Theory of Change:
Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh

February 24-25, 2014, Dhaka

The workshop was funded by UNFPA through Plan Bangladesh. This workshop was designed and facilitated by Dr. Ravi K Verma and Dr. Padmavathi Srinivasan from International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), New Delhi. The document was prepared by ICRW, New Delhi.

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A. Introduction to the Workshop

Bangladesh has one of the highest child marriage rates in the world, with 64% of women ages 20-24 married before the age of 18 years, and stark rural-urban differences (71% in rural areas as opposed to 54% in urban areas) in percentage of women married before 18 years. Despite significant strides in economic growth and modernization over the past 10 years; significant increases in female literacy levels and participation in labour force; advancements in and extensive proliferation of information and communication technology; and strong political will and government commitment to change, child marriages in the country continue unabated. Analysis of data from Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) shows that the rate of child marriage among girls below the age of 14 years in Bangladesh has declined considerably over the last 15 years; however, the marriage rate among girls ages 16-17 years has actually increased[1], which is certainly a matter of concern requiring greater attention in a rapidly modernizing country.

A two day workshop "Theory of Change: Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh," conducted jointly by UNFPA and Plan Bangladesh, and developed and facilitated by the Asia Regional Office of International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), intended to explore this paradox at length. The workshop brought together different stakeholders and members of the community (Government, NGOs, INGOs, Donors, Religious leaders, and Adolescent children) under *one* platform to address issues related to child marriage. The interactions and exchanges among the groups working to prevent child marriage enabled every stakeholder to understand the experiences and perspectives of the other participants. Just as it is necessary for the government organizations working to end child marriage to understand the views, experiences, and challenges faced by the community they work in, it is equally important for the non-governmental and community based organizations to play a complimentary role and provide a platform for the implementation of community initiated and community owned programs. Prevention of child marriage, in particular, is a case in point, where community ownership is critical, given that the practice is often justified on the grounds of deeply embedded cultural norms and beliefs relating to the institution of marriage and value of girl child in a society.

This workshop was conducted with a view to collectively develop a comprehensive understanding of the factors that determine child marriage and its consequences using a socio-ecological framework, and to think of specific strategies and their interrelated outcomes at various levels in the framework that eventually impact child marriage. The purpose of this exercise was *not* to find a solution to the child marriage problem. Rather, the intent was to bring together various stakeholders concerned with child marriage in Bangladesh, and to

1 Raj A., McDougal L., & Rusch M. L.A.(2013). Changes in Prevalence of Girl Child Marriage in South Asia. *JAMA*. 2012;307(19)

jointly conceptualize a theory of change that should serve as a framework in developing strategies, identifying goals and activities, and possibly developing monitoring and evaluation indicators to ensure that short-term and long-term goals are being met[2].

B. Workshop Process

The workshop was designed carefully to engage with diverse groups of stakeholders. There were 80 participants, comprising religious leaders and adolescent children from the community, government officials, and representatives from INGOs and NGOs. The workshop, the first of its kind in bringing together participants from diverse backgrounds with a shared goal of preventing child marriage in the country, produced interesting exchanges and insights. Heads of government, representatives from UNFPA and Plan International, and other participants were also present at the workshop[3].

Critically important to the process of the workshop at various stages was the firm commitment from senior Government officials to the prevention of child marriage in Bangladesh. Also important to the process was the recognition that the prevention of child marriage has to be addressed within the cultural sensitivities of Bangladesh; therefore, the need for intensive engagement between government and non-government and community based institutions was built into the group activities and subsequent discussions.

To encourage maximum participation and to draw diverse and rich ideas from the participants, and at the same time utilize the limited time to evolve a Theory of Change (ToC), the workshop was divided into two segments. On the first day, participants included representatives from the community, children and religious institutions, which allowed for rich and in-depth discussions on the causes and consequences of child marriage and the pathways of influence. On the second day, however, the participation was confined to only policy and program officials from government and non-governmental sectors. Children and religious groups were not present on the second day. The issues drew from the discussions on the first day, and the goal was to reach a clearer understanding of a jointly arrived at ToC framework.

Overall, the workshop utilized the focused group approach where the larger group was divided into small groups for focused and facilitated discussions. In some sessions, the small groups were created to bring participants from similar backgrounds; in others, the participants were mixed to allow heterogeneity and diversity, and free and frank exchange of ideas across sectors. Care was specially taken to ensure that the children were able to speak and participate freely and they were not overwhelmed by the presence of senior and experienced participants, and that their concerns were heard and responded to.

The discussions during the first day were framed around issues highlighted in few key presentations made in the start of day 1, which included a presentation by UNFPA on the global scenario on child marriage and approaches to prevent such marriages[4] and a presentation by Plan Bangladesh on the situation of child marriage in Bangladesh. These presentations were followed by group exercises where participants worked in homogenous groups to identify the causes and consequences of child marriage and presented them visually as a tree with roots symbolizing the reasons why child marriage occur, leaves the consequences of child marriage, and trunk the child marriage problem itself. Working in five separate groups consisting of religious leaders, adolescent children, government officials, representatives

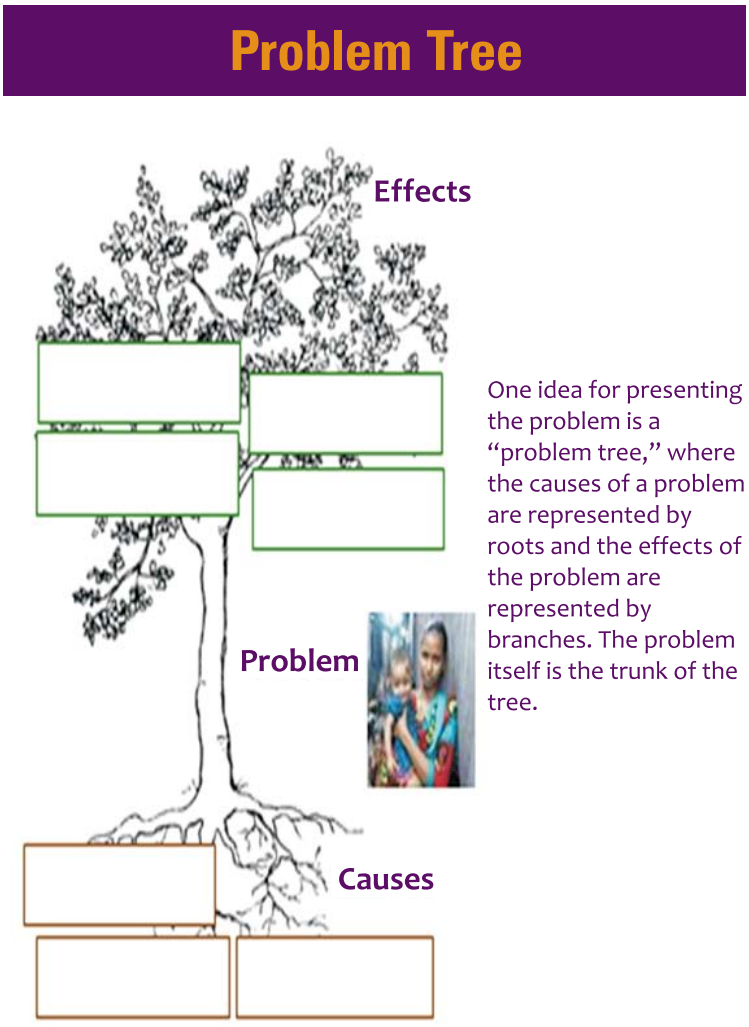
2 This workshop however was not intended to develop M and E framework; nor was it planned to come up with specific indicators. It is hoped that the broad ToC arrived at in this workshop would be helpful in identifying sector-specific indicators.

3 Although there representatives from the international organizations, the proceedings were conducted in Bangla to allow free and frank discussions and to ensure maximum participation from the community based organizations, religious leaders and children.

4 Kiran Bhatia from the regional office UNFPA made an extensive presentation on the global scenario of child marriage and prevention. Ms. Ruma from Plan Bangladesh presented country specific situation and program initiatives. Please see the Annexure 2 for summary of speeches and presentations made by guest speakers and organizers.

from NGOs, and representatives from INGOs, the groups brought together rich and diversified ideas that were then shared with a wider audience. In constructing the 'problem tree,' the groups did not rank the causes and consequences of child marriage in any particular order; however, in compiling the tables, all the responses were listed first and then ranked by the total mention each response item received from the five groups (please see Annexures 3 & 4 for the causes and consequences). This was followed by another exercise where the groups identified ways to approach the goal of ending child marriage.

On the second day, the participants discussed the outcomes from the first day to arrive at a common understanding of the factors operating at various levels within the ecological framework that influence the age at marriage for girls. This was important to discern the appropriate strategies ate various levels. Based on the discussions from the first day, the participants identified five layers of influences on the life of a girl that need to be addressed in order to prevent child marriage. These are child herself; family; community; institutions and policy. Participants were divided into five groups, with each group representing one level of influence on the girl child's age at marriage. The participants were then assigned randomly to one of the five groups so that every group had participants from a mix of professional backgrounds. Each group proposed several strategies corresponding to the level of influence and identified what outcomes they expected from these strategies, keeping in focus the ultimate goal of ending child marriage in society. Once the groups had completed the exercise, each group presented their strategies and the outcomes they expected from the strategies, corresponding to the level of influence, to the audience. This multi-level, dynamic approach to the prevention of child marriage was then built into an overall comprehensive Theory of Change (ToC) framework detailed in the following sections. The strategies and expected outcomes from the five levels were then put together in a single framework, to enable a clear conceptualization of the entire process of change. Some of the strategies proposed, such as using information and communication technologies to inform and educate the family on child marriage prevention laws and change family and community attitude to female child cut across all levels and are accordingly presented in the framework.



One idea for presenting the problem is a "problem tree," where the causes of a problem are represented by roots and the effects of the problem are represented by branches. The problem itself is the trunk of the tree.

Discussions during the workshop were conducted to unearth disagreements and differences in views and opinions; however, care was taken to ensure that the participants maintained mutual respect and sensitivity while expressing differences. Participants in smaller groups used participatory methods like 'free listing,' 'problem tree,' and 'logic framework' to express their ideas and suggestions. These were later shared with the other participants.

C. Group discussion dynamics and quality

The discussions during the two-day sessions were engaging and intense. Every group expressed its opinion and exchanged ideas freely and frankly. There were some striking differences between stakeholders in the way the problem of child marriage was perceived. Those from the community (religious leaders and adolescents) had micro-level perspective on the consequences of child marriage, whereas the representatives from government and non-governmental agencies tended to view the situation from a macro-level perspective. The participants representing the community raised concerns on the impact that early marriage has on the physical and psychological health of girls marrying young and having children immediately. Specifically, these participants highlighted the effect of early marriage on marital quality and stability, and discussed the ability of adolescent girls to be effective parents and successfully undertake marital and family responsibilities. They also felt that married adolescent girls are unable to express themselves boldly, be independent, and achieve their full potential. The participants representing government and donor organizations, on the other hand, focussed on the implications of child marriage on economic growth and development.

The difference between groups in their emphasis on the consequences of early marriage is not surprising, and is to be expected; however, it is essential that all differences be reconciled at some level in the transformative framework, in order for the policies and programs aimed at preventing child marriage to be effective.

The *Qazi* (religious judges) came under some criticism from the government officials for not being vigilant and proactive in stopping these marriages in the community. The government officials also felt that some *Qazis* knowingly broke the child marriage prevention law by issuing marriage or false birth certificate in marriages involving minors. The *Qazis* maintained, however, that child marriages occur mostly because of public ignorance on the legal age of marriage and requirement on birth and marriage registrations. They felt that the government needed to do more to educate the public on the child marriage prevention law and compulsory registration of birth and marriage, and facilitate the use of the registration systems.

These exchanges reveal the existence of intersectoral disagreements over the line of responsibility and action, and highlight the need for a more collaborative and cohesive approach in addressing the child marriage situation in the country.

D. Theory of Change (ToC): Drivers, Consequences and Solutions

The group exercises highlighted four key drivers for the child marriages in Bangladesh. These, however, did not include religious or cultural beliefs. This is an important observation and should help evolve strategies with the religious leaders on board. The four key drivers include: poverty; poor implementation of birth and marriage registration systems and enforcement of child marriage prevention law and programs; violence against girls; and negative impact of media and information and communication technologies.

(Please see Annexure 3 for drivers and Annexure 4 for consequenses as given by the participants on page no. 23-24)

Drivers

- **Poverty**

  Economic condition was perceived by all the groups as a huge factor driving child marriages in Bangladesh. Household poverty and families, especially in rural areas, not being able to meet the dowry and marriage expenses of girls were perceived as instrumental in driving down the age at marriage for girls. Poor families marry off their daughters at the earliest opportunity, because they perceive a girl child as a financial burden on the family. Performing the marriage of two or more girls in the family at the same time, irrespective of whether or not any girl has attained the legal age of marriage, is a simple cost cutting technique used by families to save on marriage and dowry expenses. Because young girls are perceived as readily marketable in the marriage market and less likely to command higher dowries, poor families become eager to marry off daughters at the earliest, especially when they receive offers of marriage from 'good' prospects. For girls dropping out of school because their families are unable to meet the cost of education, marriage is the only option to acquire economic security and avoid becoming a financial burden on their families. According to some participants, poor parents believe that investing in a girl's education yields poor returns, because after marriage, a girl will have very little control over her earnings and will be unable to give financial support to her parents and siblings.

- **Poor implementation of birth and marriage registration systems and enforcement of child marriage prevention law**

  Poor public awareness and knowledge on the need to register all births and marriages, and lack of clarity regarding the registration process were mentioned by all five groups as reasons for why child marriage continues to thrive in the country. Some groups felt that the enforcement of child marriage prevention laws and compulsory registration of birth and marriage were weak, and punitive measures against those violating the legal age at marriage or issuing false birth certificates to legitimize marriages involving minors were not stringent enough to deter families and community leaders from breaking the law. Some groups pointed out that often parents arrange the marriage of a daughter based on her physical maturity than chronological age, because, in their minds, that, rather than the legally defined age at marriage, signifies her transition from childhood to adulthood and readiness to enter married life.

- **Violence against girls and lack of physical safety**

  Concerns over physical safety of girls, especially in rural areas, were raised by all the groups. Girls in rural areas are often the subject of sexual harassment, physical assault and bullying by adolescent boys and adult men on the way to school and even in the classroom. Because of these problems, parents are hesitant to send their daughters long distances to school over safety concerns. Yet, parents find having an adolescent unmarried daughter at home equally worrying because she continues to be a potential target for sexual crimes. Moreover, keeping a girl that has attained puberty at home increases the risk of self-initiated courtship or marriage. Because there is strong social stigma attached to pre-marital sex and rape, marrying the daughter off at the earliest opportunity is seen by the parents as the only way to ensure her physical safety and maintain family honour and respect.

- **Negative impact of Information and Communication Technology**

  Despite numerous advantages and opportunities presented by information and communication technologies, some participants felt that there was a downside. The extensive proliferation of television, mobile phones, and internet were seen as having negative impact on the attitudes, values and behaviour of young people. Specifically religious leaders, felt that these technologies have contributed to negative portrayal and objectification of women, and prompted men to show disrespectful behaviour towards women. According to many participants, the lack of extra-curricular activities and opportunities to engage in healthy pursuits and interests outside school have led to youngsters relying exclusively on the television and internet for entertainment and amusement. This, in their opinion, has led to adolescents, both girls and boys, holding unhealthy views on sex and, sometimes, encouraged self-initiated marriages.

Consequences

The negative consequences of child marriage on sexual, reproductive, and psychological health of the young brides have been well documented in a number of research studies. The concerns raised by the participants corroborate the findings from many studies, and these can be classified into four broad areas: physical and mental wellbeing of adolescent married women; health of the offspring of adolescent mothers; quality of marital and family life of adolescent married women; and national productivity and economic growth.

- **Physical and psychological health of married adolescent girls**

  Nearly all groups linked early marriage with high maternal morbidity and mortality rates. Specifically, girls married at young ages are more likely to experience multiple pregnancies, recurrent miscarriage and termination of pregnancy, and pregnancy and delivery related complications. They are also more likely than women married at older ages to be malnourished, suffer frailties, unable to achieve healthy pregnancies, look after their children and family because of poor physical and mental health, and susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases, fistula, and poor sexual health. The adolescent participants opined that many married adolescent girls suffer from inferiority complex and lack confidence in dealing with other people. Moreover, they are often looked down in the marital home and community, and have severely limited opportunities to develop and reach their full potential.

- **Offspring health**

  Some groups felt that pregnancy at very young age is more likely than pregnancy at older age to lead to birth abnormalities than pregnancy at older age. Almost all groups felt that children born to young mothers are also more likely to suffer from malnourishment and long term debility and have stunted growth. These children are also likely to be poorly raised, because the mothers are not emotionally mature enough to handle child care responsibilities.

- **Quality of marital and family life**

  Young mothers are less likely to be emotionally mature and prossess the necessary life skills and knowledge to deal with the challenges of married life. Participants also felt that marriages involving a very young wife and much older husband tend to be less cohesive, riddled with marital strife and dissatisfaction, and more likely to end in divorce, abandonment, or polygyny. Additionally, young brides with much older husband have higher risk of becoming widows early in life than older brides.

- **National productivity and economic growth**

  Participants from government and INGOs felt that early marriage leads to low female labour force participation and impedes economic growth and development. The host of psychological and physical health problems associated with early marriage, pregnancies, and childbirth also impose heavy costs to society.

Solutions to end child marriage

Most of the recommendations centred on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the birth and marriage registration systems, especially their coverage and accessibility in rural areas, and enforcing the legal age at marriage, and strengthening the penalties for non-compliance.

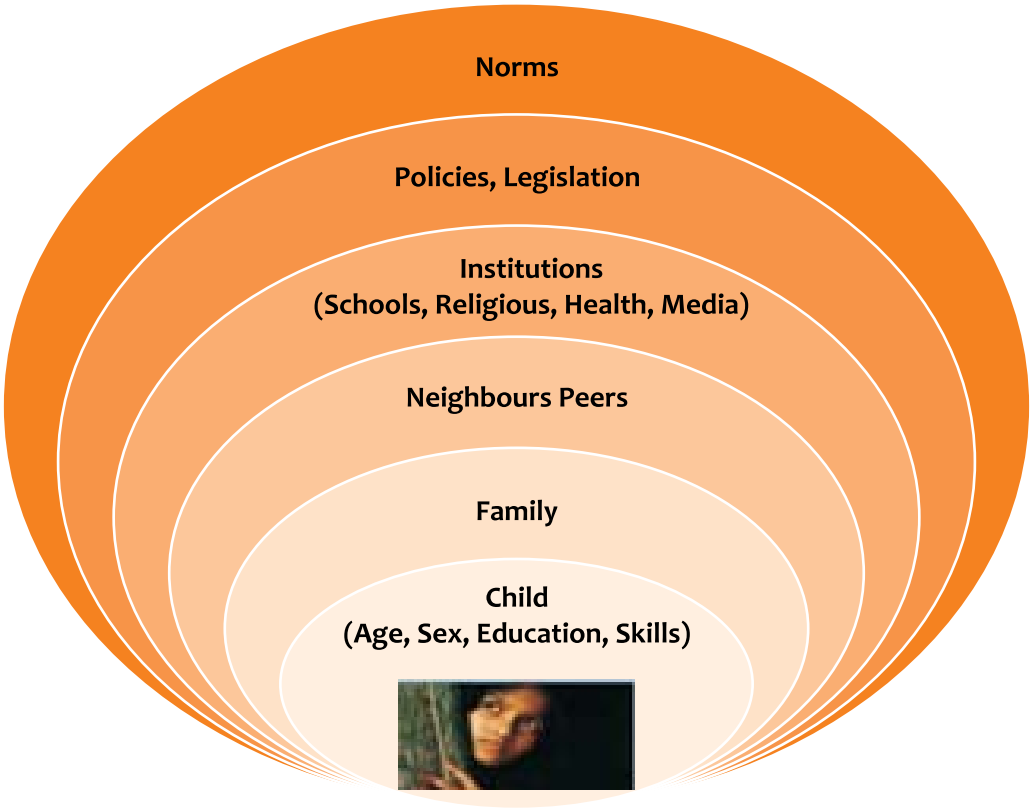
E. Theory of Change (ToC) through Ecological Framework: Five Pillars to End Child Marriages

A careful analysis of the drivers, consequences and solutions of child marriages seems to clearly suggest that approach to child marriage prevention must find ways to combine both macro and micro level factors in ways that would impact a girl's life, by giving her opportunities to make informed choices and operate within a safe environment free from violence. For example, poverty reduction programs must be accompanied by concomitant shifts in changing aspirations and values of girls, and schools and open spaces need to be made safe for girls to realize their aspirations and potential. Government programs, policies and laws at the same time must be reinforced and implemented well, and must focus not only on those at risk but also those who are married and been denied education because of marriage.

The interdependence of various factors can be easily understood within an ecological framework, where a girl's life impacts and is impacted upon by factors that operate at various levels. Participants identified five layers of influence on a girl's life. These can be considered as five pillars of the theory of change (ToC) intended to end child marriage:

1. Child
2. Family
3. Community
4. Institutions; and
5. Policies

Interdependence among these five pillars can be visually seen in the following diagram which shows how each pillar impacts and is impacted by the other.



Without implying any particular hierarchy, presented below is a list of illustrative activities at various levels that should be undertaken to end child marriage.

Child level activities and expected outcomes:

Empowering a girl is an essential step in the direction of enabling her to choose what she wants in life without fear from violence. Both married adolescent girls and those at risk of being forced into early marriage should be the focus of program interventions. Some of the indicative activities aimed at girls who are at risk are as follows:

1. Build child marriage related content within the school curriculum. This would ensure an open ended discussion and provide a legitimate platform for girls to raise their voices and set an alarm if a girl is forced into marriage.
2. Increase quality of education through enhanced recreation, creative learning, health promotion and skill generation.
3. Improve access to the above services for both married adolescents and 'at risk' girls, through the elimination of violence and greater safety measures.
4. Ensure that opportunities exist for both married and unmarried girls and *boys* to enable them to complete their education.

Some of the expected outcomes of these activities are:

1. Increased safer environment for girls to pursue education.
2. Increased value of girl child and respect for her educational and career aspirations.

Family level activities and expected outcomes:

Since family support is most essential for girls to enable them to continue their education and not fall within the trap of early marriage, the family is an important support system. It is also important to recognize that different types of families are at different levels of risk. For example, girls from displaced families or single headed families are at much higher risk of dropping out of school and marrying early. Instead of program efforts being confined to unmarried adolescents and traditional families, they need to focus on all adolescent girls and boys, married and unmarried, and from all types of families (joint, nuclear, single-headed, displaced families because of natural calamity, etc.) in order to be more successful in preventing child marriage.

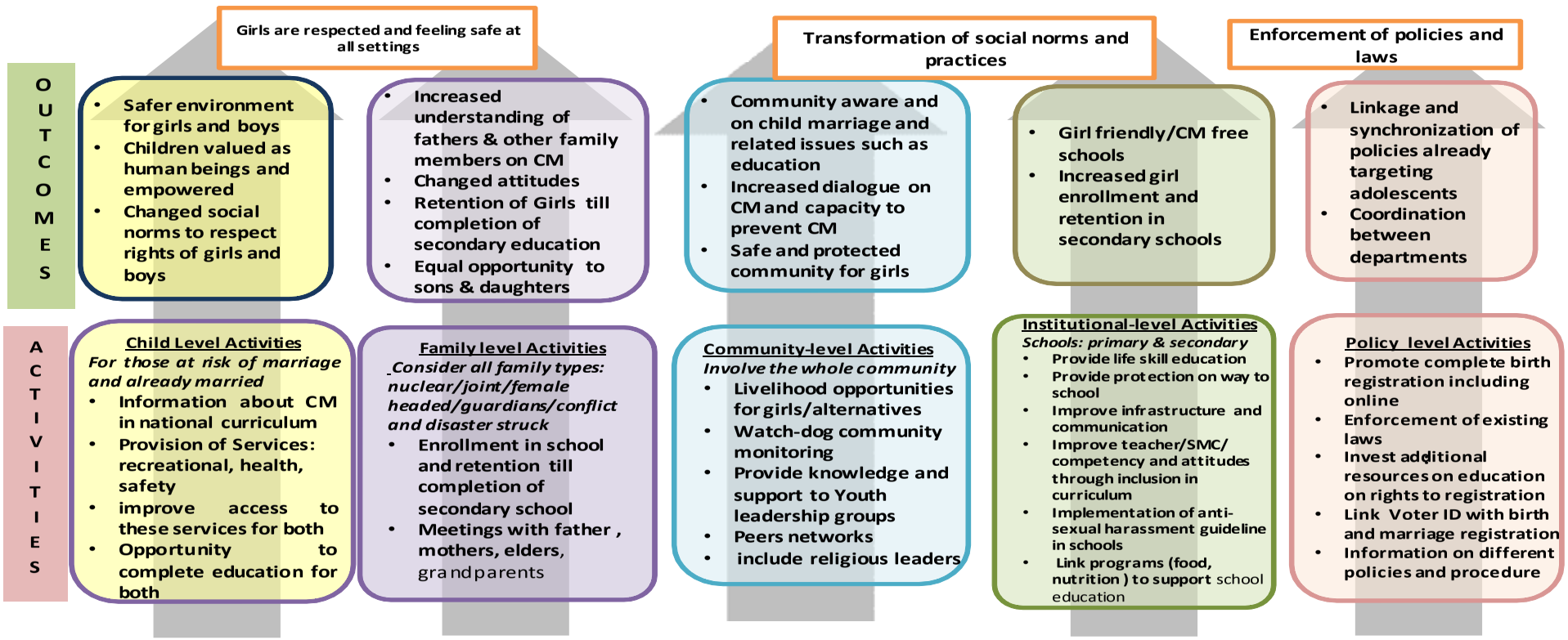
All types of families should therefore be considered for intervention programs and initiatives. Some of the activities that were identified at family level are as follows:

1. Hold regular meetings between program officers and parents to educate the latter on the negative consequences of child marriage;
2. Help families to perceive the value of girl child through intensive engagement and public dialogues;
3. Help families to increase support for the adolescent girl child.

Some of the outcomes at family level would be as follows:

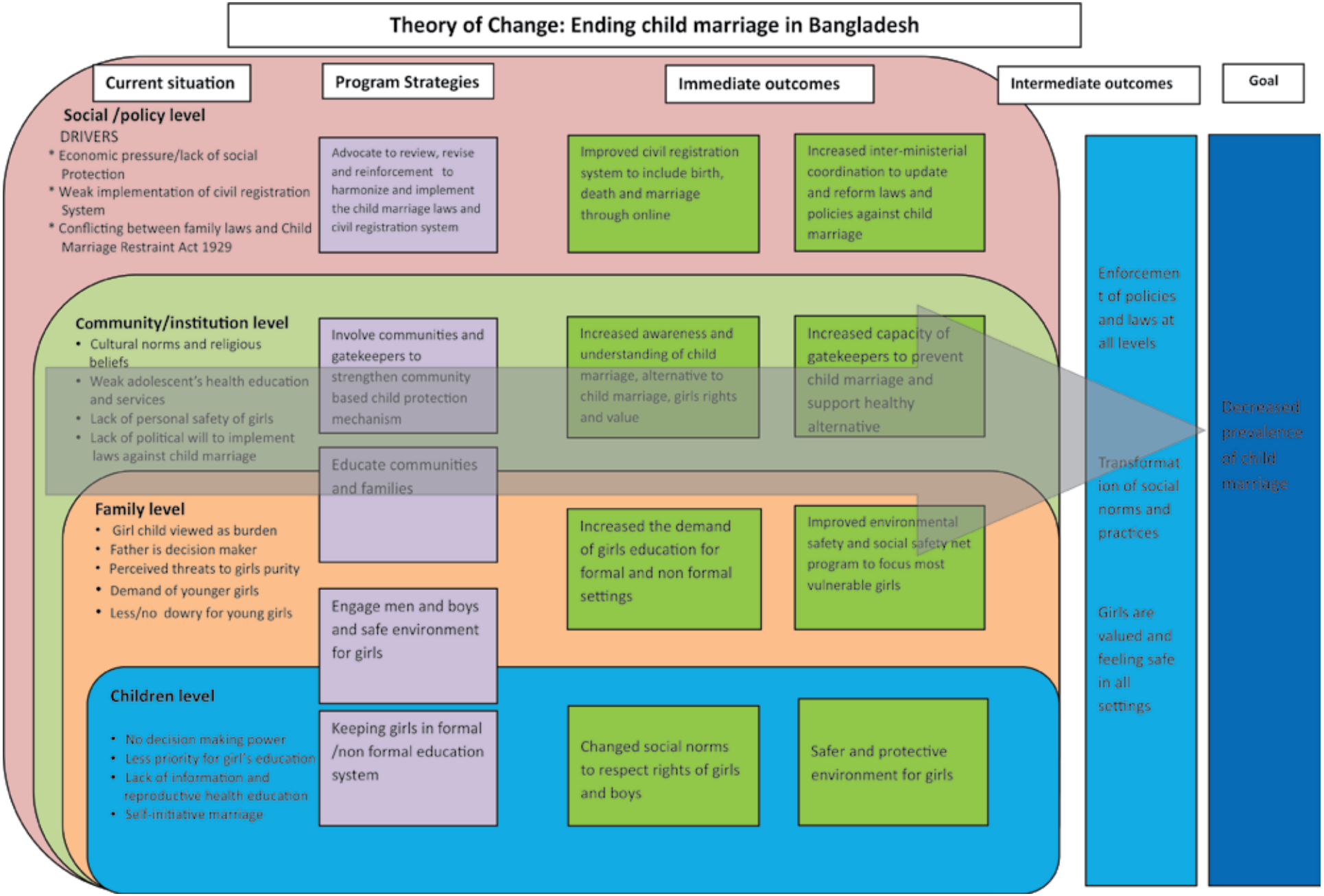
1. Families make commitment to retain girls in school till they complete their education and not marry them off while they are still in school.
2. Families provide additional support to girls to enhance their learning skills and enable them to fulfil their educational aspirations.
3. Families do not differentiate between sons and daughters in their aspirations and expectations for their children.

Program Model: End Child Marriage



Cross-cutting Activities

*Information/awareness *Mass media campaign, day celebration, IEC materials *Monitoring indicators at all levels *Research to understand drivers and patterns of CM * Informal systems for dialogue through civil society networks, groups, forums, youth clubs to change attitude on child marriage issues


Theory of Change: Ending child marriage in Bangladesh
Current situation
Program Strategies
Immediate outcomes
Intermediate outcomes
Goal
Social /policy level
DRIVERS
* Economic pressure/lack of social Protection
* Weak implementation of civil registration System
* Conflicting between family laws and Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929
Advocate to review, revise and reinforcement to harmonize and implement the child marriage laws and civil registration system
Improved civil registration system to include birth, death and marriage through online
Increased inter-ministerial coordination to update and reform laws and policies against child marriage
Community/institution level
• Cultural norms and religious beliefs
• Weak adolescent's health education and services
• Lack of personal safety of girls
• Lack of political will to implement laws against child marriage
Involve communities and gatekeepers to strengthen community based child protection mechanism
Increased awareness and understanding of child marriage, alternative to child marriage, girls rights and value
Increased capacity of gatekeepers to prevent child marriage and support healthy alternative
Educate communities and families
Family level
• Girl child viewed as burden
• Father is decision maker
• Perceived threats to girls purity
• Demand of younger girls
• Less/no dowry for young girls
Increased the demand of girls education for formal and non formal settings
Improved environmental safety and social safety net program to focus most vulnerable girls
Engage men and boys and safe environment for girls
Children level
• No decision making power
• Less priority for girl's education
• Lack of information and reproductive health education
• Self-initiative marriage
Keeping girls in formal /non formal education system
Changed social norms to respect rights of girls and boys
Safer and protective environment for girls
Enforcement of policies and laws at all levels
Transformation of social norms and practices
Girls are valued and feeling safe in all settings
Decreased prevalence of child marriage

Community level activities and expected outcomes

Community is a wider term and can include an immediate community, such as a neighbourhood, or various types of peer groups in a variety of settings. It is important that communities are well defined, identified and targeted with focused intervention and messages. The intervention programs and initiatives to end child marriage should expand to include those sections of society and communities currently outside the purview of these programs.

Similarly, a fundamental change in male and societal attitudes to women is critically needed. The initiatives to end child marriage should focus on changing the norms that discriminate against women. Because most decision makers in the family and community are men, it is very important that programs and initiatives to end child marriage work with men and boys to change their negative attitudes toward girls in the family and community. If these attitudes don't change, the various programs and initiatives to encourage girls to stay in school, complete schooling, and learn life skills can be at best only partially successful.

Some of the activities at the community level were identified as follows;

1. Set up a community or neighbourhood watch-dog to prevent child marriage
2. Create livelihood opportunities for girl children,
3. Hold regular dialogues with the community on child marriage.
4. Reach out to youth groups with clear messages on the problems of child marriages and enlist the support of male youth
5. Create awareness through strengthened peer network;
6. Give role models a public face and make them visible through some kind of reward system, using a positive deviant approach;
7. Involve positively inclined religious leaders to give vocal support to girl children and their causes.
8. Identify wider community and reach out to them through messages and ideas to build a support system for girls and their families.

Some of the expected outcomes are as follows:

1. Increased community support for female education and opposition to child marriage
2. Community makes spaces safer for girls
3. Community identifies families at risk of marrying off daughters early, and helps them to prevent child marriage in the family and increase support for girl children.

Institution level activities and expected outcomes:

There are several institutions within the immediate environment of girls that need to be identified and targeted with messages on child marriage and reforms that would help increase the value of girls in those institutions. For example, schools or educational institutions are the obvious ones. Sports, media, work place, and health institutions are others. Some of the activities at the institutional level are as follows;

1. Keeping girls at school is considered as an important and effective strategy in delaying the age at marriage for girls. *While this makes intuitive sense, in reality, providing and ensuring the physical safety of girls on the way to school and in school proves to be more challenging than assumed*. It is important to create girl-friendly and child marriage-free schools.
2. Provide safe environments for girls to study.
3. Use food and nutrition programs in schools to encourage girls to stay in schools.

Some of the expected outcomes will be:

1. Girls remain in schools longer
2. Establishment of girl friendly and child marriage free schools.

Policy level activities and expected outcomes

Even sound policies need close monitoring, coordination and resource support for effective implementation and achieving intended outcomes. There needs to be a cohesive effort by all government departments and nongovernment organizations working for upliftment of women and children, in developing strategies to end child marriage. Comprehensive, holistic strategies, operating at every level of influence on the age at marriage for girls, and the consolidation of some redundant programs, may be more effective in reducing the prevalence of child marriage than numerous fragmented programs and initiatives operating in isolation.

Some of the activities proposed are also to ensure effective implementation through better coordination, monitoring and resource mobilization. Some of them are as follows:

1. Provide additional resources to improve registration of births and marriage
2. Information and communication technologies need to be used constructively and effectively, to educate the public on the legal age of marriage and compulsory registration of birth and marriage, through a combination of educational and entertainment programs. Both traditional and newer forms of media need to build positive images of women and break stereotypes on gender roles, tasks and responsibilities, to increase the value of girl child and bring about social change.
3. Make the birth and marriage registration systems simpler, accessible and easy to use, especially in rural areas
4. Build capacity at all levels to strictly enforce current laws on child marriage prevention
5. The child marriage prevention law and compulsory registration of all births and marriage need to be strictly enforced and punitive measures against those who violate the laws or commit an act of violence against women be made more stringent.
6. Link and synchronize different policies on adolescent girls and There is need to scale up program efforts and elicit wider support to end child marriage, by building alliances among different stakeholders and bringing them together under one platform.

Some of the expected outcomes will be:

1. Greater coordination across programs and departments.
2. Child marriage issue gets mainstreamed.

F. Way forward

This workshop has shown that there is critical need to prioritize interventions through evidence based monitoring, and identify different entry points of intervention at different levels within an overall framework, which integrate and converge at a common goal of ending child marriage. It is imperative that norms regarding attitudes to girls change and the value of girl child is enhanced. Prevention of child marriage is not the end product; rather, the goal is to enhance the value of girl child and bring about greater gender equality and justice in all spheres of life.

Annexures

Annexure 1

Theory of Change for Ending Child Marriage Workshop

Dhaka

24-25 February

DAY 1 : 24 February

Introduction:

The aim of the workshop on Ending Child Marriage, conducted jointly by, UNFPA and Plan International Bangladesh, is to create understanding and awareness on the factors driving child marriage in Bangladesh, the process through which these driving forces impact and identifying solutions, using the Theory of Change (ToC) framework adapted to Bangladesh context. The workshop will be facilitated by ICRW.

Objective:

- To identify main drivers and consequences of child marriage in Bangladesh and the plausible actions/approach to tackling child marriage.

Expected Outcomes:

- Highlight problems of child marriage in Bangladesh.
- Being able to identify the goal and approaches to prevent/end child marriage, and the challenges needed to be overcome.
- Better understanding of how different sectors conceptualize the causes and consequences.

Time	Session title	What will happen	Who is involved and their role	Methodology	Facilitator Notes
9:00-9:30	**1.1 Ceremonial Welcome**	**i)** Brief Introductions to purpose and objectives of workshop **ii)** Synchronize expectation and procedure **iii)** Opening statements by Government of Bangladesh Official(s)	• Argentina P. Matavel Piccin-Country Representative, UNFPA • Senait Gebregziabher - Country Director, Plan Bangladesh • All	Plenary	**i)** Brief overview of the purpose of the workshop **ii)** Explanation of Plan, UNFPA and ICRW's role and other external experts **iii)** Introduction of agencies involved, and information on the participants attending.
9:30-10:00	**1.2 Global overview of Child Marriage**	Presentation: Global trend; broad strategies and efforts: UNFPA	Kiran Bhatia, UNFPA Bangkok	Presenting Global scenario on CM; Briefly on South Asian situation.	Overview of Child Marriage rates worldwide, issues, challenges, and approaches.
	Child Marriage: in Bangladesh	Presenting Bangladesh situation on CM	Jannatul Ferdous Ruma, Plan, Bangladesh	Presentation on Child Marriage in Bangladesh	Fact sheets on Child Marriage in Bangladesh distributed to participants.

Time	Session title	What will happen	Who is involved and their role	Methodology	Facilitator Notes
10:00-10:15	**1.3 Getting to know one another**	A chance for participants and facilitators to get to know one another informally.	ICRW and other groups	Icebreaker exercises/games	
10:15-12:30	**Getting to the Root of Child Marriage in Bangladesh**	**i)** Introduction to Problem TREE	ICRW	Depicting the causes, consequences of child marriage as parts of a TREE	Visual conceptualization of causes and consequences of Child Marriage in Bangladesh.
		ii) Exercises - Participants in groups prepare and present own TREE. Groups to be formed on the basis of common background (adolescents, government officials, religious leaders, NGOs, etc)	Participants divided into Groups	**i)**Small groups of participants from similar background to discuss causes and consequences of child marriage. **ii)**Presenting group findings. Discussions about common roots and consequences of child marriage in Bangladesh	Purpose: **i)**Participants to identify the causes and consequences of Child Marriage, and present it visually as a tree. **ii)**End with common understanding of root causes of child marriage and end discussion with who can address which driver more effectively
12:30-1:30	***LUNCH***				
1:30-2:30	**1.4 Solutions to End Child Marriages**	**i)**Short Energizer (10 minutes) **ii)**How to approach the goal of ending child marriage, identifying solutions and pathways. **iii)**Questions/discussion in plenary (25 minutes)	ICRW ICRW	Energizer exercises.	
2:30-4:30	**1.5 Group work to discuss approach and solutions to ending child marriage** ***{Working tea}***	Small group discussion (1 hour)	ICRW	Group exercise by participants in identifying goals, paths (steps taken) to achieve the goal, and challenges faced or likely to be encountered.	i)Participants from similar backgrounds to work in small groups to generate rich and diverse ideas. ii)Each group will prepare a simple chart of given conditions, the goal, and steps for achieving the goal.

Time	Session title	What will happen	Who is involved and their role	Methodology	Facilitator Notes
4:30-5:30	**1.6 Presentation by participants**	**i)**Participants and their groups will present their understanding/views/ approaches in ending child marriage. **ii)**Summarizing the day's activities. **iii)** What can be expected in Day 2	ICRW		

DAY 2: 25 February

Objective:

- To develop a draft TOC for ending child marriage in Bangladesh that includes problem framework, key activities, outputs, outcome, impact and key responsible stakeholders, including an advocacy framework.

Expected Outcomes:

- Learn from promising practices.
- Increased understanding on conceptualizing problems, using frameworks - components and need for comprehensive programming to end/prevent child marriages in Bangladesh
- Understanding the roles and responsibilities of different sectors and how they could work together to end /prevent child marriage.
- Common understanding on the theoretical frameworks (eg., Ecological Model, Theory of Change (ToC), etc.,) – what is it, how is it framed, and uses.

Time	Session title	What will happen	Who is involved and their role	Methodology	Facilitator Notes
9:00-10.00	**2.1 Opening**	Welcome Introduction Recap begins with agenda Participants reflections Recap pf Previous Day	Dr. Sharmin, UNFPA Argentina Matavel, UNFPA & SenaitGebregziabher, Plan Ravi Verma, ICRW Dr. Julia Ahmed, Mr. Nahil, Oxfam Bangladesh Padmavathi Srinivasan, ICRW	Plenary	Overview on ToC by group exercise done earlier

Time	Session title	What will happen	Who is involved and their role	Methodology	Facilitator Notes
10.00-10.45 am	**Global commitments and obligations and child marriage initiatives in Bangladesh**	UNFPA and Plan	Kiran Bhatia, UNFPA Bangkok Jannatul Ferdous Ruma, Plan, Bangladesh		
10.45-11.00 am					
11.00 am-1:00 pm	Ecological model	Presentation of 1st day's summary in ecological framework and setting the stage for the group work	Ravi Verma		
1:00-2.00 pm	***LUNCH***				
2.00 – 3:30 Pm	**2.3 Group Exercise - Framework-building and presentation**	Participants in groups build their own framework, identifying the goals, activities, and outcomes, to achieve their goals.	Moderated by Kiran Bhatia		
3:30-3:45 Pm					
3:45 – 4:00 Pm		Closing remarks by the Secretary of MOWCA		Short speech by Secretary	
4:00– 4:30 pm		Presentation of Theory of change – what it could look like Vote of Thanks and next steps	Padmavathi Srinivasan Argentina Matavel & Senait Gebregziabher		

Annexure 2

Statements by Key Speakers on child marriage in Bangladesh

Opening Day: February 24, 2014

- **Argentina Matavel (Country Representative, UNFPA):** It is not possible to stop child marriages individually; a collective effort is needed for this. We have to collectively say how we can stop it, and then international experts can bring the best practices, from around the world. This time we tried to gather people from different backgrounds, like from rural areas, Donor, Government level, community level, and civil society, children and religious leaders etc. to know better about the root cause of child marriage. This will not be a one or five years plan. There is needed a medium and long term plan for it.

- **Senait Gebregziabher, (Country Director, Plan International Bangladesh):** I am very happy to see the children, attending the workshop. Because they are the victims of child marriage. In Bangladesh, the percentage of child marriage is 64%, which is very high in South Asia and around the world. Girls are a big asset for the world. In Bangladesh, 2 out of every 3 girls are getting married before 18 years. We have to find out the root cause of child marriage. Today we have invited children, religious leaders, community people, media, government officials to listen to them. Today we will only listen to why this is happening in our country. Also, we want to know what are the negative effects of child marriage and who are responsible for stopping it. We are working on it individually, not collectively. So, now we will find the way to work collectively. No idea is small, so, we want to hear from all.

- **Ashraf Hossain (DG, MOWCA):** Today people from diverse background and age have come here in the workshop. So, it is assumed that we can get idea from this enlightened audience. Many say that the gender scenario has changed in Bangladesh. We have seen many positive changes in gender aspects. But there is some impairment too. Child marriage is one of it. The percentage of child marriage is alarming. If this situation is going on, then, this achievement can be hindered. So, we need to identify the underlined causes to stop child marriage. Women's development can be possible if we cannot combat it. We assume that education can stop child marriage. We see girls' enrolment is increased in primary level; sometimes it is far more than boys' enrolment. But still we find child marriage is happening. So, we have to find out the hidden cause of child marriage.

- **Kiran Bhatia (Regional Gender Advisor, UNFPA)**: Ms.Bhatia presented an overview of Child Marriage rates worldwide, issues, challenges, and approaches.

- **Jannatul Ferdous Ruma (Child Protection Advisor, Plan International Bangladesh)** presented some facts on the child marriage situation in Bangladesh. Plan International Bangladesh and ICCRDB jointly conducted a study on child marriage in 2013.It was found that 64% children are married at very early age. Girls, who got married before 18 years, 81% among them are poor and 56% are solvent. It explains that poverty is not the only cause of child marriage. There is a co-relation between education and child marriage also.

Closing Day: February 25, 2014

- **Abu Ahmed Jamadar, Joint Secretary (Senior Session & District Judge), MOLJPA:** 'Ending child marriage is an important as well as critical issue said the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs of Bangladesh. He mentioned that the Constitution of Bangladesh is in favour of non-discrimination and equality between men and women. If any other law contravenes with these constitutional values, that law will be deemed void. In response to a concern raised by the workshop participants regarding incompatibility/discrepancy between religious and legal provision regarding age of marriage, he repeatedly said that it's the national law which will prevail. He also said that Bangladesh as one of the signatory of UNCRC- our country must comply with the age of child and children's right of not to be married before 18. Science also do not support child marriage. Mr. Secretary clarified the religious misconception of girls' marriage with puberty that religion does not make it mandatory to solemnize marriage at early age. Considering welfare of humankind, changes has been made also in Muslim Family Laws Ordinance 1961. While visiting Sylhet, he saw that children are most organized, they are preventing and responding to Child Marriage, ensuring birth registration with 45 days of birth. He emphasized along with making laws it is also equally important to increase capacity of children. Finally he concluded that three efforts: ensuring birth registration, enacting anti child marriage law, awareness rising can make changes in ending child marriage.

- **Senait Gebregziabher, Country Director, Plan International Bangladesh:** Ms. Senait stated that Bangladesh is a country which showed huge success in reducing child mortality rate and increasing enrolment of girls in secondary schools in compliance with the Millennium Development Goal (MDG). Plan and UNFPA have been showing interest in working hand in hand with the Government to end child marriage. This workshop is arranged to develop a strategy for ending child marriage in Bangladesh, she said. Ms. Senait thanked the workshop participants, distinguished guests and special thanked ICRW resource people.

- **Tariq ul Islam, Secretary, MOWCA, Bangladesh:** Mr. Secretary discussed about the roles and responsibilities of different sectors in ending/preventing child marriage in Bangladesh. He talked about his experience of visiting Khulna at Plan project area where he met with local government officials, Qazis and the community peoples. A Qazi said that, on the occasion of Valentine's Day, a large number of teenage girls and boys are likely to want to marry. Mr. Secretary immediately circulated a mobile text message- 'Be careful of marrying before 18 years' through BTRC. He also mentioned that a draft to prevent child marriage is being finalized and expected to be placed before the Cabinet shortly. He requested everyone to sensitise parents and guardians wanting to marry off minor children in their family.

- **Dr. Sirajul Haque (Representative from Higher Secondary Education dept, Bangladesh):** Education is the best means to bring change. We have brought changes in the curriculum but we need to do more work. There should be a coordinated effort among donor, govt. and NGOs. Through collaboration we will be able to achieve our desired result.

Annexure 3: Causes of Child Marriage

Response	Groups					Total
	Children	Religious	Government	INGO	NGO	Mention
Dowry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Lack of safety & security;sexual harassment; sexual abuse & exploitation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Vital registration weakly implemented & nontransparent;false marriage certificates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Lack of awareness & insufficient information on marriage,birth registration	✓	✓	✓	✓		4
Negative influence of TV satellite,media,internet	✓		✓	✓	✓	4
Weak, poor implementation of law against child marriage, penalty not stringent	✓	✓		✓	✓	4
Norms social pressure,family pressure,religious pressure, loss of family honor	✓			✓	✓	3
Finding good groom		✓	✓	✓		3
Poverty	✓	✓		✓		2
Early maturity; sexual interests & attraction to opposite sex	✓		✓			2
Self-initiated marriage		✓		✓		2
Gender discrimination, biased against female chilfren; girl child viewd as burden				✓	✓	2
Patriarchal mindset		✓		✓		2
Male preference for young brides			✓		✓	2
Grandparents desire to see grandchildren married off			✓			1
poor school results; school drop out	✓			✓		1
Homeless situation due to natural disastors					✓	1
Unequal distribution of family assets,inheritance				✓		1
Large family					✓	1
Parents uneducated/illiterate	✓	✓				1
Perception late marriage will affect childbearing						
Lack of alternate sources of extra-curricular activities & past-time			✓			
Lack of knowledge on sex and marriage						

Annexure 4: Consequences of Child Marriage

Response	Groups					Total mention
	Children	Religious	Government	INGO	NGO	
High maternal mortality/child mortality	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Maternal/child physical health problems, malnourishment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Education deprived	✓	✓	✓	✓		4
National economy affected, Women not in workforce, Productivity reduced		✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Lack of decision-making power,dominated by husband & inlaws	✓		✓	✓	✓	4
Mental health problems faced by mothers- trauma, depression		✓	✓	✓	✓	4
higher risks of divorce		✓		✓	✓	3
Higher risk for polygamy		✓		✓	✓	3
Risk for birth abnormalities	✓	✓	✓			3
Risks of abortion, repeated abortions	✓				✓	2
early pregnancy, more children		✓	✓	✓		2
Socially deprived/less cultural,social involvement	✓			✓		2
pregnancy related/reproductive health problems		✓	✓	✓		2
unable to take care of family, rear children properly			✓	✓		2
Risk domestic violence, demand higher dowry, sexual abuse marital home	✓	✓	✓	✓		2
Girls trafficked					✓	1
Early widowhood					✓	1
Higher levels of illiteracy, more uneducated nation		✓				1
Negative economic impact on family			✓			1
Adolescent deprived of other rights			✓			1
Girl is not respected in society and/or marital home	✓					1
Girl has lower self-confidence		✓				1
Extra-marital relationship				✓		1
Burden on in-law					✓	1
Unhappy family, marital life		✓			✓	1
Husband cannot share his thoughts with wife					✓	1