

CREATING [] SPACES TO TAKE ACTION ON VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS



UPROOTING OUR BELIEFS

EXAMINING SOCIAL NORMS CONTRIBUTING
TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS,
INCLUDING CHILD MARRIAGE

Findings from the Creating Spaces project



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a global epidemic causing death, poverty, exploitation and abuse across all regions and cultures worldwide. Child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) is one of the most detrimental forms of VAWG and affects 650 million women and girls in the world today. The slow pace of change is largely the result of deeply entrenched cultural values, attitudes and practices that perpetuate gender-based violence and discrimination.

With determination to accelerate this progress, and with financial support from Global Affairs Canada, Oxfam introduced “Creating Spaces to Take Action on Violence Against Women and Girls” (Creating Spaces), a five-year project (2016–2021) to reduce VAWG and the prevalence of CEFM in six countries in South and South East Asia (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan and the Philippines).

This compendium report highlights cross-cutting themes and findings from feminist research conducted across the project areas by implementing partners. It identifies the most discriminatory gendered social norms, and material and structural factors at different levels of society that drive VAWG and CEFM. It also provides emerging examples of community-driven approaches to target and transform social norms and to advocate for legislative change. This is the first report in a series of publications that will document knowledge, learnings, and promising practices from the project.

This research is grounded in Oxfam Canada’s feminist research principles, which recognize the intersectionality of identity, honour the complexity and uniqueness of each context, reflect on the balance of power in the participant-researcher relationship, welcome participants as co-creators and co-owners of the research and, above all, follow the highest ethical practices to do no harm.

The research was also conducted within the framework of **Oxfam Canada’s Feminist Knowledge System**, which uses a participatory and learning-centered approach, acknowledges existing power structures and inequalities, and is intended as an advocacy tool to end those inequalities. Distinguished from a traditional knowledge management system, it focuses on the *process* of gathering and creating new knowledge as much as the outcomes or knowledge accumulated. It also recognizes and emphasizes the political power of knowledge and evidence as tools in achieving genuine gender transformation.

FINDINGS

Overall, the research found that four gendered norms were central drivers of CEFM across the Creating Spaces project countries, exposing women and girls to intimate partner and family violence, and denying them agency and rights over their own bodies, sexuality, health, and economic prosperity. **A strongly held social norm that permeates all norms discussed in this report is that men have dominion and ownership over women and girls.** Women and girls are expected to be subordinate, and to follow and obey key male and other authority figures in their lives. The interrelated and intersecting nature of the following four norms has led to compounding negative impacts on women’s and girls’ lives:

- 1. CHASTITY BEFORE MARRIAGE.** Across project areas, pre-marital sex is highly stigmatized and considered an immoral act. High value is placed on the virginity of girls before marriage. To preserve the family honour and uphold religious beliefs, adolescent girls are married at an early age to avoid any pre-marital relations and the risk of pregnancy out of wedlock. By extension, contraceptive use is considered sinful and against “God’s will,” which limits the availability of education and information for adolescent girls on sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR).

- 2. MEN ARE DECISION MAKERS, WOMEN ARE CARETAKERS.** Across the project areas, men are expected to represent the family and community in the public sphere and to be the primary providers for their families. Women and girls are seen as caretakers and largely limited to the private sphere of their homes. They are expected to get married, bear and raise children immediately following marriage, care for and sexually please their husband, and manage all household duties.
- 3. BOYS HAVE GREATER VALUE THAN GIRLS.** Preference for sons corresponds to the norms giving men dominion over women and positions of power in society, and influences the differential treatment of boys and girls in preparing them to fulfil their traditional gender roles. Marriage is seen as a more valuable path forward for young girls; therefore, education for sons is considered a better investment, especially in low-income households.
- 4. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IS ACCEPTABLE IN CERTAIN CONDITIONS.** Violence is seen by many in the project areas, including many women, as an acceptable course of action for husbands to keep their wives in line and control their behaviour, including when they refuse sex. Child brides are even more at risk of violence because they have limited power and knowledge, and often have no prior relationships with their new spouses.

SOCIAL, STRUCTURAL AND MATERIAL FACTORS

In addition to harmful gender norms, the research also identified several social, structural, and material factors that help to perpetuate gender-based violence and early marriage. For example, families **living in poverty**, particularly large families, have an incentive to marry their daughters early to relieve the household's economic burden. These economic factors are reinforced in regions where the **dowry system** is common practice. **Conflict-affected areas** may also be more prone to increased incidence of CEFM, due to a myriad of factors, but primarily high levels of poverty and the need for protection. A large proportion of girls married before the age of 18 do not continue their education because they are expected

to fulfil their duties as wife and mother, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and early marriage. There is also **limited education and awareness** among communities about the negative consequences of child marriage, both for women and girls and for the social and economic development of communities at large.

Traditional gender stereotypes depicted in **popular and social media** work to reinforce discriminatory social norms and normalize VAWG. Many in the project areas also feel that popular media triggers early "sexual awakenings" in youth, further driving CEFM practices. Early marriage is also considered a suitable solution to protect adolescent girls from **sexual violence and harassment**.

In countries where laws prohibiting CEFM have been enacted, **legislative loopholes** run the risk of perpetuating child marriage practices. This is especially the case when public opinion and social norms continue to uphold the *status quo*. Even when laws are implemented, the practice continues because there is little community awareness, local duty bearers themselves are proponents of it, and formal or informal accountability mechanisms are lacking. In addition, many people try to circumvent the law by falsifying ages, delaying registration of the marriage, and conducting clandestine marriages in other communities.

KEY LEARNINGS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following recommendations for further programming are based on the findings of the research:

- Continue to build the capacity of implementing partners on social norm change; incorporate education and awareness on gendered social norms and their negative consequences into all project interventions, and build capacity to monitor and measure changes in social norms.
- Apply a multi-stakeholder approach that focuses on key influencers with targeted strategies to gain their support.
- Continue to cultivate youth's leadership and influence to address gender-biased attitudes, norms, behaviours, and discriminatory laws.

- Understand the power and influence of popular and social media, and how to better integrate them into programming. In addition, consider whether the wider application of popular and social media platforms would increase the effectiveness of prevention strategies.
- Work with local leaders, influencers, women's support groups, and women's rights organizations to strengthen accountability mechanisms to enforce CEFM and VAWG laws.
- Implement CEFM and VAWG prevention strategies in tandem with poverty alleviation mechanisms.
- Study select strategies, approaches, and practices across the six countries to gain more insight into implementation successes and challenges.

These learnings have shaped VAWG prevention strategies and approaches – with a particular focus on CEFM prevention – in the six Creating Spaces countries, adapted to the varying and complex contexts of each project country. The project's multi-pronged, integrated approach to prevention includes engaging influencers; youth education, training, and mobilization; rights-based education; campaigning; edutainment; and legislative advocacy and accountability mechanisms.

As part of its learning plan, Creating Spaces is currently researching knowledge gaps related to best practice in VAWG and CEFM programming, and studying the successes and implementation challenges with project interventions. These learnings will be shared in future publications to contribute to global evidence on effective strategies to end VAWG and CEFM.



ACRONYMS

AMDF	Al Mujadilah Development Foundation
BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (Philippines)
CDC	Community Discussion Center
CEFM	Child, Early, and Forced Marriage
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EVAWG	Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
IDRC	International Development Resource Centre
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
PLCPD	Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development
REFLECT	Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SNDT	Social Norm Diagnostic Tool
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WRO	Women's Rights Organization

1. INTRODUCTION

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a global epidemic that causes death, poverty, exploitation and abuse across all regions and cultures worldwide. It manifests in many psychological, sexual, and physical forms, including intimate partner violence, human trafficking, sexual violence and harassment, female genital mutilation, and child marriage.

Child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM)¹ is one of the most detrimental forms of VAWG, affecting 650 million women and girls who are married before the age of 18.² CEFM exacerbates poverty, gender inequalities, intimate partner violence, and vulnerability to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) risks for child brides around the globe. Ending CEFM is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and supports achievement of at least eight other SDGs.³ Under the SDG agenda, 192 countries have committed to ending child marriage by 2030. In fact, during the past decade, the proportion of young women who were married as children declined by 15%,⁴ indicating some progress. Yet, despite these promising changes, no region is on track to meet its SDG goals. The largest number of child brides are in South Asia, where a reported 44% of child marriages occur. In Southeast Asia, CEFM continues to rise in some countries while it is not falling rapidly enough in others.⁵

The slow pace of change in these regions, as in many others, results largely from deeply entrenched cultural values, attitudes and practices that are rooted in gender stereotypes and discrimination and that perpetuate gender-based violence and the exploitation of girls and women. With determination to accelerate progress, and with financial support from Global Affairs Canada, Oxfam conceived and launched “Creating Spaces to Take Action on Violence Against Women and Girls” (Creating Spaces), a five-year project running from 2016 to 2021 to reduce the prevalence of VAWG and CEFM in six countries in South and South East Asia (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan and the Philippines).

In order to reduce VAWG and CEFM effectively, project strategies must address the harmful norms that entrench in society patriarchal values condoning gender-based discrimination and violence; changing *individual* attitudes and behaviour is not enough for transformative change that can eradicate child marriage practices.⁶ To this end, Creating Spaces conducted research to examine the most prevalent gendered social norms and associated socio-cultural, economic, and political factors that uphold, promote, and normalize gender-based violence within each Creating Spaces project area. This research contributed to the project’s Pillar 3 objectives (see Box 1) and to further development of a knowledge base on emerging issues and trends related to VAWG and CEFM. The findings also helped to cultivate more targeted attitudinal, behavioural, and normative change strategies by each respective project country team; promising examples of these strategies are highlighted in Section 5.

This report is a compendium of the key cross-cutting findings that emerged from formative research and impact studies conducted across the Creating Spaces countries to date.⁷ It highlights the most prevalent and discriminatory gendered social norms, as well as material and structural factors at different levels of society, that drive VAWG and CEFM in the project areas. It also features emerging examples of community-driven approaches from the Creating Spaces project to target and transform social norms and to advocate for legislative change, and key learnings that can be used to guide continued work on these themes. It is the first in a series of Creating Spaces publications that will document knowledge, learnings, and promising practices from the project.

BOX 1. Creating Spaces Pillars

ABOUT CREATING SPACES

The **CREATING SPACES** project takes an integrated and multi-faceted approach that acts on multiple levels (individual, community, institutional and societal) with diverse actors using the socio-ecological model for violence prevention to better understand and prevent violence.⁸ Ten principles that guide Oxfam's approach to addressing VAWG underpin the project's theory of change.⁹ Creating Spaces is also designed around three key programming pillars.

PILLAR 1.

PREVENTION



ENGAGE KEY COMMUNITY ACTORS and influencers (religious, community, private sector, political actors, and youth), men and boys, and women and girls to promote positive gender norms



ADVOCATE TO DECISION-MAKERS for better laws condemning CEFM and their effective implementation



BUILD THE LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN AND GIRLS to enhance their own rights

PILLAR 2.

RESPONSE



IMPROVE AWARENESS of social supports and services among survivors



BUILD THE CAPACITY of service providers to improve access to and quality services for survivors



FOSTER LEADERSHIP and economic opportunities for women to build their autonomy

PILLAR 3.

SUSTAINABILITY



BUILD THE KNOWLEDGE and capacity of institutions, especially women's rights organizations, and alliances to influence change



GENERATE RESEARCH, and document emerging and best practices on the prevention and response to VAWG and CEFM



USE INFORMATION and communication technologies to monitor social services



2. RESEARCH APPROACH

This compendium report synthesizes research undertaken in five of Creating Spaces' six countries. Implementing partner organizations (see Annex A for partners list) in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal and the Philippines led the country-level research, with support from Oxfam country offices; unfortunately, the political environment in Pakistan prevented planned research from being undertaken there. Oxfam Canada provided assistance on feminist research methods and the tailored tools used to implement them.

The partners chose their own research themes, based on their analyses of what was missing from their work and what further evidence they felt they needed to influence change in their communities. The intent was for each project to contribute to an overall picture of what works or what is needed to eliminate VAWG and CEFM from different perspectives: legislation in Bangladesh, working with youth in India and Indonesia, influencing factors such as the media and the challenges of working with young men and boys in India, and root causes of VAWG/CEFM, such as access to and education about sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in the Philippines. Each research project began with the first objective of identifying the social norms that underpin each context.

The research combined both traditional and more innovative methods. Traditional research methods consisted of key informant interviews, case studies, focus groups, and in-depth interviews with a range of stakeholders including duty bearers, religious and traditional leaders, women and adolescent girls married at an early age,¹⁰ men and boys, civil society organizations (CSOs), and women's rights organizations (WROs). The more participatory and innovative research methods included auto-ethnographic diaries or documentation by women and youth participants, and technology-based methods such as PhotoVoice and CellPhilm. For more information on the country-level research projects, please refer to Annex B.

The synthesis of the research was based on a document review of the country level research, using NVivo,¹¹ to identify cross-cutting themes and country-specific findings that could contribute to overall learnings across country teams. It also drew on relevant findings from other Creating Spaces and Oxfam reports and studies, as well as global literature on the prevention of VAWG and CEFM. The compendium report was developed by the Oxfam Canada team that manages the Creating Spaces project, including program officers and monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL), and elimination of violence against women and girls (EVAWG) knowledge specialists. The synthesis exercise was guided by a set of five questions, set out in Box 2.

Box 2. Guiding questions – Synthesis of research findings across Creating Spaces countries

- What are the social and gender norms that underpin harmful attitudes and behaviours at the household, community, and broader societal levels that promote gender discrimination, inequality, and violence against women and girls?
- How do these normative behaviours impede women's and girls' ability to advocate for and exercise their rights?
- What are other contextual and structural factors that amplify harmful behaviours including VAWG and CEFM towards women and girls?
- What are promising examples of feminist research processes and practices used to generate these research findings?
- What are some preliminary examples of promising practices to challenge discriminatory social norms to reduce VAWG and CEFM?

2.1 FEMINIST RESEARCH PRINCIPLES AND PROCESS

The Creating Spaces team followed Oxfam’s feminist research approach, which was developed to challenge gender inequality, discrimination, and systems of power and oppression that continue to disenfranchise women and girls. The objective of Creating Spaces’ Pillar 3 was to better understand how feminist knowledge generation and approaches to combatting violence against women and girls in the project’s six diverse countries could lead to a transformation in participants’ attitudes and behaviours. Generating knowledge through the research activities, as well as through the project’s monitoring, evaluation, and learning components, provided opportunities to pilot innovative feminist methodologies that would re-frame research participants as research leads, elevate the voices of women and girls, and put them in control of the knowledge generation process. See Box 3 for Oxfam Canada’s feminist research principles.

Oxfam Canada’s Feminist Knowledge System provides the overarching framework for knowledge generation. This system takes a feminist approach to creating, gathering, evaluating, communicating, and otherwise using knowledge throughout the life cycle of any program, and aims to highlight the importance of doing development differently to support transformative change. This means embracing feminist analyses and actions that address the root causes of gender inequality, such as gendered power relations and discriminatory, patriarchal gender norms that devalue women and girls as well as men and boys.

OXFAM CANADA’S FEMINIST KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM USES A PARTICIPATORY AND LEARNING-CENTERED APPROACH, ACKNOWLEDGES EXISTING POWER STRUCTURES AND INEQUALITIES, AND IS INTENDED AS AN ADVOCACY TOOL TO END THOSE INEQUALITIES.

Distinguished from a traditional knowledge management system, it focuses on the process of gathering and creating new knowledge as much as the outcomes or knowledge accumulated. It also recognizes and emphasizes the political power of knowledge and evidence as tools in ending inequality and achieving genuine gender transformation.

Box 3. Feminist Research Principles

- **INTERSECTIONALITY:** Recognize the multiple aspects of identity that play out in people’s lives and experiences, such as gender, class, age, race or ethnicity, and how they compound to exacerbate oppression and marginalization.
- **HONOUR CONTEXT AND COMPLEXITY:** Work in an inclusive way and using a social ecological approach, across multiple levels of change (individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, and policy) and with diverse stakeholders acting collectively.
- **REFLEXIVITY:** Recognizes and aims to re-balance the power imbalances in any participant-researcher relationship. People in all their diversity are recognized as agents of their own lives and holders of knowledge. As an international development organization, we recognize our own positioning and what knowledge we have access to and can feed into.
- **‘NOTHING ABOUT ME, WITHOUT ME’:** Fundamental to feminist process are integrity, contextualization, learning, collaboration, participation, inclusivity and responsiveness. Participants in any knowledge gathering activity co-create and co-own the process and are involved in collection, analysis, writing and dissemination.
- **‘DO NO HARM’ AND FOLLOW ETHICAL PRACTICE:** The highest ethical standards are adhered to in all data collection and dissemination activities. Participants of VAWG/CEFM and other programming provide informed consent and know what, where, and when the knowledge is being used. Research teams are also equipped with information on support services should they be asked for help.



Yayasan Tunas Alam Indonesia (SANTAI)

100 participants from the Youth Jambore event on VAWG and CEFM, Indonesia.

2.1.1 CASE STUDIES OF FEMINIST RESEARCH DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

While all countries applied a feminist approach to their research (see Annex B), Nepal and the Philippines used the most innovative feminist methods to date. The following short case studies of the approach and process used in these two countries serve as success stories in feminist research. Future publications will share success stories from other countries, such as the innovative and participatory research methods Creating Spaces India is applying using PhotoVoice and CellPhilm.¹²

Nepal

The research in Nepal¹³ focused on building evidence of the effectiveness of women's Community Discussion Centers (CDCs) in addressing VAWG and CEFM. The implementing partners set up CDCs to bring women together for discussions and peer-to-peer mentoring on issues related to women's and girls' rights. They provided the women with diaries to document their feelings throughout their participation in the CDC meetings, and to note any attitude or behaviour shifts. This ethnographic documentation was intended to bring out the women's voices, highlight any transformations that happened as a result of their participation in the CDCs, and provide evidence on the CDCs' effectiveness in promoting social norm change. See Box 8 in Section 5 to learn more about this research.

Philippines

The research in the Philippines¹⁴ aimed to address the barriers to access and use of SRHR information and services by women and children, particularly those who have been subjected to CEFM and VAWG, and to examine how women's and girls' ability to exercise their SRHR is influenced by social norms and other factors. A participatory tool, the Social Norms Diagnostics Tool (SNDT),¹⁵ which Oxfam had designed for a previous women's economic empowerment program, was re-tailored to focus on VAWG/SRHR, and used to bring out participants' perceptions of the social norms affecting their lives.

The SNDT is a set of participatory exercises and workshops designed to identify social norms and perceptions that hinder access to SRH information and services. The tool also explores how these norms shape, constrain or promote CEFM and VAWG. It explores the influencing factors and influencers who either reinforce norms or drive change, and intends to develop initial ideas for change strategies. The tool was tailored to the regional and cultural context of Mindanao, Philippines.

See Annex B for descriptions of the other research projects that contributed to the findings of this compendium report.

3. KEY THEMES AND FINDINGS

The research findings are presented in two sections: Section 3.1 provides an overview of each of the key gendered norms that were most prevalent in Creating Spaces project areas of Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, and the Philippines. Section 3.2 outlines other contextual and structural factors, including poverty, conflict, violence, access to education, popular media, and legislative gaps that can reinforce harmful norms and drive women's and girls' rights, VAWG, and CEFM.

3.1 UNDERSTANDING THE MOST PREVALENT GENDERED NORMS

Social norms are beliefs shared among a social group about what is considered common and appropriate behaviour. The two key types of norms are **descriptive norms**, which describe typical observable behaviours among a specific group or community (what people *actually* do), and **injunctive norms**, which describe expected behaviours (what people *should* do).¹⁶

Social norms are learned and internalized from childhood. Individuals typically uphold the norms practiced by their particular reference group, such as a peer group, or a religious or cultural community, in order to "belong" to that group and gain social approval and other rewards. Their sense of identity is strongly connected to the social group they belong to.¹⁷ They fear that acting contrary to those beliefs could lead to various forms of backlash, such as stigma, judgement, rejection, and violence. Religious individuals also fear that breaking social norms is sinful. Such fears of disapproval and punishment lead people to follow these social norms whether or not they actually believe in them.¹⁸

Several norms describe expected gender roles, and their relationships to one another. These gendered norms are practiced across communities worldwide and maintain patriarchal systems of power at the individual, household, community and societal levels, in which men are entitled to resources, authority, and bodily claims over women.¹⁹ These entrenched belief systems normalize female subordination, discrimination, and gender-based violence.

Challenging these deep-rooted beliefs is a critical step to eliminating CEFM and other forms of gender-based violence. Fostering change in individuals' attitudes and behaviour is insufficient to transform the unequal gendered power relations that are the fundamental cause of VAWG, because social norms are often what breed harmful attitudes and behaviours towards women and girls. Furthermore, as long as social norms continue to condone child marriage practices, efforts to adopt and enforce CEFM legislation will face great challenges and resistance by duty bearers, institutions, families, and communities at large.²⁰ Changing social norms is therefore critical to transforming the very foundation of society so that all genders are treated with dignity and respect, live free of violence and discrimination, and exercise their human rights fully.

This section highlights four gendered social norms that were central drivers of child marriage practices in the Creating Spaces project areas, and how they deny women's and girls' rights over their own body, sexuality, health, and agency.

A strongly held social norm that permeates all norms discussed in this report is that men have dominion and ownership over women and girls. Women and girls are expected to be subordinate, and to follow and obey key male figures in their lives, including fathers, husbands, relatives, and other respected male community leaders. The interrelated and intersecting nature of the following norms lead to compounding negative impacts on women's and girls' lives.

SOCIAL NORM 1: SEX OR RELATIONSHIPS BEFORE MARRIAGE AS SINFUL AND DISHONOURABLE

Across Creating Spaces countries, pre-marital sex is highly stigmatized and considered immoral. This attitude is one of the most prevalent injunctive social norms promoting CEFM, placing high value on a girl's or woman's virginity before marriage. Therefore, to preserve a family's honour, adolescent girls are often married soon after (and in some cases before) puberty to avoid any pre-marital relations. A related social norm condemns pregnancy out of wedlock, and is used to justify child marriage as a way to minimize the risks of teenage pregnancy. When an adolescent girl becomes pregnant, whether through consensual sexual activity, persuasion, or rape, it is customary for her to marry the father of the child (whether she chooses to or not) to maintain family honour.

According to the Creating Spaces 2019 household survey findings in Bangladesh, conducted at the project's midline, preserving the family honor was a key determinant leading to child marriage: 52% of men and 64% of women said that girls were married before the age of 18 in circumstances when 'the girl is in love/dating.'

These social norms enforcing chastity before marriage are significantly influenced by traditional and religious beliefs. Although the legitimate age of marriage differs between religious communities (both within and across Creating Spaces countries) according to interpretations of religious texts and the influence of other socio-cultural beliefs, many religious communities share the common belief that chastity before marriage is paramount to uphold the religion's core values and traditions.²¹ These traditions reflect patriarchal beliefs that validate men's dominion over women and girls, from the household to the public sphere.

A related social norm is that using contraceptives is sinful, because it is against "God's will" to prevent pregnancy. This norm often limits the availability of contraceptive education and information for adolescent girls and violates their sexual and reproductive health rights, including agency around their own body and sexuality. In Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Philippines, for instance, despite a *fatwa*²² stating that the 'improved reproductive health condition of the Muslim people benefits the individual Muslim and strengthens the Muslim socially, economically, politically and in all other aspects of human life,' there are continued reports of poor access to SRHR information and services for adolescent youth. The Philippines' Reproductive Health Law also prohibits unwed youth from seeking SRH services. In Creating Spaces countries where contraceptive use is stigmatized, the chance of pregnancy from pre-marital relations is higher, which further perpetuates CEFM as a 'safety' measure used by parents to maintain the family honour.

SOCIAL NORM 2: MEN AS DECISION MAKERS, WOMEN AS CARETAKERS

Across all countries, a conventionally 'good' woman is expected to be quiet, obedient, and accommodating, while a man is expected to be outspoken, in control, and able to impose his will, particularly in relation to women. Social norms related to traditional gender roles are a manifestation of men's dominance over women. Across the project areas, men are expected to represent the family and community in the public sphere and to be the primary providers for their families. They make all key decisions within the household, but often have little to no role in day-to-day household and child-rearing duties. Women and girls are seen primarily as caretakers and largely limited to the private sphere of their homes. Women are expected to get married, bear and take care of the children immediately following marriage, care for and sexually please their husbands, and manage all household duties. Their decision-making authority is normally restricted to day-to-day household matters. Marriage and children are deemed fundamental to women's and girls' purpose and identities, so failure to pursue this path is stigmatized and can render a woman 'undesirable'.

The research documented various examples of women’s limited decision-making authority and how it affects women’s and girls’ wellbeing. For instance, 41% of Indonesian women said they were not involved in determining when their daughters marry and to whom.²³ Without decision-making power, women are less able to advocate for their daughters to marry later and girls have limited agency to make their own decisions related to marriage.

Women’s limited decision-making authority outside the home was also evident. In BARMM, Philippines, health service providers stigmatized and refused to see women without their husbands, even though the Reproductive Health Law gives women over 18 years of age the right to seek services on their own.²⁴ This demonstrates how social norms are often a greater determinant of behaviour than laws and policies. However, laws and policies can also play an influential role in reinforcing gendered norms. Indonesia’s Marriage Law, for instance, declares that the husband is the “head of the household” and the wife shall “obey her husband.”²⁵

Gender roles at work

When women do paid work to contribute to the family’s income, they must get permission from their husbands (or fathers, prior to marriage), and they may often still be expected to carry out all their domestic duties. This care burden is indicative of the inequities inherent in traditional gender roles.

Oxfam India’s research on gender stereotypes in Indian cinema highlights how even when female characters work, they often hold positions junior to their male counterparts (see Box 4). When an Indian male youth was asked to reflect on these dynamics in films, he claimed “we [men] don’t like it, at least in the villages, that our women should know it all and be over-smart.”²⁶

Women and their families may also face stigma for pursuing a career when they are married with children, or for marrying and/or having children later in order

to prioritize their education or career.²⁷ According to a health service provider in the Philippines, when one woman’s marriage ended because she was unable to bear children, the community “blamed her because she always prioritized her career.” Therefore, even as segments of the population across Creating Spaces countries are challenging traditional gender roles, the care burden, continued stigma, and gendered laws and policies reflect enduring patriarchal values at the household, community, and societal level. These norms influence parental decisions to marry their daughters at a young age.

SOCIAL NORM 3: BOYS HAVE GREATER VALUE THAN GIRLS

According to the research, preference for sons is common in the project countries and arises from the deep-rooted normative belief that boys are more valuable than girls. This belief corresponds with norms giving men dominion and power in society and influences the different ways boys and girls are treated as their families and communities prepare them to fulfil their traditional gender roles.

Marriage is seen as a more valuable path for young girls than education and lower-income households often prioritize the education of their sons over that of their daughters. Boys’ education is considered a better economic investment, because boys are expected to provide for their parents even after marriage. Girls, however, tend to move away after marriage, do not usually undertake paid work, and are more likely to support their in-laws. Therefore, the focus is on preparing them for their role as wife and mother, with little incentive to delay their age of marriage.²⁸

The 2019 household survey findings from Nepal reflect the greater importance placed on boys’ education, especially after marriage: 48% of respondents from Banke district and 28% from Dailekh district believe that women and girls still have the right to an education after marriage, whereas 64% and 51% respectively believe that men and boys have the right to an education after marriage.



Youth are taking the pledge to ensure violence-free relationships, India.

Oxfam India

SOCIAL NORM 4: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IS ACCEPTABLE IN CERTAIN CONDITIONS

Deviation from the norm that sets gendered roles and responsibilities, coupled with notions of toxic masculinity that see violence as the only means of conflict resolution, justifies and rationalizes violence against women and girls. According to the research findings, violence is widely viewed among community members and leaders as an acceptable course of action for husbands against their wives to keep them in line and control their behaviour, as well as when they refuse sex. Child brides are even more at risk of violence because of their limited power and knowledge, and because they often have no prior relationships with their new spouses.

Several women participants in Dailekh, Nepal, considered wife beating within their own household and in their community at large to be an acceptable normative behaviour to resolve marital conflicts. In this district, 57% of female household survey respondents disagreed that 'it is unacceptable for a man to verbally or physically abuse a woman no matter what.'

“Women who talk too much get targeted. They should remain docile and quiet if they want to avoid getting assaulted and harassed by men.”²⁹

— Female youth, India

In Bangladesh, only about 30% of male and 24% of female respondents felt that a woman was justified in refusing sex if she was 'tired' or 'not in the mood.'³⁰ Research in Nepal and Indonesia also spoke to the problematic role of parents-in-law (particularly mothers-in-law) who may reinforce these norms by supporting their sons' mistreatment of their wives, and even following suit. Indeed, women, particularly those in positions of power within the household or community, also enforce these norms and are implicated in the normalization of VAWG.³¹

3.2 OTHER SOCIAL, STRUCTURAL AND MATERIAL FACTORS

In addition to the harmful norms described above, the research also uncovered several other factors that contribute to gender-based violence and early marriage, described below.

3.2.1 POVERTY

Families living in poverty, particularly large ones, have an incentive to marry their daughters before the age of 18 in order to relieve some of their household's economic burden.

According to the household survey findings from Bangladesh, 66% of respondents reported that poverty was an important factor contributing to child marriage in their community.³²

In Indonesia, CEFM was twice as likely in households with the lowest expenditure levels compared to more affluent households.³³

The incentive for poor households to marry their daughters off at a young age is particularly strong when an 'eligible bachelor' who brings potential economic and social status gains for the family³⁴ presents himself. This can result in considerable power imbalances between young brides and their often older and wealthier husbands. Poorer married women and girls are more financially dependent on their spouses, and therefore less likely to challenge or speak out against them if they are violent and/or otherwise mistreat them.³⁵

These economic factors are reinforced in regions where providing a dowry is common practice. Whether the bride's or the groom's family gives the dowry, depending on local customs, young brides are seen to have greater value than older women across all Creating Spaces countries. Furthermore, findings from Mindanao, Philippines, underline the poor access to hospitals, clinics, and other sexual and reproductive health services in areas where there is greater poverty; this exacerbates health risks for young brides, and/or increases the risk of CEFM when unwanted pregnancies occur because girls have limited access to contraceptives.

3.2.2 CONFLICT

The research in the Philippines found that conflict-affected areas may be more prone to increased incidence of early marriage. This is influenced by a myriad of factors, primarily high levels of poverty and the need for protection. For instance, during the Marawi Siege in BARMM, Philippines, young women and men were reportedly obligated to marry to obtain a green card, a requirement to receive aid.³⁶ Furthermore, access to sexual and reproductive health services, including contraceptives, was limited due to the associated costs and the absence of local hospitals and clinics. At the same time, some research participants from BARMM reported that the pressures of economic displacement, unstable living conditions, and poor access to health care in conflict zones may deter young brides from bearing children.³⁷

3.2.3 ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

A large proportion of girls married before the age of 18 do not continue their education because they are expected to fulfill their traditional duties as wife and mother. Many girls from Creating Spaces countries stopped their studies even before they were married. Girls in Indonesia who marry before age 18 are six times less likely to complete senior secondary school.³⁸ Even for families who value further education for their daughters, the absence of local schools in some districts and the costs associated with further education could be prohibitive.

There is also limited education and awareness within communities about the negative consequences of child marriage, both for women and girls and for the social and economic development of communities at large. People are often ill-informed about national and international laws and policies that prohibit VAWG and CEFM, especially in remote and rural areas where law enforcement and public education is lacking. Similarly, there may be poor awareness of the benefits that greater access to education for girls (including by delaying marriage) could have community-wide.



BOX 4. INDIA RESEARCH: Gender Stereotypes and Discrimination in Indian Cinema

Oxfam India and its partners are educating communities, especially youth, to challenge gender stereotypes in Indian cinema that normalize violence, inequality, and the sexual objectification of women and girls. They examined 51 films using the Bechdel test, which measures the representation of women in fiction, and the following indicators:

- » % of female characters
- » Gender roles and stereotypes
- » Sexual objectification
- » Violence and harassment against female characters

These findings informed the development of a youth-focused educational workshop series, *Changing the Norm*, to deconstruct gender stereotypes and norms in Indian cinema. With more than 400 participants from colleges and universities, the interactive modules used films as an entry point to start the conversation on gendered social norms with youth, and to build their advocacy skills as change agents. Oxfam India and its partners also launched the *#UnstereotypeCinema* social media campaign and the *Gender Equality Film Awards* to bring public awareness to this issue, while promoting positive depictions of women and girls in popular media.

FINDINGS



Of over 1300 characters, only **27%** were **FEMALE ROLES**.



In **77%** of films, women fulfilled purely a **ROMANTIC FUNCTION**.



57% of women have professions, but mostly **JUNIOR AND LOWER-PAYING** to their male counterpart.

WOMEN ARE OBJECTIFIED IN 88% OF FILMS, AND IN ALL TOP-GROSSING FILMS

through sexualized appearance, on-screen violence and harassment, and/or weak and submissive character portrayal.



3.2.4 POPULAR MEDIA

Gender stereotypes depicted in popular and social media work to reinforce discriminatory social norms and VAWG. The research Oxfam India and its partners conducted on Indian cinema found that the movie industry was dominated by male casts, and that most female characters had a purely romantic function in the plot. Women were portrayed as subordinate to their male counterparts, a “reassertion of male supremacy.”³⁹ Female characters fulfilled traditional gender roles, their characters were portrayed as weak (such as being frail or naïve, tolerating disrespect and misogyny, and depending on men), and were objectified sexually on-screen. Through sexist humour, sexual innuendos, sexualized clothing and cinematography, fetishization of daily household chores, and actions akin to sexual violence, misogyny was rampant in the films under study. Even female characters with unconventional, high status careers and financial independence seldom stood up to male characters. See Box 4 for a summary of this research. Research participants from both India and Bangladesh also spoke of the popular media’s influence on “early sexual awakenings” and associated youth behaviours that put adolescent girls at greater risk of violence and harassment. This can increase CEFM as communities fear increased rates of pre-marital sex.

3.2.5 HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

The risk and incidence of sexual violence against unmarried girls further drives child marriage practices. According to the research participants in India and Bangladesh, experiences of sexual violence and harassment outside the home are a common threat for young unmarried girls.⁴⁰ Early marriage is considered a suitable solution that enables parents to protect their daughters against further violence and to reduce the risk of pre-marital sex.

Often, when an adolescent girl is raped, she may be obligated to marry the perpetrator to protect her family’s honour. For instance, in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, the Merariq cultural practice whereby a man and his family essentially kidnap a girl he desires often results in the sexual abuse and/or rape of the girl, and ultimately her forced marriage to her kidnapper.⁴¹

Box 5 shares the story of Shahina, a research participant from Bangladesh. Her story illustrates how poverty, the dowry system, and harassment can result in continued CEFM practices.

Box 5. Case Study: Shahina

Shahina was married at 15 and had three children by the age of 22. Her husband supported the family by working in a shop in a nearby small town, but when their eldest daughter was about 12 or 13, he left and never returned. Shahina struggled to support herself and her three daughters by working in other people’s homes.

Shahina’s eldest daughter was attractive and began to receive marriage proposals. Without a male guardian to protect them, however, Shahina and her children were tremendously vulnerable. Local boys intimidated the family, roaming near their house every night. To protect her daughter, Shahina married the girl at age 14 or 15 to a boy from a neighbouring community, although the marriage was not officially registered. Although Shahina managed to borrow money as a down payment for the dowry, she failed to pay the remaining amount within the stipulated period. Therefore, after two and a half years of marriage, the daughter, who was now pregnant, was sent back to her mother.

Source: Excerpt from Ferdous, Saha, and Yeasmin, 2019, pg. 15.



Public hearing on child, early, and forced marriage, January 2020, Philippines. Oxfam and partners invited to attend as resource persons by the Senate Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality.

3.2.6 LEGISLATIVE GAPS

Patriarchal laws and government policies play an instrumental role in reinforcing gendered social norms that drive VAWG and CEFM. Since the 1990s, there have been positive shifts in global discourse and in national-level legislation that prohibits VAWG and CEFM in many countries and improves access to quality support services for survivors.⁴² Regional and international instruments on VAWG, such as the United Nations' Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, emphasize that states must exercise due diligence in preventing VAWG, protecting survivors and their dependents, persecuting perpetrators, applying punitive measures that are "sufficient and fair," and providing reparations and support services for survivors.⁴³ Related laws should respond to the needs of survivors of violence, and address systemic issues at institutional and societal levels that perpetuate violence, such as discriminatory social norms.⁴⁴ However, according to global studies, the strength and scope of VAWG-related laws vary. For instance, there is often a heavy focus on criminal justice approaches at the expense of more preventative measures. In addition, there is often resistance to acknowledging marital rape and sexual violence as a form of VAWG, or of framing child marriage as a form of violence against adolescent girls.⁴⁵

In countries where CEFM laws have been enacted, legislative loopholes run the risk of perpetuating child marriage practices. This is especially the case when public opinion and social norms continue to uphold

the *status quo*. In Bangladesh, for instance, *Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017*⁴⁶ stipulates that girls must reach 18 years of age, and boys 21 years of age, to get married. The law was a significant development for Oxfam and Creating Spaces partners, as well as other allies advocating for an end to child marriage. However, a provision of the law states that, in special cases, marriage between boys and girls is acceptable. What constitutes such a special case is not defined in the law, and is left to the discretion of district and religious courts. There are concerns that this special provision will be loosely interpreted by courts to permit child marriage under a variety of circumstances,⁴⁷ given that social norms that condone CEFM are still pervasive in Bangladesh.

The *Country Code of Nepal, Chapter on Marriage*, makes child marriage (legally under the age of 20) a punishable offense. However, when child marriage occurs, there is a limited period of three months to file a complaint. If the child is very young, uneducated, in a remote area, and/or married in secret, there is little probability of access to justice within such a short time period.⁴⁸ In Indonesia, the recently amended Marriage Law increased the age of marriage to 19 years for women and men⁴⁹ (see Box 6); however, marriage dispensations are still possible in exceptional cases. Again, there is no national policy to guide the decision making of the primarily religious courts that oversee these dispensation cases.⁵⁰ Traditionally, decision making has depended primarily on judges' perspectives on and interpretation of religious teachings.

Legislative enforcement and implementation

There are also several documented gaps in the implementation of VAWG and CEFM laws and policies in terms of law enforcement and criminal justice, access to quality service provision for survivors, and preventative measures.⁵¹ The Creating Spaces research in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Nepal documented the following implementation gaps cited by local community members and authorities.



AWARENESS: Outside of city centres, people in small towns and rural communities are less likely to be informed about changes in legislation related to VAWG and CEFM. This was the case with Bangladesh's 2017 Child Marriage Restraint Act. Community members, local government officers and administrators, district commissioners, registrars, and police officers were not aware of the law's provisions and the implications for local law enforcement.⁵²



MARRIAGE AND AGE REGISTRATION: Families work around the laws by continuing child marriage practices, but delaying marriage registration until after the legal age of marriage. Fake age registration was also a relatively common practice used to circumvent the law.



CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE: In some cases, marriages take place in other communities where the bride and groom are unknown to residents to avoid the registration process. Without formal registration and known witnesses to the marriage, families are able to continue child marriage practices.



SUPPORT FROM DUTY-BEARERS: Local political leaders are often proponents of child marriage themselves, and either turn a blind eye to ongoing practices, provide fake registrations, or take bribes in exchange for not reporting cases. There are reports of corruption among local government officers at various levels of leadership that help to facilitate ongoing child marriage practices. However, in some countries, such as Indonesia, local governments have established laws and mechanisms to prevent child marriages before national laws follow suit.



ABSENCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS: Many communities lack governmental accountability mechanisms and legal support systems to enforce the legal age of marriage, and to provide access to justice for adolescent girls at risk of child marriage.

Evidence suggests that **feminist activism plays an important role in building public support for policy change, and in developing comprehensive policies and sound implementation mechanisms.**⁵³ With a greater understanding of legislative gaps and enforcement challenges uncovered by this research, Creating Spaces is working with alliances of civil society and women's rights organizations in each country to design more targeted, rights-based, and context-specific policy advocacy strategies, in tandem with other multipronged preventative mechanisms and strategies to address social norms and other contributing factors that drive VAWG and CEFM. Since project inception, CEFM legislation has been enacted in Indonesia and Bangladesh, and a CEFM bill was recently filed in the Philippines.⁵⁴ Box 6 and Box 7 document Creating Spaces' involvement in Indonesia's and the Philippines' policy advocacy.

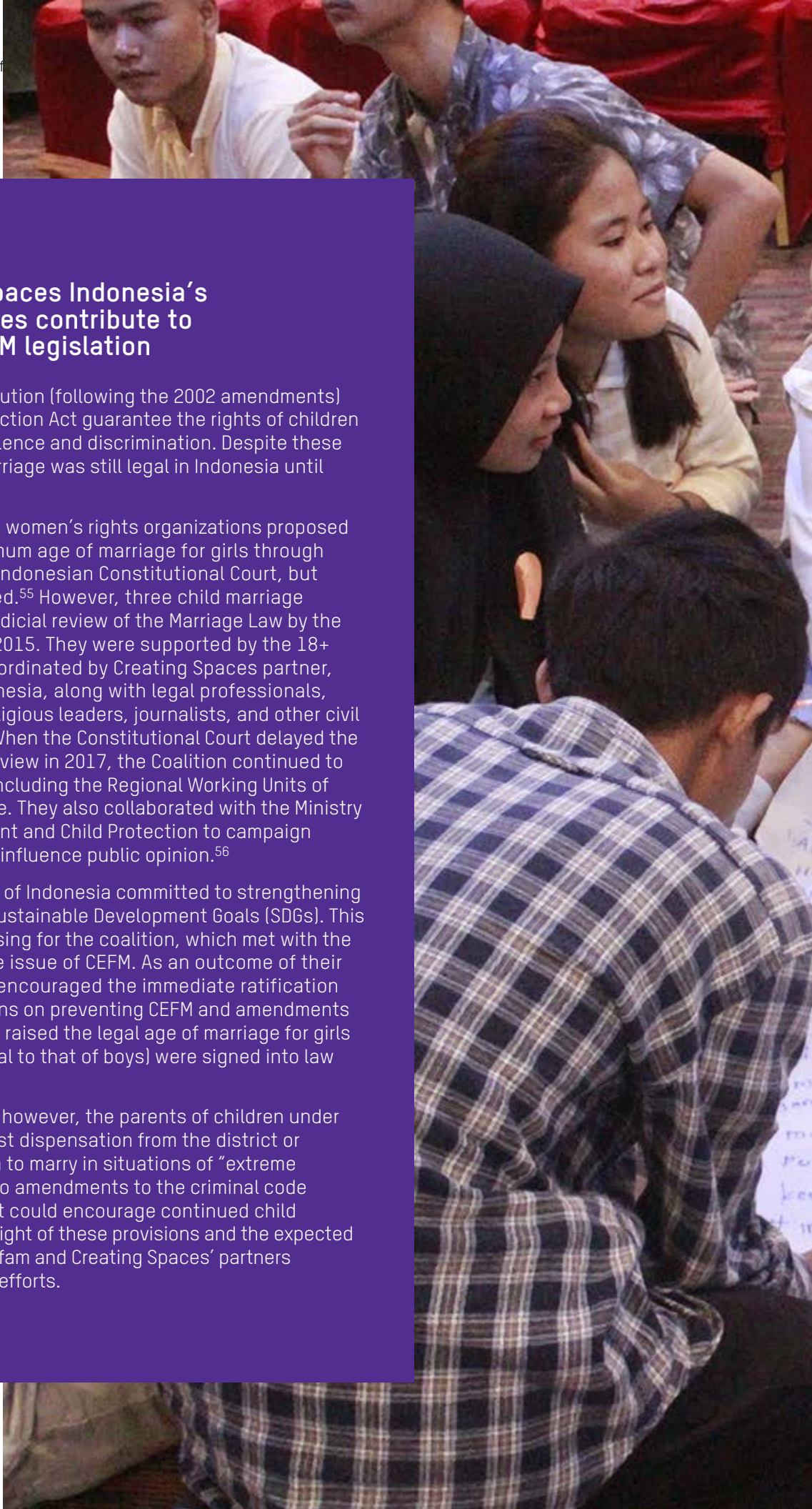
Box 6. Creating Spaces Indonesia's advocacy initiatives contribute to enactment of CEFM legislation

In Indonesia, the Constitution (following the 2002 amendments) and the 2002 Child Protection Act guarantee the rights of children to be protected from violence and discrimination. Despite these developments, child marriage was still legal in Indonesia until September 16, 2019.

In 2014, civil society and women's rights organizations proposed an increase in the minimum age of marriage for girls through a judicial review by the Indonesian Constitutional Court, but the proposal was refused.⁵⁵ However, three child marriage survivors applied for a judicial review of the Marriage Law by the Constitutional Court in 2015. They were supported by the 18+ Coalition, which was coordinated by Creating Spaces partner, Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia, along with legal professionals, academics, interfaith religious leaders, journalists, and other civil society organizations. When the Constitutional Court delayed the process after the first review in 2017, the Coalition continued to lobby the government, including the Regional Working Units of each regency or province. They also collaborated with the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection to campaign across five provinces to influence public opinion.⁵⁶

In 2018, the Government of Indonesia committed to strengthening implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This development was promising for the coalition, which met with the President to discuss the issue of CEFM. As an outcome of their meeting, the President encouraged the immediate ratification of government regulations on preventing CEFM and amendments to the *Marriage Law* that raised the legal age of marriage for girls from 16 to 19 years (equal to that of boys) were signed into law in October 2019.⁵⁷

Under the amended law, however, the parents of children under the age of 18 may request dispensation from the district or religious courts for them to marry in situations of "extreme urgency;"⁵⁸ there are also amendments to the criminal code under consideration that could encourage continued child marriage practices.⁵⁹ In light of these provisions and the expected implementation gaps, Oxfam and Creating Spaces' partners continue their advocacy efforts.





Nama

- (11) - Elvina Marl
- (12) - Bekelara
- (13) - Bawon end
- (14) - Bawon end
- (15) - Cakur
- (16) - Sga paku
- (17) - Sekelara
- (18) - Tattala bera
- (19) - Sam paku

urial tentang Perawatan with
pengobatan "Starting" o fuku Sevan
tubuh NDA
menyebabkan anemia
tue Sekelara

menyebabkan
menyebabkan

Creating Spaces youth forum group discussion. Indonesia.

4. KEY LEARNINGS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Figure 1: Social Norms

GENDERED SOCIAL NORMS are key drivers of child marriage practices.

STRUCTURAL FACTORS reinforce these norms and perpetuate further violence against women and girls.



ACCESS TO EDUCATION
Favouring boy's education



POPULAR MEDIA
Reinforcing gender stereotypes & violence



POVERTY
Marrying daughters early to reduce economic burden



DISCRIMINATORY LAWS
Legalizing child marriage



SEXUAL VIOLENCE
Marrying girls as "protection" against violence

Figure 1 summarizes the most influential norms the research uncovered that perpetuate gender inequities, discrimination, and violence against women and girls. The Creating Spaces team drew the following learnings from the research findings that have helped the project tailor its approaches and shaped future research and programming priorities:

I. Continue to build the capacity of implementing partners on social norm change

The findings demonstrate the value of building partner capacity to implement hard-hitting strategies that can disrupt the status quo and influence a shift in norms. This should include more intensive training and guidance on how to address deep-rooted gendered norms effectively, with tailored strategies and messaging for different stakeholders. In addition, all project interventions should continue to incorporate rights-based education and awareness on gendered social norms and their negative consequences for women, girls and communities at large. Legislative advocacy with duty bearers should work alongside campaigning efforts to shift social norms in order to garner widespread support for not only enacting CEFM and VAWG legislation, but also implementing it at the community level. Campaigning strategies can use more targeted messaging, constructing positive norms that counter the most destructive norms identified in each respective project area. In addition, project teams can build their capacity to monitor and measure changes in social norms.

II. Use a multi-stakeholder approach

The research findings emphasize the importance of working with diverse stakeholder groups (such as women and girls, youth, influencers, parents, duty bearers, and women's rights organizations). At the same time, country teams are encouraged to narrow their focus and use more targeted strategies with key influencers to gain their support.⁶⁰ For instance, working with traditional and religious leaders to change attitudes requires a tailored and ongoing approach. Women and girls should continue to receive rights-based education that deconstructs harmful social norms, along with life skills, empowerment, and leadership opportunities within their community to build their agency and confidence. Youth have proven to be important and effective influencers at both the household and community level and these promising results present opportunities to further cultivate youth's leadership and influence. Family-oriented interventions could also be explored further. With all stakeholder groups, interventions should consider intersectionality and adapt to each local context to ensure the most marginalized populations are included.

III. Understand the power and influence of popular and social media

The research found the mass influence of popular and social media to be a double-edged sword: on the one side, these wide-reaching media have, to a great extent, perpetuated and normalized gender-based discrimination, objectification, and violence (see the example from India in Box 4); on the other, they have the potential to serve as powerful advocacy, campaigning, and movement-building platforms (see examples from the Enough campaign, Section 5). There is ample room to explore the positive and negative implications of these media further to determine whether greater application of multi-media prevention strategies is justified. For instance, engaging youth to critically analyze the media they consume, as was done in India, can be a useful tool to deconstruct social norms and mobilize youth for social change.

IV. Strengthen accountability mechanisms to enforce laws

The research highlighted notable challenges in enforcing CEFM and VAWG legislation at the community level, in large part due to the absence of, or poorly implemented, formal or informal accountability mechanisms. Working with local leaders, influencers, women's support groups, and women's rights organizations to strengthen such mechanisms could play an instrumental role in reducing cases of CEFM and VAWG, as is emerging with Nepal's Community Discussion Centers (see Box 8).

V. Address poverty alongside VAWG prevention strategies

Poverty is a significant factor that contributes to child marriage practices in various ways, as the research discusses. Strategies that seek to prevent gender-based violence and early marriage by changing attitudes and beliefs about gender roles (such as women's mobility, decision making power, and control over money earned) would be more successful if they also incorporated gender-responsive poverty alleviation mechanisms, such as social protection schemes, incentives for girls' education, vocational skills training, and livelihoods services. Some of these strategies fall outside the scope of the Creating Spaces project; however, they present opportunities to build alliances with other institutions working in the areas of poverty alleviation, girls' education, and economic empowerment.



Oxfam India

Cultural program: No marriage without consent, India.

VI. Document promising practices to address and shift social norms

Creating Spaces is still building evidence on effective practices to change social norms that go beyond individual-level changes in attitudes and behaviours. The project will be studying select strategies, approaches, and practices across the six countries to gain more insight into implementation successes and challenges pertaining to social norm change, women's and girls' education and empowerment, and the enforcement of CEFM and VAWG legislation.

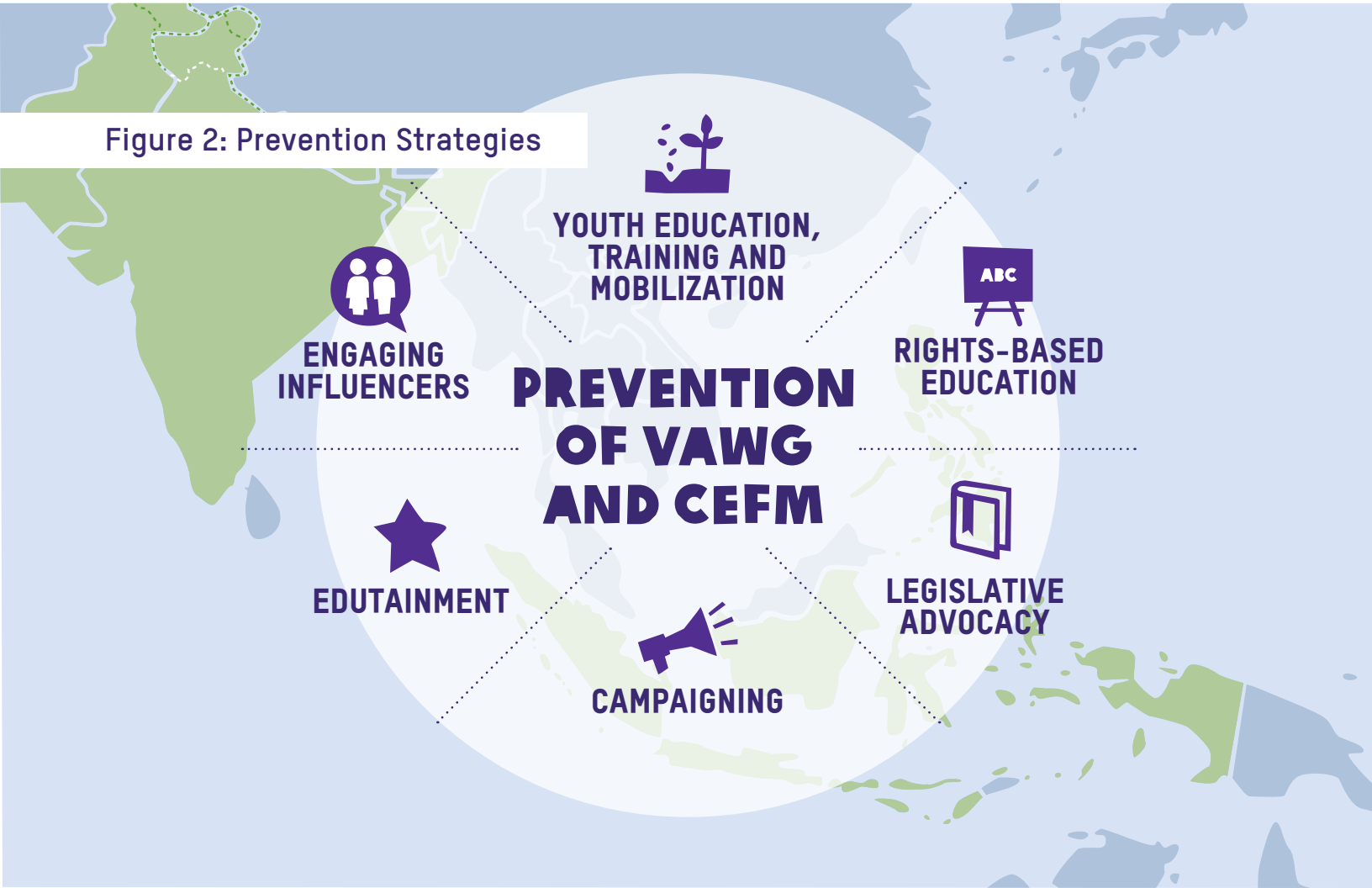
5. CREATING SPACES STRATEGIES TO END VAWG AND CEFM

Creating Spaces countries used the research findings and learnings explored in this report to inform, enhance, and/or validate the project’s prevention strategies related to policy advocacy, empowering women and girls, and social norms. Over the next year, the project endeavors to systematically study Creating Spaces interventions to gain a better understanding of ‘what works’ to shift harmful social norms, advance women’s and girls’ rights, and to hold communities and duty bearers to account to follow CEFM and VAWG legislation. Evidence on social norm change is still an emerging area of research worldwide⁶¹ that Creating

Spaces aims to contribute to; the monitoring and evaluation team is piloting various methods to measure shifts in social norms within the project areas. These and other promising practices will be shared in future publications to contribute to knowledge and learning on changing attitudes, behaviours, and social norms that drive CEFM and VAWG.

This section of the report provides a brief overview of the project’s multi-pronged approach (see Figure 2) to social norm change, including emerging examples from the field that have had promising results.

Figure 2: Prevention Strategies





Abir Abdullah/Bangladesh

I. Engaging influencers

The Creating Spaces project defines influencers as religious, community, private sector and political leaders, along with others who act as custodians of customs, practices and social norms ('norm-setters') within communities. They shape expectations about appropriate behaviour and have the power to support implementation of formal and informal laws and rules. Creating Spaces is building relationships with these influencers, educating them about the negative consequences of child marriage, and training them to take action against these harmful practices. **The goal is to garner the support of influencers as champions against child marriage who themselves can model positive norms and behaviour.**

Influencers can also act as supporters of gender equality laws, policies, and regulations. Building stakeholders' capacity on existing laws and policies through trainings, roundtables, and engaging in advocacy at the national level has been effective at advancing policy change. For example, in Indonesia

in 2019, after the Amendments to Law No.1/1974 on Marriage (revisions to Article 7) was passed raising the age of marriage for girls, Creating Spaces implementing partners organized three trainings for staff of the Office of Religion Administration and religious leaders to sensitize them on the change to the law so they could monitor and implement it in their respective jurisdictions.

In 2019, the Nepali government officially recognized facilitators trained by the project as change agents, and has begun to mobilize them as resource people and mediators to address issues of CEFM and VAWG beyond the scope of the project. In Pakistan, a local teacher who was engaged through community level workshops and trainings was able to stop numerous cases of child marriage and domestic violence. In India, the team went one step further to understand the extent to which the attitudes of key influencers had changed throughout the first three years of project implementation. They piloted a Community Score Card initiative using 45 indicators under six broad parameters, such as overall attitude on gender

and status of women, awareness of domestic violence and related laws, and awareness of child marriage. Findings showed that there was clear improvement in influencers' ability to understand and advocate for better practices, but also revealed unfavorable attitudes towards some issues, underlining the importance of having long-term strategies to shift deeply entrenched social norms.

II. Youth education, training, and mobilization

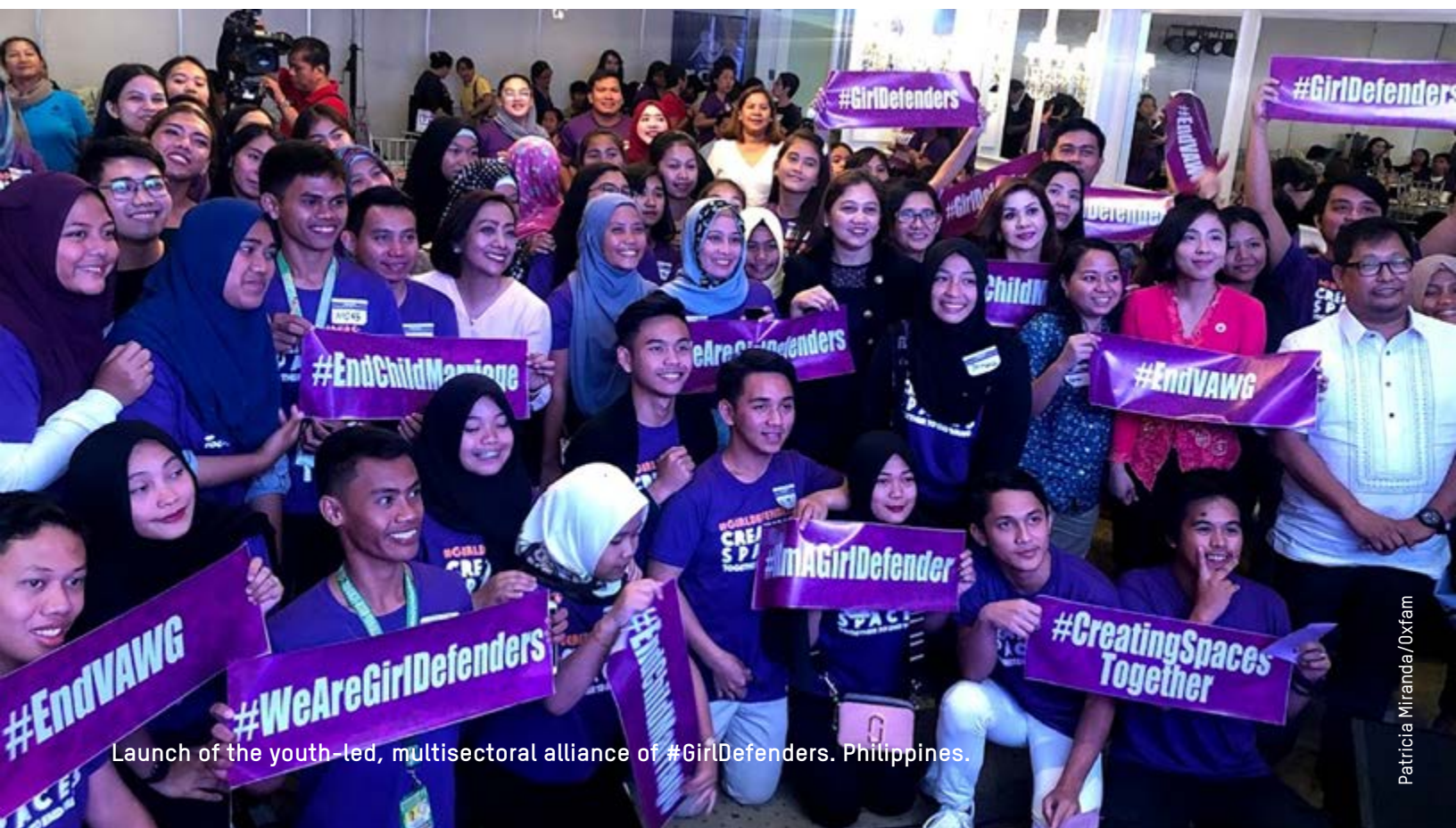
The project's mid-term review found that **youth engagement on women's rights and social norm change had increased more than any other key group**, with very promising outcomes to date.⁶² Across all project areas, Oxfam and its partners are working with youth to develop and reinforce gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours, including healthier relationships and alternative lifestyle options. Youth are also trained to support legal and community advocacy on social norms, VAWG, and CEFM.

Youth engagement is considered an effective strategy to promote and encourage the adoption of positive behaviours from an early age, especially to encourage

male youth to become allies for women and girls, to prevent child marriage among participants and their peers, and to empower youth to model positive behaviours in their households and communities at large.

For instance, in Bangladesh, over 50 youth groups were formed, trained, and supported as drivers of change. These groups gained knowledge related to gendered social norms, gender inequality and discrimination, VAWG and CEFM, relevant laws and policies, and support services for survivors. They were trained on advocacy, civic engagement, and life skills to prepare them to engage with relatives, friends, and other community members on these issues. They were also linked with service providers to create support networks for survivors. There is emerging evidence of youth group members who were empowered by these activities to raise community awareness and model alternative norms and behaviours in their own lives.

Creating Spaces' work in the Philippines to support youth-led policy advocacy and mobilization to change public opinion on child marriage, described in Box 7, demonstrates the potential of youth to advocate for legislative and social norm change.



Launch of the youth-led, multisectoral alliance of #GirlDefenders. Philippines.

Box 7. Philippines: Mobilizing youth on policy reform and advocacy to end child marriage

Creating Spaces implementing partners Philippine Legislators Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD), Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation (AMDF) and United Youth of the Philippines-Women (UnYPhil-Women) trained and mobilized hundreds of youth to advocate for an end to CEFM. To strengthen legislative advocacy efforts, 13 young girls, together with fellow youth advocates from Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, and the National Capital Region, held a dialogue with legislators in celebration of International Day of the Girl in October 2018. This dialogue led to the filing of a bill sponsored by Representatives Lagman and Herrera-Dy. A year later, the alliance of #GirlDefenders, composed of multisectoral representatives from the government – both executive and Congress – and civil society organizations, was launched. This alliance, spearheaded by PLCPD, is now a nationwide movement in support of the advocacy to end child marriage.

To build public support for an end to CEFM, youth leaders led educational sessions on child marriage with hundreds of young people. Further, 183 student leaders (61 men and 122 women) were trained and developed action plans to carry out advocacy work in their respective schools and communities. On their own initiative, the student leaders conducted room-to-room campaigns, theatrical presentations, and school symposiums. Unexpectedly, some parents invited student leaders to hold similar orientations in local elementary schools. In addition, 81 teachers were trained to support the student leaders, 16 of whom integrated content on child marriage into their classroom curricula.



III. Rights-based education

Building on Oxfam's work on transformative women's leadership, Creating Spaces is empowering women and girl leaders in communities to understand their rights and to build their capacity to claim them. **Adolescent girls have responded positively to these interventions to date, with demonstrated leadership in addressing gendered roles and attitudes within their household.**⁶³ This includes providing them with knowledge about their rights as guaranteed by international conventions, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and related country-level policy and legislative frameworks. There is evidence that rights-based approaches in which women and girls play an active role in tackling VAWG are effective in upsetting the gender *status quo* and model positive gender norms for others.⁶⁴ In many cases across Creating Spaces countries, this approach has helped women and girls realize that they should have a say in major decisions that affect their lives, such as marriage. This has proven to be extremely empowering and has led women and girls to form peer-to-peer networks of support, advocate for their right to education, and reach out for help in cases of VAWG and CEFM. See Box 8 and the accompanying short case study on Nepal's Community Discussion Centers, which provides a promising example of peer-to-peer rights-based interventions.

IV. Edutainment

In Pakistan, Oxfam and its partners are implementing a series of theatre performances and interactive puppet shows that use relatable stories to bring to light social norms that perpetuate VAWG and CEFM, to show how various actors at the community and household level can promote these harmful practices, and to shed light on ways that women and girls can seek help. By using such 'edutainment,' the project aims to explore these themes to promote positive attitudinal change among audiences, to encourage them to deconstruct norms that propel violence, and to present them with alternative, positive norms that promote a more equitable and just society for women and girls. The shows are performed in schools, colleges, and special forums, such as the children's literature festival in Lahore, for audiences that include students, teachers, parents and youth. Following each show, audience members are encouraged to question and discuss the key themes and messages presented.

Nepal's Creating Spaces team regularly conducts live theatre performances at the village level, which have become very popular with youth and community members, according to project monitoring reports. The team is currently reviewing what works and which aspects of this activity can be improved to generate even more positive results.



Zia Ul Abrar, Oxfam Pakistan



Creating Spaces India organized a state level football tournament as part of the Global 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, with the message 'no marriage without consent.'

Prince Kumar

Box 8: Community Discussion Centers (CDCs): A rights-based approach to enhancing women's and girls' capacity to advance their own rights in Nepal

Oxfam Nepal and its partners support 180 CDCs across the four Creating Spaces project districts in the country. The CDCs were designed as peer-to-peer spaces for women and adolescent girls who are survivors, or at risk of, violence and child marriage. The CDCs are facilitated by local women who were trained to use the REFLECT methodology, a literacy and community development tool that honours the skills and experiences of participants and puts them at the center of their own learning process. The project educated CDC members about women's and girls' rights – including rights to sexual and reproductive health – harmful social norms that perpetuate VAWG, and the negative consequences of CEFM. Using the *Rupantaran* ('transformation') life skills training package, the project also educated CDC members on literacy, problem solving, negotiation, civic engagement, and livelihood options.

Across multiple CDCs, the members were inspired to educate households in their community about discriminatory social norms that have normalized VAWG. CDCs also intervened to stop several cases of violence and planned child marriages, and held families accountable to adhere to national marriage laws. In some municipalities, CDCs garnered the support of local government and police who recognized the important role of CDCs in enforcing these laws.

The CDC model is a promising example of how peer-to-peer approaches that explore the root causes of VAWG and CEFM can foster empowerment of and leadership by women and girls to advocate for change within their own communities. Given the tremendous success of the CDCs, Oxfam and its partners are working to register them and advocating that the government take ownership of the CDCs as a local accountability mechanism to enforce VAWG and CEFM laws. This would ensure sustained funding for the CDCs beyond the lifecycle of the Creating Spaces project.

IMPACT STORY



"My neighbour had almost completed all the arrangements for the marriage of his 16-year-old daughter. I told him that the legal age of marriage is 20 years and there are other social and health consequences of early child marriage. He did not listen to a single word of mine. I also talked with his daughter who was unhappy about the marriage and wanted to continue her education, but could not tell her parents. I discussed the issue in my CDC and we decided to stop the child marriage at any cost. I along with three other CDC members approached the parents and made them aware that child marriage is a crime with legal punishments for committing it. The parents agreed to wait. Their daughter is now in 10th grade and she wants to continue her studies to college level."

— CDC Member



Aarati Sharma/Oxfam



Aarati Sharma/Oxfam

Women-led Community Discussion Center activities. Nepal.

V. Campaigning

Mass media, social media, and large community events are among the strategies the project uses to reach a wider audience with its messages to promote positive norms related to gender roles, marriage, sexual and reproductive health and rights, education, and income-generating opportunities for women and girls. Creating Spaces teams in Pakistan, India, Indonesia, and Nepal are also part of Oxfam's Enough campaign,⁶⁵ a global initiative led by Oxfam International to end VAWG through social norm change.

Oxfam developed the Enough campaign in collaboration with Oxfam country teams, national women's rights organizations, and feminist activists. Given that social norms are deeply rooted and entwined in all levels of society's culture, campaigning at the national and community levels is the campaign's primary focus. The Enough campaign supports the Creating Spaces project to identify the most harmful social norms driving VAWG and associated barriers, to target key influencers, and to design tailored campaigns to promote positive norms and behaviours. Enough works with the project's partners to build campaign strategies and implement innovative mobilization techniques using social media and edutainment through mobile applications, television and radio, and arts-based platforms, as well as with cultural influencers, artists, and celebrity champions.

VI. Legal advocacy and accountability mechanisms

When Creating Spaces was launched, some project countries did not have legislation that prohibited child marriage, while others had legislation with concerning loopholes and/or that was poorly enforced. Through the project, each country developed context-specific advocacy strategies to address its particular political, legal, and procedural challenges. Key activities included alliance-building; regular meetings with duty-bearers and potential champions, including parliamentarians and other high-level government officials; mobilizing public support for legal changes; raising awareness among influencers of legal frameworks related to VAWG and CEFM and proposing key amendments; and strengthening accountability mechanisms (formal and informal) to support implementation.

Since it began, the project has held 152 workshops on relevant legal frameworks with influencers across all six countries. Since inception, 80% of those workshop participants have provided positive feedback indicating that new knowledge and skills will help them to drive legal change at the national, district and local levels. This, in turn, has led to concrete policy action. One example is Creating Spaces' involvement in amending the marriage law in Indonesia (see Box 6). Another example is the project's work in the Philippines, where it led and/or participated in several consultations and advocacy meetings, and engaged with legislators to garner their support for CEFM legislation. To date, four bills that aim to prohibit child marriage were filed in both Houses of Congress – three in the lower house and one in the Senate. Philippine Legislators Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD), a Creating Spaces partner, spearheaded technical input and drafting of these bills. On January 20, 2020, Oxfam and its partners joined a public hearing to affirm their strong support for the 'Girls Not Brides' Senate bill and filed a position paper advocating the urgent passage of legislation.

ENOUGH

to change **SOCIAL NORMS**

... by **ORDINARY PEOPLE!**

... to do it in a way that's **HOLISTIC, LONG TERM, + INTERSECTIONAL**

and is **SPECIFIC TO EACH COUNTRY**

SAMPLE SOCIAL NORMS:

- ✗ a man's right to sex within marriage...
- ✗ rape shows masculinity - potent permission for domination...

launching 22 specific campaigns

JOINING...

ACTIVA

Working with **YOUNG people** popular music wide spread campaign

Hot girl crush sketchboard

CAMPAIGN PLANNING

Sustaining

LESSONS:

BEING CLEAR on our TARGET AUDIENCE

PEER to PEER support for YOUTH

CREATE EMPATHY with symbols, language + peers

ENGAGE YOUTH who ARE breaking norms - and make it **VISIBLE**

SPANNED, UNBRANDED campaigns

UNUSUAL alliances - YOUTUBE STARS

ENOUGH and CREATING SPACES:



Oxfam Canada: Creating Spaces Learning Event, March 2019

LIVE GRAPHIC RECORDING | Drawing
Sam Bradd | Change

6. CONCLUSION

The Creating Spaces research uncovered four gendered norms as central drivers of violence against women and girls and child, early and forced marriage in the project areas, exposing women and girls to intimate partner and family violence, and denying them agency and rights over their own bodies,

sexuality, health, and economic prosperity. The table below outlines each of these norms and their associated impacts on adolescent girls. The interrelated and intersecting nature of these norms leads to compounding negative impacts on women's and girls' lives.

NORMS	IMPACTS OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS
Sex and relationships before marriage are considered sinful	CEFM is used to protect the family honour and prevent pregnancies before marriage.
Men are decision makers, women are caretakers	Fathers, brothers, uncles and other male family members often have the final say on who and when their daughters marry. Girls are groomed for marriage and children from a young age as this is considered their destined path; investing in their education is considered a waste of resources.
Boys have greater value than girls	Sons' education is prioritized over daughters', particularly in low-income households.
Violence against women and girls is acceptable in certain conditions	Violence against women and girls is considered acceptable if women and girls disobey male figures or other authority figures (such as mothers-in-law) in their lives. Child brides are at even more risk of violence because of their limited power, knowledge, or history with their new spouse.

The research found that several individual, contextual, material, and structural factors also played an influential role in perpetuating CEFM and VAWG, including poverty, living in conflict-affected areas, limited access to education, traditional gender stereotypes depicted in popular and social media, and sexual violence and harassment towards adolescent girls. In addition, it identified problematic examples of legislative loopholes and implementation gaps that perpetuate child marriage practices.

KEY LEARNINGS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following programming recommendations are based on the research findings.

- Continue to build the capacity of implementing partners on social norm change. Project teams should tailor messaging for diverse stakeholders, incorporate education and awareness on gendered social norms and their negative consequences into all project interventions, and build capacity to monitor and measure changes in social norms.

- Apply a multi-stakeholder approach with key influencers using a narrowed focus and targeted strategies to gain their support.
- Continue to cultivate youth's leadership and influence to address gender-biased attitudes, norms, behaviours, and discriminatory laws.
- Understand the power and influence of popular and social media and how to better integrate them into programming.
- Consider whether the wider application of popular and social media platforms would increase the effectiveness of prevention strategies.
- Work with local leaders, influencers, women's support groups, and women's rights organizations to strengthen accountability mechanisms and play an instrumental role in enforcing CEFM and VAWG laws.
- Implement CEFM and VAWG prevention strategies in tandem with poverty alleviation mechanisms.
- Study select strategies, approaches, and practices across the six countries to gain more insight into implementation successes and challenges.
- Examining the impacts and challenges of male youth-focused interventions in India to transform norms in the context of economic migration.
- With additional funding from the International Development Research Centre, broader research focusing on the nexus between VAWG and SRHR and adolescent boys and girls' perceptions using participatory multi-media methods such as PhotoVoice and CellPhilm.
- Studying how men- and youth-focused initiatives can lead to attitudinal and behavioural changes in the household.
- Examining how to sustain attitudinal, behavioural, and social norm change through the establishment of informal accountability mechanisms to protect and promote women's rights.
- Understanding adolescent girls' aspirations and experiences of marriage in Indonesia to inform and develop more context-specific prevention strategies.
- Identifying effective strategies to improve access to quality support services for survivors and enhance the enabling environment for greater access to livelihood services.
- Documenting the feminist research processes and associated learnings and outcomes for project partners and community beneficiaries that came out of these interventions.
- Reviewing lessons learned on building the capacity of civil society and women's rights organizations to reduce VAWG and CEFM.

These learnings have shaped VAWG prevention strategies and approaches – with a particular focus on CEFM prevention – in the six Creating Spaces countries, each with varying and complex contextual realities.

CURRENT RESEARCH PRIORITIES

As part of its learning plan, Creating Spaces is currently researching knowledge gaps related to best practice in VAWG and CEFM programming, and studying project interventions to document learnings from the successes and implementation challenges to date. Other Creating Spaces feminist research projects currently underway include:

Future publications will share promising practices and learnings from the project to contribute to global evidence on prevention and response mechanisms to end VAWG and CEFM.

ANNEX A: CREATING SPACES PARTNERS

	LOCATION	PARTNER
Bangladesh	Netrokona Dinajpur Faridpur Tangail National Level	Bangladesh Nari Progoti (BNPS) Polisree Population Services and Training Centre (PSTC) Unity for Social and Human Action (USHA) Amrai Pari Paribarik Nirjaton Protirodh Jot (WE CAN Alliance)
India	Bihar Chhattisgarh Jharkhand Odisha Uttar Pradesh	Sakhiree Mahila Vikas Sansthan Nivedita Foundation Lok Swar National Alliance of Women (NAWO) Astitwa Samajik Sansthan
Indonesia	West Java/National East Java/National West Nusa Tenggara South Sulawesi	Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia (KPI)/Indonesian Women's Coalition Yayasan Kesehatan Perempuan (YKP)/Women's Health Foundation Yayasan Tunas Alam Indonesia (SANTAI) Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Untuk Keadilan (LBH APIK Makassar)/Legal Aid Institute of the Indonesian Women's Association
Nepal	Baitadi Banke Dailekh Rautahat National	Social Awareness and Development Association (SADA) Social Awareness Concerned Forum (SAC) Everest Club (EC) Rural Development Centre (RDC) Children Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN)
Pakistan	Sindh and Punjab	Idara Taleem-0-Agahi (ITA)
Philippines	Maguindanao Lanao del Sur National Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur	United Youth of the Philippines Women (UNY-PHIL Women) Al Mujadilah Development Foundation (AMDF) Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD) Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP)

ANNEX B : SUMMARY OF COUNTRY LEVEL RESEARCH

BANGLADESH⁶⁶

Preventing Child, Early, and Forced Marriage in Bangladesh: Understanding Socio-Economic Drivers and Legislative Gaps⁶⁷

The objectives of the research were to understand the significance of marriage for various populations and how this influences decision-making; to discuss the socio-economic drivers of CEFM; to identify possible loopholes in the legal and administrative infrastructures and procedures used to enforce the 2017 *Child Marriage Restraint Act*; and to generate recommendations for initiatives and approaches that could be developed to combat CEFM moving forward.

The research was conducted in nine districts of Bangladesh, including primary qualitative research in six of these districts with varying child marriage prevalence rates (from low to high): Sylhet, Sunamganj, Rangamati, Meherpur, Chapainawabganj, and Kurigram. The districts also represented a diverse range of socio-economic conditions, religion, and ethnic composition.

INDIA⁶⁸

The Irresistible and Oppressive Gaze: Indian cinema and violence against women and girls⁶⁹

The objectives of the research were to examine the portrayal of women and girls in mainstream Indian cinema,⁷⁰ and to investigate how communities consume films and to what extent their attitudes, perceptions and behaviours are influenced by the gender roles and dynamics observed on-screen.

Primary research was conducted in select villages across five states where the Creating Spaces project is implemented: Siwan district, Bihar; Khunti district, Jharkhand; Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh; Bhubaneswar, Odisha, and Janjgir-Champa district, Chattisgarh. In addition to interviews with

community members, 51 films were analyzed using the Bechdel test and a gender-based analysis with various indicators related to the portrayal of women, gender roles, on-screen sexual harassment, and objectification.⁷¹

INDONESIA

Oxfam Indonesia and its partners conducted an in-depth literature review to gain a more critical understanding of the existing body of knowledge on child marriage in Indonesia. This review examined social norms and other structural factors that drive CEFM in Indonesia, outlined the negative consequences of CEFM, and provided an overview of advocacy efforts to increase the legal age of marriage.⁷² The literature review identified major gaps in knowledge related to child marriage in Indonesia. The Creating Spaces Indonesia team is now conducting primary research on adolescent girls' aspirations and their experiences of marriage to inform strategies on how to educate, engage, and build the capacity of young women and girls to challenge CEFM practices.

NEPAL⁷³

Women's leadership in addressing harmful social norms to end violence against women and girls: An examination of Community Discussion Centres in Dailekh district in Nepal⁷⁴

The objectives of the research were to understand social norms that perpetuate CEFM and VAWG in selected project areas of Dailekh district; to document, through ethnographic methods, the stories of the transformative leadership of individual women and how it built their agency to tackle cases of VAWG; and to build evidence on the effectiveness of women's Community Discussion Centers (CDCs) to address VAWG and CEFM through a peer-to-peer learning approach.



Enough Campaign in East Java during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, Indonesia.

Various stakeholders participated in the research, including women participants and facilitators of the CDCs, religious leaders, local government representatives, and local NGOs engaged in influencing change. Learn more about the innovative feminist research approach used to carry out this study on page 13. The key research findings are highlighted in Box 8.

PHILIPPINES

*Examining the Effects of Discriminatory Social and Gender Norms on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Mindanao, Philippines (to be published in 2020)*⁷⁵

This study provided evidence on harmful social norms in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and Caraga (island of Mindanao) that drive CEFM and VAWG and jeopardize the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls. The findings informed and guided interventions for both the Creating Spaces project and Oxfam’s Sexual Health Empowerment (SHE) project.⁷⁶

The overarching aim of this research was to learn about barriers to the access and use of SRHR information and services by women and children – particularly those who are subjected to CEFM and VAWG – and examine how women’s and girls’ ability to exercise their rights to sexual and reproductive health is influenced by social norms and other factors. The research also aims to contribute to building an evidence base on the links between SRHR, CEFM and VAWG and the social norms that underpin them. See page 13 for information on the feminist research approach used for the study, using the highly participatory Social Norms Diagnostic Tool.

ENDNOTES:

- 1 According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), child marriage, or early marriage, is any marriage where at least one of the parties is under 18 years of age. In forced marriages, one and/or both parties have not expressed their full and free consent to the union. In a child marriage, both parties have not expressed full, free and informed consent. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WRGS/Pages/ChildMarriage.aspx>
- 2 UNICEF (2019). Infographic.
- 3 Ibid; UN General Assembly. (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1, SDG 5.3. Retrieved from: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/57b6e3e44.html>
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- 7 When this report was published, Oxfam Pakistan and project partners had not completed any research related to the Creating Spaces project, due to restrictions set by the government. Therefore, research conducted in all Creating Spaces countries with the exception of Pakistan were reviewed and informed the findings in this report.
- 8 Heise, L. (2011). *What works to prevent partner violence: An evidence overview*. London: DFID. Retrieved from: <http://www.oecd.org/derec/49872444.pdf>
- 9 Read the Creating Spaces Theory of Change overview and Oxfam's 10 Guiding Principles at <https://www.oxfam.ca/publication/creating-spaces-impact/>
- 10 All ethical protocols were followed with all research participants, and when interviewing minors under the age of 18. Oxfam strictly follows its feminist research principles including Do No Harm policy (see Box 3).
- 11 NVivo is a qualitative data analysis computer software package produced by QSR International. It has been designed for qualitative researchers working with very rich text-based and/or multimedia information, where deep levels of analysis on small or large volumes of data are required.
- 12 Future publications will share success stories from other countries, such as the innovative and participatory research methods Creating Spaces India is applying using PhotoVoice and CellPhilm.
- 13 Adhikari, S. (2019). *Women's Leadership in Addressing Harmful Social Norms to End Violence Against Women and Girls: An Examination of Community Discussion Centres in Dailekh District, Nepal*. Oxfam Nepal. Retrieved from: <https://42kgab3z3i7s3rm1xf48rq44-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Creating-Spaces-Addressing-Harmful-Social-Norms.pdf>
- 14 Butt, A., & Valerio, K. (2019). *Examining the Effects of Discriminatory Social and Gender Norms on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Mindanao, Philippines*. Oxfam Great Britain and Oxfam Philippines.
- 15 The Social Norms Diagnostic Tool was developed by the Empower Youth for Work program in 2016, with funding from the IKEA Foundation. It comprises a set of exercises that helps program teams identify and discuss the social norms, perceptions and expectations that shape, constrain or empower vulnerable populations. Oxfam Great Britain (OGB), Oxfam Philippines and Oxfam Canada (OCA) tailored and used the tool as a participatory research method to better draw out the voices of youth and women on issues surrounding GBV/VAWG, SRHR and CEFM.
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- 65 Learn more about the Enough campaign at <https://www.sayenoughtoviolence.org/>
- 66 For the full Bangladesh research report, see <https://tinyurl.com/rck2hkc>
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- 68 See the full India research report at <https://tinyurl.com/wqnskev>
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- 70 The research examined primarily Hindi or Bollywood films with the greatest viewership and influence, as well as a smaller sample of Bhojpuri and Odia films from Creating Spaces project areas.
- 71 At the time of this publication, Oxfam India and Creating Spaces partners were completing another research project funded by the International Development Resource Centre to examine the intersections between VAWG and the sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) of women and girls in Canada.
- 72 The minimum age of marriage for girls in Indonesia was increased after the literature review was completed. See Box 6 for more information.
- 73 See the full research report on Nepal's Community Discussion Centers at <https://tinyurl.com/yx4ga834>
- 74 Adhikari, S. (2019). *Examination of Community Discussion Centres*.
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- 76 The SHE project aims to empower women and girls to secure their SRHR in six disadvantaged and conflict-affected regions of the Philippines. Learn more at <https://www.oxfam.ca/project/she/>

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