GENDER SOLUTIONS
Capturing the impact of UNICEF’s gender equality evidence investments (2014–2021)
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Front cover: © UNICEF/UNI307674/Fazel
ISBN: 9788865220665

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Graphic design and layout: Blossom.it

The Gender Solutions team would like to thank all Regional Gender Advisors and their colleagues for sharing nominations for the Gender Solutions shortlist: Shelly Abdool, Gerda Binder, Emmanuelle Compingt, Dequina Fall, Sheeba Harma, Shoubo Jalal and Maha Muna.

Thanks also go to the many UNICEF colleagues who were interviewed for this exercise: Mohamed Ahamada Ali, Roshni Basu, Helen Belachew, Claudia Cappa, Dario Fuletti, Sheeba Harma, Shoubo Jalal, Joseph Mabirizi, Nankali Maksud, Luisa Martinez Cornejo, Brecht Mommen, Maha Muna, Zahrah Nesbitt-Ahmed, Shereen Obaid, Ismael Saadi, Laura Salamanca, Massimiliano Sani, Isabel Scott Moncrieff, Gaia Segola, Sagri Singh, Ramatou Toure, Ivonne Urriola Perez, Lucia Vernazza, Jelena Zajeganovic and Serge Zanga.

Finally, this project would not have been possible without the support from Claire Akehurst, Patricia Arquero Caballero, Gabrielle Berman, Stephanie Joanna Curran, Benjamin Hickler, Celine Little, Sarah Marchant, Gunilla Olsson, Cristina Pizzolato and Kathleen Sullivan. Many thanks to these individuals for their support, as always.
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Welcome to the Gender Solutions project. Since 2014, when the first UNICEF Gender Action Plan took effect, UNICEF offices and partners across the globe have produced a body of knowledge of tremendous scope and depth around gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. As this report demonstrates, they have been diligent, focused and innovative in collectively generating evidence – spanning both gender inequalities and effective strategies to address them – even amid the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The resulting evidence has informed a range of areas, including programming, government policymaking and legislation, and advocacy. The impact of this work arises both through the insights revealed and through its innovative, adaptable and often replicable nature. The Gender Solutions project is a way of capturing the impact so far and assessing how further strides can be made.

Work is now firmly under way to meet the goals of the UNICEF Gender Policy 2021–2030 and Action Plan 2022–2025 (GPAP). This work must be complemented by greater and more deliberate evidence building if we are to achieve the GPAP goals for children and women. Multiple factors – political shifts, climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and many more – will make for a different reality for many girls and women in the coming years. Yet we have every reason to be encouraged by the impressive evidence generation being done by UNICEF and partners to help combat gender inequality. We have created an important foundation of evidence and learning to inform future efforts.

Huge congratulations must be given to the winners of the inaugural Gender Evidence Awards. The three winning evidence generation activities encapsulate the impact and the versatility – in subject area, geographical scope, intent and design – that all UNICEF offices have demonstrated in their gender evidence generation work. Given the high calibre of the 25 activities shortlisted for the Gender Evidence Awards – and the full body of evidence generation since 2014 – our winners can feel especially proud and pleased.

We hope that you all enjoy learning more about this work.

Gunilla Olsson
Director
UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti

Lauren Rumble
UNICEF Associate Director
Gender Equality
Women and girls continue to face huge challenges to their ability to live full, empowered lives. As a new UNICEF Gender Policy 2021–2030 and Action Plan 2022–2025 (GPAP) come into effect, gendered impacts span factors including – but certainly not limited to – violence against women and girls, child marriage, malnutrition, and exclusion from employment and education. Equally, efforts to combat gender inequality continue on every level, from the global to the local. These efforts rely on three types of quality evidence – research, evaluations and studies – on gender-related issues.

The Gender Solutions project aims to draw together the knowledge, innovations and impacts of gender evidence work conducted by UNICEF’s offices since the first Gender Action Plan (GAP) was launched in 2014. UNICEF has undertaken hundreds of gender evidence generation activities, supporting programmatic action, advocacy work and policymaking. By capturing the impact of this broad body of work, Gender Solutions aims to showcase UNICEF’s evidence investments, reward excellence and inform the rollout of the GPAP.

Having identified over 750 gender evidence generation activities initiated since 2014, the Gender Solutions team mapped them against the priority areas of GAP 2022–2025. This analysis, coupled with interviews with UNICEF staff involved in selected activities, allowed the Gender Solutions team to produce a detailed review, encompassing five stages:

- **The mapping of UNICEF’s gender evidence between 2014 and 2021, broken down by thematic area, year, country and region, alongside an overall picture of the nature of the evidence generation undertaken and the progress made.**

- **Efforts to drive the uptake of evidence**, outlining different outputs (ranging from reports and peer-reviewed articles to social media content), as well as efforts to ensure broad, enduring engagement.

- **A demonstration of how gender evidence is used**, especially through UNICEF staff training and knowledge development, informing further evidence generation and influencing how organizations (including UNICEF) conceptualize specific issues.

- **The impact of gender evidence generation** through informing the programmatic work of UNICEF and partners, the actions of governments (including policymaking and legislation) and the lives of children and women.

- **The lessons learned** – positive and negative – to inform the rollout of the new GPAP.

Several case studies outline ways in which specific evidence generation has had an impact; there is a case study for each Goal Area of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022–2025, plus one that cuts across all five.

The final aspect of the Gender Solutions project is the **Gender Evidence Awards**, which reward standout work in gender evidence generation and use. From the array of evidence generation activities identified by the Gender Solutions team, a shortlist of 25 was produced through a careful consultation process. An external review panel then selected three winners. The winning outputs are covered in detail – including what impressed the panel, what findings they arrived at and how, and their impact. The winners set the benchmark for what is considered ‘good’ evidence on gender equality – not least because the methodology used for their selection was based on sound assessment criteria.
INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Since launching its first GAP in 2014, over 750 gender-related evidence generation activities have been undertaken by UNICEF and partners, spanning UNICEF’s seven geographical regions. Within this trove of knowledge is evidence covering individual countries, groups of countries, entire regions and the world as a whole.

Coinciding with the start of GAP 2022–2025, the Gender Solutions project aims to capture the impact of this evidence generation. Drawn together are an array of innovations, lessons learned, practices that are worth scaling up or replicating, and significant, real-world impacts. The aim is to showcase UNICEF’s gender evidence investments and to use the knowledge that they have yielded to inform the rollout of GAP 2022–2025.

Gender Solutions mirrors the Best of UNICEF Research (BOUR) competition and the related BOUR Retrospective exercise.5,6 BOUR is undertaken annually to showcase and reward high-quality (and potentially high-impact) evidence generation activities. As with the BOUR competition, an external panel reviewed shortlisted activities and selected three Gender Evidence Awards winners. This report includes details of the winners, alongside background on the uptake, use and impact of UNICEF gender evidence work and recommendations for future activities.

Gender Solutions: the process

761

gender evidence generation activities conducted since 2014 were identified through a desk review

25

especially high-quality and impactful evidence generation activities were shortlisted

3

Gender Evidence Awards winners were selected by an independent external panel of gender experts
METHODOLOGY

The Gender Solutions project captures the impact of investments made in gender-related evidence generation since 2014. Identified activities were mapped against the priority areas of GAP 2022–2025 and 25 outstanding examples (see Appendix 1) were shortlisted for consideration for the Gender Evidence Awards, based on the following assessment criteria:

- (Potential for) impact
- Local engagement and ownership
- Conceptualization
- Innovation and originality
- Methodology
- Writing and presentation
- Promise of gender-transformative analysis and change
- Ethical standards

Two main sources were used to identify activities conducted since 2014: the database of entrants to the BOUR competition and the Evidence Information Systems Integration (EISI) database, which collates planned, ongoing and completed evidence generation. A call was also issued across UNICEF’s gender network to identify any further activities. In total, 761 activities were identified. They were all eligible to be considered for the Gender Evidence Awards, but they needed to have an output that could be reviewed against the assessment criteria.

After a careful selection process (see Appendix 2), staff involved in the 25 shortlisted activities were interviewed about the uptake, use and impact of the evidence, as well as broader insights and lessons. Interviews were conducted for 21 activities and thematic analysis was conducted for all interview transcripts using NVivo software.

Finally, the nominees were assessed by an independent external panel of gender specialists who identified three Gender Evidence Awards winners.


Figure 1. UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2022–2025: Programmatic priorities

Goal Area 1
Every child survives and thrives

Goal Area 2
Every child learns

Goal Area 3
Every child is protected

Goal Area 4
Every child lives in a safe and sustainable climate and environment

Goal Area 5
Every child has access to inclusive social protection and lives free of poverty

Cross-cutting organizational priorities

Address gender-based violence

Gender equality programming for transformative results, including to address discriminatory gender norms

Gender-responsive workplaces and institutional accountability

Gender priorities across the life course

Quality maternal health care and nutrition, and HIV testing, counselling and care

Gender-responsive education systems and equitable access to education for all

Addressing violence against girls, boys and women, and harmful practices

Equitable water sanitation and hygiene systems

Gender-responsive social protection systems and care work

Adolescent girls’ leadership and well-being

Promote adolescent girls’ nutrition and the prevention of HIV/AIDS and human papillomavirus

Advance girls’ education, learning and skills, including science, technology, engineering, mathematics and digital skills

Eliminate child marriage and early unions

Promote accessible and dignified menstrual health and hygiene services, including tackling taboos about menstruation

Boys and men as allies for gender equality

THE UNICEF GENDER POLICY AND ACTION PLAN

Gender equality is an essential element of UNICEF’s mandate to uphold the rights of all children. GAP 2022–2025 operationalizes the UNICEF Gender Policy 2021–2030, specifying how UNICEF will promote gender equality across its programmes and workplaces.8

It does so by setting out programmatic priorities linked to the five Goal Areas of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022–2025.9 Some of these are cross-cutting priorities, while others apply to specific Goal Areas. Indicators and monitoring mechanisms track progress.

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Each of the 761 identified gender evidence generation activities has been mapped against the GAP 2022–2025 priority areas, spanning the five UNICEF Strategic Plan Goal Areas (with 144 activities corresponding to multiple priority areas). Of the 761 activities planned, undertaken or completed since 2014, 182 can be categorized under cross-cutting organizational priorities around addressing gender-based violence, gender equality programming for transformative results, or gender-responsive workplaces and institutional accountability.

More than 500 activities address gender priorities across the life course. Three of the five priorities in this category are each covered by over 100 evidence generation activities; ‘Quality maternal health care and nutrition, and HIV testing, counselling, and quality of care’, a focus of 204 activities, has the highest coverage. The fourth and fifth categories – ‘Equitable WASH systems’ and ‘Gender-responsive social protection systems and care work’ – saw less coverage, being a focus of 63 and 47 activities respectively.
Figure 2. How do evidence generation efforts meet UNICEF’s GAP 2022–2025 priorities?

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<td>Every child survives and thrives</td>
<td>Every child learns</td>
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<td>Every child lives in a safe and sustainable climate and environment</td>
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Cross-cutting organizational priorities:
- Address gender-based violence
- Gender equality programming for transformative results, including to address discriminatory gender norms
- Gender-responsive workplaces and institutional accountability

Gender priorities across the life course:
- Quality maternal health care and nutrition, and HIV testing, counselling, and care
- Gender-responsive education systems and equitable access to education for all
- Addressing violence against girls, boys and women, and harmful practices
- Equitable water sanitation and hygiene systems
- Gender-responsive social protection systems and care work

Adolescent girls’ leadership and well-being:
- Promote adolescent girls’ nutrition and pregnancy care, and the prevention of HIV/AIDS and human papillomavirus
- Advance girls’ education, learning and skills, including science, technology, engineering, mathematics and digital skills
- Eliminate child marriage and early unions
- Promote accessible and dignified menstrual health and hygiene services, including tackling taboos about menstruation

Three of the four priority areas in the ‘Adolescent girls’ leadership and well-being’ category are each covered in between 24 and 36 activities, suggesting that more evidence focuses on gender priorities across the life course than on adolescent girls. ‘Eliminate child marriage and early unions’, covered by 97 evidence generation activities, is by far the most frequently covered priority area affecting adolescent girls.
HOW ARE EVIDENCE GENERATION ACTIVITIES SPREAD GEOGRAPHICALLY?

UNICEF offices have been busy with evidence generation worldwide – in four of the seven UNICEF regions, 100 or more activities have been planned, are ongoing, or have been completed since 2014. The lion’s share (over 300) have taken place in West and Central Africa and in Eastern and Southern Africa. South Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean have also been host to a large number of activities. Another 82 activities were conducted at UNICEF’s HQ.

Figure 3. The number of evidence generation activities undertaken in each UNICEF region in 2014–2021*

* The number of planned, ongoing or completed evidence generation activities

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, GeoNames, Microsoft, Navinfo, Tom Tom, Wikipedia (Powered by Bing)
Note: This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers.
Figure 4. Mapping the evidence by type of office

Although a sizeable number of activities (20 per cent) have been undertaken by UNICEF HQ and regional offices, the majority of evidence since 2014 (80 per cent) has been generated by country offices. The country offices of Nigeria (23 activities), India (21), Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Malawi (18 each) have undertaken the most activities.

Figure 5. The top 10 country offices in terms of gender evidence generation activities undertaken in 2014–2021

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, GeoNames, Microsoft, Navinfo, Tom Tom, Wikipedia (Powered by Bing)
Note: This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers.
Over half (55 per cent) of UNICEF’s gender evidence generation consists of studies. Research is also important; making up 31 per cent of activities. Evaluations account for a further 14 per cent of activities, providing vital assessments of UNICEF’s own work to accelerate progress towards gender equality.

The hard work looks set to continue. The evidence generation activities undertaken since 2014, 77 per cent of which have been completed, have been focused on the understanding of specific development efforts. Research involves the systematic collection and analysis of data to answer specific questions or test a hypothesis. Studies, which are primarily descriptive, seek to establish existing knowledge around a subject. Evaluations attempt to systematically determine the relevance, effectiveness and impact of interventions. Evaluations attempt to systematically determine the relevance, effectiveness and impact of interventions.

Based on published UNICEF taxonomy, evidence generation is split into three evidence types: research, evaluations and studies. Research involves the systematic collection and analysis of data to answer specific questions or test hypotheses. Studies, which are primarily descriptive, seek to establish existing knowledge around a subject. Evaluations attempt to systematically determine the relevance, effectiveness and impact of interventions. Evaluations attempt to systematically determine the relevance, effectiveness and impact of interventions.

The number dropped in 2021 amid pandemic-related travel restrictions and lockdowns.
GOAL AREA 1
Every child survives and thrives

“I’ve met many of the women included in the programme. I have witnessed the evidence and the change women felt after the evaluation.”

Shereen Obaid, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist

CASE STUDIES

PROVIDING INSIGHT TO STRENGTHEN AN EXISTING PROGRAMME

Evaluation of a postnatal home-visiting programme for mothers, neonates and their families in Gaza, State of Palestine, over the period 2011–2016

UNICEF State of Palestine, 2018

This evaluation:

- Focused on analysis of the impact of postnatal home visits in an environment that is hard to reach and where conducting such work is difficult

- Supported provision of a postnatal home visit (PNHV) programme that is embedded in the national ministry of health system and has since been extended to reach a higher number of high-risk pregnant and lactating women, and children

- Facilitated a feedback mechanism for women, allowing their voices to be heard

This evaluation had two aims: to document and assess a pre-existing PNHV programme; and to identify good practices and areas for improvement to inform future programming around postnatal care in the Gaza Strip. The researchers combined desk-based research with interviews and focus-group discussions. During the evaluation process, 36 interviews were conducted with women (and their spouses) who had experienced high-risk pregnancies, in addition to 15 interviews with policymakers from the ministry of health and with staff working for United Nations agencies and NGOs. Meanwhile, focus-group discussions brought together midwives and nurses.
Respondent: Honestly, it is very useful for people and society. Moreover, it helps to decrease the morbidity and mortality rates of children and mothers.

Focus-group facilitator: Do you have evidence that the home visits contribute to decrease the mortality rates?

Respondent: Yes, many cases of haemorrhage and severe anaemia (the haemoglobin blood concentration was seven or less) have been referred.

Focus-group facilitator: Did you notice among the clinic’s data that the number of deaths was higher before the postnatal home visits? Can you remember a story?

Respondent: When we explored a case of low haemoglobin blood concentration (seven) during the postnatal home visit and referred the woman to the hospital, where they diagnosed it as a haemorrhage, it was considered a success story. Her family didn’t know the danger signs, they thought it was normal because she was a primigravida. We visited her at the right time, so we saved her life. The same happens for babies, especially bilirubin cases.

A conversation with one health professional illustrates how the PNHV programme contributed to decreases in the morbidity and mortality rates of children and mothers.

The findings

The evaluation produced ground-level evidence around the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the PNHV programme. The evidence suggested that the programme had facilitated a personalized approach and offered a view into problems and harmful practices linked to breastfeeding. It had also increased mutual understanding between health care providers and women. On the whole, it helped demonstrate the equal importance of care for mothers and for infants, and the overall need for postnatal care, including via home visit services. In addition, the evaluation demonstrated that home visits become easier for health workers to prioritize when they are perceived as being equal to the ‘primary’ tasks of nurses and midwives. It also revealed safety issues and fear of sexual harassment faced by health workers. Monitoring activities conducted after the evaluation was completed demonstrated the great extent to which the recommendations of the evaluation were implemented.

The impact

A stronger, better supported programme

The PNHV programme was embedded in the national ministry of health system, and UNICEF and implementing partners continue to support it. UNICEF also developed protocols for empowering women during home visits and standardized investments in capacity building for service providers, with a focus on strengthening outreach to the most vulnerable women. The PNHV programme’s coverage has expanded and a systematic feedback mechanism has been developed by UNICEF, allowing women’s voices to be heard by policymakers.

Overall, the evaluation showed that strengthened postnatal care through the provision of targeted home visiting contributed to declines in maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity. It also generated high satisfaction among mothers and service providers. The evaluation also suggested a need for external funding, which would help ensure that the achievements obtained so far can be sustained.
GOAL AREA 2

Every child learns

“The girls felt comfortable and safe – and happy to talk about this topic and how they felt … The study was important for those 112 girls.”

Luisa Martínez Cornejo, Gender and Development Officer


EMPOWERING GIRLS AND DRIVING LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

Challenges and impacts of menstrual hygiene management for girls and adolescents in schools

UNICEF Peru, 2020

This research:

- Gave girls a direct voice on menstrual hygiene management, a subject that is under-resourced and treated as taboo
- Directly led to the passing of a law to support the management of menstrual hygiene, including the provision of information and access to supplies of menstrual hygiene products
- Spurred Peru’s ministry of education to mandate comprehensive sexuality education and guidance in schools

This research combined interviews and observational research to assess the challenges that schoolgirls in Peru face with menstrual hygiene management. The voices of those impacted were key: researchers spoke with 112 girls (including Spanish- and indigenous-language speakers) in 11 schools across four regions, as well as parents, boys, teachers and health workers. Ultimately, over 173 hours of discussion took place. The aim was to consider menstrual hygiene as socially, culturally and environmentally influenced, rather than being a solely individual issue.
The research employed an ecological model to assess menstrual hygiene as something affected by a range of social, cultural and environmental factors.


The findings

Researchers found that girls lacked adequate access to information and education about menstrual hygiene, both in and outside school. Discussions with girls revealed that this lack of information led to feelings of shame and fear around menstruation, including in terms of discussing it in school or at home.

Support from health and education services was insufficient, including in terms of school WASH facilities. Communications by health and education services either lacked reach or were too general. A lack of cleanliness, privacy and basic WASH supplies led girls to avoid using school facilities for menstrual hygiene management.

The impact

Making the law

A well-orchestrated launch and advocacy effort directly resulted in the adoption of legislation to help girls manage their menstrual hygiene. In March 2020, UNICEF Peru held a public event, launching the Cambiemos las Reglas campaign (‘Let’s change the rules’, but regla also means menstruation). The results were also presented within UNICEF Peru and shared in roundtables with adolescents, politicians and NGOs. In addition, a member of congress was targeted for advocacy efforts; she became convinced of the importance of the issue and (with technical support from UNICEF) proposed a national menstrual law.

In April 2021, congress approved a law declaring that all girls and women should have access to information about menstruation, as well as (progressively) free access to menstrual hygiene supplies. The ministry of education also approved new sexuality education guidance, with technical assistance from UNICEF.
GUIDING A MAJOR GLOBAL PROGRAMME INTO ITS NEXT PHASE

Evaluation of the UNFPA–UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage

UNICEF Evaluation Office, 2019

The Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage (GPECM) is being implemented in three phases over 15 years, initially in 12 countries. This first programmatic evaluation highlighted how the GPECM:

- Has increased and collectively met targets for girls’ access to health and protection services over each year of the programme and has brought together the combined capabilities of UNICEF and UNFPA to facilitate a multisectoral approach.
- Takes a gender-targeted approach, focusing on adolescent girls, and considers that lessons suggest that boys must be targeted as beneficiaries and as agents of change to maximize impact.
- Has fostered sustainability through advocacy, institutionalization, strengthening national and subnational systems, developing capacities and mobilizing complementary funding.

This evaluation was the first of the GPECM, a programme jointly managed by UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and it specifically focused on its first phase (2016–2019). The aim was to provide an independent assessment of progress towards results, sustainability of interventions, and the efficiency and effectiveness of programming. Combining discussion and desk review, the evaluation covered global, regional and national programme levels. In total, 588 stakeholders were consulted, ranging from UNICEF and UNFPA in-country staff to community-level beneficiaries.

Nankali Maksud, Senior Advisor, Child Protection

The findings

The evaluation found that the GPECM had been responsive to local contexts, although at times it needed to be more systematic. For example, a more systematic engagement with adolescent boys and child grooms was needed, while interventions linked to the programme had not systematically reached vulnerable locations or groups.

The evaluation found that the GPECM was on track to achieve its desired outcomes and was extending its reach, despite funding reductions, although focus and reach varied across countries. Ultimately, the GPECM had a catalytic effect, despite being in a growth phase. Although more efforts were needed to track progress nationally, the programme had played a key role and garnered broad stakeholder engagement.

The impact

Guiding a major programme into its second phase

The report – which, along with a summary, was published in English, French, Spanish and Arabic – was widely disseminated. Findings were also shared via social media, the UNICEF website, email and webinars.

The report fully informed strategic shifts in phase 2 of the GPECM. Having highlighted how the GPECM is a gender-focused programme and that focusing solely on delaying the age of marriage is insufficient, the evaluation informed the design of the theory of change and results framework for phase 2, which is taking a gender-transformative approach and integrating gender-transformative indicators.

UNICEF is now providing a multipronged approach to building the capacity of child protection staff and staff from other sectors to enable them to address gender in their work as an integral programming and advocacy strategy.

14. See also the brief on the approach to gender-transformative programming in phase 2: <www.unicef.org/media/108881/file/Gender-transformative-accelerator-brief-2021.pdf>
The evaluation fed into the design of the second phase of the GPECM

DEMONSTRATING THE POWERFUL INFLUENCE OF WOMEN IN RURAL ADMINISTRATION

Does women’s participation in water committees affect management and water system performance in rural Vanuatu?15

UNICEF Vanuatu, 2017

This research:

- Demonstrated that women’s involvement in rural water committees improves outcomes for women and their communities
- Led Vanuatu’s government to mandate that at least 40 per cent of the members of rural water committees must be women
- Contributed to a broader debate among policymakers and academics on the importance of women in WASH

Despite a broad belief that women’s involvement in water management correlates with more effective water systems, women’s participation in water use committees (WUCs) has traditionally been limited. This research revealed how women’s participation in WUCs affects community-level water management in Vanuatu. The government, supported by UNICEF, conducted a census of water points, collecting information on each water system – the type and characteristics, ownership and funding, use and management, and potential pollutants. Data from 365 committee-run water systems was analysed to determine the impact of women’s involvement in WUCs.

The findings

The research found that, on average, 16 per cent of committee-run WUCs’ members were women and just over half of WUCs had women in key roles. WUCs with women in key roles were found to meet more regularly, and more revenue collection takes place. **Women’s involvement in key WUC roles was found to have an impact on the committees’ effectiveness.** Of 186 WUCs featuring women in key roles, 78 per cent were in a good or fair condition; where women were not involved, the figure was 64 per cent.

**Figure 11. Water system functioning of a WUC, with or without women in a key post**

Research by UNICEF Vanuatu demonstrated clear improvements in water management where women held key posts in water use committees


The impact

**Mandating women’s involvement**

The findings helped motivate discussions about gender in the male-dominated water sector. As a result, the government of Vanuatu now mandates that 40 per cent of WUC members should be women.

The research was published in a journal article that contributed to a broader debate among policymakers and academics globally on the importance of women in WASH.
GOAL AREA 5

Every child has access to inclusive social protection and lives free of poverty

“It resonates with both [gender equality and social protection practitioners]; it was even used in a paper about climate change … [The report] has grown wings and gone above and beyond what we anticipated.”

Zahrah Nesbitt-Ahmed, Gender and Development Manager

MEETING DEFINED AIMS AND INFLUENCING WIDER DISCUSSION

Gender-Responsive Age-Sensitive Social Protection: A conceptual framework

UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, 2020

This working paper:
- Drew together existing evidence to inform the Gender-Responsive Age-Sensitive Social Protection (GRASSP) programme
- Built a framework that mapped the interconnectedness of gender, social protection and the life course
- Significantly influenced other internal and external work, including UNICEF’s new Gender Action Plan (GAP)

The conceptual framework was developed to inform the GRASSP programme, a five-year research programme – funded by the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office – established to build evidence around ‘what works’, how and why for integrating gender equality objectives into social protection. The framework largely consists of the conceptual distillation of a large body of existing evidence. The objective was to map concepts related to gender, social protection and life course, and their linkages, ultimately guiding the GRASSP programme.
The findings

Building on existing conceptual and theoretical work, the GRASSP conceptual framework mapped the interconnections between gender, social protection and the life course. It did so across nine interconnected elements:

1. Structural drivers of gender inequality, poverty and vulnerability
2. Dimensions of a gender-positive social protection system
3. A gender integration continuum
4. Adopting a life-course lens
5. Gender-responsive outcomes
6. Gender equality outcome areas
7. Moderators
8. Long-term impacts (end poverty and achieve gender equality)
9. Change levers

Within each of these, key elements were outlined. For example, the design of a gender-responsive social protection system was mapped across four aspects (social assistance, social insurance, labour market programmes and social care services) and three strands of action (a gender-responsive legal policy framework, gender-responsive implementation and governance, and gender-responsive programme design).

The outcome

Exceeding planned impact

Although the framework was originally developed solely to inform the GRASSP programme, the team decided to publish it, as they thought others in the social protection field might find it useful; it was also disseminated widely through social media, presentations and other means. The decision to publish turned out to be correct, with the paper garnering significant interest in the idea of conceptualizing gender-responsive social protection across the life course.

The paper has gone on to inform policy and research discussion, has been featured in many events, and has been recommended by several organizations as a resource on gender and social protection, including UN Women, the Center for Global Development and the International Institute for Environment and Development, among others. 17, 18, 19 It also informed the development of the new GAP 2022–2025.

Figure 12. Gender-Responsive Age-Sensitive Social Protection: A conceptual framework

**Moderators**

- Intra household dynamics
- Market access
- Social and cultural norms
- Gender norms
- Gender-friendly policies and laws
- Macroeconomic conditions
- Conflict and instability
- Political conditions
- Availability & quality of services

**Economic Security & Empowerment**
- Decent work
- Income security and resilience
- Reduced and redistributed care & domestic work burdens
- Financial autonomy
- Savings
- Access to credit
- Access to markets

**Improved Health**
- Access to health and social services
- Physical health and nutrition
- Reproductive & sexual health
- Reduced HIV/AIDS risk
- Delayed sexual debut and pregnancy

**Enhanced Education**
- Improved literacy
- Increased school attendance & achievement
- Improved capabilities & skills
- Enhanced cognitive abilities

**Improved Psychosocial Well-Being**
- Mental health
- Life satisfaction
- Self-esteem
- Increased expectations & aspirations
- Reduced stress & enhanced resilience

**Increased Protection**
- Freedom from violence
- Delayed marriage
- Reduced risk of FGM
- Greater mobility

**Gender-Responsive Programmes**

- Objectives
- Benefit design
- Eligibility criteria & targeting
- Incentives, conditionalities, co-responsibilities
- Payment / benefit delivery
- Messaging, labeling, nudges
- Linkages to complementary programmes, services

**Gender-Responsive Social Protection System**

- Legal and policy framework
- Social protection strategy
- Coherence within the social protection system
- Coordination
- Public expenditure & financing
- Access to information and cross-sectoral linkages between programmes, services & systems

**Gender-Responsive Implementation & Governance**
- Implementation & fidelity of design
- Capacity in delivery of benefits and services
- M&E Systems
- Sex- and age-disaggregated data
- Integrated Management Information Systems and social & information registries
- Grievance & redress mechanisms

**Gender Equality Outcomes**

- Equal access to benefits
- Adequate response to gender-specific needs
- Enhancing empowerment of women & girls

The GRASSP conceptual framework shows how gender-responsive social protection contributes to enhanced gender equality outcomes across the life course. This is an extract of the conceptual framework. For the complete version, please see: <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/WP-10_Gender-Responsive-Age-Sensitive-Social-Protection.pdf>

GIVING GIRLS AND WOMEN A PLATFORM TO ARTICULATE THEIR NEEDS DIRECTLY

Girls’ rights for an equal future: Renewing commitments in Latin America and the Caribbean

UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO), 2021

This research:

- Drew on the input of a strikingly large and varied cohort of girls and women
- Asked girls to lead discussion, both in terms of input into the research and also at launch events
- Maximized its impact with national and regional launch events, social media content and a continuing engagement strategy

Twenty-five years after the launch of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), a broad initiative aimed at advancing gender equality, UNICEF LACRO sought to answer two questions: Are the objectives of the BPfA still valid? And what do girls in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) say is needed to exercise their rights?

Input was sought from over 1,400 girls across 26 countries, spanning a range of ethnic and sexual backgrounds, while feminist leaders and gender rights specialists were also consulted. The report detailed seven priorities expressed by the girls.

“The Gender Action Plan is explicit that UNICEF needs to address an intentional approach related to girls and their rights. This is a contribution to that.”

Ivonne Urriola Perez, Gender and Development Officer

The findings

Structured around the eight strategic objectives of the BPfA chapter focused on girls, the report lays out a host of key findings. Ultimately, it states that the BPfA objectives remain valid, although the ‘old’ issues have become more complex and newer issues have arisen.

Despite LAC being a ‘pioneer region’ on women’s rights, child and adolescent protection agendas often fail to employ a gender lens. Equally, agendas seeking to further women’s rights often lack a life-course perspective. Additionally, girls are often not visible in official statistics.

In addition to the seven priorities identified by the girls, the report included a ‘Girls’ wish list’ for 2050 (a sample wish: ‘That every girl and young woman is respected’).

The outcome

Girls taking the lead

Launching the report on International Women’s Day 2021, UNICEF LACRO asked girls from different countries to lead the event. They spoke about the report and the priorities for their own countries, moderated discussion and performed songs related to girls’ rights. A Facebook live event reached 17,000 viewers, while subsequent TikTok content produced to accompany the Brazilian launch received 70,000 views. A partnership was launched with Chilean singer Denise Rosenthal, based around the seven priorities. She re-recorded a new version of her song ‘Agua Segura’ (written about her own journey to transform harmful gender norms) and recorded a video with adolescent girls across the region, launched on 10 December 2021 (Human Rights Day). It has been viewed more than 3.6 million times.
As well as country-level launch events, LACRO has been working on a political engagement strategy involving UN agencies, governments, feminist organizations and girls. A toolkit was developed to help country offices disseminate the report. To continue engagement with adolescent girls, and the co-construction of solutions with and for them, an adolescent girls’ activism toolkit, *Maleta Activista* (‘Activism Suitcase’) is currently being finalized with Niñas Valientes, a girls-led foundation.

The girls’ rights agenda is part of the LACRO work plan for the next four years. **The main aim is to advocate for an intergenerational approach to gender equality by including girls in regional gender commitments, investments and actions, which are currently centred around women.**

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**Figure 13. Girls’ Priorities in Latin America and the Caribbean**

The report detailed seven priorities identified by girls consulted in the LAC region.

1. Girls demand to live free of violence: girls say no more sexual violence and sexual exploitation; they demand to be able to walk down the street in peace and safety; they demand an end to impunity of abusers and maltreaters; and want to grow up and live without fear.

2. Girls, and even more so Afro-descendant girls, demand an end to objectification and sexualization.

3. Girls want to be treated without any discrimination: girls want their rights to be respected and want to be treated equally in their homes and communities; girls demand equal education.

4. Girls demand comprehensive sexual education and to be able to decide about their bodies.

5. Girls want to participate and decide on issues that concern them.

6. Girls need climate justice in order to live and grow.

7. Girls must be visible in statistics.

DRIVING THE UPTAKE OF UNICEF’S GENDER EVIDENCE

“We are trying to convert knowledge into something that can be easily understood and taken forward by advocates.”

Claudia Cappa, Senior Advisor, Statistics and Monitoring, on ‘Harnessing the Power of Data for Girls: Taking stock and looking ahead to 2030’ (UNICEF Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring, 2016)

ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

UNICEF’s gender evidence takes a range of forms. It can focus on a specific issue or subject area, review the impact of individual initiatives, or inform the development of frameworks to tackle systemic challenges. Both quantitative and qualitative evidence is used. For example, researchers have spoken directly to girls affected by specific issues, presenting their voices alongside statistics. Geographical range also varies broadly. At one end of the scale, for instance, is an evaluation of the UNFPA–UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage (GPECM), while at the other is an analysis revealing the positive impact of women’s involvement in local water use committees in Vanuatu.21,22

Collaboration is key. Academic institutions, NGOs, government departments and other UN bodies all provide access, know-how and support. Collaboration can also increase traction and encourage local ownership. For example, one research project, which examined the determinants of violence against women in South Africa, involved two University of Cape Town bodies and was backed by a government committee.23

MAKING A SPLASH

Just as important as generating evidence is maximizing its uptake. As UNICEF’s audience is global and encompasses policymakers, programme staff, media organizations and local communities, it is important that messaging is clear and accessible; this often requires multiple, tailored outputs.

UNICEF’s gender evidence has been presented in a range of formats, including reports, summary documents, journal articles, web portals, videos and infographics. For instance, the evaluation of the GPECM, conducted by UNICEF’s Evaluation Office, presented both a large report and a shorter summary translated into several languages. Elsewhere, the team that undertook a study on the care of newborns in Cameroon produced a research report and a peer-reviewed journal article, as well as working with colleagues in communication for development (C4D) to devise messages for community-level impact.24,25

When a launch is impactful, the media impact can be breath-taking. In the five days surrounding its launch, the A New Era for Girls report, presenting evidence generated by UNICEF’s HQ Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring and the organization’s Gender Division, received 344 mentions in print, online and on broadcast media in the six UN official languages.26


Getting the word out: Global media coverage of UNICEF’s gender evidence27,28,29

Girls Spend 40% More Time on Household Labor Than Boys, UNICEF Says

“Girls spend 40% more time, or 160 million more hours a day, on household chores such as cooking, cleaning, collecting firewood and caring for family members, than boys of the same age, says a new UNICEF report.”

Coverage in Time of the Harnessing the Power of Data for Girls report (UNICEF Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring, 2016)

One of Every Two Schoolgirls Has Suffered Bullying Related to Menstruation

“...bullying is only part of the problem: 85% of the interviewees (schoolgirls from Huancavelica, Loreto, Lima and Ucayali) said that they did not feel comfortable with school bathrooms, as they are unclean and lack supplies such as paper and soap.”

Coverage in Peruvian newspaper La República of the Challenges and Impacts of Menstrual Hygiene Management for Girls and Adolescents in Schools report (UNICEF Peru, 2020)

More Girls Getting Education but Little Progress Made in Reducing Violence: UN report

“More girls are getting education now than ever before but this gain made little headway in helping shape a more equal, less violent environment for girls, UNICEF, Plan International and UN Women warned Wednesday in a new report.”

Coverage by Xinhua of UNICEF’s A New Era for Girls report (UNICEF HQ Gender Section, UN Women and Plan International, 2020)
ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

Bringing gender evidence to life often relies on approaches beyond producing a report or brochure. For instance, the team overseeing research on menstrual hygiene management in Peru held a series of roundtables, bringing teenagers, government and NGOs together and ultimately leading Peru’s congress to pass legislation on the matter.\(^{30}\)

Working with the government of Mozambique, another UNICEF team devised a national media campaign on child marriage that featured prominent authority figures, including the country’s first lady, the minister of gender, children and social action, top religious leaders and teachers.\(^{31}\)

Securing buy-in from external stakeholders offers a unique opportunity to add clout and real-world meaning to evidence. This often involves engaging government departments and other organizations such as NGOs, schools and private sector companies through workshops, presentations and conferences. Ultimately, this is often where the work has its most significant impact – many gender evidence generation activities have either informed or directly led to policymaking changes and new government initiatives.

Often, a cause can be taken on by external advocates. After the team overseeing the *A New Era for Girls* report was asked to present its work to the EU in Brussels, Irish MEP Frances Fitzgerald picked up the baton, writing about the results in *the Irish Times*.\(^{32}\)

In Latin America, Chilean singer Denise Rosenthal recorded a song about gender norms and girls and launched it in collaboration with UNICEF’s Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office. The launch drew LACRO’s highest ever social media engagement (mainly consisting of adolescent girls), and Rosenthal has undertaken subsequent work, based on UNICEF evidence, to amplify girls’ voices.\(^{33}\)

Elsewhere, tie-ins with events such as the Beijing+25 Regional Review Meetings and the Y outh Co:Lab summit have helped amplify the reach of gender evidence while allying UNICEF’s work with the aims of other major programmes.

Making evidence generation count amid COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges around engagement. Yet some teams reacted decisively when faced with the inability to hold live events, in the process demonstrating the potential of digital outreach. LACRO’s *Girls’ Rights for an Equal Future* report, for instance, which launched to coincide with International Women’s Day in March 2021, attracted 17,000 viewers to a live online launch event.\(^{34}\)

Following on from this, the team launching the report in Brazil set out to use social media to reach young Brazilians through an event streamed on TikTok. The launch, conducted in Portuguese, attracted 70,000 views. “Girls’ rights and gender equality are interesting to adolescents and young people [in general], not only girls,” says Ivonne Urriola Perez, Gender and Development Officer at UNICEF LACRO.

Once conditions had eased, in-person launch events were held in several countries in the region, ensuring that the launch achieved maximum impact, both online and offline.


“Addressing culture overall is sensitive, especially in a country that has a 70 per cent rural population … Going against tradition or trying to promote a new narrative to shape how these cultural practices are implemented requires a very respectful and participatory engagement community approach.”

Massimiliano Sani, Social and Behaviour Change Specialist, on ‘Formative research to inform the development of the communication for development (C4D) strategy on child marriage in Mozambique’ (UNICEF Mozambique, 2017)

“Overcoming” Barriers to Evidence Uptake

Ensuring successful uptake of evidence is not without challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the persistence required to generate and disseminate evidence in an impactful way that meets the original objectives. On the flip side, given the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on women and girls, there have been examples of gender-related work being more impactful, especially given the extensive and up-to-date nature of much of the evidence gathered.

The pandemic aside, UNICEF’s global spread requires agility on multiple fronts. For example, evidence often applies to countries or regions where multiple languages are spoken. The questions that arise include: Can the findings be published in more than one language? There are also considerations linked to reach and dissemination – for instance, a report published in English may have greater global reach but reduced impact among specific populations of concern.

Local context provides perhaps the greatest challenges. Changing government priorities can alter the landscape in which evidence initiatives must operate. For example, one team found uptake negatively impacted after a national election ushered in a political shift. Local political context can also mean that relevant government ministries hold limited sway.

Local attitudes to gender can also provide challenges to evidence uptake. Research on gender and malnutrition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) recommended that bicycles should be provided to women to save them time spent on tasks such as fetching water – yet a concern is that men might take the bicycles. In Mozambique, attempts to implement a C4D strategy for the prevention and elimination of child marriage had to contend with local sociocultural norms.

Sociocultural norms can also create challenges during the evidence generation process. If practices such as initiation rites are widespread and culturally important in a country, discussions that question aspects of them can be taboo. Enabling women to speak openly about culturally embedded practices or taboo subjects can be especially challenging. Several teams have ensured that women interview women, or they conducted separate group discussions for women and men (and girls and boys).

There are also economic challenges in the low- and middle-income countries where UNICEF operates, affecting both the daily realities of those targeted and the availability of funding. The fact that additional funding has been forthcoming from a huge range of government bodies, private sector firms and other donor organizations demonstrates the buy-in that UNICEF’s gender work garners worldwide.

“If you look at the funding that has been provided to us to bring in additional gender technical services, I think it really speaks to high levels of institutional commitment.”

Helen Belachew, Gender and Development Specialist, on ‘Joint evaluation of the UNFPA–UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage’ (UNICEF Evaluation Office and UNFPA, 2019)

HOW GENDER EVIDENCE IS USED TO INFORM UNICEF STAFF KNOWLEDGE AND FURTHER EVIDENCE GENERATION

“Awareness and Reaction”

The impact of UNICEF’s gender evidence work is most apparent when it directly influences how organizations (including UNICEF) and individuals approach an issue. For example, equipped with evidence (generated by UNICEF’s Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring) that the disproportionate burden on women of unpaid household work actually begins in childhood, UNICEF was able to advocate for household chores to be incorporated in the statistical definition and measurement of child labour. Gender-related evidence has also repeatedly shifted focus in a way that drives more concrete actions, whether government legislation, new or modified NGO programme priorities, or improved business and employment practices.

Evidence generation also influences UNICEF’s own programming. For instance, evidence produced on child marriage by the West and Central Africa Regional Office shifted advocacy efforts towards demonstrating safer, empowering ways of protecting children from poverty, rather than focusing purely on child marriage as a harmful practice. Evidence also influences broader (even non-gender-focused) work, driving programme staff to adopt a gender lens for their own work, including when working with external organizations.

“Changes in Knowledge and Skills”

UNICEF staff cite specific UNICEF gender evidence as fundamental influences on their own programme design work, both in terms of the subject area insights revealed by the evidence itself and in the way that evidence is gathered, analysed and presented. For new staff especially, gender evidence has provided vital insights into programme design and topical context, both when encountered directly and through training initiatives linked to evidence dissemination.

For instance, the UNFPA–UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage was followed by a training programme for staff working in child protection and other sectors. Child protection colleagues were interested in building their knowledge around gender and child marriage, and the training programme helped them to do so.

The impact on knowledge and skills also goes beyond UNICEF. For instance, evidence on newborn care generated by UNICEF Cameroon yielded updated training curricula for health workers. A practitioner network was also established, allowing community health workers to share experiences and best practices, in line with a government drive to decentralize activity and eliminate community-level bottlenecks.

**FURTHER EVIDENCE GENERATION**

The work of many evidence initiatives extends beyond the initial lifespan, whether into one-off follow-up work or longer-running initiatives. Following the nominal conclusion of research, evaluations or studies, continuing evidence generation has been conducted by the same teams, by UNICEF colleagues elsewhere, and by government, academia, NGOs and the private sector.

For instance, the team that produced region-wide evidence on child marriage and adolescent pregnancy in West and Central Africa went on to partner with an external organization to conduct analysis within specific countries. Similarly, the team working on a child marriage C4D strategy in Mozambique worked with polling firm Ipsos to conduct a follow-up survey based on a model originally used in the Middle East and North Africa. These kinds of reviews enable the creation of new bodies of information and the expansion of existing ones.

Going beyond extending a single strand of research, a conceptual framework developed by UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, on gender-responsive and age-sensitive social protection, informed a five-year research programme operating across three broad streams. The same framework has also been adopted by several other development organizations.

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REAL-WORLD IMPACT: UNICEF’S GENDER EVIDENCE AND THE CHANGE IT DRIVES

“Evidence from our research is being used by UNICEF and local partners to build programmes that support women through improved access to services, including health care. For example, our analyses highlighted poor quality of care and lack of appropriate materials in maternity wards as a barrier to women going to clinics to deliver babies. This is being translated into action, including training of staff to address specifically identified needs and rehabilitation of certain maternity facilities.”

Isabel Scott Moncrieff, Research Specialist, on ‘Using an integrated analytics approach to understand the gendered dimensions of malnutrition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo’ (UNICEF DRC, 2021)

CHANGES IN BEHAVIOURS, PRACTICES AND PROGRAMMING

The optimal impact of any evidence generation is action. Practical or behavioural change often occurs when evidence ushers a shift in focus – either towards new areas or within existing ones. For instance, evidence generation in Peru (on menstrual hygiene) and the State of Palestine (on postnatal home visits) saw obvious impacts from incorporating women’s and girls’ voices – both in terms of increased ownership and in access to tools for their own empowerment.42,43 The latter include structural resources (such as a feedback mechanism for postnatal home visits in the State of Palestine) and physical tools (such as bicycles to reduce time spent by women in the DRC collecting water and food).44

Often, the most straightforward way for change to manifest is through the replication of successful methods and approaches. If something works in one location, it is likely to have an impact elsewhere, even if it requires adaptation. Localization also yields further innovation. For example, whereas social media outreach may prove effective in some countries, new approaches to more traditional media might be more effective elsewhere.

On an individual level, impactful and even surprising evidence outcomes have had an effect on how UNICEF staff think about gender issues. Evidence on gender and malnutrition led UNICEF staff in the DRC to better recognize the importance of gender programming; several staffers subsequently became de facto members of the gender team. Particular topics can also become a more specific focus of country programming, as is the case with menstrual hygiene in Peru.

“We used one methodology, one process, and it really broke [down] some of the silos in the organization … It was a very practical way of moving forward on something that cuts across three regions.”

Maha Muna, Regional Gender Advisor, on the multiregional Gender Counts study (UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office, UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office and UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, 2019)

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CHANGE

UNICEF’s gender evidence has been a driver of improvement in a variety of ways, but influencing legislative or policy change has the widest reach within a country and mandates systemic change. It also takes the ultimate responsibility for gender action away from organizations such as UNICEF and gives governments both accountability and an opportunity to lead – not only at home, but also as standard-bearers in the international arena.

Time and again, UNICEF’s gender evidence – often followed by the provision of technical or implementation support – has been a tool for political change. New national laws and policy have arisen as a direct result of gender evidence generation activities in several countries in recent years. The differing political reality and geography across these countries demonstrates how versatile UNICEF has been in informing gender-related policy and law. On a larger scale, too, supranational organizations such as the EU have been driven to take up issues by UNICEF’s gender research, often with the backing of other UN bodies and external organizations.

CHANGES IN ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Generating change in a large, global organization such as UNICEF can take time, involving gradual evolution rather than rapid, wholesale change. Happily, there are clear areas where gender evidence has both driven focus within UNICEF and put UNICEF on the map for its work combating gender inequality.

Figure 14. Mapping the legislative and policymaking impact of some of UNICEF’s gender evidence

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, GeoNames, Microsoft, Navinfo, Tom Tom, Wikipedia (Powered by Bing)
Note: This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers.
Large organizations can be prone to splitting into silos, making unified progress difficult. Region- and country-spanning evidence generation can counter such divisions. For example, the Gender Counts study was a first-of-its-kind quantitative review of the impacts of gender inequality across three UNICEF regions (Europe and Central Asia, South Asia, and East Asia and the Pacific). As well as demonstrating that UNICEF regional offices could collaborate using the same methodology, the review allowed UNICEF to position itself in this subject area.

Gender evidence has also influenced cross-organizational discussion and major strategies. For instance, discussion around child protection has shifted from focusing on violence against children to a multifaceted conversation on violence against women, girls and boys, and gender-based violence is now a cross-cutting priority in GAP 2022–2025.

46. Burnet Institute, Gender Counts East and South East Asia: A quantitative assessment of gender inequality and its impact on girls and boys, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women, Bangkok, 2019.
LOOKING AHEAD: LESSONS FOR EVIDENCE GENERATION LINKED TO UNICEF’S GENDER ACTION PLAN 2022–2025

“We are trying to use these results to strengthen our advocacy, our programming at country level, and the shared responsibility as well as shared information between the countries doing the programmes.”

Shoubo Jalal, Regional Gender Advisor, on ‘Child marriage in the Middle East and North Africa’ (UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, 2017)

As the new GPAP comes into effect, the challenges and achievements seen in gender evidence generation since 2014 offer clear lessons.

RESULTS OVER TIME

The uptake, use and impact of UNICEF’s gender evidence extend well beyond the initial timespan of most evidence generation activities, often by years. While evidence offers insight directly at the time of publication, more time – possibly involving additional phases of work – is sometimes needed to assess how evidence can best be used, as well as to see whether its use is having a positive impact. For instance, UNICEF staff at the Middle East and North Africa Regional Office suggested that another round of evidence generation as part of research on child marriage could reveal whether the work had contributed to a reduction in child marriage rates.50 Discussing the possibilities of expanding the scope of existing research, staff who worked on the Vanuatu Country Office’s research on women’s involvement in water use committees recommended conducting a systematic review of papers conducted on the subject in other countries.51

This would collate local-level research into an international body of evidence.


FILLING DATA GAPS

Evidence generation efforts have revealed data gaps to address over the next few years. For example, UNICEF HQ’s Harnessing the Power of Data for Girls analysis pointed to gaps in areas including women’s and girls’ participation, social protection coverage and decision making about reproductive health.52 Gaps also exist in terms of demographics – for example, there is a lack of data on fertility and contraception use (and sexuality more generally) among girls aged under 15. Partly this is because such subjects can be taboo or difficult for people to discuss – similar gaps exist in gender evidence around suicide and mental health, notwithstanding significant progress in data collection in recent years. More broadly, one area highlighted in GAP 2022–2025 is the need to more intentionally tackle the impacts of gender inequality that are faced specifically by girls.53

SPREADING THE REACH AND ENDURANCE OF OUTPUT AND ENGAGEMENT

UNICEF’s gender evidence has been successfully disseminated through a variety of different outputs and engagement activities. Producing peer-reviewed content has allowed UNICEF to contribute to academic discussions. Equally, community-level promotion of findings, canny media strategies and outreach to governments have yielded progress in a variety of ways. However, time is an issue in uptake and impact – once the fanfare of launch and engagement work has subsided, continued awareness-raising efforts are needed to sustain the impact of evidence generation.

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REPLICATING SUCCESSFUL EVIDENCE GENERATION ACTIVITIES

In terms of impacting on and speeding up gender programming, some of the most efficient and effective work has come through replicating successful approaches and methodologies. The Gender Counts review, for example, was successfully undertaken in three regions. Equally, the localization of gender evidence generation—from a regional to a national or even subnational level, for example—has offered a relatively quick way to maximize the impact of evidence generation.

But in seeking quick results by replicating successful work, there is a need to be sensitive to different conditions and local contexts. Language, for example, is an inclusionary (and potentially exclusionary) element of evidence generation. Great strides have been made in recent years—evidence generation has involved ground-level discussions in native and indigenous languages, while outputs have been published in a range of languages.

Replicating work across regions and countries links to another area that was highlighted in interviews with UNICEF staff: efforts to coordinate work and avoid silos—links between regional and country offices and UNICEF HQ could be enhanced, for example. Similarly, several examples have demonstrated the expansion of reach and knowledge made available by interagency cooperation. There are distinct possibilities for further crossover with other agencies, such as UN Women and UNFPA.

PUTTING GIRLS AND WOMEN AT THE CENTRE OF EVIDENCE GENERATION DESIGN AND METHODS

The hundreds of evidence generation activities identified in the Gender Solutions project have been characterized by openness, ambition and innovation. Efforts to involve women and girls in the design process have been key. These include ensuring the gender equality commitment of personnel and partner organizations—some research teams have favoured employing consultants with a feminist background, for example, while others have sought partner organizations that have been acknowledged for previous gender work.

Several researchers have conducted separate discussion activities for women and men (and boys and girls), to ensure that everyone can make their voice heard. Who conducts discussions is important, too—girls may feel more comfortable when they are interviewed by women, for example.

Ultimately, gender-transformative methodology can empower women at every stage of an evidence generation project. The evaluation of a postnatal home visiting programme in the State of Palestine involved dedicated meetings with female community leaders and service providers to engage them in design and the discussion of findings, recommendations and implementation. The participants included women who had never been engaged in such a way.

55. Burnet Institute, Gender Counts East and South East Asia: A quantitative assessment of gender inequality and its impact on girls and boys, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women, Bangkok, 2019.
The UNICEF Gender Evidence Awards: Rewarding insight, innovation and impact

Twenty-five evidence generation activities were shortlisted for the UNICEF Gender Evidence Awards. An independent external review panel of seven senior gender experts with significant academic and policy experience assessed these 25 activities and selected three Gender Evidence Awards winners based on the following criteria:

- (Potential for) impact
- Local engagement and ownership
- Conceptualization (the context, relevance and purpose)
- Innovation and originality
- Methodology (i.e. that it is appropriate, rigorous, robust, ethical and clearly documented)
- Writing and presentation
- Promise of gender-transformative analysis and change
- Ethical standards

The three winners are outlined in no particular order over the next few pages. The 25-strong shortlist can be found in Appendix 1.
Addressing gender barriers to entrepreneurship and leadership among girls and young women in South-East Asia (UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, 2021)\(^{59}\)

Focused on four key life stages spanning ages 10–24, this research assessed gender-related barriers to entrepreneurship in South-East Asia, specifically Indonesia, Lao PDR and Thailand. It combined primary research with a literature review and expert interviews. The external review panel praised the research for its participatory nature, design (and the clarity of its description in the report), and the use of practical examples and areas of action to support the report’s recommendations.

The UNICEF Gender Solutions external review panel’s verdict:

“It was participatory, it had good co-design, one could see how the uptake could be done, the recommendations were well elaborated and it had a good conceptual framework. The report is also very effective – it goes into a lot of detail and really brings out the realities of these women entrepreneurs. Overall, it was very well done and very usable.”

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UNICEF has committed to advancing gender equality and dismantling gender-related barriers faced by young girls and women in the East Asia and Pacific region as they move through adolescence and early adulthood. This research sought to strengthen the evidence base behind this commitment and guide action. It utilized a human-centred design that incorporated a range of primary research involving girls. Seeking to understand the multidimensional interaction of drivers of gender inequality, the research assesses the impact and interactions of various ‘ecosystems’ – individual, social, education and skills development, entrepreneurship and employment, and policy and law.

Working in specific areas of Indonesia, Lao PDR and Thailand, researchers conducted a combination of co-designed workshops with young people (aged 10–24), in-depth interviews with girls, and text-based and online surveys with young women. Researchers sought to build a picture of the aspirations of girls and young women, their lived experiences, and the barriers and enablers they face.

“The findings from this research enable us to make a more compelling case to partners on the need for adequate investments in financial literacy, digital skills and entrepreneurship opportunities for girls, along with access to financing for young women.”

Roshni Basu, Regional Advisor, Adolescent Development
THE FINDINGS

The compiled evidence was used to generate country-specific findings, key learnings and a series of recommendations. These recommendations, each supported by multiple action points and examples in practice, were designed to guide the actions of a variety of stakeholders across the region – including the implementation of UNICEF and UNDP programming to empower young people.

The research yielded seven key learnings:

■ Young women suffer from significantly lower self-confidence and higher fear of failure than young men.

■ Girls and young women feel that their individual needs and choices must come second to family duties.

■ Young women feel that their career possibilities are limited by societal pressures on appropriate roles for women.

■ Education is viewed as inadequate in developing entrepreneurial skills and equipping girls and women for work, while unaffordability and travel needs restrict access to skills development.

■ Flexibility in balancing income and care responsibilities is a significant reason why young women decide to pursue entrepreneurship.

■ Inadequate access to finance, business networks and information are the most significant barriers faced to entrepreneurship by young women.

■ The lack of female leadership in decision-making positions and the existence of gender-blind policies and laws limit the potential for advancing gender equality.

Figure 15. The four key stages of a young woman’s journey, as identified by the research

UPTAKE AND IMPACT

The report was launched at the Youth Co:Lab summit for Asia-Pacific in June 2021, led by UNDP and Citi Foundation. Many private sector companies and youth organizations participated. In November 2021, at the virtual forum ‘Unlimited ASEAN: Empowering ASEAN’s Young People’, co-hosted by UNICEF, the ASEAN Business Advisory Council, the EU-ASEAN Business Council and UNDP, the results were presented to over 500 participants from across South-East Asia, many of whom included private sector partners. The three country offices also disseminated the research at country level and the report was widely promoted on social media.

As well as using the research to influence policy dialogue, the East Asia and Pacific Regional Office is also starting to work with e-commerce, ICT and digital media companies on tailored access to financing, business platforms, information and training, and plans to give more visibility to female role models in entrepreneurship and leadership. The findings have been used to leverage further research and interest from partners, with additional funding already secured.
Gender Counts: A quantitative assessment of gender inequality and its impact on girls and boys (UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office, UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office and UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, 2019)\textsuperscript{60,61,62,63}

This first-of-its-kind review used quantitative data spanning dozens of data points to build a comprehensive picture of how gender inequality impacts girls and boys in low- and middle-income countries in Asia and the Pacific. UNICEF-led, but bringing together eight United Nations agencies, it identified clear data gaps and yielded four regional reports (covering Central Asia, South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific) alongside a range of multimedia outputs. The external review panel praised Gender Counts for its clear framing, clear identification of shortcomings, scalability to other regions, accessible presentation of data, and impressive uptake and impact.

The UNICEF Gender Solutions external review panel’s verdict:

“It has good potential for driving gender-transformative change and [is] very useful. It establishes a good basis for follow-up research and identifies areas where more data needs to be collected. The language is very accessible for non-experts. It is an effective, clear, simple and well-presented advocacy tool. It is widely referred to by UNICEF and the other agencies that worked on it. It has been presented in many countries and has led to other countries delving more into adolescence. It has an immediate impact on laypeople; they become concerned once they read the results.”

\textsuperscript{60. Burnet Institute, Gender Counts Central Asia: A quantitative assessment of gender inequality and its impact on girls and boys, UNICEF Geneva, 2019.}

\textsuperscript{61. Burnet Institute, Gender Counts East and South East Asia: A quantitative assessment of gender inequality and its impact on girls and boys, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women, Bangkok, 2019.}

\textsuperscript{62. Burnet Institute, Gender Counts Pacific: A quantitative assessment of gender inequality and its impact on girls and boys, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women, Bangkok, 2019.}

\textsuperscript{63. Burnet Institute, Gender Counts South Asia: A quantitative assessment of gender inequality and its impact on girls and boys, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women, Kathmandu, 2019.}
The research

Relatively little is known about the impact of gender inequality on the well-being and development of children and adolescents. With this in mind, Gender Counts was designed to amass and assess a comprehensive range of data on the subject.

Researchers sought to gather national-level data for over 100 indicators across a conceptual framework spanning six domains: two contextual (‘socio-demographic context’ and ‘social-level indicators of gender inequality’) and four outcomes-focused (‘health’, ‘education and employment’, ‘protection’ and ‘safe environment’).

Figure 16. Inequalities in educational and employment outcomes between girls and boys

Boys are less likely to be in upper secondary school than girls
Secondary school aged children not in upper secondary school

BUT girls are less likely to be in post-school employment, education or training
15–24-year-olds not in employment, education or training (NEET)

Gender Counts gathered data on dozens of indicators for countries across four regions
THE FINDINGS

The indicators covered an unsurprisingly vast range of subjects (examples include migration, pollution, time spent on chores, education status, adolescent pregnancy, suicide and access to public space – but these only hint at the scope). Several key findings spanned the regions covered by all four reports:

- Girls are exposed to high levels of household, institutional and societal gender inequality.
- Women earn less than men and have less control over household resources. Many married women face restricted mobility, resources and decision-making power, and face isolation.
- Entrenched gender roles allocate unpaid domestic work and childcare to women and girls.

- More than 4.5 million girls give birth each year without adequate sexual and reproductive health education and services and face potential complications from early pregnancy.
- Seventy million more girls than boys do not enter post-school education, employment or training.
- Child marriage remains common, while girls are four times more trafficked than boys and a fifth of girls in some countries suffer from intimate partner violence.

One key aim was to identify data gaps; the research identified several areas where available data did not meet the criteria for inclusion or was not disaggregated by age, demonstrating that quality data is unavailable for entire topics linked to gender inequality in young people.

Available data was assessed by teams in each region, with numerous findings highlighted in four final regional reports, with a chapter linked to each domain. Ultimately, four recommendations spanned all four regions covered by the assessment:

- Integrate priority gender indicators for children and adolescents into routine reporting.
- Invest in gender data collection for children and adolescents in priority areas.
- Conduct additional research to understand observed gender disparities for children and adolescents.
- Address key drivers of gender inequality in the region.
In step with its broad scope, the review yielded a range of outputs, including four regional reports, an interagency webinar, the ‘Gender Counts More Than Ever’ blog and an online video viewed over 1,500 times. An article published in The Lancet Global Health won the Burnet Institute Nick Crofts Publication Award, as well as generating multiple citations and media mentions.64

Gender Counts remains an important advocacy tool and is widely referred to internally, with partners and by other agencies. It is forward-looking, with its six domains matching the most essential domains of the latest GPAP. It is also used as a resource to advocate for additional data collection or action. At country office level, it has informed gender programmatic reviews, situation analyses and country programme documents. At regional level, the UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office disseminated the Gender Counts findings at several important events, including the Asia-Pacific High-Level Ministerial Conference on the Beijing +25 Review and the side event ‘Girls Count: Girls’ Rights and Gender Data in Asia-Pacific’, and shared the findings in a Gender Counts social media campaign on the International Day of the Girl in 2019. The UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office now has gender country profiles for all countries, which provide data on gender differences spanning politics, economy, education, health, child protection and gender socialization. The UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia is using the Gender Counts evidence to populate a regional database.

Having demonstrated its multiregional scalability (helping to overcome silos in the process), Gender Counts could be a foundation for more disaggregated data at the subnational level and could potentially be scaled up to all of UNICEF’s regions.

Formative research to inform the development of the communication for development (C4D) strategy on child marriage in Mozambique (UNICEF Mozambique, 2017) 65

This research, which engaged government and civil society organizations from the outset, combined an extensive literature review with individual interviews and focus-group discussions. This was the first formative research available in the country to inform UNICEF’s child marriage programme in Mozambique, and it led to a national multimedia campaign and local-level community engagement programmes. The evidence generated contributed to successful efforts to advocate for the adoption of new legislation and an acceleration in social and behaviour change programming in Mozambique. The external review panel appreciated the focus on learning from positive deviance (which in this case meant not marrying before the age of 18) and the strong use of multisectoral stakeholders. Panellists were also impressed by the extent to which the research helped shift social norms.

The UNICEF Gender Solutions external review panel’s verdict:

“A brilliant example of the way that we should be thinking about the research we do before campaigns are done. So many campaigns don’t do the social norms work beforehand. There was great engagement with a huge universe of audiences – boys, girls, adults, influencers. A fine example of excellent formative research, it could set an example for a lot of country offices working on C4D. It just stood out above other studies, hands down.”

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THE RESEARCH

With over 40 per cent of women aged 18–24 married before the age of 18, the prevalence of child marriage in Mozambique is among the highest in Eastern and Southern Africa.66

To combat gaps in knowledge around child marriage, UNICEF partnered with the ministry of gender, children and social action to draft a communication for development (C4D) strategy on the subject. The C4D strategy was informed by formative research that combined a bibliographical review with 86 interviews and 41 focus-group discussions conducted in eight districts across four regions where child marriage rates were high.

The research highlighted perceptions, attitudes and practices around child marriage and provided a qualitative analysis of the sociocultural causes and interpretations of child marriage. It also focused on uncovering positive deviance – i.e. examples of behaviours and strategies that allow people to find better solutions for problems than their peers (in this case, it meant not marrying before the age of 18). This allowed solutions to child marriage to be sought among persons or communities with the same characteristics as those who practise child marriage.

THE FINDINGS

Beyond data on trends and prevalence, the research assessed reasons given for marrying before the age of 18, including social prestige and pressure around things such as initiation rites and honour, as well as economic reasons; who girls marry, in terms of age and social status; and reasons for not marrying, such as complications in pregnancy and childbirth, and the possibility of otherwise continuing their studies.

To examine positive deviance linked to child marriage, the research profiled members of two groups: women who had not married early and girls favourable to delaying marriage. It also assessed the negative and positive social perceptions faced by members of both groups. It found that girls who have not married early or are not in favour of doing so are sometimes seen to be subverting standards of acceptable conduct or are regarded as suffering bad luck (being ‘cursed’; essentially). The parents of these girls – especially fathers – also face negative perceptions related to norms around parental authority. However, positive perceptions also arose in relation to parents (for being responsible leaders) and girls (for being aware of the physical and social preparation for marriage that delaying marriage allows).

Finally, the research provided a focus on access to protection, health and education (or basic services), as well as assessing preferred means of communication (ranging from radio to mobile cinema, community dialogues to door-to-door campaigns) at district level.

The final report provided 18 recommendations to inform the UNICEF’s C4D strategy. These covered a broad spectrum, ranging from social pressures around child marriage (“the C4D strategy should stress the experience of sexuality in the perspective of law, and subvert the idea of the treatment of girls as sexual objects”) to social and behaviour change strategies (“the C4D strategy should structure multiple forms of communication using the available channels, specifying the objectives to be attained with each means and the specific content”).

“The research has been used both in the UNICEF Mozambique Country Office and also externally … the findings have been discussed extensively – for example, internally, during the development of the new country programme … we had just started a new country programme and child marriage was considered a flagship priority for UNICEF.”

Massimiliano Sani, Social and Behaviour Change Specialist
UPTAKE AND IMPACT

Building on the recommendations, UNICEF’s national C4D strategy was designed and validated by all stakeholders. UNICEF also developed a national multimedia campaign to address child marriage, with the participation of high-level figures including the minister of gender, children and social action, the first lady, the chair of the Interfaith Council of Religions in Mozambique, and other stakeholders such as teachers. In addition, UNICEF developed storylines about child marriage and initiation rites as part of a long-running national edutainment radio drama Ouro Negro and for community theatre, and kick-started a community dialogue intervention in target districts to address gender and social norms around child marriage.67, 68

The combined advocacy efforts of UNICEF, UNFPA and civil society organizations led to the approval, in 2019, of a new law against child marriage. The research findings also informed a mentorship programme conducted by UNFPA. In addition, UNICEF, together with the ministry of education and in coordination with the ministry of health, the ministry of gender, children and social action, the police and civil society organizations, developed a schools-based mechanism to prevent and respond to cases of violence and child marriage and to provide access to legal and protection services.

The proportion of women married before the age of 18 declined from 48 per cent of 20–24-year-old women to 41 per cent of 18–24-year-old women in Mozambique between 2011 and 2019 (although one province is not covered in the 2019 data). However, UNICEF expects these gains to have slipped in the wake of Cyclone Idai in 2019, recent military conflict and the impact of COVID-19 prevention measures, including school closures, that led to an increase in teenage pregnancies, increased household poverty and families turning to coping mechanisms including child marriage. Even without these recent setbacks, there is a long way to go before this harmful practice can be eliminated.

Ben Cislaghi (Chair) is Associate Professor at the Department of Global Health and Development, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). Ben previously worked for various NGOs and international organizations. He was director of research for the NGO Tostan in Senegal for three years. His research work at the LSHTM has contributed to increasing the understanding of how gender norms affect children's health and how their effect can be measured. He leads a team of researchers and activists working at the intersection between gender equality, child protection and ethics of international development. Ben is passionate about translating research into practice and collaborates with several NGOs to increase their self-reflective ethical practices and integrate greater understanding of gender and social norms into their work. This commitment results in both translational research-to-action and accompaniment of small and mid-size NGOs working in low- and middle-income countries. His latest book is Human Rights and Community-Led Development (Edinburgh University Press).

Clara Alemann is Director of Programmes at Promundo-US. She is a gender specialist with almost 20 years of experience in social science research, programme design, implementation and evaluation of social development programmes to advance gender equality. Her work has focused on the integration of gender-transformative approaches within social development programmes in the areas of early childhood development, parenting and caregiver support, sexual and reproductive health, and engaging men and boys to promote gender equality. She has worked closely with government, research organizations and NGOs in the adaptation, design, implementation and evaluation of gender-transformative interventions, and she provides technical accompaniment to organizations seeking to strengthen their work on family violence prevention. Clara previously worked as a gender specialist with UNDP, the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank. She has a master's degree in Public Policy from the School of International Public Affairs at Columbia University and a BA in Political Science from the University of Buenos Aires. She has worked in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

Bonnie Berry has more than five years’ experience working on children’s issues at the United Nations with both government and civil society. She is currently a Senior Advocacy Advisor with Save the Children International in New York. Her work is focused on children and the SDGs, climate change, and public investment in children. In her previous role as Senior Policy Advisor with the UK Permanent Mission, Bonnie represented the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the UNICEF Executive Board. Bonnie has additional experience supporting advocacy, partnerships and research initiatives to promote children’s rights in conflict settings with Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict. She holds a master’s degree in International Affairs from the New School and a bachelor’s degree in International Affairs from the George Washington University.

Robert Blum is the Emeritus William H. Gates, Sr. Professor, Bloomberg School of Public Health. He has edited two books and written over 325 journal articles, book chapters and special reports. Past-President of the Society for Adolescent Medicine and Health, he has served on the American Board of Pediatrics, is a past chair of the Guttmacher Institute Board of Directors and was inaugural chair of the US National Academy of Sciences Committee on Adolescent Health. In 2006 he was elected to the National Academy of Medicine. He is a consultant to the World Bank, UNICEF and UNFPA. He has served on the Technical Advisory Group of the WHO’s Maternal and Child Health Department, as well as the Scientific and Technical Advisory Group of the Human Reproductive Programme. He has received the Society for Adolescent Medicine’s Outstanding Achievement Award, the American Public Health Association’s Herbert Needleman Award and the Child Health Bureau’s Vince Hutchins Award. In 2014 he received the American Public Health Association’s Martha May Eliot Award and the University of Minnesota Outstanding Alumni Award. He is the principal investigator (PI) on the Global Early Adolescent Study and co-PI on an adolescent mental health study in Kenya, Indonesia and Vietnam.
Bernadette Madrid is the Director of the Child Protection Unit of the University of the Philippines Manila – Philippine General Hospital, where she is concurrently Associate Clinical Professor of Pediatrics. She is the Executive Director of the Child Protection Network Foundation, an NGO that supports the training of child protection professionals and the development of women and child protection units in the Philippines. She is a member of several government committees on health, social welfare, law enforcement and the judiciary, and she is frequently invited to be a resource person for congressional and senate hearings on laws affecting women and children. Bernadette has published several papers on child abuse and neglect that have led to changes in policy and practice in the Philippines. She has been a consultant and trainer for different international agencies such as UNICEF, WHO, UNESCAP and UNFPA. She is a reviewer for journals including Child Abuse and Neglect, Journal of Interpersonal Violence and Trauma, Violence and Abuse. She has engineered changes in the medical, legal and social welfare paradigm on women and child protection in the Philippines, leading to her receiving several national awards.

Catherine Maternowska is Professor of Violence Prevention for Young People and co-founder of the End Violence Lab at the University of Edinburgh. She has three decades of field-based research and programming experience focused on violence prevention and response, gender equity, and sexual and reproductive health. Trained in economics, public health and medical anthropology, she uses mixed-methodology approaches to achieve improved outcomes. She has published dozens of peer-reviewed articles on gender-related issues and violence prevention, as well as the book Reproducing Inequities: Poverty and the politics of population in Haiti (Rutgers University Press). She previously held a faculty position at the University of California, San Francisco, largely based in East Africa. In 2012–2017 she led the Multi-Country Study on the Drivers of Violence for UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti. In 2017–2021 she led Data, Evidence and Learning at the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. At the End Violence Lab, she provides technical accompaniment around generating and curating data and evidence. She is co-leading efforts to establish a first-of-its-kind global data institute addressing child sexual abuse and exploitation. She has a PhD from Columbia University, an MPH from the University of Michigan and a BSc (Econ) from the London School of Economics.

Maheen Sultan is Senior Fellow of Practice and a founder of the Centre for Gender and Social Transformation at the BRAC Development Institute, BRAC University, a regional centre for research, teaching and policy related to gender and social transformation. She is a development practitioner with over 25 years’ experience in social development, poverty, civil society and community participation, and gender equality. Maheen is also a women’s rights activist and a member of Naripokkho, a Bangladeshi women’s rights organization. She is the co-editor of Voicing Demands: Feminist activism in transitional contexts (Zed Books).
## APPENDIX 1: GENDER SOLUTIONS SHORTLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Office type</th>
<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>GAP priority area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A new era for girls: Taking stock of 25 years of progress</td>
<td>HQ Gender Section</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Cross-cutting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing gender barriers to entrepreneurship and leadership among girls and young women in South-East Asia</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>East Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Advance girls’ learning and skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adolescent girls’ information needs regarding menstrual hygiene management: The Sindh experience</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Menstrual health and hygiene; Equitable WASH systems</td>
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<td>Challenges and impacts of menstrual hygiene management for girls and adolescents in schools</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Menstrual health and hygiene; Equitable WASH systems; Education</td>
</tr>
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<td>Child marriage in the Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<td>Child marriage, adolescent pregnancy and family formation in West and Central Africa</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>West and Central Africa</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td>Does women's participation in water committees affect management and water system performance in rural Vanuatu?</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Equitable WASH systems</td>
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<td>Evaluation of listening services and protection of infants and female victims of violence in Ngazidji, Comoros</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Addressing violence against women and children</td>
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<td>Formative research to inform the development of the communication for development (C4D) strategy on child marriage in Mozambique</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>End child marriage</td>
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<td>From the maternity to the home: An anthropological study on the care of newborns in Cameroon</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Maternal health, nutrition and HIV</td>
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<td>Gender Counts: A quantitative assessment of gender inequality and its impact on girls and boys*</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Europe and Central Asia</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Cross-cutting</td>
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<td>Gender Counts: A quantitative assessment of gender inequality and its impact on girls and boys*</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Cross-cutting</td>
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<td>Gender Counts: A quantitative assessment of gender inequality and its impact on girls and boys*</td>
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<td>East Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>2019</td>
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<td>Gender-Responsive Age-Sensitive Social Protection: A conceptual framework</td>
<td>Office of Research – Innocenti</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Gender-responsive social protection systems and care work</td>
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<td>Girls Rights for an Equal Future: Renewing commitments in Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
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<td>Harnessing the Power of Data for Girls: Taking stock and looking ahead to 2030</td>
<td>Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>Joint evaluation of the UNFPA–UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage</td>
<td>HQ Evaluation Office</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>End child marriage</td>
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<td>Making the connection: Intimate partner violence and violence against children in Eastern Europe and Central Asia</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Europe and Central Asia</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Addressing violence against women and children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reducing child marriage in India</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>End child marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey on childhood, gender and time use in the framework of the health emergency</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Cross-cutting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Towards a more comprehensive understanding of the direct and indirect determinants of violence against women in South Africa with a view to enhancing violence prevention</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Addressing violence against women and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using an integrated analytics approach to understand the gendered dimensions of malnutrition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Maternal health, nutrition and HIV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence in schools in Serbia: Analysis of the situation from 2006 to 2013</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Addressing violence against women and children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Gender Counts is a multiregional study. Four subregional reports were nominated on behalf of UNICEF Europe and Central Asia (the Central Asia report); UNICEF South Asia (the South Asia report); and UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific (the East and South-East Asia report and the Pacific report). The subregional reports were reviewed by different external review panel members but considered together for the Gender Evidence Awards selection.*
APPENDIX 2: GENDER SOLUTIONS
SHORTLISTING PROCESS

761
- Evidence generation activities were mapped against the Gender Action Plan 2022–2025 priorities.

58
- Evidence generation activities were included in a longlist, based on previous Best of UNICEF Research winners and highly scored submissions; previous Best Evaluations and Highly Satisfactory Evaluations as defined in the Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System; and activities highlighted in annual reports.

Using the longlist as a starting point, each Regional Gender Advisor nominated 3 activities and HQ nominated 4 activities, based on the external review panel assessment criteria.

25
- Nominations were included in a shortlist, which was reviewed in a meeting with the UNICEF advisory group and the Regional Gender Advisors.

All focal points for the shortlisted evidence generation activities were invited for an interview.

3
- Gender Evidence Awards winners were selected by the external review panel, based on the external review panel assessment criteria.