



Gender assessment of civil society organization partners of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage

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marriage**
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INTRODUCTION



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The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage (the Global Programme) is a United Nations flagship joint programme that seeks to address the global challenge of child marriage, to support girls most at risk for child marriage and already married girls. It promotes the rights of adolescent girls to avert marriage and pregnancy, and seeks to enable them to achieve their aspirations through education and alternative pathways. This programme also aims to amplify its impact by working intensively with civil society organizations (CSOs) in addition to other partners. Its engagement with CSOs enables action to be grounded at local level and enhances the potential for significant societal transformation.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are considering various strategies for adopting a gender-transformative approach in designing, implementing and measuring interventions in the Global Programme. This follows their efforts in developing and piloting a field-tested gender-transformative accelerator tool.¹ In line with ongoing initiatives to promote the gender-transformative work of CSOs, the purpose of this assignment is to assess the CSOs which form part of the Global Programme, and to review and document organizations that are youth- or women-led and those supporting adolescent girls' empowerment and agency. This assessment seeks to guide UNICEF and UNFPA on how better to support and identify opportunities for improving gender-transformative approaches (GTAs) within the Global Programme. The assessment documents the CSOs' structure, work, operations, and strategies in order to determine areas for improvement and to identify and promote the work of those demonstrating – or who have the potential to demonstrate – GTA in their work. The ultimate objective of the

assignment is to support, foster, and enable feminist organizations and those that are youth or women-led to challenge the causes of gender inequality and to promote gender-transformative change at all socioecological levels.

The assessment draws on the guidance in the 'Technical note on gender-transformative approaches in the Global Programme to End Child Marriage Phase II',² as well as the definition of a GTA outlined in the Inter-agency Working Group for Gender Equality,³ which includes:

- fostering a critical examination of inequalities and gender roles, norms and dynamics
- recognizing and strengthening positive norms that support equality and an enabling environment
- promoting the position of women, girls and marginalized groups
- engaging with men and boys to transform the underlying social structures, policies, systems and broadly held social norms that perpetuate and legitimize gender inequalities
- mobilizing communities, effectively communicating positive attitudes towards girls and women and building strong networks with key stakeholders and partners.

Some of the key findings include:

- More than 50 per cent of the CSOs have, to varying degrees, as a core part of their vision and mission, the advancement of the rights of women and girls. These organizations, ranked as gender-responsive and gender-transformative, incorporate the empowerment of women and girls into their programming and aim for structural change to power dynamics, norms and institutions. There were multiple examples of organizations questioning gender roles and norms. Notably,

1. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, A synthesis paper on the Gender-Transformative Accelerator, UNFPA and UNICEF, July 2022.

2. United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 'Technical note on gender-transformative approaches in the Global Programme to End Child Marriage Phase II: A summary for practitioners', UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women, January 2020.

3. United States Agency for International Development, Policy Advocacy Communication Enhanced, and Interagency Gender Working Group, 'The Gender Integration Continuum,' USAID, PACE, IGWG, 2017, Washington, D.C., 2017, <www.igwg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Gender-Continuum-PowerPoint_final.pdf>.

Some 20 per cent of the organizations ranked as gender-transformative, showing impressive efforts in addressing the root causes and power relations contributing to inequality and exclusion, and are actively engaging in structural and substantive gender-transformative change.

36 per cent of the CSOs demonstrated that they are gender-responsive and have targeted actions for equality, inclusion and empowerment, and have demonstrated some effort towards structural and substantive gender-transformative change. Some 20 per cent of the organizations ranked as gender-transformative, showing impressive efforts in addressing the root causes and power relations contributing to inequality and exclusion, and are actively engaging in structural and substantive gender-transformative change. Moreover, there were several examples of CSOs actively enabling young people, and women in all their diversity, to influence and/or lead programme implementation and evaluation.

- Some 19 per cent of the CSOs are aware of gender inequalities but could be doing more to recognize the different needs of men and women and to address and overcome harmful gender roles. However, many of those that are ranked as gender-aware can likely be supported to become more gender-responsive or transformative.
- Only 1 per cent of CSOs were marked as gender-unequal, demonstrating possible inabilities to acknowledge and incorporate efforts to address structural inequalities in their work.
- There was a small number of CSOs, 14 per cent, that could not be assessed due to the unavailability of information or contact details.

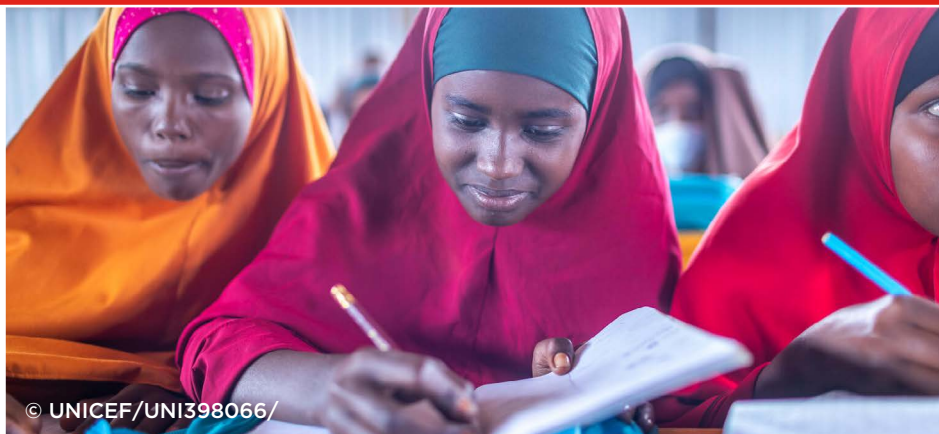
It is clear that many of the assessed CSOs, with the continued support of the Global Programme and the implementation of the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool, have the potential to become gender-transformative.

However, further support is needed, particularly in conducting gender analyses to inform programmes, develop internal policies and strategies, and consider interventions to address systemic challenges. At this stage, this support can be provided through the development of toolkits, and by conducting workshops and training, and engaging with organizations individually or collectively.



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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



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The assessment covered 134 CSOs, identified by country office Focal Points. It was conducted by using information from various online resources, including the CSOs' websites, reviews of available annual reports, analysis of strategy documents, social media pages, descriptions of the CSOs by external parties (for example, from funders, coalitions, networks and news articles). Any additional reports from UNFPA and UNICEF were also considered. This information was complemented by input from the CSOs, primarily through the completion of a self-assessment survey. The questions from this are annexed to this report. The survey was available in English, French, Portuguese and Arabic, and was circulated to the CSOs by the Focal Points of the respective country office. At the date of drafting the final assessment report, more than 61 per cent of CSOs had completed the surveys.

In some instances, certain markers could not be assessed due to insufficient information or evidence. Some CSOs completed the surveys but did not have an online presence. Others provided

minimal information on a public website and did not complete the survey. Some could not be identified based on the description (usually an acronym) provided and, without contact details, it was not possible to engage with them. As a result, approximately 14 per cent of the 134 CSOs on the assessment list could not be assessed. Where organizations were assessed on limited information, this has been noted. In these cases, some organizations were approached for an online interview, however, due to timing and availability, very few organizations were available. With the arranged interviews, connectivity challenges made it difficult to meaningfully engage with the CSOs.

Feedback from the Focal Points after the first draft and in the lead-up to the finalization of the assessment has also been taken into consideration.

Nevertheless, the desktop research coupled with the surveys enabled a reasonable assessment of approximately 86 per cent of the CSOs.

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ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

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The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme explains a GTA as follows:

“Gender transformation actively examines, questions and changes rigid gender norms and imbalances of power that advantage boys and men over girls and women. It aspires to tackle the root causes of gender inequality and reshape unequal power relations; it moves beyond individual self-improvement among girls and women towards redressing the power dynamics and structures that serve to reinforce gendered inequalities.”⁴

An assessment tool was developed and reviewed at an early stage of the assignment by members of the UNICEF and UNFPA team.⁵ This took into account the socioecological model and opportunities for gender-transformative programming as described in the ‘Technical note on gender-transformative approaches in the Global Programme to End Child Marriage Phase II’, along with the five key strategies identified in the technical note, and the expertise and experience of the consultants. The methodology also takes into account the definition of women-and/or girl-led organizations, by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee’s Gender Reference Group, particularly with regard to the assessment of team leadership and representation.⁶

The assessment acknowledges that organizations that are women-led or girl-led are not necessarily feminist organizations, and neither are those that focus on combating injustices against women and girls. In line with contemporary understanding of feminist movement building, there are a few key characteristics that distinguish feminist organizations from social justice organizations.⁷ For example, feminist organizations recognize patriarchy and gender-based systemic discrimination and exclusion as one of the deepest layers of inequality in society. Feminist organizations also examine how power dynamics manifest in public and private spaces. Moreover, feminist organizations adopt intersectional approaches, recognizing that patriarchal power does not operate in isolation.

4. ‘Technical note on gender-transformative approaches’.

5. This approach, with relevant contextual and necessary adaptations, has been applied in various gender assessments conducted by the consultants with other multilateral and national-level clients. It is based heavily on the GTA but adapted to the particular needs of this project.

6. The full definition is: “a registered or informally organized group or network led by a woman or girl, whose leadership and staffing is made up of women and/or girls, comprising minimum 50 per cent of board, executive positions, and staff/volunteers, with a mandate to advance gender equality and women’s and/or girls’ rights and empowerment. Exceptions include organizations with less than 50 per cent of board, executive positions, and staff/volunteers in exceptional crisis contexts where it is difficult or not safe for women/girls to take up public positions. These organizations must however be primarily working with a mandate to advance gender equality and women’s and/or girls’ rights and empowerment.”

7. Batliwala, Srilatha, All about movements: Why building movements creates deeper change, Primer 2 in CREA’s Feminist Leadership for Social Transformation Series, CREA, undated, <https://creaworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/All-About-Movements_Web.pdf>, accessed 26 June 2023.

Incorporating guidance from the technical note, both the structural (institutional structure and operations) and substantive (programmatic activities) qualities of an organization were

considered. Collectively, the tools list several structural and substantive assessment characteristics (see **Figure 1**).

Figure 1. Comparing structural and substantive qualities of an organization

STRUCTURAL	Explicitly acknowledges the need for gender representation in its leadership and demonstrates evidence of taking steps to advance gender representation in its leadership and team, inclusive of evidence of a shared understanding of feminism at the level of leadership.
	Has gender equality included in the core values of the organization and has the organization a gender budget system in place aligned with its vision and mission, the advancement of the rights of women, girls and marginalized groups in society and the attainment of gender equality, and actively allocates resources to programmes that seek to achieve this vision.
	Seeks to inform and enable staff to implement feminist principles and advance gender equality within the organization by creating an empowering space in which women can work.
	Has appropriate internal policies in place to advance gender equality within the organization, such as equal opportunity policies, sexual harassment policies or hiring targets.
	Has a clear set of feminist statements that guide the strategies, practices and behaviours of the organization, as well as a feminist benchmark document that allows the organization to measure and show the results of these strategies, practices and behaviours.
SUBSTANTIVE	Challenges power relations, norms, institutions, and structural drivers of inequality, and critically question gender roles and norms throughout its work, including by involving women, girls and young people - including affected populations - in strategic decision-making about programming.
	Actively incorporates the empowerment of women and girls into its programming, rather than merely focusing on the passive delivery of support services to women and girls.
	Has, as a core part of its vision and mission, the advancement of equality and the rights of women and girls, working towards human-rights-based gender-transformative change with an approach that aims to leave no person behind.
	Challenges the root causes of gender inequality, recognizing the importance of an intersectional approach that acknowledges the varying forces of discrimination and bias faced by different individuals.
	Critically questions gender roles and norms throughout its work, understands what positive gender norms are, and seeks to infuse them throughout its work.
	Demonstrates an understanding in its strategic programming of how to enable individual-level empowerment of women and girls as well as the need for structural change to power dynamics, norms, institutions and the structural drivers that perpetuate gender inequalities.

With the above factors and the five key strategies of the technical note, the consultants developed questions, which formed the basis of the assessment tool used to assess the CSOs (see **Figure 2**).

Figure 2. Key questions

STRUCTURAL	Mission & vision	Is the strategic programming and corresponding (human) resource planning/ allocation of the organization informed by a gender analysis?
		Does the organizational structure align with the vision and mission to advance the rights of women and girls through a gender-transformative lens? (i.e., gender-transformative results is integrated throughout the entire organization, and not separated as a small component)?
		Does the organization's budget system actively allocate resources to programmes that work towards this vision?
		What is the relationship between the programmes to end child marriage and other programmes managed by the organization? Is there a shared approach and strategy that centres on gender power relations across the programmes?
	Policies	Are policies to advance gender equality in place in the organization (such as equal opportunity policies, sexual harassment policies or hiring targets)?
		Does the organization have a gender representation policy and is it actively making progress towards actioning it?
		Does the organization have a youth representation policy and is it actively making progress towards actioning it?
	Leadership	To what extent are women involved in decision-making and management?
		To what extent are young people involved in decision-making and management?
	Monitoring evaluation	Does the organization have a coherent strategy for measuring progress against gender equality objectives in its programming?
		Is the strategy effectively implemented?
		Are there tangible results in terms of contributing to gender equality/women's/girls' empowerment/ending child marriages and other harmful practices?
		Does the organization integrate feedback from community members and affected stakeholders into its evaluations?
		Does the organization measure changes in women's and young people's agency, gender relations and institutional structures?
Representation & empowerment	Does the organization promote the relative position of women, girls and marginalized groups in its internal structures?	
	Do girls, young people and women in all their diversity, especially marginalized groups, have a voice in and the ability to influence and/or lead programme implementation and measurement and evaluation?	
SUBSTANTIVE	Representation & empowerment	Are girls at the centre of programming efforts; building their skills and agency to open up alternative life choices beyond child marriage, such as developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills?
		Does the organization engage with men and boys on topics relating to norms, behaviour and attitudes in the context of masculinity and patriarchy?
	Activities	What are the organization's main activities?
		How do these relate to the objective of ending child marriage?
		What other harmful gender practices are targeted?
		Does the organization provide gender-responsive information and services?

	Systemic change	Does the organization actively work on addressing interpersonal behaviour change?
		Does the organization actively target making social networks more aware of positive gender norms?
		Does the organization actively work on changing systems and institutions to be more gender-responsive?
		Does the organization work on changing policies and legislation to address gender inequities?
		Does the organization engage men and boys for gender equality?
	Knowledge-generation & communication	Is external communication a core part of the organization's strategy?
		If so, are communications and outreach messages coherent with the aim of ending harmful gender practices and promoting gender equality and women's and girls' rights?
		Do messages focus on mobilizing communities through rights-based and gender-positive social norms and narratives?
	Networks	Does the organization work on a local, national, regional or international scale?
		Is the organization building strong institutional partnerships with the government, civil society and the private sector?
		Is the organization connected with / does it interact with the feminist community / feminist coalitions and/or feminist movements at a local/national/international level, including other organizations working on feminist goals and/or with a feminist outlook?

In line with the structural and substantive characteristics of a feminist organization, as set out above, the questions from the assessment tool, along with available answers to the self-assessment survey, were used to assess the

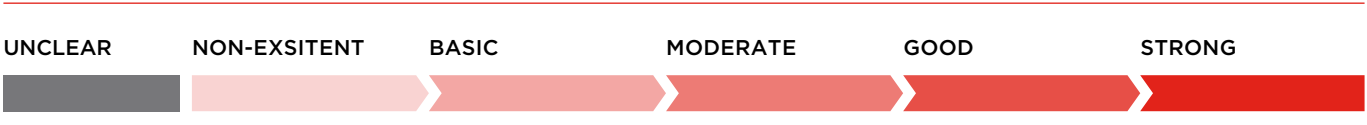
selected CSOs. For simplicity and efficiency in data capturing, the content derived from answers to the questions in the assessment tool and to the questions of the self-assessment survey has been streamlined into the following markers.

STRUCTURAL	SUBSTANTIVE
® Mission and vision	® Activities
® Learning and evaluation	® Systemic change
® Policies and strategies	® Knowledge generation
® Leadership and team	® Networks and coalitions
® Representation and empowerment	® Representation and empowerment

Assessment criteria were defined for each of these markers. For example, for the structural marker on 'leadership and team', the organization was rated as 'basic' if girls'/women's participation was under 25 per cent. It was rated 'moderate' if girls'/women's participation was between 25 and 49 per cent, The rating 'good' was given if girls/

women represented between 50 and 74 per cent. For organizations with over 75 per cent girls/women in leadership and team the rating was 'strong'. Similar ratings were defined for each of the structural and substantive markers. Following an in-depth assessment, these markers were rated (see **Figure 3**).

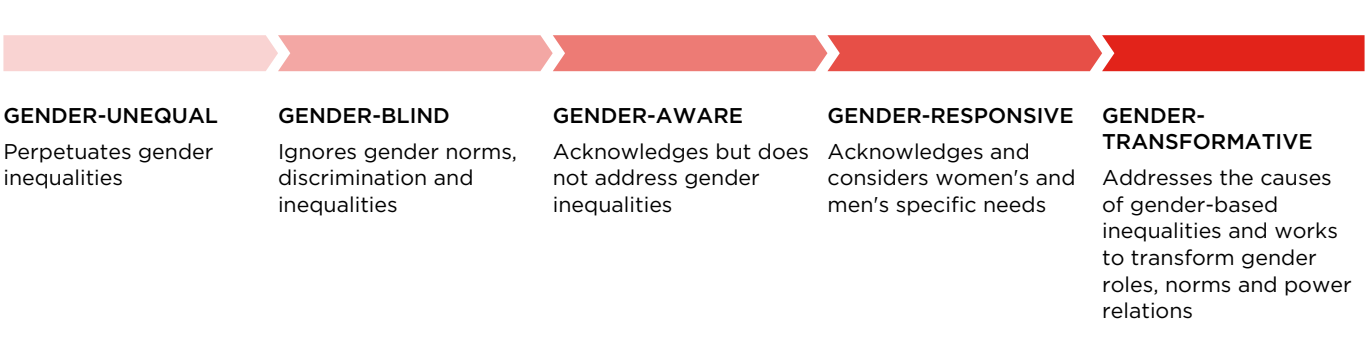
Figure 3. Rating scale



An overall analysis was based on the average of the 10 ratings of both structural and substantive dimensions and double-checked by triangulating information gathered by desktop research, findings from the self-assessment survey that was

completed by the organizations, and additional interviews. The CSOs were then assigned a gender ranking in terms of the gender equity spectrum, aligned with the gender equity continuum provided in the technical note (see **Figure 4**).

Figure 4. Gender rankings



An example of how a ranking, assessment and categorization would be conducted can be seen in **Figure 5**.

Figure 5. Example of ranking and assessment

RANKING & ASSESSMENT									
STRUCTURAL					SUBSTANTIVE				
Mission & Vision	Policies & Strategies	Learning & evaluation	Leadership	Representation & empowerment	Activities	Systemic change	Knowledge generation	Networks	
Good	Good	Strong	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Strong	Good
OVERALL CATEGORISATION									
Categorisation	Gender- responsive								

This forms part of the profile of each assessed CSO. The profiles also included the reach of the organization,⁸ the type of CSO, a high-level overview of the nature of the work of the CSO

and comments related to the ranking of the CSO. The CSO profiles are grouped per country in order to account for the context within which they operate.

⁸ The reach of the CSOs has been categorized as follows: Local (operating in a province or state within a country); National (operating across the country); Regional (operating within the region (e.g., West Africa; South-East Asia); and International (organizations with an international presence).

04



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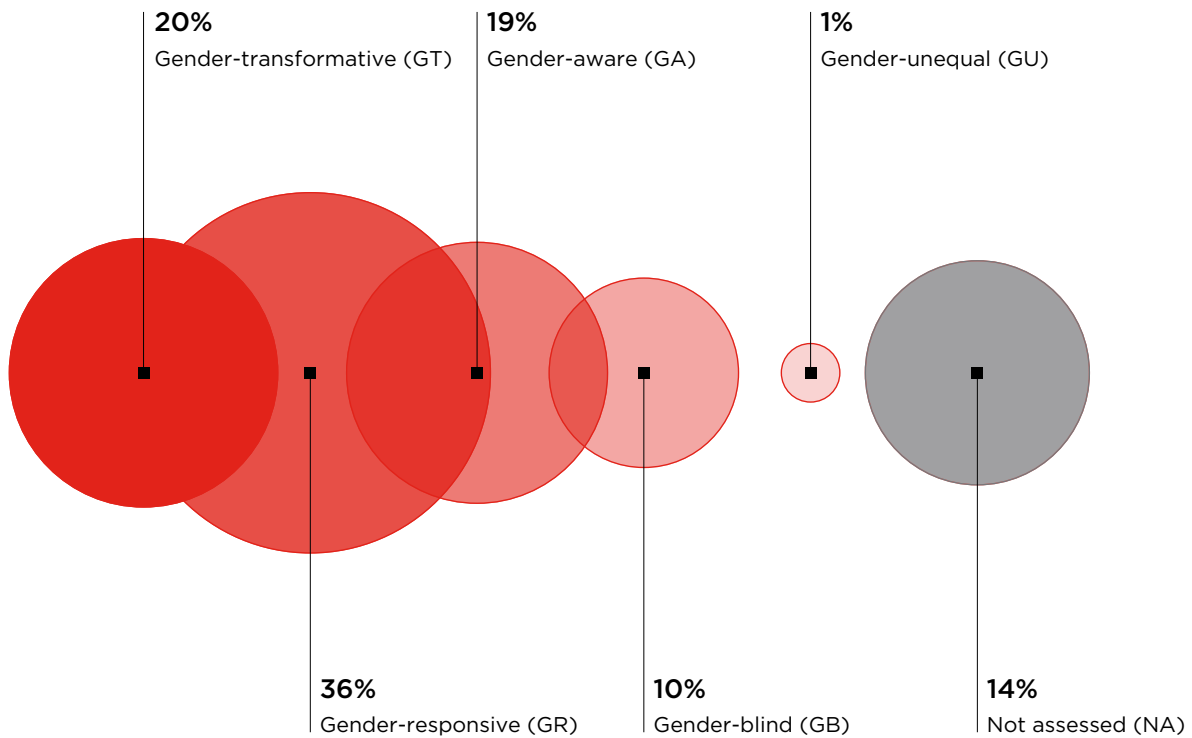
OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT FINDINGS



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The assessment of the 134 CSOs are summarized in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6. Overall survey findings



Statistically, the findings suggest that, overall, organizations are doing very well on both the structural and substantive elements of gender-transformative change. Notably, more than half the CSOs were gender-responsive or gender-transformative, and many of those ranked as gender-aware could probably be ranked as responsive or transformative following some structural and/or substantive changes to their operations. Only 1 per cent of CSOs were ranked as gender-unequal and 10 per cent as gender-blind. As noted above, some CSOs were not assessed due to lack of information or contact details, limited or no online presence and challenges with connectivity.

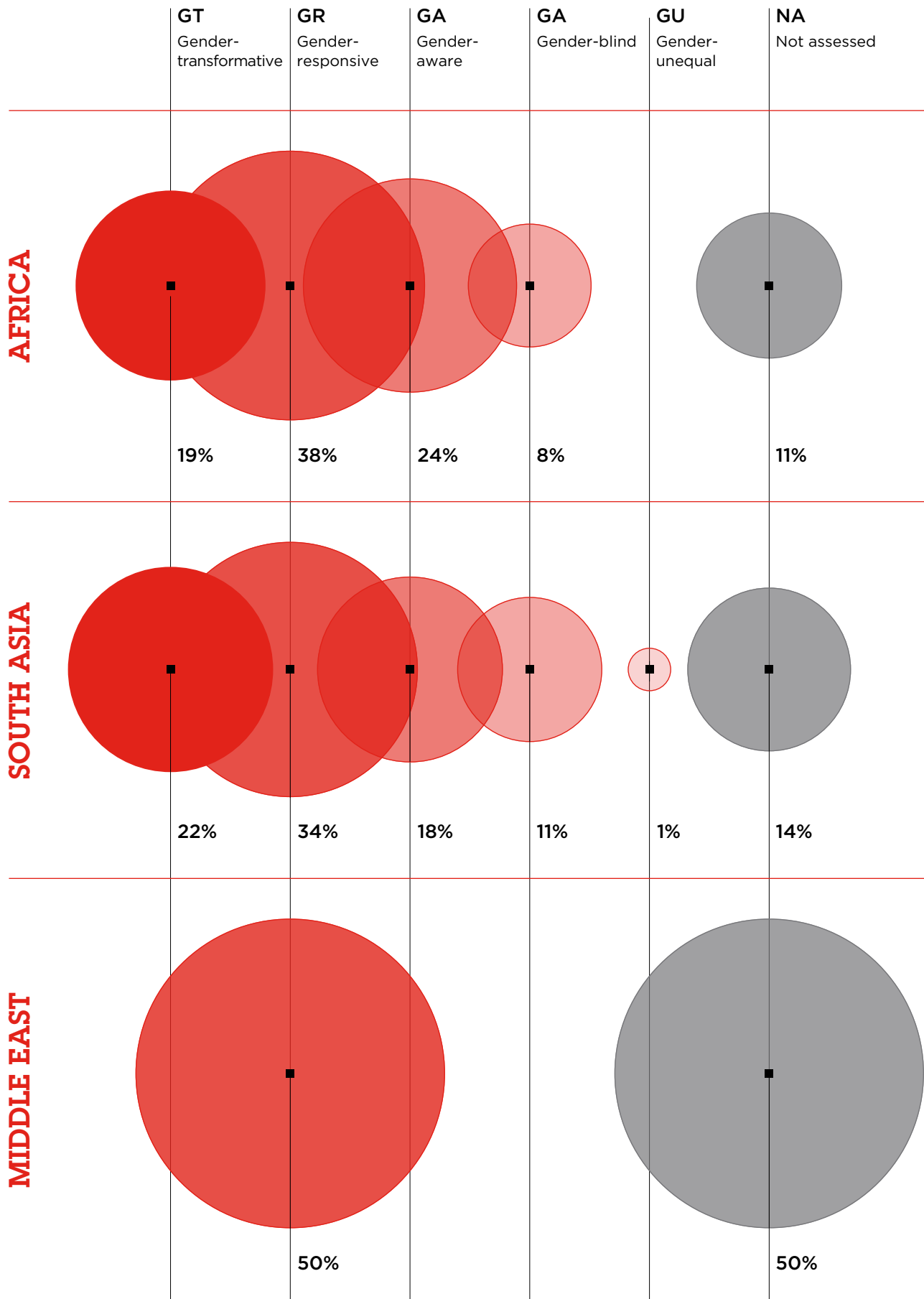
Among the assessed organizations, the representation of girls/women in leadership was 'strong' for 14 per cent, and 'good' for 32 per cent. It was 'moderate' in 32 per cent, and 'basic' among 16 per cent. Data about women's participation were unclear or not available for 6

per cent of the organizations.

Among the 26 gender-transformative organizations, there were 10 where 75 per cent of leadership roles were filled by girls/women, and 14 where between 50 and 74 per cent of leadership roles were filled by girls/women. The share was between 25 and 49 per cent in only two organizations, one of which was an international NGO.

While it is useful to get an overall picture of the regional rankings (see **Figure 7**), it must be noted that the socioeconomic and political contexts can vary substantially between countries both within the same region and between regions. Moreover, there were substantial variations in the number of CSOs from each region. For example, there were 91 CSOs to be assessed from South Asia and only four from the Middle East. It is therefore difficult to assess regional trends in detail but, at a high-level, some observations can be made.

Figure 7. Overall assessment of CSOs



The resilience, persistence, and impact of many of the CSOs suggest that the Global Programme is contributing towards tackling the root causes of gender inequality, reshaping unequal power relations, and creating sustainable, resilient, equal, inclusive and safe societies and communities.

- CSOs in Africa generally ranked well, with some minor areas for improvement.
- South Asia had some very notable examples of gender-transformative CSOs but also had the highest number of gender-blind CSOs and the only gender-unequal CSO.
- The Middle East, with only CSOs in Yemen to assess, was found to have gender-responsive CSOs in general, despite the harsh and complex climate in which they operate.

Overall, many of the CSOs were found to be doing important work promoting the rights of women and girls and boys, and there are several impressive examples of youth-led and women-led groups that promote the relative position of women, girls, and young people in their internal structures and that create space for young people and women to influence and/

or lead programme implementation. There were further notable efforts by CSOs, focused on engaging with men and boys on topics relating to norms, behaviour and attitudes in the context of masculinity and patriarchy. There were many remarkable examples of CSOs that have, as a core part of their vision and mission, the advancement of the rights of women and girls.

The work of many of these CSOs certainly contributes to gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment and ending child marriage and other harmful practices. Many are enabling systemic change, challenging the status quo and effectively communicating and actively engaging with the feminist community. There appears to be some correlation between the countries that have begun working with the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool, however, it appears that not all CSOs were included in piloting the tool, which may explain why some are ranked as gender-aware or gender-blind. That said, the resilience, persistence, and impact of many of the CSOs suggest that the Global Programme is contributing towards tackling the root causes of gender inequality, reshaping unequal power relations, and creating sustainable, resilient, equal, inclusive and safe societies and communities. Key challenges that remain are primarily structural or related to enabling systemic change and facilitating communication and knowledge-sharing. Internal organizational capacity-building requires adequate funding, which enables the CSOs to face the challenges of the deeply rooted and systemic gender discrimination in their respective contexts, to analyse the hindrances and opportunities for change, to share their insights and raise awareness about the benefits of, and the need for, gender-transformative change.

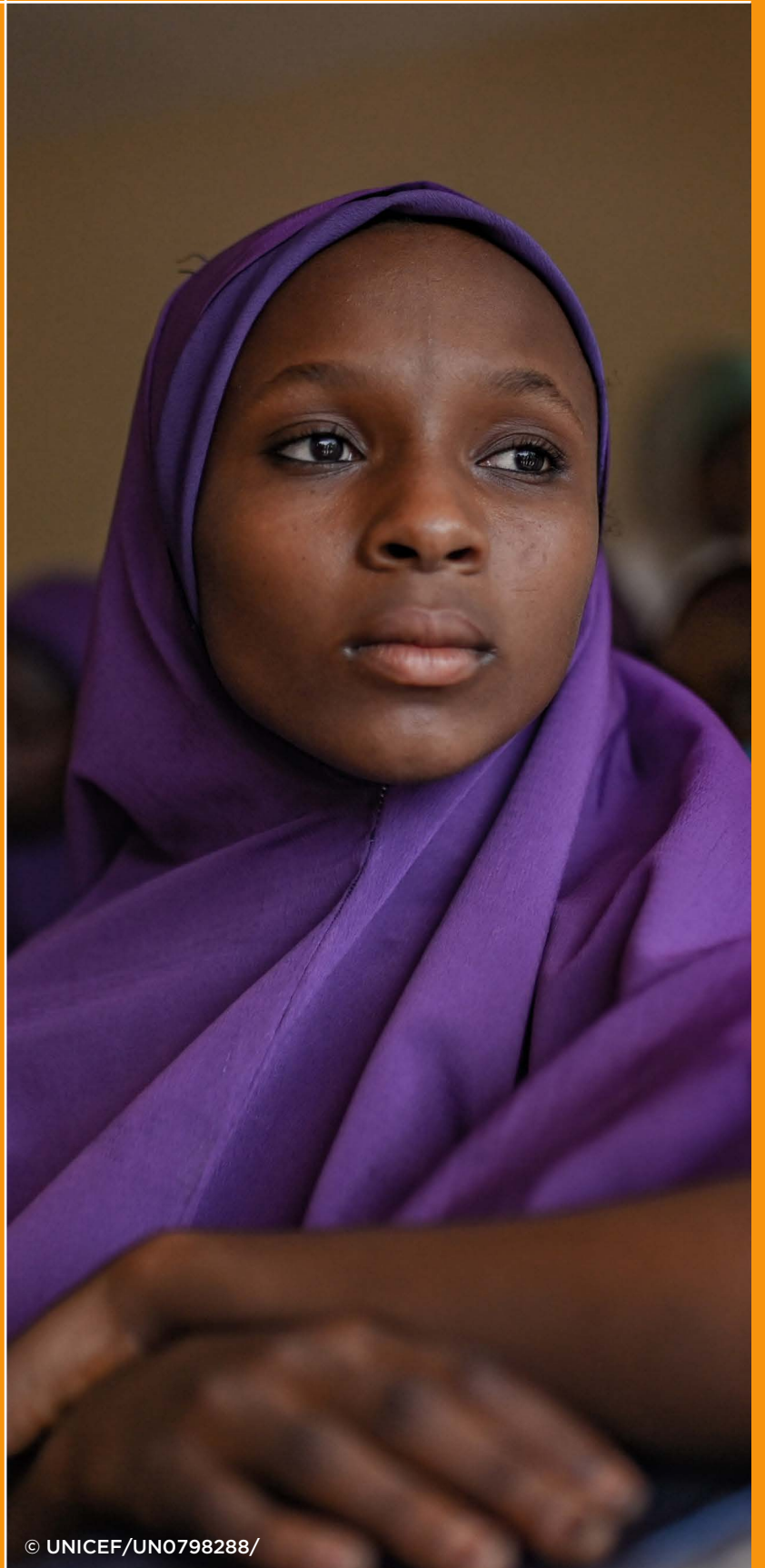


05

ANALYSIS BY COUNTRY



AFRICA



BURKINA FASO

High-level overview

According to UN Women, Burkina Faso continues to suffer from high rates of child marriage, high adolescent birth rates, poor representation of women in decision-making, and barriers to accessing sexual and reproductive health services, along with other indicators of poor gender equality.⁹ Burkina Faso ranks 184 out of 191 countries on the Gender Inequality Index, produced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).¹⁰ In terms of children's rights, calls have been made for Burkina Faso to:

“urgently reduce gender inequalities and provide young girls with a living environment that promotes the development of their full potential and guarantees their empowerment.”¹¹

Despite the positive legal framework, children in Burkina Faso are exposed to a wide range of violations of their rights, such as child labour and child marriage.¹² There are reportedly 2.8 million child brides in Burkina Faso, with the prevalence of this practice at 52 per cent of girls.¹³ The Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool identified that the particularly challenging environment in Burkina Faso has been created by political transition, a security and humanitarian crisis of internally-displaced people, COVID-19 and a major food crisis.¹⁴ The programme's objectives in the country include increasing the number of safe spaces and adolescent girls' clubs to develop agency and empowerment and undertaking policy advocacy to generate political will and social buy-in for gender-transformative actions.

9. UN Women, 'Burkina Faso,' <<https://data.unwomen.org/country/burkina-faso>>, accessed 26 June 2023.

10. United Nations Development Programme, 'Gender Inequality Index (GII)' <<https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII>>, accessed 26 June 2023.

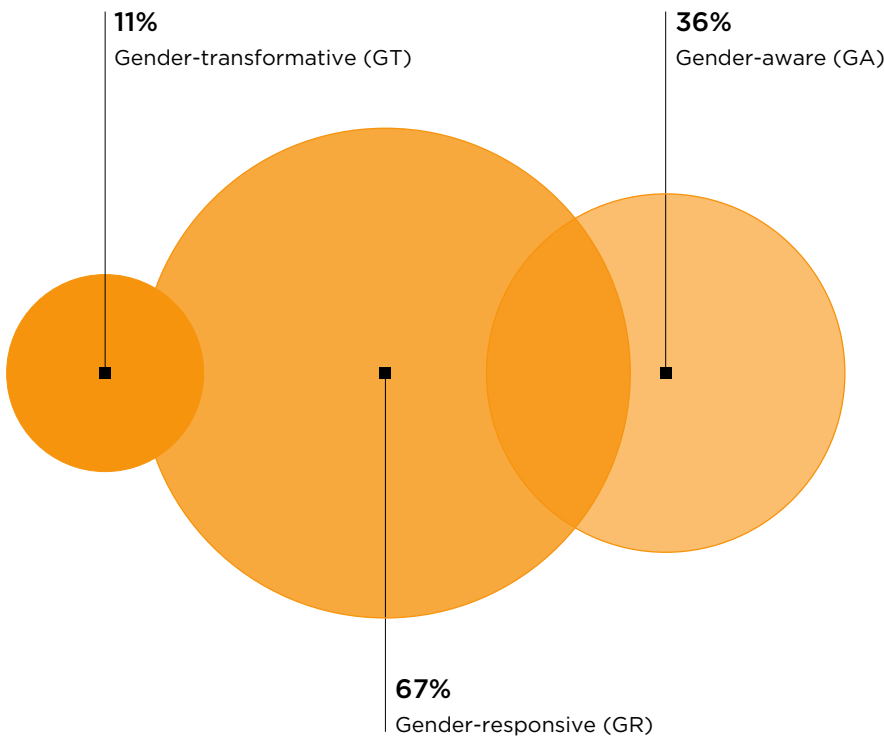
11. Humanium, 'Children of Burkina Faso,' <www.humanium.org/en/burkina-faso>, accessed 26 June 2023.

12. GIZ, 'Protecting children and promoting their rights,' <www.giz.de/en/worldwide/37351.html>, accessed 26 June 2023.

13. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, *UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool: Burkina Faso*, UNFPA and UNICEF, August 2022.

14. Ibid.

ASSESSMENT RESULTS



Association for Community Development and Promotion of Children's Rights (ADC-PDE): Gender-aware

Association Pengdwendé pour épanouissement et de la jeunesse du Sanmatenga: Gender-responsive

Association Songui Manegré/Aide au Développement Endogène (ASMADE): Gender-responsive

Association Tin-Tua: Gender-responsive

Association trait-d'union pour les jeunes du Burkina: Gender-aware

Association Voix de Femmes: Gender-transformative

Children Believe: Gender-responsive

Mwangaza action: Gender-responsive

OBSERVATIONS

Positive lessons: Of the CSOs assessed in Burkina Faso, none was gender-blind or unequal. The gender-responsive organizations demonstrated a relatively nuanced understanding of a GTA. Attempts to address gender norms and sociocultural barriers to gender equality are evident through the CSOs' projects. The assessment found that many of the CSOs are contributing positively to changing attitudes and are working with men and boys in an effort to overcome harmful behaviours, perceptions and actions. Association Voix de Femmes stands

out, having multiple policies and staff gender training and good team and leadership dynamics. It appears that the organization uses a two-year period for strategy development and publishes annual reports that track progress against gender equality targets. Changing the social and cultural environment is seen as a central part of the efforts to end gender-based violence, and the organization focuses on empowering people to defend and advance their own rights. It has implemented numerous programmes targeting gender norms and beliefs and institutional

power relations e.g., strategic litigation to recognize customary marriages. From a youth-serving perspective, the organization works with teenagers in order to change social and cultural beliefs among the youth and combines the provision of direct services with awareness-raising efforts among the general community.

Gaps and challenges: The organizations listed as gender-aware appear to struggle with fully understanding GTA. For example, while the organizations score relatively well on some of the institutional measures e.g., policies, they did not appear to have a deep understanding of the meaning of gender-transformative programming or of the systemic/institutional causes of gender inequality and do not appear to be addressing the underlying social and cultural practices that affect gendered outcomes. It appears that there are some gaps in relation to training, monitoring and evaluation, and in understanding systemic change as a metric.

Recommendations: From a systems-strengthening perspective, greater support is needed to ensure CSOs conduct gender analyses

and apply the findings to inform programmes, incorporate gender targets in their measurement processes and continually build staff capacity on gender-responsive/transformational programming. Guidance may be necessary to support CSOs to network with other regional and international feminist groups, especially for children's rights organizations. National partnerships seem quite strong, as can be seen with the National Coalition Against Child Marriage in Burkina Faso (CONAMEB). There is also a need to help CSOs with implementing policies and providing training on what transformative gender work means in practice. This can complement existing efforts recommended by the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool, such as strengthening capacities on transformative budgeting for gender and child's rights and developing a checklist of transformative elements of interventions.¹⁵ The findings of this assessment support the priority focus areas and actions identified in the Gender-Transformative Accelerator report, specifically in terms of providing training support to CSOs to better understand GTA.



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ETHIOPIA

High-level overview

According to UN Women, while much progress has been made on gender equality in Ethiopia in recent years, certain key gaps still remain.¹⁶ Ethiopia ranks 175 out of 191 countries on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index.¹⁷ Children's rights are undermined by gaps and insufficiencies in policy frameworks, in the implementation of programmes, as well as mindsets on gender issues.¹⁸ Additionally, severe poverty, the high prevalence of female genital mutilation, and lack of health services and sanitation pose sustained threats to children's rights. There were 17.3 million child brides in Ethiopia in 2021, with a prevalence of child marriage of 40 per cent of girls being married before age 18.¹⁹ Nevertheless, this reflects a 30 per cent reduction since 1991.²⁰ The Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool identified that there have been some positive and promising efforts in advancing a GTA in the country. A gap was identified "between achieving the ideal of gender-transformative programming and the current reality of programme capacity, highlighting the need for increased technical support and case studies to address harmful masculinities and to challenge gender norms and restrictions with men and boys."²¹

16. UN Women, 'Ethiopia,' <<https://data.unwomen.org/country/ethiopia>>, accessed 26 June 2023.

17. 'Gender Inequality Index (GII)'

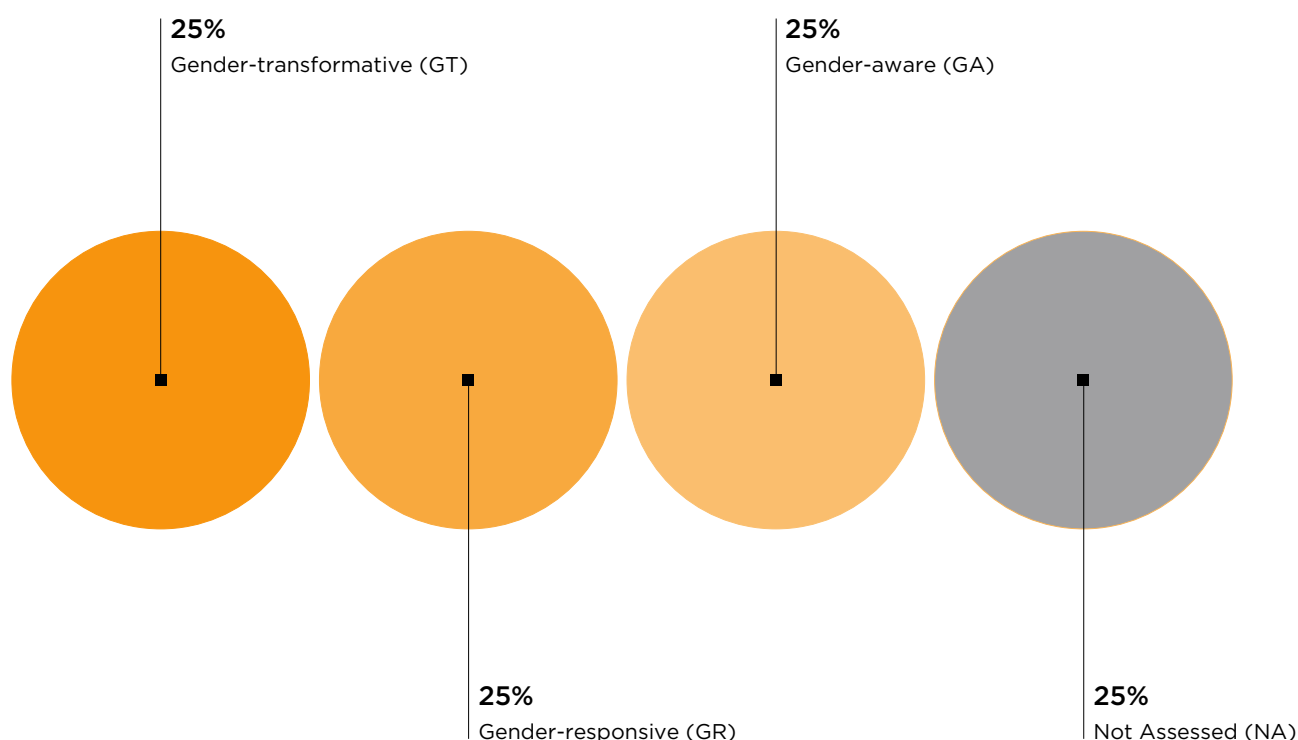
18. Humanium, 'Children of Ethiopia,' <www.humanium.org/en/ethiopia>, accessed 26 June 2023.

19. *UNFPA-UNICEF synthesis paper*.

20. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, *UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, Gender-Transformative Accelerator Ethiopia Country Report*, December 2021

21. *Ibid.*

ASSESSMENT RESULTS²²



CARE: Gender-transformative

Population Media Center: Gender-responsive

Norwegian Church Aid: Gender-aware

Women Development Groups: Not assessed²³

OBSERVATIONS²⁴

Positive lessons: The CSOs assessed in Ethiopia are doing important and effective work, for example advocating for legislation against, and raising awareness on child marriage and female genital mutilation. CARE Ethiopia is an encouraging example of an organization taking a gender-responsive approach by placing

women and girls at the centre of its humanitarian responses. The organization's programming is gender-responsive and intersectional, and it has a gender equality and inclusion policy through which it commits to incorporating gender equality in all its work, both internally and externally. The organization also recognizes that

22. The consultants were provided with a list of four CSOs to assess in Ethiopia. Towards the end of the assignment, the following organizations were flagged by the Focal Point: Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesu, Inter-religious Council of Ethiopia, OWS-Development Fund, ORDA Ethiopia, Development Expertise Center, IASC Afar, and Ethiopian Muslim Relief and Development. Due to the timeframes of the assignment, these organizations have not been assessed, but could be considered for inclusion in further assessments, interventions and gender-transformative work to be undertaken by UNICEF and UNFPA.

23. The Focal Points for Ethiopia have advised that Women Development Groups are not CSOs but rather a community structure aimed at enhancing equal participation and benefit from the social, economic and political arena. It was further advised that the structures are women-led and are likely to be gender-responsive.

24. These observations have been reviewed by the Focal Points for Ethiopia and their feedback has been considered in the preparation of the final draft.



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gender is non-binary and adopts a multi-faceted approach to diversity in its programming.

Gaps and challenges: The Norwegian Church Aid acknowledges, but does not address, gender inequalities in its work, which appears to have a more humanitarian focus. There is limited information to suggest this CSO focuses its efforts on addressing the causes of gender-based inequalities, either at a structural or substantive level, nor is there evidence to suggest that it is working to transform harmful gender roles, norms and power relations. As a general observation, gender-aware organizations appear to lack a coherent understanding of a GTA and appear to fall short in terms of structural markers. For example, the Population Media Center ranks well in terms of its efforts to raise awareness of gender equality and appears to adopt a robust communication strategy which is important for creating systemic change, however, on the information available, it is not apparent that the organization has included a GTA in its policies and practices. Generally, there are some gaps in relation to how CSOs communicate their

impact, illustrative of weaknesses with policy and strategy, learning and monitoring, and knowledge generation.

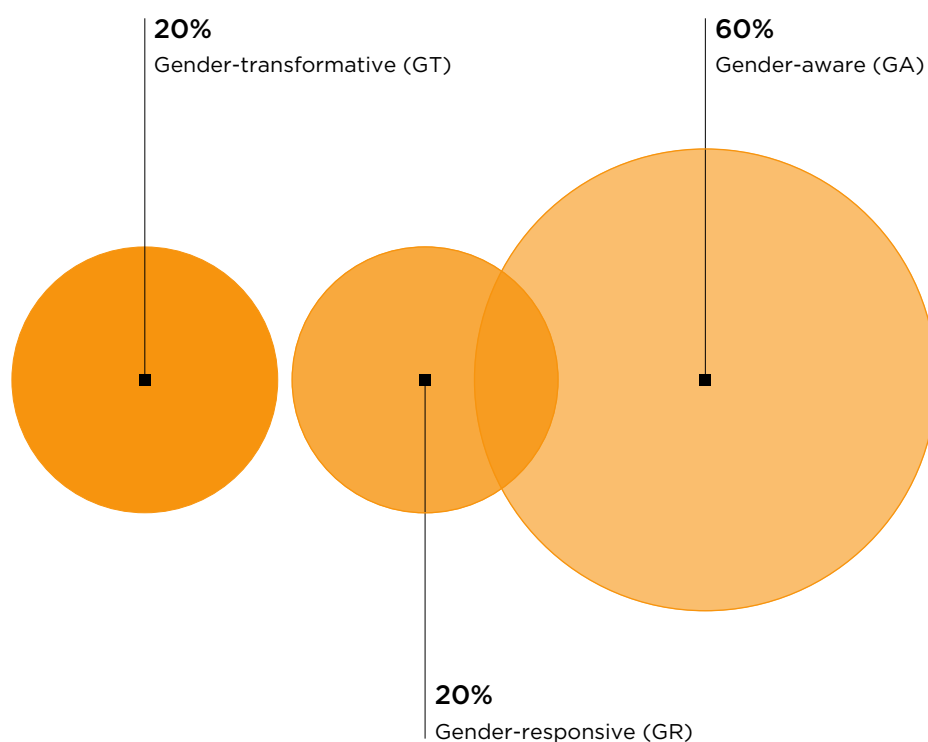
Recommendations: Target support for policy development and guidance on monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure inclusive, coherent strategies for measuring progress against gender equality objectives. Workshops on the value of a GTA are likely to improve understanding of this approach among CSOs, which, in the long term, will positively influence the organizations at structural and substantive levels.

GHANA

High-level overview

According to UN Women, some gender gaps still remain in Ghana despite recent progress in achieving gender equality.²⁵ Ghana ranks 133 out of 191 countries on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index.²⁶ Although children's rights are legally protected, there are continuing challenges posed by slavery and forced labour, poverty, physical and moral violence, sexual abuse, poor quality education and certain ancestral rites.²⁷ In 2017, it was noted that teenage pregnancy, poverty, lack of education and economic empowerment opportunities were the key drivers of child marriage.²⁸ There were 2.2 million child brides in Ghana in 2021, with 19 per cent of girls being married in childhood, which is among the lowest in west and central Africa.²⁹

ASSESSMENT RESULTS



25. UN Women, 'Ghana,' <<https://data.unwomen.org/country/ghana>>, accessed 26 June 2023.

26. 'Gender Inequality Index (GII)'

27. Humanium, 'Realising children's rights in Ghana,' <www.humanium.org/en/ghana>, accessed 26 June 2023.

28. United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Children's Fund and UN Women, *Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage*, Phase II Design Workshop Report, April 2019.

29. UNFPA-UNICEF synthesis paper.

International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA Ghana): Gender-responsive

International Need Ghana (INGH): Gender-aware

Northern Sector Action on Awareness Centre (NORSAAC): Gender-transformative

Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana: Gender-responsive

Purim African Youth Development Platform: Gender-aware

OBSERVATIONS³⁰

Positive lessons: The gender-responsive organizations have demonstrated the adoption of a gender-aware and rights-based approach throughout their work and have sought to address gender inequalities in their programming and within their organizational structures. The Northern Sector Action on Awareness Centre (NORSAAC), has indicated that it has zero tolerance for the abuse and exploitation of its staff, partners and associates and commits to preventing circumstances that may harm them. A core part of the organization's vision and mission is to create a healthy and empowered society for everyone by working with networks of women, young people, children and excluded groups in order to strengthen their agency. It is noted that, in September 2022, Ghana started rolling out the Gender-Transformative Accelerator. NORSAAC and INGH have participated in the GTA workshop.³¹ It is expected that these organizations will adopt an increasingly gender-transformative approach.

Gaps and challenges: The gender-aware organizations are struggling at a structural level. For example, women are absent when it comes to strategic decision-making processes. It is important that organizations reflect on their internal gender dynamics in order to make a meaningful impact in their surrounding communities. Additionally, there is a lack of policies and strategies, which is hampering them from becoming more gender-transformative.

Recommendations: With support in conducting gender training and analyses, gender-aware

organizations would be more likely to adopt a gender-transformative approach. Targeted support on policy development and strategic development, as well as some guidance on the use of monitoring and evaluation tools to understand and enhance progress on gender equality is recommended. Workshops on the value of a GTA will likely improve the organizations' rankings as a more nuanced understanding of GTA is included in their work. The 2022 synthesis report recommended that the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool be expanded to Ghana, which could assist with the rollout of these proposed initiatives.³²



³⁰. Some additional feedback was received from the Focal Points for Ghana, which has been considered.

³¹. The Focal Points for Ghana advised the consultants on this.

³². UNFPA-UNICEF synthesis paper.

MOZAMBIQUE

High-level overview

According to UN Women, much work remains to be done in Mozambique to achieve meaningful gender equality.³³ While adolescent birth rates have fallen in recent years, high rates of gender-based violence persist and many women face barriers with respect to their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Mozambique ranks 185 out of 191 countries on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index.³⁴ Poverty contributes to the negative socioeconomic position of children in Mozambique, who are vulnerable to child marriage, child labour and sex trafficking.³⁵ There are 4.4 million child brides in Mozambique, and a prevalence of 53 per cent of girls being married before age 18, with very little progress in recent decades in reducing these rates.³⁶ The gender-responsive results below align with the Gender-Transformative Accelerator report on Mozambique that found that CSOs in Mozambique:

“understood that addressing gender norms in a transformative way implies addressing unequal power relations intentionally and being mindful of challenges to influence social and gender norms such as unacceptability of child marriage without changing power dynamics or expectations related to gender norms.”³⁷

In 2022, some CSOs in Mozambique participated in joint UNFPA-UNICEF national and provincial training in which they worked on gender-transformative change and positive masculinities. It appears that this may have contributed to the positive findings in Mozambique.³⁸

33. UN Women, ‘Mozambique,’ <<https://data.unwomen.org/country/mozambique>>, accessed 27 June 2023.

34. ‘Gender Inequality Index (GII)’.

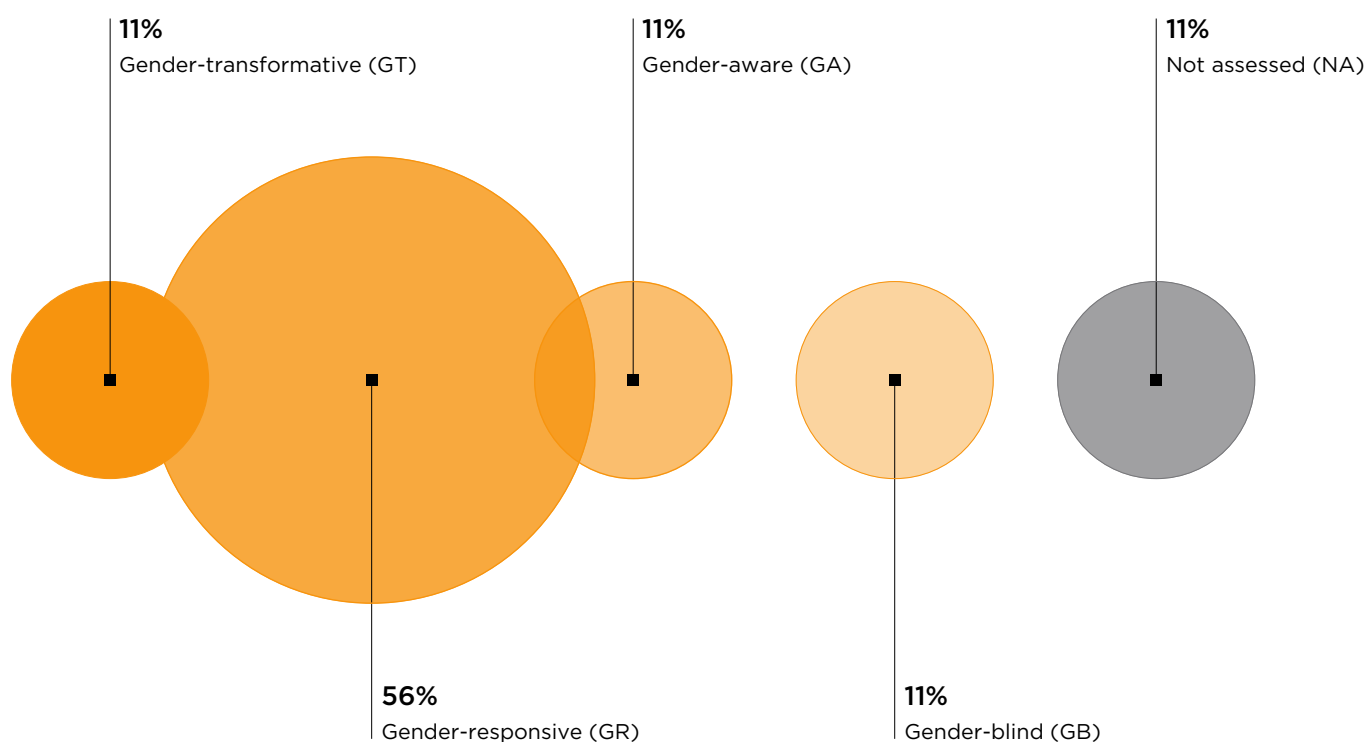
35. Humanium, ‘Children of Mozambique,’ <www.humanium.org/en/mozambique>, accessed 27 June 2023.

36. UNFPA-UNICEF *synthesis paper*.

37. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund, *UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, Gender-Transformative Accelerator: Mozambique Country Report*, December 2021.

38. The consultants were advised of these trainings by the Focal Points for Mozambique.

ASSESSMENT RESULTS³⁹



COALIZÃO: Gender-transformative

Coligação para Eliminação dos Casamentos Prematuros: Gender-responsive

Fundação para o Desenvolvimento da Comunidade / Community Development Foundation (FDC): Gender-responsive

Hopem: Gender-responsive

Linha Fala Criança: Gender-aware

Núcleo das Associações Femininas da Zambézia: Gender-responsive

N'weti: Gender-responsive

Parlamento Juvenil: Gender-blind

OBSERVATIONS⁴⁰

Positive lessons: More than 50 per cent of Mozambique CSOs were gender-responsive or gender-transformative. Coalizão stands out as a leading organization here. Its theory

of change highlights systemic gender issues, focusing on empowering girls, mobilizing families and communities, providing services and establishing and implementing laws and

³⁹. Towards the end of the assignment, Kutenga was noted as an additional CSO to consider. Due to the timeframes of the assignment, this organization has not been assessed, but it is noted that the Focal Point confirmed that this CSO does good work in relation to working with men and boys to create safe spaces focusing on positive masculinities. It is advised that this organization be included for further assessments, interventions, and gender-transformative work to be undertaken by UNICEF and UNFPA.

⁴⁰. These observations have been reviewed by the Focal Points for Mozambique and their feedback incorporated in the preparation of the final draft.

policies. The organization spends most of its budget on advancing the rights of women and girls. It also confirmed that it has an active process to understand the gender dynamics and consequences of its work and to adapt its work to overcome gender inequalities. The organization appears to actively monitor its progress to tackle gender equality and changing public opinion or public narratives is a central part of its work. A gender-transformative approach appears to be required for all projects and programmes.

Gaps and challenges: Gender equality and inclusion do not appear to be prioritized for some CSOs in Mozambique, one of which is ranked as gender-blind as there is limited evidence to suggest that women or young people are involved in decision-making and management. Further, there are gaps in terms of policies to advance gender equality and the assessment did not uncover a strong sense that these organizations actively incorporate the empowerment of women and girls into their programming, or target structural change to

power dynamics, norms and institutions, rather than merely focusing on the passive delivery of support services to women and girls.

Recommendations: Support with messaging and communication may assist the CSOs in better expressing their impact. This will also assist with programming that relies on external messaging, such as engaging communities and groups of men and boys. The latter was highlighted as a key action to be implemented in the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool country report for Mozambique, which calls for strengthening the work of local CSOs working with men and boys to implement gender-transformative interventions.⁴¹ Guidance is needed in terms of policy development as well as training for the CSOs in addition to guidance on monitoring and evaluation to effectively track progress against GTA targets. A collective workshop with the CSOs on the importance of systemic change and how to infuse gender-transformative thinking into their work will likely yield positive results.



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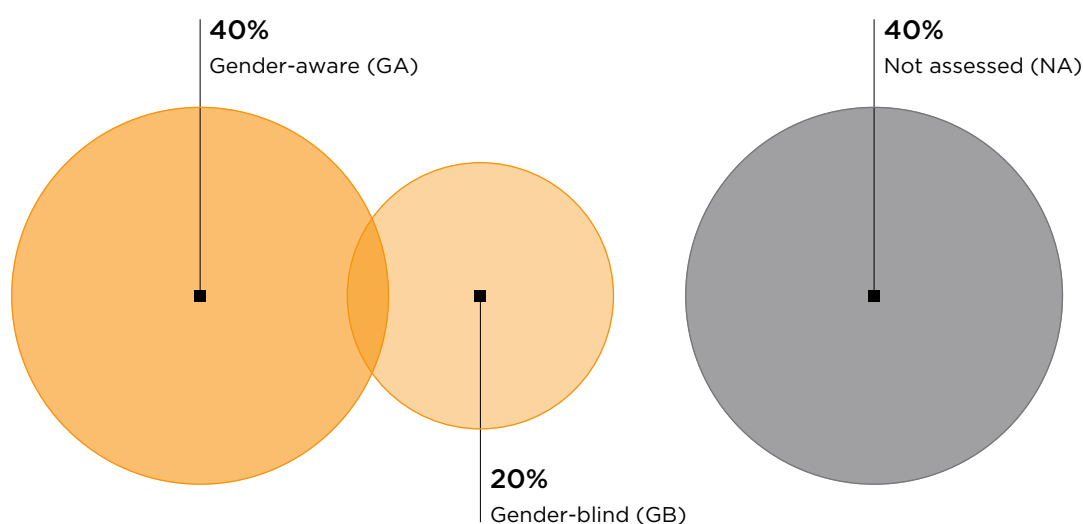
41. Ibid.

NIGER

High-level overview

According to UN Women, serious challenges to gender equality remain in Niger, such as increases in the adolescent birth rate and high rates of gender-based violence.⁴² Niger ranks 189 out of 191 countries on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index.⁴³ Children's rights in Niger are not fully respected, protected and promoted with socioeconomic factors making them vulnerable to poor education and health care.⁴⁴ Children are also at risk of trafficking, abuse and sexual exploitation. The rate of child marriage in Niger is concerningly high at 76 per cent of girls married before the age of 18.⁴⁵ This is the highest figure in the world by far, demonstrating the severe challenges posed to gender-transformative programming in Niger. Further, there have reportedly been no signs of progress in eliminating the practice in recent decades.⁴⁶

ASSESSMENT RESULTS⁴⁷



42. UN Women, 'Niger,' <<https://data.unwomen.org/country/niger>>, accessed 27 June 2023.

43. 'Gender Inequality Index (GII)'.

44. Humanium, 'Children of Niger,' <www.humanium.org/en/niger>, accessed 27 June 2023.

45. UNFPA-UNICEF synthesis paper.

46. Ibid.

47. Towards the end of the assignment additional CSOs were flagged by the Gender Focal Points for Niger: Debbo'arts, Fada des Filles/Jeunesse Plus, AJFSR, COJEFIL, CNJFL, AFRIYan, APBE, OPE, FAD. Due to the timeframes of the assignment, these organizations have not been assessed. It is advised that these organizations be included for further assessment, interventions, and gender-transformative work to be undertaken by UNICEF and UNFPA.

Adkoul: Not assessed

Agir Pour Plus d'Actions de Développement au Niger (APPADN): Gender-aware

Association of Traditional Chiefs of ACTN: Not assessed

Comité Nigérien sur les Pratiques Traditionnelles ayant effet sur la Santé des Femmes et des Enfants (CONIPRAT): Gender-aware

ONG Cadel (CADEL): Gender-blind

OBSERVATIONS⁴⁸

Positive lessons: Unlike other African states, CSOs in Niger have not been ranked highly, however, the organizations do appear to make an effort to include targeted populations in strategic programming. For example, APPADN reports that it conducts some empowering work for vulnerable groups, in particular the promotion of vocational training and entrepreneurship for young people and women. It is further notable that APPADN attended the work around the Gender-Transformative Accelerator in 2021. CONIPRAT does appear to make an effort to include targeted populations in strategic programming decisions.

Gaps and challenges: Although the organizations, to differing degrees, conduct some work relating to gender equality and rights, they did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the gender-transformative approach. Limited

resources were available to demonstrate the kinds of work that they do and how they manifest a gender-transformative approach. Gaps are particularly prevalent under the structural markers, with room for improvement in terms of systemic change and knowledge generation.

Recommendations: All CSOs should undergo additional training on GTA. This should include guidance on how to conduct gender analyses, support on the development of policies and strategies, and guidance on how to monitor and track impact. Niger could leverage the GTA action plan to incorporate capacity strengthening for CSOs on advancing gender-transformative programming. Given that most of the assessed CSOs were not part of the initial work around the Gender-Transformative Accelerator, it is recommended that further targeted work directly with the CSOs should be prioritized in Niger.



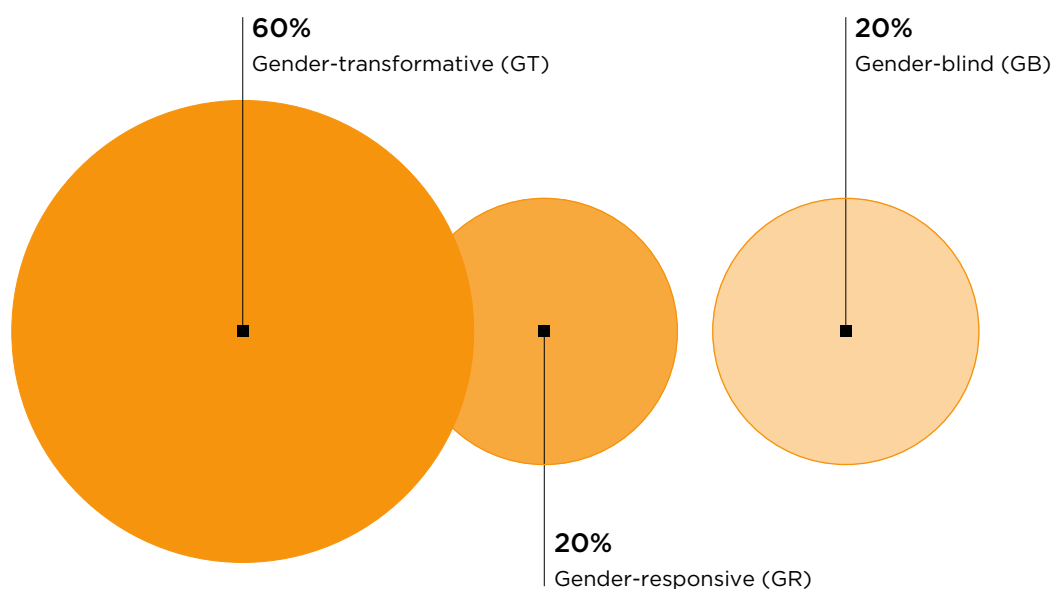
⁴⁸ These observations have been reviewed by the Focal Points for Niger and their feedback has been considered in the preparation of the final draft.

SIERRA LEONE

High-level overview

According to UNFPA, while progress has been made in Sierra Leone in expanding opportunities for women and girls to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, gender inequality and the denial of women's rights are still prevalent at all levels in Sierra Leonean society.⁴⁹ Sierra Leone ranks 181 out of 191 countries on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index.⁵⁰ Children in Sierra Leone face an array of interlinked obstacles which inhibit the fulfilment of their human rights and they are at high risk of child marriage and adolescent pregnancy, child labour, female genital mutilation and gender-based violence.⁵¹ There were 776,000 child brides in Sierra Leone in 2021 and the prevalence of child marriage (before the age of 18) among girls stood at 30 per cent.⁵²

ASSESSMENT RESULTS⁵³



49. The United Nations Population Fund, Sierra Leone, 'Gender Equality,' <<https://sierraleone.unfpa.org/en/node/6135>>, accessed 27 June 2023.

50. 'Gender Inequality Index (GII)'.

51. Humanium, 'Children of Sierra Leone,' <www.humanium.org/en/sierra-leone> accessed 27 June 2023.

52. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, *Country Profiles 2021, Fighting the Odds, Catalyzing Change: A Strategic Approach to Ending the Global Problem of Child Marriage, UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage*, UNFPA and UNICEF, September 2022, <www.unicef.org/media/128306/file/Child-marriage-country-profiles-2021.pdf>

53. Early on in the assignment the Focal Point from Sierra Leone requested that additional CSOs be included in the assessment. Given that this was raised at an early stage, these CSOs have been included in the assessment.

Girls Advocacy Development Network (GADNET): Gender-transformative

Her Future Foundation: Gender-transformative

Interreligious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL): Gender-blind

Kids Advocacy Network: Gender-responsive

Prevention First Initiative: Gender-transformative

OBSERVATIONS⁵⁴

Positive lessons: The assessment results for Sierra Leone, with 60 per cent of CSOs ranked as gender-transformative and another 20 per cent as gender-responsive, suggest that these CSOs are engaging meaningfully with issues relating to gender-transformative change and there is substantial work leading to systemic positive change. The Prevention First Initiative serves as a good model in terms of strategic thinking and learning and evaluation. Notably, it organizes focus group discussions and surveys before starting any programme, as the organization states it believes that potential beneficiaries always understand their challenges better and that together, they can find solutions that match their challenges. It also provides a forum for feedback both during and after its programmes and always incorporates those suggestions in future iterations. GADNET is another positive example of an organization amplifying the voices of those it works with. It relies on a multi-stakeholder/interface dialogue and action approach in confronting negative stereotypes and challenges related to the attainment of gender justice. One of its biggest achievements has been the establishment of the Sierra Leone National Girls' Summit which seeks to empower girls and young women around the country to know their rights and to speak confidently on issues that affect them directly and indirectly. The young participants are given an opportunity to collectively share recommendations with key stakeholders. They have recorded that this platform has been highly impactful since its inception. From a structural perspective, Her Future Foundation ranked highly, due to its clear mentoring and evaluation approaches, 75–99

per cent of the leadership identifying as women, having an equal opportunity policy and a zero-tolerance sexual harassment policy, as well as other policies such as hiring targets. These organizations are commended for adopting a gender-transformative lens in their work.

Gaps and challenges: The objectives of the Interreligious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) are to:

1. provide a platform for religious communities to share information on their respective traditions, principles and values
2. plan and implement collaborative action programmes based on shared moral commitments
3. support religious communities in Sierra Leone and galvanize areas of convergence in their respective traditions, moral commitments and promotion of religious rites.

Although this engagement with religious communities provides significant potential to address gender norms and practices, the advancement of the rights of women and girls does not form part of the organization's mission and it does not appear to consider a gender lens in the development of its strategic programming. The assessment was unable to find information regarding any work contributing to gender equality/women's/girls' empowerment/ending child marriages and other harmful practices.

⁵⁴. Apart from initial feedback from the Focal Point from Sierra Leone, no further feedback has been received.

Recommendations: It is suggested that the Global Programme hosts an engagement with the CSOs listed as gender-transformative and gender-responsive in order to listen and learn about the ways in which these organizations are adopting a GTA in their work. Valuable lessons can likely be drawn from such an engagement and used to support other CSOs in the programme. To the extent that the activities and programmes of the IRCSL align with the Global Programme’s gender-transformative agenda, the Global Programme might consider supporting this organization to reconsider its internal operations and substantive work to better target gender inequalities, as well as to engage with the leadership and members of the organization on positive masculinities. A meeting with the organization may prove useful to ascertain if it is willing to become more gender-transformative. More broadly, organizations in Sierra Leone could benefit from existing initiatives within the GTA, such as training on how to conduct programming with boys that supports the mission of the Country Programme.⁵⁵



SOUTH ASIA



BANGLADESH

High-level overview

According to UN Women, while there are constitutional protections for equality and there have been some strides taken⁵⁶ to promote and protect women's rights, Bangladesh has not yet achieved full gender equality.⁵⁷ Bangladesh ranks 129 out of 191 countries on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index.⁵⁸ Poverty and gender-based violence are primary barriers to advancing gender equality.⁵⁹ While Bangladesh has made substantial progress in advancing the rights of children, more must be done to ensure that the rights of children are prioritized, particularly as there are currently high rates of children out of school, unregistered births and child marriage.⁶⁰ It has been reported that there are 34.5 million child brides in Bangladesh, with the prevalence of child marriage among girls under age 18 at 51 per cent, putting it among the 10 countries with the highest prevalence in the world.⁶¹ The Bangladesh country office has indicated its commitment to advancing gender equality by becoming one of six 'trailblazer countries' field-testing the Gender-Transformative Accelerator, and is focused on adolescent girls' empowerment, systems-strengthening and engaging men and boys to develop positive masculinities.⁶² The country office has identified that key barriers to progress include a lack of understanding around the benefits of delaying marriage, a lack of inclusion of married adolescent girls in interventions, a focus on individual-level change in programming, and a complex national humanitarian context.⁶³

56. UN Women, Asia and the Pacific, 'UN Women Bangladesh,' <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/bangladesh>, accessed 27 June 2023.

57. UN Women Data, 'Bangladesh, Asia' <<https://data.unwomen.org/country/bangladesh>>, accessed 27 June 2023.

58. 'Gender Inequality Index (GII)'.

59. CONCERN Worldwide, 'Gender inequality in Bangladesh: Engaging men and boys to close the gap,' 28 February 2022, <www.concern.net/news/gender-inequality-in-bangladesh-closing-the-gap>.

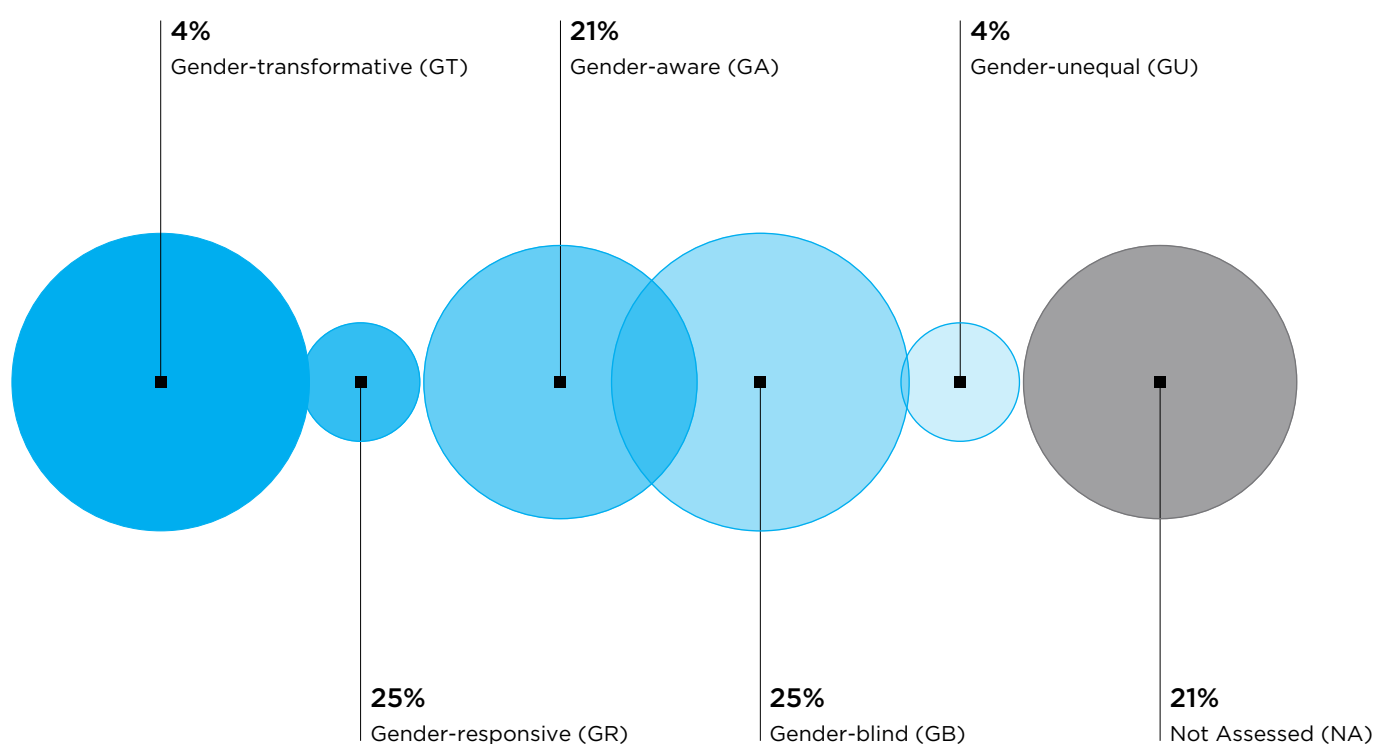
60. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Thirty years of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,' 23 November 2019, <www.unicef.org/bangladesh/en/press-releases/thirty-years-un-convention-rights-child>.

61. *Fighting the Odds, Catalyzing Change*.

62. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, *UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, Gender-Transformative Accelerator: Bangladesh Country Report*, August 2022.

63. Ibid.

ASSESSMENT RESULTS



Aragami Dustha Mohila Sangstha: Gender-responsive

Alliance for Cooperation and Legal Aid Bangladesh: Gender-unequal

Alokito Bogura: Gender-blind

Alokito Samaj Unnyan sangstha: Gender-aware

Alor Dishari Mohila Unnyan Sangha: Gender-responsive

Anirban Samaj Unnyan Sangita (ASUS): Gender-responsive

Association of Voluntary Actions for Society (AVAS): Gender-transforming

Atta Swanirvor Samaj Unnyan Sangha: Gender-aware

Bogura Zila Bandhan Protibondhi Songstha (BZBPS): Not assessed

Dalit: Gender-responsive

Gontobbo Youth Organization: Gender-blind

Goranbose Gram Bikash Kendra (GGBK): Gender-responsive

Jagroni Mohila Foundation: Not assessed

Jagroto Nari: Gender-blind

Mother and Child Wisher Association: Not assessed

Nabo Prottasha Shongstha: Gender-blind

Prothoma: Gender-blind

Protigga Foundation: Gender-responsive

SAHNTI (Social Action for Human Needs in Technological Improvement): Gender-blind

Shanirvar Nari Kallayan Sangstha: Not assessed

Society Development Agency (SDA): Gender-aware

Sustainable Upliftment Initiative Trust (SUIT): Gender-aware

Taranga Mohila Kollyan Sangstha: Not assessed

Tarango Mohila Kallyan Sangstha: Gender-aware



OBSERVATIONS⁶⁴

Positive lessons: The Association of Voluntary Actions for Society (AVAS), the only CSO marked as gender-transformative, is a positive example of the potential impact that can be achieved by CSOs in Bangladesh by adopting a GTA. Structurally, AVAS appears to promote gender equality and inclusion, having considered policies, targets and programmes through a gender lens. It provides sex-disaggregated data about its staffing and has a women-led team. It is also interested in working with young people and include data on the youth members that engage with the organization. It appears to create spaces for youth participation. Moreover, this organization demonstrates a good understanding of a GTA as evidenced by its efforts to promote women and girls as change-makers at individual, community and structural levels in order to challenge gender norms and restrictions.

Gaps and challenges: Many of the CSOs in Bangladesh do not have an online presence. This makes it difficult to fully assess their approach. However, from the surveys submitted, the general trend suggests that the organizations have a limited-to-moderate understanding of gender-transformative approaches and, while their work is important in addressing child marriage, their internal structures do not appear to promote a GTA. The learning and impact and policy and strategy metrics were consistently marked at the lower end of the spectrum. Compared with other countries, Bangladesh had the highest proportion of gender-blind organizations (29 per cent). Of greater concern, Bangladesh is the only country with organizations that were ranked as gender-unequal. There were concerns that the organizations themselves may be entrenching harmful gender profiles internally in terms of policies for hiring employees and the gender-bias expectations of the staff. Some responses in the survey raised concerns about the failure to critically question gender norms and roles, although this may be partially due to language

barriers or translation issues. At a general level, however, many organizations appear potentially to be perpetuating harmful gender profiles or, at the very least, lack a nuanced understanding of a GTA. There were further concerns that some of the activities of these organizations perpetuate gender stereotypes. For example, several programmes appear to be focused on providing girls with training in trades such as beauty parlours and tailoring, whereas programmes for boys relate to cellular phone servicing.

Recommendations: Increased efforts to support CSOs in Bangladesh are recommended, in line with the commitments made in the 2022 Bangladesh country report to invest in capacity-building on GTA for the UNICEF and UNFPA Country Office staff and implementing partners.⁶⁵ Assistance with conducting gender analyses, training on the development of appropriate policies, and training on feminist approaches to structuring an organization would benefit most of the organizations. Moreover, it is suggested that the CSOs receive support and training to develop an online presence and undergo communications training to better share their work with funders, and potential partners. This would likely contribute to better education and awareness, as well as possible benefits for creating systemic change. The CSOs in Bangladesh may benefit from a series of group trainings with UNICEF and UNFPA on key topics in order to improve their structural and substantive work. We note that the 2022 Bangladesh country report identified the need for improved curricula content on adolescent girls' empowerment and guidelines on community engagement through a gender-transformative lens. These were described as key priorities to support implementing partners on how to incorporate more gender-transformative elements in their programming, and to support their proposition of training on these particular issues.⁶⁶

⁶⁴. No additional feedback was received from the Focal Points for Bangladesh.

⁶⁵. *Bangladesh Country Report*.

⁶⁶. *Ibid.*

INDIA

High-level overview

According to UNICEF, gender inequality results in unequal opportunities across the country, and India is the only large country where more girls die than boys.⁶⁷ India ranks 131 out of 191 countries on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index.⁶⁸ India has experienced some advancements in promoting children's rights. However, there are still concerns regarding children's socioeconomic rights, as well as the incidence of abuse, exploitation, violence, neglect, commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and other harmful practices.⁶⁹ There are 226.3 million child brides in India, indicating a problem of significant scale and complexity.⁷⁰ Child marriage is illegal in India but child brides here account for a third of the global total.⁷¹ UNICEF and UNFPA have worked with several CSOs in India on structural issues relating to gender and have programmes on positive masculinities.⁷²

67. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Accelerating progress and opportunities across India for every girl and every boy,' <www.unicef.org/india/what-we-do/gender-equality>, accessed 27 June 2023.

68. 'Gender Inequality Index (GII)'

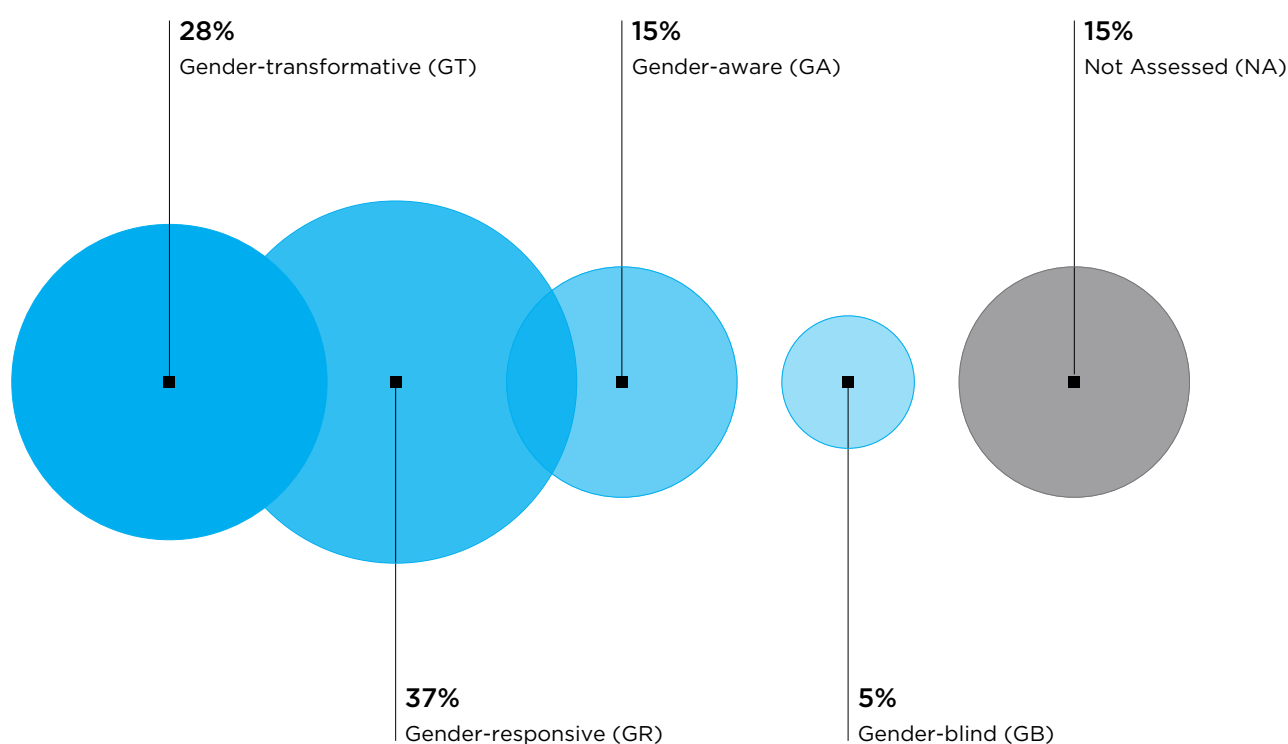
69. Humanium, 'Realising Children's Rights in India,' <www.humanium.org/en/india>, accessed 27 June 2023.

70. *UNFPA-UNICEF synthesis paper.*

71. Ibid.

72. The consultants were advised of these trainings by the Focal Points for India.

ASSESSMENT RESULTS⁷³



Adivasi Vikas Trust: Not assessed

ActionAid India: Gender-transformative

Akshara Centre: Gender-transformative

Bal Sakha-Assam: Gender-responsive

Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ): Gender-transformative

Child in Need Institute (CINI): Gender-responsive

Child Rights and You (CRY): Gender-responsive

Childline: Gender-blind

Collective Coalition Against Human Trafficking: Not assessed

ComMutiny-the Youth Collective: Gender-responsive

Indo-Global Social Service Society (IGSSS): Gender-responsive

ISAR -Institute For Social Action and Research: Not assessed

Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti: Gender-transformative

Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Manda (MASUM): Gender-transformative

MIND India (Institute of Positive Mental Health & Research): Gender-aware

National Cadet Corps: Gender-blind

National Social Service: Gender-transformative

NSS/NYKS: Youth-Led Organizations: Gender-responsive

Pratham: Gender-aware

SafetiPin: Gender-transformative

Samvedana: Child Rights: Gender-aware

Sauhard: Youth and Adolescent Participation: Gender-responsive

Save the Children: Gender-responsive

Shiv Shiksha Samiti Ranoli: Gender-responsive

State Resource Centre for Women (SRCW, DSW): Gender-transformative

73. Towards the end of the assignment additional CSOs were flagged in the validation phase of this assignment: Breakthrough, Girls not Brides, Point of View, Jatan, Talash, Abita (Assam). Some of these CSOs also filed surveys in January 2023. Given the timeframes for the assignment, these CSOs have not been fully assessed. However, following a brief review of the surveys and a desktop review, it appears these are relevant organizations to consider. It is advised that these organizations be included for further assessment, interventions, and gender-transformative work to be undertaken by UNICEF and UNFPA.

OBSERVATIONS⁷⁴

Positive lessons: Despite low response rates from the Indian CSOs on the assessment list, the desktop research revealed that CSOs in India are mostly gender-responsive and gender-transformative. Many of the organizations that ranked highly in their approach to gender equality are working with men and boys to make them partners in initiatives on social justice and transforming masculinities. Several organizations actively incorporate the empowerment of women and girls into their programming and target structural change to power dynamics, gender norms and institutions, rather than merely focusing on the passive delivery of support services to women and girls. Safetipin is a good illustration of a gender-transformative organization seeking to improve safety in urban spaces and enable data-collection, working to ensure that people, particularly women, can make informed choices about their mobility. The She Rises project carried out by Safetipin is particularly notable. The organization acknowledges that patriarchy places the burden of care primarily upon women, including the care of vulnerable and excluded groups like children, the elderly and people with disabilities. It is working towards a framework for gender transformation in cities to ensure that public spaces are responsive, inclusive, safe and equitable. This organization is strong both in terms of structural and substantive efforts to enable gender transformation. Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Manda (MASUM) is another interesting example. The organization is also strong structurally: notably, it has two committees focused on gender issues (the sexual harassment of women in the workplace and the grievance resolution committees). From a networking perspective, and as part of the programmes, the organization works with different community-based organizations and structures. The organization has a programme on the Rights of Adolescents and Youth which focuses on empowering young women by teaching them negotiation skills to stall early-marriage, among other things. All its programmes have, at their

core, the empowerment of women and young girls and the fight for human rights. Partners for Law in Development (PLD) similarly stood out as a gender-transformative CSO. Women's needs inform its work and PLD has a clear feminist goal. Further, its strategy is informed by an intersectional perspective. It conducts research and monitors the implementation of laws, creates resource materials from a legal perspective, and runs the project 'Feminist Law Archives', which chronicles the engagement of the women's movement with the law in India. It has a special section on 'Adolescents Concerns'. The organization also offers capacity development training and has presented research on the case for differentiated legal responses to children and related to early and forced marriage/unions, looking at lessons from India for a global audience. This is illustrative of its efforts to advance systemic change and knowledge-generation.

Gaps and challenges: There were a handful of CSOs in India that ranked as gender-blind. In general, the strategic programming of these does not appear to be informed by a gender analysis, and they do not have, as a core part of their vision and mission, the advancement of the rights of women and girls through a gender-transformative lens. There are no indications that they actively incorporate the empowerment of women and girls into their programming and target structural change to power dynamics, norms and institutions. They do not speak to the rights of women and children. These organizations fall short both at the structural and substantive level when it comes to gender-transformative change, being unaccountable for gender.

Recommendations: While India is another good example of a country with generally gender-responsive CSOs, there is room for improvement for gender-blind and gender-aware organizations. A meeting for all the organizations to exchange good practice could be of great benefit. Some of the more progressive ones may benefit from

⁷⁴ These observations have been reviewed by the Focal Points for India and their feedback has been considered in the preparation of the final draft.



a refresher course on GTAs, and they may also be able to share positive impact stories in order to assist the other organizations with practical suggestions for improvements. Accordingly, it is recommended that a workshop or series of workshops be conducted in India, focusing on structural changes, as well as support for generating the systemic change from a gender-transformative perspective. This could be conducted in a way that supports existing recommendations in the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool country report to provide capacity-building for CSOs through training modules on GTA.⁷⁵ This may also involve strengthening the capacity for engaging men and boys on positive narratives of masculinities and gender norms and how to conduct life skills and employment development programmes in a way that addresses systemic and structural gender inequalities, as recommended in the country report.

The additional CSOs that were mentioned by the Gender Focal Point in the validation phase, pointed to several gender-transformative organizations. For example, Breakthrough, a structurally strong CSO, is working to create

a cultural shift and make discrimination and violence against girls and women unacceptable, with a strong emphasis on the empowerment of girls and adolescents. Girls not Brides is a global network committed to ending child marriage in which 169 organizations in India participate. It works with a 'Partnership Strategy 2022-2025' that is informed by a gender analysis and focused on a community-led GTA that addresses, in a coordinated way, the intersecting oppressions of girls across sectors to end child marriages. Point of View plays an important role in empowering women, girls and gender and sexual minorities to shape and inhabit digital spaces, using social media to amplify the voices of adolescent girls on the age of marriage and equipping young women and girls with the advocacy skills they need to negotiate change in their communities. Interestingly, UNICEF also works with the Assam Branch Indian Tea Association to empower adolescent girls in tea gardens on a range of issues, including ending child marriage and the rights of children, adolescents and women. This appeals to the CSO's due diligence and corporate social responsibilities. A review is recommended to see if these organizations can be included in the list of CSOs for the Global Programme.

⁷⁵ United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, *UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, Gender-Transformative Accelerator: India Country Report*, December 2021.

NEPAL

High-level overview

According to UN Women, key legal frameworks to support gender equality are in place in Nepal and progress has been made on several other key metrics. However, gaps remain in areas such as child marriage and gender-based violence.⁷⁶ Nepal ranks 143 out of 191 countries on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index.⁷⁷ According to UNICEF, progress in terms of child protection here is mixed.⁷⁸ While child marriages have decreased, reports to police of violence against women and girls increased substantially, cases of trafficking are increasingly being intercepted, and laws and policies are more protective of children. Unfortunately, challenges persist in relation to violence against children, child marriage and child labour. Nepalese children do not have access to all their rights, and poverty is a significant factor that contributes towards violence and other harmful practices against children.⁷⁹ The prevalence of child marriage has dropped in recent years to a rate of 33 per cent, with the current number of child brides estimated at 4.2 million.⁸⁰

76. UN Women, 'Nepal,' <<https://data.unwomen.org/country/nepal>>, accessed 27 June 2023.

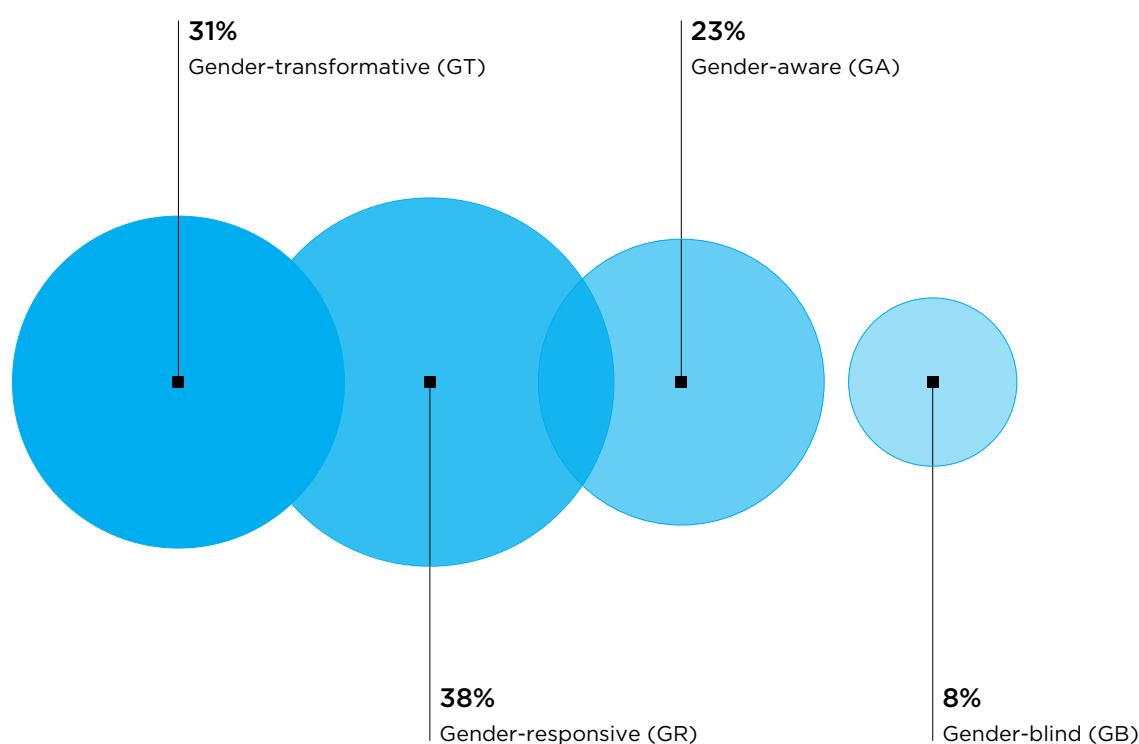
77. 'Gender Inequality Index (GII)'.

78. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Child Protection,' <www.unicef.org/nepal/child-protection>, accessed 27 June 2023.

79. Humanium, 'Children of Nepal,' <www.humanium.org/en/nepal> accessed 27 June 2023.

80. UNFPA-UNICEF *synthesis paper*.

ASSESSMENT RESULTS



Aawaj: Gender-transformative

BAS Nepal: Gender-aware

Education Pages: Gender-responsive

Family Planning Association Nepal: Gender-responsive

Forum for Awareness and Youth Activity: Gender-aware

Karnali Integrated Rural (Kirdac): Gender-responsive

LIFE Nepal: Gender-transformative

Nepal Fertility Care Centre: Gender-transformative

Nepal Red Cross Society: Gender-blind

Siddhartha Social Development Centre: Gender-responsive

Social Organization District Coordination Committee: Gender-aware

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency: Gender-responsive

Voluntary Service Overseas: Gender-transformative

OBSERVATIONS⁸¹

Positive lessons: Nepal stood out as a country with very gender-responsive and transformative CSOs, many of which actively participated in this process. Roughly two-thirds of the CSOs assessed in Nepal were ranked as either gender-responsive or gender-transformative. LIFE Nepal was notable for its impressive approach towards ensuring commitment to child safety. It works to ensure that all volunteers, vendors, and

stakeholders associated with the organization are aware of their core mandate and have a good understanding of child protection. All the staff and volunteers are required to show a commitment to child protection and safeguarding by signing a code of conduct. Notably, LIFE also encourages the vendors it works with to commit to child safeguarding. LIFE sets a target of creating a gender-responsive

⁸¹ These observations have been reviewed by the Focal Points for Nepal who have confirmed their agreement with the findings and recommendations.

and sensitive (child protection-friendly) environment at local level. To measure the target, it uses an indicator that collects data on child marriage in the targeted areas on an annual basis by mobilizing girl champions to complete a checklist. Nepal Fertility Care Centre (NFCC) was also ranked highly for its GTA at the structural level. The organization has been able to create a space where women are leading work on issues that affect women. NFCC believes in creating within the organization as well as in the spaces in which it works, an environment in which everyone, especially women, feels safe and empowered. Awaaj is yet another example of a GTA CSO in Nepal, as it monitors progress to tackle gender inequality, has acknowledged areas of weaknesses, and has established strategies to improve them. It appears that its work contributes towards creating an enabling environment through establishing community support mechanisms addressing violence against children and women, and it seeks to bring about lasting change through a participatory process involving the active contributions of men and women, children, families, teachers, local leaders,

existing community groups, the government, and local NGOs, and especially survivors of sexual exploitation, in all phases of its work.

Gaps and challenges: The Nepal Red Cross Society demonstrated some challenges from a GTA perspective. While conducting important work, there is limited evidence to illustrate that the organization adopts a gender-transformative lens in its work. There are limited references in its work to the advancement of gender equality. The main gaps and challenges for gender-aware organizations in Nepal were structural, relating to policies, strategies and team and leadership dynamics.

Recommendations: Nepal is a shining example of several CSOs adopting a GTA in a context marred by poverty and patriarchy. Given that many of the CSOs rank highly, there may be value in hosting a workshop with all CSOs enabling them to share ideas, lessons, and challenges, and to support one another with strategies to implement a GTA in their work.



MIDDLE EAST



YEMEN

High-level overview

Work still needs to be done in Yemen to achieve gender equality, particularly on gender representation in Parliament, high adolescent birth rates and barriers to accessing sexual and reproductive health services.⁸² Yemen ranks 183 out of 191 countries on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index.⁸³ Children in Yemen do not have any particular legislative protection. Child abuse and child marriage are still prevalent.⁸⁴ Yemen has also experienced six years of armed conflict, making it the site of the largest humanitarian crises in the world.⁸⁵ This has reportedly contributed to an increase in cases of child marriage.⁸⁶ Yemen has 3.8 million child brides, and 32 per cent of women aged 20–24 had been married before the age of 18.⁸⁷ Some progress has been noted in this regard since 1988, though the country is still behind targets to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.⁸⁸

82. UN Women, 'Yemen,' <<https://data.unwomen.org/country/yemen>>, accessed 27 June 2023.

83. 'Gender Inequality Index (GII)'.

84. Humanium, 'Children of Yemen,' <www.humanium.org/en/yemen>, accessed 27 June 2023.

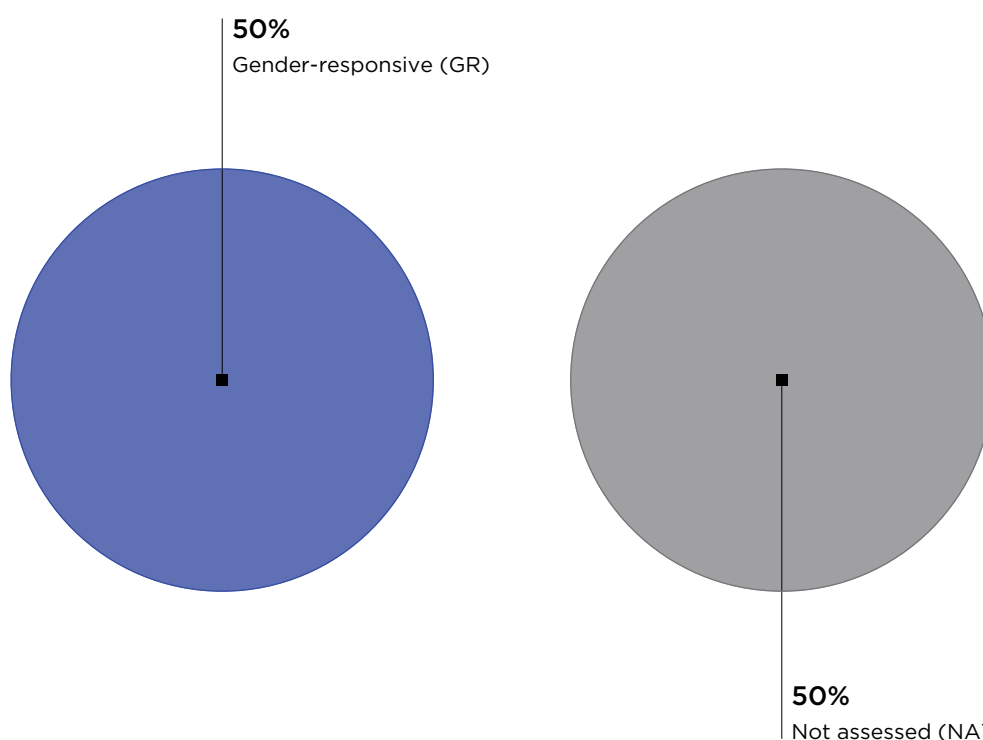
85. Human Rights Watch, 'Yemen: Events of 2020,' <www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/yemen>, accessed 27 June 2023.

86. United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, *UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to end child marriage, Phase II Programme Document: 2020–2023*, UNFPA and UNICEF, November 2019.

87. *UNFPA-UNICEF synthesis paper*.

88. *Ibid.*

ASSESSMENT RESULTS



Al Zahraa: Not assessed

Children and Youth Protection Organization (CYPO): Not assessed

SOS Foundation: Gender-responsive

Yemen Women Union: Gender-responsive

OBSERVATIONS⁸⁹

Positive lessons: The CSOs assessed in Yemen were impressive for their gender-responsive work, particularly in the context of its ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis. The SOS foundation was outstanding for focusing on gender equality and gender-transformative programming and seeking to encourage gender mainstreaming in the country's peacebuilding initiatives. It further hosted the Next Generation Feminist Leaders Retreat during which it conducted training for 25 women activists and agents of social change, building their capacity in feminist leadership, mechanisms and approaches to shift and change

attitudes, behaviours and social norms that perpetuate gender inequality. The Yemen Women Union ranked highly in terms of its monitoring and learning as it uses a data analysis tool to represent and measure progress and results. The team engages in training, workshops, and programmes that seek to provide women with a safe environment and help them to become financially independent. It also provides legal and psychological advice with the aim of preventing child marriages. Notably, all decision makers within the organization are women. It also uses a data analysis tool to represent and measure progress

⁸⁹. No additional feedback was received from the Focal Points for Yemen.



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and results. The organization involves beneficiaries in sharing their positive impact stories and appears to be intentional about connecting and collaborating with other feminist organizations to build their capacity, often assisting them by providing manuals that support their work.

Gaps and challenges: Unfortunately, there was no available information about Al Zahraa and the Children and Youth Protection Organization (CYPO). Therefore, the gaps and challenges relate, in part, to a lack of information about CSOs and the need for better communication and knowledge generation. When considering the gaps and challenges it is necessary to acknowledge that the socioeconomic and political climate, coupled with persistent conflict, means that Yemen is a difficult environment for CSOs. Moreover, it is worth noting that it is currently experiencing one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world,⁹⁰ in which “women and girls are among the hardest hit.”⁹¹

Recommendations: It is advised that the Global Programme Focal Points engage with Al Zahraa and CYPO to confirm if it is still operating. If so, an analysis should be conducted to determine how best to support them. The Global Programme may consider expanding its work in the country to support additional CSOs adopting a GTA. For example, Human Access, in and among its impressive humanitarian work, is working on improving livelihood opportunities for women and youth through skills imparting programmes. Deem Yemen is another organization to consider – it appears UNFPA is already working with it on projects to empower women and girls. In the context of crisis, war and a tribal/patriarchal society, the challenges of implementing a GTA must be acknowledged. However, this also amplifies the need for supporting CSOs seeking to address the very gendered consequences for women and girls in Yemen.

90. UNICEF, ‘Yemen crisis’ <www.unicef.org/emergencies/yemen-crisis>, accessed 27 June 2023.

91. United Nations Population Fund, *2022 UNFPA – Humanitarian Response in Yemen*, UNFPA, April 2022, <www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/2022_unfpa_humanitarian_response_yemen.pdf>.

06



CONCLUDING REMARKS



It is clear that the Global Programme is having a significant impact in supporting CSOs in priority countries to systemically transform gendered institutions, structures and social norms that inhibit the realization of the rights of women, girls and young people. The organizations that form part of the Global Programme are, in many ways, positively contributing towards the gender-transformative change in their respective countries. That said, and while many of the assessed CSOs have ranked highly in this assessment, it is important to understand this assessment in context. While the CSOs were assessed with the same tools and metrics, their country profiles were taken into account when ranking them. It is necessary to note that, overall, the countries that formed part of this assessment do not rank highly when it comes to gender equality. All the countries fall at the lower end of the UNDP Gender Inequality Index, ranking as follows out of 191 countries:

- **Bangladesh**, 129
- **Burkina Faso**, 184
- **Ethiopia**, 175
- **Ghana**, 133
- **India**, 131
- **Mozambique**, 185
- **Nepal**, 143
- **Niger**, 189
- **Sierra Leone**, 181
- **Yemen**, 183

These rankings illustrate that the context in which these CSOs operate is complex, often highly patriarchal and exclusive. With the considerable barriers these CSOs face, it is impressive that so many are gender-responsive and gender-

transformative. It is important to note that many of those that fell below the gender-responsive and gender-transformative levels require capacity-building. Some will require more support and guidance than others, but in the main, there is a notable foundation on which to work, with most CSOs having some understanding of gender equality, inclusivity, intersectionality, and transformation, and most taking some steps to implement structural and substantive elements of a GTA in their work.

The Global Programme may want to consider expanding efforts to support the CSOs in transforming gender-unequal practices and institutions in their respective countries. This could take the form of a toolkit coupled with country-specific training, workshops and strategic interventions. Support in the development of policies, guidance on team and leadership structures, as well as regular gender analyses and improvements to monitoring and evaluation tools, will be of great value to the CSOs, particularly those that fall within the gender-blind and gender-aware categories. There is also scope for further collaboration between the CSOs, with those ranking more highly guiding and training other CSOs in their country/region. This would also ensure that the trainings are adequately contextualized.

Overall, this assessment has highlighted the trends, gaps and challenges for CSOs in their respective countries. It is hoped that this assessment can assist the Global Programme as it helps to strengthen and amplify the work of these organizations.

It is clear that the Global Programme is having a significant impact in supporting CSOs in priority countries to systemically transform gendered institutions, structures and social norms that inhibit the realization of the rights of women, girls and young people.



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