



CUSTOM INDICATORS

ADDRESSING CHILD, EARLY, AND FORCED MARRIAGE AND UNIONS

This document — to be used alongside the Child, Early, and Forced Marriage and Unions (CEFMU) Theory of Change, CEFMU Learning Agenda, and CEFMU Implementation Plan — introduces a set of custom indicators that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implementing partners can use to assess progress toward CEFMU results. These custom indicators are intended for use in combination with USAID standard indicators related to gender equality to assess progress toward intended CEFMU results across the socioecological framework. Teams should select the set of indicators that will best capture whether intended changes are occurring.

STANDARD INDICATORS

Many of the results USAID aims to achieve through CEFMU prevention and response programming can be measured through shifts in broader gender equality outcomes. For that reason, the following standard USAID/F indicators for gender equality, women’s empowerment, and gender-based violence can be used to assess progress toward intended results for CEFMU:

- Number of legal instruments drafted, proposed, or adopted with U.S. Government (USG) assistance designed to promote gender equality or non-discrimination against women or girls at the national or subnational level (GNDR-1)
- Proportion of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (GNDR-2)
- Percentage of participants reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political resources and opportunities (GNDR-4)
- Number of legal instruments drafted, proposed, or adopted with USG assistance designed to improve prevention of or response to sexual and gender-based violence at the national or subnational level (GNDR-5)

TERMINOLOGY

Child marriage (also called early marriage) is a formal or informal union where one or both parties are under the age of 18.^a Forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not give full and free consent, regardless of age.^b Early unions are informal unions in which a girl or boy lives with a partner as if married before the age of 18.^c The acronyms “CEFM” — and increasingly, “CEFMU” — are often used to encompass all of these practices.

(a) [UNICEF 2021](#), (b) [UNFPA 2020](#), (c) [Girls Not Brides 2020](#)

- Number of people reached by a USG-funded intervention providing GBV services (e.g., health, legal, psychosocial counseling, shelters, hotlines) (GNDR-6)
- Percentage of organizations receiving USAID support for CEFMU-related work that demonstrate improved performance (adapted from CBLD-9)

CUSTOM INDICATORS FOR CEFMU

ESSENTIAL CEFMU PREVALENCE INDICATORS

The following are indicators that are essential to capture the scale of CEFMU in a country or region. These data are collected and made publicly available for most USAID countries via the Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, or national censuses. These data are representative at the national level, with subnational disaggregation often possible. Localized data can be collected via community- or program-level surveys.

- Percentage of women/men ages 20–24 who were first married or in union by age 18
- Percentage of women/men ages 20–24 who were first married or in union by age 15
- Median age at first marriage, female/male

INDICATORS OF PROGRAMMATIC SUCCESS

Taking into account the type of intervention, many relevant metrics of progress can be captured through surveys of individuals in the target catchment area and population, reviews of administrative data and legislation, reports of implementing partners, and monitoring reports, particularly when measured at appropriate time points. The following indicators can help to demonstrate progress at the individual, household, community, and institutional levels:

- Percentage of married girls/boys who say they wanted to get married at the time that they were married
- Percentage of girls who have life goals beyond roles of mother, wife, and homemaker, disaggregated by age and marital status
- Percentage of parents who support their child's decision to pursue roles and goals beyond those of mother, wife, and homemaker
- Percentage of parents who envision roles and trajectories for their daughters beyond those of mother, wife, and homemaker, disaggregated by sex of parent
- Percentage of unmarried girls/boys who are confident in their ability to pursue alternatives to CEFMU
- Percentage of adolescent girls who report having a say in important decisions (i.e., regarding schooling, marriage, finances, sex, pregnancy, childbearing), disaggregated by age and marital status
- Percentage of parents who say they will not marry their sons/daughters before the age of 18
- Percentage of parents who say they will not marry their sons/daughters to a girl/boy younger than 18

- Number of national or subnational strategies or plans of action to address CEFMU
- Percentage of key stakeholders (e.g., parents, adolescents, young people, community and political leaders, and faith-based actors) who believe it is harmful to get married before age 18
- Percentage of organizations (i.e., nongovernmental organizations, local institutions, schools) receiving USAID support for CEFMU-related work that demonstrate improved performance
- Number of influential leaders (e.g., traditional, cultural, political, and faith-based actors) who have made public declarations against CEFMU and in support of alternative roles for girls
- Number of news media stories, edutainment programs, dramas, or films aired on television or radio that address CEFMU and related gender norms

INDICATORS OF PROGRESS TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND LEARNING AGENDA

While the above indicators can help assess progress at the country level, the following metrics can support USAID in tracking institutional commitment to address CEFMU within missions or headquarters:

- Number of activities that incorporate CEFMU prevention or response (new and existing), disaggregated by sector and Operating Unit
- Amount of funding invested in CEFMU prevention or response programming
- Number of partnerships USAID engages in on CEFMU, by type of partner (i.e., funder, government, private sector, implementing partner, community-based organization)
- Number of governments USAID supports to develop or implement CEFMU laws, policies, and implementation plans
- Number of research studies funded to build evidence on CEFMU, disaggregated by sector and Operating Unit
- Number of new trainings or materials (e.g., toolkits, how-to notes, and fact sheets) developed to expand capacity within USAID or to communicate best practices on CEFMU, within and outside the Agency
- Number of USAID staff, implementing partners, and host country government officials trained on CEFMU prevention and/or response

Additional, sector-specific indicators for CEFMU prevention and response are available in USAID's Child, Early, and Forced Marriage Resource Guide.¹

¹ Glinski AM, Sexton M, and Meyers L. Washington, DC: The Child, Early, and Forced Marriage Resource Guide. Task Order, Banyan Global: 2015. Available from: <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1865/child-early-and-forced-marriage-resource-guide>.

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The goal of the Collective Action to Reduce Gender-Based Violence (CARE-GBV) activity is to strengthen USAID’s collective prevention and response, or “collective action” in gender-based violence (GBV) development programming across USAID. For more information about CARE-GBV, click [here](#).

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