

Inclusive Community Engagement for Ending Child Early and Forced Marriages in Malawi

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Background/Objectives



Malawi is amongst countries with highest rate of child marriage in the world.

42% of girls in the country are married by the age of 18, and 9 percent are married by age 15.(UNICEF 2018)

Breakthrough ACTION CEFM project in Malawi was designed with the aim of changing the mindset of the community members and sparking a social movement that will prevent and stop child, early and forced marriages.

Status of Child Marriage in Malawi

FIGURE 1 Child Marriage in ESAR

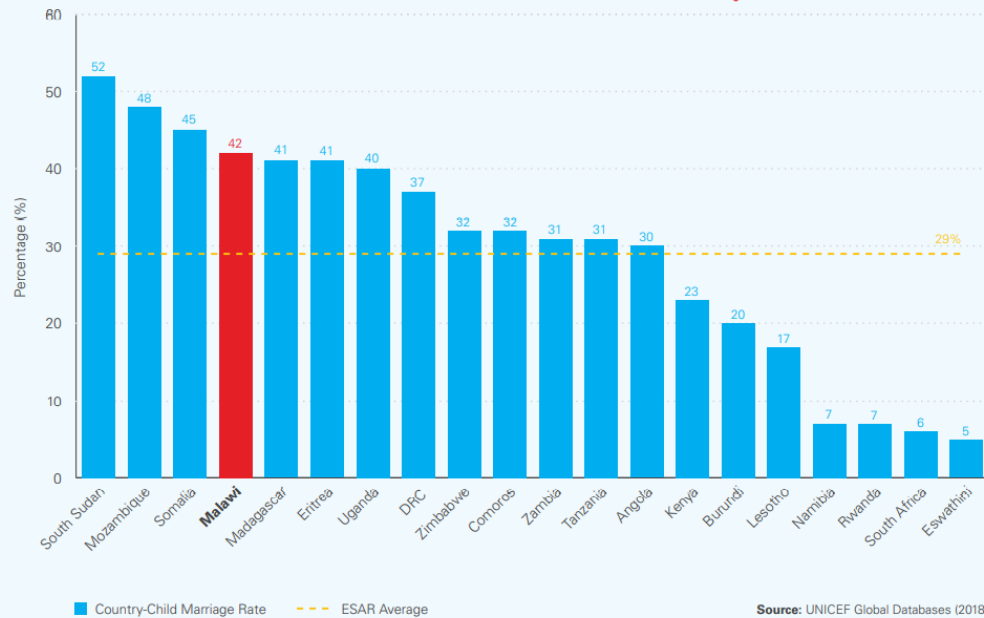
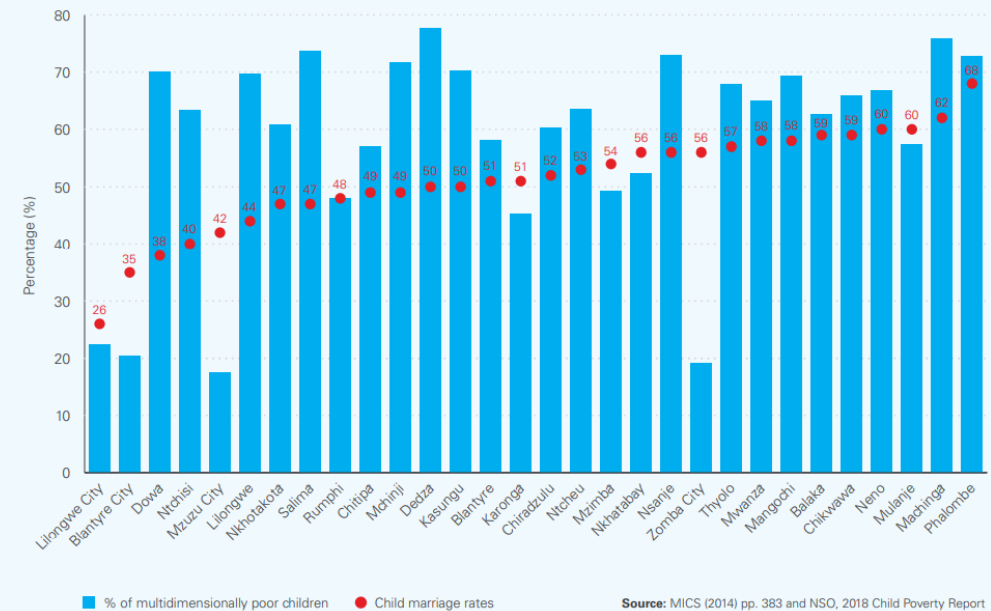


FIGURE 2 Child Marriage and Poverty Rates by District



Way above regional averages and varies by location from 26% to 68%

CEFM Intervention from 2021 to 2022

Inclusive community mobilization approach

- Used a modified Community Action Cycle (CAC)

Evidence-based curricula

- Curricula slightly modified to include elements of the Tostan model for community empowerment from Senegal.

Three-tiered approach

- reaching adolescent girls and boys,
- their caregivers and
- the community as a whole

Reaching Adolescent Girls and Boys

- Adolescents were reached through peer-led clubs
- Girls and boys' clubs receiving two different curriculums
 - The adolescent girls focused on vision creation, self-esteem promotion, learning about their rights and local level advocacy.
 - The adolescent boys' curriculum focuses on transforming unequal power relations and promoted gender justice, local level advocacy and positive masculinity





Caregivers of adolescent girls and boys

- Caregivers participated in REAL Fathers which works to foster a family vision, improve interpersonal communication between parents and children and highlights children's rights.
- Sessions started with fathers only
- Mothers joining at session 3 through session 7
- Each session having an activity to be done at home together with children

General Community: A holistic approach



The broader community was mobilized using a modified Community Action Cycle (CAC) approach



Applied a unique twist to this approach and blended adults and youth to form Community Action Groups (CAGs). Emphasizing youth engagement and involvement, with one group per community.



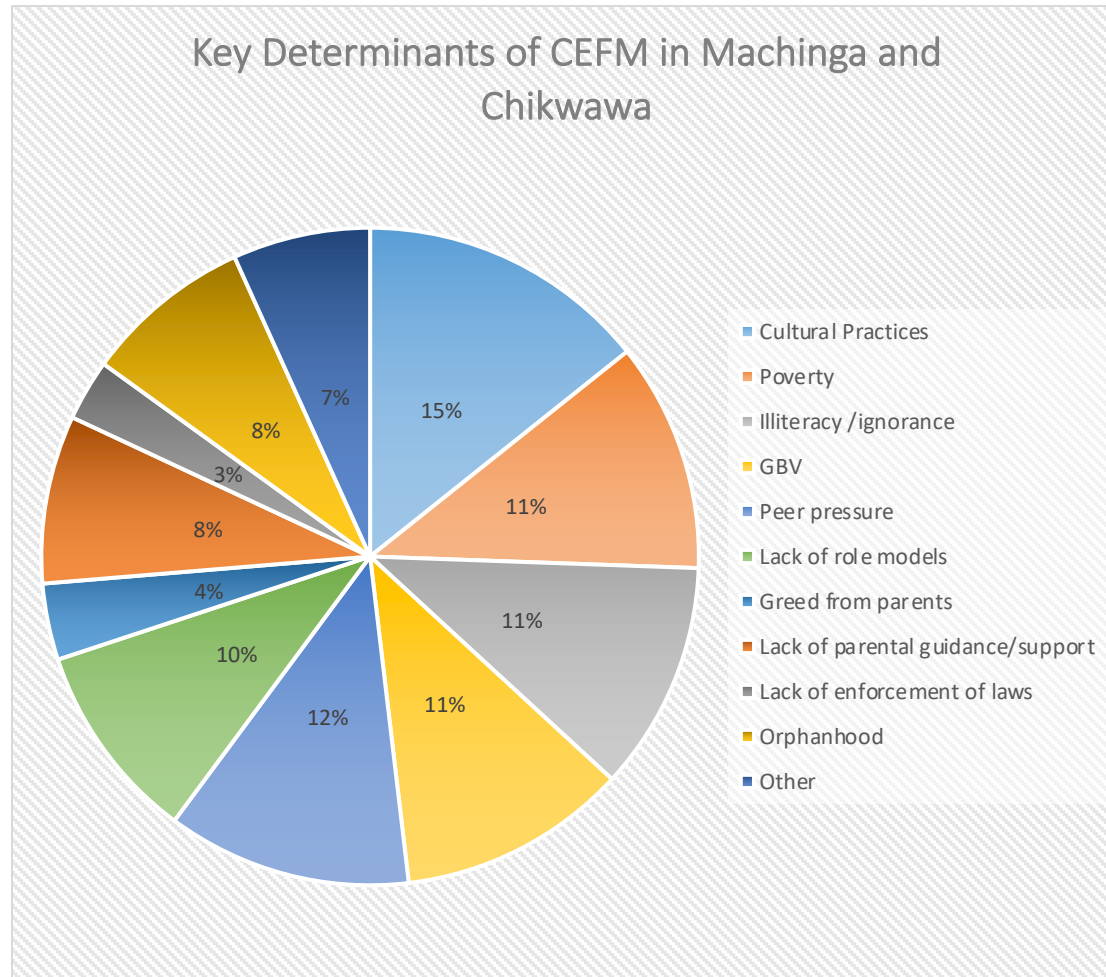
Participants in CAGs were drawn from already active community level structures responsible for child protection, education, law enforcement, faith groups and initiation ceremony counsellors.



Traditional leaders were incorporated as supporters and advisors to these groups

DRIVERS OF CHILD MARRIAGE

As identified from the communities



Impact of these drivers on education

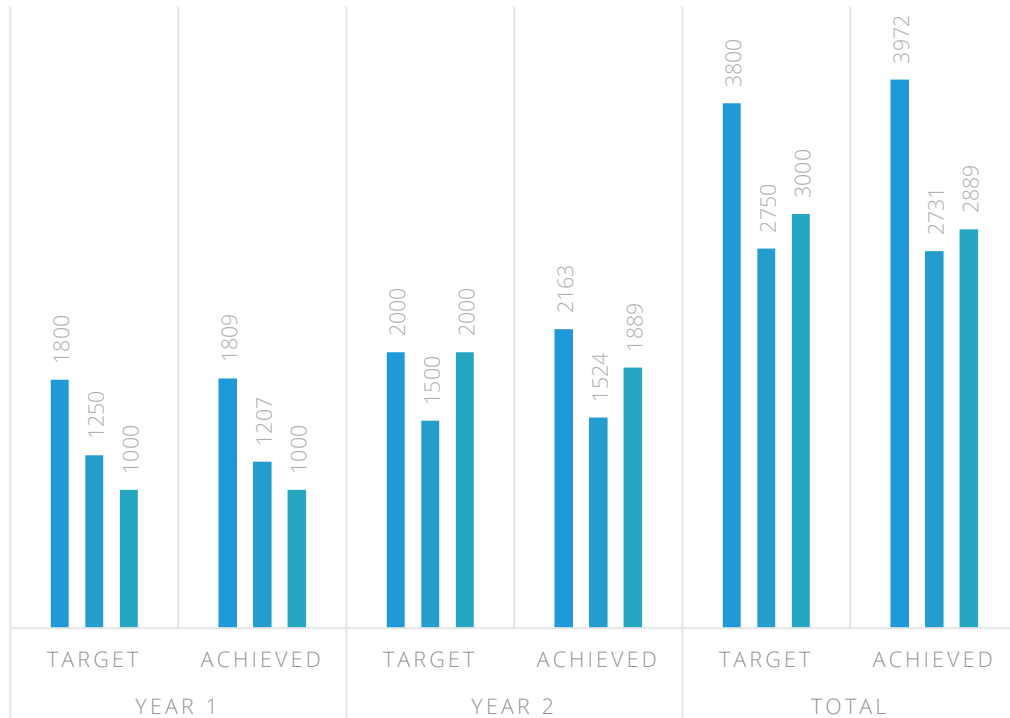
- Only 38.4 per cent of children transition from primary to secondary school (40.9 per cent for boys and 35.8 per cent for girls),
- only 8 per cent move on to tertiary education (EMIS, 2018).
- Source: UNICEF 2018-Budget Scooping report for Malawi

PROJECT RESULTS

CREATING THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT

GROUP SESSIONS REACH

■ AGYW Reach ■ ABYM Reach ■ Caregiver Reach



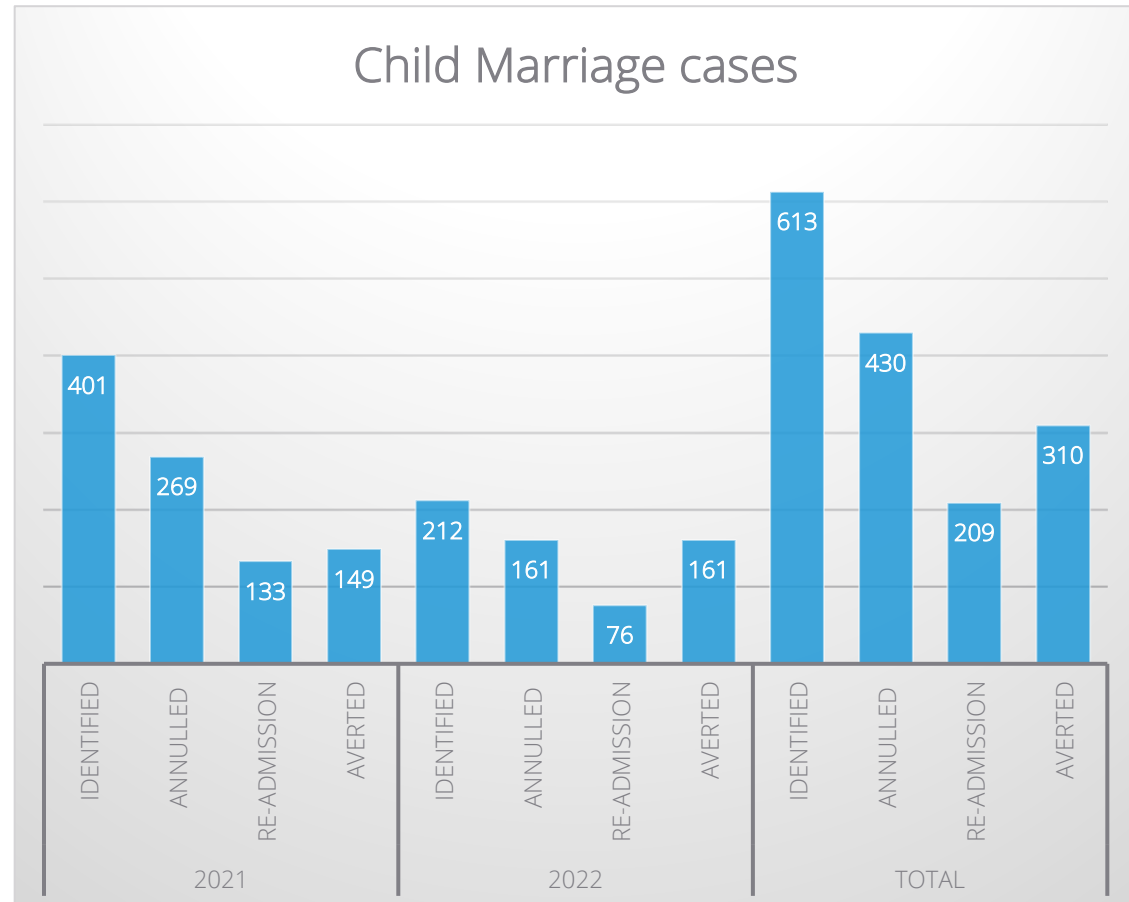
- Community Reach by CAGs
- 20 CAGs in year 1 reached 12 834 people in 20 communities
- 28 CAGs in year 2 reached 52, 157 people in 28 communities
- Proportionally there was a sharp increase in people reached (306%) compared to the increase in the number of CAGs (40%)

Impact

- 67% Annulled in 2021 and 76% annulled in 2022
- Child marriage cases reduced by 47% (401 to 212)



Child Marriage cases



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PROJECT IMPACT

ORGANISED DIFUSION



- 7 Community Action Groups (CAGs) reached out to additional 14 Group Village Heads (GVHs)
- 4,488 additional people reached (2,034M, 2,454F)
- Youth organization reached out a neighboring Traditional Authority (TA) (Mizinga)
- Build the capacity of 50 additional traditional leaders
- Traditional leaders annulled 83 additional marriages

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

Building the Capacity of local structures for sustainability

Youth Led Org.	#of clubs	Membership		Total
		G	B	
Community Change for youth Development(CCYD)	9	166	211	377
Youth Action for Change and Development(YACD)	9	145	179	324
Youth Action for Change(Y4C)	15	173	144	317
Centre for Youth Organisation(CYO)	28	414	358	772
Total	61	898	892	1,790

- Youth led organizations conducting community meetings and collaborating with other partners
- District level resource persons for all the curricula- 8 officers per district
- Community level resource persons-10 extension workers per TA
- Traditional leaders buy in
- Pool of peer educators for both boys and girls

Lessons

- A significant impact within a short period of time due to the project's approach of involving a wide variety of participants.
- Ending child marriage necessitates the involvement of many: the parents, children (boys and girls), chiefs, faith leaders and other community members.
- The ENGAGE curriculum for girls, Champions of Change for boys, REAL Fathers for caregivers and CAC for the general community are all proven curricula/approaches that have demonstrated great results.



Lessons

- The modification of these curricula, using them in tandem, and adapting the Tostan model helped to achieve the holistic approach
- This holistic approach is recommended for any project focusing on social behavior change or creating a social movement.
- Started observing organized diffusion to other communities, to create widespread change in year 2: leaders sharing their successes with other leaders; fathers sharing what they learned with other fathers, CAGs reaching out other communities
- A limitation is that social norms change takes time, and it is difficult to achieve in only 2 years of project implementation.



THANK YOU ZIKOMO



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