



GIRLS NOT BRIDES

The Global Partnership
to End Child Marriage



CIVIL SOCIETY AND BUDGET ADVOCACY TO END CHILD MARRIAGE

Lessons learned from six pilot projects

June 2020



PICTURED: Poster session during *Girls Not Brides* global meeting
Photo: *Girls Not Brides*/Graham Crouch

CIVIL SOCIETY AND BUDGET ADVOCACY TO END CHILD MARRIAGE: LESSONS LEARNED FROM SIX PILOT PROJECTS

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PICTURED ON COVER: Girls in a primary school in Samburu, Kenya. Photo: *Girls Not Brides*/Amref.

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ACRONYMS

CFME-T	<i>Coalition pour la Fin du Mariage des Enfants au Togo</i> (Togo National Coalition to End Child Marriage)
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
EVAC	Ending Violence Against Children
FACES	Formation, Awareness and Community Empowerment Society, Pakistan
FP2020	Family Planning 2020
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IBP	International Budget Partnership
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGOs	International Non-Government Organisations
KMYDO	Kenya Muslim Youth Development Organisation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OMM	<i>Observatorio de Mortalidad Materna en México</i> (Maternal Mortality Observatory in Mexico)
RELUTET	<i>Réseau de Lutte contre la Traite des Enfants au Togo</i> (Network to Combat Child Trafficking in Togo)
SIPINNA	<i>El Sistema Nacional de Protección Integral de Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes</i> (National Integrated Child and Adolescent Protection System)
SIRP	Society for the Improvement of Rural People, Nigeria
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

1. INTRODUCTION

This discussion paper shares key lessons learned from six pilot projects on budget advocacy to end child marriage. The projects were designed and implemented by *Girls Not Brides* civil society member organisations across three continents, in Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan and Togo.

This paper contributes to an emerging area of work within the global movement to end child marriage: how to hold governments to account for the implementation of national policies and programmes that prevent and respond to child marriage across sectors and at different levels. Within this, it also considers how to influence public budgets and mobilise a government's domestic resources to ensure implementation efforts reach the local level – and especially the girls – that need them most.

Specifically, this paper highlights the critical role that civil society organisations (CSOs) can play in budget advocacy to address child marriage, traditionally an area of work often inaccessible to those who do not work within the technical realms of government planning and budgeting processes.

For the global movement to end child marriage, the lessons opposite demonstrate how and why all stakeholders at different levels and across sectors must work in an intentional and informed way to ensure that public budgets reflect the needs of – and work for – adolescent girls who are at risk of child marriage or are already married.

Key lessons learned:

Lesson 1: Civil society organisations have a unique role to play in holding governments to account for their budgetary commitments to address child marriage.

Lesson 2: Civil society must negotiate their role as both advocates and “encouraging friends” to government in their budget advocacy work.

Lesson 3: Strong relationships between civil society and key stakeholders – government officials, parliamentarians, the media, other civil society organisations, community leaders and young people – are key to budget advocacy success.

Lesson 4: Budget advocacy on child marriage helps lift the political profile of the issue at the sub-national level.

Lesson 5: A solid budget analysis is a powerful tool that complements other advocacy strategies. Civil society must leverage technical expertise to conduct budget analyses and ensure budget advocacy is supported by strong data.

Lesson 6: Budget advocacy is not a one-off – it is a long-term process to engage with as part of a broader advocacy plan.



PICTURED: Danha, 18, helps during a “Let Girls Lead” workshop to raise awareness of child marriage in Guatemala. Photo: *Girls Not Brides*/James Rodríguez

2. BACKGROUND: GIRLS NOT BRIDES' LINK TO BUDGET ADVOCACY

Girls Not Brides' work on budget advocacy stems from the need for governments to “walk the talk” and demonstrate concrete political will to end child marriage. A public budget is important because it is the chief instrument by which governments make decisions that most accurately reflect their social and economic priorities. It is through budgetary allocation that a government can tangibly show that it is committed to meeting the needs of its people, especially the most vulnerable.

The decisions governments make about funding policies, programmes and services for girls have a direct impact on many aspects their lives – their health, education, safety and protection from violence. Delayed salary payments for teachers, due to poor funding flows, may result in high teacher absenteeism and reduce the quality of education delivered in schools.¹ A lack of health supplies, due to poor costing or the inequitable distribution of funds, may result in devastating health outcomes for a teenage mother or her newborn child. Married girls who are victims of domestic violence are often unable to access safe houses or gender-based violence (GBV) support services, because child protection systems, social welfare services and local law enforcement do not have the funding or capacity to run such a service despite overwhelming demand.

Interventions that address child marriage – and enable girls to fulfil their potential –

must be planned for, costed and funded across sectors in public budgets.

Governments must take responsibility for ensuring that these programmes are delivered and effective. These public funds must be spent effectively, with an improved flow and effective use of budgeted resources for system strengthening and service delivery in health, education and child protection and social welfare, especially at the sub-national level.

For this reason, the budget advocacy *Girls Not Brides* focuses on specifically relates to advocacy for nationally-generated domestic resources spent by governments, rather than official development assistance (ODA) or any other interventions paid for by civil society organisations or the private sector. It also focuses on public expenditure at the national/central level and at the sub-national level by local government, whether the financing comes from central government or from locally-generated government revenue.

As the global movement to end child marriage has grown over the past nine years, there has been increased recognition that to achieve change that meets the scale of the problem – over 12 million girls are married each year – it is necessary to move from a project-based approach to child marriage into comprehensive multi-sectoral policy solutions that are led and owned by governments.

¹ For more information see UNICEF's [Engagements in Influencing Domestic Public Finance for Children \(PF4C\): A Global Programme Framework](#).

This shift has led to over 40 governments with high-prevalence, high-burden² or hotspots of child marriage having developed or now being deeply in the process of developing national policies to end the practice.³ These national policies are in addition to existing government policies that indirectly support child marriage prevention and response through the education, health, child protection/ending violence against children (EVAC), gender, youth, GBV and humanitarian sectors. While dedicated national policies help with political agenda-setting, it is important that child marriage is not then seen as a “stand-alone” issue rather than the multi-sectoral issue it is. Interventions to end child marriage must be mainstreamed and integrated across and into relevant sectors.

These 40-plus government-led policies provide an important framework for holistic and comprehensive government action to end child marriage. However, only a few of these have had public funds allocated to

them by their government. As most are under-resourced, they are consequently also largely unimplemented. This is partly because it is usually the Ministry of Gender/Social Welfare/Women/Children or equivalent which holds the mandate as lead ministry to coordinate and spearhead the implementation of the national policy. This ministry generally has the largest mandate to deliver on social welfare and gender issues, yet tends to have fewer resources and reduced political influence compared to other line ministries. Therefore, prospects for implementation of a national policy generally remain low.

In this context, *Girls Not Brides* members are engaging in budget advocacy with the explicit intention of advancing policy goals. That is, the implementation of national strategies, National Action Plans and other sectoral government policies and programmes that will contribute to ending child marriage in a country.

PICTURED: Youth activist with world map at the *Girls Not Brides* global meeting.
Photo: *Girls Not Brides*/
Graham Crouch



² UNICEF global databases 2018, based on Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, Demographic and Health Surveys and other national surveys. Highest burden is based on the number (in thousands) of women 20-24 years old who were first married or in union before they were 18 years old. Based on population in 2017. From the

population data from United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision*, DVD Edition.

³ This does not include national policies which pre-dated the global movement to end child marriage.

3. ROLE OF GIRLS NOT BRIDES MEMBERS IN BUDGET ADVOCACY

There is growing evidence that civil society participation in public budgeting can have a significant impact on budget processes, policies and outcomes.⁴

Girls Not Brides' approach to budget advocacy is aligned with that of the International Budget Partnership, which suggests that budget advocacy is most effective when it combines two key elements:

Budget analysis: the capacity to secure budget information, analyse it and explain its implications in clear and compelling ways.

Strategic advocacy: the ability to get the word out about a campaign, mobilise the public and reach out to policymakers and other stakeholders.

It is by combining these two elements, and often the different kinds of organisations in which those different skills reside, that civil society can influence public budgets effectively.⁵ Each of the six pilot projects combined these elements, as explored below.

4. RATIONALE FOR THE BUDGET ADVOCACY PILOT PROJECTS

The *Girls Not Brides* secretariat has been working on budget advocacy to end child marriage since January 2018. This work has included research, scoping and discussions with interested stakeholders and experts in budget advocacy, gender-responsive budgeting and public financial management fields. The work has included a session with key members and experts at the *Girls Not Brides* Global Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in June 2018, a leadership development pipeline with self-nominated *Girls Not Brides* member organisations working on budget advocacy in different countries, capacity building using the online UN Women Gender-Responsive Budgeting training⁶ for members and a workshop on the topic in Nairobi in March

2019.⁷ The latter brought together key stakeholders (*Girls Not Brides* member organisations, UN agencies and other experts) to discuss challenges, lessons learned and ways forward on budget advocacy for the global movement to end child marriage.

Following the Nairobi workshop, the *Girls Not Brides* secretariat convened a Working Group on Budget Advocacy to End Child Marriage. The Working Group – made up of civil society members, UN agencies and other stakeholders and experts working on budget advocacy – continues to unpack the complexities of this work and share information and resources. Through this process, it became clear that *Girls Not Brides*

⁴ For more information see the International Budget Partnership [website](#).

⁵ For more information see the International Budget Partnership [website](#).

⁶ UN Women's online Gender-Responsive Budgeting [training](#).

⁷ *Girls Not Brides* Workshop on Budget Advocacy to End Child Marriage, March 2019.

member organisations were already undertaking effective, but often undocumented, work on budget advocacy on child marriage and adolescent girls in often resource-poor settings across different sectors.

The secretariat therefore decided to showcase the vital role of civil society in budget advocacy by strengthening the evidence base and providing real-life examples from its members' work. *Girls Not Brides* funded small pilot grants for members to shine a light on the budget advocacy work they were undertaking at the sub-national level, with the overall aim to:

- Document and showcase the critical role civil society plays in holding governments to account in funding and implementing

national policies and programmes that address child marriage.

- Familiarise other actors who are part of the global movement to end child marriage with the budget advocacy approach, understanding that there is no such thing as a “child marriage budget” and that it is essential to advocate across government sectors and at national and sub-national levels.
- Build learning about how civil society can effectively influence public budgets and sectoral planning processes to ensure sufficient resources are provided for relevant child marriage interventions in those sectors.









PICTURED: Opening plenary at *Girls Not Brides* global meeting. Photo: *Girls Not Brides*/Graham Crouch

5. METHODOLOGY

This discussion paper was developed on the basis of a review and analysis of current literature through the scoping and background work initiated from January 2018, discussions with member organisations and the outcomes of the six pilot projects. The key lessons learned were formed through an analysis of all project documents, project outputs – including photos, media reports, budget analyses and government

budget documents – Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) information and pre-/mid-term/end-of-project reports from each of the six pilots.

Following a competitive application process amongst the *Girls Not Brides* member organisations engaging in the secretariat’s budget advocacy work over the previous 18 months, the following pilots were selected:

	<p>Gender-responsive budgeting in Enugu State, Nigeria: Society for the Improvement of Rural People (SIRP)</p>
	<p>Gender-responsive budget advocacy campaign to end child marriage in Punjab province, Pakistan: Formation, Awareness and Community Empowerment Society (FACES) Pakistan</p>
 <p>Peace Foundation</p>	<p>Budget advocacy for implementation of district-level monitoring committees and Women’s Safe Houses to support ending child marriage in Sindh province, Pakistan: Peace Foundation</p>
	<p>Linda Mtoto budget advocacy project in Kilifi County, Kenya: Kenya Muslim Youth Development Organisation (KMYDO)</p>
	<p>Budget allocation for the prevention of formal, informal and early unions for children and adolescents in Chiapas state, Mexico: The case of the National Integrated Child and Adolescent Protection System and its application at the federal, state and municipal level: Observatorio de Mortalidad Materna en México (OMM)</p>
	<p>Child rights and protection through budget advocacy to end child marriage in Est-Mono and Anié communes, Togo: Réseau de Lutte contre la Traite des Enfants au Togo (RELUTET) on behalf of the Coalition pour la Fin du Mariage des Enfants au Togo (CFME-T) (Togo National Coalition to End Child Marriage)</p>

Projects were proposed and designed by *Girls Not Brides* member organisations to ensure a local and contextual focus for budget advocacy, and selected based on their potential capacity to be catalytic in terms of:

- Directly influencing budget lines and processes
- Building capacity for budget analysis or budget advocacy of CSOs, government officials and other relevant stakeholders
- Institutionalising child marriage interventions across one or more sectors
- Holding the government to account for their budget commitments to end child marriage and support adolescent girls

Analysis across the six projects showed some commonalities in the projects' implementation. To aid in analysis, these were loosely grouped into four aspects of project implementation:

- Budget analysis
- Validation and sharing budget information with all stakeholders
- Budget advocacy campaign, lobbying and media engagement
- Securing budgetary commitments from government

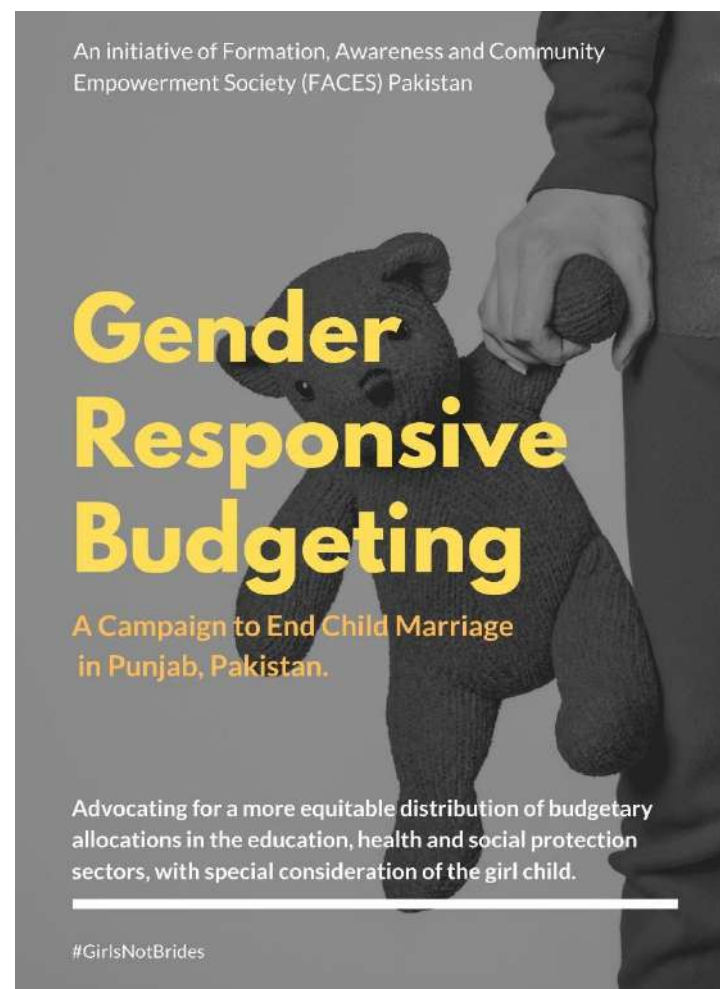
While not all projects followed each of these aspects in a linear fashion, or implemented each area in an exacting way, this grouping helped in the broader analysis of the key lessons learned with regards the role of civil society in budget advocacy.

Each of the projects also included cross-cutting activities to build stakeholder capacity in budget information and

budgetary processes, and raise government officials' awareness of child marriage and its impact on their work, sector or agency's mandate.

All the projects' budgets were between US\$4,000 and \$10,000, had a three-month implementation period from September to November 2019, focused work at the sub-national level (i.e. county level in Kenya, state level in Mexico and Nigeria, provincial level in Pakistan and commune level in Togo) and had M&E, documentation and learning components included throughout the project cycle.

The *Girls Not Brides* secretariat provided the six projects with financial support and technical assistance throughout implementation and follow-up.



PICTURED: A budget advocacy campaign poster produced by FACES, Pakistan. Photo: *Girls Not Brides*/FACES

6. LIMITATIONS OF PILOT FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This paper details a number of lessons learned that were collated through analysis across each of the six pilots designed and implemented by *Girls Not Brides* civil society member organisations. Each project was distinctive in terms of the focus, scope, budget lines and project targets the relevant organisation was seeking to influence within government. The projects were therefore adapted to the local context, and to different government budgeting and decision-making processes.

As a result, this paper provides an insight into diverse approaches and ways of influencing budget outcomes, it is not a comparative analysis or a systematic review. The short-term nature of the pilots and the light-touch evaluation means that it is not yet possible to draw conclusions on their long-term impact on government budgets and policies. The pilots were also funded by the *Girls Not Brides* secretariat, meaning that complete impartiality in reporting their work or analysis is not possible.

7. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE BUDGET ADVOCACY PILOTS

Lesson 1: Civil society organisations have a unique role in holding government to account for their budgetary commitments to address child marriage.

CSOs have a range of roles in this process: monitoring budgets and expenditure, advocating for budget transparency and accountability, acting as “watchdogs,” monitoring quality of service provision for girls – including in health, education and child protection-related systems and services – and engaging and mobilising other CSOs and young people in budgetary issues related to child marriage.

CSOs have a key value-add in budget advocacy work, in that they ensure that the technical budget data produced from a budget analysis is then used as part of a broader advocacy strategy to apply pressure

on governments to take action for girls, where other actors are unable to do so or lack the mandate to play a direct advocacy role. Equally, having a conversation with government officials that is based on credible evidence, hard budget data and a government’s own documents also moves the conversation between CSOs and government into a technical space of negotiation around the concrete “how to” of policy implementation.

However, limitations still exist in terms of the extent to which civil society can influence different stages of the budget cycle and the overall decision-making process. One recurring challenge is the general absence of information on budgetary issues – especially in accessible, non-technical forms – which can hinder CSO participation. The monopoly on budget information and processes ensures that budgetary matters remain a technical area of expertise planned and executed within government, with

relatively few clear entry points for informed civil society input. Finding opportunities for CSOs to effectively influence these processes remains a challenge.

Budgets and budgetary processes are often rigid and committed to fixed expenditures – such as government salaries or multi-year funded policies and programmes – and it can be difficult for CSOs to persuade government to allocate new expenditure for girls. Effectively advocating for increased budget allocation without affecting existing funding remains a challenge: how can CSOs advocate for child marriage-related budget lines without diverting funds from other no less deserving sectors or social issues? Within all budget advocacy efforts, it is critical that any budgetary “asks” for child marriage interventions should support and enrich other sectors and should not take existing resources away from other gender/social/sectoral budgets. A potential advocacy ask going forward could be to push for overall spending for social issues, or sectoral policies – in health and education, for example – that support girls and boys. This could help increase the overall envelope of public spending for gender and social welfare-related issues.

Lesson 2: Civil society must negotiate their role as both advocates and “encouraging friends” to government in their budget advocacy work.

In many contexts, CSOs have to constantly negotiate and balance their position between contributing to policy development and implementation, supporting service provision for girls – especially in resource-

“When engaging with a controversial issue like this [...] do not impose your views on what works best. Let it be more of a consultation and a collective effort between government and CSOs, and at times let the government dominate and share your proceedings on budget advocacy.”

KMYDO, Kilifi County, Kenya

poor contexts where government services may be inadequate or lacking – and as advocates holding government to account. They sometimes have to balance these different roles simultaneously. This means that when CSOs take on the alternate roles of service provider or policy developer, they may need to modify their approach and exercise both direct and indirect advocacy.

The reality of working at the sub-national level means that it may not be feasible for civil society to only take on a more outspoken or adversarial role in holding government to account. Their role as the “encouraging friend” of government – conducting quieter indirect advocacy – may be more effective for addressing child marriage and supporting adolescent girls. Civil society advocates and local government officials often work side-by-side – with collaborative, trusting and complementary relationships – to adapt the same national legal and policy frameworks for girls to the local level. Several of the pilots reported that it was important not to treat the government as an opponent and that – when working on a sensitive topic like child marriage and budgetary matters – it was critical to consult and work in partnership

with them. CSOs found that clarity in the different roles and responsibilities of government and civil society – and having a good relationship with government officials and parliamentarians – was critical to the success of their budget advocacy work.

Lesson 3: Strong relationships between civil society and key stakeholders – government officials, parliamentarians, other civil society organisations, the media, community leaders and young people – are key to budget advocacy success.

These relationships are critical in terms of what CSOs are able to do with the data gathered from budget analyses. Examples of these working relationships include:

- **Relationships with other CSOs:** The ability to connect with other CSOs working on child marriage was important for the validation of budget data and findings and the formulation of collectively-agreed budget asks for government. In Sindh, Pakistan, strong pre-existing relationships between CSOs working on child marriage meant they were able to collectively validate the findings of the budget analysis, which reviewed expenditure for the implementation of the provincial law to ban child marriage. Strong relationships between CSOs can also provide access to wider networks of women and young people, meaning that budget data can be used as part of a broader advocacy campaign to end child marriage. Thanks to these

relationships, if one CSO produces credible budget data, other CSOs and activists can trust and use it in their own advocacy.

- **Relationships with the media:** The media is an important ally in reaching target audiences – such as policy-makers – and also for mobilising larger constituencies on budget issues. It is important that they are viewed as a partner and not only a mouthpiece for a CSO's work. This is critical because it helps the media to see a CSO as a trusted source and partner, in turn making it more likely that they cover the relevant policy issue favourably. Like CSOs, the media can also act as watchdogs on budget advocacy issues. They can help ensure that policymakers focus on child marriage when they are overwhelmed with policy asks from different stakeholders. Following their budget analysis, Peace Foundation held a press conference with the Karachi media to help explain the policy implications of their budget data to the public in Sindh province, Pakistan. This was then reported on in multiple newspapers, on the radio and on social media.



PICTURED: Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Ada Nwoye, being interviewed by Enugu State Broadcasting Service, Nigeria.
Photo: Girls Not Brides/SIRP

- **Relationships with parliamentarians:** Engaging parliamentarians can be a critical part of budget advocacy, as they will in turn influence the executive on policy and budgetary issues. Depending on the country context and extent to which parliamentarians have power over public budgets, civil society can play a key role in briefing parliamentarians on child marriage issues, increasing their awareness on child marriage, bringing policy content into parliamentary debates and working groups, and preparing policy briefs and analyses for them.⁸
- **Relationships with young people:** Developing young people’s capacity to meaningfully participate in budget decisions and processes helps ensure that adolescent girls’ voices and priorities are not forgotten or ignored in national and sub-national budgets and planning. It is often the poorest and most marginalised who are most affected by a government’s budgetary decisions (or macroeconomic factors like low economic growth or inflation). Many girls at risk of child marriage – and married girls – are trapped in a cycle of poverty. They are often among the most vulnerable populations, invisible to decision-makers – with their specific needs masked by broader gender or child rights budgets – and severely impacted by budget decisions. Working with young people – especially adolescent girls – and providing spaces and entry points for their meaningful input is therefore critical to any CSO’s budget advocacy.

“We work hard on the participation of children and adolescents, it’s been hard but we’re getting it in the system. [We engage in] political dialogue behind the scenes.”

Melel Xojobal A.C., in interview with OMM in Mexico

- **Relationships with community leaders and gatekeepers:** The diversity of stakeholders involved in budget advocacy can be overwhelming. All six pilots showed the importance of engaging and involving a range of community stakeholders in budget advocacy work to ensure their buy-in and support. This may include religious and traditional leaders, teachers, the police and judiciary, political leaders, parents and other stakeholders who may have significant influence at the sub-national level on government budget decisions.

Lesson 4: Budget advocacy on child marriage helps lift the political profile of the issue at the sub-national level.

Specific budget advocacy on child marriage helps raise its political profile to local government and other actors, where it might be masked by wider child protection and gender issues. In Kilifi County, Kenya, KMYDO’s budget advocacy highlighted to the County Government the need for

⁸ More information on engaging parliamentarians to end child marriage on the *Girls Not Brides* [website](#).

research and a situation analysis on child marriage to help plug knowledge gaps regarding its prevalence and hotspots in the county. The County Government was also encouraged to link child marriage interventions to other sector-related policies for girls, such as the existing strategy on adolescent pregnancy. In this respect, CSOs are well placed to help share case studies and real-life examples of the effects of budgetary decisions on girls, and can highlight the impact of child marriage on girls to different government departments and sectors.

In some project contexts, the implementing organisation had not previously worked with the government on either budget advocacy or child marriage. Sensitisation and basic awareness-raising of the drivers and impact of child marriage on girls, families and communities was therefore an important aspect of their work. This helped increase government awareness of the multi-sectoral nature of child marriage and their role in ending the practice within their own agency's mandate.



PICTURED: Group work with the Frameworks for Consultation of Child Protection Actors in Togo. Photo: *Girls Not Brides/RELUTET*

Lesson 5: A solid budget analysis is a powerful tool that complements other advocacy strategies. Civil society must leverage technical expertise to conduct budget analyses and ensure budget advocacy is supported by strong data.

The pilots demonstrated that budget analysis is a key tool for effective budget advocacy, but should not be seen as a stand-alone strategy or end goal in itself. Budget analysis helps form the evidence base for advocacy asks and shape the arguments needed to advance policy objectives. This budget analysis information can be used in tandem with other advocacy strategies: mobilising citizens – including young people – on budget issues; working with parliamentarians to push for budget-related decisions to be passed; working with the media to highlight weaknesses, bottlenecks and wastage in existing public budgets; working with oversight institutions that monitor expenditure and act as watchdogs on public financial management processes; and advocating for public access to budget-related information and documents.

The pilots showed the value of civil society having concrete budget data to refer to when working with government officials. Having tangible data and a specific ask related to a budget line or sectoral plan helps to articulate a clear and detailed advocacy ask for government. This moves the conversation on from civil society demanding that government “end child marriage” in generic and ideological terms, to a more detailed and technical discussion about the “how-to” of ending child marriage.

The pilots indicated that it is also important to choose one specific sector, system/service for adolescent girls or law to focus on for the budget analysis, rather than trying to analyse all budget lines for all possible child marriage interventions at once. For civil society, prioritising certain child marriage interventions can be challenging, as ending child marriage ultimately requires a multi-sectoral and holistic approach. However, the reality is that civil society cannot analyse or advocate to all sectors and actors for all child marriage interventions at once, so this sectoral prioritisation is an important aspect to understand before undertaking a budget analysis.

The lack of available gender-disaggregated data on adolescent girls or child marriage at the sub-national level is a challenge, as this data and information can inform decisions for developing, planning and implementing

gender-responsive budgets. Government officials in several of the pilots recognised this scarcity of data and proposed research and situation analyses on the prevalence of child marriage within their jurisdiction. Data gaps therefore also present an opportunity for governments to commit and take action to fill data gaps, where they exist.

The capacity to carry out a budget analysis is a scarce resource in most CSO environments, but there are gatekeepers and partners who can support the production of a solid budget analysis. While CSOs should not be scared of engaging in the technical and analytical aspects of budget advocacy, all CSOs cannot be expected to have the expertise needed to conduct an in-house budget analysis. However, all CSOs can partner with technical experts and organisations with the necessary expertise.

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Advocating for a more equitable distribution of budgetary allocations in the education, health and social protection sectors, with special consideration of the girl child.

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Gender Responsive Budgeting

Take a stand and join our campaign to end child marriage in Punjab, Pakistan.

Advocating for a more equitable distribution of budgetary allocations in the education, health and social protection sectors, with special consideration of the girl child.

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EDUCATION

Currently, 22.8 million children (between 5-16 years) are out of school in Pakistan with greater percentage of 49 per cent girls and 40 per cent boys.

Gender inequality is more visible through the chart that demonstrates the enrolment across gender and levels of education.

Despite this, we see that while the amount of spending on Education on the provincial level may have increased, an in-depth analysis shows that the Education budget, as a percentage of total spending, has in fact decreased.

For 2019-20 the allocation for education is 16.64 per cent of the total budget of the province. In October 2018, when the mini budget was presented Rs.373 billion was allocated for education in Punjab out of the total budget of Rs 2,026.51 billion, making it 18.4% of the total budget; it was initially 17.9% of the total budget.

Budget tracking exercises over the past couple of years reveal patterns of under-spending for both the recurrent and development expenditure in all the provinces. Between 2010-11 and 2013-14, 9% to 13% of the Punjab's education budget remained unspent. In absolute terms, this ranges between US\$10 million to US\$270 million. This money could support 1.1 million to 1.5 million.

Education is one of the most powerful tools available to prevent and respond to child marriage thus sufficient allocations within the budget must be made.

PICTURED: Budget advocacy campaign in Pakistan, supported by FACES's budget analysis data. Photo: Girls Not Brides/ FACES

Who can CSOs work with to conduct a budget analysis?

The “gatekeepers” – individuals, organisations, institutions and government entities – that CSOs can work with include:

- **Individuals:** Academics with backgrounds in economics, social policy, gender-responsive budgeting and public financial management; sectoral financing experts (eg, from health, education and social protection); auditors (as they often understand the financial and public budgeting processes of government).
- **Organisations and networks:** Think tanks focusing on public policy, social policy, or public finance; UNICEF (Social Policy sections); UN Women (strong history in gender-responsive budgeting work); INGOs with expertise in gender-responsive budgeting/public financing/transparency and corruption issues (eg, Transparency International); International Monetary Fund; World Bank; International Budget Partnership and their partners at the national level with expertise in budget advocacy; public finance/budget advocacy networks; private firms with expertise in public financial management and processes (eg, KPMG or PWC); media networks interested in budgets; organisations working on sectoral financing related to child marriage (eg, FP2020 or education financing).
- **Institutions:** University departments with expertise in Public Financial Management, Economics, Taxation, Public Policy or Social Policy; national human rights institutions (that provide oversight to public financial management processes).
- **Government:** Tax offices; national statistical offices; technical working groups within ministries and departments responsible for budgeting, costing and planning; parliamentarians; Ministry of Planning (or equivalent); Ministry of Finance.

By working in partnership with such gatekeepers, CSOs can combine an in-depth knowledge of their key policy issue with a solid knowledge of budgets to produce an effective advocacy strategy and positively influence public budget decisions.

Lesson 6: Budget advocacy is not a one-off – it is a long-term process with which to engage as part of a broader advocacy plan.

The short three-month duration of the pilots showed that it is possible to get some quick wins in budget advocacy – for example, through changes to specific budget line items or efficiencies in spending or service provision for girls. However, it is also important to see budget advocacy as just one tool within the wider advocacy toolbox, and to recognise that it requires sustained advocacy efforts to structurally shift policies and budgets for girls. In the Kenya and Nigeria projects, where substantial budget commitments for girls were made, the next challenge is to follow up on whether the government delivers on their budget commitment in practice.

There is also a big question around the planned follow-up of a budget analysis. Budget analyses may reveal potentially powerful evidence for advocacy – huge gaps in data and research, comparably low expenditure levels, poor service provision and even corruption – but such information is of little use unless it is linked to a longer-term advocacy plan with a clear idea of how the evidence will be used to influence budgets and related policy processes.

For civil society organisations which are also part of broader CSO coalitions and networks, and have strong allies within government, the media, UN agencies and donors, there is also a potential question around the role they should play in influencing the “bigger picture” and more structural change within governments’ budgetary and decision-making processes.

8. CONCLUSION

This discussion paper shares key lessons learned from six pilot projects on budget advocacy to end child marriage. It informs an emerging area of work in the global movement to end child marriage: how to hold governments accountable for the implementation of national policies and programmes that prevent and respond to child marriage across sectors and at different levels. Within this, it also considers how to influence public budgets and mobilise a government’s domestic resources to ensure implementation efforts reach the local level – and especially the girls – that need them most.

A number of key lessons are highlighted throughout the paper, such as the importance of having a solid and credible

budget analysis to inform broader advocacy efforts, and the way that successful budget advocacy hinges on strong relationships between stakeholders – including the government, CSOs, the media, parliamentarians, communities and, of course, girls. It also considers how budget advocacy cannot be viewed as a one-off intervention – it is a long-term process and a tool to use within a larger toolbox of advocacy strategies.

However, the most important takeaway from these findings is the critical and unique role that CSOs can play in budget advocacy, in holding governments to account for their budgetary commitments to address child marriage. CSOs can work as partners and as advocates to

governments and other stakeholders to ensure that public budgets reflect the needs

of – and work to empower – adolescent girls and address child marriage.



PICTURED: Participants in a State/Public Dialogue on Budget Advocacy in Enugu State, Nigeria.
Photo: *Girls Not Brides/SIRP*

9. ANNEX: PROJECT PILOT CASE STUDIES

Project 1: Implementing a gender-responsive budgeting approach in the Enugu and Nsukka zones of Enugu State, Nigeria

Girls Not Brides member organisation: Society for the Improvement of Rural People (SIRP)

Pilot funding amount: US\$8,330

1. National context

A total of 43% of girls in Nigeria are married before the age of 18 and 16% before turning 15.⁹ Child marriage is most common in the North West and North East of the country, where up to 68% of women aged 20-49 were child brides.¹⁰ Child marriage is most common among Nigeria's poorest, rural households.¹¹ Ending child marriage could generate an additional US\$7.6 billion in earnings and productivity in the country.¹²

In 2016 the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development launched a National Strategy to End Child Marriage.¹³ The strategy's vision is to reduce child marriage by 40% by 2020 and end the practice entirely by 2030, and is one of the key policy frameworks used by SIRP to hold government accountable in this project.

2. Project summary

In this project, SIRP worked to institutionalise a gender-responsive budgeting approach to preparing annual budgets in the Enugu and Nsukka zones of Enugu State in Nigeria. They worked to

direct budgetary allocations towards interventions that support adolescent girls and address child marriage in the 2020 Enugu State Budget.

SIRP used key policy frameworks to strengthen accountability systems and increase financing. These were the National Gender Policy Strategic Framework (Implementation Plan) 2008-13, the National Strategy to End Child Marriage 2016-21, enforcement of the Enugu State Child Rights Law 2004 and Violence Against Persons Prohibition Bill 2019.

3. SIRP worked with

- Ministry of Gender and Social Development
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Budget and Planning
- Members of the legislature and judiciary
- Civil society organisations (CSO)
- The media

⁹ National Population Commission (NPC) and ICF, [Nigeria demographic and health survey 2018](#), 2019.

¹⁰ National Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF, [Multiple indicator cluster survey 2016-17: Survey findings report](#), 2017.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² World Bank and International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), [Economic impacts of child marriage: Work, earnings and household welfare brief](#), 2017.

¹³ Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, [National strategy to end child marriage in Nigeria \(2016-2021\)](#), 2016.

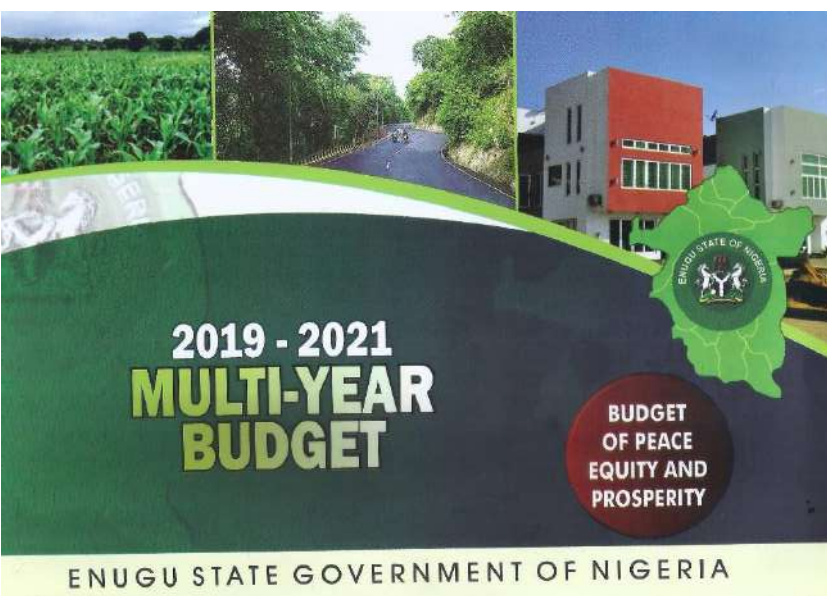
4. SIRP's achievements

- **Budget lines that support adolescent girls and address child marriage are institutionalised within the 2020 Enugu State Budget, with approximately US\$6.8 million allocated to:**
 - Child/social protection
 - Primary school completion for girls
 - Reduction of gender disparity and increase of (girls') secondary school attendance
 - Provision of sanitary pads to girls and young women
- **The body of Permanent Secretaries officially committed to gender-responsive budgeting as a framework for the state annual budget, beginning in 2020.** They will:
 - Promote gender mainstreaming by considering revenue raising and spending
 - Analyse the budget's gender-differentiated impacts

- Adjust budgetary decisions and priorities according to the different needs of girls, boys, women and men

This was achieved thanks to trainings with 50 policymakers and government officials, and a State Dialogue on gender-responsive budgeting with members of the executive, legislature, judiciary, CSOs and the media. The official commitment resulted from a training for Permanent Secretaries and Senior Budget Officers on how to prepare a gender mainstreamed Budget Call Circular.

- **The media and civil society have greater knowledge of the key policy issues affecting a government's budgetary decisions and are able to influence this at the state level.** They are also more aware of the role they play in monitoring government expenditure and can flag up misspending via elected members of the Enugu State House of Assembly, the media and public mobilisation. This was achieved through training on gender-responsive budgeting.
- **Relationships between SIRP and the Ministries of Budget and Planning, Education and Gender Affairs are stronger and dedicated to gender-responsive budgeting from 2020.** A WhatsApp group was set up for government and non-state actors to share information on global best practices and resources on gender-responsive budgeting and child marriage.
- **A committee headed and convened by Mrs. Peace Nnaji – the Honourable Commissioner for Gender Affairs – will develop a framework to enforce the Enugu State Child Rights Law and Enugu State Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law.** These two statutes



PICTURED: Enugu State Budget 2019-21 now includes budget lines that support adolescent girls and address child marriage.
Photo: *Girls Not Brides/SIRP*

criminalise all forms of gender-based violence.

5. Key findings

- **Child marriage interventions should be linked and costed to a programme and budget.** It can be more effective to work with state actors to agree a few key intervention areas in different sectors. In the Enugu State 2020 Budget, SIRP influenced the linking of budget lines on “Child Protection” and “Completion of Primary School Education” for girls under the functional and programmatic budget classifications of the Gender and Education Ministries’ budgets.
- **A systems approach supports advocacy for public spending on gender/social welfare issues like child marriage.** This is because social issues related to child protection and child marriages are often incorrectly conceptualised and budgeted for, if at all. In the Enugu State 2020 Budget, SIRP ensured the adoption of a systems approach by providing budget line items for the social/child protection sectors.
- **Advocacy should go beyond budget allocation to address child marriage.** In implementing the pilot project, SIRP deepened their understanding of the complexity of budgeting to end child marriage, particularly in:
 - Challenging and influencing policies and budgets at the state (sub-national) level.
 - Advocating not just for more resources, but for a more gender-equitable and efficient use of those resources.
 - Advocating for resources within and across sectors, and for child protection and education for girls.
 - Improving government transparency and accountability and citizen-led participatory budgeting processes.
 - Influencing decision-making processes in public budgets – both those on paper, and the “behind the scenes” informal decision-making processes.
- **CSOs can connect budget numbers with real-life stories to build an investment case for action on child marriage.** Statistics, cost of inaction and economic arguments alone do not and cannot convince governments to take action on child marriage.

“We shared stories and experiences of a number of girl child school dropouts in the 17 local government councils of Enugu State [...] due to poverty, lack of access to school facilities, patriarchy and the consequent result of forced and early marriage for these young girls [...] We painted a scenario of the impact of the practices of child marriage on the girl child, and in that way we were able to secure approval of State actors.”

Dr. Christopher Ugwu, SIRP

Project 2. A gender-responsive budget advocacy campaign to end child marriage in Punjab Province, Pakistan

Girls Not Brides member organisation: Formation, Awareness and Community Empowerment Society (FACES)

Pilot funding amount: US\$7,831

1. National context

A total of 18% of girls in Pakistan are married before the age of 18 and almost 4% are married before 15.¹⁴ Child marriage is more prevalent in rural areas.¹⁵ Ending child marriage could see a 13% rise in earnings and productivity for Pakistani women who married early.¹⁶

Under the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 the minimum legal age of marriage is 16 for girls and 18 for boys. In 2019, a Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Bill was passed in the Pakistani Senate to increase the minimum age of marriage for girls to 18 years. Religious political parties in Pakistan opposed the bill, claiming it to be against Islam, and recommended that it be sent to the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) before being discussed in the Senate. However, the bill was passed by the Senate and awaits debate in the National Assembly.

Child marriage has become a provincial issue since many powers were decentralised to the provinces and territories in 2010. The Punjab Government has proposed a bill to amend the age of marriage from 16 to 18 years (a bill introducing harsher penalties for marriage before 16 has already been adopted), and other provinces have proposed similar amendments (Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). In Sindh province, the

minimum age of marriage for girls and boys is 18, as defined by the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act.

2. Project summary

In this project, FACES delivered a gender-responsive budget advocacy campaign to address child marriage in Punjab province. They wanted to ensure that key sectoral departments of Punjab's provincial government – the education, health and child protection sectors – were incorporating child marriage and gender equality issues for adolescent girls into their budgeting and planning processes. FACES focused on three main components:

- **Budget analysis:** FACES carried out a gender-responsive analysis of Punjab's health, education and child protection budgets for 2019-20.
- **Budget advocacy campaign:** FACES called for more gender-responsive provincial sectoral budgets in health education and child protection, taking into account the needs of adolescent girls.
- **Budget commitments from government:** FACES worked with key stakeholders in government to create a

¹⁴ National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS) and ICF, [Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18](#), 2019.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ World Bank and ICRW, op. cit.

set of commitments on how they would incorporate budgetary changes on spending for women and girls into the sectoral budgets of the health, education and child protection sectors.

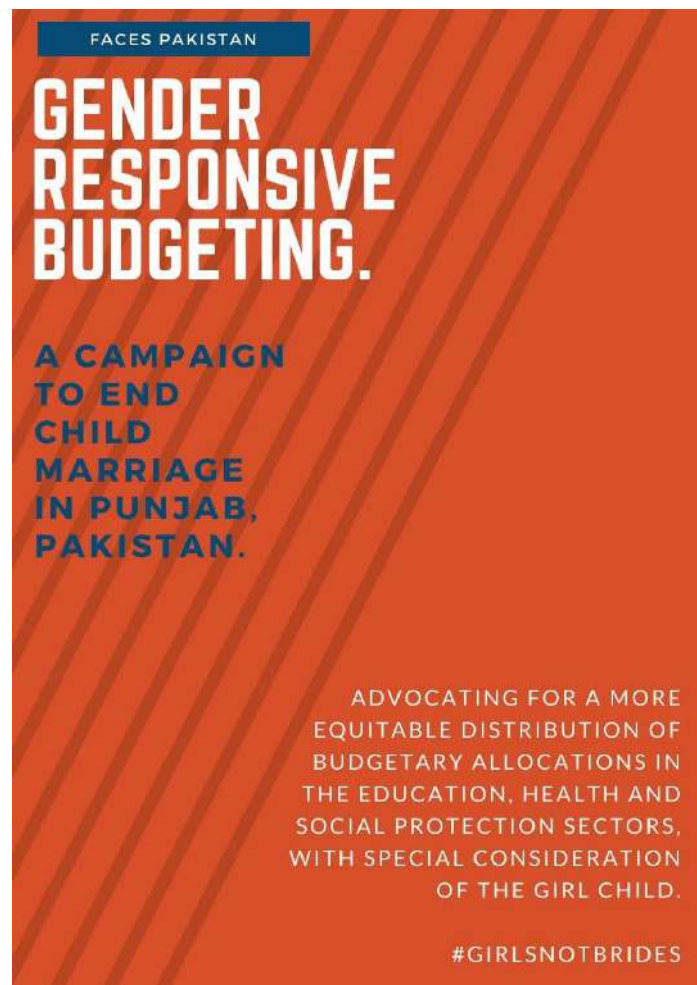
3. **FACES worked with**

Through the project, FACES directly engaged 75 targeted stakeholders including:

- Government officials directly involved in budgeting processes
- Parliamentarians, particularly women and those who represent parliamentary committees
- Political leaders involved in provincial budgeting processes
- The media
- Other civil society organisations
- Academic representatives

4. **FACES's achievements**

- **FACES used their budget analysis to increase awareness of existing gender inequalities in the provincial budget** among key government officials, parliamentarians, civil society, the media and academia in the education, health and child protection sectors. They did this through a campaign, meetings and dialogues. FACES also increased awareness among targeted stakeholders of the importance of using a gender lens in policy formulation, planning and resource allocation.
- **Government stakeholders committed to increasing gender-responsive budget allocations and spending for women and girls** in the



PICTURED: A campaign for gender-responsive budgeting run by FACES. Photo: *Girls Not Brides/FACES*

health, education and child protection sectoral budgets. This was in response to:

- FACES's budget advocacy campaign strategy and materials, sectoral policy briefs, presentations of the sectoral budget analyses, calendar and other campaign materials.
- Events and dialogues with stakeholders, including a Budget Advocacy Workshop and Dialogue, and consultative sessions with parliamentarians and government officials.

- **A multi-agency taskforce is planned for the upcoming budget to increase inter-departmental coordination.** It will be comprised of 10 provincial members from key sectoral departments including the Department of Human Rights and Minority Affairs, Punjab Treaty Implementation Cell, Women Development Department, Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, Planning and Development Board, FACES Pakistan, Health Department and parliamentarians.
- **Girls and women should be involved to ensure their needs are included in budgets.** Girls' and women's voices are largely missing from planning and budgeting processes. Strategies that include them need to be put in place. Examples include assigning a designated focal person from each sectoral department to liaise with girls and women, or to include a girls' and women's representative on the government's inter-departmental taskforce.

5. Key findings

- **There are many cost-effective actions governments can take to make their budgets more gender-responsive without additional financial resources.** They can often be technically incorporated into planning and budgeting processes, and institutionalised using existing resources.
- **Gender-disaggregated data is critical to good budgeting for girls.** There are many data gaps on adolescent girls' needs within the education, health and child protection sectors in Punjab. Improved gender-disaggregated data and information can inform decisions for developing, planning and implementing gender-responsive budgets. This is key to meeting the needs of married and at-risk girls.
- **Government transparency and accountability is an ongoing issue.** Government structures in Punjab need reform to ensure that funds allocated to gender-related budgets for girls and women are being used for their intended purpose and are not transferred elsewhere. Provincial government departments should provide quarterly updates on budget allocations received and spent, to improve accountability. All budget data should be accessible to the public at all times.
- **A budget analysis is a useful tool for starting conversations with key stakeholders.** An analysis will provide information about gaps and opportunities that will underpin concrete budget advocacy goals. It is also a useful tool to convene stakeholders for discussion and decision-making about specific actions.

Project 3: Budget advocacy for implementation of district-level monitoring committees to end child marriage and to fund Women's Safe Houses to support married girls in Sindh Province, Pakistan

Girls Not Brides member organisation: Peace Foundation

Pilot funding amount: US\$4,766

1. National context

A total of 18% of girls in Pakistan are married before the age of 18 and almost 4% are married before 15.¹⁷ Child marriage is more prevalent in rural areas.¹⁸ Ending child marriage could see a 13% rise in earnings and productivity for Pakistani women who married early.¹⁹

Under the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 the minimum legal age of marriage is 16 for girls and 18 for boys. In 2019, a Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Bill was passed in the Pakistani Senate to increase the minimum age of marriage for girls to 18 years. Pakistan religious political parties opposed the bill, claiming it to be against Islam, and recommended that it be sent to the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) before being discussed in the Senate. However, the bill was passed by the Senate and awaits debate in the National Assembly.

Child marriage has become a provincial issue since many powers were decentralised to the provinces and territories in 2010. The Punjab Government has proposed a bill to amend the age of marriage from 16 to 18 years (a bill introducing harsher penalties for marriage before 16 has already been adopted), and other provinces have proposed similar amendments (Balochistan

and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). In Sindh province, the minimum age of marriage for girls and boys is 18, as defined by the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act.

2. Project summary

In this project, Peace Foundation focused on ensuring financial resources were allocated for the implementation of specific provisions of the Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act 2016 and the Hindu Marriage Act 2017, including district-level monitoring committees. They also carried out budget advocacy for the funding of Women's Safe Houses at the district level in Sindh. They used three strategies in their budget advocacy:

- Advocate and push for the establishment of district-level monitoring committees and ensure they can oversee the implementation of existing legislation prohibiting child marriage in Sindh. These committees are currently non-functional due to a lack of budget allocation for their operation. Peace Foundation sensitised and mobilised community members, police and nikah registrars (who solemnise marriages), helping them understand their function in addressing child marriage.

¹⁷ National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS) and ICF, op. cit.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ World Bank and International Center for Research on Women, op. cit.

- Advocate for Women's Safe Houses in all districts to have sufficient resources in the 2019-20 provincial budget to assist child brides in accessing shelter, health services and psychosocial and legal support.
- Support CSOs in conducting evidence-based budget advocacy using the Peace Foundation analysis, including advocacy for funding district-level monitoring committees and Women's Safe Houses.

3. Peace Foundation worked with

- Planning and Development Division
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Social Welfare
- Child Protection Authority
- Population Welfare Department
- Commission on the Status of Women
- Prison Department
- UN Women provincial office
- Parliamentarians
- Police Government
- Religious leaders (Muslim and non-Muslim leaders who solemnise marriages)
- Union Council Secretaries (who keep records of birth and marriage registration)
- Twelve *Girls Not Brides* member organisations in Sindh

4. Peace Foundation's achievements

- **There is a larger evidence base for CSOs to advocate for Sindh provincial budget allocation for implementing the Child Marriage Restraint Act and Hindu Marriage Act.** Peace Foundation produced a report with budget allocation

recommendations for provincial officials to address child marriage. The validation and dissemination of this analysis provided a first opportunity for stakeholders to come together and consider budget allocation and resourcing for Women's Safe Houses, Women's Police Stations and the role of the Sindh Child Protection Authority and District Monitoring Committees.

- **Collective work and advocacy by *Girls Not Brides* members in Sindh has improved, and there is renewed enthusiasm and engagement with diverse stakeholders on addressing child marriage at the district level.** This was demonstrated through the validation of the budget analysis – an important step in securing buy-in from stakeholders, and consensus over the credibility of the findings. This was achieved through a fact-sharing and validation workshop with 74 stakeholders. Participants were diverse and comprised of children and adolescents from Sindh, 12 *Girls Not Brides* member organisations, representatives from the Human Rights Commission, Commission on the Status of Women, UN Women provincial office, Population Welfare Department, Women Development Department, Social Welfare Department, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Information Department, Agriculture Department, Education Department and Labour Department.
- **Awareness of the gaps in resourcing for the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act and Hindu Marriage Act has increased.** This is thanks to sharing the budget analysis with a diverse range of stakeholders.

- Two hundred hard copies of the report were sent to key stakeholders in Sindh, including the Chief Minister of Sindh, Minister for Finance, Interior Minister, Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Speaker of Sindh Assembly, Chief Secretary of Sindh, Secretary of Finance, Governor of Sindh, Leader of Opposition in Sindh Assembly (Shehla Raza), Minister for Women Development, and a Member of the National Assembly (Shamim Ara Panhwar).
- Five *Girls Not Brides* member organisations hosted a press conference with the Karachi Press Club to share the budget analysis data with the media, including five television networks and 11 newspapers. The press conference resulted in nine news articles on the budget analysis.
- **Key stakeholders are more aware of the impact of budget decisions on adolescent girls.** Civil society pressure and advocacy to government and parliamentarians – to ensure the budget analysis findings are converted into action – has also demonstrably increased. Peace Foundation helped form a pressure group to influence government budget allocations, and organised meetings with CSOs and female Provincial Assembly members to come together and work for women’s rights in Sindh.

PICTURED: A gender-responsive budgeting workshop run by Peace Foundation.
Photo: *Girls Not Brides*/Peace Foundation



5. Key findings

- **A budget analysis and its dissemination can help *Girls Not Brides* member organisations work together and advocate collectively.** The budget analysis, report and associated activities for sharing data – such as the validation workshop and press conference – helped to connect Peace Foundation with 12 other *Girls Not Brides* member organisations in Sindh, and resulted in them working collectively around a common advocacy objective.
- **Solid budget data helps CSOs conduct evidence-based budget advocacy, which in turn helps governments make evidence-based budget decisions to support girls and women.** Concrete information on provincial budgets and processes produced by the budget analysis helped Peace Foundation and other *Girls Not Brides* members conduct evidence-based budget advocacy. Knowing about the budget process, tracking and expenditure – and how best to influence the process at different points in the budget cycle – was useful for tracking and analysing existing budget allocation and expenditure. It also helped to calculate estimates for the resources needed to run District Monitoring Committees and Women’s Safe Houses.

Project 4: Linda Mtoto (Protect a Child), Kilifi County, Kenya

Girls Not Brides member organisation: Kenya Muslim Youth Development Organisation (KMYDO)

Pilot funding amount: US\$7,500

1. National context

A total of 23% of Kenyan girls are married before the age of 18 and 4% before 15.²⁰ Child marriage rates in the country vary across regions and among ethnic groups, and is most common in North Eastern Province (56%), followed by the Coast Province (41%) and Nyanza (32%).²¹

Child marriage in Kenya is exacerbated by poverty, level of education, natural disasters, conflict and displacement, other harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), beading and bride price,²² adolescent pregnancy, and poor awareness and enforcement of laws.²³

The Marriage Act 2014 sets the minimum legal age of marriage at 18 years with no exceptions.²⁴ The Gender Department and Anti-FGM Board within the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender led the development of a draft National Plan of Action on Child Marriage in 2016, but this is still under development.

2. Project summary

In the Linda Mtoto project, KMYDO worked to increase the County Government of Kilifi's 2020-21 budget to address child marriage. They did this by:

- Influencing the costed annual work plan of the Department of Gender, Social Services, Culture and Sports and the Department of Youth Affairs to feed into the County Fiscal Strategy Paper
- Prioritising child marriage in other related planning and budget documents
- Supporting a pool of dedicated advocates to promote budgets that address child marriage. This included facilitating budget advocacy meetings with the Ministry and County Assembly Budget Committee and influencing budget advocacy discussions during public forums.

3. KMYDO worked with

- Government officials involved in planning and budgeting processes of the Department of Gender, Social Services, Culture and Sports, Department of Youth Affairs - County Government of Kilifi
- Ministry of Planning
- Ministry of Health
- County Assembly Budget Committee
- Civil society organisations (CSO)

²⁰ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, [Demographic and Health Survey 2014](#), 2015.

²¹ UNICEF, [Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Kenya 2017](#), 2018. ²¹ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, [Demographic and Health Survey 2014](#), 2015.

²² UN CEDAW, [Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Kenya](#), 2017, p.5.

²³ UNICEF, [Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Kenya 2017](#), 2018, <https://www.unicef.org/kenya/media/136/file/SITAN-report-2017-pdf.pdf>

²⁴ [Marriage Act, 2014](#), https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/The-MARRIAGE-ACT-2014_Kenya.pdf

4. KMYDO's achievements

- **Child marriage was prioritised in county budget and planning documents** and the general attitudes and behaviours of government officials towards adolescent girls and child marriage has changed. This was due to meetings and workshops with government stakeholders to orient and sensitise partners to the project aims; workshops with ministry officials to develop, peer review and finalise the annual work plan; and budget advocacy meetings between ministries and the County Assembly Budget Committee.
- **Tangible costed budget lines to address child marriage were included in the Kilifi County annual work plan** and will be submitted to the Ministry of Planning for inclusion in the County Fiscal Strategy Paper for the 2020-21 county budget. The two costed activity lines on ending child marriage are:
 - County campaign on ending child marriage (estimated cost: 7 million Kenya shillings, KSh). This will sensitise 10,500 girls, boys, women and men (100 per ward) to the effects of child marriage in order to reduce the number of cases, and increase reporting and responses.
 - Development and dissemination of a county strategy to end child marriage (estimated cost: KSh7 million). This will sensitise 7,500 girls, boys, men and women (100 per ward) to the strategy.

5. Key findings

- **Project orientation meetings were extremely important to sensitise stakeholders to the issue of child marriage, its impacts and consequences, and to debunk myths and stereotypes related to the practice.** This was particularly useful for government officials who may have been hearing about child marriage for the first time. They were also useful for highlighting the links between child marriage and related issues for adolescent girls – such as adolescent pregnancy – in the county. The orientation meetings were also critical for getting everyone on board to ensure partnership and collaboration from the beginning.
- **Shining a light on child marriage helps to raise its profile where it may otherwise be invisible among wider child protection and gender issues.** KMYDO's specific focus on child marriage increased the likelihood of it being addressed in the annual work plan. It also highlighted the need for more research and information on child marriage in Kilifi County, evidenced by calls from within and outside government for a study to highlight the prevalence and hotspots of the practice.
- **Linking child marriage to other issues affecting adolescent girls (and vice versa) can open doors and increase awareness of the multi-sectoral nature of child marriage.** Prior to the project, the Kilifi County Government had an adolescent pregnancy strategy that was not linked to any child marriage issues. By using data and human stories, KMYDO was able to make this link and the government realised they should be

looking at the two issues and strategies in an interconnected way.

- **CSOs can partner with government for budget advocacy success.** It is important for CSOs to work collaboratively and in partnership with government on a sensitive topic like child marriage.
- **CSOs can link girls' lived experiences to budgets.** CSOs can share case studies and real-life examples of the effects of budget decisions on girls, and can highlight the impacts to different government sectors. This can put them in

a credible position to recommend the prioritisation of different budgets to government.

“When engaging with a controversial issue like this one [...] do not impose your views on what works best. Let it be more of a consultation and a collective effort between government and CSOs.”

KMYDO

Project 5: Child protection through budget advocacy to end child marriage in the communes of Est-Mono and Anié, Togo

Girls Not Brides member organisation: Réseau de Lutte contre la Traite des Enfants au Togo (RELUTET) on behalf of the Coalition pour la Fin du Mariage des Enfants au Togo (CFME-T)

Pilot funding amount: US\$9,951

1. National context

A total of [22%](#) of girls in Togo are married before the age of 18 and [6%](#) are married before 15.²⁵ Child marriage in Togo is driven by level of education and poverty, and is linked to harmful traditional practices and ideas of “family honour.” Forced marriage is [common](#) in the northern part of Togo and the Vogan region.²⁶ Virginity is highly valued and parents may marry their daughters early for fear of them becoming pregnant.

Under the Code of the Child 2007, the [minimum legal age of marriage](#) is 18 years. However, marriage at 16 is possible if there is serious cause and judicial and parental consent.²⁷ In terms of policy frameworks, the Togolese Ministries of Education, Gender and Health developed a National Programme against Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy (2015-19), which focuses on providing social protection to girls who are married as children.

RELUTET, Réseau des Organisations pour la Lutte contre la Maltraitance, l’Abus et l’Exploitation Sexuelle des Enfants (ROMAESE), and the BorneFonden led the

formation of a national coalition to end child marriage (the CFME-T) in 2017.

2. Project summary

In this project, RELUTET strengthened child protection outcomes in Togo through budget advocacy to end child marriage. They implemented the project in the two communes of Est-Mono and Anié on behalf of the CFME-T. RELUTET built on work the coalition had already completed in seven communes, and focused on:

- Advocacy and capacity building for local communal authorities to integrate child protection budget lines into communal budgets
- Promoting the agency of young people and civil society in those communes to gain knowledge of child rights-sensitive budgeting and to hold local authorities accountable with regards child protection-related budget lines, including on child marriage

²⁵ Ministère de la Planification, du Développement et de l’Aménagement du Territoire, Ministère de la Santé et ICF International, [Enquête démographique et de santé au Togo 2013-2014](#), 2015.

²⁶ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, [Togo: Forced marriage, particularly in Lomé, including its prevalence, the](#)

[consequences of a refusal, and the treatment by society and the government of women who refuse a forced marriage; state protection and services](#), 2013.

²⁷ OECD Social Institutions & Gender Index, [Togo](#), 2014.

3. CFME-T worked with:

- Municipal authorities, mayors and elected officials
- Child protection actors
- Prefectural Children's Advisory Councils (the main body for strengthening the participation of children in monitoring actions relating to children's rights in Togo)
- Children and young people who are members of Prefectural Children's Advisory Councils
- Togo coalition civil society organisations (CSO)

4. CFME-T's achievements

- **Municipal authorities and local elected officials in two municipalities have greater knowledge of child protection frameworks and have action plans for developing child-sensitive budgets that address child marriage.** This resulted from:
 - Training for 29 municipal authorities in Anié commune to build their capacity to prepare municipal budgets that address child marriage. Participants included mayors and municipal councillors responsible for defining actions and budgets in their respective territories.
 - Training for 20 child protection actors on budget advocacy to end child marriage. The training covered the municipal budget development process, responsibilities of child protection actors, and advocacy and budget monitoring techniques.
- Municipal authorities and local elected officials committed to involving children and young people in budgetary decision-making processes. They demonstrated this by developing child-sensitive budgets through action plans.
- Civil society and young people can monitor and hold local municipal authorities accountable through budget monitoring and advocacy. They can also intervene more effectively in municipal budget development processes. This was achieved through training for 20 young people from the Prefectural Children's Advisory Councils (CCPEs, for its initials in French) – the main body for strengthening children's participation in monitoring actions on child rights in Togo. This training helped strengthen knowledge and attitudes to child rights, and highlighted the importance of involving children's and young people's organisations in actions to end child marriage and in developing and monitoring municipal budgets.
- **Collaboration between local municipal authorities and local elected officials, child protection actors, civil society and young people is stronger.** This collaboration has continued beyond the life of the project, as shown in the follow-up support and monitoring meetings with municipal authorities, organised to ensure the implementation of action plans and check in with and support child protection actors and members of CCPEs on their respective action plans.

5. Key findings

- **“Quick wins” can be achieved in budget advocacy over short timespans.** Three months is a short duration for project implementation. While some quick wins are possible, completing other tasks within this time frame can be challenging. More time may be needed to align with the budget process, conduct a budget analysis, build the capacity of different stakeholders, ensure stakeholders understand child marriage, secure stakeholder commitments and action plans, and reflect on lessons learned with project partners.
- **Civil society can effectively monitor budgets and expenditure, but time is needed to build their capacity to do this.** Civil society has a critical role as watchdogs in monitoring municipal budgets, but need more time and capacity building to better understand the budget process and when to intervene in that process to effectively influence a government’s budget decisions.

“The workshop allowed us not only to know our role in the protection of the child – and especially in [addressing] child marriage – but also to have ideas on the stages of developing budgets.”

Municipal authority representative

- **Government authorities are more likely to respond to child protection issues and child marriage when they have a good understanding of the problem, its impact on girls and their role in addressing the issue.**
- **Budget analysis is time-consuming for many CSOs, but is a necessary prerequisite for budget advocacy.** It can sometimes be difficult to access the necessary budget documents for analysis and to identify budget lines that relate directly or indirectly to preventing and responding to child marriage.

PICTURED: Child Protection Actors Consultation Framework after training in sensitive budgeting. Photo: *Girls Not Brides/RELUTET*



Project 6: Budget allocation for the prevention of formal or informal, early, child / adolescent unions in Mexico: The case of the SIPINNA and its application at the federal, state and municipal level

Girls Not Brides member organisation: Observatorio de Mortalidad Materna en México (OMM)

Pilot funding amount: US\$9,304.43

1. National context

A total of 26% of women in Mexico are married or in a union before the age of 18 and 4% before 15.²⁸ Though rates of officially registered marriages have fallen in Mexico, more girls and adolescents are being pushed into informal unions, which are four times more common than registered marriages.²⁹ Mexico is a country of young people: nearly a third of its 113 million inhabitants is aged between 10 and 24.³⁰ Almost 60% of those aged 15 to 19 did not use contraception during their first sexual encounter and 60% of adolescent pregnancies are planned.³¹ There are 7.3 million people who speak Indigenous languages,³² and rates of teenage pregnancy among them are higher than the national average.³³

Thanks to years of advocacy by civil organisations, children and adolescents are considered subjects of rights in the General Law on Child and Adolescent Rights (LGDNNA), which was enacted in 2014. This law – and the Federal Civil Code – established 18 as the minimum age of marriage, without exception. It created diverse institutions – including the National

Integrated Child and Adolescent Protection System (SIPINNA) – to improve coordination between public, private and social sectors working to protect child and adolescent rights, as well as promote youth participation in the decision-making process. The LGDNNA is assigned a budget for child and adolescent care through Cross-cutting Annex 18 of the Federal Expenditure Budget.

2. Project summary

In this project, the OMM used their five-step Public Policy Monitoring Model to analyse the state- and municipal-level application of the LGDNNA's federal budget and programmes. Through policy analysis and fieldwork, they highlight the complexity of – and possibilities for – implementing public policy in Chiapas, a state with a large youth and Indigenous population, and the highest fertility rate in the country. They draw particular attention to the importance of civil oversight and advocacy, and of including child and adolescent voices in the decision-making process.

The OMM's specific objectives were to:

²⁸ Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública y UNICEF México, *Encuesta Nacional de Niños, Niñas y Mujeres 2015 - Encuesta de Indicadores Múltiples por Conglomerados 2015*, Informe Final, 2016, https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS5/Latin%20America%20and%20Caribbean/Mexico/2015/Final/Mexico%202015%20MICS_Spanish.pdf

²⁹ INSAD, *Report on Early Unions Mexico: A National, State and Regional Analysis*, 2017.

³⁰ EIC, Inter-censal Survey, 2015, Mexico: INEGI

³¹ ENADID, National Demographic Dynamics Survey, 2018. Mexico: INEGI

³² INEGI, National Statistics and Geography Institute, 2015

³³ SINAC, Births Information Subsystem, 2019

- Investigate and analyse the budget for the prevention of formal and informal early child/adolescent unions in Chiapas
- Identify and analyse the perception of key actors (see below) in Chiapas
- Document the actions taken by municipal-level government to prevent early pregnancy and unions

3. The OMM worked with

- Secretariats of Health, Education and SIPINNA in Chiapas
- Civil society organisations (CSO): the Alliance for Health, Food and Nutrition in Chiapas (ASAN A.C.) and Melel Xojobal A.C.

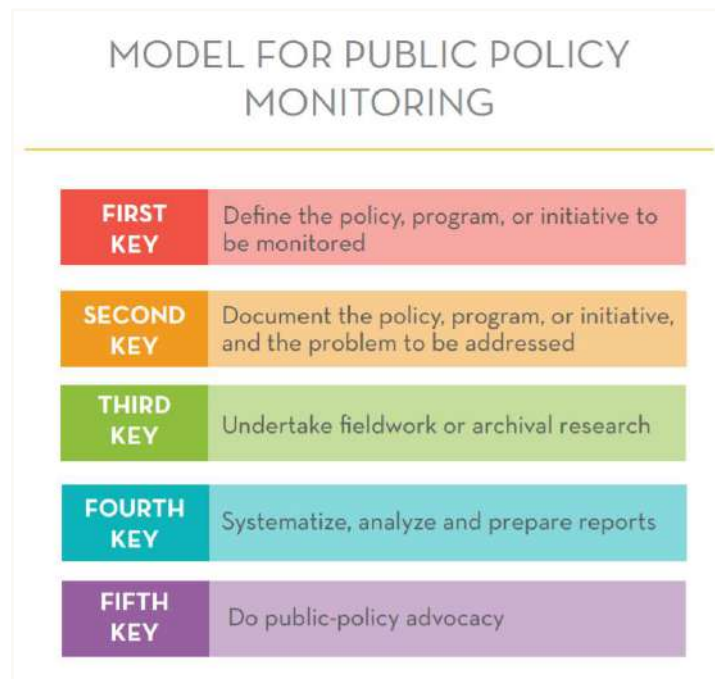
4. The OMM's achievements

- A final report promoting connected thinking about budget allocation and the implementation of public policies across the federal, state and municipal levels. The report provides evidence-based recommendations for policy (and budget) advocacy.
- Connection with key government actors and networks of CSOs working to promote and protect child and adolescent rights and share good practices at the state (Network for the Child and Adolescent Rights in Chiapas, REDIAS) and federal level (Network for Child Rights in Mexico, REDIM).
- Greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities for creating and implementing municipal SIPINNAs, particularly in rural areas and in collaboration with local and Indigenous authorities.

- Clear identification of the lack of strategies for the reduction of formal and informal early unions, as a basis for advocacy.

5. Key findings

- **The OMM's Public Policy Monitoring Model is a simple, low-cost and replicable methodology.** The Model comprises five steps on how to monitor public policies, from policy definition and documentation to fieldwork, reporting and advocacy. The method includes both quantitative and qualitative approaches, providing solid evidence to raise awareness and support the effective implementation of public policy. The Model is available with an operative guide (in [Spanish](#)) and a general guide (in [Spanish](#) and [English](#)).



PICTURED: The OMM Model for Public Policy Monitoring. Photo: *Girls Not Brides*/OMM

“The SIPINNA budget should go straight to the municipality, because that’s where the children and adolescents are [...] though even the state doesn’t have resources.”

TGC, former member of the Chiapas SIPINNA executive secretariat

- **Civil society can use budget analyses to oversee implementation at the local level and push for progressive federal budget allocations to protect child and adolescent rights.** The OMM budget analysis revealed a reduction in the proportion of government funding going to the SIPINNA in 2019. It also showed that, in the same year, the entire SIPINNA budget was spent at the federal level, mostly on personnel (almost 70%). Meanwhile, the municipal president of San Cristóbal de Las Casas donated 50% of her salary to cover local SIPINNA staff and coordination costs. This case highlights three areas for civil society attention:
 - Use of federal budget analysis and oversight to: ensure funds are fully executed and secured for subsequent years; and identify relative reductions in federal funding and advocate for equivalent and progressive spending to protect child and adolescent rights.
 - Transparency in federal budget allocation and its impact on local implementation: demand the publication of expenses, achievements, and the methodology used to distribute budgets at the federal level; highlight local solutions

and how they relate to decisions made at the federal level; and make alignment with local development plans visible.

- Budget advocacy to increase and decentralise funding: advocate for overall increases in the funds allocated to protecting child and adolescent rights; and promote the use of subsidies to draw down funds to the state and municipal level.
- **Local implementation bodies can protect child and adolescent rights, even if they lack the budget or legal power for direct action.** States and municipalities do not receive financial resources from the SIPINNA budget and municipal SIPINNA staff responsibilities and obligations are not legally defined and therefore unevenly implemented. However, the OMM found that state and municipal SIPINNAs can coordinate responses and calls to action, forming working groups to contribute expertise and avoid duplication. Municipal SIPINNAs and CSOs can also promote data collection by other government bodies – such as sex and age

“[...] the prosecutor’s office shouldn’t work alone, so we formed a working group including the municipal police, civil defence, and the two public prosecutor’s offices [including the Indigenous justice prosecutor].”

Member of the Chiapas SIPINNA executive secretariat and former director of the SCLC municipal SIPINNA

disaggregated data and child and adolescent surveys – and can incorporate them into evidence-based strategies to protect child and adolescent rights.

- **Civil society can ensure oversight meetings are held and that the context-specific issues affecting children and adolescents are included on the agenda.** Two examples of civil society action identified by OMM are:
 - Creating spaces for dialogue beyond official meetings – and promoting a vision of young people as subjects of rights capable of proposing solutions – to influence the agenda on public policy implementation.
 - Advocacy for migration and Indigenous childhood to be explicitly considered in the Chiapas state Law on Child and Adolescent Rights. Migration surveys were carried out to inform subsequent programmes. Childhood and adolescence surveys in general help raise awareness and inform strategies that respond to local contexts.

“We work hard on the participation of children and adolescents, it’s been hard but we’re getting it in the system. [We engage in] political dialogue behind the scenes, because during the system sessions you go and approve guidelines, but there’s no space for deliberation.”

Melel Xojobal A.C.

- **Budgets need to be allocated to raising awareness and training those responsible for the implementation of public policy.** Legally establishing implementation bodies is not enough; their personnel also needs information and training on their responsibilities and functions. Setting out the powers and obligations of municipal-level public officials in law also provides a guide that can be adapted to local contexts.
- **Civil society requests for information at the municipal level can catalyse action and raise awareness of the functions and importance of implementing public policy.**

“[...] Someone requested information [...] and the municipalities woke up, they called us, because they had to respond [...] thank goodness for the person who made the information request, because we never had that impact, even though we signed the documents.”

Former member of the Chiapas SIPINNA executive secretariat

- **CSOs can bring municipal officials together to share strategies and good practices across states.** Expanding networks to include CSOs and public officials working to implement and monitor public policy at all levels promotes dialogue and the creation of locally-appropriate action plans to protect child and adolescent rights across a region.

- **Indigenous authorities should be seen as partners in the implementation and monitoring of public policy to protect child and adolescent rights.** Understanding the complex interrelation between indigeneity, marriage, sexuality, adulthood and migration can help create effective strategies. During their background research and fieldwork, the OMM found that the greater frequency of civil unions over formal marriage; the taboo around contraception and sexual relations outside of formal unions;

marriage as a rite of passage for holding community positions; the exchange of money, labour and gifts when a daughter is married; and patrilocal residence patterns may all incentivise early marriage and pregnancy in Indigenous communities. Indigenous adolescents migrating to urban areas may be able to reassess their priorities, but are also those most vulnerable to early pregnancy. These local specificities must be considered when planning and implementing public policy to protect child and adolescent rights.