



# Community action to reduce child marriage in Shinyanga, Tanzania

Summary report of achievements and learnings – April 2021

Note: This report summarizes learnings from an independent evaluation conducted by the AfriChild Centre of Excellence for the Study of the African Child, CBO grantee-partners' reports, reports from community dialogues conducted by grantee-partners with their communities, consultant reports, and observations and reflections by Firelight staff.

## Glossary of Terms

CBO- Community based organization  
NGO-Non Government Organization  
OPE- Organization of People Empowerment  
ICS-Investing in Children and their Societies  
AACP-Agape Aids Control Programme  
TVMC-The Voice of Marginalized Community  
WEADO- Women, Elderly Advocacy and Development Organization  
YWCA-Young Women Christian Association  
CHIDEP-Children on Disability Development Programme  
TAI-Thubutu Africa Initiatives  
PWWCO-Promising World for Women and Children Organization  
Rafiki SDO-Rafiki Social Development Organization  
UNFPA-United Nations Population Fund  
CPC-Child Protection Committee  
CWPC-Children and Women Protections Committees  
SDGs-Sustainable Development Goals  
TDHS-Tanzania Demographic Health Survey  
FGD-Focus Group Discussion  
GBV-Gender Based Violence  
HIV-Human Immunodeficiency Virus  
AIDS-Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome)  
IEC-Information, Education and Communication  
IGA-Income Generating Activities  
SRHR-Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

## Summary

Since 2015, Firelight has been working with twelve community-based organizations (CBOs) to end child marriage in Shinyanga Region, Tanzania. Although the national average shows that 36% of women aged 25-49 were married before their 18th birthday (TDHS – MIS, 2015-16), statistics show that child marriage was estimated to be at 59% in the Shinyanga region (Data from TDHS 2010, as compiled by UNFPA-Tanzania 2013).

Child marriage is defined as a formal or informal union entered into by an individual before reaching the age of 18 years. Child marriage may be forced, it may result from elopement of the girl with a man/boy or follow an early/adolescent pregnancy. The problem of child marriage in Shinyanga was largely associated with negative social cultural norm practices and poverty. Child marriage negatively affects the health, development and participation of the girl child threatening the attainment of her life potentials and sustainable development goals (SDGs).

At Firelight, we believe that community-based organizations (CBOs) are uniquely positioned to stop child marriage where it starts – in the home and in the community. Based most often at the intersection of family, children and community leadership at all levels, CBOs have the capacity to influence all of the drivers of child marriage. Critically, we also believe that CBOs have a major role to play in preventing child marriage in the future. This is because CBOs:

- work in the space where children live and thrive, making informal systems of support accessible to kids;
- are well positioned and adept at facilitating strong linkages between the formal and informal systems of support, e.g. building the capacity of community-based child protection committees that are able to recognize cases of abuse, file police reports, and refer abused children to government services;
- use multi-pronged strategies to improve the safety and resilience of children. While often beginning with a focus on mitigating the impact of violence and abuse, greater understanding of the problem leads to the integration of prevention strategies. Within that continuum, CBOs engage children, youth families, communities, and government in a process of long-term social change;
- are trained to listen – borne out of a desire to help, they are deeply attuned to their communities and can turn their ear to the needs of adolescent girls; and
- are potentially powerful but under-represented in critical policy-level conversations relating to child marriage.

In this initiative, Firelight began working in 2015 to strengthen the capacity of 12 CBOs to –

- work as a collective to mobilize their communities to uphold girls' rights,
- develop strong child protection systems that link up to the district level and
- strengthen their programming in the fight against child marriage.

In order to attack the multiplicity of drivers of child marriage, Firelight's grantee partners varied in their strategies and approaches, forming an integrated attempt to drive out child marriage from the region. Harnessing the varied approaches in the fight against child marriage, their work was complementary, resulting in an integrated network striving to uphold the rights of children locally, regionally, and nationally.

The approaches our grantee partners employed ranged from individual girl rescues, to education, to economic livelihood promotion, to skillful parenting training for parents. They are training children (both in and out of school) on sexual and reproductive health, so that they can make informed decisions that safeguard their futures. CBOs are also strengthening community child protection systems by training child protection teams at village, ward, and district levels.

At the end of the evaluation, it was confirmed that both AfriChild and grantee-partners noted patterns of positive changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices which are proximal indications of reductions in drivers of child marriages, along with many other positive improvements in the circumstances, approaches and opportunities that lead to child marriage. These changes were attributed to many factors including the Tanzanian governments' commitment to fight the problem through enactment and enforcement of existing laws and policies, the establishment of child protection structures such as CPCs and gender desks at police stations, and the construction of secondary schools in every ward. However, it was externally validated that the Firelight initiative to end child marriage, along with the interventions of other NGOs such as Save the Children, absolutely contributed enormously to the reduction of child marriage in the region.

## About This Report

This report summarizes learnings from an independent evaluation conducted by the AfriChild Centre of Excellence for the Study of the African Child, CBO grantee-partners' reports, reports from community dialogues conducted by grantee-partners with their communities, consultant reports, and observations and reflections by Firelight staff.

Firelight provided coaching and support for CBO grantee-partners in Shinyanga to conduct community dialogues with their community in 2016, 2017, and 2018. This involved using different participatory methodologies to surface the perspectives of children, youth, and adults on the ways in which different factors in the community supported or harmed children's safety, wellbeing, and rights.

In 2018, Firelight commissioned the AfriChild Center at Makerere University in Kampala Uganda to conduct a process evaluation of the Initiative to assess and document implementation progress, achievements, challenges, learnings and continuing needs. AfriChild's review constituted an assessment and evaluation of Firelight's activities as well as of approaches and service delivery of the CBOs and their likely effects at community and organizational level. The evaluation process obtained ethics review and approval, used rigorous methods, and involved the participation of CBO staff and board members, local government staff, child protection teams, community members, and children in and out of school.

Additional sources that have contributed to our learnings include –

- CBO grantee-partner surveys and assessments,
- CBO grantee-partner validation of the AfriChild findings,
- Documentation of CBOs' program models, and
- CBOs' periodic reports and documents – including community dialogue reports.

## Theory of Change

This initiative aimed at reducing child marriage which stood at high levels in Shinyanga at the start of the initiative. The theory of change that was developed by Firelight and CBO grantee-partners was that –

- Local community-based organizations (CBOs) with improved capacity (resources, networks, and skills) would be more effective at providing services and programs and working with their communities to reduce child marriage.
- These CBOs would in turn effectively and efficiently respond to child marriage, sexual exploitation and abuse in the communities they interfaced with and encourage their communities to do the same.
- CBOs that holistically address the root causes of child marriage (create awareness in communities about the dangers of child marriage and pregnancies, equip parents with skills for good parenting children, sensitize people about child rights, and teach children in schools about issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights) in children/youth, the families, and communities as well as the child protection systems of government, will encourage social systems change in respect to child marriage.

## The child marriage situation in Shinyanga

### About Shinyanga

According to the 2012 national census Shinyanga was having a total population of 1,534,808 people of whom 750,841 are males and 783,967 are females. It had a population growth rate of 2.1; 261,732 households with an average size of 5.9 people; and 2.6 sleeping rooms. Of these households, 178,778 (68%) are male headed while 80,203 (31%) are female headed.

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood, contributing about 75% to the Shinyanga Regional economy and employing about 90 % of the working population. Other economic activities include mining, livestock, trading, industry and transportation.

### Child marriage and early pregnancy in Shinyanga

Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) of 2004 as showed that 36 % of girls between 20 and 24 years old had married before the age of 18. Child marriage is most common in rural areas, although it also occurs in towns and cities, with large differences across regions. In Tanzania, child marriage and sexual abuses affect girls more than boys. In the Shinyanga Region, child marriage was estimated at 59 % at the start of initiative – ranking the region number one in the whole of Tanzania. This was followed by its neighbor Tabora at 58 %, Mara 55 %, and Dodoma 51 %.

Child marriage and adolescent pregnancy are often linked. In many cases, child marriage is a driver of early pregnancy however, in other cases, marriage follows a girl's often unwanted pregnancy. Data from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)<sup>1</sup> provides that by 2016 one in four Tanzanian girls aged 15-19 is either pregnant or has given birth.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://tanzania.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/factsheet\\_teenage%20pregnancy\\_UNFPA\\_14oct.pdf](https://tanzania.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/factsheet_teenage%20pregnancy_UNFPA_14oct.pdf)

## Underlying causes and drivers of child marriage

Child marriage in Tanzania is most often driven by a range of challenges including poverty, the payment of dowry, child labor, adolescent pregnancy, child abuse and neglect, as well as limited access to education and employment opportunities for the whole population but especially for women and girls. It is also critical to understand what role patriarchy and gender power/dominance as well as other aspects such as adultism and control over girls' sexuality mean for child marriage.

## Economic conditions

According to 2015 Tanzania mainland poverty assessment report by World bank group, at national level, 3 out of 10 children in Tanzania experience deprivation poverty, living in households below the poverty line. Shinyanga is among the relatively least developed regions in Tanzania. Approximately 36% of the population lives below poverty line. In Shinyanga, it is estimated that 78-89% of all children experience deprivation in 3 or more poverty dimensions notably protection, housing, water and sanitation. 50% of children aged 0-17 years are deprived of education at some level. School enrollment in primary schools is 67.9% with high dropout rates – especially of girls - from primary and secondary schools (estimated at 500 per year). The link between child marriage and poverty has been well demonstrated. Low income countries and families have few resources to support more healthy alternatives for girls, such as schooling. In settings as diverse as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, India and Malaysia, families cite economic reasons for marrying girls early. Low income families may see a daughter as an economic burden to be shed through marriage as early as possible. In families with limited resources, child marriage is often seen as a way to provide for their daughter's future. Similarly, economic gains through the marriage of a daughter may also motivate poor families. In South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, marrying girls can also often be paired with exchanging wealth between the bride's and groom's families—in the form of a dowry or a bride price.

## Water

Water scarcity is a big problem in the semi-arid areas of Kishapu especially in the areas occupied by the Taturu ethnic groups. In these areas, people and animals share the same water sources. Child marriage and pregnancies were associated with long distances girls walked to draw water from dams and rivers approximated to be about 10 km a return journey. This made them tired and at risk of being harmed and also kept them out of school.

## Cultural norms

In Shinyanga the role of cultural norms, beliefs and traditions are also very strong and great determinants of child marriage. For example, child marriage is a practice historically embedded in the culture of the Sukuma people, an ethnic group which predominantly occupies the region. According to AfriChild progress evaluation conducted in Shinyanga, it is believed that a girl aged 10 and 11 years is ripe for marriage. When a girl reaches 14 years and she is not married then she is considered to be "too old" to get married. For example, a girl aged about 13 years may fetch about 50 heads of cattle while a girls aged 18 may fetch 15-20 heads of cattle. In addition, the Sukuma do not always value education for girls because it keeps girls in school for long, making them "grow old."

For other communities, when a girl child "gets old" (i.e. - completes standard /primary seven at school) it is feared she will look big and attract more men that will impregnate her.

Girls are also perceived as a source of wealth. Girls are alleged to impoverish the family when kept in school for too long because at the end they “will still leave the biological family and go on to be of more benefit to their husbands.” Parents do not want to invest in girls’ education because the more a parent invests the less he/she expects back.

Child marriage is also often utilized to cover the perceived “shame” of an out-of-wedlock pregnancy. It is feared that if a girl gets pregnant outside wedlock, she will bring shame to the family. There is an economic element as well – as such a girl also fetches fewer cows in “bride price” than a younger girl.

Colloquially, while impregnation of girls under age 14 is taken seriously; but those above are not. They are considered “grown-ups.”

Boys are also often keen to get married early to obtain respect from the community or to obtain prestige or alternatively to control a woman because this is considered to be an achievement by some tribes.

Tradition also plays a part.

*If you try to stop the arranged child marriage by the husband, he would remind you about the dowry he gave your parents when he was marrying you and that the cows given to marry the mother were an investment to be recovered by the daughter’s dowry. (FGD women Mondo ward as part of the progress evaluation conducted by AfriChild).*

“White skinned” (brown/fair skin complexion) girls were believed to be more at risk of being married off early.

Finally, child labor and female genital mutilation are also pathways to child marriage.

### Legal questions surrounding the age of marriage

Tanzania’s Marriage Act of 1971 sets the minimum marriage age for girls at 15 with parental consent, and 18 for boys. It permits the marriage of 14-year-old children when a court is satisfied that special, although unspecified, circumstances exist. In a landmark 2016 decision, a Tanzanian high court ruled these provisions unconstitutional, and directed the government to raise the legal age of marriage to 18 years for both girls and boys. The Tanzania government appealed the decision, but in 2019, Tanzania’s Court of Appeal upheld the 2016 High Court ruling. We are yet to see a formal amendment to the Marriage Act to realize this change.

### Substantial numbers of single-parent households

Because of the instability of systemic government support for families, single-parent households are often associated with poverty. The progress evaluation conducted by AfriChild also came up with similar findings. Poverty in Shinyanga is especially prevalent in single headed and grand-parenting/kinship care families. Single parenthood is a phenomenon reported to be about 70% in Shinyanga Municipality.

### Gender based violence

Communities reported the existence of violence in homes and also in schools. Nationally, GBV stands at 78% for married women aged 15-45 years. GBV leads to marital breakdowns and abandonment of children. GBV was reported to happen around harvest time when men had

money. They completely neglect their families leaving the burden of care of children to women alone. Conflicts and fights of parents made some children feel insecure and were mentioned as reasons for failure to attend school. Therefore, GBV may be a pathway for child marriage.

### Poor quality education

While education is the best alternative choice to early marriage, its quality is not attractive enough for children to keep in school. Despite the government's best intentions to enroll all Tanzanian children in school, one systemic impact has been the overcrowding and subsequent lowering of quality learning in school. Schools across the nation – and also in Shinyanga – are reported to be overcrowded with 300 pupils being taught by one teacher. Classrooms in some schools lacked desks and amenities to attract children to keep in school. Some schools lacked latrines, rooms and water for girls to manage their hygiene during menstruation. This challenge has been further compounded by the Tanzanian government disincentivizing parents and communities from contributing to their schools. This challenged teaching and learning leads to many negative outcomes –

- School is not motivating for students or teachers
- Cognitive, social and emotional development is harder
- The quality of the learning is poorer - some students were reported to complete primary education without the ability to read and write even their names

Corporal punishment in schools and the unquestioning reverence with which the community holds teachers also presented challenges. In addition to commonly reported corporal punishment, when such problems were reported to community leaders but they were not felt to be acted upon because cultural elevation of teachers is predominant. Parents were equally powerless and not organized to enter into dialogue with schools' leadership to solve these problems.

Overall, in relation to child marriage, this poor education system discourages parents from keeping their children in school and keeping children out of school is a pathway to child marriage and pregnancy.

The existence of poverty also means that families cannot meet the education needs of their children such as such as bicycles for girls who stay far from schools, and scholastic materials such as books, pens, and uniforms.

### Legal prohibition on girls returning to school following pregnancy

Tanzania adheres to a school ban that discriminates against pregnant students, adolescent mothers, and married girls. While Tanzanian officials have often argued that they do not have a policy that expressly says pregnant or married girls cannot go to school, the expulsion of pregnant girls from public schools is permitted under Tanzania's education regulations, which state that "the expulsion of a pupil from school may be ordered where a pupil has committed an offence against morality" or "entered into wedlock." The policy does not explain what offenses against morality are, but school officials often interpret pregnancy as such an offense. The government has vigorously supported a ban on pregnant students returning to both primary and secondary school and vowed to uphold it throughout his term. In recent years, an official from the Home Affairs Minister threatened to rescind the registration of groups advocating for the education of teenage mothers. Further, the authorities have also arrested some schoolgirls for becoming pregnant and harassed their families. According to Human Rights Watch posted April

24, 2020<sup>2</sup>. It is estimated that before COVID-19 up to 8,000 students were forced to drop out of school each year in Tanzania because of this ban.

In addition to limiting girls' right to education, the ban's enforcement also often abuses a range of girls' rights. For example – many schools practice forced pregnancy testing of adolescent girls upon their return to school each year/term. And if a girl is found to be pregnant, there is a widespread and deeply entrenched practice of expelling pregnant girls.

### Gender norms and expectations

As in any society, power over women and girls as well as misogyny plays a role in child marriage in Shinyanga and manifests itself in different ways. In addition to many of the cultural norms outlined for girls above, some other examples are –

Senior officials in Tanzania's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology have openly stated that the ban on pregnant girls returning to school is to prevent girls from becoming pregnant in the first place – placing the blame solely on the girl. Human Rights Watch reports government officials saying that allowing pregnant girls to remain in school will normalize out-of-wedlock pregnancy, absolve the girls of punishment, and create a “domino effect” by which more girls become pregnant. Not only does this place the blame on girls, such arguments are not grounded in any authoritative studies.

In a further encroachment on their rights and self-agency, Tanzanian officials routinely subject girls to forced pregnancy testing as a disciplinary measure and permanently expel those who are pregnant. Mandatory pregnancy testing itself is a serious infringement of girls' rights to privacy, equality, and autonomy, and is a deep exercise of power against girls.

Women reported to the evaluators and to the CBOs that they continued to feel powerlessness to say no to child marriage when proposed by fathers. They also felt they were powerless to reverse the decisions of their husbands.

The evaluators confirmed that there is still a lot of gender inequality in homes and powerlessness of women unable to influence decisions that affect them and their children.

Power dynamics meant that reporting of defilement cases occurring in homes and also schools was not effectively handled as some mothers preferred an apology from an abusive relative to prompt reporting for the girl to obtain medical treatment such as an HIV prophylaxis.

Use of any methods of family planning is low at 24.1% in Shinyanga compared to the national contraceptive prevalence rate of 38.1%.

### Child sexual abuse

There were reported sexual abuses for both girls and boys in homes and schools.

Sodomy of young boys by bigger boys was common when they went to graze animals. Normally, when boys were sodomized they kept quiet but developed psychosocial problems.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/24/tanzania-q-ban-pregnant-girls-and-world-bank-education-loan>



Sexual abuse of young girls was also reported. Some of the culprits were bodabodas and daladalas (bicycle transporters) were used by sex abusers to transport children to culprits. They also engaged in sexual and physical abuse of children.

Sexual abuse was also done by teachers and other children themselves.

Another reported problem for girls – witchdoctors advise their clients that to get rich they need to have sex with a virgin girl. These superstitions are deeply abusive of girls.

### Other child rights abuses

Most Tanzanian parents are loving, thoughtful, caring and strong but – as in any society – children's rights abuses (other than child marriage) were identified as present in Shinyanga. Some of these abuses might lead directly to child marriage but others may indirectly contribute to negative perceptions of the rights of the child. Some of the reported abuses of children's rights included –

- Children were denied food by step parents and also biological parents when the children made mistakes.
- Both boys and girls were given heavy punishment in farming and animal keeping families, and corporal punishments.
- Children were not given an opportunity to express themselves on what they needed or what they wanted to do. Children were still not permitted to express themselves and participate in decision making during problem analysis and solution at family level.
- Children with disability are still hidden in the homes - isolated and discriminated.
- Physical violence/corporal punishment in schools was common (despite being contrary to existing policy) and took the form of severe beatings of pupils and students.
- Cruelty against children such as burning a child's body parts when she/he made a mistake.
- Boys and girls defiled in in their homes and schools.
- Severe corporal punishment of children by families.
- Abandonment of families by fathers.
- Abandonment of children by parents.
- Boys forced to drop out of school due to parents requiring them to engage in production – agriculture, livestock keeping, working in diamond mining sites and small businesses.
- Prioritization of income over children's rights.

### Collateral impact of the punishment for child marriage

Although fear of being arrested and imprisoned for as many as 30 years has potentially led to reduced child marriage, reporting of child abuse cases and the related punishment has actually created many collateral risks. These include –

- Hatred of children by parents when the children report abuse in home and/or planned child marriages. The parents threatened to kill the children or bewitch them if they continued to report.
- Hatred of and threats to teachers who reported family abuse or children at risk of child marriages.
- The severe laws do not protect future children and families and indeed risk the possibility of creating another generation of single mothers and children without fathers.
- Fear of punishment can drive the practice of child marriage underground.
- Fear of punishment often leads to victims and culprits of child marriage and pregnancy cases settling outside court.
- Fear of punishment can lead to girls denying being pregnant to let the culprit free.

- Fear of punishment can lead some parents to hide their pregnant/married girls or to shift the home completely.
- “The parents of the abused child will hate you and so we are afraid to report other families” (FGD Women group Buchambi, Mondo ward).

### Challenges in the process to report child marriages, pregnancies and abuse

The process of reporting a child marriage or pregnancy or sexual assault is a complicated one –

- Reports of child abuse are commonly reported by neighbors to the family of the abused child and also reported to the village chairperson.
- In turn the chairperson reports the case to the village child protection committee.
- The child protection committee takes the case to the nearest police.
- The police refer the case to the police gender desk or a bigger police station for arrest, subsequent prosecution, and court proceedings.
- In the case of a child defilement, the first step is to go police to obtain a police form number 3 (PF3) which the victim then takes to hospital for verification of defilement. The filled form is then taken back to the police for filing the case and prosecution. (It should be noted that the government has since starting steps to correct this by establishing one stop centers where all the service providers are in one place.)

In addition to the multi-stage process itself, some of the major challenges that continue to present themselves vis a vis reporting child marriage include corruption and cover-up. In Firelight’s experience – for example - the corrupt nature of the police was openly cited as discouraging reporting and ability of girls to obtain justices in cases of sexual abuse and other child rights violations.

QUOTE “There are those who are sexually abused; however, the case may be taken to police but a few days the culprit bribes the officers and is let free. And once the police receives the money, they tell the culprit who reported him. So the people are afraid to report to police because is it not trustworthy and cannot assure you of your safety and anonymity” (FGD Women group Buchambi, Mondo ward – AfriChild’s Progress Evaluation).

It is important to note however that despite this challenge, some cases are still reported to police, successfully go through courts of law and are sentenced.

However, corruption is not just limited to the police – it manifests itself in many different ways –

- A reporting this process is intercepted by bribing the police to drop the charges
- Sometimes it is the parents who are bribed and they fail to turn up to witness in courts of law leading to dismissal of the case.
- Some parents bribe head teachers not to enroll their children in school which then enables the child to continue working and/or be married.
- If a child marriage/pregnancy case involves a rich and poor family, the rich person buys off the poor family and the poor parents shift the girl far away, cover up the pregnancy, fail to disclose the sexual partner or hide the marriage.
- Where a pregnancy involves incest, girls always try to cover up the relative on whom they depend for survival.

## Community factors that protect and support children's well-being in Shinyanga

Annual community dialogues, as well as ongoing engagement with communities, enabled CBO grantee-partners to identify the protective factors in their community that support children's wellbeing and safety. Separate discussions were held with female and male children – older and younger children, as well as adults.

Community members – both children and adults – described important factors in the home that support children's wellbeing. These included a positive socio-emotional climate – such as supportive relationships, security, and positive parent behavior; along with physical aspects of the environment such as lighting, covered wells, cleanliness. Community members also described specific actions that could be taken to improve the home environment. These primarily centered around educating parents and community members on child rights and child protection, the risks to children's education when they spend too much time on chores/labor, gender equity, skillful parenting, supporting children with disabilities, and the risks of early marriage and early parenthood. Respondents also recommended the provision of basic support to children, particularly orphans and marginalized children.

Children and adults also discussed the characteristics of supportive school environments: cleanliness, safety, and supportive and effective approaches to teaching and learning. Community members specific actions that could be taken to improve the school environment. These focused on the provision of basic resources such as food, specialized teachers, water supply, etc., and teacher training on topics such as corporal punishment, sexual reproductive health education, supporting children with disabilities, and gender equity, as well as extracurricular life skills, child protection, and child rights. It was also recommended that teachers be held accountable for their duties such as attending classes, and for their transgressions such as sexual misconduct. Finally, general suggestions were made around improving the classroom environment and routine and improving relationships and communication between teachers, students, and parents.

Community members also discussed how other community spaces – such as playgrounds, markets, and alleys/roads could support (or harm) children's safety and wellbeing. Across all the different spaces, factors identified as supporting children's wellbeing spanned three major domains: economic sufficiency (basic needs being met, adequate resources and facilities); positive social-emotional climates; and recreational activities. The greatest emphasis seemed to be on positive social-emotional climates, including supportive and loving relationships and interactions. These findings are consistent with research from around the world about social relationships being key for children's development and wellbeing. This finding also highlights that even in situations of extreme disadvantage, positive social-emotional climates and supportive relationships can play a protective role for children's wellbeing.

Finally, in a few of the groups, participants were asked to suggest actions that would make the community more supportive for children's wellbeing. Respondents focused on raising awareness and educating community members, including parents, on the risks in early marriages and early pregnancies, on the risks in child labor, and on child rights and child

protection. More broadly, participants advocated for laws to protect children – including laws to protect girls from early marriage and laws to punish those sexually abusing children.

## About Firelight's Work in Shinyanga

### Process of identifying CBO partners

Firelight moved away from the traditional approach of inviting for applications and reviewing the proposals and selecting partners based on the strengths of their proposals only. Potential partners were invited to submit Expression of Interest for partnership. These were reviewed and shortlisting was done based on demonstration of community groundedness. Onsite visits were conducted to the organizations that were shortlisted. The visits included having discussions with the staff, management and the board members to understand the organization and the work they do. The ones that were selected after the onsite visits were invited to submit proposals for funding. This approach helped us to reach out to small CBOs that would have otherwise been left out if we had just used the call of proposal to select partners.

### Firelight's process

Firelight initiative in Shinyanga began with a series of “community dialogues” which supported children, youth, families and community members to express their own perspective on child and youth rights, safety and protection in the community. One of the major challenges identified by internal and external informants was the high levels of child marriage in the community. Firelight's these qualitative participatory exercises enabled the CBOs to engage the community, children and adolescents, to inform their programming and – because it has continued throughout the initiative – to inform and help guide adaptation of their programming.

Following the community dialogues, Firelight provided CBOs with coordination, capital, intimate mentoring, networking, and best practice guidance in programming, monitoring, learning and evaluation, and capacity building.

Generally, Firelight supported the CBOs in two major ways –

With funds, networking and support to run their own programs in the community and to engage critical stakeholders from children to families to government

With organizational and programming capacity support for the CBOs

Specifically, Firelight provided grantee partners with a combination of -

- financial grants for organizational capacity and programs;
- CBO organizational assessment;
- customized 1:1 Firelight-led mentoring in organizational development and child-centered programming;
- facilitated local network building and learning amongst the grantee partners;
- specialized outside technical support in specific areas of need, such as social accountability and transition and sustainability training
- local mentoring from Firelight's Lead Partner;
- learning and evaluation frameworks that include community dialogues conducted by the CBOs themselves and learning questions that are evaluated by Firelight
- program model documentation for sharing among the grantees and with a global audience;

- grants to support the Department of Social Welfare to strength the case management and data management systems at district level
- grants and support for CBOs to engage in Tanzania's national conversation to secure legislation that prevents a child being married before age 18; and
- mentoring to carry out annual participatory community dialogues, enabling our grantees to track changes in community perceptions and realities and allowing them to adapt their program models accordingly.
- Exposure to regional and international forums on child rights issues where the partners made presentations and engaged with other child rights players. For example, three partners were supported to submit abstracts, make presentations, and participate in the Regional Psycho-social Support Initiative Regional Conference. Another partner was supported to participate alongside Firelight staff at an international symposium catalyzing the #ShiftThePower movement in global development which seeks to move resources, power, and decision-making closer to communities and those impacted directly by issues of concern.

### Firelight's grantmaking

Firelight used two models for grant-making: the direct granting and sub-granting or community granting. Firelight directly disbursed funds to five CBOs namely Agape, ICS, RAFIKI, TAI and OPE. Sub-granting was done by the lead partners - ICS and Agape. Agape sub-granted to three CBOs namely: WEADO, CHEDEP, and YWCA; while ICS sub-granted to four CBOs namely: YWL, TVMC, PWWCO, and Mkombozi. In 2020, the subgrating arrangements were changed and TAI took over the community grant maker role from ICS.

CBOs planned and budgeted individually and the finances granted to each varied in amount. The grants ranged from US\$10,000- 20,000 annually for the CBOs that obtained funding directly from Firelight. CBOs that obtained their grants through sub-granters got an average of US\$10,000 as they were often smaller institutions.

As a result of the community strengthening, some CBOs who started off being sub grantees have since become direct recipients of grants. A case to note is that of TAI, who started off as a subgrantee but have moved to be a community grant maker and is now sub-granting 3 CBOs.

### Firelight's capacity building for CBOs

Firelight also provided capacity building to CBO grantee-partners both individually and collectively across a range identified needs, such as –

- Organizational capacity in child protection including child protection policies, case management systems and referrals
- Skills and approaches for building community capacity
- Internal programming capacity strengthened – for example – through learning and evaluation or systems analysis or advocacy
- Strategic planning and financial management
- Improvement in organizational management
- Program and organizational sustainability
- Training on relevant national laws and policies such as the Marriage Law and the National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children in Tanzania
- Enhanced linkages such as –
  - o Techniques for advocating for child rights and child protection at district and national levels
  - o Approaches to assist CBOs and community structures to work together

- Ways to collaborate with government to track data on safety of children

Firelight also employed the co-leadership and support of two more mature organizations to serve as “Lead Partners” to the cluster of grantees – helping with intimate, local day-to-day capacity building and sub-granting to much smaller organizations.

### Overall reach of initiative – beneficiaries and geographical areas reached by CBO grantee-partners

Grantee-partners covered a wide geography in their programming, including –

- Shinyanga Rural
- Shinyanga Municipal
- Kishapu
- Kahama

For a detailed breakdown of geographic areas covered, see Annex B.

Thousands of beneficiaries were reached by the grantee-partners over the years of initiative’s implementation – supported in both direct and intense as well as indirect ways. The table below represents reached beneficiaries in 2019 as a sample year.

Grantee-partners	Direct beneficiaries		Indirect beneficiaries		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
TAI	232	237	75	65	609
WEADO	142	110	1,001	908	2,161
OPE	1,007	1,180	2,175	2,251	6,613
Rafiki SDO	103	127	205	235	670
TVMC	1,579	2,233	2,241	3,446	9,499
YWCA	146	146	1,035	1,075	2,402
YWL	460	847	2,034	3,382	6,723
Agape	2,509	2,614	1,192	1,657	7,972
CHIDEP	49	101	861	928	1,939
ICS	577	81	1,250	1,170	3,078
PWWCO	340	197	727	983	2,247
Mkombozi	404	456	973	979	2,812
CHIDEP	49	101	861	928	1,939
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>7,597</b>	<b>8,430</b>	<b>14,630</b>	<b>18,007</b>	<b>48,664</b>
	<b>16,027</b>		<b>32,637</b>		

A sample year breakdown is as follows -

In the 2019 implementation year of the initiative, grantee-partners reached a total of 16,027 direct beneficiaries (7,597 M, 8,430 F). Indirect beneficiaries reached were 32,637 (14,630 M, 18,007 F).

CBO grantee-partners made great strides in reaching children, parents, community members, teachers, school officials, and other key stakeholders. This includes parents trained on skillful parenting, child protection, and family budgeting, fathers reached by forums promoting male involvement in child protection, awareness-raising through activities such as cinema shows, radio talk shows, school bonanzas, school clubs, printed literature and materials, and commemoration of international events. Other beneficiaries were children who were reached through school clubs and SRHR education work, enrollment of children in vocational training colleges and supported in starting IGAs – whereby gained income enables them to meet their siblings’ scholastic needs, children from poor families who were supported with school fees and materials, and female caregivers who were trained on starting, managing, and improving IGAs.

Furthermore, a total of 113 child protection committees (CPCs) were formed and trained as per the below breakdown of CPCs that CBOs worked with at the village level as of August 2018.

<b>CBO</b>	<b>No. of CPC worked with at village level</b>	<b>No. of CPC the CBO helped to create</b>	<b>No. of the CPC Existing at the start of FF’s Initiate</b>
OPE	28	0	28
YWL	6	0	0
ICS	21	0	21
TVMC	8	6	2
TAI	4	0	4
YWCA	2	0	3
RAFIKI	16	3	13
AGAPE	17	15	2
CHIDEP	27	0	27
MKOMBOZI	5	3	2
PWWCO	10	0	7
WEADO	10	6	4
<b>Total CPCs</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>113</b>

Source: AfriChild’s Process Evaluation

## CBO grantee-partners’ program objectives and models

### Summary

Firelight’s 12 community-based grantees deliberately varied in their strategies and approaches, forming a complementary, integrated attempt to drive out child marriage from the region.

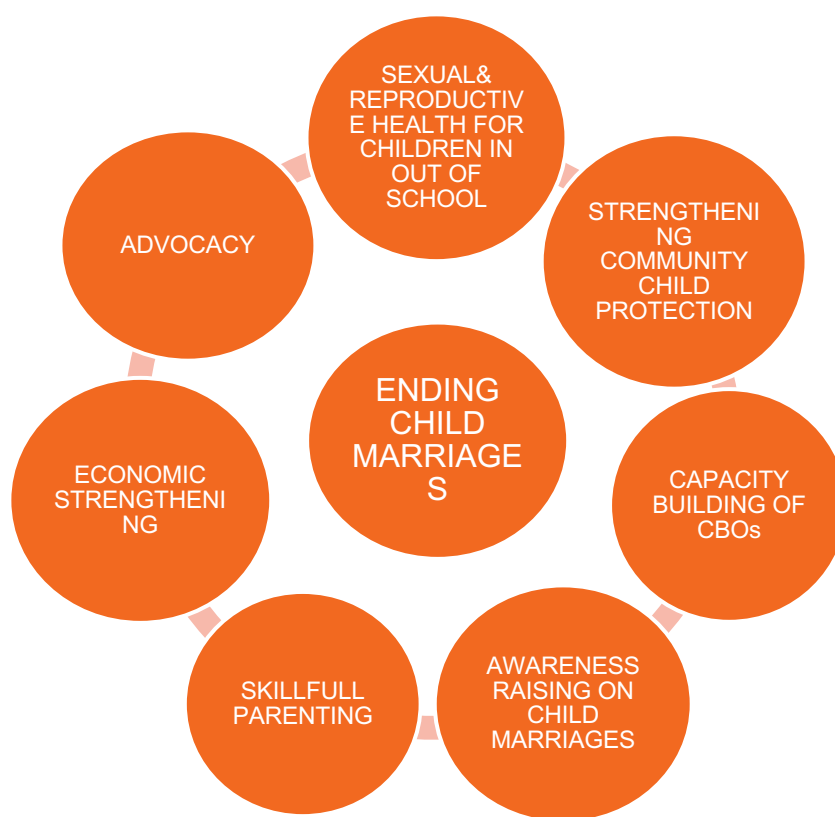
The approaches that the CBOs employed were both preventative and responsive and ranged from individual girl rescues, education, economic livelihood promotion, to cash transfers to skillful parenting training for parents. They also included training for adolescent girls and boys (both in and out of school) on sexual and reproductive health so that they can make informed decisions that safeguard their futures, creating safe spaces for girls and supporting girls with social and emotional counseling that is critical to their increased agency.

CBO grantees also strengthened community child protection systems by training child protection teams at village, ward, and district levels and engaged the government on many levels to support child protections and reductions in child marriage. CBO grantee-partners also developed a great deal of traction in positively influencing the institutional structures that

surround children and adolescent girls - those that are critical in the fight against child marriage - from local child protection committees to district officials to the national level debate about child marriage.

Specifically, their approaches included but were not limited to, the following -

- economic strengthening for families
- psychosocial support for children rescued from child marriage
- facilitating families counselling sessions and reunification for girls withdrawn from child marriages
- social and emotional support for adolescent girls
- safe spaces for girls
- vocational support for children rescued from or at risk of child marriage
- effective parenting assistance for families
- cultural awareness raising
- law-enforcement interventions
- strengthening local child protection teams
- strengthening government data management and case management systems at district level
- establishing clubs for children in schools
- training teachers on child protection
- engaging government and local leaders for structural change





For a detailed analysis of each grantee-partner's program models, see Annex 1.

### Preventative approaches

Prevention took two forms –

- direct preventative activities targeted at communities, families and children
- indirect preventative activities in the form of advocacy and lobbying for more resources and enactment of relevant laws and by-laws

### Awareness raising with communities

Based on the assumption that people married off their young girls before they reached 18 years because they were ignorant of the dangers of child marriages and pregnancies on their children's future health and social economic development, CBO grantee-partners engaged in awareness creation. This took the form of information provision, education and communication (IEC).

Several approaches were used to provide IEC which was centered on child rights and the dangers of child marriages and child pregnancies and other issues such as the right of girls to go to school, stay in school, and complete their education. These included use of public community rallies, radios, films, use of T-shirts, banners, leaflets, and brochures with child rights.

Four CBOs namely ICS, RAFIKI, TAI and TVMC used public gatherings to sensitize communities about the dangers of child marriage. They were assisted by ward and district leaders who gave public rallies political and cultural legitimacy. Agape and TAI used films on the dangers of child marriage in their operational communities, upon which they built community dialogue sessions.

WEADO, CHIDEP and OPE provided IEC to the general public using radios particularly Radio Faraja. OPE staff reported that the approach to community sensitization was by use of the radio whereby social welfare officers and children went on air to talk about issues that affect children. CHIDEP reported that the staff managed to conduct TV programs on child marriage.

### Awareness raising with parents

Awareness creation about the dangers of child marriage and pregnancy was done with not only with entire communities but also with parents more directly. In Tanzania, it is mandatory for every citizen to belong to an economic group for easy access to government loans so all CBOs met the parents in their saving and credit groups in their operational geographical areas.

Other approaches used to reach parents were training one parent in an area who was expected in turn to go back and teach her friends and neighbors. This method was used by RAFIKI.

### Skillful parenting

Skillful Parenting sessions were also another critical tool used by grantee-partners as a preventative measure. Using a curriculum developed by grantee-partner ICS, all CBOs provided this method of providing both IEC along with parenting tips and support to parents. The Skillful Parenting model developed by ICS worked in conjunction with the Tanzanian National Plan of Action to end Violence against Women and Children. Several aspects of parenting were addressed in the sessions -

- family relations and their influence on child development

- roles and responsibilities of a skillful parent
- stages of development of a child and needs
- self-esteem and self-care
- values and discipline
- communication
- child protection
- family budgeting

Other issues covered during the training of parents included risk factors and situations that made children vulnerable to sexual abuse, such as sending their children to shops late at night. The parents were also advised to create time to talk with their children. Skillful parenting sessions with men's' groups addressed issues like: fatherhood, the goodness of a father, how to protect the family, how to take care of the children, and how to support children in schools. The training of parents was largely done by the trained CBO staff and the community facilitators.

### Economic empowerment of families

Economic empowerment was undertaken to address poverty, one of the leading causes of child marriage in Shinyanga. Eight CBOs were engaged in different activities of economic empowerment of communities and especially the poor families. They were: YWL, TVMC, OPE, PWWCO, TAI, RAFIKI, Mkombozi and Agape. The eight CBOs used four strategies to fight poverty, including -

- Provision of scholastic material support to children from poor families
- Provision of seed grants (IGAs) to vulnerable families
- Provision of entrepreneurial skills for vulnerable families
- Support for vocational skills development for children from vulnerable families
- Formation of savings and credit groups in communities

#### Provision of scholastic materials to children from vulnerable families

The need to provide scholastic materials and other basics to children from poor families was based on the understanding that although education was free in primary and secondary schools in Tanzania, absence of these materials could make a child drop out of school. Dropping out of school was one known path to child marriage.

QUOTE If a girl has no shoes, for example, she has to wear sandals something that makes her uncomfortable so she stops schooling. Lack of pads to use for menstruation can also make a girl drop out of school. Girls feel ashamed when they bleed at school and they get dirty. She fears going back to school the next day. For us girls, there is nothing that hurts like the menstrual blood to be seen by men. Girls who cannot afford to buy pads may decide to get men to marry them. (FGD for out of school girls at Bizimanta- WEADO – AfriChild's Progress Evaluation, 2018)

Six CBOs – Mkombozi, PWWCO, YWCA, RAFIKI, OPE and TAI - provided scholastic materials such as exercise books, pens, and menstrual pads to children from poor families to keep their children from dropping out of school. For most CBOs, the process of identifying vulnerable children involved largely school teachers. Mkombozi also had its board members visiting the homes of the children and verifying the economic status of the parents.

### Provision of seed grants to families and entrepreneurial skills development

This involved provision of income generating activities (IGAs) as well as capacity building in business management to families in need. Some of the seed materials provided to families for

their IGAs included chicken, cotton, and goats. It was anticipated that once the family had a source of income, it would be able to support the girl child in school on a sustainable basis and deter early marriage.

QUOTE The project enabled poor parents to earn an income to support their children. The government will not provide food, uniform and exercise books. But if the parents have a harvest from farms and chicken, they could sell them and buy school materials and children could stay in school. (Board members OPE).

OPE, PWWCO, YWL, Mkombozi, TVMC and TAI provided IGA materials and support. Young Women Leaders (YWL) also did so, targeting single young mothers, most of who were victims of child marriage and had moved out their marital unions.

### Vocational training for vulnerable children

Four CBOs - AGAPE, OPE, RAFIKI and YWL - encouraged and supported some children from families in need to do vocational training. The reason for sending children from families in need to vocational schools was that earning an income after completing vocational training would reduce vulnerability and a desire for to marry early for survival purposes. YWL provided this support to young single parent mothers while AGAPE provided this support to girls who had been rescued from child marriages or the threat thereof. The vocational training was obtained from community level institutions.

### Formation of savings and credit groups in communities

Three CBOS – PWWCO, TVMC, and AGAPE - were involved in the mobilization of community members - especially women - to form savings and credit groups to access government loans. The CBOs also encouraged savings. For example, TVMC – reported helping two groups of women to write their constitution, register and open a bank account. The two groups had saved a total amount of 560,000 Tanzania Shillings by the time the AfriChild evaluation was conducted.

### Engagement with children in schools

Understanding that children too needed to be supported in the fight against child marriage, the CBO grantee-partners undertook preventive activities with children in primary and secondary schools in their operational areas. They covered a total of 54 secondary schools and 133 primary schools. The assumptions behind provision of IEC was that once children's knowledge was improved with the right information then they will be empowered to defend themselves and refuse the demands made by parents to marry and leave school prematurely.

Engagement with children involved provision of IEC in three broad topical areas: a) child rights, b) dangers of child marriage and pregnancy and c) sexual and reproductive health and rights. All the CBOs addressed the first two topics while only 5 addressed sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The CBOs that addressed SRHR were: PWWCO, TAI, OPEC, YWCA, YWL, and AGAPE.

Broadly, the topics discussed included –

- the meaning of a child
- effects of child marriage and early pregnancies
- risk factors for unwanted pregnancies
- the psychosocial and economic impacts of unwanted pregnancies

- how to protect themselves against unwanted pregnancies and other harmful community family and school practices
- child rights vis a vis child labor
- HIV /AIDS issues
- child responsibilities
- parent and community responsibilities
- the need for parents to obtain birth certificates for their children
- covered consequences of child marriage such as complications during child birth such as death, of mother and baby, fistula etc. for persons who deliver when too young

Five models were used to provide IEC to school children. These included –

- school clubs
- use of matrons and patrons of schools who were trained by the CBOs and in turn trained or supervised the school clubs
- CBO staff themselves moving from class to class to teach children on child rights. This was done in conjunction with the school patrons
- government staff such as health workers or community development directly teaching of children in classes or school clubs
- hired experts such as paralegals to teach child rights

### Strengthening community child protection structures

Another major investment was in the building or strengthening of Community Child Protection Committees (CPCs) that have been rebranded and are now known as Violence against Women and Children Committees (VAWCC). CPCs are very important government-established structures that oversee child protection issues in their respective communities. The CPCs comprise of community members as well as politically elected village chairperson, the executive director who is an appointed government officer and other notable government officials such as the police, community police teachers in nearby schools. The committees are named after the name of the village or street in the urban areas. The roles and responsibilities of the child protection committees are - advocating for children's rights and particularly ensuring that children attend and complete school.

In some areas, CBO grantee-partners worked with already established CPCs and in some places they worked with the local government community development and social welfare departments to set them up.

As part of their support to the CPCs, CBOs also lobbied local governments to allocate more resources to their social welfare departments to enable them reach out to provide technical support to CPCs at ward levels. The ward level child protection committees were in turn supported to reach out to the village CPCs to improve their functioning.

### Advocacy for legal or public policy changes

The CBOs also engaged in advocacy and lobbying work to improve policies and laws at local government and national levels concerning child protection. For example, they lobbied local government to increase the budget for the social welfare department to enable them take services to the grassroots. The CBOs wanted the social welfare departments to take a more proactive role to train, mentor and support the child protection committees and effectively attend to child protection cases.

Other important areas where CBOs did advocacy work were –

- lobbying to require district councils to receive and discuss child abuse cases during their meetings
- pushing for increased reporting of child abuse cases to ward and district officers including reporting of old cases
- supporting the development of tools at local government levels to monitor child protection services
- supporting local traditional leaders to issue by-laws preventing child marriage or requiring the presentation of valid birth certificates before marriage

At national level the CBOs participated in litigation process requiring government to nullify the marriage act which required girls to marry at 15 years with consent of the parent contrary to the constitutional provisions of 18 years.

### Direct support for government

Early on in the creation of this initiative, Firelight also identified that there was no central system in Shinyanga to coordinate information on child abuse cases from the village level to district level. As a result, it was difficult to advocate for change, as there was no information that would justify the need for the increase in resources to the Social Welfare Department to support child protection teams. In 2016, Firelight gave a small grant to one CBO to strengthen Child Protection Information Management System in the Child Welfare Department in the Shinyanga Municipal area. The program was extensive – 30 government officers and other stakeholders were trained on the national case management system. As a result of this support, Shinyanga Municipal is now able to consolidate cases from lower levels and feed them into the national system.

## Responsive Approaches

### Response/treatment of survivors of child marriage

Response or treatment was another service provided by some Firelight grantee-partner CBOs to survivors of child marriage or those at risk of child marriage. Practically, response program brought girls who were married early back from their husbands, back to their parents and back to school. Children on the streets were also brought off the streets and returned to their parents and back to school. Child brides who had been arranged for marriage were rescued and marriage ceremonies cancelled. In addition, the program addressed the psychosocial needs of the victims and their families as well as social justice issues of the criminal cases of child marriage. The rescue services also aimed to restore the survivors' rights which had been violated. They also facilitated family reconciliation sessions so that rescued girls could be re-integrated back with their families.

This sub-program was largely anchored on AGAPE which had a full-service delivery structure – a legal department to pursue child marriage crimes, a hostel to accommodate rescued girls from early marriages, a school for enabling the same girls to continue with their secondary education, re-patriation counselling for girls and their families, and vocational training if the girls were not able to return to school. All of the other CBOs which came across planned child marriages referred the cases to AGAPE for social and legal management. CBOS like YWL and YWCA also targeted survivors of child marriage – the single young mothers who had married but separated. Often these mothers found it difficult to settle back at home if – for example – the family felt shame or the family had already spent the dowry paid by the son-in law and were afraid he would demand back his dowry.

## Reflections on Impact

### Impact on children, parents, and the community

#### Quantitative data reported by CBO grantee-partners

CBO grantee-partners, having received capacity building in monitoring, evaluation, and learning, began in 2019 to more systematically collect data on outcome indicators, including knowledge, attitudes, and practices around child marriage in their community. These data demonstrate important gains in the perspectives and practices of different stakeholder groups. See details in the table below.

Grantee-partner	Learning objective/ questions/ outcome indicator	Results
Agape AIDS Control Program (ACP)	To what extent has Agape ACP increased awareness on ending child marriage among the people in Didia Ward?	94.8% of girls and boys believe that it is harmful to conceive or get married under the age of 18 years.
		94% of parents say that they will prohibit engagement in sexual activity and not marry their sons to girls younger than 18 years
		70.8% of men and women think that child marriage and child pregnancy should be stopped
	To what extent has Agape ACP supported the victims and survivors of child marriages/early pregnancies with alternative livelihoods in Didia ward?	45 girls reported having support to rejoin education or vocational training after being withdrawn or protected from child marriage in the period of 2018/2019
To what extent has Agape ACP through its ending child marriage/early pregnancy project, used as a platform to compel the local government authority to engage in the fight against child marriage in Didia Ward?	71% of community, traditional and religious leaders took greater actions to re-enforce enacted bylaws to end child marriage and child pregnancy and realize the rights of girls.	
Thubutu Initiative Africa (TAI)	Ideal age of marriage for girls	230/295 (78%) described the best age for marriage for girls to be between 18 and 20 years, 12% described the best age to be between 16 & 17 while only 6% claimed to be between 21 and 24 years to be the best for marriage of girls.
	Meaning of child marriage	22/25 (88%) school and out of school boys and girls explained child marriage being

		the marriage of young girls of below 18 years old
	Knowledge on disadvantage of child marriage	219/295 (74%) strongly agreed that child marriage has a lot of disadvantaged to the girls and only 39% of the respondent claimed child marriage has no any disadvantages to the girls.
	Readiness of taking measures to end child marriage	233/295 (79%) of the respondents are ready to take appropriate measures towards ending child marriage and only 13% of the respondent were not ready to take actions to end child marriage.
	Awareness of the community leaders and LGA officials on the project	13/13 (100%) community leaders and LGA officials agreed well realizing the ending child marriage project implemented by TAI at Mwalukwa village
	Impacts of the project to community leaders, religious, traditional leaders and LGA officials on new techniques to fight against child marriage	13 out of 13 (100%) of community leaders, religious, traditional leaders and LGA officials explained that the project has impacted them much with the information and techniques to fight against child marriages in Mwalukwa
Rafiki SDO (n=75)	Percentage of men and women who think that child marriage and child pregnancy should be stopped	80% of men and women reached with the survey strongly agreed that child marriage and pregnancies should be stopped
		88% of respondents said that they are not are ready to marry their daughter under the age of 18 years. This was because of the awareness education conducted in the project areas on the negative impacts of child marriage and early pregnancies
	Percentage of community, traditional and religious leaders who take greater action to re-enforce enacted by laws to end child marriage and child pregnancy and realize the rights of girls	80% of community, traditional and religious leaders actively participate in initiatives to end child marriage and pregnancies by taking action and implementing developed action plans and rules. Based on the survey conducted, Rafiki found that the community and NPA/VAWC committee's knowledge and commitment to fight child marriages is at 95%, which could be associated with the training provided by the initiative. NPA/VAWC committee actively collaborated with the community to report and handle VAC and marriage incidences that occurred in the community by advising victims and taking perpetrators to court, police station, and local authorities' office in their localities.

### *Qualitative reports of change*

We also captured qualitative learnings around how the initiative was impacting children, parents, and the community with regards to child marriage. These are described below.

### *Positive developments were achieved vis a vis the drivers of child marriage*

Several very important positive changes were reported to the evaluators in areas that are often associated with or as drivers of child marriage -

- The members of the child protection committees reported that they no longer saw infants abandoned by mothers
- Increased numbers of girls going to school
- Increased in the numbers of children who pass standard seven continue to secondary school
- The rate of teenage pregnancies is decreasing
- Reduction of defilements of girls which used to occur during traditional dances, at water wells, bushes and on the way to school and homes
- Increases in the number of girls who had left school for marriage or other reasons returning to school
- Increased overall school enrolments and completion by girls and boys in ward level government schools

### *Increased sensitivity to child marriage problems and child abuse*

Communities and children indicated to the evaluators that they were more sensitive to the problem of child marriage and child abuses. Indicators were -

- Children know about the child protection committees and where to report problems
- Neighbors were able to report child abuse cases to relevant authorities
- There was increased interest in reproductive health issues evidenced by the influx of students who visited some CBOs for more information or clarifications
- An increased habit of youths reading SRHR books
- Girls report to their matrons when refused to go to school
- The enforcement of the Child Protection Act, followed by arrests of those who marry girls below 18 years have awakened the community to the law
- Community members affirmed that they learnt that child abuse took several forms including marrying off a girl when still a child, not taking a child to school, teachers sending pupils to work in their gardens or fetch water instead of being in classes; and child beating.

### *Changes in parental, family and community behavior*

AfriChild's progress evaluation found that a number of very positive changes in parental and community behavior were noted as precursors to or adjacent to the reduction in child marriage and child abuse. These included –

- Parents who had been trained were reported to have changed their discriminatory practices where they preferred to educate boys to girls.
- Fathers were adopting practices of family budgets and organizing family meetings to discuss budgets.
- There was more involvement of family members in economic decisions of the families was reported.
- Increased expression of children's views in families was also becoming common.
- The practice of "chagulaga" (choose whom you want) reduced.
- There were reduced child harassments in families.



- Teachers followed up on children who missed school for extended periods and worked with parents to bring them back.
- Trained parents communicated more effectively with their children and made adjustments to protect them against risky situations that exposed them to sexual abuse such as collecting firewood in the evening, fetching water from a far off water sources because they had been alerted to the risky situations in the communities that led to children's sexual abuses.

Severe beatings exerted on children by teachers were reported to reduce the child's confidence leading to absenteeism from school and then child marriage. They learnt to report child abuses to authorities.

A group of men (54.5%) who attended a focus discussion group conducted in Mwaza Ward, in Shinyanga Municipality during the evaluation, confirmed that they heard the messages discouraging child marriages from the radio. Some of the messages heard on the radio appealed to parents to stop the practice of marrying off girls below 18 years for purposes of accumulating wealth. Instead parents should allow their girls to complete their education "because education cannot wait but marriage can wait."

Another example, after receiving the training from YWCA, we received a case that some months back, a boy had been sodomised by a cattle keeper of the family in the grazing area. The case was reported to police and courts and was convicted, sentenced and is now in prison. Previously, the parents would have not taken any action because the family would argue that it has nobody to take care of the cattle. They would value cattle over their family; over their own child! The abuser would be deducted his wages by a half and he stays on the job!! (Women FGD under YWCA).

### *Increased family and community economic security*

One good opportunity for families that exists in Tanzania is the government program to provide credit to people who have formed into economic groups. Community development departments are responsible for mobilizing people to form social groups which can then access government loans. Statutorily, formation of savings and credit groups in communities is the function of the community development department of local governments. But funding capacity of government social development programs is quite limited. Thus many community members were reportedly not yet members of the economic groups in villages especially the rural villages. Many communities did not have the capacity to get the paper work together including a constitution, managing registrations and opening bank accounts. Without meeting these requirements, the savings and loan group could not obtain a government loan. Assistance from the CBOs helped them to get the paperwork and seed funding they needed and they were able to get connected to the system. 80% of female caregivers who benefited from seed capital are now able to meet their children's educational needs. No cases of child marriages/pregnancies have been reported in families who have benefitted from IGA support.

### *CBO successful in their ability to influence policies and laws through advocacy work*

The advocacy work done by CBOs made some impact on existing resource allocation policies for child protection policies in local governments, and inclusion of child protection issues in district council activity agendas. The increase in funding for social welfare services in local government helped to improve child protection service delivery. In a concerted effort with other social activists, Firelight grantee-partner CBOs together with other players were able to

influence the nullification of the marriage act which allowed girls to marry at 15 years with the consent of the parent contrary to the constitutional provisions.

### *Better agency and awareness amongst adolescent girls*

It was reported that girls were aware of sexually transmitted diseases; what causes early pregnancies and its consequences. The girls know how to protect themselves. Girls have confidence in themselves and talk freely about themselves; have decision making abilities, take up personal hygiene and care for themselves better. Girls are keeping in school and some students who used to misbehave have changed. Girls who were rescued from early marriage husbands and returned home, school, or vocational training had their social development enhanced. Most female children can at least finish their primary and secondary school education without getting pregnant in some communities.

Firelight's Community Dialogues research process also consistently showed that children and adolescent girls were more aware of their rights and were able to speak out on issues of violence against them.

### *Positive outcomes from the school-based IEC interventions*

Pupils and students who were accessed IEC on child marriage and child rights reported benefiting from those sessions. They indicated that the messages helped them to protect themselves. Many were able to describe the consequences of child marriage and early pregnancies.

For example, girls from Buchambi Primary School reported that:

When a little girl gets married, she will get pregnant. The little girl gets complications because of immature biological body which in turn may tear apart and eventually the girl dies. (FGD girls Buchambi Primary School, Kishapu district).

QUOTE When girls were asked how they would respond to their parents who were trying to convince them to marry a rich man all the girls replied in the negative:

No, because I am under 18 years, it is not legal to be married.

Myself, I won't accept to such a thing because my body is not fully matured...

QUOTE Also primary school boys indicated that if asked to marry they would refuse and the reasons they would give would be:

I am still young and she is big. I have not chosen her by myself. I am a pupil and still in school. I would say no and go to police.

These types of responses indicated that the children were really empowered with information which would enable them fight for their rights and protection. Children were sensitive to the problem of child marriage and its consequences. They were aware of the causes and the tactics used by parents to get their girls out of school to go and marry. Some of the reasons given by children for child marriages in their communities were: poverty; the desire for wealth; and because parents wanted grandchildren. The children also were made aware of the dangers of child marriage by the lived experiences of their sisters who had married early. Some information on the dangers of child marriage was obtained from their science teachers. The children mentioned the CBO names which taught them about good parenting practices, abstinence from marriage, and menstruation issues.

Even boys in primary schools who had been reached by the CBOs knew the consequences of child marriage. Some of the bad things arising from child marriage which were mentioned by the boys were contraction of HIV/AIDS and pregnancies at early age. The boys in Mwantini primary knew the people to report abuses. These included the head teacher, or deputy head teacher, and teachers in situations where the latter two were not available. Senior boys in secondary schools were also sensitive to the problem of child marriage in their communities as the quotation below illustrates.

### *Increased reporting and action on child marriage and abuse*

There were increased community reporting of child abuse cases to government authorities and the child protection committees. Community members have developed new attitudes and a sense of responsibility where everyone sees oneself as having a responsibility to protect a child whether theirs or somebody else's child. Likewise, teachers were reporting cases of children they suspected not to be feeling well or behaving right.

### *Strengthened Child Protection Information Management Systems for Social Welfare Department*

Early on in the creation of this initiative, Firelight also identified that there was no central system in Shinyanga to coordinate information on child abuse cases from the village level to district level. As a result, it was difficult to advocate for change, as there was no information that would justify the need for the increase in resources to the Social Welfare Department to support child protection teams. In 2016, Firelight gave a small grant to one CBO to strengthen Child Protection Information Management System in the Child Welfare Department in the Shinyanga Municipal area. The program was extensive – 30 government officers and other stakeholders were trained on the national case management system. As a result of this support, Shinyanga Municipal is now able to consolidate cases from lower levels and feed them into the national system.

### *Strengthened community structures for the future*

The involvement of government structures in CBO activities increased the effectiveness of the CBOs interventions and sustainability as the CBOs used trained staff and approved training manuals. Likewise, the transactions should have helped local government staff to improve their practices competence for better management and control of child marriage in the future when Firelight support to CBOs ceases.

### *Improved policies and laws at local government and national levels concerning child protection*

Many CBOs were successful in their lobbying local government to increase the budget for the social welfare department to enable them take services to the grassroots. For example – when it was pointed out that OPE was being granted 52 million to do child protection activities in 6 wards yet the social welfare officers who had to implement similar activities in 25 wards were given only 3m/= the local government increased funding for social welfare departments from 3 million TZ shilling to 25 million TZ shillings in 2017/2018.

Other successful areas of advocacy work were -

- requiring district councils to receive and discuss child abuse cases during their meetings
- increased reporting of child abuse cases to ward and district officers including reporting of old cases
- development of tools to monitor government implemented activities

At national level the CBOs participated in litigation process requiring government to nullify the marriage act which required girls to marry at 15 years with consent of the parent contrary to the constitutional provisions of 18 years. The NGOs won the case in court although government appealed to higher courts of law.

### *Community facilitators empowered at all levels*

All CBOs use full time staff and volunteers to take services to the communities. Due to funding constraints and a high CBO staff attrition rates, and the need to sustain the community driven activities, the 12 CBOs introduced a sub structure of volunteers called “community facilitators”. These are residents in the communities who have been trained to undertake certain CBO activities in the villages and wards - some of the lower local government administrative units. Other CBOs like Agape also have crafted their own unique service delivery structures at the grassroots such as the community mobilisers who mobilize community members to start saving and loan groups to fight poverty.

Most CBOs with the exception of Mkombozi worked with volunteers. The cross cutting category of volunteers were the “community facilitators”. This cadre of staff was adapted by Firelight after observing high attrition rates of staff from CBOs who left after they had been trained. These left CBOs whenever CBOs run out of funds or had their grants delayed. To reduce on this inefficiency in the use of program resources, each CBO was asked to identify volunteers resident in their operational communities to undergo training and go back to offer services in their communities.

Community facilitators helped to mobilize parents and teach them skillful parenting modules. These were collectively trained by ICS on skillful parenting after which they were deployed by the CBOs in their respective operational communities. By August 2018 the Initiative had a total of 82 community facilitators. Five of these were trained in year 2015; 23 in 2016, and 54 between 2017 and 2018.

“Community based mobilisers” is another structure used largely by Agape. These are volunteers who were recruited to mobilize women in communities to form or join saving and credit groups to enable them access government loans for economic development. Economic development is relevant to ending child marriage because poverty is one established cause of child marriage in Tanzania.

### *Improved community actions to reduce child marriage*

One great achievement was the enactment of bylaws at ward level to protect children against sexual abuses; against seduction of girls by old men; prohibiting sexual relationships between girls and boys in schools and district councils accepted to develop tools to monitor implemented child protection activities.

### *Changes in family behaviors*

Members of the women’s FGDs conducted by the Evaluation Team indicated that parents who attended the trainings were able to talk to their children about risky situations and places where they could easily be defiled. They told their children not to develop rapport with strangers, nor accept gifts from them. They cautioned their children against going to secluded places and entering houses of strangers. Trained women were able to talk to children about sexuality issues something which had been considered taboo before they were trained. This information helped children to protect themselves.

We treat our children with love lest they never tell us what happens to them. We have also come to learn that a neighbor's child is also your child (FGD Women...YWCA).

Before, we considered each grown up girl as ready for marriage and bride price. My son has grown up - he should marry a girl to help in domestic chores. Training has changed our old thinking and practices (aged female participant FGD Mawaza village, Mawaza Ward).

Men who had ever attended awareness creation by the CBOs appreciated the knowledge given and it changed the way they related with girl children.

Previously the girl child could not ask her father to buy her panties or pads but now fathers are able to buy these because they are cloth like other cloth in shops. (Men FGD Mondo ward).

Men's discussion groups indicated that men were slowly changing their attitudes towards girl education. The argument that education of the girl child was more beneficial to the husband of the girl and less to the girl's biological was fading away. Men, however, noted that the long duration of schooling, and high unemployment rates make many fathers question the value of education. Men suggested that many more men could be reached through public meetings called by the village leaders.

### *Community members taking on new and increased roles as child protection service providers*

Some members of the community notably the community facilitators, leaders of the school clubs, and whistle blowers in AGAPE's response sub-program participated in the Firelight initiative as service providers. They were able to offer services after undergoing some training. Some of these volunteers were trained for satisfactorily adequate time periods, while others like members of the school clubs were provided inadequate training and follow ups. The community facilitators were given certificates but others like the school club participants and leaders were not given. Actually the school club participants requested the CBOs to provide them with certificates.

### *Community members taking on new and increased roles as information providers*

As information providers, community members provided information for the community dialogues whereby they identified child needs and problems that the Initiative needed to address; and how to address them. The community dialogues were used to design the interventions and especially in the identification of children's spaces which the Initiative targeted. This was commendable.

During this evaluation, men and women provided their own assessments of the child marriage status before and after CBO and government interventions. A discussion group of men reported that child marriage was reducing; and that in urban areas child marriage had reduced to zero. They associated the reduction to a number of factors including: a) the commitment and dedication put in by the government in terms of policies and laws; b) enforcement of existing laws including the arrest and imprisonment of culprits for long periods; c) the awareness creation about the dangers of child marriage done by CBOs particularly in urban areas; d) the improved distribution of secondary schools (built in each ward) which reduced the walking distances of students and risks.

### *Creation or support of CPCs*

This increase in functional CPCs implies an improvement in the availability and accessibility of these structures to families and children for improved reporting and protection of children

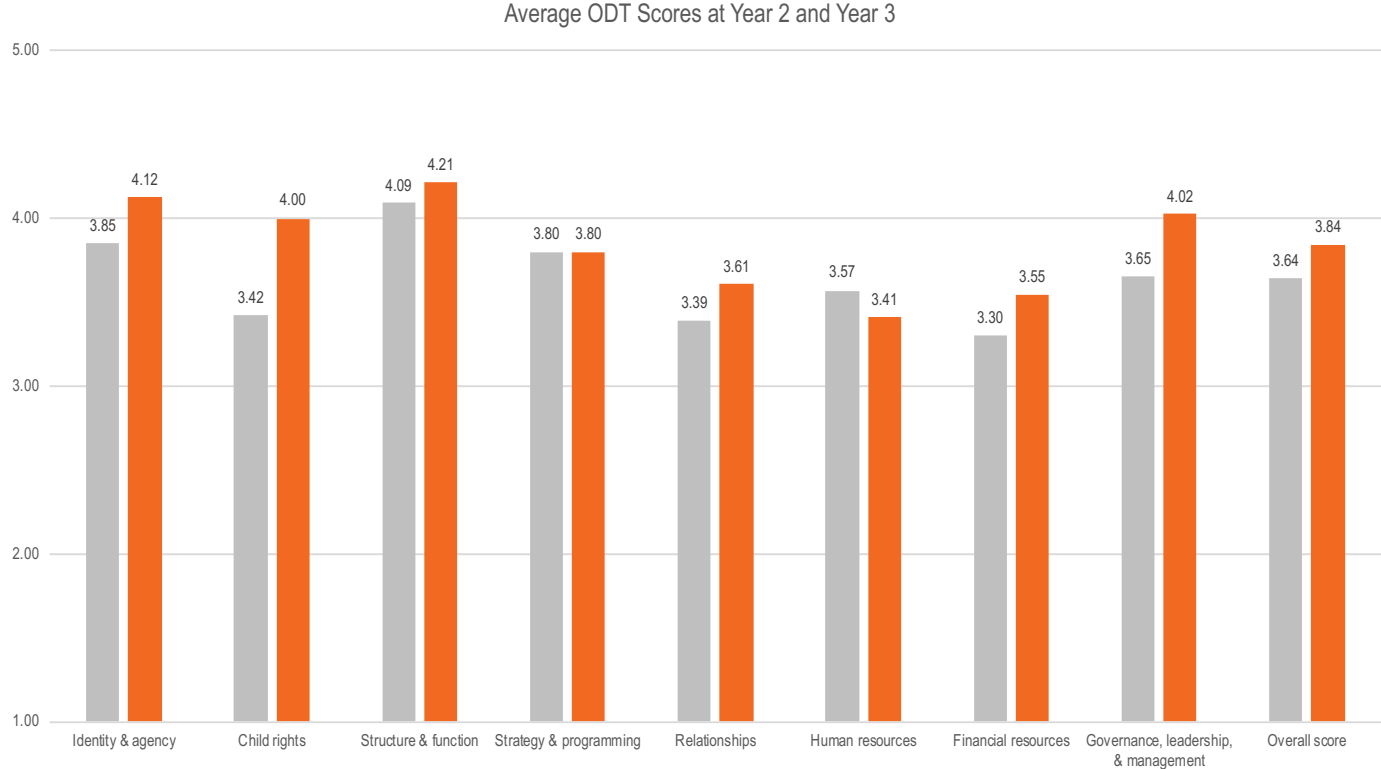
against abuses. This was a relevant and commendable strategy. The CPCs participated in the sensitization of community members about child rights and the dangers of child marriage. They collaborated with the CBOs to identify service beneficiaries like single parent mothers and other vulnerable children who were living in abject poverty and hard conditions, and referred them to different organizations. They proposed some bye-laws which were approved by the ward counselors. One such bye-law was requiring that a person planning to marry produces a birth certificate such that they do not lie about the ages of the girl. Child protection committees also received reports of child abuse cases and followed them up to relevant authorities like the police.

**Impact on CBOs’ capacities**

Core to Firelight Foundation’s work with CBO grantee-partner organizations is strengthening their organizational capacity.

**Assessments of organizational capacity**

Initial and ongoing assessments informed capacity building plans during the initiative, as well as to provide a pulse of organizational capacity over time. Two formal rounds of organizational capacity data collection were conducted – a “Year 2” assessment in 2017, and a “Year 3” assessment in 2018. These assessments (visualized in the chart below) demonstrate important gains in almost all areas of organizational capacity assessed.



*Organizations’ average scores on the areas of the ODT at Year 2 and Year 3*

The data show that partners have made great strides in improving organizational systems and governance structures. One major area of need identified was in broadening the resource base

of the CBOs, as the majority of the partners relied on only one source of funding. However, in terms of improvements, the partners had started to receive significant support on monitoring and evaluation, that targeted to enhance their capacity to collect data, analyze it, and use the information to inform programs.

We also captured qualitative learning and reflections on changes in CBO partners' organizational capacities – detailed below.

### Improved organizational development of the Firelight CBO partners

The AfriChild evaluators observed that significant progress was attained in many areas including their organizational capacities and their provision of quality child protection services. There was significant documented improvement in the capacity of CBOs following their capacity building. Some CBOs moved from the level of CBO to NGO level (e.g., TAI acquired the status of a non-governmental organization). TAI and RAFIKI managed to attract more funding and were obtaining grants directly from Firelight. Many CBOs such as OPE focused their programs and were implementable and they easily monitored their activities. The initiative has been able to build the confidence of the CBO staff such that they can stand and make presentations of their activities during quarterly meetings and in international conferences. The CBOs were able to use the acquired organizational competences to help community groups such as savings and credit groups to organize themselves, write constitutions, register, save etc. There was increased professionalization of the CBOs. CBO that did not have strategic plans developed these and this helped them to have better designed programs. At governance level, board members were trained on their roles and responsibilities and this helped the CBOs develop better systems for financial management for example.

CBOs received support to strengthen their child protection and safeguarding systems. Partners developed child protection policies and guidelines to accompany them. For example they now have guidelines for visitors that they share with stakeholders before they go out into the field. The guidelines state the dos and don'ts that visitors should follow when interacting with children such as not taking photos without consent.

### CBOs rated highly by their communities

Many of the populations groups which participated in the awareness creation activities of the Firelight Initiative were satisfied with the knowledge and skills obtained. Parents were particularly satisfied with the skillful parenting training obtained. Evaluators also confirmed that the more community members were exposed to the CBO training (such as skillful parenting) the more they liked the sessions and the more they attended.

## Lessons Learned

### Positive Lessons

#### Community-based organizations are well placed to inspire and support action by communities to stamp out child marriage

In this initiative we saw the power of CBOs in particular to engage with and influence their own communities. Firelight's grantee-partners comprised CBOs and one NGO which was actually founded in the Netherlands but had offices in several parts of Africa and a local operation in Shinyanga. It was observed that the CBOs had a stronger presence in the communities, understood their needs and cultural sensitivities and enjoyed higher levels of social legitimacy

among communities. This made it much easier and more effective for them to engage, inspire and support community action in support reductions in child marriage. CBOs (as opposed to NGOs) were also better positioned to mobilize community members and collaborate with local leaders to encourage thoughtful attention to challenges across the spectrum of rights and care rather than just implementing a specialized “program model”.

The NGO on the other hand - while perhaps stronger in technical capacity in certain areas - was much less successful in community engagement and in inspiring or instigating community action and was much less effective at the holistic approach that was needed to effect lasting change because they had a thin presence in the grassroots. This reduced their legitimacy with local communities and their capacity to work on multiple drivers of challenge for girls and their families. The NGO that was supported – in the end – gravitated to more of a “technical partner” role, training the CBOs on Skillful Parenting.

### **It is important to work with both men and women**

It is critical for both men and women to be engaged in understanding and acting on the root causes and drivers of child marriage. It was very positive therefore that the savings and loan groups comprised both genders, even if a higher proportion of the membership was women. It is also commendable that, given this situation, CBOs tried to make sure men were equally reached by following them up in their coffee drinking joints and other gathering places. This was innovative and highly commendable a strategy as it improved coverage reaching out to the fathers who were major decision makers in homes responsible for forcing girl children into early marriages. It was also commendable that some CBOs used radios to reach out entire communities.

### **A holistic approach is important**

Significant achievements were attributed to the multifaceted approach that grantee-partners took, which targeted the child, the family, the community and formal child protection systems. CBO partners aggressively mobilized communities, creating awareness about children’s rights and the dangers of child marriage and pregnancies, helping communities to understand and positively influence cultural norms, attitudes, and child protection practices, supporting positive policy making, laws and byelaw enactment and supporting actual child and family needs. It was highly commendable and effective for Firelight’s grantee-partners to pursue this holistic approach to address the root causes of child marriage within the families, communities and children.

### **Acknowledging and understanding the whole system is critical**

While improving people’s knowledge about the dangers of child marriage might bring out some of the necessary transformation in attitudes and behaviors towards girl children and reduce the instances of child marriage, the provision of factual information about a problem or disease does not by itself always lead to individual behavioral change. Nor does it lead to systemic change. As such, it was commendable that the program addressed the factors that cause and sustain the problem of child marriage in the whole “person-situation and environment” of the child. In other words, it was very effective to address -

- the issues within the child such as powerlessness, ignorance of their rights and puberty demands that may attract girls and boys into early sex and marriage
- the social-cultural-economic environment of the child in which the problem of child marriage and abuses were equally rooted
- the critical causal factors of child marriage particularly the social cultural norms and traditions



- poverty and deficiencies in the child that increase her/his vulnerability to child marriage and pregnancies

### Working with all systems actors is also critical

To uproot the problem of child marriage, it was also positive that the grantee-partners worked with different target populations including families, communities, children themselves of different ages and gender. But more than that, it was also commendable that the initiative also addressed other actors and systems that are responsible for different dimensions and levels of the problem, such as the local government child protection systems from the villages, wards, region and national levels, traditional and religious leaders, welfare and community development officers at different geographical administration levels, from the wards to districts and regional levels, local child protection committees, ward development councils, school teachers, patrons and matrons, the police and community leaders such as ward and village executives. The full range of actors engaged within the system of child protection and child marriage included –

- children and youth of both genders
- parents of both genders
- traditional leaders
- religious leaders
- law enforcement
- government social protection mechanisms
- community social protection mechanisms such as the CPCs
- local, district and national policy makers and legislators
- other NGOs
- teachers and school leaders

### CPC support was important

This increase in the number and capacity of the CPCs was an important and effective investment. Not only did it lead to an improvement in the availability and accessibility of these structures to families and children but also to improved reporting and protection of children against abuses. This strategy also helped to create a wider base of change agents involved in the fight against child marriage. The CPCs have since rebranded but some of the members that were trained with the support of the CBOs have been coopted into the new structure. They continue to be the first line of support to issues that affect children and women at community level and refer them to other relevant structures if need be.

### Community dialogues were effective and important

CBO partners were supported to conduct regular “community dialogues”. These were participatory discussions and processes undertaken to surface community perspectives and priorities around the factors that protect or harm children’s safety and wellbeing in their community. The communities and also the children identified factors that harmed children in families, communities and schools. This learning was useful for the identification of social systems to target interventions; and the existing child protection risks and opportunities for the promotion of child wellbeing within those systems. In addition, when the dialogues were continued over time, community members were able to reflect on where they saw improvements and change, and what issues remained challenging – thereby further informing community-based action for children’s rights and wellbeing in the community.

The use of community dialogues was a “best practice” as it helped to identify the social environments where child protection problems as well as wellbeing were rooted. This further

helped to guide planning and especially the prioritization of spaces to work on and with to resolve the problem of child marriage. It helped affirm the choice of the targeted populations and social systems - notably the children, the families, communities and child protection service delivery structures

### School-based IEC is really important

Evaluators and children alike reported that the school based IEC efforts were a highly relevant strategy in fighting child marriage.

### Engaging community really works

Because CBOs were so strong in reaching out to engage community-members in their own process of change in the face of child marriage, they also received very positive ideas for future engagement and ways to reach those who needed to be included. Some examples of the ideas given were –

- Asking village leaders to mobilize over the weekends
- Asking religious leaders to be engaged and/or mobilize their believers
- Use of mobile telephones to send out/receive short messages and help lines on parenting
- Ensuring that all stakeholders were engaged – especially those least visible/accessible – such as hyper-rural families, families on the edge of society, men

### Firelight's support for the capacity of CBOs works

There was significant improvement in the capacity of CBOs following their capacity building. CBOs moved from the level of CBO to NGO level. TAI acquired the status of a non-governmental organization. TAI and RAFIKI managed to attract more funding and were obtaining grants directly from Firelight. Many CBOs such as OPE focused their programs and were implementable and they easily monitored their activities. The initiative has been able to build the confidence of the CBO staff such that they can stand and make presentations of their activities during quarterly meetings and in international conferences. The CBOs were able to use the acquired organizational competences to help community groups such as savings and credit groups to organize themselves, write constitutions, register, save etc. There was increased professionalization of the CBOs. This quality and range of support was supported by the evaluators.

The coordinated approach in case management resulted in some cases being brought before the courts and perpetrators sentenced. This gave confidence to the communities to continue reporting cases and they now had confidence in the justice delivery system.

Value in investing in establishing partnerships with the CBOs

We have learnt that the process of identifying partners should not be rushed. There is value in going on the ground to understand the realities of the CBOs. This helps in choosing the right CBOs to partners with who are actually community grounded. It helps CBO partners to also to learn and understand about Firelight so that they can make an informed decision if they want to partners with them

### Difficult Lessons

### Not letting communities fully and completely lead their own actions

With Firelight's support, each CBO chose their own intervention strategies based on their own prior knowledge of the community and their existing area of expertise as an organization and based their programmatic planning those inputs. This was further reinforced by Firelight who asked CBOs for program proposals before they received their grants. However, Firelight has reflected that an even more powerful strategy would have been to support the CBOs to first deeply engage with communities on the specific subject of child marriage, work with their communities to choose their programs and activities based on the joint needs/decisions of both the CBO and the community and only then put a program proposal together for Firelight. It should be noted that this learning has influenced Firelight to change its practices across all initiatives and we now provide a paid period for CBOs to engage with their communities on the issues, on the system, on the actions the community wishes to take and how they might measure their own success – before a joint proposal is requested from the CBO and the community together.

### Need to look more at other root causes such as poverty more carefully

One learning was that as much as the grantee-partners invested in addressing many of the drivers of child marriage, their efforts could perhaps have paid more attention to the core systemic drivers of child marriage – the ones that are less easy to address – such as availability of arable land, poverty and economic opportunity for families and young adults. This would have made the interventions more sustainable and would have made the CBOs to work with different stakeholders right from the design of the initiative

### Need to reach more men and boys

The participation of men in person to person community awareness campaigns – such as those conducted through savings and loans programs - was low compared to that of women. Likewise, the participation of boys was limited compared to that of girls in the schools engagement programs. It could not be established how much of the information obtained by women in the absence of the men reached the fathers. The exclusion of boys was partly because they were considered less vulnerable to early marriages and school dropping out. In hindsight, all genders should have been involved, at all levels, even if in different ways if necessary. Nonetheless, the CBOs are commended for the innovative ways they devised to reach some men, such as in coffee joints and for using radios to reach out entire communities.

### Some other populations were missed

Few CBOs targeted out of school youth and single mothers. The out of school is another group not well targeted by the Initiative. It was also not clear how well their needs were addressed.

### Educational, school-based efforts should have also included training teachers

While the engagement of school students in a school environment was commendable, the grantee-partners should have also trained teachers and school administration. Unfortunately, the program relegated the training of teachers to a lower priority and children were trained before the teachers and the school gate keepers such as administrators. This affected the levels of motivation, commitment, engagement and accountability by teachers and head teachers for the CBO school clubs. Effective school administration and teacher engagement would also sustain the commitment to the school clubs and therefore the cause of ending child marriage and early pregnancies.

### Any rescue program needs to be extremely carefully conducted

The response efforts that were undertaken – mostly by one of our grantee-partners – did have an observable effect on the reduction of child marriage. However, several parts of their efforts need to be considered carefully and addressed –

- The police's poor response to child abuse cases was alluded to by many communities visited during the evaluation. Law enforcement is an important action system that could merit more training in child protection issues and practice ethics.
- Methods of supporting and protecting whistleblowers are critical and could have used more investment. Supporting the social welfare and community development structures on ways of protecting whistle blowers of child abuse cases would be an important future investment.

### False and negative power structures amongst grantees

In an experience that actually spurred Firelight to make changes to its model, significant negative power dynamics emerged between Lead Partners and sub-grantees and many of the sub-grantee CBOs lamented the power dynamics that were exercised by Lead Partners. Firelight wishes to take full responsibility for this but it is important to reflect on them without blame. That said, the dynamics that were documented included –

- Lead Partners limiting communications between CBOs and Firelight
- Lead Partners deciding how much funding should be provided to CBO sub-grantees
- Lead Partners delaying payment of grants based on their own (not Firelight's) schedule/demands
- Lead Partners demanding "branding/marketing" recognition in any publication or announcement of the sub-grantee
- Lead Partners fighting between themselves for power and resources
- Lead Partners unilaterally deciding where and when to hold grantee cluster information sharing sessions and group meetings and/or cancelling them without notice

As mentioned, Firelight has since changed our model of support for grantees with a stated goal and structure that allows all grantees to choose what kind of leadership/ mentoring/ sub granting they might want and who should provide it – Firelight will no longer prescribe or pre-ordain. (You can see our new "Multi-Form Mentoring Model" here

<https://firelightfoundation.box.com/s/0bw49w9z35to98thh95r5bhquimvjz0b>)

### Gaps in CBO grantee-partner capacity building

It was reflected by both Firelight and CBOs that there were some gaps in Firelight's capacity support for grantee partners. One example is that while Firelight supported our grantee-partners to work with families, communities and other stakeholders, they were not deeply equipped to work with especially vulnerable children or children and youth who had been victimized. While CBOs cannot be expected to do everything, one joint reflection was that this training might have been helpful even as cases were increasingly referred to social workers and law enforcement.

### Community Dialogues could have been used more fully

While the evaluators and many others commended the utilization of community dialogues prior to the start of the initiative, they were not fully utilized in several important areas –

- They were not fully expanded to allow communities, families, children, youth and CBOs to look at a full root cause mapping
- They were not expanded to support systems or stakeholder analysis to its furthest
- They were not used as a baseline

### Challenges in the design of the initiative

Partners developed annual proposals. This resulted in them not have a clear vision of the whole initiative and where they wanted to be at the ended of the partnership. We have since learnt that it is important to support partners to start with the end in mind and for them to start by clearly articulating their vision together with their communities as well as state the different systems that they need to work with so as to realize their vision.

### Delays in the grantmaking process

Due to internal proposal review processes, partners experienced funding gaps as their proposals were being reviewed for the following year. This negatively affected the flow of activities at community level.

### Firelight's own observations regarding what it takes to support community-driven approaches

Over the last four years, learnings at Firelight – including many from the Shinyanga initiative - have made it clear that –

- Partnering with communities is fundamental to achieving real, lasting change. True change comes from demand or action that is driven by communities themselves, with support from CBOs as needed.
- Global knowledge, values, and practices around girls' education need to be critically examined and as appropriate, integrated with local knowledge, values, and practices in order to be contextually grounded and relevant to local communities.
- Approaching something as complex as girls' education with a 'package' or 'model' might provide an instinctively "effective" or "scalable" solution but structural change – especially when it is norm-driven – better benefits from support to the community itself to deeply understand and critically analyze what gender norms and actions impact girls' education and how the change may be supported in different ways in their own communities.
- Outside-in approaches (i.e. – those not driven by the communities themselves) create continual dependence on external experts for guidance, training and results that often makes little room for the community to sustain, particularly after the initiative or funding cycle from the donor ends.
- Communities need to be empowered to understand the most urgent needs and priorities in their own communities around girls' education, and then supported to explore what can be adapted from existing tools and what needs to be developed in order to respond to those priority issues in their community.
- Implementing organizations – ideally CBOs - need time and support to work with their communities to think carefully about, and act on, the micro and mezzo systems in their communities affecting girls' lives on a day-to-day basis – where they experience the restrictions on their rights and wellbeing but also how they might experience caring relationships and interactions that shape their full development. If organizations simply deliver a service or program, they may improve the lives of a cohort of girls, but the effects are likely to fade away as girls move through the other systems in their lives and communities. The program itself may also fade away after external funding ends. On the other hand, if organizations and communities analyze, map out, and act on different systems – and work to shift those systems in meaningful ways, those changed systems will continue to support girls and communities will be empowered to continue to work on change long after the initiative cycle has ended.

## Annex 1

CBO	Intervention objective /intended outcome
MKOMBOZI	<p>To modify parents' discriminative attitudes towards girls that lead to reduced access and use of societal opportunities such as education, and social development</p> <p>To empower parents, children, teachers and community leaders to identify and address risk factors leading to sexual abuses and child pregnancies.</p> <p>To increase children's knowledge of their rights and responsibilities in homes, schools and community</p> <p>To equip fathers and their families with financial budgeting knowledge and skills, for improved management and control of family resources.</p> <p>To reduce dropout rates of vulnerable girls and boys from primary schools in Shinyanga</p> <p>Encourage reporting of child abuse cases or planned child marriages to police, child protection committees and CBO</p>
RAFIKI SDO	<p>Reduce the number of children (12-17years) seeking work in gold mines in the 3 Firelight supported wards of Kahama</p> <p>End child marriage in 3 wards in Kahama</p> <p>Promote children's rights among parents and children and other actions systems in the 3 Firelight supported wards of Kahama</p> <p>Rescue and resettle children previously working in mines to vocational schools</p> <p>Influence the enforcement of the child protection act of 2009 by all government agencies</p> <p>Ensure employers in the gold mines fenced the mines and equipped working children with protective gears for safety</p> <p>Advocate for increased budgets of services and support to vulnerable children by the local governments</p> <p>Awareness creation of the dangers of child marriages and pregnancies to communities of Kahama</p> <p>Strengthen child protection committees at village level to enable them take a lead in child protection</p>
YWL	<p>Improve family wellbeing through provision of improved parenting skills</p> <p>Increase awareness of sexual and reproductive health issues in schools</p> <p>Increase awareness of sexual and reproductive health and rights to out of school mothers</p> <p>Improve skillful parenting and life skills for out of school children and entire communities</p> <p>Strengthen economic capacity of young mothers</p>
CHIDEP	<p>To reduce child marriage and pregnancies</p> <p>Increase primary and secondary students' knowledge of the effects of child marriage and pregnancies on their lives</p> <p>Develop students' life skills on how to protect themselves against unwanted pregnancies and child marriage</p> <p>Increase awareness of communities regarding the dangers of child pregnancies</p> <p>Improve parenting skills of both men and women in 3 wards of Shinyanga Municipality – Ndala, Ngokolo, and Old Shinyanga</p>

<p><b>The Voice of Marginalized Communities (TVMC)</b></p>	<p>Strengthen school clubs (those concerned with social development issues of children) and child protection committees          To pursue issues of child pregnancy with the police and hospital to make sure the girl gets social justice and support          To end child marriages and pregnancies</p> <p>Rescue school girls planned for marriages by parents          Follow up girls impregnated while in school to make sure the justice law and order sector prosecutes, convicts, and sentences culprits          Awareness creation of communities and school systems about the dangers of child marriage and pregnancies and the need to report child rights violators.          Resettle pregnant and young mothers in viable economic activities          Advocate for the enactment of bye-laws by local governments for protection of children against child marriage and access to services that attract children to keep in schools (such as provision of mid-day meals by parents )          To end child marriages and pregnancies</p>
<p><b>Women Elderly Advocacy Development Organization (WEADO)</b></p>	<p>Improve attitudes and behaviors of parents towards girl children and their rights including right to education and maximization of potentials          Reduce the number of girls marrying before they reached the age of 18 years in Tinde Ward, Shinyanga Municipality          Increase reporting of children planned for marriage before the age of 18 in communities and other child abuse cases to police, social welfare offices, child protection committees and WEADO          Increase the awareness of the dangers of child marriage and pregnancies to school teachers and adolescent children          Increase the number of girls that complete school          Improve CBO understanding of the spaces children and adults consider unsafe in the targeted operational areas through community mapping          To end child marriages and pregnancies</p>
<p><b>Promising World for women and Children Organization (PWWCO)</b></p>	<p>Organize women into viable economic groups able to access government loans for their economic and social development.          Improve parenting skills and child protection at family level for attainment of children's rights and maximization of potentials.          Increase self-awareness of primary school girls' (from standard 4 to 7) sexuality and reproductive health and rights          Strengthen life skills of girls in the areas of developing self-esteem and self-care, abstinence          Create school clubs and use club members act as peer educators on sexual and reproductive health and self-identity to colleagues          Goal : End child marriage and pregnancies</p>
<p><b>Organization of People Empowerment (OPE)</b></p>	<p>Change parents' perceptions of seeing girls as a source of wealth and education as being meant for boys          A community which values education for both boys and girls in Kishapu Municipal Council for attainment of their life goals and maximization of their potentials          Empower poor families with income generating activities to reduce temptations to marry off girls below 18 years in Kishapu Municipal Council</p>

	<p>Strengthen child protection committees to be enable them enforce the Child Protection Act</p> <p>Advocate and lobby district /municipal councils to increase the funding of the child protection service delivery systems</p> <p>Equip children out of school with vocational skills</p> <p>Empower school going children with knowledge of the sexual and reproductive health for self-protection</p> <p>Return children who had dropped out of school because of marriage or pregnancy back to school</p> <p>Increase reporting of cases of abused children to relevant authorities including police village and ward child protection committees, social welfare officers and AGAPE</p> <p>End child marriage and pregnancies to ensure girls accomplish their life goals and dreams</p>
<p><b>Young Women Christian Association (YWCA)</b></p>	<p>Reduce school drop-out rates by girls and boys in Shinyanga Municipality</p> <p>Reduce the number of women with reproductive health problems arising from early marriages</p> <p>Reduce social economic impacts of early marriages on girls and young women</p> <p>Improve knowledge of Community on the dangers of early marriage and early pregnancies</p> <p>Improvement of the way parents and child carers undertake their parenting roles and responsibilities</p>
<p><b>TAI</b></p>	<p>End child marriage in 3 wards of Mwaluka (Shinyanga Rural), Bubiki and Mondo wards in Kishapu district.</p> <p>Capacity enhancement of parents on skillful parenting</p> <p>Influence legal bylaws and policies (with focus on child rights) to protect children from child marriages and early pregnancies is enforced</p> <p>Communities' mind sets, knowledge, aspirations, behaviors, and social norms that drive child marriages and teenage pregnancies is changed</p> <p>Household economic strengthening</p>
<p><b>ICS</b></p>	<p>Improve the capacity of CBOS to enable them effectively fight child marriage</p> <p>Sub-granting to 5 CBOs</p> <p>Monitoring CBO activities and finances to ensure efficiency</p> <p>Support organizations to ensure effectiveness and efficiency CBOs</p> <p>Skillful parenting to communities</p>
<p><b>AGAPE</b></p>	<p>Girl victims of child marriage continue with formal schooling or vocational skills development</p> <p>Prevent child marriage though provision of skillful parenting</p> <p>Sub-granting 3 CBOs since 2016-</p> <p>Capacity building of 3 CBOs until 2017</p> <p>Provision of support to families and children living with HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Mobilize and organize women in saving and loan groups</p> <p>End child marriage in Shinyanga Municipality</p>



## ANNEX 2

CBO	District/ Municipal council	Total wards existing in district/ municipality	Number of operational wards (%)	Total villages/streets in operational wards	Number of villages served (%)
OPE	Kishapu district	25	6 (24%)	126	28 (22.2%)
YWL	Shinyanga Municipal	17	2 (12%)	72	4 streets (5.6%)
TVMC	Shinyanga Municipal	17	4 (23.5%)	72	18 (25%)
TAI	Shinyanga Rural & Kishapu district	26	3 (11.5%)	126	5 (4.0%)
YWCA	Shinyanga Municipal	17	2 (11.8%)	72	2 (2.8%)
ICS	Shinyanga Municipal	17	4 (23.5%)	72	8 (11.1%)
	Shinyanga Rural	26	12 (46.2%)	126	31 (24.6%)
	Kahama Town Council	20	10 (50%)	77	55 (71.4%)
RAFIKI	Kahama Town Council	20	3 (15%)	77	3 (3.9%)
WEAD	Shinyanga Municipal	17	3 (17.6%)	72	10 (13.9%)
O	Shinyanga Municipality	17	3 (17.6%)	72	12 (16.7%)
AGAPE	Shinyanga Rural	26	5 (19.2%)	126	24 (19%)
CHIDE	Shinyanga Municipal	17	3 (17.6%)	72	27 (37.5%)
P	Shinyanga Rural	26	1 (3.8%)	126	3 (2.4%)
MKOM	Shinyanga Municipal	17	2 (12%)	72	6 (8.3%)
BOZI	Shinyanga Rural	26	1 (3.8%)	126	3 (2.4%)
PWWC	Shinyanga Municipal	17	2 (12%)	72	6 (8.3%)
O	Shinyanga Rural	26	1 (3.8%)	126	3 (2.4%)
Total	2 districts; 1 municipality, and 1 town council	88 wards	67 wards	473 villages*	238 villages
% coverage			76.1%		50.3%