# HOW CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS CAN USE GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE COLLECTIVE ACTION TO ADDRESS CHILD MARRIAGE AND ADVANCE GIRLS' RIGHTS

## A 7-STEP GUIDE

"This has been a booster for the collective, a collective awakening ... members are now asking how to be part of this process."

"A truly reflective process throughout."

"The discussions have been a good step in advancing and engaging the coalition members to speak the same language, to ask the same things in terms of advocacy, to actively come together to achieve a common goal."

"Insightful. An opportunity for critical engagement."

– Gender-transformative approaches Intensive Week participants

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Civil society's power

### Why gender-transformative collective action is key to addressing child marriage and gender inequality at the root.

Globally, child marriage[a] prevalence has declined by around 15% since 2010, but progress needs to happen 17 times faster to reach the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of zero child marriages by 2030.[1]

*Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage* is committed to catalysing action and investment to accelerate progress. This means addressing the root causes of gender inequality and creating the space for girls and adolescents in all their diversity to act on their choices and reach their full potential.

## Who this Guide is for

This 7-step facilitation guide (from here on "Guide") recognises the unique role of civil society as a powerhouse for transformative change at national, global and community levels – in policies, laws, institutions, services and attitudes – to ensure girls and women know, and can exercise, their equal rights and agency, including if, when and whom to marry.

### KEY TERMS

#### The *Girls Not Brides* vision

The vision of the *Girls Not Brides* global partnership is a world without child marriage where girls and women enjoy equal status with boys and men and can achieve their full potential.

Evidence confirms significant reductions in violence against women and girls – including child marriage – are possible within programmatic timeframes[2] when interventions are well-designed, well-implemented[3] and intentional about gender-transformative strategies.[4]

Without acknowledging and addressing the connection between gender inequality and child marriage, gender-transformative investments in services and programmes will only ever be able to intervene in an ongoing problem, rather than ensure girls, adolescents and their families and communities are empowered to end the issue at its root.[5]

### KEY TERMS

#### Agency

The power to do things without seeking someone else's permission or approval, and the capacity to act for change.[6] Transforming negative social and gender norms to support girls' agency is key to building a world without child marriage, where girls are – and feel – able to claim their rights.

Agency requires freedom from coercion, violence or the threat of violence, as well as access to education and information. In order to exercise agency, adolescent girls and other marginalised adolescents need: autonomy, including bodily autonomy; support to build individual skills such as confidence, literacy and decision-making; social skills, including negotiation and assertiveness; and the skills needed to pursue further education, health, employment and other ambitions.

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a.    We use the term "child marriage" to refer to all forms of marriage or union where at least one party is under the age of 18 years.

This Guide is for any group of civil society organisations (CSO) working collectively on child marriage at a national or sub-national level.

The processes and tools in this Guide were piloted in two African countries, with *Girls Not Brides* national collectives in Mozambique and Nigeria. This means a focus is given to Africa but there is strong crossover and relevance for CSOs working in other regions and on education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence, gender justice and minority rights more broadly.

## What this Guide is for

The aim of this Guide is to catalyse higher impact, more intentional gender-transformative collective action – by employing gender-transformative approaches (GTAs).

Through a series of steps[b] it supports CSOs, as a collective, in strengthening their gender-transformative skills, knowledge and leadership to systematically analyse and address the root causes of gender inequality, both at the individual and a systems level.

It encourages workshop-based critical reflection and action planning to end child marriage. It leads participants – as individuals and as a collective – through a process of critical engagement with country-level evidence and experience-sharing. It supports them to question the unequal distribution of resources and relationships of power, particularly those rooted in gender norms that discriminate against girls and women.

**KEY TERMS**

### Gender-transformative approaches (GTAs)

GTAs aim to promote gender equality by fostering critical examination of gender roles, norms and dynamics. GTAs recognise and strengthen positive norms that support equality and aim to create an enabling environment. This means promoting the relative position of women, girls and marginalised groups and transforming the underlying social structures, policies, systems and broadly held social norms that perpetuate and legitimise gender inequalities. They are intentional about challenging the status quo, rebalancing power, and redistributing resources towards people who have been historically marginalised, excluded and discriminated against on the basis of their gender.

**GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES**

**Additional resources to support your gender-transformative journey**

- Seven UNFPA/UNICEF technical notes on how to implement gender-transformative programming including the *Technical note on gender-transformative approaches in the Global Programme to End Child Marriage.*

- UNICEF's free and accessible e-learning GenderPro modules, including adolescent girls' agency, safety and well-being.

- The quarterly research meeting resources (which include recordings, presentations, session notes and reports) and Research Spotlights of The Child Marriage Research to Action Network (The CRANK).

- Oxfam's *Transforming gender inequalities: Practical guidance for achieving gender transformation in resilient development toolkit.*

- The *What Works to prevent VAWG?* report, outlining effective design and implementation elements in interventions to prevent violence against women and girls.

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b.   These steps are a guide only. For greatest impact, they should be adapted to context.

## How to use this Guide

The Guide has been designed as a practical manual for the facilitation of your own gender-transformative story. In keeping with a foundational principle of GTAs to always be attuned to context, each CSO collective should adapt the outline it provides to their own specific context.

The Guide comes with a [set of tools](#), which are provided as easily amendable templates. We will point to specific documents as we move through the steps of the collective journey, and each tool can be adapted to a CSO collective's requirements.

## Why gender-transformative action on child marriage?

*"When you cut a tree from the roots then it will not grow again. When you cut a branch, it will continue."*

**CSO participant, GTA Intensive Week workshop**

### Child marriage: The global picture, and the scale of the challenge in Africa

Globally, child marriage prevalence and absolute numbers have declined, but progress is uneven and not happening fast enough. Declines have been greatest among girls from the richest backgrounds, and stagnant, or increasing, among girls from the poorest backgrounds. 36% of girls in the world's lowest-income countries and 35% in the world's most fragile contexts marry before 18, almost double the global average.[7]

The girls and young women who have been most economically and socially marginalised are still more likely to marry or enter a union (cohabit) before age 18,[8] and child marriage prevalence has actually increased among girls from the poorest households in Latin America and the Caribbean, West and Central Africa, and Southern Africa.[9]

African women face some of the highest levels of discrimination in the world,[10] and the region is home to 130 of the world's 620 million girls and women who married before age 18. Over 50 million girls who married before 18 live in Eastern and Southern Africa, with the largest share in Ethiopia. Nearly 60 million live in West and Central Africa, with the largest number in Nigeria. Niger in West Africa has the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world, at 76%. The Sahel region – located between the Sahara Desert and the savannahs to the south and covering countries including Burkina Faso, Chad, Eritrea, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan – is set to overtake South Asia in terms of the largest number of girls (burden) married before 18 in the world.[c]

To accelerate progress, girls from the poorest and most marginalised backgrounds must be prioritised. So must the regions where prevalence is stagnant, particularly the Sahel, in West and Central Africa.

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c.   Burden is the absolute number of women 20-24 years old who were first married or in union before they were 18 years old. Prevalence is the percentage of women 20-24 years old who were first married or in union before they were 18 years old.

## Figure 1: Map showing the percentage of women aged 20-24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

Africa is home to 130 million girls and women who married before 18 years.
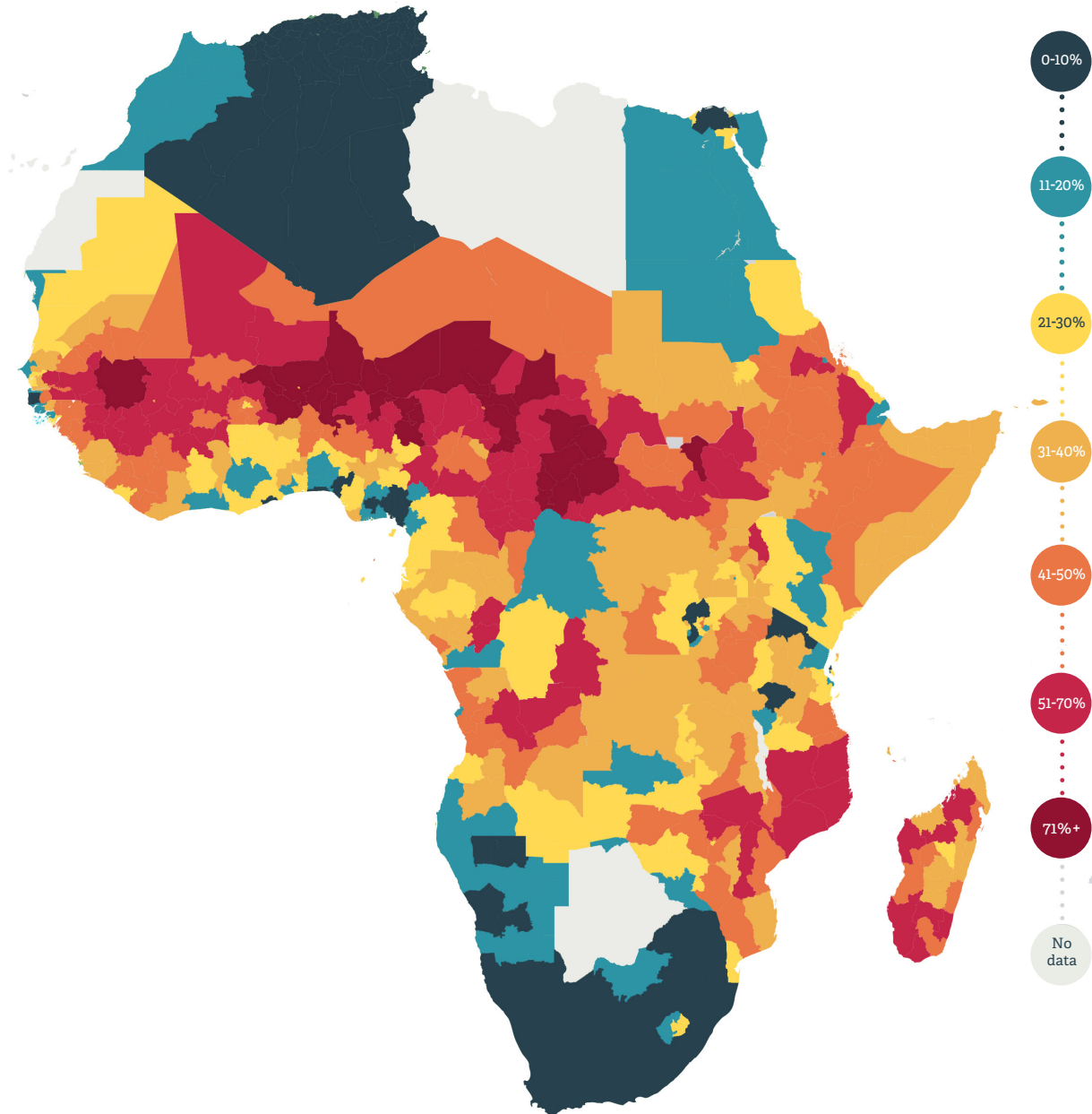


Source: Adapted from UNICEF, 2022, _Towards Ending Harmful Practices in Africa: A statistical overview of child marriage and female genital mutilation_.

## Figure 2: Graph showing the percentage of women aged 20-24 years who were first married or in a union before age 18, by country

Progress towards ending child marriage has been uneven across Africa.



Among countries where child marriage is most common, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and the Gambia stand out for progress in the last decade

Some countries, especially in northern and southern Africa, are nearing elimination of child marriage
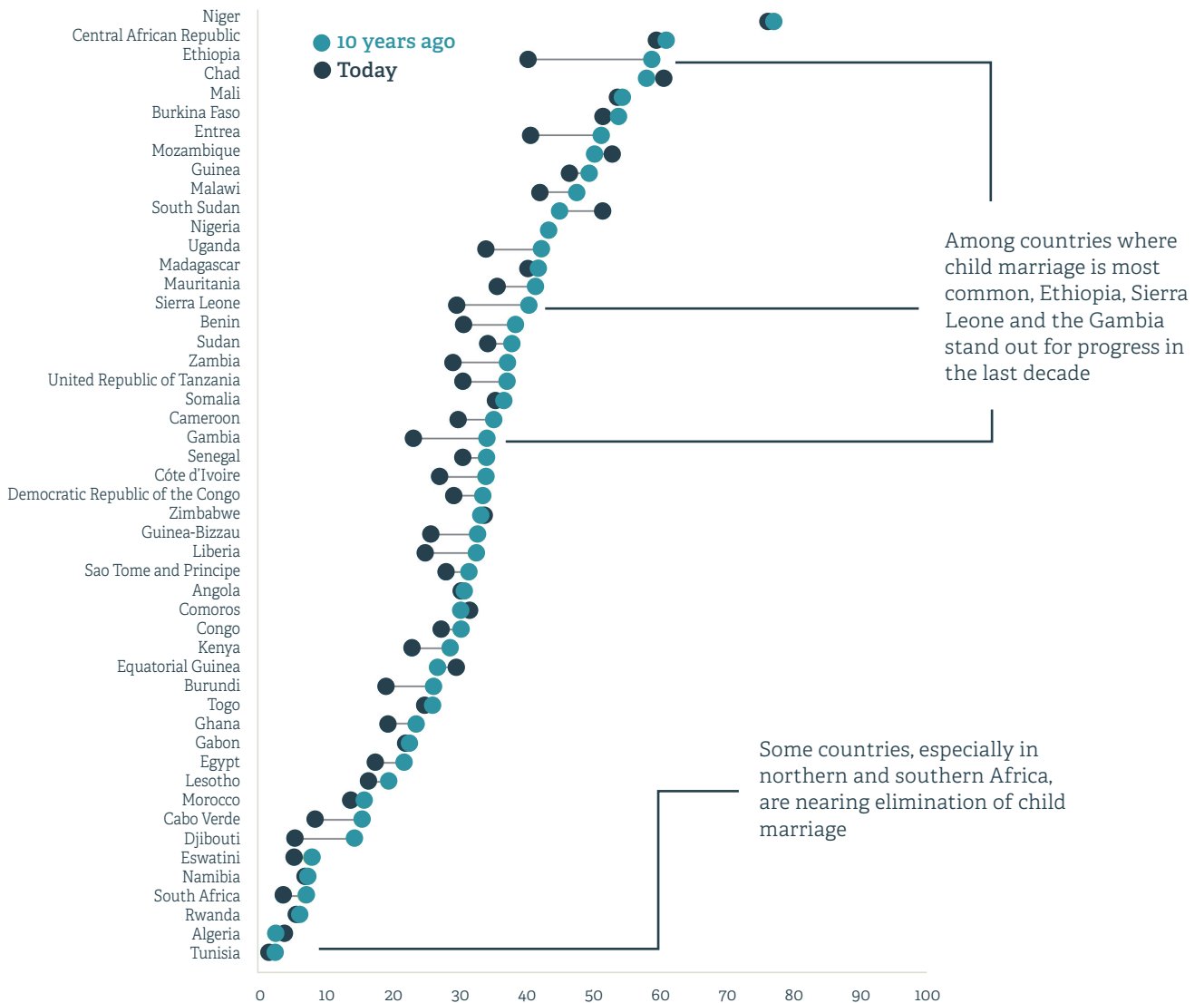
## Figure 3: Graph showing the percentage of women aged 20-24 who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required to end child marriage

Africa is not on track to meet the SDG target of zero child marriages by 2030, or the Africa Union target by 2063.
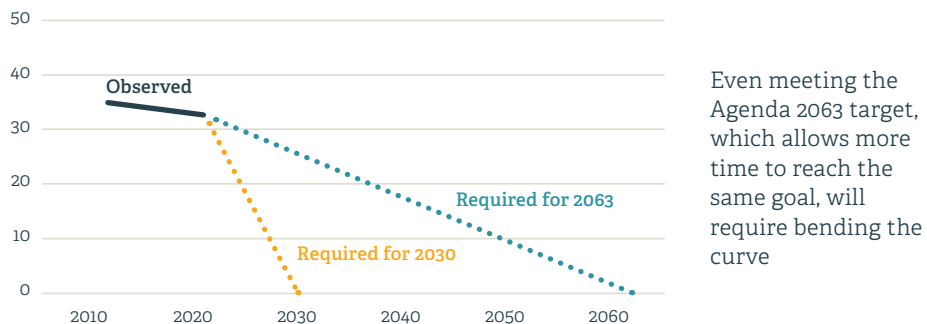


Even meeting the Agenda 2063 target, which allows more time to reach the same goal, will require bending the curve

Source: Adapted from UNICEF, 2022, *Towards Ending Harmful Practices in Africa: A statistical overview of child marriage and female genital mutilation*.

**Key facts: Where child marriage is most prevalent**[11]

**19%** of girls globally marry before age 18

**28%** in South Asia

**31%** in East and Southern Africa

**37%** in West and Central Africa

Prevalence in the lowest-income countries is **double** the global average

Prevalence in countries affected by conflict and fragility is **double** the global average

Within countries, there is **disparity** across regions and between rich and poor households

*"The development and progress of the world remains pinned on securing the rights of women and children by reducing inequalities and investing in their future. The major stumbling block is child marriage as a recognised global issue with high prevalence in Africa."*

Dr Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda[12]

## Impact of child marriage on girls' lives

Behind every number is a girl with dreams, potential, ideas, priorities and needs. Girls and adolescents that enter marriage or union before the age of 18 face situations that often violate their human rights and wellbeing.[13]

The impact of child marriage can be devastating and lifelong, including:

- Girls married before the age of 18 are significantly more likely to experience intimate partner violence.[14]

- Married girls are often expected to drop out of school, and young wives and mothers typically struggle to resume their education due to increased domestic responsibilities, stigma and legal exclusion.

- Missing out on an education affects girls' ability to secure reliable work, make informed decisions, access health services and social support networks, and live independent lives. It can push girls and their children into cycles of poverty.

- Adolescent pregnancy can have significant short- and longer-term health consequences for girls and their children, while delayed pregnancy after marriage (whether by choice or not) can lead to additional stigma, ostracization and violence.

### Girls, adolescents and young women; age-differentiated; evolving capacities

The understanding of, and age range assigned to, the term childhood varies across the world. Every attempt needs to be made to respect and support the changing needs and competencies of girls, as they progress in age.

**Age-differentiated** means a differentiation is made between, say, adolescence, as a life stage with unique potential and strengths, and younger age groups. The concept aims to avoid infantilising girls at any stage. Those designing programmes and policies need to recognise and promote girls' and adolescents' evolving capacities (see below) to exercise autonomy. It is critical to recognise that adults assessing young people's capacity are still influenced by prevailing social norms. Thus, the concepts of age differentiation and evolving capacities are important to counter limitations on sexuality, education, information, services, or support.

**Evolving capacities** is an enabling principle that addresses the process of maturation and learning through which children progressively acquire competencies, understanding and increasing levels of agency to take responsibility and exercise their rights. Using age as the sole indicator of girls' and adolescents' capacity to consent fails to recognise their biological and social realities, as well as their evolving capacities.[15] Applying the principle means recognising the changing relationship between parents and children as they grow up, for example, and focusing on capacity, rather than age, as the determinant in the exercise of human rights.

## Legal frameworks on child marriage

Globally, some 25 million child marriages have been prevented in the last decade due to increased awareness, programming, legislation and advocacy.[16]

Child marriage is on the agenda of decision- and policymakers as a global priority: 93 governments have signed up to SDG Target 5.3 to end child marriage, and 40 countries either have or are working on national action plans to end child marriage.[17]

In Africa, there has been steady – but slow – progress with the adoption of regional and national frameworks and policies to end child marriage.

In 2003, African Union Member States adopted the Maputo Protocol as a framework to hold African governments to account on the violation of girls' and women's rights.

In 2013, the African Union launched their Agenda 2063 shared framework. Goal 17 of the Agenda signalled Member States' high-level political commitment to gender equality and ending child marriage.

In 2014, the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage was signed by 30 Member States, with the aim of raising awareness of the impacts of child marriage, the need to close the gap between theoretical and lived rights, and to strengthen the capacity of non-state actors to undertake evidence-based policy advocacy.

The 2019-2023 AU Five-Year Strategic Plan to End Child Marriage calls for the design and implementation of policies and programmes that are comprehensive and transformative. They should target those most at risk of, and impacted by, child marriage and other harmful practices, including girls and adolescents who are married, pregnant or mothers.

In 2016, the Southern Africa Development Community adopted a Model Law to provide national legislators and policymakers with model provisions to address child marriage. That said, political will is required to implement, enforce, monitor and evaluate such legislation, engage with key stakeholders – including girls and young women – and train and educate public officials.

In 2019, the Economic Community of West African States adopted a [Child Policy](#) five-year strategic action plan, which recognises child marriage as one of its top five priorities.

The same year following a series of dialogues facilitated by UN Women with over 300 traditional leaders from across the region, the Council of Traditional Leaders of Africa (COTLA) was created. This is an influential Pan African movement of progressive Traditional Leaders united in their commitment to drive the transformation of negative cultural practices, customs and traditions to end child marriage, female genital mutilation or cutting, and other harmful practices.

In 2022 the Community of Practice for the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage was launched to bring together national governments, civil society, traditional and religious leaders and researchers to facilitate exchange of knowledge, data and innovation with a view to accelerate progress on the implementation of the AU Strategy.

*"What is the point of rescuing girls from marriage if we are not able to support them afterwards – to return to school or learn a skill?"*
**Member of *Girls Not Brides* National Partnership in Mozambique**

### How gender-transformative action can accelerate progress

*Girls Not Brides* member organisations talk of the dilemma of where to find support – emotional, financial, educational and professional – for girls and adolescents who have left unwanted child marriages. Without systems and services in place, what is the future for girls who courageously go against the wishes of family and social norms? And what are the alternatives to child marriage?



## KEY TERMS

### The consequences of not taking a gender-transformative approach

- Progress will not happen fast enough and, worse still, can be reversed.

- The responsibility for change is unequitable, putting the greatest burden on those most affected by child marriage.

- There is an increased risk of backlash as challenging the status quo can expose girls and their allies to reprisals and/or harm.

- Impact at scale is compromised.

- Those most at risk of child marriage and most marginalised are often missed.

- Opportunities for movement-building and forging alliances to advance the rights of all girls and women are missed.

- Even where there have been gains – for example in supportive laws – they have faced overt hostility and been challenged by the backlash to gender equality fostered by conservative forces, undermined by exceptions, and eroded by conflicts between customary and civil law.[18]

Increased (self) awareness and action to resist child marriage are positive outcomes, but when the resources and services are not in place to support girls and adolescents who have avoided or left child marriages, girls can be put at greater risk. This is why responses need to be comprehensive, rights-based and gender-transformative.

Minimum-age-of-marriage laws are important, but evidence around the world shows that they are not enough in isolation and, worse still, may drive the practice underground or lead to increases in informal unions.[d] GTAs are needed to change decision-making power, status, safety and opportunity for girls and women.

Millions of girls and adolescents continue to marry early because of the lack of secondary schools and employment opportunities beyond school, even in countries where the minimum age of marriage by law is 18. The focus for governments – in partnership with civil society – needs to be the creation of genuine alternatives to early marriage, which means addressing poverty and inequalities, investing in gender-equitable services, and addressing systemic discrimination in the policies and attitudes of those working in public services.

How to engage with religious and traditional leaders is central to gender-transformative action across Africa. They are powerful gatekeepers of norms and high-level influencers of policy. Many are a tremendous force for progress; others are blockers. Such is the case in Zimbabwe, where attempts to harmonise the law on child marriage with the 2013 Constitution is blocked due to traditional leaders' objections to the abolition of lobola, or bride price.[19]

A differentiated approach that works with the complexity of traditional and religious authority is a central challenge for GTAs to end child marriage in Africa.[20]

## GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

### Resources to support your gender-transformative journey

A strong case for gender-transformative advocacy and programming to prevent child marriage and advance adolescent girls' rights and agency is made in *Girls' sexuality and child, early, and forced marriages and unions: A conceptual framework*.

The *Girls Not Brides* Partnership Strategy responds to member organisations' calls for a bolder political approach to transforming the systemic and structural drivers of child marriage, and for greater focus on movement-building.

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d.    Increasing the minimum age of marriage to 18 years old in Mexico reduced formal marriage but did not prevent school dropout or early motherhood and informal unions among 17- and 17-year old adolescents. For more information, see VoxDev's article *Can minimum-age-of-marriage laws eradicate child marriage?*.

## Definitions of gender-transformative action to end child marriage

We can only end child marriage if we address the root causes of gender inequality, and we will not achieve gender equality unless we address child marriage.

GTAs aim to achieve gender equality by encouraging a critical awareness of gender norms and addressing unequal power relationships and unequal distribution of resources to girls and women compared to others in the community.[21]



### KEY TERMS

#### Gender

**Gender** is a term that was popularised in the 1970s by feminists to distinguish those aspects of male and female roles, responsibilities, behaviours, preferences and entitlements that were socially constructed and associated with being (or being seen as) male or female, masculine or feminine.[22] Most existing gender systems are deeply hierarchical, privileging that which is male or masculine over that which is female or feminine or anywhere along the spectrum of gender identity.[23]

**Gender norms** describe deeply entrenched and widely held beliefs and expectations about gender roles that govern human behaviours and practices within a particular social context and at a particular point in time.[24]

**Gender roles** are socially-constructed, expected roles, including behaviours, activities, and responsibilities, associated with biological sex.

**Gender equality** refers to equal outcomes for women, men, girls, boys and gender-diverse people.[25]

**Gender equity** refers to the process of levelling the playing field – creating fairness – to achieve gender equality. GTAs are a way to operationalise gender equity, with the goal of achieving gender equality through intentional and additional measures.

Beyond "engagement", GTAs work with those in positions of power to recognise, understand and be part of the movement of change that challenges privilege based on systems of social hierarchy – including patriarchy and adultism. Such systems systematically disadvantage all who do not fit the dominant heteronormative male norm.

Effective GTAs are grounded in strong gender analysis and an understanding of local context.[26] While specific drivers vary by context, child marriage is consistently rooted in gender inequality and fuelled by poverty, discriminatory social norms, barriers to education, and insecurity. Girls facing multiple intersecting forms of marginalisation and discrimination are often the most vulnerable to child marriage, and the least likely to be offered and/or access support once married.



### KEY TERMS

#### Intersectionality

A framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different forms of discrimination and privilege. These identities include gender, race, ethnicity, ability, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, and age among other issues.

#### The key elements of gender-transformative action

Gender-transformative actions:

- Promote the position of girls and adolescents, challenge the allocation of caring responsibilities between women and men, and/or address the power relationships between women and others in the community.

- Aim to go beyond individual self-improvement among women toward transforming power dynamics and structures that act to reinforce gendered inequalities.

- Seek solutions to overcome discriminatory gender norms and inequalities by empowering girls, women, boys and men, as well as sexual minorities.[27]

# Why collective civil society action?

**"Our unity is our greatest strength. With a spirit of teamwork, partnership and solidarity – even with limited funds – we are able to carry out activities and have an impact. We have been able to raise our voices and create more change across borders."**
Member of *Girls Not Brides Mozambique*

Child marriage is a complex and widespread issue. The *Girls Not Brides* Theory of Change therefore outlines the actions needed at all levels and across sectors to transform the unequal power dynamics – in systems, policies, services and institutions – that reinforce gendered inequalities and drive child marriage.[28] We need to achieve change across all aspects of girls' lives which means working together, pooling our diverse experience, knowledge and fields of influence to have real impact in girls' and adolescents' lives.

Civil society organisations are key actors in enhancing understanding of what works to end child marriage. They can work from and with communities, building relationships based on trust and shared history, and finding joint solutions that work for those most at risk and/or affected by child marriage. They often have limited resources, but, working together, can focus their advocacy and programmatic work to fully utilise – and amplify – these resources across their networks for maximum impact.

Civil society organisations and their networks:

- Can reach the girls most at risk of child marriage.

- Can facilitate organisational reflection and engagement around sensitive norms that stand in the way of girls exercising their equal rights, using language and cultural references that resonate.

- Can adapt rapidly to changes in context, as demonstrated in the response to COVID-19 when many CSOs mobilised rapidly to provide essential services and support.

- Are sometimes the only places where those who are most affected by and/or at risk of child marriage – including girls, women, youth, young people living with disabilities or HIV or who are gender non-conforming – can make their voices and experiences heard and seen.



## KEY TERMS

### Youth

The official United Nations age range for youth is between 15 and 24 years old.[29] There are, however, variations across the world. In Latin America and the Caribbean, for instance, there are countries that extend this to 30 years old, or even 35 as in the Dominican Republic. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines "children" as persons up to the age of 18.



## IN PRACTICE

### Advocating for national-level change in Uganda

At the national level, *Girls Not Brides Uganda* built on the financial support and joint work begun in 2020 to develop a parliamentary motion tabled by a champion MP in 2021. Their collective advocacy led MPs to pass a motion urging the Ugandan Government to develop and enforce policies and strategies to protect girls against escalating cases of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage during the pandemic.

This case illustrates the power of ongoing collective and multi-stakeholder action, which has resulted in child marriage becoming a political and social priority in Uganda.[30]

**Figure 4: Facilitation guide outline – how to use this resource**

**STEP 1:**
Preparation, team formation, inception meeting

90-120 min call

**STEP 2:**
Assess yourself as a collective

2-day workshop

**STEP 3:**
GTA core elements (Intensive Week Day 1)

3-day GTA Intensive Week

**STEP 4:**
GTA deep dives (Intensive Week Day 2)

**STEP 5:**
GTA road map (Intensive Week Day 3)

**STEP 6:**
GTA pilots

1- to 2-day workshop

**STEP 7:**
Next steps in your GTA journey

# 2. THE GUIDE

## Start your gender-transformative journey towards intentional, impactful collective action
### In 7 steps

This Guide is designed to facilitate workshop-based knowledge and skills-building, critical reflection, and action planning to strengthen gender-transformative skills, knowledge and leadership of CSO team members.

The gender-transformative journey charted here has been organised into 7 steps, but these are just a guideline: every CSO can tailor this programme to their own objectives and requirements. Each step comes with a general introduction, detailed practical advice for running workshops and other activities, direct reference to presentation materials, further reading and a toolbox.

The Guide is an adaptation by and for CSOs of the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool of the Global Programme to End Child Marriage, which was produced by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) headquarters' offices in collaboration with Collective Impact and piloted in six countries, including Burkina Faso and Niger in West Africa and Mozambique in southeastern Africa.

# 2.1 – STEP 1: GETTING READY
## Preparation, team formation, inception meeting

Considered planning and preparation will get your collective journey off to a strong start. In this chapter, we offer advice on putting together your team, including a CSO Lead and Gender Advocates; consider language, translation and online participation; and guide you on the time commitments required. An inception meeting will send the collective on its way.

## THE TOOLBOX

The full toolbox, including those highlighted for use in Step 1, is available on the *Girls Not Brides* website.

### Getting ready

- Tool 1: Documentation template
- Tool 2: Informed consent form

- Tool 3: Participant attendance sheet
- Tool 4: Workshop participant surveys
- Tool 5: Terms of reference for Gender Advocates
- Tool 6: Inception meeting agenda
- Tool 7: Inception meeting presentation

## Scheduling

It takes time to plan! One person needs to be responsible for coordinating, arranging calls and agreeing dates for the workshops. They need to allocate time for preparation and follow-up.

- **Start by sharing participating organisations' activity and work plans to identify potential dates.** Avoid overload or repeatedly changing dates.

- **Be clear** about when you need to invite all members of the collective, and when you can work through smaller working sessions with members of the Steering Committee or equivalent collective governance body.

- **Agree who else it would be good to invite:** a government official, for example, a UN country office representative, or a member of a national coalition of high relevance to child marriage, such as a National Education Coalition or a CSO country lead for the MenEngage Alliance. Allies from outside of the collective can significantly enhance the quality of the discussions, and increase opportunities for ongoing strategic collaboration.

- **Share calendar invites promptly** and follow up with WhatsApp, or whichever communications channel works best for your membership, to get those dates in the diary.

## Agree a CSO Lead

- **Agree which CSO member of the collective will be responsible – and therefore accountable – for coordinating, leading, planning, delivery and follow-up.**

This will not be the only project that the collective and individual CSO members are working on. The choice of CSO Lead needs to be a mixture of **pragmatism** (availability), active **participation in the decision-making processes** of the collective (for example a member of the Steering Committee) and fit in terms of gender expertise and track record of working on gender equality and human rights and child marriage.

You can use and adapt the profile and selection criteria (see Choosing a CSO Lead on the next page) for the CSO Lead developed with the *Girls Not Brides* National Partnership in Mozambique and the National Coalition of Civil Society to End Child Marriage in Nigeria.

Our experience shows that meaningful co-creation and shared leadership for the design and the facilitation of the GTA journey, while significantly increasing the amount of time needed, can pay high dividends.

## GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

### Choosing a CSO Lead

1. The organisation needs to have a clear commitment to achieving gender equality, gender justice and human rights, and have a track record on gender equality and women and girls' rights.
2. They must have a strong willingness to work with, and in support of, the collective (for example *Girls Not Brides* National Partnership) to improve its skills on gender-transformative programming and advocacy to catalyse collective action. They must have the capacity to mobilise and work with the full diversity of members.
3. They can demonstrate gender-equitable governance in their organisation and a commitment to meaningful participation of youth in decision-making spaces.
4. They are committed to collective action and can demonstrate previous experience in collective organising.
5. They have links to, or have collaborated with, the women's movement, feminist activist networks or gender justice training organisations in the country or region.
6. They must have credibility in relationships with a wide variety of stakeholders from community to national level, civil society, government and child marriage allies.
7. In addition, priority will be given to organisations:
    a. Working with socially excluded and disadvantaged young women.
    b. Using creative and innovative strategies to further their activism, for example feminist activist driven research, arts and culture etc.
    c. With staff that have experience designing, delivering or advocating gender justice and women's and girls' rights interventions (and with connections to the gender justice/feminist networks in their country).
    d. That are led or governed by women or individuals with a proven commitment to gender justice and women's rights.

## The Facilitation Team

The CSO Lead needs to assemble Facilitation and Support Teams, and identify Gender Advocates to support throughout the process. Consider selecting Gender Advocates (see p.21) to join the Facilitation and Support Teams. They can play a significant role during the workshops, and support follow-up and promotion of learning afterwards.

If the workshops are in-person events, all members of the Facilitation Time need to be based in the country or be able to travel. If the workshops are hybrid – a mixture of in-person and online – some members of the Facilitation Team may be operating virtually (typically to facilitate the online discussion spaces).

The **Facilitation Team** is responsible for preparing and leading the workshops. This team should include a **Lead Facilitator** and a **Co-Facilitator**.

### Lead Facilitator

The **Lead Facilitator** is responsible for creating a welcoming, constructive and inclusive environment that encourages participants to share and critically reflect on their experience. They should value lived experience alongside evidence and learning.

The Lead Facilitator should be experienced in using participatory methodologies and gender and power analysis tools. This will help them to encourage critical examination and dialogue around gender roles and norms, and the unequal relationships of power between girls and women and others in the community, services and institutions.[31]

The Lead Facilitator has an important role in encouraging action-focused reflection, so experience in facilitating strategic planning or similar workshop-style discussions is useful.

They will facilitate some of the group discussions and working groups, and set up exercises.

They have primary responsibility for knowing who does what for each part of the process and for each workshop session.

The Lead Facilitator can be a member of the CSO Lead's team, a collaborating partner organisation such as the *Girls Not Brides* secretariat, or a consultant. Please refer to p.22, for further guidance on choosing and briefing the workshop facilitator.

### Co-Facilitator

The **Co-facilitator** is responsible for facilitating the discussion groups, and – in the case of virtual or hybrid events – ensuring the needs of online participants are met by appointing and briefing a dedicated member of the Support Team. The Co-facilitator will have strong facilitation skills and experience of working in a hybrid workshop setting.

### The Support Team

The **Support Team** provides logistical and technical support to facilitators before, during and after the workshop. They will support with scheduling, the preparation of workshop content and materials, documentation and note-taking during and after workshops, monitoring and evaluation, report writing and post-workshop engagement and follow-up with participants. They may also be called on to support workshop facilitation. Some of the key tasks to be assigned to members of the Support Team include:

### Documentation

This includes audio recording plenary sessions (useful for future reference and analysis) and identifying quotes, for examples. Appoint note-takers for all plenary sessions and all working group sessions, and brief them beforehand on what to include. Tool 1 provides a simple template you can adapt.

### Informed consent

Rather than a form-filling exercise, informed consent is a multi-staged process. It takes time to ensure participants understand and are comfortable with when and how their data, words and images may be gathered and used, have time and space to share their preferences (for example around attribution and/or anonymity), and understand that they can say no or withdraw their participation at any time.

Consent forms should be translated and shared with participants ahead of time, as should examples of the types of communications that could be produced.

We include a template consent form as Tool 2. You can use this to invite participants to indicate on arrival at the workshops whether they consent to their data being used (in this case for learning and reporting purposes). Consent can then be recorded in your participant attendance sheet (Tool 3) or a standard consent form signed by the person leading the activity on behalf of the group, after participants have indicated their willingness to consent as a group.

If making images during the workshop, all participants should be informed verbally that images will be made, where these may be shown and for what purpose, and that they can indicate, publicly or privately to the person making the images, if they would prefer not to be shown.

It is also important to ensure participants know who to contact regarding consent, and how. A leave-behind card can facilitate this. Any attributed quotes or comments should also be checked with participants ahead of publication. For more information and tools on informed consent, see the *Girls Not Brides* ethical communications guidelines.

### Monitoring and evaluation

Responsibility needs to be assigned for the design and delivery of pre- and post-workshop participant feedback forms (included in the toolbox as Tool 4), as well as analysis of the results; and for collecting stories of change (or preferred methodology) to document changes for individual participants and collective action catalysed by the process.

### Optimal and quality environment for full participation

Give careful consideration to sound quality, and a physical and online space that supports participation of all participants. The best way to ensure this is to make it the responsibility of a Support Team member.  Before participants arrive, check for sound quality and ensure sockets, extension leads, screen and other essential equipment is in place. Have a back-up for internet outages: paper copies of resources, flip charts for voting rather than online polls, the mobile numbers of online participants to keep in touch.

## Gender Advocates

You can boost gender expertise to facilitate and support the workshops by selecting people with proven commitment to advancing gender equality, either from gender networks outside the collective or from member organisations within the collective.

Think about the skills and experience a Gender Advocate needs. They should have strong communication skills and a rights-based perspective. They should also have the expertise and soft skills to constructively support collective reflection and action that transforms unequal relationships of power and promotes the participation and decision-making power of girls, in all their diversity.

## Time commitments

Whatever the nature of the process chosen (co-created or more externally facilitated), the content and format of the gender-transformative journey should meet the needs of the collective and its CSO members.

The Facilitation and Support Teams include team members of the CSO Lead. These roles imply a significant time commitment. It is important to make an informed choice about the desired or practicable level of participation for the design and implementation of the gender-transformative journey.

### IN PRACTICE

#### Gender Advocates in Mozambique and Nigeria

Six Gender Advocates supported the gender-transformative journey in Mozambique and Nigeria.

In Mozambique, the Gender Advocates were selected from the teams of CSO members of the collective; in Nigeria, they were not.

The Gender Advocates in Mozambique took on the Lead Facilitator role for the GTA Intensive Week.

The Gender Advocates in Nigeria supported the workshops during the GTA Intensive Week and have gone on to promote GTA learning and engagement to end child marriage, for example giving talks in schools or blogging.

You can adapt and use Tool 5, which outlines the Gender Advocate profile, selection process, roles and responsibilities.

### KEY TERMS

#### Co-creation

A co-created gender-transformative journey means a process that is designed with and for the people who will be participating in the journey – in this case the national collectives and their civil society members. Participants are invited to input ideas throughout the process – usually through facilitated workshops – in a horizontal power structure, where responsibility for the final design is shared.

A process that is highly co-created:

- Increases the probability that it is rooted in context and meets the needs of the collective and its members.

- Will be supported and sustained beyond the "project" boundaries, building commitment and ownership for continuing the longer-term gender-transformative journey.

- Provides additional opportunities for building relationships and developing skills.

- Validates the expertise, skills and experience available within the collective.

The steps outlined in this Guide are the first in a longer-term gender-transformative journey. Those undertaking the journey should plan for continuing investment in members' learning and GTA skills – Steps 2 and 6 in this Guide support the identification of the collective's new training, capacity enhancement and accompaniment needs.

The UNICEF GTA Accelerator Facilitator Guide suggests a commitment of 20 to 30 hours for members of the Facilitation Team. Additional time is needed for the Organisational Self-Assessment (Step 2) and GTA Road Map workshop and GTA Pilots (Step 6) that are included in this Guide.

Table 1 shows the number of days required for some of the key moments in the gender-transformative journey. It does not include time for preparation or follow-up. A co-creative design and implementation process requires double the amount of time, to allow for consultation, review, adaptation and contextualisation.

## Table 1: Time commitments for key moments in the gender-transformative journey

| Key events | Facilitation and Support Teams | Steering Committee | Members of the CSO collective |
|---|---|---|---|
| Inception meeting | 1 day | ½ day | 60-90 minutes call or meeting |
| Organisational self-assessment workshop | 4-5 days | 2 days | 1 day |
| GTA Intensive Week of workshops | 7 days | 3 days | 3 days |
| GTA pilot design and follow up to Road Map | 5 days | 2 days | |

## Online, in-person – or both

Choose what works best for you: an in-person event, an online meeting, or a mixture of the two, known as a hybrid event.

In-person participation is strongly recommended, but not always possible or the best option for the group:

- It might be difficult for some members to travel due to insecurity. Being able to join online can mean members in these areas are able to participate.

- The cost of venue hire, travel, accommodation and refreshments might mean an in-person event is beyond budget.

There are multiple challenges to promoting quality and inclusive online participation. In the GTA Tool Facilitator Guide the section on 'Considerations for participation and inclusion' provides useful guidance for facilitators working in a virtual setting. Hybrid can be challenging and means additional investment of time and expertise at the design stage, and during facilitation to ensure inclusive and meaningful participation of all participants.

A member of the Support Team should be assigned responsibility for the online experience of participants during workshops. They should:

- Invest time in the venue ahead of the workshop to check microphones, their position, cabling, etc.

- Make sure online participants know who is taking care of them at the beginning of each workshop. They need to know who to contact for technical questions and to have their voice heard, and for instructions on working groups or polls.

- Liaise with the Facilitation Team to be clear about instructions for working groups, agenda and materials to be used, so these can be shared with online participants (via chat or email) to promote their full participation.

- Ensure there is interpretation available if any online participants do not speak the language being used in the workshop.

## Language

Given participants are all members of a national CSO collective, there will likely be a shared language in which they are all confident or comfortable.

If a member of the Facilitation or Support Team is not confident in that language, include a budget line for translation.

### IN PRACTICE

**Translation in Mozambique**

In the Mozambique GTA journey, some members of the Support Team were not Portuguese speakers, so professional interpreters were needed for workshops and some calls. Selected workshop materials also needed to be translated to Portuguese.

Ideally, this would have been covered by a budget line for professional translation, but in practice this was occasionally carried out by members of the Support Team, adding to their workload.

## Inception meeting

As with most projects and partnerships, it is good practice to make time for coming together in the early stages of the collaboration, particularly if members of the group have not worked together before or so intensely.

This type of meeting is typically called an "inception meeting". You can reference and adapt **Tool 6** for your agenda and use our inception meeting presentation (**Tool 7**) when planning. If members of the Facilitation or Support Team are not in the same country, the meeting will take the form of a call on a platform like Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

The main purpose of an inception meeting is to make the project objectives clear. This includes the rationale or reason for the collaboration, roles and responsibilities for its delivery and support, resources required, scheduling, reporting, monitoring, and evaluation.

## 2.2 – STEP 2: ASSESS YOURSELF AS A COLLECTIVE
### Where are you on the Gender Integration Continuum?

You need to know where you stand. Here, we talk you through the process of using scorecards to assess your collective's strength and needs – and create a baseline. This step introduces the Gender Integration Continuum (GIC) – a key concept to understand where you are, and where you are going. At the end of this workshop, you should have a clear set of priorities to move ahead with.

### Objectives of the organisational self-assessment workshop

- Reflect on how the collective is working together, identify areas of strength and capacity enhancement needs.

- Spark discussion on how to address challenges and move forward as a collective.

- Gather information that will serve as a baseline to track progress over time.

- Help assess how gender-transformative the collective is in its current organisational practices, to support gender-transformative action.

Gender-transformative action requires gender-transformative organisational practice. To dismantle the systematic discrimination against girls and women, and end child marriage, CSO collectives – and the global Partnership to end child marriage – need to apply policies and behaviours that proactively promote gender equality and feminist leadership principles within their own organisations.[e]

### THE TOOLBOX

The full toolbox, including those highlighted for use in Step 2, is available on the *Girls Not Brides* website.

- Tool 8: Self-assessment scorecard (Part 1)
- Tool 9: Self-assessment scorecard (Part 2)
- Tool 10: Priorities for GTA capacity enhancement

### KEY TERMS

#### Gender Integration Continuum (GIC)

Gender integration can helpfully be viewed across a continuum that progresses from gender-unaware (or gender-unequal), to gender-aware (or gender-sensitive), to gender-responsive, to gender-transformative. The aim of GTAs is to move programmes and interventions towards the right of this continuum. If applied to programming, gender-aware (or gender-sensitive) programming acknowledges gender inequalities and may act on gender analysis insofar as needed to reach programme objectives. It does not necessarily prioritise girls' and women's needs specifically or address structural causes of gender inequality. Gender-transformative programming goes further by actively aiming to promote gender equality and girls' and women's outcomes as a primary objective. It deliberately tackles discriminatory and harmful gender norms, roles, structures and institutions that perpetuate gender inequalities and gendered risks in the long-term.[32]

#### Feminist approaches and leadership

Feminist approaches seek to transform patriarchal power structures and create agency for those disadvantaged by them, most often girls and women, but in some cases, also boys, men and people of non-conforming gender identities. Feminist approaches are one of the key conceptual foundations upon which GTAs are built.

Contemporary feminist approaches are intersectional – they take into account the way people experience multiple forms of discrimination and oppression based on different aspects of their identity (e.g. race, gender, class, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity). Feminist leadership aims at the explicit and intentional redistribution of power and responsibility in a way that is inclusive, participatory, and mindful of intersecting identities.

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e.  There are many resources and toolkits available to support individual and organisational leadership practices that are in harmony with a transformative feminist and social justice agenda.

## Steps and resources required

▶ **Think about where in the longer-term gender-transformative journey you choose to schedule this workshop** (see Figure 4 on p. 16). This is not pre-defined and you may choose to use a planned meeting with members to do this.

### IN PRACTICE

#### Self-assessment workshop in Mozambique and Nigeria

In Nigeria, the workshop was held *before* the GTA Intensive Week. This meant the information from the self-assessment could be used as a baseline for the more intensive work that followed. It also meant members of the collective and the Facilitation Team could start preparing for the Intensive Week workshops.

In Mozambique, the workshop happened *after* the GTA Intensive Week. This was a pragmatic, cost-effective option making the most of a planned General Assembly meeting.

### GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

#### Self-assessment scorecard, Parts 1 and 2

There are two parts to the self-assessment. They can be combined or done separately:

- **Self-assessment scorecard Part 1.** This is an Excel document and included in the toolbox as Tool 8. It contains five tabs: 1) the instructions, 2) the scorecard, 3) the scoring scale definitions to fill out the scorecard, 4) your results, and 5) gender-transformative practice reflexion. There is also an online version of the scorecard for *Girls Not Brides* members, which is more visually appealing but may be difficult to access for those with limited data or internet coverage.

- **Self-assessment scorecard Part 2.** This is a Word document and included the toolbox as Tool 9. It contains exercises to help your collective: 1) plan according to the results of the scorecard, 2) identify which stage of the partnership cycle you are at, 3) reflect on your gender-transformative journey.

## Part 1: Self-assessment of the collective

▶ **Introduce members of your collective to the self-assessment scorecard (Tools 8 and 9, see above) and steps in the data collection, analysis and reflection process. This can be done in an online call, an in-person meeting, or as part of another meeting of the collective, like a General Assembly.**

### For *Girls Not Brides* CSO collectives

▶ **Send part 1 of the scorecard to members for completion.** It can be shared in an online format, or as an Excel spreadsheet (Tool 8) for participants to download and return by email. Note: Whichever version of the scorecard you use, ask each member to complete and return it based on the experience of their respective organisation.

▶ **Notify and send members' scorecards to *Girls Not Brides* secretariat.** Once members have confirmed they have completed the online scorecard or have sent you the completed excel spreadsheet format, you can contact the *Girls*

*Not Brides* secretariat by emailing impact@girlsnotbrides.org to input the members' scorecards into a "Master Scorecard", which will identify an aggregate score across the member organisations for each of the principles and criteria.

▶ **Convene a workshop with all members of the collective.** Allow at least 2-3 hours to discuss the results of the scorecard together, exploring them at the member and collective level. Focus on sheet 4, your results; and sheet 5, gender-transformative practice reflection. Encourage discussion of the findings and make sure the notetaker records the discussions, as this is where the rich qualitative findings of the assessment will be generated.

If, through the discussion, the group can reach consensus on the aggregate group score for each statement, then record this. If there is strong disagreement, ensure the notetaker records this. Once the group has discussed the aggregated results, they can complete Part 2 of the scorecard (Tool 9). This is when they will outline their action plan to address the priorities for enhancing their organisational capacities.

### Alternative process for *Girls Not Brides* CSO collectives

Some *Girls Not Brides* CSO national collectives may choose to meet and fill in Part 1 of the scorecard collectively. This alternative process allows for more time to answer any questions and for members to exchange views. This means you would:

▶ **Organise a workshop for members to complete the scorecard together.** Explain what the purpose of the scorecard is and ask members to fill in the scorecard in groups of three or four people, from across different member organisations.

▶ **Notify and send the scorecard to the *Girls Not Brides* secretariat**, as above. They will input the group scorecards into a "Master Scorecard".

▶ **Convene a second workshop to discuss the scorecard together**, as above.

### For CSO collectives who are not members of *Girls Not Brides*

▶ **Send part 1 of the scorecard in Excel format (Tool 8)**, for members to download and return by email. Ask each member to complete and return the scorecards based on the experience of their respective organisation.

▶ **Agree who will aggregate and analyse the results.**

▶ **Convene a workshop with all members of the national collective** and allow at least 2-3 hours to discuss the scorecard collectively, as above.

### Alternative process for CSO collectives who are not members of *Girls Not Brides*

▶ Instead of sending the scorecard to members, **organise a workshop for them to complete the scorecard together**, in groups of three or four people. Then complete steps 2 and 3 as above.

## Part 2: Self-assessment scorecard

After you have completed the self-assessment scorecard (Part 1), use it to complete Part 2, reflecting on your scores and identifying priorities for a collective action plan. Part 2 of the scorecard includes guidance and tools to carry out the three actions below.

### 1. Agree a collective action plan

▶ **Choose up to three priority areas** to strengthen over the next year and discuss how to put in place solutions to each of the challenges identified. The results of the self-assessment scorecard (Part 1, sheet 4) should offer an indication of what the collective's strengths and challenges are. The collective should use these to identify which areas are of highest priority for them to strengthen, and how they plan to do so.

▶ **Fill in the collective action plan**, outlining which actions will be taken, how by when, and who will take them. Share this with the wider membership for validation.

### 2. Strengthen your gender-transformative collective action and accelerate your GTA journey

This part of the scorecard (Part 2) includes guidance and tools on how to critically reflect and plan – as a collective. How can we best shift power and resources to support girls in all their diversity to express their opinions, and have them heard; to make and act on their decisions; and to reach their full potential?

▶ **Agree how each of the selected priorities will strengthen the collective's gender-transformative action and practice.**

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### KEY TERMS

#### Scores on the Gender Integration Continuum

Gender integration is a process of critically reflecting on the impact of gender norms, roles and dynamics – including unequal relationships of power – and identifying how to transform and overcome them, so women, girls and gender minorities can exercise their equal rights and power, including if, when and whom to marry.

The scores 1-3 in the "Gender-transformative practice" sheet of the self-assessment scorecard (Part 1, sheet 5) are a simplified version of the Gender Integration Continuum.[33]

**A score of 1** indicates that gender is not addressed, or gender norms and roles are exploited, which perpetuates gender inequality and, worse, can be harmful.

**A score of 2** includes organisations and actions that range from being gender-aware to being gender-responsive.

**A score of 3** shows active commitment to gender-transformative action that addresses the root causes of gender inequality.

Progress along the Gender Integration Continuum is the only pathway to accelerate progress to end child marriage at scale, safely and sustainably.

**Figure 5: Scores along the simplified Gender Integration Continuum**

| 1. Gender unaware | → | 2. Between gender aware and gender responsive | → | 3. Gender transformative |
|---|---|---|---|---|
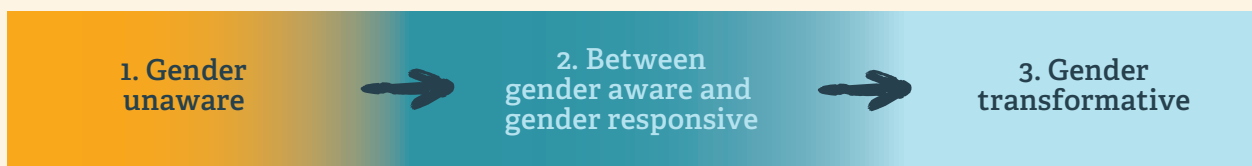
## KEY TERMS

### Scorecard results for gender-transformative practice

The "Gender-transformative practice" sheet in the self-assessment scorecard is based on 13 of the 26 criteria scored by members in Part 1. These criteria have been pre-selected for their higher relevance to gender-transformative practice. When completed, with scores of 1 to 3 for each of the criteria, this sheet gives a snapshot of where the collective is on its GTA journey. Those criteria relate to six principles for gender-transformative collective action and practice:

1. Diverse and inclusive membership.

2. Leadership by and for women, youth and people from communities most affected by child marriage.

3. Active engagement with women's collectives, youth networks and minority rights groups.

4. Approaches that address the root causes of child marriage to advance girls' rights and agency.

5. Advocacy to address structural drivers of child marriage informed by gender and power analysis.

6. Child marriage effectively framed and communicated as a girls' and women's rights priority.

In the following steps, you will **explicitly address how progress will be made in the collective's gender-transformative practice:**

▶ **Convene members** (online or in person) to present and discuss the aggregated results in sheet 5 of the Part 1 self-assessment scorecard (gender-transformative practice). Bring as many people together face-to-face as possible, so the workshop has the potential to generate rich discussion.

▶ **Present the gender integration continuum and scale definition**s used in the scorecard (see Key terms highlight box on p.27).

▶ **Introduce the scorecard questions** for the GTA snapshot (see Guidance and resources highlight box on p.26).

▶ **Display and explain the collective's Master Scorecard results** in gender-transformative practices, using visuals to prompt critical reflection and build common understanding. What is important for gender-transformative practice? Where are our priorities for improvement?

The results can be displayed in two ways:

• To emphasise which of the organisational principles need greatest attention, as illustrated in Figure 6. In this example, "Approaches that address the root causes of child marriage to advance girls' rights and agency" scored the lowest, and therefore requires most attention in the steps that follow.

• To position – as assessed by its own members – the collective on the Gender Integration Continuum, as illustrated in Figure 7. In this example, members positioned the collective's organisational practice and action just inside the gender-transformative bracket.

## Figure 6: Example scores in gender-transformative practice

1 = Gender unaware
2 = Gender aware/gender responsive
3 = Gender transformative

Child marriage effectively framed and communicated
as a girls' and women's rights priority

Advocacy to address structural drivers of child marriage
informed by gender and power analysis

Approaches that address the root causes of child marriage
to advance girls' rights and agency

Active engagement with women's collectives,
youth networks, minority rights groups

Leadership by and for women, youth and people from
communities most affected by child marriage

Diverse and inclusive membership

1    2    3

## Figure 7: Example scores along the Gender Integration Continuum

| 1. Gender unaware | → | 2. Between gender aware and gender responsive | → | 3. Gender transformative |

68.5%

▶ **Choose a skilled facilitator** to prompt and guide discussions, and notetakers to record diversity of perspectives, consensus and when practical examples are given. Brief them as to their role.

▶ **Divide into two or three smaller working groups** and invite one volunteer per group to facilitate group discussion for 30-40 minutes. Use the guiding questions below and GTA snapshot results to identify priorities for capacity enhancement.

▶ Back in plenary, **encourage each group to share their findings and answer questions**. You can use the table in Tool 10 to record priorities and next steps. Leave 15 minutes for this discussion.

▶ **Discuss your findings and next steps with the _Girls Not Brides_ secretariat**. You can schedule a specific session for this.

## Choosing and briefing the workshop facilitator

There are advantages and disadvantages to a facilitator who is a member of the collective.

### Advantages

- They understand the collective's power dynamics, history, mission and vision.

- They are better-placed to make connections between the profile of the CSO member and their perspective, for example, if more negative feelings around diversity and inclusion are coming from youth and/or women-led CSO members?

### Disadvantages

- They are part of the power dynamics of the organisation and may introduce or perpetuate bias.

- They will not be able to fully participate in the discussion if they are occupied with facilitation and moderation.

When briefing the Facilitator, be sure to explain their role in:

- Encouraging full and constructive participation. The results of the scorecard are to prompt and guide conversations among members; they are not about "scoring".

- Steering members away from inflating scores to promote the collective to outsiders. Much better to use this safe space for honest and open critical self-reflection, which is essential for gender-transformative practice.

- Encouraging members to share examples to support their scores and their perspective.

## Prompt questions for plenary discussion of priorities for GTA capacity enhancement

- In what ways will your proposal shift power and resources to address the root causes of child marriage?

- What will success look like?

- Finalise the table in Tool 10 and make sure it is shared with members of the Facilitation Team to be used in the GTA Intensive Week workshops.

# 2.3 – STEP 3: RUNNING YOUR GTA INTENSIVE WEEK: DAY 1
## Getting to know the GTA core elements

At the centre of this journey is a 3-day workshop – the *GTA Intensive Week*. On Day 1, members of the collective will familiarise themselves with the core elements of GTA. You will look at the evidence in your context (let a CSO member or an external spokesperson provide the picture); start defining and making the case for GTA; and contextualise. By the end of Day 1, the group will have started to focus in on 2-3 core elements as their priorities.

## Objectives: Intensive Week Day 1

- Introduce participants to the GTA process.
- Build a shared understanding of gender-transformative approaches, core elements and stages of the Gender Integration Continuum.
- Define and rank the collective's progress on core elements of a GTA.

### THE TOOLBOX

The full toolbox, including those highlighted for use in Step 3, is available on the *Girls Not Brides* website.

### Intensive Week – Day 1

- Tool 4: Workshop participant surveys
- Tool 3: Participant attendance sheet
- Tool 11: Agenda GTA Intensive Week Day 1
- Tool 12: Presentation GTA Intensive Week Day 1 - Core elements & ranking
- Tool 13: Presentation GTA Intensive Week Day 1 & 2 - Evidence & data
- Tool 14: GTA scale definitions
- Tool 15: Example GTA ranking results

## Day 1 in overview

| Key agenda items for Day 1 |
| --- |
| 1. Welcome, agenda overview, pre-event participant survey |
| 2. Review of the evidence and data – accelerating action to end child marriage |
| 3. Overview of the gender-transformative journey |
| 4. Defining and making the case for GTA |
| 5. Core elements for GTA from gender-unaware to gender-transformative: scale definitions and examples and member examples |
| 6. GTA ranking of collective's work |
| 7. Wrap up |

### Suggested additional resources: Intensive Week Day 1

- Gender-transformative accelerator tool – Brief (UNFPA/UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage)

- Technical note on gender-transformative approaches in the Global Programme to End Child Marriage

- Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool Facilitator Guide – Workshop day 1 (UNFPA/UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage)

- UNICEF Technical Note on Gender Norms (UNFPA/UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage)

- Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms (ALIGN) around Child Marriage

## KEY TERMS

### Gender-transformative core elements

The core elements for gender-transformative programming and advocacy to address the root causes of child marriage and advance gender equality are: 1) Adolescent girls' skills, agency and leadership; 2) Family and community mobilisation; 3) Addressing masculinities and engaging men and boys; 4) Services and multi-sectoral collaboration; 5) Policies, laws and structural change, and cross-cutting through all of these; and 6) Gender norms and inequalities.

## 1. Welcome

### Starting on time and timekeeping

Do everything possible to support participants in honouring the agreed time to start the day's workshop. This will help set a positive momentum for the day, and ensure there is time for a rich discussion.

Experience shows that timekeeping can be a challenge. Budget and security-permitting, consider fully residential workshops or as a minimum entrust timekeeping to a member of the Support Team who has the authority and soft skills to intervene, where necessary.

You can adapt the agenda provided (Tool 11) to your context, to help you manage the space and time during Step 3.

## GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

### Preparing the venue to start on time

When preparing ahead of the Intensive Week, you may want to:

- Consider if there is sufficient budget for a residential event, where participants can be fully present for the workshop and avoid the delays and stresses of public transport and rush-hour traffic.

- Agree a start time with participants, ensuring it is realistic for them.

- Check the venue ahead of Day 1 and make provision for any kit needed. Check where plugs are and where to position the master laptop, the need for extension leads, additional laptops, Wi-Fi connection, potential for smaller spaces for breakout rooms, how flexible catering is for refreshments, etc.

- Arrive at the venue ahead of the start time on Day 1 and test sound quality in the space, do a dummy call to check the experience for online participants.

- As a Facilitation Team, discuss and agree what feels comfortable in terms of the minimum number of participants to have in the room to be able to begin the workshop. Be realistic – it is highly unlikely that everybody will make it for the agreed start time, but it is respectful to try to honour that commitment.

- If inviting the participation of government representatives or others in senior leadership positions, agree as a Team what feels appropriate if they arrive late to the workshop. Do you feel comfortable starting without them? Is there something you can do to use the time as a collective whilst waiting for them? Is there part of the agenda that you can bring forward?

### Registration

Registration can take a lot of time. Plan your approach in advance. If funding for the event has come from an external donor, you usually need to know the number of participants, a little about who they are (sex, sometimes age), where they come from (which part of the country, the name of the CSO they work for and represent), and what they do (their job title).

To collect this information, consider including some questions in the pre-event participant survey form (Tool 4). It is also useful information for the collective in terms of knowing the spread of representation from the membership.

### Protocol

CSO members who are in the Facilitation and Support Teams are best placed to advise on protocol in their country.

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**GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES**

#### Facilitating a smooth registration process

- Appoint one or two members of the Support Team to be responsible for registration.
- Print out a participant attendance sheet (Tool 3) before the start of Day 1.
- If there is a space just outside the main room, consider setting up registration there so the workshop can start and late-comers can join discretely.
- The member of the Support Team nominated to take care of the online participant experience needs to share a link to the Attendance Sheet in the chat box. If online participants were required to pre-register for the event, this information could be collected at that stage.

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**GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES**

#### Protocols to consider with the Facilitation and Support Teams

- If inviting government representatives or others in senior leadership positions (for example, traditional or religious leaders) agree where on the agenda they appear, and whether they need any guidance on how to introduce themselves (for example, having a check-in with them before the meeting to go over the workshop objectives).
- Timetabling in the workshop agenda needs to be sensitive to participant needs. For example, you may want to avoid Fridays, think about daily prayers for Muslim participants, check on the childcare plans of participants with responsibility for children, and consider those caring for relatives.

**Names**

As members of a national CSO collective, most participants will know each other. But there may be newer members of the team, or people in the Facilitation Team or from outside the collective, who are not known as well as others in the group.

**Inclusive and comfortable**

Creating a comfortable and safe space for participants means checking ahead of the event if they have any particular needs. This may be with regards physical access, language, difficulties with hearing or sight, or dietary requirements and allergies. It also means agreeing some of the values that will guide the spirit of the discussions.

## GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

### Making sure everyone is introduced

- Consider asking participants to write their names on labels, or on a big board/flip chart as they introduce themselves. This can be quite time-consuming so weigh up the pros and cons.

- The Support Team member nominated to take care of the online participant experience can ask online participants to write their names in the chat, and these can be added to the big board/flipchart or written and displayed so that they are "present" in the room.

## GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

### Making sure everyone is included and comfortable

- During the course of the day, participants will be asked to vote on how they rank the collective's work in relation to several gender-transformative core elements.
  - Reassure participants that the results of the ranking will not be used – by anyone – to judge the collective.
  - Explain that the process is a way to encourage critical reflection by and for the collective's membership.
- Emphasise that these three days of workshops are an opportunity for participants from different CSO members to reflect on how to strengthen the work of the collective – the added value of collective voice and action to address the root causes of child marriage.
- Encourage participants to be open and constructive in sharing their opinions and votes. There can be a temptation for members to inflate scores – particularly if there are funders in the room – but this only detracts from the objective of the workshop, which is to critically and honestly reflect in order to make the changes necessary (to the organisation, ways of working, approaches, allies) to accelerate action on child marriage and girls' rights.

*"This is not a 'test'. We want to reflect: what are our strong points? What do we need to do to strengthen our work as a coalition? Sometimes we see that a strength within a member is not reflected in the Coalition's work."*

*Girls Not Brides* national CSO collective to end child marriage

## Documenting change

Investing time and money in these workshops needs to have tangible results. Think about how you will assess the baseline and show changes in the gender-transformative skills, knowledge and leadership of participants and the collective.

### GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

**Documenting change**

- Ask members to complete a pre-event survey (Tool 4), preferably in the morning of Day 1. They will be asked to do something very similar at the end of the workshop on Day 3. Comparison of the results gives some indication of the changes participants perceived in their gender-transformative know-how.

- Consider including some questions about the profile of the participants in the pre-event survey and simplifying the registration form.

- If possible, use an app like Kobo Toolbox or Survey Monkey to create charts and graphs using the results. This will make it easier to understand and communicate the results.

- Focus survey questions on the gender-transformative skills, knowledge and leadership of participants, and their application to collective action to end child marriage.

## 2. Review of the evidence and data – accelerating action to end child marriage

The GTA Intensive Week should start with a call to action, and evidence to show that progress on child marriage is urgent and possible.

▶ Throughout the workshop, **focus on developing solutions** through gender-transformative collective action, rather than on the scale of the challenge – this will help build motivation.

Ahead of the Intensive Week, members of the Facilitation Team need to agree who will review and present the latest evidence and data for the collective. For instance, you may want to ask one person or organisation to focus on the global-level, and another person or organisation to focus on the regional- and/or country-level.

▶ **Check what materials from previous events you could repurpose.** You can also use the resources listed in the guidance and resources highlight box, or parts of the slide deck in Tool 13.

This presentation aims to bring all members to the same level of understanding about what the latest evidence and data say about the scale of the challenge, the combination of drivers that put some girls at higher risk than others, and what works to address child marriage and support girls who are – or have been – married in their context.

▶ **Return to the evidence and data on Day 2** when as a collective you will take a deeper dive to reflect on how to address the key drivers of child marriage in a gender-transformative way.

### GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

#### Evidence and data to accelerate action

- The *Girls Not Brides* interactive child marriage atlas provides data on child marriage prevalence, burden, drivers and legal frameworks.
- UNICEF's child marriage country profiles are highly visual and an excellent resource using the latest verified data available on child marriage.
- The UNICEF child marriage database has the latest verified data, organised by country.
- The CRANK webpages and tracker include round-ups of the latest evidence and research on what works to end child marriage and support girls who are – or have been – married.
- Consider creating a PowerPoint presentation that can be shared online and in the room to bring some of the trends and data to life.
- You can adapt the slide deck provided as Tool 13 – prepared for the GTA Intensive Week Days 1 and 2 in Nigeria – with a mixture of data from the global and the country (Nigeria) evidence base.
- Consider inviting allies to the workshop who have recently published, can access and/or are comfortable with the data around child marriage and gender equality in the country. In Nigeria, the workshop benefitted from the participation of representatives from the Gender and Child Protection Teams of the UNICEF Country Office. They presented country-level evidence and data that situated the need to advance progress on child marriage within the frame of obstacles to gender equality and women's right to safety and choice.

## 3. Overview of the gender-transformative accelerator journey

Some participants may have started the gender-transformative journey during the Inception Meeting, others when they came together for the Organisational Self-assessment (Step 2). For a few, however, this may be the first time. That's why it's important to begin by (re-)introducing the steps of the journey.

▶ **Use the slide deck provided as Tool 12 to highlight the seven steps in the GTA journey** and describe aspects of the activities that have already taken place to get to Day 1 of the GTA Intensive Week.

Slides in this PowerPoint are useful for different agenda points throughout the GTA Intensive Week and you can return to them to recap on key concepts such as the differences between gender-transformative and gender-transformative and gender-aware.

It is important to emphasise and acknowledge the work that has led up to Day 1 that the broader membership may not have been involved with -- such as a review of evidence, scheduling, consultation meetings to design and prepare workshops – and that these workshops are part of a longer-term process.

▶ **Highlight that today – Day 1 – will be the opportunity to build shared understanding of what gender-transformative means,** and why the approach is important for a collective dedicated to addressing child marriage and other forms of gender inequality. It is important that enough time is given to defining what GTAs are. Practical examples should be included, and time allocated for discussion.

▶ **Outline what's to come:** Day 2 will be the opportunity for a deeper reflection – informed by evidence and experience from Day 1 – about whether the collective's work can be described as gender-blind, -aware, -responsive or gender-transformative. Day 3 will focus on using gender-transformative skills, knowledge and leadership to develop priorities and action for the collective's gender-transformative Road Map.

▶ **Introduce members of the Facilitation and Support Teams,** including the Gender Advocates, and acknowledge the work they have done to get to this point.

## 4. Defining and making the case for GTA

This part of the agenda is largely presentation-based and an opportunity to bring all participants to the same level of confidence with, and understanding of, some of the key language and tools that will be used throughout the week.

▶ **Use the PowerPoint slide 'What is a gender-transformative approach?' (slide 10 in Tool 12) to define GTA, and why it's important.**

You may want to emphasise the importance of:

• transforming discriminatory relationships of power that systematically devalue girls and people who identify as non-heterosexual,

• recognising that such unequal relationships of power play out in multiple spaces, including seats of power and decision making, schools, health services, in our inter-personal relationships, families, organised religion, the workplace, sport and the media,

• critical engagement and self-awareness, understanding the role that we all play as individuals in perpetuating, or transforming, the norms that restrict girls' and women's rights to choose the lives they want to live, and

• not putting the burden of creating change – addressing child marriage and gender equality – on the shoulders of girls and women, but working to create the enabling environment that is supportive of their agency and leadership.

We suggest referencing *The case for gender-transformative approaches: What is lost when we do not take gender-transformative approaches to address child marriage?* for relevant examples from an evidence base and lived experience. Consider, for instance:

- "Programmes that provide financial incentives to parents to delay daughters' marriages may succeed in postponing marriage until age 18, but without any meaningful shifts in empowerment, agency and decision-making in the girls' lives going forward."[34]

- "A programme that does not tackle the root causes of sexual harassment against girls or strengthen their autonomy will not prevent families from seeking to marry them early in order to avoid harassment or involvement in sexual relationships."[35]

# 5. Core elements of moving from gender-blind to gender-transformative

▶ **Use the PowerPoint slides in Tool 12 to introduce participants to the foundational tools used to describe to what extent strategies, behaviours, organisations are gender-transformative.**

It is important to emphasise that the purpose of this collective reflection and self-assessment is not to "judge", but to open opportunities and create collective agreement about which actions are needed to strengthen the collective's contribution to gender equality outcomes including marriage by choice alone.

▶ **Pause for a check-in and find out from participants how comfortable they are with what has been shared and discussed so far.** Where do they see themselves on the journey towards a GTA? Invite questions for clarification, and consider noting on a flipchart questions that are not answered (with the name of the person asking) at this point – they will be addressed later on.

**ONLINE:** Invite the responsible Support Team member to **share comments or questions raised by online participants.**

**Gender Integration Continuum**

▶ **Use the PowerPoint slides to introduce the concept of the Gender Integration Continuum (GIC).** At this point, you can highlight what a progression from gender-unequal to gender-transformative might look like.

▶ **Remind participants that it is possible for the collective, or the CSO they represent, to be operating at different points of the spectrum simultaneously,** rather than one fixed point. For example, an organisation may be making a significant contribution to addressing the root causes of gender inequality by advocating for the repeal of discriminatory laws that exclude girls from school (this is gender-transformative), but the same organisation may have a culture that supports ethnic and gender discrimination in its recruitment policies (this is gender-unequal).

By using the GIC, you are encouraging critical self-reflection, individually and as a collective, on the kind of changes in approach and behaviour that will accelerate progress toward gender equitable outcomes.

**Socio-ecological model**
Here, it is important to provide an overview of what we understand by the socio-ecological model (using the slideshow, particularly the two 'Transformation of what' slides) and emphasise why GTAs need action and change at multiple levels – from the individual to the institutional – to deliver safe, long-lasting and meaningful outcomes.

▶ **Use the socio-ecological model to highlight the value of collective action,** and use an example from the collective's experience to demonstrate the added value for civil society organisations in coming together and speaking with one voice.

**Socio-ecological model**

This is a conceptual framework depicting spheres of influence over human behaviours. It is central to the *Girls Not Brides* global theory of change and informed by the belief that there is no single solution to child marriage. Instead, a range of approaches and multiple partnership are needed to collectively catalyse change from the individual to the institutional level.

### Scale definitions

▶ **Review the core elements of a GTA and their scale definitions,** using the PowerPoint slides – from gender-blind to gender-transformative. For each element the slides provide key points for consideration, a short description and examples.

The information can be supplemented by printed copies of Tool 14, which contains GTA scale definitions for each GTA core element. (It is useful to have paper copies for participants to study and to be able to flip backward and forwards.)

**ONLINE:** The responsible member of the Support Team can email the Scale definitions document to online participants ahead of the workshop, or share the UNICEF GTA Accelerator Tool which contains the definitions.

### Contextualisation

▶ **Now, make space for a member of the collective to share a relevant example.** Who has done work in relation to this element? What has the approach been? What were the outcomes?

Examples like these will help to create a bridge between some of the more conceptual gender-transformative language and contextual realities. This supports the uptake and application of the collective's learning. They could be the work of the collective, as well as individual CSO members.

It should be part of the Facilitation Team's remit to brainstorm potential CSO members known for their work in the areas of the GTA core elements. They can then be approached and invited to prepare a 10-minute presentation. (It is unrealistic to expect them to prepare anything additional, but very welcome!)

In their presentation, the CSO members will be asked to give consideration to three guiding questions: (1) How does the work in the area of this core GTA element shift power and resources/transform unequal relationships of power? (2) What impact/achievements can they share that shows the work has contributed to positive outcomes in the lives of girls? (3) What challenges have they overcome, and how?

**ONLINE:** Online participants can also be invited to share examples, working with the same briefing and guiding questions, which will have been provided beforehand.

# 6. GTA ranking

▶ **Invite members to reflect, and then vote, on how they rank the collective's work on a scale from gender-blind to gender-transformative** in relation to the core element.

We suggest for voting on the first core element to take place in plenary with the full group, with an option of breaking into smaller groups for the remaining core elements.

Online Slido polls are free and easy to use. We suggest giving responsibility for creating and managing the polls to a member of the Support Team. They will need to share a link to the polls with participants, know when and how to activate the poll, and how to display the results.

For in-person events, you can prepare one flip chart for each GTA core element, featuring a simple model of the Gender Integration Continuum. Blank ballot papers are given to participants, who are invited to mark their ballot paper (with a B for Blind, A for Aware, R for Responsive and T for Transformative) for each element and cast their vote in a Box. The Lead or Co-Facilitator can count the ballots for each point and mark the results on the flip chart.

**ONLINE:** Online participants can write their response in the chat, or send them privately to the Support Team member.

▶ **Share the results with the full group.** (With Slido polls, visualisation is rapid and effective. See example on p. 41 and in Tool 15.)

▶ **Use this to prompt discussion in the group**, encouraging a variety of perspectives. How can members of the same collective give such different ranking? The value of the exercise is not to see how far the collective is along the GIC, but to explore the reasoning behind the choices made, to ask for supporting examples, and to gauge the level of understanding of key GTA concepts.
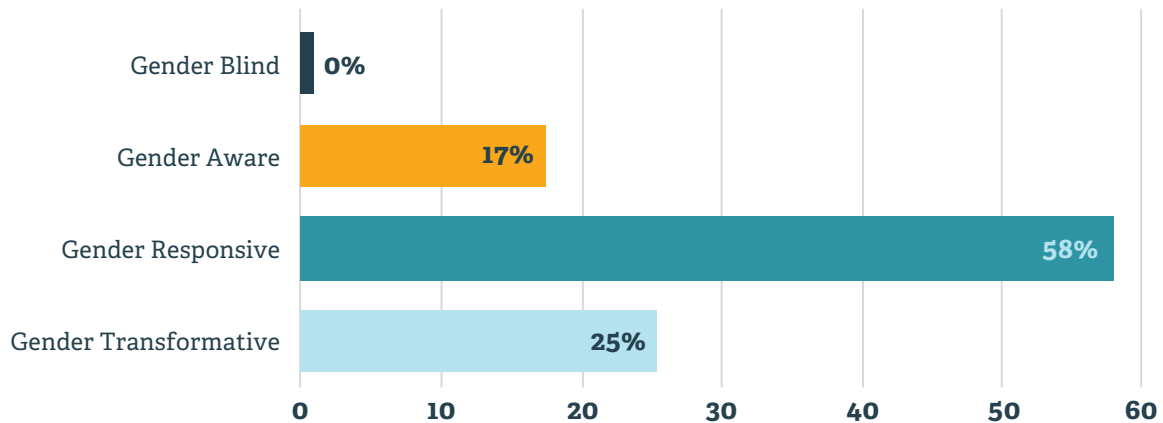
If choosing to break into smaller groups, approximately 25 minutes are suggested for each core element, including voting and discussion. Be sure to assign a member of the Facilitation or Support Team to each group, but establish that each group will be responsible for assigning their own notetaker to report back.

Group size can vary, but experience tells us that no more than seven participants supports fuller participation and better conversations.

**ONLINE:** The responsible Support Team member will be the Facilitator for online participants. They will form one online group. Again, one member will be the notetaker and report back to the room.

**Figure 8: Example of poll results answering the question "Advancing girls' rights, agency and leadership: How would you rate your collective action?"**



| Category | Value |
|---|---|
| Gender Blind | 0% |
| Gender Aware | 17% |
| Gender Responsive | 58% |
| Gender Transformative | 25% |

**Bringing it all together**

Now it's time to bring the small groups back into plenary to report the rankings and explanations given in support for each of the GTA core elements and the collective's work.

▶ **Give time for questions and comments** and invite participants to summarise key points that have emerged from the reflections and discussions.

▶ **Ask the Co-Facilitator to summarise highlights, questions, opportunities, challenges, or threads** emerging from the day's work (in 5-10 minutes).

In their concluding remarks, the Co-Facilitator will thank participants for the time and energy they have given to the day, before outlining Day 2 – typically the next day – which is focused on analysis and an opportunity for a deeper dive into a maximum of three of the GTA core elements. Invite participants to give some thought to which elements they would prioritise for this.

▶ If energy levels permit, **bring up a slide with prompting questions for Day 2:**

• What is the collective currently doing across each level of the socio-ecological model in the priority areas of focus?

• What opportunities does the collective have to shift towards more gender transformative approaches?

• What actions could be planned to accelerate progress?

## 7. Wrap up

A member of the Steering Committee or CSO lead will thank participants for the day and remind them of any housekeeping notices and the starting time for Day 2 of their gender-transformative journey.

▶ **Acknowledge the commitment and effort**, and balance this with an invitation to review the GTA core element scale definitions and other materials shared or highlighted during the day.

▶ **Encourage everyone to rest and come refreshed and on time the next day.**

**Day 2 is for deep dives. Here, we illustrate how to use 2-3 core elements for critical reflection, both in plenary and in small groups. Tool 18 has been designed specifically for this purpose. What is the collective doing in this area already? Where are the challenges and barriers? What are the opportunities that could accelerate progress?**

### Objectives: Intensive Week Day 2

- Prioritise 2-3 GTA core elements where the collective can accelerate progress towards gender-transformative action to address child marriage and advance girls' rights.

- Conduct a deeper review of the country-level evidence to build shared understanding of the obstacles and opportunities to accelerate progress to address child marriage.

- On Day 2, it is important to facilitate collective critical review, by CSO members, of the collective's work in relation to the chosen 2-3 GTA core elements, across all levels of the socio-ecological model, including identification of challenges and opportunities for accelerated progress towards gender-transformative collective action.

- At this point, the group should begin to map potential actions to accelerate progress, an exercise that will be continued on Day 3.

## Day 2 in overview

| Key agenda items for Day 2 |
| --- |
| Open and welcome |
| 1. Review of country-level evidence and data |
| 2. Poll and discussion to choose 2-3 GTA priorities for deep dives |
| 3. Deep dive GTA priority #1: Critical reflection in plenary |
| 4. Deep dive GTA priority #2 and #3: Critical reflection in small groups |
| 5. Present and discuss results from small groups |
| 6. Start discussing priorities for GTA accelerated action |
| 7. Reflections |

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f.   Child Marriage Research to Action Network (the CRANK) is a joint initiative of *Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage* and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) - United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Global Programme to End Child Marriage.

### THE TOOLBOX

The full toolbox, including those highlighted for use in Step 4, is available on the *Girls Not Brides* website.

#### Intensive Week – Day 2

- Tool 12: GTA Intensive Week Day 1 – Core elements & ranking
- Tool 13: Presentation GTA Intensive Week Day 1 & 2 – Evidence & data
- Tool 15: GTA Intensive Week Day 1 – Ranking results
- Tool 16: Facilitator agenda GTA Intensive Week Day 2 – Deep dives
- Tool 17: Participant agenda GTA Intensive Week Day 2 – Deep dives
- Tool 18: GTA Intensive Week Day 2 – Deep dives
- Tool 19: Facilitator agenda GTA Intensive Week Day 2 – GTA Road map
- Tool 20: GTA Intensive Week Day 3 – Road map worksheet

### Suggested additional resources: Intensive Week Day 2

- UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool Workshop Facilitator Guide

- The CRANK's quarterly research meetings (including recordings, presentations, session notes and reports) and Research Spotlights, which range across themes of high relevance to all members of the child marriage movement who wish to accelerate progress by strengthening their gender-transformative action[f]

- UNICEF Child Marriage Country Profiles, regional overviews and sectoral analysis including a statistical overview for Eastern and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa[36] and female genital mutilation and child marriage and The Power of Education to End Child Marriage[37]

# 1. Review of country-level evidence and data

The time spent on evidence and data on Day 1 will determine how much time to dedicate to this on Day 2. You may want to share evidence and data from an area of the collective's work that is already gender-transformative, or is emerging as of high gender-transformative value.

For example, this could be a more detailed country overview of evidence and data around the link between girls' education and child marriage.

Or you may use today's time for well-briefed experts to present evidence and data that will make the link between their area of expertise and what it means for child marriage.

You can use the slide deck included in Tool 13 and the facilitator and participant agendas included in Tools 16 and 17 to help organise your ideas.

## IN PRACTICE

### Country-level evidence and data

Consider inviting the participation of somebody working on gender equality more broadly who can make the link with child marriage bringing to life evidence and data that illustrates trends and opportunities for gender-transformative collective action to address child marriage and to promote multiple positive outcomes for women and girls. Brief the speaker to focus the evidence-informed presentation on opportunities for CSOs to shift power and resources to catalyse positive gender outcomes, including reducing the prevalence of child marriage and other harmful practices.

The Gender & Development Manager and Child Protection Specialist (Harmful Practices) of the UNICEF Country Office were fantastic contributors to the GTA Intensive Week during the CSO pilot in Nigeria, and brought a wealth of country-level data and evidence to the room. This stimulated discussions with the national CSO collective about their unique and optimal role to shift power and resources to create the environment for girls' voice and choice, including about if, when and whom to marry.

## 2. Poll and discussion to choose 2-3 GTA priorities for deep dives

Given the time available, it is not possible to take a deep dive into all areas of the collective's work. For Day 2, it is important to choose 2-3 priorities that can be continued in Day 3's GTA Road Map action planning.

▶ **Review the discussion and rankings of the GTA core elements from Day 1**, sharing a slide with the results of the poll. A flip chart (shared as a photo for your online participants) can help talking through each. An example of poll results from Day 1 using Slido can be seen in Tool 15.

▶ **Remind participants of the steps in the gender-transformative journey and the socio-ecological model**. Some of the slides from Day 1 (included in the toolbox as Tool 12) can support this and don't be afraid to repeat: this can help with building shared understanding.

▶ Now it's time to **use a poll or vote for participants to select the 2-3 GTA core elements** where they feel the collective has the greatest potential to accelerate progress by taking a more conscious and conscientious gender-transformative approach.

▶ **Invite members to consider the following as they make their selections:**

- Which of the priorities have the greatest potential to shift power and resources to create the enabling environment for girls to step into their power and to have voice and choice over marriage and other decisions?

- Consider opportunities and risks in the current context and time frame.

- Is this an area of work that the collective can include in their current workplans?

## Core elements of a GTA[38]

- Core element 1: Adolescent girls' skills, agency and leadership.
- Core element 2: Enabling environment, family and community mobilisation.
- Core element 3: Addressing masculinities and engaging boys and men.
- Core element 4: Services and multi-sectoral collaboration.
- Core element 5: Policy and structural change and institutional partnerships, including laws and policies.
- Cross-cutting element: Gender norms and inequalities. This needs to be integrated across all gender-transformative work.

### Figure 9: Example of poll for selection of priorities for GTA deep dives

▶ **What core components would you like to focus on for our 3 deep dives today?**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Enabling environment, family and community mobilisation | 1.68 |
| 2. Adolescent girls' skills, agency and leadership | 1.64 |
| 3. Addressing masculinities and engaging boys and men | 1.09 |
| 4. Policy and structural change and institutional partnerships | 0.96 |
| 5. Services and mutli-sectoral collaboration | 0.64 |
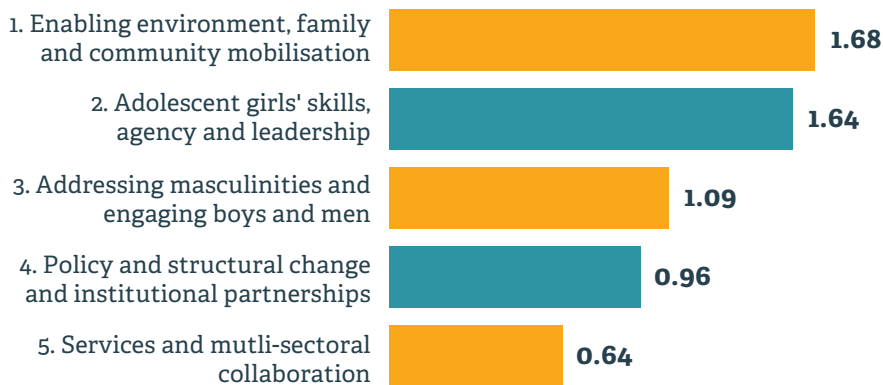
In this example of a poll, we see that the three GTA core elements chosen for the Day 2 deep dives reflection were:

- Core element 2: Enabling environment, family and community mobilisation.
- Core element 1: Adolescent girls' skills, agency and leadership.
- Core element 3: Addressing masculinities and engaging boys and men.

Gender norms and inequalities is a (non-negotiable) cross-cutting priority.

### Masculinities

Patterns of behaviour and practice that reflect and reinforce the position of men and boys in the gender order.[39] These patterns of behaviour and practice vary across cultural and social settings, within groups and networks, and across time.[40] Rigidity about the binary distinction between masculinity and femininity and a resistance to greater fluidity is a core manifestation of patriarchy.[41]

## 3. Deep dive GTA priority #1: Critical reflection in plenary

Each of the three GTA core elements selected now forms the basis of a deep dive reflection process.

▶ **Use Tool 18 to guide the group through the deep dive discussions, and record answers.**

▶ **Start with the group's first choice** (Enabling environment, family and community mobilisation in the above example), and work your way through from there.

Consider taking on the first element in plenary to familiarise participants with the tool and the process. The second and third deep dives can then be done in small groups, followed by a discussion of the results in plenary.

To support reflection and discussion, you may want to provide printed copies of Tool 18 in the room and email it to online participants ahead of the session.

▶ **Use Tool 18 to guide participants through the process of discussing, and recording, their perspectives** to three guiding questions:

1. What the collective is already doing in this area in relation to each level of the socio-ecological model (individual to policy).

2. The challenges and barriers to progress on a more gender-transformative approach.

3. The opportunities and actions that could be used to accelerate progress.

▶ **Encourage participants to give supporting examples where possible and think about each level of the socio-ecological framework.**

▶ **Remind participants that the focus is *collective action* rather than the work of individual CSO members.** The Facilitator should pay particular attention to this, as it is likely that participants will identify more closely with the work of their CSO than with the work of the collective.

## 4. Deep dive GTA priority #2 and #3: Critical reflection in small groups

▶ **Repeat the same deep dive process for the second and third priorities**, but working in smaller groups. We suggest approximately one hour for each deep dive.

▶ **Divide participants into as many groups as needed** to encourage higher levels of participation across the membership.

▶ **Assign a member of the Facilitation or Support Teams and/or a Gender Advocate to each group.** It will be their task to focus discussion around the three guiding questions, and to ensure that all levels of the socio-ecological framework are addressed.

▶ **Assign a notetaker**, responsible for filling in Tool 18, and ask for a volunteer spokesperson from each group **to report back to the full group.**

The group facilitators and notetakers need to ensure members of their group can see Tool 18. It is preferable, but not essential, for them to also see how it is being populated as the discussion progresses. Given the difficulties of using an online tool to document discussions, we suggest downloading a copy, saving as "Deep dive, working group 1" and using this to record the discussion.

The information recorded in Tool 18 will be used for Day 3's GTA Road Map action planning.

▶ **Keep asking for examples when participants share their perspectives:** this can provide leads to be followed up in the action planning and is useful to signal opportunities and promising practice.

**ONLINE:** To facilitate full participation of online participants, follow the same process in virtual breakout room(s). If a relatively small number of participants are joining online (as part of a hybrid event), consider creating a single online breakout room.

The responsible member of the Support Team needs to ensure participants have clear instructions for the deep dive reflection process. The plenary session will have helped to model the process. In addition, consider posting instructions in the chat which can mitigate poor sound quality, connectivity issues and late arrivals.

The facilitator for the online group needs to ensure online participants are able to see Tool 18 and preferably how it is being populated as the discussion progresses. We suggest uploading a copy and sharing the screen.

## 5. Present and discuss results from small groups

▶ **Bring participants back together into plenary and invite the spokesperson from each group to summarise and share their discussions**. Give time for questions and clarifications from the other groups after each report-back.

▶ **Encourage discussion around emerging themes, challenges and opportunities.**

We suggest taking 10-15 minutes – either just before or after the report-back to plenary – to hear an inspiring story from a member of the collective, an invited external speaker, or a video presentation. We suggest content that is inspiring, shows that change is possible, and highlights the leadership qualities and talents of girls in all their diversity when they are able to stand up and speak out.

## 6. Start discussing priorities for GTA accelerated action

This step in the day is to support the transition from deep dive collective reflection (today's focus) to action planning (tomorrow's focus).

▶ **Take 30-45 minutes to focus on responses to question 3 in Tool 18**. What opportunities does the CSO collective have within its current workplan and networks to shift towards more gender-transformative approaches in this area? And what actions could be planned to accelerate progress?

▶ **Read, or ask participants to read out, some of the responses Tool 18, and as they are listening, invite them to reflect on the opportunities identified.** Can they begin to think of actions that might be included in the GTA Road Map for accelerated gender-transformative collective action on Day 3?

## 7. Reflection

A lot of information will have been shared by this point.

▶ We suggest that a member of the Facilitation Team or a Gender Advocate takes 15 or so minutes at the end of the workshop to **reflect some of the key points that have emerged.** This can support the transition to tomorrow's forward-looking session – and reassure participants that their contributions are laying the foundations for the next steps.

▶ Look at the entries in Tool 18 and **review the spread of work across the levels of the socio-ecological model for each of the three priorities:** Are patterns or themes emerging? Are there more examples of work shared for some levels than others? (Experience has been that fewer examples/opportunities are being shared in the 'Policy level' column.)

▶ **Wrap up by highlighting the unique and valuable role of a collective.**

The focus on collective action emphasises the collective's opportunity to be more than the sum of its individual parts: it can be a powerful driving force for systems-level change.

If the collective has members spread throughout the country, it is uniquely placed to understand and communicate the importance of context-sensitive approaches.

Many collectives have a wide range of members with different programmatic entry points, from education to sexual and reproductive health rights to access to justice to youth engagement. This multiplies the opportunities for the collective to influence decision- and policymakers, funders, service providers and opinion leaders to create the enabling environment for girls to exercise voice and choice about marriage.

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**KEY TERMS**

**Sexuality**

Includes sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. It can manifest in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. Sexuality is socially constructed and influenced by the interaction of a range of factors including biological, legal and cultural elements.[42]

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## 8. Preparation for Day 3

▶ Gather the copies of Tool 18 used in plenary and small working groups, and **summarise and transfer the answers to Question 3** (opportunities) to Tool 20.

▶ **Use Tool 20 as your road map worksheet from now on.** It serves as your master copy.

▶ **Use the agenda in Tool 19** to guide you through Day 3.

**ONLINE:** Ensure that the master copy of Tool 20 can be shared and viewed by participants in the room and online as this will be needed at the beginning of Day 3.

If the workshop does not include online participants, you can ask the group to write their answers to Question 3 (from Tool 18) on record cards or post-it notes that can be displayed on large flip charts in the room the next day.

It's time to make an action plan! This chapter guides you through the creation of a GTA Road Map – informed by everything achieved during Day 1 and 2. A worksheet tracks this process in real-time: How can we create meaningful, collective action that shifts power towards the most marginalised girls, accelerates progress to address child marriage, and catalyses positive outcomes on gender equality?

## Objectives: Intensive Week Day 3

- Build on the deep dive reflections of Day 2 to brainstorm potential actions for the collective to catalyse progress towards more gender-transformative action.

- Identify and collectively agree a set of 5-10 strategic actions to create a GTA Road Map of collective action for the collective.

- Together, build a Road Map for the next stage in the gender-transformative journey of the collective to continue to strengthen gender-transformative skills and leadership.

### THE TOOLBOX

The full toolbox, including those highlighted for use in Step 5, is available on the *Girls Not Brides* website.

#### Intensive Week – Day 3

- Tool 19: GTA Intensive Week Day 3 - Facilitation Agenda
- Tool 20: GTA Intensive Week Day 3 – Road Map worksheet
- Tool 21: GTA Intensive Week Day 3 – Road Map presentation

## Day 3 in overview

### Key agenda items for Day 3

1. Welcome and recap

2. Brainstorm and select priority actions

3. Road Map planning for GTA priority#1 in plenary

4. Road Map planning for GTA priorities #2 and #3 in small groups

5. Feedback to plenary and group discussion

6. Next steps

## Suggested additional resources: Intensive Week Day 3

- UNFPA/UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool Workshop Facilitator Guide

## 1. Welcome

▶ **Welcome participants into the space** and check the sound quality for anyone joining online.

▶ **Ask an open-ended check-in question** to give participants the opportunity to share what is going on for them in terms of their individual gender-transformative journey.

▶ **Adapt the PowerPoint provided as Tool 21 to introduce Day 3's agenda and objectives** and its position in the sequence of **stepping-stones in a longer-term gender-transformative journey.**

▶ **You can adapt and use the agenda in Tool 19.**

📶 **ONLINE:** Check for contributions from online participants who can either ask to speak or write in the chat box.

📶 **ONLINE:** The responsible Support Team member needs to post the agenda and objectives for the day, a reminder of the GTA priorities chosen on Day 1, and a link to Tool 20 in the chat.

## 2. Brainstorm and select priority actions for inclusion in the GTA Road Map

• **Share the summarised responses to Question 3 from yesterday's GTA deep dives (Tool 18)**. These will either be on Tool 20 (your master worksheet), or, for in-person only events, on post-it notes/ record cards displayed on flip charts.

For the flip chart option, we suggest organising the suggestions around the three guiding questions:

• Does this action shift power and resources towards the most marginalised girls?

• Does this action accelerate progress to address child marriage?

• Does this action catalyse additional positive outcomes related to gender equality?

• **Invite participants to brainstorm additional actions and reflect collectively on suggestions.** It is useful to remind participants that these are suggestions for collective action.

• **Nominate a person of the Support Team to add suggestions to your master worksheet (Tool 20)** to share the screen for online participants to be able to view.

For in-person only events, suggestions can alternatively be written on post-it notes either by a Support Team member or by participants who are given 5-10 minutes to do this.

📶 **ONLINE:** If recorded directly by a member of the Support Team onto Tool 20, using screen share mode, online participants can also view. For online participants, the Support Team member will check the chat for suggestions and share these with the room.

## Table 2: Example using Tool 20 for Day 3 GTA Road Map

| 3 GTA priorities *[as selected on Day 2 of your GTA Intensive Week]* | Action # | Action *[Collectively prioritise about 5 actions, drawing from Question 3 in Tool 18]* | Steps/process *[Remember each action may involved several steps]* | Timeframe | Support needed | How to measure success | Responsible focal points |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *[Insert priority 1, for example: Enabling environment, family and community mobilisation]* | 1 | *[For example: Partner with local youth organisation to design comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) module for out-of-school girls.]* | 1.<br>2.<br>3. | *[For example: 6-12 months]* | *[For example: Guidance on promising practices for gender in CSE.*<br><br>*Mapping of partner youth organisations led by or working with out-of-school girls.]* | *[For ideas, review CSE module using UNESCO/ UNFPA guidance and with the engagement of adolescents]* | *[Insert name of the person / organisation responsible]* |
|  | 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## 3. Road Map planning for GTA priority #1 in plenary

You are working with the GTA priorities that were chosen on Day 1 (Step 3). In our example, they are (1) Enabling environment, family and community mobilisation; (2) Adolescent girls' skills, agency and leadership; (3) Addressing masculinities and engaging boys and men; with gender norms and inequalities as cross-cutting priorities.

▶ **Continue to use Tool 20 to document and guide discussions.**

▶ **Complete Road Map action planning for the first priority in plenary**, so participants can familiarise themselves with the process and the tool. The remaining priorities should be discussed in smaller groups.

▶ **Invite the full group to offer suggestions prompted by a facilitated discussion.**

This might include:

• Exploration of opportunities for immediate effect.

• Identification and prioritisation of actions that could accelerate progress on child marriage directly and catalyse other indirect positive outcomes for gender equality (for example retention of girls in school, comprehensive sexuality education, pro-gender equality messaging by religious or traditional leaders).

• Exploration of a central question: Which of these actions will shift power and resources towards the most marginalised girls? And how?

▶ **Invite the full group to prioritise five strategic actions** for this first GTA priority which are to be recorded on Tool 20.

▶ Once the group has selected approximately five actions for the first priority, **think through and list all the steps that will need to be taken to complete these actions**.

▶ Then, **work together to fill in the remaining columns of the worksheet** to elicit information about:

- **Time frame:** When will steps be taken? This could be expressed as, say, a quarter or a month (if linked to a special event), or an indication of the duration, say within 6-18 months.

- **Support needed:** Brainstorm external support that may be needed. This could include support for training, consultancy, a budget for research, or participation in an external event.

- **Who is responsible:** Discuss and suggest individuals or CSO members within the collective who will be responsible for leading on this action.

- **How to measure success:** Suggest pragmatic ways to show that this activity has been completed, and, crucially, to what effect. This might include monitoring a platform to show the number of references to child marriage, or demonstrating changes in how women and girls are described in terms of their equal rights and leadership qualities.

Aim to finish with a list of no more than five strategic actions for the first GTA priority. Note: one action can include sub-activities.

## 4. Road Map planning for GTA priorities #2 and #3 in small groups

▶ **Repeat the same Road Map action planning process for the second and third GTA priorities,** working in smaller groups. We suggest 45-60 minutes for each GTA priority.

▶ **Divide participants into as many groups as needed** to encourage higher levels of participation across the membership.

▶ **Assign a member of the Facilitation Team and/ or a Gender Advocate to each group.**

▶ **Keep bringing back learning**, **evidence or data that is relevant to the discussion** and keep the guiding questions used in the plenary discussion at the forefront.

▶ **Assign a notetaker** who is responsible for filling in the columns of **Tool 20** and **ask for a volunteer from each group to report back to the full group.**

The group facilitators and notetakers need to ensure members of their group can see Tool 20, and preferably (although not essential) how it is being populated as the discussion progresses. As on Day 2, we recommend downloading and saving working group copies of the worksheet, and using this to record the discussion.

## 5. Feedback to plenary and group discussion

▶ When the groups have worked through the remaining two priorities, **bring participants back to plenary and invite a spokesperson for each group to summarise and share their discussions**.

▶ **Give time for questions and clarifications** from the other groups after each report-back.

We suggest a member of the Support Team is assigned to harmonise/aggregate the actions suggested into one GTA Road Map. This will help the smaller group tasked with finalising the GTA Road Map.

## 6. Next Steps

▶ **Explain that a small group of members – probably from the Steering Committee – will continue to work on the GTA Road Map** and will bring this work back to the full membership in a method of their choosing.

Ideally, this workshop takes place as soon as possible after the GTA Intensive Week, although a level of pragmatism is needed.

**IN PRACTICE**

In Nigeria and Mozambique, an additional 2-day in-person workshop to finalise the GTA Road Map was scheduled to bring together members of the Steering Committee and Facilitation Team.

# 2.6 – STEP 6: TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL
## How small-investment GTA pilots can work for you

**A smaller group will continue to work on the GTA Road Map created during the Intensive Week. In this chapter, we highlight GTA pilots as one way to take the work to the next level. Funded by small financial investments, they can provide valuable feedback and evidence of change to help secure the continued investment in the collective's gender-transformative journey, and documentation to promote GTA to other collectives.**

Small financial investments for GTA pilots are suggested for collectives to support the application of GTA skills and leadership.

Long-term investments to strengthen and support intentional gender-transformative collective action will lead to significant outcome-level change. Shorter-term, a focus should be placed on changes in the GTA skills, knowledge and leadership of individuals (your participants), as well as some organisational-level changes in commitment to gender-transformative behaviours and practices.

The GTA Road Map includes space for the design, implementation and documentation of a 4-month GTA pilot, using a small financial investment. This can be an opportunity to provide:

- Feedback to the members of the collective to adjust their course, and support fundraising and alliance-building.

- Proof of concept that supports continued investment in the next stage of the collective's gender-transformative journey, or learning what can be shared with other collectives to support them.

- Documentation which can support the promotion of GTA promising practice to other collectives for further uptake and use.

*"We have increased our engagement with the Federal government especially contributing to policy formulation. The coalition is now a member of the technical working group on ending child marriage and also a member of the core group of the TWG which means that we can now collectively advocate for the participation of girls in the planned review of the national Strategy on Ending Child Marriage. Members are collectively and systematically engaging on the drivers of child marriage in the different zones of the country."*

Member of The Coalition of Civil Society to End Child Marriage in Nigeria

# 2.7 – STEP 7: LOOKING AHEAD
## Where next on your collective GTA journey?

**This is only the beginning! The guide's final chapter emphasises the importance of looking back over the journey (Which gaps can we identify? What are our ongoing needs?) and ahead (What are the unanswered challenges, questions and requests for further support we should focus on now?). Ongoing exchange and conversation may encourage other CSOs to follow in your footsteps.**

As we have said repeatedly: this is just one step in a longer gender-transformative journey.

Along the way it is important to document unanswered challenges, questions, and requests for further support – both for the collective and for individual participants.

At this stage we suggest tasking one or two members of the Facilitation Team to look back and summarise the gaps and needs identified during the process. Key moments during the GTA journey where this information might be found are:

- Priorities for GTA capacity enhancement (Table 3) highlighted during the Self-Assessment of the collective in chapter 2.

- Analysis of change documented between Day 1 (pre) and Day 3 (post) GTA Intensive Week.

- Analysis of ranking of GTA core elements and examples given for GTA deep dives during the GTA Intensive Week.

- Documentation of GTA pilots.

- Gender Advocates' journalling and contributions.

# 3. FINAL REMARKS

## How this resource was developed
### Acknowledgements and thanks

This gender-transformative journey has been undertaken by the national CSO collectives in Mozambique and Nigeria, alongside their allies within government and UNICEF Country Offices, with support from the *Girls Not Brides* secretariat in collaboration with UNICEF global, regional and country-level allies and support from Collective Impact.

Its starting point was the alignment between the missions and visions of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, the UN/EU Spotlight Initiative to eliminate all forms of VAWG, and the *Girls Not Brides* global partnership's commitment to build civil society action to end child marriage. Shared by all was a commitment to promote and invest in the gender-transformative capacities of CSO collectives in Africa.

In collaboration with the national CSO collectives and UNICEF the activities, process and tools for the GTA Intensive Week were adapted from the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool of the Global Programme to End Child Marriage, which was produced by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) headquarters' offices in collaboration with Collective Impact.

Valuable additional resources used to adapt and support this process include multiple resources published by the Global Programme, including country reports, technical notes and the Agora e-learning platform; as well as data and analysis published on UNICEF's website, including Child Marriage Country Profiles, regional overviews and sectoral analysis. A vote of thanks also goes to members of the Collective Impact team who generously supported with facilitation and adaptation.

Special thanks goes to members of the Mozambique and Nigeria National Partnership and Coalition, and especially to the Lead CSOs – AMODEFA and CYPF – and the project's Gender Advocates: (Mozambique) Mwema Nicoleta Uaciquete, Eunice Margarido, Estrela Monica Bila and for (Nigeria) Odonghanro Dorinda, Peace Adebola Okeshola, Zainab Yahaya Tanko.

# Embarking on your own gender-transformative journey

## The key transformations we have observed so far

The following provides an overview of some of the changes in gender-transformative skills, knowledge and practice that emerged during the gender-transformative journey, particularly the GTA Intensive Week. They were compiled based on a mix of observation, documentation and self-reporting and serve as an encouragement for CSOs who are thinking to embark on their own gender-transformative journey.

### 1. Complexity

During their gender-transformative journey, participants often developed a better understanding of the many different drivers of child marriage, acknowledging that some are more visible than others. To address the root causes of child marriage, it is important to be open to addressing powerful – but often invisible – drivers, such as the link between family honour and girls' sexuality. Participants increased their understanding that engaging with complexity and with taboos are both essential for GTAs.

### 2. Context-sensitive, region-specific approaches

Participants developed a shared understanding that drivers of child marriage are specific to context including within the same country. For example, in Nigeria members discussed the differences between the north, where cultural norms and traditions are a major driver of child marriages, and the west or south, where child marriage tends to be driven by a link between family honour and a girl's virginity/pregnancy, typically summarised in the colloquial phrase: "You got the baby, you marry the man who gave you the baby." Context- specific approaches are imperative in the gender-transformative journey.

### 3. Existing CSO expertise

Members of one collective recognised the need to review and adapt approaches for engagement with men and boys to address and transform the norms supporting male power and privilege. While discussing how to move beyond engagement with men and boys, they recognised the potential of one of their own members – who had expertise in this area – to be a gender-transformative learning-for-practice resource. The same collective began making the most of some members' expertise in the design of community level social norms change programmes through affiliations with the Tostan network. When, previously, each member of a collective tended to function as an individual organisation, without identifying or leveraging the knowelege and resources within the national collective, the gender-transformative journey has the potential to bring to the fore a more collaborative approach. In Nigeria, for instance, members are now going to use an adapted guide for facilitating Girls' Safe Spaces, having pooled, and collectively reviewed, the multiple guides and resources being used by different members in the coalition.

### 4. A deeper understanding of education

Keeping girls in school – especially secondary school – is one of the best ways to delay the age of marriage: on average, the likelihood of a girl marrying as a child is six percentage points less for every additional year she stays in secondary education (Girls' Education and Child marriage, GNB). The collectives who piloted the gender-transformative journey were already deeply aware of this. During the GTA Intensive Week, they were able to deepen their thinking about the potential of education further. Moving beyond the existing engagement with parents, communities and religious and traditional leaders to advocate for girls being encouraged and supported to go to school based on the equal rights of girls, members started to focus on what they, as a collective, can do. How to advocate for the changes necessary to allow more girls to complete their secondary education? What is needed to raise the quality and relevance of schooling to prepare young people to make safe, informed choices about sexual relationships, consent and marriage? How can girls be encouraged to believe in themselves, develop their talents, and start aspiring to be in formal employment and leadership?

## 5. Religion and culture

Most national CSO collectives working on child marriage in Africa consider it essential to work with religious and traditional leaders. They are custodians of tradition and gatekeepers of social norms. Their interpretations of religious texts, teachings and customs influence which behaviour – and which choices – are considered acceptable. Often, the pressure to marry young is linked to fears of pre-marital pregnancy or loss of virginity – which is considered a dishonour in many communities, irrespective of whether it was by choice, unplanned, or even forced. During the GTA Intensive Week and Road Map workshops, members of one national CSO collective began critiquing their existing approach, pushing themselves to move beyond "engagement with" religious and traditional leaders to explore "how" they were engaging. To what extent did their engagement work on the power and privilege of leaders? How much did their engagement reinforce the need for the rights of all girls – regardless of age, marital status, wealth – to complete their education and access the full range of sexual and reproductive rights?

During these discussions, participants made an interesting connection with some members' work with religious denominational groups, such as religious youth groups, groups for young girls, and women's organisations. Deeper youth engagement, important in its own right, could have the added benefit of encouraging young people to advocate more effectively, influencing religious leaders to check their privilege and to support the equal voice and choice of girls.

## 6. Girls' voice and choice

On Day 1 of the GTA Intensive Week, one participant reflected: "We make sure that we educate the girl child to speak out, to have the communication skills they need to be able to negotiate. By the time we are teaching life skills, you'll be able to tell your parents that you want to complete secondary school education and go further." The focus for this member's work was getting girls into school, and providing safe spaces and life skills training to "build life skills, how to know the value of a girl child, how to know who you are, what you need to do and achieve, what you want to achieve." In its Road Map for GTA Collective Action, which was

developed on Day 3, this member has committed to building capacity within the coalition. This will come in the form of an adapted guide for facilitating Girls' Safe Spaces. It will place high importance on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), leadership and negotiation skills, with a view to enhancing employability of girls and their ability to advocate for their rights. This is a shift from the traditional idea that safe spaces are used to teach girls a limited set of gender-stereotyped productive skills, such as how to make cleaning agents, food and snacks for sale, or hairdressing as a job.

## 7. Increased representation of women and youth-led members

Following the GTA organisational self-assessment, two collectives made a commitment to increase the number of women and youth-led members. They also vowed to support the participation and leadership of women- and youth-led members in the decision-making structures of the collective.

## 8. Changing approaches and strategies

The range of activities proposed in the GTA Road Maps compiled on Day 3 of the GTA Intensive Week showed strong gender-transformative potential: members identified opportunities to bring about changes in structures, practices and attitudes. These actions were geared towards rebalancing unequal opportunities and to increasing the share of resources and power for girls, in all their diversity. When planning their GTA Pilots, the step that follows the Intensive Week, members were able to propose activities on the basis of their potential to catalyse changes in discriminatory norms and practices, at both the individual and the institutional levels.

### Further reading

For detailed accounts of the gender-transformative journeys piloted in Nigeria and Mozambique, you can read our country reports: [LINKS]
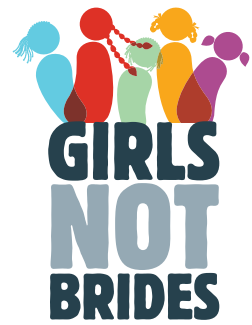
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# "WE CAN ONLY END CHILD MARRIAGE IF WE ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSE: GENDER INEQUALITY. WE WILL NOT ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY UNLESS WE ADDRESS CHILD MARRIAGE."

GIRLS NOT BRIDES

The Global Partnership
to End Child Marriage

## HOW CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS CAN USE GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE COLLECTIVE ACTION TO ADDRESS CHILD MARRIAGE AND ADVANCE GIRLS' RIGHTS
### A 7-step guide

*Girls Not Brides* is a global partnership of over 1,600 civil society organisations from more than 100 countries committed to ending child marriage and ensuring girls can fulfil their potential.