Leverage the role of adolescent girls who are part of the Adolescent and Youth Advisory Committee to learn where opportunities for adolescent girl programming can be prioritised, and track their voice, agency and leadership opportunities distinctly from boys
- Improve and deepen the budgetary tracking and analysis of spend for gender transformative programming

ANNEX 1. LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

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23. UNICEF Zimbabwe (2023). National Assessment on Adolescent Pregnancies in Zimbabwe.
24. UNICEF Zimbabwe (2020). Plan International Social Norms Programme Document
25. UNICEF Zimbabwe (2022). Plan International Ministries capacity challenge VAC.
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