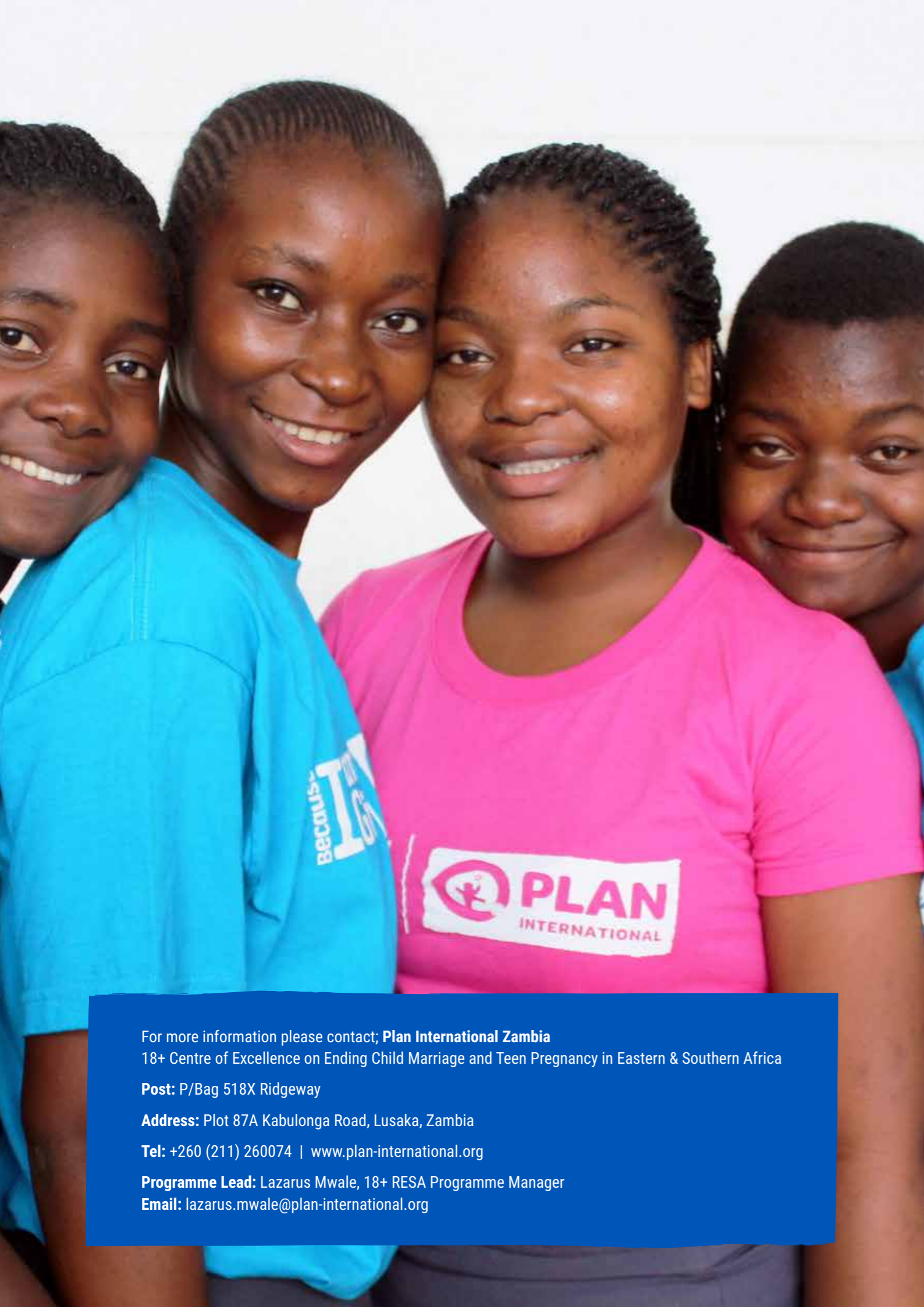


**18+ ENDING
CHILD MARRIAGE
AND TEEN PREGNANCY
IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**

Learning for Change

April 2019



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite global declines in the rates of child marriage, an estimated 1 in 5 women worldwide are married as children.¹ According to UNICEF data, child, early and forced child marriage (CEFM) is most common in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite a steady decline in some countries in the region, the rates are still very high in many countries. Teen pregnancy is also a major social and health issue which can cause severe issues for both adolescent mothers and children - both in the short-term and on an intergenerational level.

The purpose of this report is to help inform more effective, contextualized interventions to address CEFM and teen pregnancy. The report documents case studies of programme innovations and successes carried out as part of Plan International's 18+ Ending Child Marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa Programme (18+ RESA). This report also includes the stories of young people, told in their own words and images, who have confronted CEFM and teen pregnancy and risen above their challenges to become advocates for change in their communities.

Ending CEFM and teen pregnancy requires work across all sectors and at all levels. It requires understanding the complex drivers behind the practices in different contexts in order to adapt interventions. 18+ RESA Programme takes a multi-level, holistic approach to identify and address the root causes or 'drivers' of CEFM, as well as relevant agents of change at all levels. We hope that these stories and case studies will help other countries, partners and local organisations in the region to more effectively adapt and implement the 18+ Programme to ensure that it is responsive to the unique needs and experiences of young women, families, and communities in their own local contexts.

Building on the successes and lessons learned within the 18+ RESA Programme, and with the support of communities, governments and other NGOs; we have learned how young people can be empowered to take on the child marriage problem in their communities.



¹ United Nations Children's Fund, *Child Marriage: Latest trends and future prospects*, UNICEF, New York, 2018.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS:

- Support youth-led social movements to scale up action against CEFM and teen pregnancy.
- Create positive alternatives for young people instead of CEFM, otherwise changes such as getting girls out of early marriages will not last. Education needs to become the alternative that girls and boys want to pursue.
- Expand the focus of programming to include urban areas, especially informal settlements, so as to move away from the current over-focus on rural areas.
- Expand the focus of programming to include how we address child marriage and sexual exploitation in emergency contexts.
- Design, implement, monitor and evaluate gender-transformative programming that addresses the root causes of CEFM, including control of adolescent girls' sexuality. There is a need to explore the drivers of this harmful practice in a way that has the potential to create lasting change
- Ensure CEFM programming places girls at the centre - building their life skills, their political consciousness, and their agency to open up alternative life options beyond CEFM. Additionally, support communities in recognising, analysing and deconstructing the social and gender norms that place women and girls at a disadvantage in all societies.
- Engage men and boys with methodologies that support them to recognise, question and act against unequal divisions of power in society.

TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES:

- Work with traditional and religious leaders to provide awareness about the crucial role they play in social norm change and advancing equality for girls and young women.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS:

- Incentivise education and increase the quality of education so that girls have real alternatives to CEFM.
- Set the legal age of marriage to 18 for both girls and boys, and enforce these laws to protect children.
- Ensure the effective implementation of such legislation by engaging, sensitising and providing relevant training to judges, as well as to traditional, community and religious leaders on CEFM, teen pregnancy and child rights.
- Provide young people with sexual and reproductive health services to reduce teen pregnancy.
- Allocate budgets to support commitments to end CEFM and teen pregnancy, and follow through with the implementation of these commitments.
- Develop coordinated multi-sectoral approaches that connect CEFM and teen pregnancy initiatives to broader development goals.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

Section 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 2 INTRODUCTION

Background information on CEFM and the Plan International 18+ Ending Child Marriage Programme and Centre of Excellence, and information on how this report was generated.

Stories from young people: Transcripts of stories told by the young people themselves, illustrated with their own images.

Sections 3-5

These sections are colour coded and organised around the three central pillars of the **Theory of Change** for the 18+ End Child Marriage Programme, and draw out key learnings from programmes across Eastern and Southern Africa:

3

EMPOWERING GIRLS

4

MOBILISING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

5

CREATING AN ENABLING LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

Section 6 WORKING ACROSS ALL LEVELS

Section 7 IMPLICATIONS


2. INTRODUCTION

Despite global declines in the rates of child marriage, an estimated 1 in 5 women worldwide are married as children.² More than half of the girls from the poorest families in the developing world are married as children.³ According to UNICEF data, child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) is most common in sub-Saharan Africa: the 6 countries with the highest prevalence of CEFM in the world are in the Eastern and Southern African Region (RESA). Despite a steady decline in some countries in this region, the rates of child marriage are still very high in many countries.

CEFM is a violation of children's rights and denies children (especially girls) an opportunity to realise their full potential. Child marriages affect how young women and men's lives unfold — shortening their childhoods, limiting their education and economic opportunities, and subjecting them to social isolation and vulnerability to violence.

Teen pregnancy is also a major social and health issue which can cause severe issues for both adolescent mothers and children. According to UNFPA, 7.3 million girls in developing countries become pregnant before the age of 18 each year.

RECENT ESTIMATES SUGGEST THAT



ONE IN THREE CHILD MARRIAGES CURRENTLY OCCUR IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, WHERE 38% OF WOMEN 20-24 YEARS OF AGE WERE MARRIED BEFORE THE AGE OF 18.⁴

650 MILLION WOMEN ALIVE TODAY WERE MARRIED AS CHILDREN



IF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES DO NOT OCCUR, IT IS PROJECTED THAT **150 MILLION MORE GIRLS ARE LIKELY TO BE MARRIED BY 2030**

Early childbearing increases health risks for both mothers and children.⁵ Plan International Malawi research found that 4 out of 5 young women in Malawi who married before the age of 18 did not complete their schooling. The impact of CEFM and teen pregnancy is thus physical, psychological, emotional, social, as well as economic.

Research has shown that the underlying factors that contribute to CEFM and teen pregnancy are complex and inter-related and have different dynamics in every context. Ending child, early and forced marriage and teen pregnancy requires work across all sectors and at all levels. It requires an understanding of the complex drivers behind the practice in different contexts in order to adapt interventions.

THE KEY DRIVERS OF CEFM AND TEEN PREGNANCY IN THE EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION INCLUDE:

-  Harmful cultural norms and practices
-  Weak legal and institutional environments
-  Household poverty
-  Low levels of education
-  Teen pregnancy

² United Nations Children's Fund, (2018). *Child Marriage: Latest trends and future prospects*. New York: UNICEF.
³ International Centre for Research on Women and Girls Not Brides, (2015). *Taking action to address child marriage: The role of different sectors : Economic Growth and Workforce Development*
⁴ United Nations Children's Fund, (2017). *State of the World's Children. USA: UNICEF.*
⁵ Meade, C.S., Kershaw, T.S. and Ickovics, J.R. (2008). *The intergenerational cycle of teenage motherhood: An ecological approach. Health Psychology, 27(4), p. 419.*

PROJECT COUNTRY SUMMARY

SOUTH SUDAN

UGANDA

RWANDA

ZAMBIA

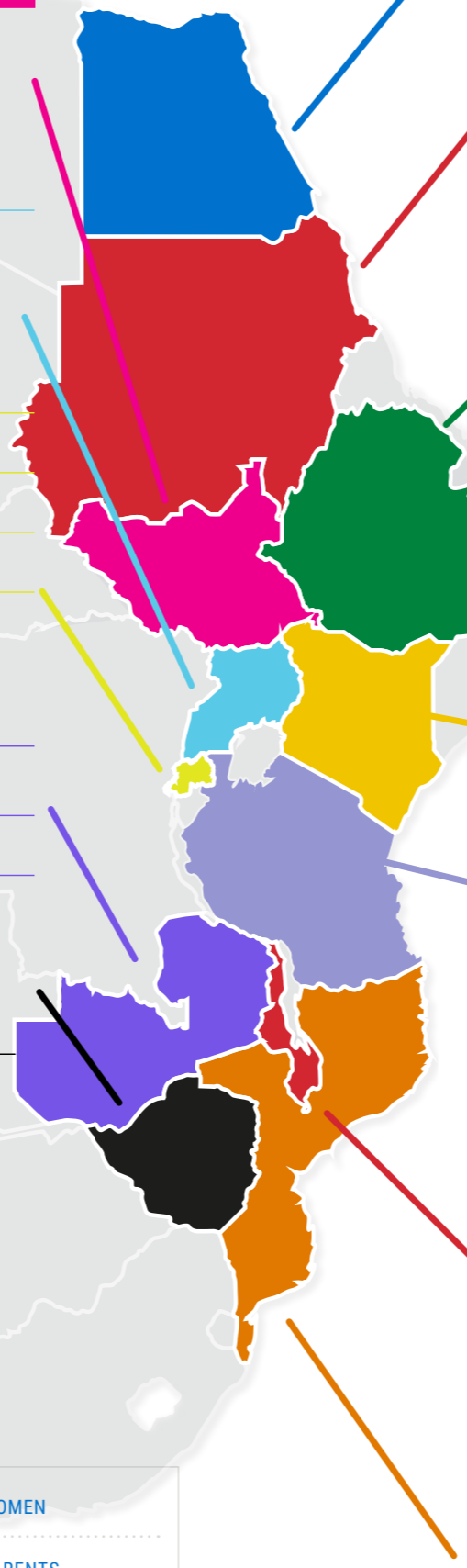
ZIMBABWE

MULTI COUNTRY

KEY PLAYERS

PROGRAMME NAME	TIMELINE	INVESTMENT	KEY PLAYERS
Women and Girls For Change (WG4C)	2017-19	€ 300,00	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN
Decide! End child marriage and teenage pregnancy	2018-21	€ 3,275,000	CIVIL SOCIETY, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Promoting girl's rights through CEDAW	2016-19	€ 476,146	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Girls Take The Lead: Building Assets of Adolescent Girls in Refugee Camps in Rwanda	2015-17	€ 490,050	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN
Girls Leadership Empowerment	2017-18	€ 44,470	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN
Girls Safe School	2016-18	€ 300,000	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN
Financial Education for Girls	2013-18	€ 729,511	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN
Access to Quality Education and ECD Services in Rwanda	2018-2021	€ 1,440,900	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Yes I Do	2016-19	€ 2,067,867	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Cycle for Plan	2016-19	€ 174,000	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
18+ Fighting Child Marriage in Zambia	2016-19	€ 644,746	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Building Skills and Economic Resilience for Girls and Mothers to End Child Marriage	2016-19	€ 832,863	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
18+ Ending Child Marriage in Zimbabwe	2016-19	€ 606,060	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Enhancing the Voices of Civic Society to End Child Marriage in Eastern & Southern Africa	2018-21	€ 429,766	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
18+ Ending Child Marriage in Eastern & Southern Africa	2017-20	€ 439,568	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS

BOYS
 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS.
 GOVERNMENT DECISION MAKERS
 WOMEN
 CIVIL SOCIETY
 FAMILIES
 LEADERS
 PARENTS
 COMMUNITIES
 GIRLS
 MEDIA
 SERVICE PROVIDERS



PROGRAMME NAME	TIMELINE	INVESTMENT	KEY PLAYERS
Empowering Civil Society to Combat FGM/C	2018-20	€ 1,316,435	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN
Girls Decide – My Body My Rights	2018-19	€ 562,450	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Adolescence Protection and Empowerment	2015-19	€ 2,365,727	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Abandonment of FGM in North Kordofan	2018-21	€ 718,647	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Obligation to Protect and Empower Girls in Sudan (OPEG)	2019-23	€ 3,000,000	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
CO Advocacy and Influence Support Project for Ending FGM/C & CEFM	2018-19	€ 29,967,999	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
My Body-My Future (Yene-Raey)	2018-21	€ 3,470,000	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
My Choice for My Life	2018-21	€ 7,284,350	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
The Early Marriage Fund	2015-18	€ 1,076,990	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Girls Advocacy Alliance Project	2016-20	€ 1,782,000	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Transformed Assertiveness of Community and Local-Government for Effective Response Against FGM/C	2017-20	€ 750,000	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Yes I Do	2016-20	€ 965,036	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Yes I Do	2016-20	€ 990,158	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Preventing child marriage in Morogoro and Rukwa regions	2016-19	€ 419,251	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Empowering communities to end child marriage in Geita Region	2016-19	€ 800,000	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Countering child marriage and Female genital mutilation In Tarime and Geita	2017-20	€ 605,700	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Enhancing the voices of civil society to end child marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa	2018-21	€ 1,232,000	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Yes I Do	2016-20	€ 1,508,890	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Cycle for Plan	2019-20	€ 73,508	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
18+ Ending Child Marriage	2016-20	€ 859,660	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
18+ Media Project	2018-20	€ 914,144	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
18 + Sports league on ending child marriage	2018-19	€ 25,573	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Enhancing the Voices of Civil Society to End Child Marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa (18+ Stage II)	2019-21	€ 838,349	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Gender and Influencing Project	2018-19	€ 285,930	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
My Body-My Future (Yene-Raey)	2018-21	€ 1.371.000,00	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS
Yes I Do	2016-20	€ 1,952,413	BOYS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS., WOMEN, CIVIL SOCIETY, FAMILIES, LEADERS, PARENTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS

EGYPT

SUDAN

ETHIOPIA

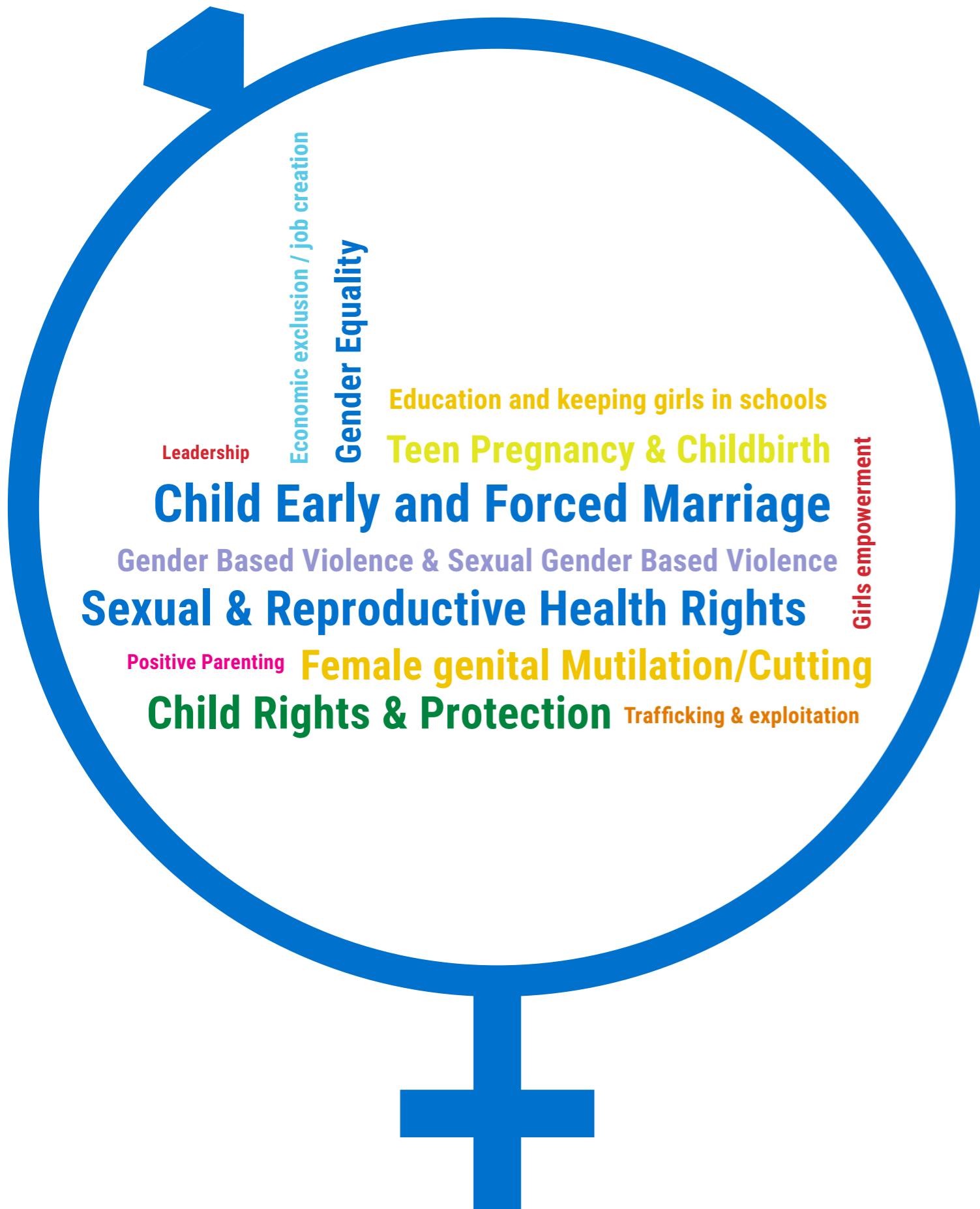
KENYA

TANZANIA

MALAWI

MOZAMBIQUE

18+ RESA PROGRAMME FOCUS



HOW THIS REPORT WAS DEVELOPED

The content for this report was developed through two processes:

1. LEARNING FOR CHANGE WORKSHOP WITH PLAN INTERNATIONAL STAFF

In October 2018, the 18+ Centre of Excellence implemented a learning and sharing process to document best practices, local innovations, and adaptations of the 18+ Ending Child Marriage Programme in Eastern and Southern Africa. **Thirty-eight participants** from **Plan International offices in 11 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa** - as well as representatives from **Plan International Germany, Plan International Global Hub, Regional Hub and Pan African Liaison Office** - participated. The participatory workshop helped programme and country staff to refine and build case studies from their work to end CEFM and teen pregnancy, and to share insights from 18+ RESA programme delivery with each other. The workshop also allowed Plan International staff to draw cross-cutting lessons and themes from the case studies, relating these to the 18+ RESA Programme theory of change. After the workshop, programme staff were given ongoing support to revise their case studies for this report.

2. PERSONAL STORYTELLING FOR TRANSFORMATION WORKSHOP WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

In September 2018, a group of 18 young activists working with Plan International in **Zambia, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda, Zimbabwe and Mozambique** came together for 5 days to tell their stories. Through a range of forms of expression - including art, photography, drama, creative writing, storyscapes and story circles - the young people developed their own stories and produced them digitally. The framing question that underpinned the storytelling process was: *'Tell a story about a moment when an important change in your life happened. What did you do? What happened next? What is the significance of what happened for what you are doing now?'*

The purpose of the storytelling for transformation process was to give young people an opportunity to reflect on and articulate their own experiences around CEFM and teen pregnancy, and to better understand one another's experiences across different contexts. The storytelling workshop marked the beginning of a process of youth-led social movements across Eastern and Southern Africa.

THIRTY 8 PARTICIPANTS

ELEVEN COUNTRIES



Drawing produced during participatory workshop with programme offices

18+ RESA PROGRAMME ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE PROGRAMME IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Plan International's 18+ RESA Programme Ending Child Marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa is a 12 country initiative taking on the challenge of contributing to end child marriage.⁶ The 18+ RESA Programme adopts a holistic approach to address key drivers of CEFM and teen pregnancy in different communities. We work with girls, communities, traditional leaders, governments, global institutions and the private sector to address the barriers that prevent girls from realising their full potential. The programme focuses on three main levels:

- **Girls and young women (individual level)**
- **Households and communities (collective level)**
- **Legal and policy environment (system level)**

While the programme design is intended to apply to all contexts, it requires careful situational and contextual analysis. The programme is thus constantly tested, updated and adapted to ensure that it remains relevant and fit for purpose in each area of implementation (see table in Appendix 1 for more details regarding projects being implemented by each country office in the region).

Recently, the 18+ RESA Programme has expanded to become a comprehensive global framework for change. It is supported by Plan International's Global Theory of Change, that seeks to trigger change for children and young people by:

- **Influencing social norms**
- **Strengthening people's personal, social and economic assets, as well as their safety nets.**
- **Contributing to better policies, legislation, budgets and government services at various levels.**

In 2018, Plan International established the 18+ Centre of Excellence on Ending Child Marriage and Teen Pregnancy to support the implementation of programmes. The overall goal of the Centre of Excellence is to contribute towards ending child marriage and teen pregnancy in Africa by 2030.

“ Our goal is to reach 50 million girls by 2022, so that they are protected from early marriage and pregnancy. ”



THE ORIGINS OF THE +18 RESA PROGRAMME AND THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Adapted from an interview with Samuel Musyoki, director of Plan International Zambia from 2013 to 2018

“When I came to Zambia in 2013, the team in Southern Africa had been discussing a focus on ending child marriage. These countries share borders and a culture around young girls getting married after an initiation process. They wanted to try to push the age of marriage to 18. We developed a shared programme model and Theory of Change that can be applied by all the countries. The key pillars were: working with the girls themselves to build their agency, working with gatekeepers (aunties and uncles and the powerful in the community), working with the communities and then the institutions. We developed the model with support of the International Council of Research on Women so that each country can use it as they design programmes, so that we can compare across contexts. This led to a loose network of sharing and learning. The first projects began around 2014.

“ A key pillar was working with the girls themselves to build their agency. ”

is a difficult subject to discuss openly, yet it is also a key driver. You cannot ignore SRHR when it comes to early child marriage.

With the lessons coming out of this work, we entered a global competition in Plan International and this programme was chosen as the best designed advocacy project or programme out of 70 country offices. Our approach was then picked as the global approach for Plan International.

We wanted to be more networked and have a Centre of Excellence on ending child marriage. We have the skills, the experience and we can support other countries to design programming, document critical stories of change and really implement this work well. The main mandate was to strengthen the capacity of countries to develop programming on child marriage. The Centre of Excellence is supported by direct contributions from each country involved, and by other country offices such as Plan International Germany and the International Headquarters. In return, they expect some key services, including a sharing and learning workshop and a community of practice who regularly share and learn via webinars. They can also ask for tailored support.

There are 18+ RESA Programme focal points in each country, and these are the communities of passion. It is that movement that is building: people will remain connected and exchange ideas and learn from one another and then it becomes easy to keep extending this. It is a movement, an approach, an organising principle: it is not about a project anymore. It's a way of thinking and doing things that is keeping people connected and moving the agenda forward.”

“ We have been trying to build a critical mass of people who can work together. ”

⁶ Countries involved in the 18+ Programme include Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Egypt, Rwanda, Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

SOKO MARY'S STORY

“

Soko Mary is my name, born in the eastern part of Zambia. I was born alone in my family without a brother. At the age of 7, both my parents died in the same year, only to leave me and my grandmother, who had complications in her leg, without anyone to help us.

Suddenly my life changed until when Plan International Zambia came to Chadiza and I was selected as one of the sponsored children. Their sponsorship could not take long because they wanted everyone to benefit from their projects, not only one person.

By then I had written my junior examinations and luckily, I was selected to Grade 10. Having no one to look after me and my grandmum, I started going out with a certain boy in gain of some money. And I only discovered that I was pregnant because I didn't know how to use a condom. By then, I was 15 years old. The guy ran away and I had to suffer alone looking for some food, prepare for my unborn baby. Sometimes I could eat, sometimes I couldn't. I just became like a street kid for 3 years. I almost gave up, together with my



son, until I met a good woman who introduced me to a nurse who wanted a maid by then. Luckily, she accepted me with my son. That's how I left the village for Kafue, where I was working as a maid for 3 years so that she could pay school fees for me. Still... life wasn't good but because I knew what I really wanted to achieve, at the end of the day I had to be strong. In the morning I would do house chores, then in the afternoon go to school until I completed. Then I was told to go back to the village.

While at the village, I went to see staff from Plan International Zambia because I really wanted to be the voice of the voiceless for youth in my community. I was trained as a Champion of Change facilitator, child protection volunteer, change agent and a community data collector. I facilitate programmes for youth (girls) from the age 10 to 24 on how they can protect themselves from early marriages[and] early pregnancies. I want to see a community which is free from child marriages, early pregnancies, gender-based violence, and gender [in] equality. Thank you to Plan International Zambia for helping me to be the way I am today.

”



ROSE'S STORY

“

My name is Rose Sakala, I am 25 years old. I was born to my both parents in a family of 2 with my elder sister Baleke but raised by a single parent from the age of 6. My mum, Miss Emily, was a government primary school teacher in the most remote areas of Malawi but she made sure I had access to quality education and she so much believed in me. Every day she spoke words into my future and would always say, "Rose you will be the world's greatest leader and I will be there to cheer you up always my daughter."

I used to be super intelligent and that made me to go to college whilst so young. I was 15 when I was doing my first year doing in a Diploma for Agriculture. A week to finishing my internship and resuming school I lost my mum. She died in her sleep and it was so hard for me. I never believed! and knew my precious jewellery would go like that.

I lost everything! Everything I had in a single day. My life was shattered. I lost my identity, I lost my voice, I lost my family, I lost my relations and friends. I dropped out of college and became a nobody on the streets of Karonga and

Lilongwe. Life became miserable as I had to survive a period of homelessness without food, family and shelter. I had to become a parent of my own. I had to part ways with my sister to fend for myself. I began to hustle on the streets and sell water. To live on the streets like that is something no one should have to go through. Throughout these challenges, there was a family that took me in, but then again I had to stand on my own.

In time, I got a job with World Vision and begun to save for my fees. Later on...a local non-governmental organisation (NGO), paid my tuition and I finished my Diploma. I enrolled for a degree programme in Agribusiness Management, and I had to be working and paying for my fees until third year when the Board Chair for Save the Children Italy...paid for my tuition for the remaining 2 years.

I am now a graduate. I work with VSO Malawi and I am also an International Youth Engagement advocate for Plan International. I have a personal project with my friend and managed to pull out over 365 young boys and girls from early, child and forced marriages. I pay for 38 of them, with their tuition and boarding fees.

The present gives me so much hope for the future as mum had said. I believe I will be the world's greatest leader and make her proud as she had desired. I love you so much Miss Emily and I owe you big time.

”

EMPOWERING YOUNG GIRLS

3. EMPOWERING YOUNG GIRLS

Soko Mary and Rose's stories highlight the diversity of young people's experiences of child, early and forced marriage and teen pregnancy. They show the agency of young people, even in difficult circumstances. In the first, we meet a young woman whose lost her parents at a young age, fell pregnant, and then ended up on the streets. Eventually, through the kindness of strangers and her own hard work, she managed to pull herself out of poverty and become an advocate for other young people.

Recognizing the power of young people to determine their own fates, the first pillar of the 18+ RESA Programme is focused on mobilising girls at risk to build capabilities to determine their own futures - especially choices about if, when and who they marry. **To achieve this broader goal, the intended outcomes of the programme are focused on ensuring that girls:**

1. have improved agency and assets; and
2. have improved advocacy skills and opportunities.

Activities under this pillar are focused at the girl level and include:

- Girls empowerment groups
- Safe spaces
- Peer mentorship
- Life skills and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR)-based curricula
- Advocacy training and opportunities for young women at community, national and sub-regional levels.

THIS SECTION DESCRIBES 3 DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS.



In **South Sudan**, where many girls are promised into marriage at very young ages, Plan International staff have helped to launch child rights clubs to encourage the return of child brides to schools and to advocate against child marriage.



In the case of Plan International **Tanzania**, initiatives have taken on the interlinked issues of child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting, creating girls clubs, running trainings, and establishing child protection teams.



Plan International **Rwanda** has launched three 'Girls Safe School' initiatives to deliver a holistic package of services to address teen pregnancy and the sexual and reproductive health and rights of girls and young women - including trainings, provision of menstrual hygiene packs and economic strengthening initiatives.



PREVENTING STOLEN CHILDHOODS IN SOUTH SUDAN

According to UNICEF data, 52% of girls in South Sudan are married before their 18th birthday - the 5th highest child marriage rate in the world.⁷ The South Sudanese constitution officially restricts marriage to persons below the age of 18, and the Child Act of 2008 also specifies that children have the right to be protected from child marriage and other traditional practices that might affect their development. However, these legal frameworks are rarely enforced. The conflict that has ravaged the country for the last 5 years continues to drive its population into dire economic and social situations, many of which are linked to child marriage. According to research conducted by Plan International in 2017, child marriages in South Sudan are often motivated by direct economic gains for parents, who sell their daughters or exchange them for cattle.⁸ In this region, cows are highly prized because they are seen as a source of wealth and social status.

In Pibor, a county lying in one of South Sudan's most arid areas, hundreds of kilometres of land is uninhabited as a result of people being displaced by long-term inter-communal fights over grazing rights and access to water. Many in this community believe that promising a girl into marriage at an early age reduces the risk of her falling into a relationship that will not be approved by her parents. Gola, a young woman from Pibor, was sold into marriage to the father of a young man from a neighbouring clan at the age of 5. Her parents received 45 cows in exchange for the promise of marriage.

To try and address such situations, Plan International South Sudan has set up 7 child rights clubs and child-friendly spaces to give children an environment to interact and learn, as well as to educate communities about children's rights and the negative impact that child marriage can have on the lives of girls. In the early stages of the programme, few girls attended the child rights club meetings for fear of reprisal from their parents. In subsequent months however, more girls began to attend in larger number as they learned about the important lessons being taught at the clubs, including both practical health advice



A girls sports team in South Sudan to raise community awareness

(like the management of menstrual cycles) and assertiveness skills. The chairpersonship for the daily meetings rotates among the girls in order to allow them to gain public presentation and debating skills.

The girls are also involved in debate sessions in the clubs on topics mainly related to tolerance and child rights. Through group meetings, they support each other and raise awareness in the community on the importance of protecting girls and sending them to school.

“Through such interventions, and in consultation with the local community and with support from elders, Plan International South Sudan has encouraged the return of child brides to school settings to gain education and has begun to build the groundwork for child-led advocacy against child marriage.”

⁷ United Nations Children's Fund, (2017). *State of the World's Children. USA: UNICEF.*

⁸ See: <https://plan-international.org/publications/girls-crisis-south-sudan>



“MY CHILD WILL NOT MARRY YOUNG”: PEER EDUCATION AND PROTECTION PROGRAMMES FOR GIRLS IN TANZANIA

According to the 2015 Tanzanian Demographic and Health Survey, 36% of women aged 25-49 had married before their 18th birthday. Legally, Tanzanian girls are allowed to be married as young as 14, as stated in the National Marriage Act of 1971. In some regions of Tanzania, female genital cutting or circumcision is an important rite of passage to initiate girls into womanhood and prepare them for marriage, thus linking the practice to child marriage. Female genital cutting practices, which predominantly affect girls from disadvantaged families and communities, can have a significantly negative impact on girls' health and well-being, as well as violate their rights to education and dignity. In Tanzania, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) is a criminal offence under the penal code, but there is no specific legal framework to prevent it. While the national prevalence of female genital cutting is 10%, the prevalence in the Mara region has been documented to be as high as 32% according to the 2015 Tanzanian Demographic and Health Survey.



Tanzania youth activists

Plan International and other development partners (with support from the European Union in Tanzania) have scaled up interventions in the Tarime district of Mara, where the Kurya tribe resides, to address high rates of female genital cutting and child marriage and protect the well-being of girls and young women. The programme has been establishing girls' clubs and is training thousands of young women in life skills and adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights. Furthermore, the programme focuses on raising community awareness through sports and has worked to establish and strengthen Child Protection teams at district, ward and village levels to address child marriage and female genital cutting. The programme also facilitates women's income generation groups and entrepreneurship skills training.

“For the Kurya tribe, a girl who does not undergo circumcision is considered an outcast and is restricted from full participation in household life.”

Joyce, age 25, is one of the peer educators involved in Plan International programmes in the Mara region. As a member of the Kurya tribe, for whom circumcision is considered mandatory, Joyce was initiated in a genital cutting ceremony at the age of 14 just after completing primary school.

Six months after her circumcision ceremony, Joyce married a 26-year-old man. “I was happy,” she told a Plan International staff member, “because I moved from childhood to adulthood and I was praised highly by my people. I thought this was better than education”. Over time though, her views changed. “My husband started to beat me. I was not able to stand up for myself or express how I was feeling. Now I regret my decision and the cultural ceremony as it denies young girls the high possibilities embedded in education”.

When her husband passed away, shortly after the death of her third child, Joyce began to get involved in the girls' clubs and life skills trainings. She also began to participate in income generation groups and began to practice small scale farming and trading to help support herself. She also works hard as a peer educator to end cultural norms that threaten girls' futures by educating young girls on sexual and reproductive health and rights and the potential effects of circumcision and child marriage. Although she still lives with her husband's family, as tradition dictates, her mother-in-law is supportive of her role as a peer educator. “I am glad that my life is now transformed,” she explained, “and from what I have gone through, I know that my children will not marry young”.



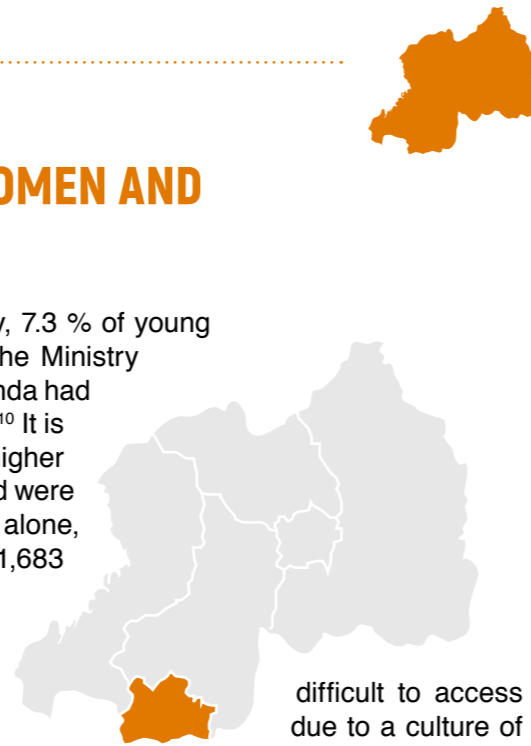
Joyce seated outside her in-law's house together with her three children.

TOGETHER FOR THE SUPPORT OF YOUNG WOMEN AND TEEN MOTHERS IN RWANDA

According to the 2015 Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey, 7.3 % of young women aged 15 to 19 had fallen pregnant in 2015.⁹ In 2016, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion reported that 17,444 girls in Rwanda had been sexually abused and had given birth to a child as a consequence.¹⁰ It is anticipated that the rates of teen pregnancy and childbirth are in fact higher than those reported nationally, as births from women under 15 years old were not counted in these studies. In the Nyaruguru and Bugesera districts alone, where Plan International Rwanda supports a number of programmes, 1,683 teen mothers were identified in 2016.

Sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) are difficult to access in Rwanda. Emergency contraceptive methods are particularly difficult to access because of the lack of information on the service. This is partly due to a culture of silence on sexual activity and a lack of information on who to turn to in cases of gender-based violence. Unintended pregnancies are an important consequence of this lack of access to SRHR for girls and young women in Rwanda. Further, high rates of poverty in some regions of Rwanda are a key factor that shapes young people's reproductive decision-making. Due to unequal gender norms, especially in rural areas, there is little representation of girls and young women in decision-making structures, and they often lack the space and self-esteem to advocate for issues that matter to them.

A girl is showing a skirt made by herself



To begin to address some of these issues, in 2016, Plan International Rwanda implemented an initiative to create “Girls safe schools” in 3 schools and the surrounding communities in Nyaruguru district. The Girls Safe School model is a holistic package of services that builds the personal, social and material assets of girls in order to reduce barriers to accessing quality education for girls. These barriers include gender-based violence in schools, school environments that are not girl-friendly, and teaching approaches that are not student/girl child-centred.

Plan International Rwanda Country Office staff worked with project partners and school leadership to launch the project and ensure local ownership of the project. Working with YWCA, Plan International Rwanda also promoted SRHR for young women through trainings and through the distribution of menstrual health kits. They were distributed to 342 girls in 3 schools and were replenished monthly. In addition, latrines were constructed in 3 schools to ensure proper hygiene and privacy for girls and boys. Around 10,000 girls participated in sensitisation meetings to increase knowledge on SRHR and gender-based violence.

The project also worked to foster economic resilience among young women through the provision of vocational trainings and the distribution of livestock to vulnerable children and young people, as well as teen and single mothers. Further, Plan International partnered with the Ndago Vocational Training Centre to provide training in sewing to 32 teen mothers. After 3 months, the graduates were provided with tailoring machines to start their own businesses. Plan International Rwanda is supporting the first round of graduates to take over the leadership of this project.

In addition to their programmes focused on young women, Plan International Rwanda has supported programmes to address parent-child communication around sexuality through village-based forums called “parenting evening sessions”. These sessions provided safe spaces for people to discuss social issues and resolve them together. They also learn about SRH so that they can talk to their children (including teen mothers) more effectively.

The Girls Safe School project was beneficial to different categories of people apart from young women. Students were the primary beneficiaries of programmes through trainings, facility improvements and direct resources. Their parents also benefited from the assets the young people acquired and have helped their children in using the livestock effectively. Further, the surrounding communities benefited from the new resources through the sales of goats and overall economic strengthening. Plan International Rwanda staff have reported that the programme served to help shift gender norms by providing much-needed resources and skills to girls and young women, including teen mothers.

Plan International's experience with building community initiatives for girls and young women has highlighted the great needs of girls and young women and emphasized the need for more participatory research to understand the complex causes of child marriage and teen pregnancy in the region in order to develop effective strategies for programme growth and resource mobilisation.

342 GIRLS IN 3 SCHOOLS RECEIVED MENSTRUAL HEALTH KITS

“ To address child marriage, early pregnancy and other systemic challenges faced by young women in the region, it is necessary to develop holistic activities that attempt to shift the norms, attitudes and behaviours of young men and women and their families and communities; to develop strategies for confronting structural determinants, including widespread poverty; and to work for policy-level change. ”

⁹ National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, Ministry of Health (Rwanda) and ICF International, (2015). Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey 2014-15. Maryland, USA: NISR, MOH and ICF International. Available at: <http://www.statistics.gov.rw/publication/demographic-and-health-survey-20142015-final-report>

¹⁰ The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion reported teen pregnancies in numbers using the DHS information (the 7.3% was translated into numbers).

'PEGGY'S STORY

“

I was only as young as 17 years old, after sitting for my A level high school, when I started thinking that I could end my education and engage in an early marriage. It was so simple because at this point in time, I disagreed a lot with my mum.

Looking at this young man who I knew since my childhood. He was also waiting to join the university after his A level. Though a little older than me, I felt he loved me so very much. Thinking he was the best, the most suitable hubby for me, we started dating.

Little did I know that he had an affair with another girl throughout his high school. Joey, a young woman whom he had been relating with then, confronted me one evening with a clique of other older crazy girls who were always bothering me...she warned me strongly to let go of her husband. I felt so low, disappointed, insulted and, above all, I felt betrayed not just by anyone, but by someone I loved and looked up to.



I then made up my mind to let go of my dream Prince Charming. I just couldn't see sense in fighting or struggling for a man. I was broken but I put myself together. It costed me a lot because I was so focused about my decision to settle with him. Even in my disappointment, I slowly picked up my broken pieces and went ahead to learn a few hands-on skills. I then recollected myself in a decision to move on with a new and only dream, which was to continue with my education because my parents were able and willing to pay my tuition. I then got admission to the best business school in the country to study economics. While at school, I did other things like baking and even at a point, I set up a [small business] to generate enough revenue for my hostel and my upkeep.

Today I am so proud of the decision I took. Currently, I am pursuing my [postgraduate studies] and now I train girls and young women who are economically marginalised in my community. With this, I do advocacy to make sure that all girls can stand up for their rights - together.

”

MOBILIZING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

4. MOBILIZING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

The second pillar of the 18+ Ending Child Marriage Programme in Eastern and Southern Africa aims to transform gender norms and practices through social movement-building.

The programme has two intended community-level outcomes:

1. Increased awareness and understanding about child marriage, girls' education and girls' rights among families, community members and gatekeepers.
2. Increased mobilisation of families, communities and gatekeepers to prevent child marriage and support girls' rights and opportunities, especially rights to education and sexual and reproductive health.

Activities include:

- Engagement of influential family members of girls at risk for child marriage
- Community dialogues with the community-at-large and specific groups, especially men and boys
- Identifying, supporting and training traditional, religious, and community leaders
- Facilitating and supporting community action plans to end child marriage
- Strengthening school/community partnerships to keep girls in school

This chapter includes three case studies of how Plan International Country Offices have worked to shift local social norms and practices.



The staff at Plan International **Ethiopia** have built strong partnerships to tackle the issue of child marriage through a dialogue-based approach.



Plan International **Mozambique** staff have worked with both local artists and young people in school clubs to create a local social **movement** to shift social and gender norms and practices.



In **Kenya**, the 18+ RESA Programme is mobilising local community leaders to raise awareness about the risks of FGM/C, and to promote children's rights.



COMMUNITY ACTION TO ELIMINATE CHILD MARRIAGE IN ETHIOPIA

Plan International Ethiopia has been working to eliminate child marriage, making significant strides in the country for girls and women's rights. Girls are at the centre of the project because of their high risk of child marriage and the need for support from numerous people and organisations around them. The project has involved several key stakeholders - including the lower government structures, community-based organisations, religious institutions and their leaders, traditional leaders, as well as partners and change agents - in solving the complex issue of child marriage. The programme has focused on strengthening existing structures and organisations to tackle this issue, including women's and men's development groups, community policing groups, women associations, and faith-based organisations.

Community engagement has been an essential mechanism to protect girls from early marriage. Plan International Ethiopia engaged community members in dialogues to encourage them to help ensure that girls are kept in school. Gender clubs were revitalised, thereby improving girls' academic performance. The programme also worked directly with girls to educate them on their rights and agency, which in turn has resulted in reductions in the rates of child marriage. Partnerships with the Ethiopian Centre for Development and Woredas (district) Women and Children Affairs were leveraged to enhance capacity and sensitivity to gender-related issues and address the consequences of child marriage with high-level actors and district departments through training and community engagement.

A significant advancement of the 18+ RESA Programme in Ethiopia has been the commitment of religious leaders to work against child marriage. This was accomplished by working closely with religious leaders to understand their perspectives and using religious texts to engage them in discussions about child marriage. As religious leaders have significant authority in many communities in Ethiopia, their commitment to the programme was an important factor in promoting change in local understandings and practices.

This large scale, multi-pronged, dialogue-based approach to engaging the community in addressing the issue of child marriage was important so as to enable individuals to take ownership of the movement.

Lakech Gebre, a community leader in the movement to end child marriage, was herself married at 14 years old and had her first of 5 children at the age of 16. "I had gone to my family every time I gave birth," she recounted to Plan International staff, "but they had always wanted me to get back to my husband because they did not want to be rejected by the society".

Eventually, without the option to return to her family, Lakech decided to leave her husband and flee to a different community with her children. "It was after I fled that I got to know what a happy life means". Through the small business she established in her new community, she was able to send all her 5 children to school. "I want all of them to focus on their education and build their future" she stated.

She has now been elected to serve as chairperson of the local woman's Idir (an informal group to support different social issues such as funerals, etc). As a leader, she is participating in the fight against harmful traditions affecting girls and women. "I don't recommend girls to marry before living their dreams," she explained, "let alone give them to a husband at an early age. Thank God things have changed now. Awareness has been created. The domestic law and legal framework on marriage is in favour of the girls. I wish I could be born now."



Lakech Gebre: Community leader in the movement to end child marriage



SOCIAL AND GENDER NORMS AS DRIVERS OF CHILD MARRIAGES AND EARLY PREGNANCY IN MOZAMBIQUE

In many parts of Mozambique, social and gender norms and practices that are detrimental to the rights of women and girls persist. Particularly in rural areas, it is still commonly understood that girls and women are responsible for domestic roles such as cooking, taking care of babies, and working in the farms; whereas men are responsible for bringing income into the household. Unequal power relations within households often make it difficult for girls to achieve higher levels of education, therefore limiting their access to employment. Consequently, girls and women can become trapped in a cycle of poverty. In many cases, these gender imbalances are also strongly linked to child marriage and early pregnancy.

Since 2014, Plan International Mozambique has been working to support the growth of youth social movements to raise awareness and address harmful social norms and practices. Plan International works to ensure the active involvement of youth groups, as well as local popular opinion leaders.

In the "Yes I Do" project, 36 artists (including musicians and theatre actors) were trained by a partner organisation on issues relating to sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender, masculinity and teen pregnancy. Programme participants were encouraged to use their art for social transformation, working against gender inequality, child marriage and teen pregnancy. As a result of these initiatives,

“ several artists have developed and recorded songs about gender-based violence and child marriage. ”

These songs were performed in a Children's Day event in 2017 attended by more than 3,000 young people and adults. The songs were also used to raise awareness and prompt discussion during roadshow events held throughout the province, which were also attended by local government officials. Additionally, the events served as opportunities for health workers to distribute contraceptive information and services.

In the areas of Mogovolas, Nampula and Rapale, 9 theatre groups who had participated in the trainings performed pieces about the negative impact of child marriage and teen pregnancy, reaching more than 800 people. These interactive events served as productive platforms for honest conversations with young people. The AMOR Project, implemented in Jangamo since 2014, facilitates 15 school clubs for girls and boys to discuss gender norms and sexual and reproductive health and rights. The members of school clubs use the skills gained in the programme to address issues related to girls' education and rights in their homes and neighbourhoods.

In Mogovolas, 320 Champions of Change agents, working collaboratively with the school councils, are leading peer-to-peer awareness raising campaigns to highlight the issues of teen pregnancy and child marriage. The impact of these intensive campaigns on both teen pregnancy rates and CEFM has been significant. The impact also had important effects within families. Sebastião, a School Club member, told Plan International staff that the Champions of Change programme had enabled him to help his 16-year-old sister resist family pressure to get married.

Mozambiquan youths during a campaign to end child marriage



Through social movement initiatives, the 18+ RESA Programme in Mozambique has effectively mobilized young people and others to become collaborators and true champions fighting against harmful social and gender norms. Engaging young women and men as leaders and deploying arts-based approaches to communicate core messages have proven to be effective strategies for promoting community-level change.



COUNCIL OF ELDERS AND CIRCUMCISERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE IN ENDING FGM AND CHILD MARRIAGE IN KENYA

The Tharaka community live in the semi-arid region of Eastern Kenya. They practice agropastoralism as their main source of livelihood. For many years, the community has lived somewhat apart from other sub-tribes in eastern Kenyan communities with whom they share geographical, social and economic boundaries. The community identifies strongly with traditional norms and structures, including allegiance to the leadership of the local Council of Elders. This traditional leadership structure has shaped and influenced many of their practices and beliefs.

The Tharaka community believe in female genital mutilation/cutting and marrying off their girl children at puberty. The cutting ritual serves as a rite of passage for young women to be inducted into adulthood, thus giving them permission to engage in sex and exposing them to the risk of early pregnancies. It is believed that without undergoing the practice, one would continue to be an immature woman irrespective of one's age. Consequently, it would be impossible to get a suitor from the community.

In an attempt to shift these beliefs and practices, Plan International Kenya is implementing a project called "Obligation to Protect" to raise awareness about female genital cutting and children's rights. The project has supported the development of an 'alternative' rite of passage programme.

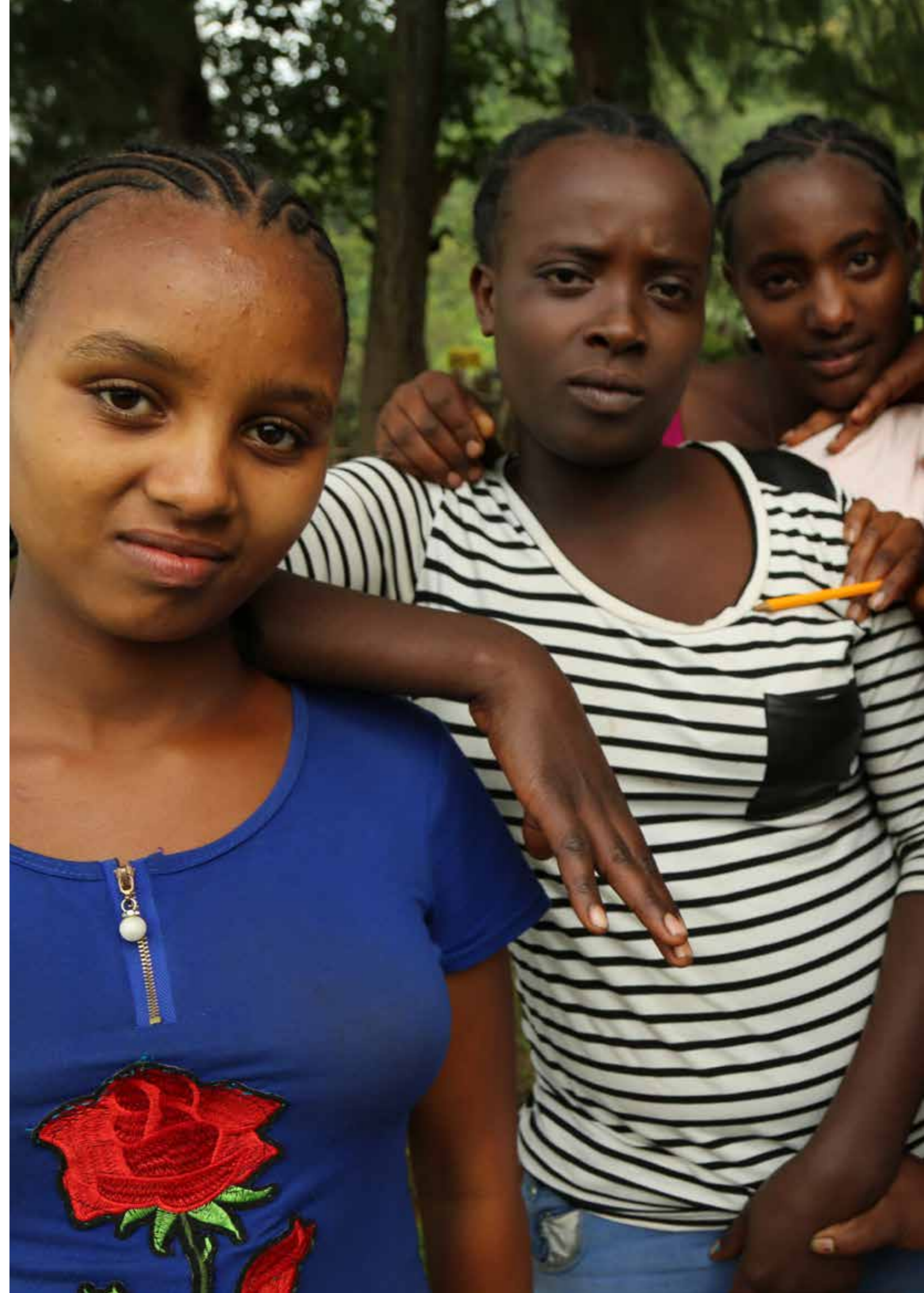
“ As part of this programme, young women learn about the importance of completing school, getting married at the right time, and the potentially harmful effects of female genital cutting on their health. ”

To strengthen this programme, Plan International Kenya has trained several agents of change in the local community. These community leaders work to help intervene on behalf of young women, educating parents on the potentially harmful effects of FGM for young women and encouraging them to allow their girl children to stay in school.



An award ceremony as an example of an alternative rite of passage for young girls in Kenya

The Obligation to Protect project has also partnered with the Council of Elders in the community and local government administrators to influence the community to abandon the practice. Plan International Kenya trained the elders on advocacy skills, basic legal issues, as well as the health and socio-economic effects of female genital cutting and child marriage. As a result, the Njurinceke have been able to campaign against the ritual with great success. The community is slowly transforming, and the cases of girls going through FGM and child marriage are on the decline. Some circumcisers have abandoned the practice altogether and have been trained on alternative livelihoods. They are now strong advocates of girls' education and abandonment of FGM and child marriage in the community.



CREATING ENABLING LEGAL ENVIRONMENTS

5. CREATING ENABLING LEGAL ENVIRONMENTS

According to the World Health Organisation, 32 of 54 countries in Africa have laws that set the minimum age of marriage at 18 or above. These statutory laws, however, are only a small part of the picture. In some settings, there are no formal ceremonies or legal statuses for marriage, with diverse local customs shaping unions. Ceremonies are often held by religious or traditional leaders according to customary laws and practices, rather than according to statutory law. Customary legal systems often have a lower age limit for marriage than statutory laws. In cases where registration systems are weak, the actual age of individuals is difficult to determine or prove. Weak implementation of formal laws and inconsistencies in legal frameworks perpetuate the practice of child marriage.

The third pillar of the 18+ RESA Programme is focused on the creation of enabling legal and policy environments to protect girls from child marriage.

To achieve this long-term goal, the programme works towards two outcomes:

1. The enhanced awareness and capacity of authorities to prevent child marriage and support girls' rights.
2. Laws and policies written, reformed and/or effectively implemented at sub-national, national and regional levels.

Activities include:

- Analyses of legal and policy environments¹¹
- Development of policy briefs, position papers and reports
- Engagement with customary law systems
- Identification and training of duty-bearers of child marriage and girls' rights
- Support for reform and harmonization of policies and laws for girls' rights
- Building capacities of media institutions to conduct media advocacy

The case studies in this chapter highlight three different approaches taken by Plan International programmes to work towards legal and policy frameworks that protect girls and young women from child marriage.



The next case study, from **Zambia**, shows the important role that traditional leaders can play in shifting customary law frameworks to protect girls and young women from early marriage and pregnancy.



Finally, the case study from **Malawi** documents how youth advocates supported by Plan International Malawi mobilised traditional leaders and female members of Parliament to outlaw child marriage in the constitution.

¹¹ For example, the Plan African Union Liaison Office supported the production of this: Department of Social Affairs, African Union Commission. (2018) 'Marriage Laws in Africa: A Compendium from 55 African Member States,' Accessed at http://www.wlsa.org/mz/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Marriage-Laws-AU_FINAL_9-Nov-2018.pdf

ESTABLISHING THE SADC MODEL LAW ON ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE

As part of the 18+ RESA Programme, Plan International has been working to facilitate broader changes to the legal and policy environment over the past 4 years in order to enhance the protection of children from child marriage in the region. As a result of active lobbying, in June 2014 at its 35th plenary session, the Southern Africa Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) resolved that concerted efforts must be made to eradicate child marriage in the SADC region. In response, the Human Social Development and Special Programme of the SADC-PF - in partnership with the Plan International 18+ RESA Programme and the Association of European Parliamentarians in Africa (AWEPA) - convened a SADC regional parliamentary dialogue on child marriage law on February 2015. The meeting explored the benefits of a model legislation on ending child marriage and the possible contents of such a law. It went further to adopt a roadmap towards the development of a regional model law that would help strengthen legal and policy environments in SADC countries and contribute towards ending child marriage.

The first part of developing and drafting the model law was to conduct a comprehensive legal and policy environment review to document domestic and regional legislation which prohibits and/or perpetuates the practices of child, early and forced marriages. The review included statutory, customary and religious laws, and examined their conformity with international human rights standards. The assessment also explored the extent to which existing laws relating to child, early and forced marriages were applied and enforced in each country; and the extent to which they effectively supported or undermined efforts to eliminate CEFM. Following this analysis, conducted by a team of legal



Plan Regional Director, Roland Angerer, makes a key note speech during the SADC-PF debate on the adoption of model law

experts, the 18+ RESA Programme arranged a research validation meeting in Lusaka, Zambia in 2015. In addition, a series of consultations were planned. As Malawi Member of Parliament Hon Patricia Kainga (member of the SADC-PF) recalls, “The process of developing the model law involved wide consultations with various stakeholders in the SADC member states - including victims of child marriage, experts on ending child marriage, civil society representatives from across the SADC region, parliamentarians in the region, government officials, and legislative drafting counsels from the Ministries of Justice in the region”. The consultations were designed to ensure joint ownership of the model law and enhance its acceptability in the SADC region.

Following the research and consultation process, the 18+ RESA Programme staff worked with other stakeholders to draft the model law. In 2015, the draft model law was presented at the first African Girls Summit in Zambia and the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) in Zimbabwe. Thereafter, in March 2016, a civil society consultation meeting was held in South Africa, co-organised by Girls Not Brides, UNFPA, the Plan 18+ RESA Programme and Rozario Memorial Trust. The meeting aimed to ensure that civil society organisations could gain a full understanding of the model law, provide feedback and plan for how to implement it at local and national levels.

Once the draft model law was completed, with input from stakeholders and civil society organisations from throughout the region, the SADC-PF Secretariat invited legislative drafting counsel from Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia to review the model law. The legislative drafters scrutinised the model law clause-by-clause, ensuring that it could be effectively integrated into national laws throughout the region. The revised model law was presented to the 39th Plenary Assembly of the SADC-PF, held in Swaziland in June 2016. Addressing the SADC-PF plenary, Plan International Regional Director in Eastern

and Southern Africa, Roland Angerer, highlighted the importance of the law for ending child marriage in the region: “The model law will address the problem of inconsistencies and gaps in the laws [regarding CEFM], which weaken the sanction mechanisms available to law enforcement agencies across the region”, he explained. He added that the model law eliminates several loopholes that make current laws ineffective and unenforceable - including parental and judicial consent, and conflicts between customary and statutory laws. The Plenary Assembly voted to accept the model law.

Today, the SADC model law serves as a yardstick and an advocacy tool to address child marriage and SRHR issues in the SADC region. In 2017, as described in detail in the case study from Malawi, Malawi became the first country in Southern Africa to use the guidance and provisions of the model law to enact a new Marriage Act that restricted legal marriage to age 18 and above. In addition to statutory reform, some traditional rulers have taken up some of the provisions of the model law and enforced them in their own chiefdoms, as the subsequent case study will highlight.

TRADITIONAL LEADERS PROTECT GIRLS FROM CHILD MARRIAGE IN ZAMBIA



Zambia currently has the 10th highest prevalence rate of child marriage in the world. Child marriage in Zambia, as elsewhere, affects girls and young women much more than their male counterparts. According to the 2013-2014 Zambia Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS), 42% of women aged 20-49 were reported to have been married before age 18, as compared to only 4.2% of men. Relatedly, the ZDHS reported that 33.6% of women aged 20-49 had their first child before they were 18 years old. Although child marriage has declined by 25% - from 41.6% to 31.4% - among women aged 20–24 who report being married before they were 18 years old, it is still among the highest in the world.¹²

To address these problems, the Government of Zambia has put in place a number of legal frameworks to protect children’s rights. These include the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act (2011), which explicitly identifies child marriage as a violation of children’s rights and mandates the creation of referral systems and safe houses for victims of child marriages; and the Education Act (2011), which states that any person who removes a child from school for any reason commits a punishable offence. It is important to note, however, that Zambia has a dual legal system - with both statutory and customary laws in action. Traditional leaders have a diversity of functions, ranging from administrative responsibilities to much more extensive judicial and development duties. They are generally regarded and accepted as the custodians of customs and traditions and provide important guidance to their respective communities.

In some instances, the statutory and customary systems can stand in tension, as is the case in the legal definition of childhood. The Zambian constitution, following international conventions, defines a child as a person below the age of 18 years. By contrast, customary law - which is based on traditional, social and cultural norms - generally defines adulthood as commencing at puberty. As both systems define the legitimate age of marriage as the commencement of adulthood, research has found that this difference in definition serves to perpetuate the practice of child marriage. According to customary law, a 12-year-old who has passed puberty is considered eligible for marriage, and a customary union could thus legally be performed.

To address this issue, since the launch of the 18+ RESA Programme in 2014, Plan International has been partnering with the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs and local partner organisations to work towards the harmonization of the statutory and customary legal frameworks around children’s rights.

Through this programme, traditional and religious leaders in Zambia have been trained to understand the SADC model law, as well as national legal frameworks. They also received trainings in adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights. The two key figures in this initiative are Chieftainess Mwanjabathu and Chief Chamuka.

“As part of the “Yes I Do” project, Plan International Zambia is currently working with 8 chiefs in 2 regions to shift perceptions about child marriage and teen pregnancy, promote gender transformative norms and take action to prevent early marriage and pregnancy.”

¹² Population Council, UNFPA, and Government of the Republic of Zambia, (2017). “Child Marriage in Zambia”. Lusaka, Zambia.

Chief Chamuka, from the Central Province in Zambia, has been one of the most vocal proponents of changing customary by-laws to protect young people from child marriage, early pregnancy and gender-based violence. The project he is leading aims to increase girls' decision-making powers, prioritize their education and transform social norms and practices. Chief Chamuka attended a portion of the 2018 Learning and Sharing workshop to share his experiences with Plan International staff from throughout the region. "I know that the future of this chiefdom is dependent on girls and women," Chief Chamuka stated, "and so the more educated they get, the better for the chiefdom".

A key element of the programme he has led in his chiefdom has been the creation of new by-laws to ban child marriage and teen pregnancy. The new by-laws were developed through a careful process of consultations with village headmen, local residents, and youth advocates - some of whom had been involved in child marriages themselves. The by-laws stipulate that the age of marriage should be 21 and require that all marriages and births be registered with the chiefdom. To ensure all subjects were aware of the by-laws, the chieftaincy has worked with government bodies including the police, local organisations and community leaders to conduct community consultations and information sharing. To help with the enforcement of the new by-laws, Plan International Zambia has trained more than 300 paralegals to address cases of child marriage, teen pregnancy and gender-based violence.

In addition to the by-laws, the chiefdom has implemented a holistic programme to address the root causes of child marriage and teen pregnancy. Key elements of this programme include economic empowerment for women, educational support for girls, mothering groups for teen parents, and awareness campaigns for families and communities. The women's economic empowerment programme has focused on shifting land tenure systems to protect girls and women and enable them to own their own land, as well as on developing women's savings groups and livelihood schemes. The chief has collaborated with partners to offer scholarships to more than 200 girls who have dropped out of school, often due to pregnancy, to enable them to return to their studies.

Since the introduction of these holistic programmes, the chiefdom reports that recorded child marriages went from 45 in 2015 to 8 in 2017. Teen pregnancies dropped from 209 in 2015 to 1 in 2017. In addition, a total of 67 girls who left school due to child marriages in the Chamuka chiefdom were withdrawn from their marriages and went back to school. "These results are a consequence of concerted efforts by community members and government, in partnership with other stakeholders such as Plan International," said Chief Chamuka. "It is difficult to defy the law that you made together. And this is how we are managing to stand as a united front in ensuring that we uphold the by-laws that we formulated".

His goal moving forward is to work, in partnership with Plan International Zambia, to help all 288 traditional leaders in Zambia implement similar programmes in their own chiefdoms. He has also begun to travel to other countries in the region to work with traditional leaders in other countries to address these issues. "Ending child marriage requires passion and commitment," he explained, "and traditional leaders to engage with each other to exchange good practices...Culture is good, it's important, but we must move away from traditional practices that cause harm".



Chief Chamuka of Zambia shows his chiefdom by-laws to end child marriage that contain provisions of the model law



CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION IN MALAWI

According to UNICEF, Malawi had the 12th highest rate of child marriage in the world, with 42% of girls married before the age of 18. Until recently, the Constitution of Malawi allowed parents to consent to marriage on behalf of children between the ages of 15 and 18. With the support of Plan International Malawi, a group of Malawian youth activists, teachers and government officials came together to demand that the constitution ban child marriage.

In 2015, a group of 12 youth advocates organised a march to present a petition to the Minister of Justice to raise the age of marriage from 15 to 18 years old. The youth were informed that such a change would require either a national referendum or approval by the Chief of Justices to be considered as a formal motion to change the constitution. This set off a nationwide journey of youth advocates, who worked together and travelled to different areas of Malawi to collect signatures and garner broader support for the campaign. "The challenge of getting those signatures was cumbersome", Rose, who was one of the 12 youth leaders and whose story was featured above, recounted. "Plan International supported the group with resources for travelling".

To gain broader support and momentum, the youth advocates decided to use radio broadcasting to reach people in Malawi. They developed a radio programme called Ungatani ("What Can You Do?"), which was aired on most radio stations in the country from 2016 until today. The purpose of the radio programme was to educate people on children's rights, particularly the rights of girls and young women; and to provide information on access to health facilities and proper referral systems if experiencing or observing child marriage (or other violations of children's rights).

“ As young people we don't have the money, but we do have the energy that this type of activism requires. ”

Also addressed were the issues with the current constitutional language on child marriage. During the programme, listeners were allowed to call in or send free mobile messages with their feedback. The responses to the radio campaign were massive.

“ People in Malawi have more access to radio than they do to social media. This is especially true for those who live in rural areas. ”

At the same time, the youth advocates worked to engage and mobilize women leaders in the Malawian government. A group of women members of Parliament, called the Women's Caucus, were engaged in dialogues and asked to become the vehicles for change in the campaign to end child marriage. The First Lady of Malawi, who serves as the Ambassador for Girls under Plan International Malawi's programme, also promised to take the issue forward to the President.

In addition to working with representatives of national government, the youth advocates organized a Chief's Forum for the paramount chiefs from different communities across the country. At the Forum, chiefs were further educated on the key issues of the campaign and then asked to sign a pledge to help ensure that people would sign the petition and uphold the values of the cause.





Kachindamoto advocating to end child marriage in Malawi, Kenya Airways inflight magazine 2018

In Malawi, the government relies on chiefs to organize and administer public votes, and so they were key to the success of the voting campaign. In addition, by educating the chiefs on the issues of child marriage and girls' rights, the campaign hoped to help encourage chiefs to develop measures to ensure that no child marriages could occur in their communities.

“The chiefs are the custodians of culture,” Rose pointed out, “so if you want to get to the people, you must mobilise those who have the power to influence them.”

ON 14TH FEBRUARY 2017 AS A RESULT OF THE SUCCESS OF THE MASSIVE PUBLIC CAMPAIGN, THE PARLIAMENT OF MALAWI VOTED 131 TO 2 TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION IN ORDER TO RAISE THE MINIMUM AGE OF MARRIAGE TO 18.

To ensure that it was understood and upheld, Plan International Malawi supported the translation of the new constitution into child-friendly versions and worked with youth advocates to distribute it in

schools. Although the campaign achieved major success in ensuring a change in the legal framework, Rose highlighted the important ongoing work to be done:

“This does not end with the law...There also needs to be a review of all the laws pertaining to children, as they are currently contradictory. Secondly, we need to popularise and harmonise and ensure young people can understand their laws. These are big documents and are difficult for those in rural areas to access. It needs to be child-friendly. For this, radio programmes can continue being used”.

One of the other youth advocates involved in the campaign, Charity Bitu, also pointed out that major changes still need to take place in local communities:

“Despite the registered success on the constitutional amendment, more children are still victims of child marriage. I feel like we are not looking at the bigger picture within the community, which is the traditions and the norms that have a great impact on the cases of child marriages. I personally think it's time we start to deal with these traditions if we are to save these girls and children”.

Despite these ongoing challenges, the youth campaign to change the Constitution of Malawi has highlighted the immense power of young people to drive movements for change. It has also demonstrated the effectiveness of working with a number of different stakeholders from local communities and national government, who have the power to influence others from their different hierarchical positions. Finally, the campaign reminds us that a law is only made meaningful if it is absorbed into people's everyday lives and changes their practices. The youth advocates are continuing their work to ensure that the law banning child marriage, and others that protect the rights of girls and young women, become the norms and practices in communities throughout Malawi.



IDAH'S STORY

“

My name is Idah. I am 18 years old, I live in [a village in Zambia].

I remember when my mother left me at home. My aunty's first-born moved into our house. This is when things became bad. My cousin started telling me about marriage and that I had to get married. I was very young at the age of 16. She took advantage of my age and because of her, I got married. At that very time, I fell pregnant. My mother was still not back from her project work in another district. Time went by and I gave birth, which did not make me happy because of the suffering. I lived like a slave because I had no time to rest, nor to be happy.

I had to run away. I left everything - it was just me and my child. I left the man and went back home. When I went to my chieftom, called Chief Chamuka, the chief said that he didn't want any girl child below the age of 21 to get married. I went back to my mother's home and found my two brothers there. They said "No, my sister. Just stay here, don't go



back again".

During that time my mother came back home, and she was surprised to find out that I was in a marriage. Then she started asking me questions of what happened, and I told her what happened. Then my mother called the family and asked them what was happening, and she said that she was going to take the matter to the police. The family refused to take the matter to the police, which made her very sad. They said "No, don't do that. Only God knows".

The father of the child does not support the child. My mother is the one who takes care of everything that the child needs, and things became better. That is when I began sensitising young people and also teaching them about their rights and responsibilities because I don't want them to become the lost, but the found.

”



Some details have been removed at the storyteller's request to protect anonymity.

EMILY'S STORY

“

I remember when I was still going through hard times, working and sometimes living in the dumping site. Otherwise I would sleep in the street. I met different kind of people that made my life hot and difficult to survive, but I had to make their wishes come true for me to survive.

I was 13 years old when I found myself pregnant. At this time, I was in Grade 7. When I managed to give birth to my first-born, I was in Grade 8.

My mother started going out to hustle with my son on her back. Life continued and I went through a lot and through hell on the street. I had hatred and bitterness. I was thinking of other people who have everything, and I just told myself that God gave them everything because he loved them more than my family. I believed this because people were using us to get rich. My heart was so broken.

There came a time when some good friends came to give their help and love by giving us food and gifts. I went through rehabilitation. I also went through a traumatic healing process where I was engaged in teachings and also counselling. So I had to keep on going and coming to the trainings. As the time went by, my heart kept on being cleaned by the nice people.



I had to make up my mind. This was the first time I decided to follow advice from other people. This changed my whole life because before, I was not able to hear or trust anybody due to what I passed through.

It's true when they say love can change everything. First, I decided to love myself, so that I can love others. By God's grace, I managed to change. Now I work as a peer educator and also as a mentor. I managed to rescue some of the girls I lived with before on the street and I accommodate them and give them shelter. Through Plan International, I have also been able to reach other people in my community. I support, raise awareness and give community services, and am now happy because I am able to also support my dear friends. We also have feeding programmes and sports activities that help a lot.

”

WORKING ACROSS ALL LEVELS

6. WORKING ACROSS ALL LEVELS

In addition to individual, family and community-level activities and efforts to change policy structures, the 18+ Ending Child Marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa Programme encourages cross-cutting activities focused on creating and strengthening civil society networks to address child marriage - including inter-faith alliances, youth clubs, engagements with researchers and academics, and regional alliances. For example, the programme promotes the use of mass media campaigns on the effects of CEFM and teen pregnancy and/or the positive outcomes of delayed marriages, as well as the impact of local legal structures around child marriage. This final case study is an example of how programmes can effectively work across all three levels to achieve large-scale transformations.

WORKING ACROSS ALL THE LEVELS IN UGANDA

According to the 2016 Ugandan Demographic and Health Survey, 1 in 4 girls in Uganda are married before the age of 18. High rates of child marriage, particularly in the eastern and northern regions, are linked to broader issues related to gender inequality, gender-based violence and widespread poverty. According to Plan International Uganda, these issues have been amplified by inadequate budget allocation and commitment by government in implementing, monitoring and evaluating existing child protection laws and policies- meaning that girls and young women have limited access to justice.

MOBILIZING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH CLUBS

In an attempt to tackle this complex situation, Plan International Uganda has worked with a number of local implementing partners to mobilize and empower girls and young women to strive towards the end of child marriage and teen pregnancy, as well as to ensure girls' access to justice and rights more broadly. A central element of this programme has been the development of rights clubs for girls through the Girls Advocacy Alliance and Promoting Girls' Rights. A total of 80 schools currently participate in the programme. In the clubs, girls and young women are mentored to understand their rights, to develop confidence and knowledge to speak out against injustices, and to take action. To complement the activities with young women, Plan International Uganda has also supported rights clubs for in-school boys and young men and masculinity clubs for out-of-school young men that aim to encourage them to become agents and champions of change for gender equality and positive masculinities.



Uganda young activists

As part of this programme, implementing organizations have organised annual gender fairs and girls' galas which are attended by young people, parents and community members. At these events, the young advocates share success stories and experiences with the broader community. Further, awards are given to young women and men who excelled as gender champions. As a result of peer education initiatives, the young advocates trained through the programme also reached out to many of their fellow girls and young women in disadvantaged communities and schools to raise awareness and help provide them with the knowledge and skills to resist child marriage; keep girls in schools; and speak out against gender inequality and injustice. Plan International

6. WORKING ACROSS ALL LEVELS

Through these processes, Plan International and partner organisations have helped to build the confidence of young Ugandans to lead in advocating for their own rights, and to articulate their concerns at any level and to any audience. As part of this process, Plan International and local advocacy organisations have helped young people to gain representation on school governing bodies and to form children's councils at district-level that brought issues related to children's rights to the attention of both local and national government. Through this platform, in 2014, a group of young women presented a petition to the Ugandan Parliament demanding an end to the sexual harassment of girls in schools. Their efforts eventually resulted in the revision of the Education Act in 2016 to increase punitive measures against teachers for sexual abuse, ensuring that they would be jailed and banned from teaching.

The success of the campaign against sexual abuse in schools motivated the young advocates, with the support of Plan International, to craft and present another petition to Parliament demanding the creation of a new law to address issues of sexual harassment, child marriage and teen pregnancy in Uganda. Before delivering the petition and as part of its broader multi-stakeholder engagement strategy, Plan International Uganda supported the Ugandan Media Association to carry out a study to document the magnitude of the issues of teen pregnancy, child abuse and child marriages in central and eastern Uganda. After having read the petition, the Right Honourable Speaker of Parliament summoned all key ministers for an emergency meeting at Parliament to hear the young women's petition in person. All ministers signed a commitment for action to protect the rights of girls and young women in Uganda, which was received by Plan International Uganda Country Director Rashid Javed on behalf of the multi-sectoral campaign.

As a result of these initiatives, Plan International and its advocacy partners have developed an effective collaboration with the Ugandan Women's Parliamentary Association to influence Parliament and government to put in place inclusive gender

transformation laws, policies and budgets. A key success story of this partnership is the 2016 revision of the Children's Act to ban child marriage. Plan International also supported the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to put in place a functional Child Helpline Action Centre (called Sauti 116), managed centrally and with branches in each district to report issues of child abuse and violations of girl's rights. To intervene at younger ages, the President of Uganda, with Plan International support, has launched a new Early Childhood Development Policy to support early learning, effective parenting, and gender transformative programmes for young children.

At district level, the girls' and boys' clubs have worked with Plan International Uganda and other actors to advocate for district-level pass ordinances and by-laws on ending child marriage and teen pregnancies in their districts. So far, their efforts have been successful in the Kamuli, Tororo and Lira districts; while the Buyende and Alebtong districts are in the process of adopting new ordinances. Plan International Uganda is also supporting the distribution and implementation of these new laws by working with local village councils and parent groups.

A number of cases have already been documented of the powerful effects of these new legal frameworks to protect girls and young women. In 2018 for instance, two young women belonging to the Girl Rights Club in Buyende district learnt of a marriage ceremony taking place in a local village to give away a 13-year-old girl to an adult man. Drawing on the skills they had gained as youth advocates, they decided to intervene and reported the matter to the local council, the police and the Child Helpline. The marriage ceremony was interrupted and the parents of the girl and the husband-to-be were arrested. The girl involved, who was found to be already pregnant, has received counselling and healthcare services and is being supported to return to school. This case serves as a testament to both girls' empowerment to act and the commitment of duty bearers to implement laws.

“ The success of the campaign against sexual abuse in schools motivated the young advocates, with the support of Plan International, to craft and present another petition to Parliament demanding the creation of a new law to address issues of sexual harassment, child marriage and teen pregnancy in Uganda. ”

COMMUNITY-LEVEL INITIATIVES

In addition to working to strengthen legal frameworks for child protection, Plan International Uganda is committed to promoting increased understanding of girls' rights and child protection within local communities. A number of projects work to ensure that young people and parents understand their respective roles in advancing the wellbeing of girls and young women and keeping girls in schools. One of these is a Theatre for Development project called Niyetu ("It's Ours"), where young people work to mobilize communities around social norm change through interactive music, dance and drama.



News Clip of a young activist handing over petition to First Lady Hon Janet Kataha Museveni

Aware of the power and respect cultural and religious leaders hold over their constituents, Plan International Uganda has also been working to mobilize and train cultural and religious leaders to advance the rights of children and girls. A number of local leaders have begun to disseminate these messages in religious sermons, radio shows and community dialogues. One of the most influential figures in this movement has been the King of Busoga Kingdom in eastern Uganda, who has publicly pronounced child marriage illegal and unacceptable in his kingdom.

Plan International has also built the capacity of local Child Protection committees in understanding issues of child protection, children and girls' rights and their roles in providing protection and safety for children - especially girls. To support their work, Plan International has also trained a large number of community-based paralegals who have constituted themselves into an association to provide mobile aid clinics for those in need.

Through these efforts - centred around mobilizing girls and young women as advocates - Plan International Uganda has succeeded in bringing on-board key players and influential actors across a variety of levels and sectors to work together towards the goals of ending child marriage and teen pregnancies and protecting the rights of girls. This case study highlights the value and effectiveness of multi-thronged, multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional approaches to protect the rights of girls and young women.

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

7. CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This report documents important examples and lessons from across Eastern and Southern Africa that contribute towards ending child marriage and teen pregnancy. Looking across these examples, some future directions for Plan International's work to end CEFM and teen pregnancy emerge, including:

- Supporting young people to lead the work on ending child marriage and teen pregnancy through youth-led social movements, for example through the Plan International Girls Get Equal campaign.
- There are good examples of effective advocacy, but Plan International still needs to make its influencing expertise more systematic, including more effective advocacy at the national level around budget allocation. Currently, too little resources from governments are going towards the things that will help end CEFM and teen pregnancies, such as basic education. For this to change, Plan International and allies need to work together to shift the priorities of governments.
- Using strategic litigation to provoke changes to laws in order to protect children's rights and ensure the enforcement of these changes.
- Setting up credible M&E systems that effectively monitor and track Plan International's work and impact. The organisation needs to be able to measure its impacts, quantify these, and assess their cost-effectiveness. These results can then be used to demand accountability.
- Conducting broader research on the determinants of CEFM and teen pregnancy, as well as the overall impact of the work conducted in order to continue documenting and learning from experience, especially across contexts and over time.

Recommendations for future work to address CEFM and teen pregnancy across Eastern and Southern Africa:

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS:

- Support youth-led social movements to scale up action against CEFM and teen pregnancy.
- Create positive alternatives for young people instead of CEFM, otherwise changes such as getting girls out of early marriages will not last. Education needs to become the alternative that girls and boys want to pursue.
- Expand the focus of programming to include urban areas, especially informal settlements, so as to move away from the current over-focus on rural areas.
- Expand the focus of programming to include how we address child marriage and sexual exploitation in emergency contexts.
- Design, implement, monitor and evaluate gender-transformative programming that addresses the root causes of CEFM, including control of adolescent girls' sexuality. There is a need to explore the drivers of this harmful practice in a way that has the potential to create lasting change.
- Ensure CEFM programming places girls at the centre - building their life skills, their political consciousness, and their agency to open up alternative life options beyond CEFM. Additionally, support communities in recognising, analysing and deconstructing the social and gender norms that place women and girls at a disadvantage in all societies.
- Engage men and boys with methodologies that support them to recognise, question and act against unequal divisions of power in society.

TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES:

- Work with traditional and religious leaders to provide awareness about the crucial role they play in social norm change and advancing equality for girls and young women.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS:

- Incentivise education and increase the quality of education so that girls have real alternatives to CEFM.
- Set the legal age of marriage to 18 for both girls and boys and enforce these laws to protect children.
- Ensure the effective implementation of such legislation by engaging, sensitising and providing relevant training to judges, as well as to traditional, community and religious leaders on CEFM, teen pregnancy and child rights.
- Provide young people with sexual and reproductive health services to reduce teen pregnancy.
- Allocate budgets to support commitments to end CEFM and teen pregnancy and follow through with the implementation of these commitments.
- Develop coordinated multi-sectoral approaches that connect CEFM and teen pregnancy initiatives to broader development goals.

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE ON ENDING CEFM AND TEEN PREGNANCY JOINS SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS GLOBAL NETWORK

The current Plan International Global Strategy commits to deliver an effective organisational design that builds on flexible, networked models; the clustering of expertise; and the sharing of services. The Sexual Reproductive Health Rights Global Network has been created to increase the impact of Plan International's work, and directly contribute to improving the lives of girls and boys. The 18+ Centre of Excellence is a core member of this network. The SRHR Global Network leverages our collective programming, influencing expertise and experiences, and related investments. It also drives organisational focus around work that builds excellence by establishing thought leadership and promoting common approaches that build on good practices and that make use of innovation.

We must all take action to end child marriage. Building on the successes and lessons learned within the 18+ Programme, and with the support of governments and NGOs, young people can be empowered to take on the child marriage problem in their communities. Young people are a vital resource for challenging the prevailing social and gender norms that allow child marriage to continue. But we must educate them, support them and give them the tools to create change in their own lives. We need to work with young people to give them the space and support to develop their own initiatives, and then amplify their voices: young people and their own ideas are at the heart of how to end CEFM and teen pregnancy.

APPENDICES

1. PROGRAMME THEORY OF CHANGE

TO CONTRIBUTE TO ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE IN EASTERN & SOUTHERN AFRICA



2. STORYTELLERS' BIOGRAPHIES



ROSE SAKALA

My name is Rose Sakala. I'm 25 years old and live in Lilongwe, Malawi. I am currently working as a Project Manager-Youth with Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and I am pursuing a Master's in Business Administration at Malawi Institute of Management (MIM). I am the National Chairperson for the Commonwealth Girls Alliance - Malawi Chapter. Beginning in 2016, I became a Plan Malawi activist working with them in the "Yes I Do" project to mentor young boys and girls and work with chiefs, parents and teachers in fighting against child marriage.

My desire is to have a generation, a continent, a world free from child marriage, with zero tolerance to child marriage; where we see every child as our child and are able to cater, fend, defend and protect them. I want to see young girls and boys being able to live to their fullest potentials in life! I intend to continue giving support in policy, strategy and implementation plan development for various countries both with high and low child marriage prevalence. I would like to also play an active role in resource mobilization for the youth movement against child marriage. As such, I am ready to go to any length to achieve this. My goal in life is to be a Doctor in Economics by 30 years old, and then the UN Secretary General (UNSG) by 35.



EMILY TATA

Emily Achungo is a facilitator of the Safer Cities for Girls project. As a young girl, she took to the streets to find food and clothing for her family. They were poor and she was raised by her single mother. After experiencing many painful hardships and having her first child at the age of 13, Emily was introduced to Plan International.

With the love and support of her friends, Emily made the decision to reform herself and change for the better. As part of her activism, she started a football club with the intention to rehabilitate young girls on the streets. Through her dedication to these young girls, she gained skills and knowledge from NGOs such as World Vision. Emily became a member of the Safer Cities for Girls project, which shaped her life to become a Champion of Change.

Many girls have benefited from Emily's activism and her strong sense of care for others. She currently provides shelter for girls who are on the street, supported by a well-wisher. Emily strongly believes that God will help her change the lives of young girls within her community and that, one day, no girl will have to fight for survival the way she did.



IDAH

Idah is a young volunteer at Plan International Zambia. Her motivation for becoming an activist was to help end early child marriage. She was once a victim of early child marriage and as a result, wanted to help others avoid the situation she was in.

With regards to the social movement to end early, child and forced marriage, Idah would like to see all people sensitised to the issue. She hopes that her role will be influential in her own community.

When asked what she would like to become one day, Idah explained, "I would like to become a police woman one day to help or work with the community".



'PEGGY'

I work in Sustainable Development (implementing SDG 6) in Northern Uganda and currently pursuing a postgraduate degree. I became an activist because I wanted the girl child to be equally empowered and given equal opportunities as their male counterparts, especially when it comes to issues that directly affect girls and young women. I worked as a volunteer for the GAA project within Plan International, together with Restless Development, as a Gender Advocacy Team member and young researcher.

Our main goal was to assist girls and young women who were part of economically excluded communities. At Plan International I am an advocate for girls' and women's rights. I would be so glad if the laws and policies that concern the issues of girls' and women's rights were not only put on paper, but enforced and implemented with no compromise. I would like to be a great influence in the movement that aims to end early, child and forced marriage. One day I would like to be a great change agent in the issues of the marginalised in society.



SOKO MARY

My name is Soko Mary and I am 23 years old. I live in Chadiza and I am a volunteer at Plan International. I became an activist because as someone who experienced challenges of teen pregnancy, I wanted to help put an end to early child marriage and teen pregnancies. At Plan international I am a Champion of Change facilitator on ending child marriages, promoting gender equality and children's rights.

For the movement that aims to end early, child and forced marriage, I wish to see all those children who were involved to make it back to school and succeed in life. I would like to continue sensitising communities on the importance of education and the danger of getting pregnant at an early age. One day, I would like to become a Community Developer of Plan International Zambia because I have seen so many activities that needs more attention in our communities.

PROJECT DONORS

- Caterpillar Foundation
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- Finland Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
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- The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) Germany
- United Nations Population Fund and Plan International UK
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18+ ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE AND TEEN PREGNANCY IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Learning for Change

April 2019

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