

GLOBAL THEMATIC REPORT CHILD PROTECTION

SC 149906

UNICEF ERITREA

January – December 2018



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Financial Summary
Global – Thematic Child Protection

Assisted Country:	Eritrea
Assisted Programme/Project:	Child Protection (CP)
Donor reference:	Global Thematic
Grant Number:	SC149906
Total Contribution Pledge Amount:	US\$ 389,124.99
Total Programme Support Costs:	US\$ 24,212.36
Programmable Amount CP:	US\$ 364,912.63
Funds Used To-date (From Programmable Amount):	US\$ 364,887.17
Balance of Funds to date:	US\$ 25.46
Duration of the Contribution:	October 2013 - December 2018
Period Covered by the Report	January 2018 – December 2018
Date Prepared:	March 2019

Executive Summary

Underage Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) and injuries and disabilities related to landmines, Unexploded Ordnances (UXO) and/or Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) are factors negatively affecting the lives of Eritrean children. Some 13 per cent of women aged between 20 to 24 were married by age 15, and 41 per cent were married by age 18. While declining trends are observed among young children aged fifteen and five with 33 per cent and 12 per cent FGM prevalence rates respectively, the corresponding figure for Eritrea remains at 83 per cent.

UNICEF Eritrea's 2017-2018 rolling work plan signed with the Government of State of Eritrea (GoSE) integrated strategies that address child protection issues. These included the social protection of orphans and vulnerable children, elimination of FGM/C and child marriage, and prevention from injuries and disabilities through integrated community and school based Mine Risk Education (MRE).

During the reporting period, a formative research on the drivers and possible interventions to eliminate child marriage was completed and disseminated with the five-year strategic plan of action to end child marriage. Technical and financial support was extended to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW) to map the social protection interventions in Eritrea. The global thematic child protection fund was instrumental in strengthening the capacity of UNICEF staff and Government partners on child protection and supporting government participation in international forums.

The thematic funding contributed to the production of IEC materials on FGM/C and underage marriage, MRE and Violence Against Children (VAC), and the commemoration of International Day of Persons with Disabilities and World Children's Day. The thematic funding additionally contributed to a FGM/C community mapping in 55 villages and the analysis of the 2016-2018 mapping data of 140 villages; and recruiting a consultant to develop an Integrated Strategic plan on FGM/C, Underage Marriage and Child Rights.

UNICEF's partners on programmes on the abandonment of harmful social practices include Ministry of Health (MoH), MoLSW and the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW); who are working together in a tightly coordinated manner to strengthen and to mobilise six Zonal Child Rights Committees (CRC), and 67 sub-zonal and 701 village level committees to end all harmful practices and to promote the advancement of children rights. 2018 was a promising year with positive results in terms of coordination and concerted action for children.

In 2019, the focus will be on strengthening all community-based platforms and the social welfare workforce towards strengthening the national child protection system that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, and the protection of children from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse by 2030.

Although 2018 saw the realization of peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the GoSE's development of priorities, put on hold many UN programmes, including that of UNICEF's by freezing all direct cash transfers (DCTs) to implementing partners. UNICEF worked closely with its implementing partners to minimise the risks related to the freezing of the DCTs, and by implementing some of the critical activities outside of the DCT process.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBR	Community-Based Rehabilitation
CRC	Child Rights Committee
CWD	Children with Disabilities
ECO	Eritrea Country Office
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practices
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
GoSE	Government of the State of Eritrea
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MRE	Mine Risk Education
NUEW	National Union of Eritrean Women
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SPCF	Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
VAC	Violence against Children

Strategic Context - 2018

There were major political changes that took place in Eritrea during 2018. The rapprochement between Eritrea and Ethiopia ended two decades of a political stalemate between the two neighbours. Following the peace agreement, the Government of the State of Eritrea (GoSE) also initiated an internal reprioritisation process to align itself to the new situation. The borders were opened for the first time after many years and the people of the two neighbouring countries were able to travel freely.

While the peace in general was a very positive move, the changes in the environment primarily affected the situation of women and children, but also the UN as the line ministries were unable to implement their interventions as planned.

This was the second year of the implementation of the GoSE/UN Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework 2017-2021 (SPCF 2017-2021) and the 2017-2021 UNICEF Country Programme. UNICEF Eritrea's child protection programme also embeds social protection and continued to focus on preparing communities for collective abandonment of harmful social norms such as FGM/C; prevention of different manifestations of exploitation and abuse against children; strengthening capacity of Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare; providing assistance to vulnerable families, orphans and vulnerable children; and to provide Mine Risk Education (MRE).

The year 2018 had positive results as the MoH, MoLSW and the NUEW coordinated their workplans and activities on the abandonment of harmful social practices at the national level. This coordination mechanism was further replicated at the regional, sub-regional and village level to end all harmful practices and to promote children's rights.

Results Achieved

Programme:

The formative research on underage marriage and the five-year strategic plan, completed in 2017 by the NUEW in collaboration with UNICEF, was disseminated to stakeholders on 11 October 2018 to commemorate the International Day of the Girl Child. The implementation of the strategic plan was put on hold due to technical reasons by the GoSE. UNICEF plans to continue to address the issues and advocate to endorse the strategic plan and start implementation in 2019. The strategic plan will be further strengthened in 2019 by aligning it with the Integrated Strategic Plan for FGM/C and Child Rights to provide a comprehensive roadmap for elimination of harmful traditional practices and protection of child rights to reflect the new coordination modalities. The integrated strategic plan is expected to be finalised by May 2019.

The enhanced coordination by the partners working on the abandonment of harmful social practices was expanded from the national level to six zonal CRCs, 67 sub-zonal and 701 village level committees. While many of the activities this year centred on the establishment of these committees at all levels, activities in 2019 will focus on strengthening all community-based platforms and strengthening the social welfare workforce towards strengthening the national child

protection system. This enhanced system will contribute to the achievement of the SDGs of protecting children from all violence, exploitation and abuse by 2030.

Furthermore, the social norms approach adopted in implementing the UNICEF/UNFPA Joint Programme and the technical support offered to the implementing partners was instrumental in changing attitudes of partners and local communities about FGM/C in Eritrea. The intensive and sustained community mobilisation, with key messages focusing on FGM/C as violations of the basic rights of girls and women, and its illegal and inhumane nature, showed that 82 per cent respondents believed there were no benefits of FGM/C, according to the Eritrea Population and Health Survey (EPHS), 2010.

The acceptance of social norms changes to eliminate FGM/C is growing through the intensive sensitisation and community dialogues conducted in the targeted sub-Zobas. The thematic funding contributed to a FGM/C community mapping in 55 villages that assessed their readiness to abandon FGM/C against an “index of readiness for public declaration of FGM/C abandonment”. The data was analysed together with the mapping data of 85 villages collected in 2016. The results indicated that 58 of the 140 surveyed villages were ready to make public declaration for the abandonment of FGM/C. Partners are working with communities in all the six regions of Eritrea to help them to publicly disavow and gain the proud title of a “Female Genital Mutilation Free Community.”

UNICEF continued its technical and financial support to the Ministry of Education (MoE) and MoLSW on integrated community and school-based MRE to prevent injury and death from explosive remnants of war (ERW). Altogether 224 teachers' capacity was built to act as trainers, and these teachers reached over 97,800 children (45% female) with MRE in schools. This increased awareness helped to prevent child injuries, disabilities and death. The thematic funding also contributed to the production of IEC materials MRE, FGM/C and underage marriage; IEC materials on the different forms of VAC including bullying and corporal punishment are being finalised and will be widely disseminated.

UNICEF supported the MoLSW to commemorate International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 1 December under the theme "Facilitating the Participation of PWDs in Sports". The day was commemorated at the national stadium with the participation of thousands of people including over 2000 children/persons with disabilities from the various disability organizations in Eritrea. Additionally, the event was attended by the Minister for Labour and Social Welfare, high-ranking government officials, representatives from UN agencies and the diplomatic community.

The talent show comprised of sports competitions, poems, drama and songs by persons with disabilities (PWDs) and children with disabilities (CWDs). During the event, the Director General of the Department of Social Welfare from MoLSW and UNICEF Representative in Eritrea delivered key messages regarding the theme of the day and reaffirmed their commitment to work for the rights and welfare of CWDs in Eritrea. The event was broadcast on national TV.

The International Children's Day was celebrated on 20 November in Asmara under the theme “Renew our Commitment for the Sustainable Development of Children” with over 250 children from kindergarten and elementary schools. Participating children performed dances, poems, songs and drama to reflect the rights and welfare of children. The event was disseminated on mass-media (Newspaper, Radio & TV) in different languages and helped to raise awareness among the public that parents and caregivers are the key actors responsible for sustainable development of children.

UNICEF's technical and financial support were vital to supporting social protection for vulnerable families and children. In 2018, UNICEF supported through the MoLSW to provide donkey-carts for 2206 families benefitting approximately 9000 children. The donkey-carts were used to generate income for vulnerable families which improved their livelihoods and to access basic social services. The social protection mapping was completed in 2018, which assessed over 100 social protection interventions and provided an evidence base for the development of a national strategic plan and the design of a social safety net programme to be developed in 2019.

To monitor and supervise community-based programme activities, UNICEF and implementing partners conducted five field-monitoring visits. The joint field monitoring improved the implementation of programme activities by identifying challenges in a timely manner, assessing progress made, lessons learned and generating evidence for advocacy.

Capacity Building:

The thematic funding was utilised to build capacity of 10 technical staff of implementing partners on social norms, and to serve as national level trainers. The training manuals were reviewed and enriched with relevant and updated information and messages on child rights, underage marriage and FGM/C abandonment to enhance knowledge of the CRC members on how to sensitise communities. Additionally, IEC materials and harmonised message on gender-based violence were developed in local languages, and have been used to support community mobilisation of existing child protection networks to strengthen behaviours that lead to the abandonment of FGM/C.

Social protection within UNICEF Eritrea falls under the child protection portfolio and UNICEF supported two senior government officials, the Director General of the MoE and the Director General of MoLSW to participate in a regional conference on "Community of Practice for Cash Transfer in Africa." During the conference, Eritrea showcased the Donkey for School programme that empowers children with disabilities and enables them to access education and other social services. The participation of delegates from Eritrea in the conference has improved the social cash transfer programme implementation in Eritrea, vis-à-vis through sharing of information, knowledge and best practices from other countries in Africa.

UNICEF Eritrea Child Protection Specialist attended the Regional Conference on the Protection of Child Migrants in the Horn of Africa held on 12-13 March 2018 in Djibouti where issues around mixed migration (migration, irregular migration, illegal migration, smuggling, trafficking) were discussed to strengthen the understanding of migration and establishment of child protective services. UNICEF's advocacy with GoSE contributed to the incorporation of issues related to irregular migration into awareness-raising and training programmes being undertaken by the MoLSW in 10 sub-Zobas. These programmes seek to sensitise communities, including youth, on the dangers of trafficking and exploitation associated with irregular migration, and reached 27,500 community members.

UNICEF supported the MoH and the MoLSW to participate in the FGM/C conference in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on 24-25 October 2018 and the Africa Girls Summit held in Accra, Ghana on 23 - 24 November 2018. The participation of GoSE delegations at the Girls' Summit and FGM/C conference solidifies government commitment to eliminate all forms of harmful practices and gender-based violence against girls and women. The delegates also reported their understanding of the global trends and joint African target to eliminate FGM/C and underage marriage.

To enhance the knowledge and skills on community-based rehabilitation (CBR), staff from MoLSW and UNICEF participated in 6th CBR Africa Network Conference in Lusaka, Zambia on 7-11 May 2018. During the conference, Eritrea shared its experience of CBR service delivery, inclusion and participation of children living with disabilities. The lessons learned from the conference have helped to strengthen CBR programme and the gradual shift towards Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID).

Constraints:

The pace of implementation for planned child protection activities was slow in 2018 and was mostly affected by the freeze on DCTs by the government. UNICEF Eritrea did not receive any funding from the FGM/C joint programme in 2018 resulting in a suspension of the 2018 action plan. According to the joint field monitoring with implementing partners, the needs are enormous and thousands of vulnerable children/families remain un-reached with social protection activities, due to huge gaps in resources. UNICEF continues to advocate for more resources in order to address the needs of vulnerable populations for care and protection.

Fund Utilisation

Reporting Period	January – December 2018
Programmable Amount	US\$ 364,912.63
Funds Used To-date	US\$ 364,887.17
2018 Expenditure	US\$146,123.44

From the Global Child Protection Thematic Fund (SC 149906), USD 146,123.44 has been spent in 2018. The thematic fund was instrumental to help implement child protection activities in 2018, especially on generating evidence on FGM/C through community mapping and data analysis. It also supported the commemoration of World Children's Day, International Day of Persons with Disabilities and to strength the capacity of child protection staff of UNICEF Eritrea, and that of implementing partners.

Future Work Plan

To develop an effective child protection system and monitor its impact, it is essential that cases of violence and abuse are recorded to ensure appropriate protective services. Service provisions for victims of violence should be in place and referral mechanism should be developed. In this context, a robust Child Protection Case Management Information system should be established. Since the EPHS 2010 validated the prevalence of gender-based violence, the upcoming work on child protection will focus on addressing gender-based violence against children and women. UNICEF will focus on strengthening the national child protection system.

Furthermore, the pace of declaration for FGM/C free communities is an area that needs to be expedited and requires additional funding and technical support if Eritrea is going to meet goals of zero FGM/C and underage marriage by 2030. The child protection programme in 2019 will focus on strengthening community child protection system by specifically strengthening the existing social welfare workforce and community-based child protection and participation platforms.

Expression of Thanks

UNICEF Eritrea would like to express its profound gratitude to the Global Child Protection Thematic Fund for its generous and continued support to its Child Protection programme to reach vulnerable children and women in hard-to-reach communities. Without this significant contribution, it would not have been possible for UNICEF Eritrea to support efforts to protect children and adolescents from the threat posed by harmful practices and mines and ERW, and our work towards a safer environment for and the realisation of children's rights in Eritrea.

Annex I: Donor Feedback Form

In acknowledgement of the contribution of your organization and in order to fulfil our reporting obligations, we continually strive to ensure that our donor reports are of a standard that assures you that funds are being used effectively and in the best interest of the child. Hence, we are interested in your feedback and seek your input towards improving our performance. Please take time to let us know how satisfied you are with the report you have received by completing the accompanying donor report feedback form.

Name of Report: "Access to Child Protection Services: Global Thematic Report"

Reference no: SC149906

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SCORING: 5 indicates "highest level of satisfaction" while 0 indicates "complete dissatisfaction".

1. To what extent did the narrative content of the report conform to your reporting expectations?

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