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# Summative Evaluation of UNICEF India's Cotton Corridors Project: 'Preventing Exploitation and Protecting Children's rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.'

Final evaluation report

Oxford Policy Management and Glocal Research Services

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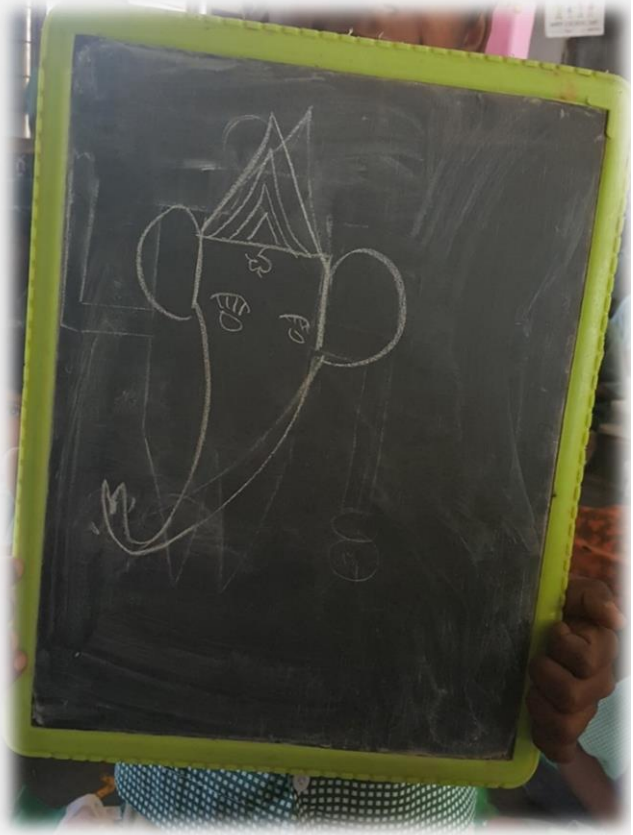
unicef



# Acknowledgements

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) contracted Oxford Policy Management (OPM) Limited for the summative evaluation of UNICEF India's Cotton Corridors Project: Preventing Exploitation and Protecting Children's rights in Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Karnataka, for the duration of October 2015 to June 2016.

Both rounds of data collection have been conducted by OPM and Glocal Research Services (Glocal, the fieldwork and research partner) in Kurnool and Raichur, the two project districts in AP and Karnataka. Writing of the evaluation report has been undertaken by OPM.

The roles and responsibilities of the team members were as follows:

| Roles and responsibilities | |
|---|---|
| **Name** | **Roles and responsibilities** |
| **Ian MacAuslan** | Research guidance and coordination, overall management and quality assurance |
| **Mehjabeen Jagmag, Shruti Viswanathan, Udit Ranjan and Vanika Grover** | Development of theory of change, evaluation matrix and survey tools.<br>Conducted first phase of data collection and part of the data collection in the second phase<br>Coding and analysis |
| **Davuluri Venkateswarlu** | Overall field management, research guidance |
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| **Aprajita Mukherjee** | Technical guidance (gender issues) |
| **Saltanat Rasulova** | Research guidance on methodology and quality assurance |
| **Tom Newton-Lewis** | Peer reviewer |
| **Glocal staff and surveyors** | Data collection and providing field insights |

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All errors remain the authors'. All photographs are by the authors.

# Executive summary

## Purpose and methodology

**This report presents findings from an independent summative evaluation** conducted in 2015–2016 by OPM and Glocal of the "Cotton Corridors Project: Preventing Exploitation and Protecting Child Rights in AP and Karnataka" (henceforth Cotton Corridors project). The Cotton Corridors project ran between June 2008 and December 2014, with a budget allocated by IKEA Foundation of EUR 4,794,135, and was implemented by UNICEF India and the Governments of AP and Karnataka.

**The objective of the Cotton Corridors project was to create improved systems and structures for preventing exploitation and protecting children in Kurnool and Raichur districts**, building on the work of an earlier phase of project activity that started in 2006. These districts were selected because they had a particularly large estimated number of children working in cottonseed and cotton production and were out of school. The project aimed to improve child protection outcomes in these districts, specifically to:

- return 18,750 long-term and short-term drop outs aged 6-14 to school;
- improve the quality of child friendly infrastructure in 350 schools;
- train 1,500 adolescent girls in relevant skills;
- form 591 collectives for young people to discuss and have a dialogue with policy-makers and
- equip 4,500 women as leaders on child protection issues.

**The Cotton Corridors project took an innovative approach to achieving these objectives**. The key characteristics of this approach were:

- working closely with state, district and block-level government officials and community structures to **create an enabling environment for improved child protection** through engagement, technical assistance, and information, education and communication (IEC);
- **forming, training and supporting three types of community groups** in each village (a Child Protection Committee [CPC], a Child Club [CC], and a Girls' Collective) to work with community volunteers (CVs) to identify and address child protection issues in their villages;
- collecting, monitoring and agreeing **data on children who were not in school**; and
- conducting with government and communities a set of activities designed to improve child protection outcomes, including:
    - conducting enforcement drives on farms or businesses employing children, rescuing children and returning them to formal or bridge education, and fining employers;
    - conducting enforcement drives on under-age marriages and fining parents and priests;
    - funding children at risk of dropping out to attend open school from 10th class and sit for exams;
    - organising and funding Non-Residential Special Training Centres (NRSTCs) for children who have recently dropped out of school and need to catch up before re-entering;
    - organising and funding Residential STCs (RSTCs) for long-term dropouts;
    - organising and funding Child Migration Prevention Centres (CMPC) to allow children to remain in school while their parents migrate for work; and
    - organising and funding skills training for adolescents.

**The purpose of the evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of whether the project's strategies and approaches contributed to the achievement of objectives**, and to identify lessons that can be learned for future attempts to improve child protection. The evaluation answers five key questions organised around five evaluation criteria:

- **relevance**: To what extent were the outputs of Cotton Corridors project consistent with recipients' requirements, country needs, global priorities and UNICEF's policies?
- **effectiveness**: To what extent were outcomes of the various strands of the Cotton Corridors project successfully achieved?
- **efficiency**: How economically were resources/inputs converted into results?
- **sustainability and replicability**: To what extent have benefits from Cotton Corridors project continued after UNICEF support has been completed and why, and to what extent are the successes of the project replicable elsewhere?
- **equity and gender**: To what extent have activities affected marginalised communities, addressed differences in gender, and empowered both girls and boys?

**The key intended audiences** are: i) departments in the **Governments** of AP, Karnataka and India relevant to child labour (Labour, Education, Women and Child Development [WCD], and Planning), and ii) **UNICEF India** staff, specifically, the Hyderabad Chief of Office, India Chief of Child Protection, and the Policy, Planning and Evaluation (PPE) and Child Protection networks. In order to ensure that the evaluation delivers on its objectives to its key audiences, UNICEF constituted an Evaluation Steering Committee of the Cotton Corridors project and evaluation staff, and an Evaluation Reference Group also including government officials and independent experts.

**The methodology used for the evaluation was limited by its timing and scope**: the evaluation was commissioned nine months after the project ended and there was no possibility of a counterfactual. This meant that the evaluation relied on (non-representative) primary data collected from 64 focus group discussions (FGDs) with group members and parents, 144 scale questionnaires with group chairs, 192 in-depth interviews (IDIs) with key stakeholders in 16 villages, and 19 IDIs at district and state level, all conducted a year after project completion, and on project and secondary documents. This introduces limitations to the rigour of the assessment, in particular further down the 'results chain' to child protection outcomes, compelling the evaluation team to rely more heavily on triangulation, induction and judgement. However, despite these limitations, the timeline of the evaluation provided an opportunity to assess the sustainability of the project.

## Key findings

### Relevance

**The Cotton Corridors project is highly relevant, both to global, national and state priorities, and to the needs of children in Raichur and Kurnool districts**. The project design closely aligns with current (and past) international and national priorities to protect the rights of children. The project engaged the government to work together to address child labour and child marriage in the project areas. In addition, the project drew on the institutional strengths of each district it worked in and engaged key stakeholders in child protection.

## Effectiveness

We assessed effectiveness by developing a detailed TOC for how project activities and strategies should lead to improvements in child protection, and then seeking evidence and the perceptions of key stakeholders on whether this theory held in practice by relying on contribution analysis methods.

**Overall, the evidence on changes in child protection outcomes during the project is positive**. The balance of evidence from different sources suggests that child protection outcomes improved during project implementation, and that this was related to the project. Changes appeared more significant for child labour and education than for child marriage.

**The wider environment is reasonably conducive to improved child protection, but has not changed substantially**. Broadly, communities remain aware of the potential benefits of schooling in comparison with work, and the dangers of early marriage, but often due to financial constraints and other reasons are unable to act on this perception. At district and state level, Government was more strongly motivated to be involved in child protection activities.

**Groups were formed in most villages by 2012 but their functioning was limited and most of them were not operational at the time the evaluation took place**. Group members were able to articulate their role and some achievements, particularly for CPCs, but other respondents at village level were rarely able to identify the groups or what they did. Groups tended not to discuss the formation of their own agendas, but instead implemented specific activities largely designed around the project. Members were largely selected from outgoing and talented members of the community. The community groups reported that they received limited training and support from the project.

**Some activities were extremely effective, but others were limited by funding and operational problems, or operated only at a small scale and appear not to have been taken up;**

- enforcement drives on child labour and marriage were reasonably effective short-term. Over 5,000 children were enrolled in education programmes through enforcement drives against child labour[1]. However, these were unable to deter parents, employers or priests entirely outside the cottonseed sector where a very intensive campaign was more successful in discouraging farmers from employing children;

- open schooling for children from 10th class was successful in helping dropouts complete their secondary education. This measure was praised by several respondents;

- RSTCs were an effective model but had limited scope and suffered from challenges in implementation and funding;

- Child Migration Prevention Centres (CMPCs) were considered to be effective at reducing child labour. This was viewed as an innovative model and there has been some success in sustaining, and scaling it up, in a few villages;

- skills training for adolescents was not widely mentioned by the respondents, and while it took place it was hard to assess its effectiveness given challenges with work placement and scale;

- the project was able to improve the quality of school infrastructure in a few schools, however this was not sufficient in solving the more significant problems of educational quality, particularly teacher shortages. Some of these problems, such as teacher shortages are core

[1] UNICEF India, “Cotton Corridors: Preventing Exploitation and Protecting Child Rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka”, (March, 2015)

issues of the government and were beyond the framework of the project. Moreover, the state bifurcation of AP in 2014 further aggravated this issue.

**The systematic collection of data on out of school children (OOSC) was limited to Kurnool, where such data was collected it was useful.** The child tracking system was an innovative approach to follow and update the status of each child in the data. However, opportunities to sustainably track children over time were missed, information on children in the database was not updated, and CVs were not adequately monitored on updating this database. Moreover, this approach was not taken up in Raichur district. In Raichur it was felt that more than a baseline survey, overall OOSC numbers for each village were enough to start project implementation.

**The project played an important role in promoting conversations between governments departments on child protection issues. However, this did not necessarily translate into effective, collaborative action at different levels of government.** Evidence seems to suggest that this was stronger at the *mandal*-level departments than at state and district level ones. The movement towards the bifurcation of AP state happened during the project duration which also hampered convergence of government departments.

## Efficiency

**Leverage of resources from government was considered by project and government staff as one of** Cotton Corridors project **most laudable achievements.** Government contributed nearly USD 2 million for project-related activities.

**Only 78 per cent of the project budget was spent.** Project documents, project staff and UNICEF staff suggested this was largely due to efficiency savings, funding of activities by government or community and downsizing of the project budget after discussion with the government.

However, a detailed analysis of budget allocations and actual spending for different project activities indicates that a sizeable part of the under-spending was also due to a lack of proper financial planning in allocating funds towards different project activities This also caused delays to some of the project activities, and particularly to implementing the sustainability plan in AP state.

## Sustainability and replicability

**There were some positive changes in attitudes towards schooling, but practices in child labour and child marriage did not change sustainably**. Interviews with various stakeholders suggest that the project contributed to, and operated in, an environment that was increasingly positive about child labour and marriage. However, as mentioned under the effectiveness section rehabilitation measures were not sustained through the project. Children who were brought into the school system, dropped out again in the absence of the programme. Additionally, after programme withdrawal communities lacked fear of punitive action for child marriage. Thus, community practices in child labour and child marriage lapsed. Sustainability of the community groups was low. Most community groups stopped being operational and discontinued their activities once the project ended. The failure on UNICEF's part to work out, in collaboration with the state government, a proper exit strategy left most groups without any idea of their future responsibilities.

**Gains made in government convergence lost steam after the project withdrawal.** Interviews with key staff in the government suggest that without facilitation from UNICEF, government departments stopped aligning their actions and objectives. This was particularly true in the state of AP where bifurcation of the state affected functioning across all government departments.

**Replication in other contexts will be challenging and the checklist below captures lessons to be kept in mind in the future.** This includes aspects that the project was successful at and aspects which require improvement.

Future projects must include**:**

- detailed and comprehensive handover process;
- adequate capacity within community groups and NGOs to function independently;
- effective models to address challenges to child protection;
- leveraging existing structures to promote child protection objectives; and
- institutionalising rules and processes to promote convergence across government departments

### Equity and gender

**The project was explicitly designed around issues of marginalisation and gender, and implemented in a way that was particularly sensitive to gender.** Girls are usually at highest risk of poor child protection outcomes, and the formation of specific girls' collectives and the involvement of women leaders partially addressed this. The formation of groups and activities was less sensitive to other aspects of marginalisation, but the project did not negatively impact any group.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

**The Cotton Corridors project is an innovative example of a holistic, community-based and government-led approach to addressing the complex issues of child protection in two districts with large numbers of working children.** The project rightly identified the needs of, and major problems of, children in Raichur and Kurnool; adopted a gender-sensitive approach to programme design and implementation with its focus on young girls; introduced innovative models for dealing with child work and schooling; was very effective at changing the attitudes and approaches of government officials; and leverage government expenditure for child protection. However, the sustainability of these positive changes is not assured either at community or government-level, and the changes in child protection outcomes remain fairly small — reflecting the enormity and difficulty of the challenge.

**UNICEF and Government have much to learn from this project.** In particular, first the challenges of improving child protection are substantial, and this project underlines the importance of taking a holistic approach. Enforcement drives alone, innovative education approaches alone, IEC and community engagement alone will not be effective. Yet even in combination, these approaches are still limited by income poverty and employment options for most households. Second, the model of joint implementation led by a government official was appropriate for getting government involvement and funding, but closer involvement from UNICEF staff might have strengthened aspects of the implementation and funding. Finally, community- and NGO-led approaches can be very effective, but the effectiveness depends substantially on the strength of the community and NGO (and individuals within them), and on the working relationship with government.

Since the project has ended, we do not make recommendations that are directly applied to this project, but instead recommendations for further attempts to improve child protection in AP and Karnataka. We prioritise five recommendations, the first three for UNICEF and the last two for the government:

- **UNICEF should continue to work with government and NGOs on child protection issues in AP and Karnataka**, because they have not fully been addressed and will take much longer to do so. The model used in this project is largely appropriate, but more direct project management from UNICEF staff (in terms of capitalising on UNICEF's technical expertise on CP, being more rigorous with regard to M&E etc.) and a longer period of engagement will increase the probability of sustainable change;

- for future UNICEF projects, a clear exit and sustainability plan must be designed and carefully implemented, supervised by UNICEF staff;
- **it becomes imperative that a child protection strategy (targeted at eliminating child labour) acknowledges and incorporates the angle of financial constraints on households** that might disable them from adopting favourable child protection behaviours;
- government officials in both states should attempt to replicate, and institutionalise, the integrative practices that were developed around child protection during the project. This is particularly important in tackling government level coordination that may arise during the project duration;
- **inter-district and inter-state linkages will be important in tackling the impacts of child migration**. Since migration occurs across districts and states, this will require the development of comprehensive policies that link social protection scheme across these boundaries.

# Table of contents

Acknowledgements ii
Executive summary iii
Purpose and methodology iii
Key findings iv
Conclusions and Recommendations vii
List of exhibits xi
List of abbreviations xiii
1 Introduction 1
1.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation 1
1.2 Cotton Corridors project 2
1.3 Evaluation context 4
1.4 Defining the problem statement 7
1.5 TOC, key questions and scope of the evaluation 9
1.6 Methodology 13
1.7 Ethics and UNEG standards 25
1.8 Deviations from the TOR 25
1.9 Limitations 26
2 Findings 28
2.1 Relevance 29
2.2 Effectiveness 42
2.3 Efficiency 72
2.4 Sustainability and replicability 76
2.5 Equity and gender 86
3 Conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned 95
3.1 Conclusions 95
3.2 Recommendations 96
3.3 Lessons learned 98
References 106
Annex A Terms of reference 108
Annex B Cotton Corridors project description 119
B.1 Source documents 119
B.2 Project history 119
B.3 Cotton Corridors project (July 2008–December 2014) 121
B.4 Alternative TOC for the evaluation 127
Annex C Background and context to the evaluation 133
C.1 CL in India, AP and Karnataka 133
C.2 Legislative, policy and institutional context 137
Annex D Detailed evaluation matrix and TOC 144
Annex E Methodology and data collection 151
E.1 Evaluation approach 151
E.2 Data collection 152

E.3 Node trees for analysis 154
E.4 Data analysis 159
E.5 Ethics and UNEG standards 160
Annex F List of interviewees and sample villages 164

# List of exhibits

Exhibit 1-1: Evaluation characteristics and their implications ..... 2
Exhibit 1-2: Cotton Corridors project result, objectives, outcomes, and strategies ..... 3
Exhibit 1-3: Cotton Corridors project TOC ..... 9
Exhibit 1-4: TOC structure ..... 9
Exhibit 1-5: Evaluation questions and sub-questions ..... 11
Exhibit 1-6: Tools for data collection by categorised by respondents and interview type ..... 18
Exhibit 1-7: Scale score questionnaire template ..... 18
Exhibit 1-8: Factors used by NGOs to give endline village grading ..... 20
Exhibit 1-9: Criteria for selection of villages ..... 20
Exhibit 1-10: Criteria for selection of respondents ..... 22
Exhibit 2-1: Status of the evaluation criteria ..... 28
Exhibit 2-2: Relevance evaluation questions ..... 29
Exhibit 2-3: UNICEF global strategic priorities and Cotton Corridors project ..... 31
Exhibit 2-4: UNICEF CPAP strategies ..... 33
Exhibit 2-5: Media reports of flooding in Kurnool and Raichur ..... 35
Exhibit 2-6: Perception among community groups about age at which children generally begin work ..... 37
Exhibit 2-7: Community groups' perceptions on the contribution of a child's income ..... 38
Exhibit 2-8: Effectiveness evaluation questions ..... 42
Exhibit 2-9: Cotton Corridors project TOC ..... 43
Exhibit 2-10: Respondents' views of changes in child marriage and labour outcomes ..... 44
Exhibit 2-11: Respondents' views of changes in government schooling ..... 45
Exhibit 2-12: Agricultural seasons and school terms ..... 48
Exhibit 2-13: Views of whether other groups were carrying out child protection activities ..... 54
Exhibit 2-14: Project activities and child work, school and marriage ..... 57
Exhibit 2-15: Respondents' views on group activities ..... 58
Exhibit 2-16: School improvement ..... 65
Exhibit 2-17: Distribution of expenditure, 2008–2011 ..... 74
Exhibit 2-18: Per cent of planned budget that was utilised on particular activities in Year 4 (2012–2013) ..... 75
Exhibit 2-19: Results from a follow-up study of children in five villages ..... 78
Exhibit 2-20: Government orders on maintaining project activities and convergence ..... 80
Exhibit 2-21: Functioning and sustainability of community groups ..... 82
Exhibit 2-22: Equity and gender evaluation questions ..... 86
Exhibit 2-23: 'The earlier a girl gets married, the better' — Scaled responses from community groups ..... 90
Exhibit 2-24: Marital age of boys and girls — Responses from community groups ..... 91
Exhibit 2-25: Membership of CPCs disaggregated by gender ..... 91
Exhibit 3-1: Project objectives, outcomes, and strategies (Phase I Kurnool 2006 proposal) ..... 120
Exhibit 3-2: Project objectives, outcomes, and strategies (Cotton Corridors Kurnool and Raichur, 2011 Project Document) ..... 121
Exhibit 3-3: Input 1: Trainings and meetings ..... 128
Exhibit 3-4: Input 2: Organise and catalyse community groups ..... 129
Exhibit 3-5: Input 3: Support design of activities to improve child protection ..... 130
Exhibit 3-6: Input 4: Collect data on OOSC ..... 132
Exhibit 3-7: Conceptual framework: demand for education, cost and non-cost factors and types of intervention ..... 134
Exhibit 3-8: Children employed in cottonseed production, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka ..... 136
Exhibit 3-9: Integrated Child Protection Scheme Objectives and approaches ..... 139
Exhibit 3-10: UNICEF global strategic priorities in education and child protection ..... 141
Exhibit 3-11: UNICEF global child protection strategic priorities ..... 142
Exhibit 3-12: UNICEF CPAP strategies ..... 143
Exhibit 3-13: Evaluation matrix ..... 145
Exhibit 3-14: Node Tree for Qualitative Data Analysis ..... 155

Exhibit 3-15: Phase 1: Key informant interviewees..... 164
Exhibit 3-16: Phase 2: Key informant interviewees..... 165
Exhibit 3-17: Phase 2: Number of In-depth interviews and focus group discussions ..... 166
Exhibit 3-18: Phase 2: Number of interviews, village-wise list for Kurnool ..... 166
Exhibit 3-19: Phase 2: Number of interviews, village-wise list for Raichur ..... 167

# List of abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AIDS | Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome |
| AP | Andhra Pradesh |
| ASER | Annual Status of Education Report |
| AWC | Anganwadi Centre |
| AWW | Anganwadi Worker |
| BC | Backward Castes |
| BS | Balika Sangha |
| BT | Bacillus Thuringiensis |
| BJP | Bharatiya Janata Party |
| CC | Child Club |
| CDPO | Child Development Project Officer |
| CESS | Centre for Economic and Social Studies |
| CL, CM, CP | Child Labour, Child Marriage, Child Protection |
| CMPC | Child Migration Prevention Centres |
| CPAP | Country Project Action Plan |
| CPC | Child Protection Committee |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisations |
| CV | Community volunteer |
| CWC | Child Welfare Committee |
| DC | District Collector |
| DCPU | District Child Protection Unit |
| DISE | District Information System for Education |
| EUR | Euro |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GEROS | Global Evaluation Report Oversight System |
| Glocal | Glocal Research Services |
| GoAP | Government of Andhra Pradesh |

| | |
|---|---|
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| HM | Head Master/Mistress |
| ICPS | Integrated Child Protection Scheme |
| ICO | UNICEF India Country Office |
| IDI | In-depth interview |
| IEC | Information, Education and Communication |
| ILO | International Labour Organisation |
| JJ | Juvenile Justice |
| JJA | Justice Juvenile (Care and Protection of Children) Act |
| JJB | Justice Juvenile Board |
| KGBV | Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya |
| KII | Key Informant Interview |
| MIS | Management Information System |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MVF | Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation |
| NCLP | National Child Labour Project |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NREGA | National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme |
| NRSTC | Non-Residential Special Training Centre |
| OOSC | Out of School Children |
| OPM | Oxford Policy Management |
| PPE | Policy, Planning and Evaluation |
| RSTC | Residential Special Training Centre |
| RTE | Right to Education |
| SC | Scheduled Caste |
| SERP | Society for Elimination of Poverty |
| SHG | Self-Help Group |
| SJPU | Special Juvenile Police Unit |

| | |
|---|---|
| SMC | School Management Committee |
| SP | Superintendent of Police |
| SSA | Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan |
| ST | Scheduled Tribe |
| STC | Special Training Centre |
| SVK | Sramika Vikas Kendram |
| TOC | Theory of change |
| TOR | Terms of Reference |
| UNDAF | United Nations Development Assistance Framework |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| WCD | Women and Child Development |

# 1 Introduction

The introductory chapter sets out the overall purpose and scope of the evaluation, a description of the project and a brief overview of the context in which the evaluation is set. We go through the proposed structure for the TOC and key questions for the evaluation. We then describe the methodology adopted, ethical considerations, deviations from the original Terms of Reference (TOR) and limitations of the evaluation. Annexes provide the TOR, more detail on the project, context of the evaluation, the evaluation matrix, a detailed description of the methodology and the list of interviewees and sample villages. Fieldwork instruments were made available separately.

## 1.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

UNICEF, with the support of the IKEA Foundation, worked with partners to create and strengthen a protective environment for children with a special focus on child labour elimination in the cotton sector in 17 *mandals* of Kurnool district, AP and 2 *taluks* of Raichur district, Karnataka from 2008–2014.

As the project has concluded, it is important to:

- evaluate the progress made and the challenges faced during the implementation period;
- measure whether the project achieved its objectives and to what extent it was able to achieve the key performance indicators;
- assess the contribution of key strategies and activities implemented to achieve results, and whether they are replicable and sustainable;
- study factors outside of UNICEF's control that may have played a role in whether or not the aforementioned objectives were achieved will be examined

This is important in the context of UNICEF India's Country Programme (2013–2017), where lessons learnt from this and similar interventions will inform the development of a strategic framework for child protection.

UNICEF, October 2015, contracted OPM and its partner, Glocal, to undertake the summative evaluation of the project 'Cotton Corridors: Preventing Exploitation and Protecting Children's Rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka'.

It was agreed with UNICEF colleagues[2] and at the November 2015 meeting of the Evaluation Reference Group[3] that the evaluation will "contribute to the Government and UNICEF's objectives of eliminating (reducing) child labour."

Moreover, the evaluation will "assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the [Cotton Corridors] project and to derive recommendations accordingly. It will also probe whether different aspects of the project are replicable and what pre-existing factors/conditions have to be in place." To achieve this, it will have the characteristics agreed with the Evaluation Reference Group set out in Exhibit 1-1: Evaluation characteristics and their implications.

In terms of key audiences, the inception phase identified the following:

[2] OPM (2015b), Summative Evaluation of UNICEF Cotton Corridors Project: Kickoff workshop report
[3] OPM (2015c), Summative Evaluation of UNICEF Cotton Corridors Project: Evaluation Reference Group meeting – inception phase

- UNICEF India Chief of Child Protection;
- departments in the Governments of AP and Karnataka relevant to child labour (Labour; Education; WCD; Planning);
- UNICEF Hyderabad Chief of Office;
- departments in the Government of India relevant to child labour;
- UNICEF PPE network and Child Protection (CP) network.

Secondary audiences include other policy-makers, UNICEF staff, large-scale CSO networks and researchers working on child labour in India.

**Exhibit 1-1: Evaluation characteristics and their implications**

| Characteristic | Detail | Implication for evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| Rigorous | •High quality technical report subject to peer review and good enough to appear in peer reviewed journals | Internal, GEROS and Reference Group peer review process |
| Independent | •Takes a hard look at the contribution made by UNICEF funding and activities to realities now | Rigorous contribution analysis design and clarity on limitations<br>Evaluation team independent of implementation team |
| Interesting | •Generates important lessons for government and UNICEF on how to reduce child labour | Evaluation questions agreed by both government and UNICEF |
| Persuasive | •Managed and communicated in a way that effectively influences key audiences | Evaluation Reference Group includes key audiences and agrees communications plan |

*Source: Evaluation Reference group; OPM.*

## 1.2 Cotton Corridors project

The project "Cotton Corridors: Preventing Exploitation and Protecting Child Rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka" (henceforth Cotton Corridors) from June 2008 to December 2014, built on an earlier and overlapping phase of project activity ('Phase I', which ran from 2006 to 2009. Cotton Corridors project was operational in 17 *mandals* of Kurnool district in AP[4] and two *taluks* of Raichur district in Karnataka,[5] areas selected due to the large numbers of children employed there. A much longer summary and history of the project is presented in Annex B.

[4] These 17 includes 12 mandals from phase 1 that moved over to Cotton Corridors in 2010
[5] In the targeted sub districts there were an estimated total of 25,000 children outside schools. The targeted mandals are characterised by a high proportion of socially excluded communities: Scheduled Tribes, SCs and BCs who live below the poverty line. Both Kurnool and Raichur are drought prone districts, have little irrigation facilities. Large-scale seasonal migration is also common in both districts.

The project documents show five objectives, achieved through six strategies and three activities, as set out in Exhibit 1-2 below.

**Exhibit 1-2: Cotton Corridors project result, objectives, outcomes, and strategies**

**Long-term result**

*Improved systems and structures for preventing exploitation and protecting children in Kurnool and Raichur districts*

**Objectives:**

- 18,750 of the 25,000 children between 6-14 years old are in school
- 360 upper primary and high schools adopt quality education packages along with other elements of a child friendly school
- 1,500 adolescent girls are equipped with skills to make informed decisions
- 591 collectives for young people function as a common platform and dialogue with key influencers and policy makers
- 4,500 women become leaders, having been equipped with appropriate information and confidence to integrate child protection issues into their activities

**Strategies:**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Awareness and mobilisation | Education and making schools child friendly | Capacity building and systems strengthening including enforcement | Girls Collectives (Balika Sanghas) | Women's empowerment | Review, monitoring and evaluation |

**Activities:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Education | Awareness and mobilisation | Women's empowerment |

*Source: UNICEF India 2011 Revised Project Document. Cotton Corridors project also included an exit strategy not presented here. Long-term result is from the summative evaluation TOR.*

The project's organisation was explicitly arranged to promote convergence with government and sustainability. The District Collector (DC) was head of the project in both districts, with particular responsibility for convergence, amongst other things, and with support from UNICEF. The project was managed by a coordinator jointly identified by the Governments of AP and Karnataka and UNICEF, who headed the Project Support Unit based in district headquarters, and reported to the DC. Concerned UNICEF staff provided technical guidance and a supporting role in overall project implementation. The project involved the Departments of Education, Labour, WCD (responsible in these States for the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)), the police, Child Welfare Committees (CWC), the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), and the Department of Rural Development, amongst others.

The project was implemented by three NGOs in Kurnool (Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation [MVF], Sadhana, and Sramika Vikas Kendram [SVK]) and initially by an NGO in Raichur, though this was later replaced by a team of staff hired specifically for the project.[6] These NGOs/UNICEF teams had CVs operating in each village and *mandal* coordinators. The total budget was EUR 4,794,135 of which EUR 3,732,202, or 78 per cent, was spent. This was largely funded by IKEA Foundation, but, as noted in annual reports, the government and communities also made contributions to activities that are not captured by these figures.

[6] It is not clear why this replacement was made.

## 1.3 Evaluation context

Having briefly summarised the project, we can now explore further, the context in which the evaluation is set. The current section presents the context of the evaluation, covering social, political, economic, demographic, and institutional factors, and including the key strategies, policies, goals, frameworks and priorities at the international and national level, that shaped the project. More detail on this context is provided in Annex C. Many of these contextual factors are picked up throughout the findings, in particular in the section on relevance.

### 1.3.1 Social, economic and political context

We provide a short description of some of the key characteristics of the Cotton Corridors project districts, describe briefly cotton production in India, and then present an overview of key poverty, educational and political trends in India to contextualise the research better.

#### Cotton Corridors project districts

The Cotton Corridors project districts were selected in part because of the high incidence of child labour. Based on what was presented and agreed with the Steering Committee and Reference Group, and our phase 1 interviews with government and UNICEF staff, they appear to have a number of characteristics that contribute to this high incidence:

- **geographical:** they are good cottonseed growing areas, and are isolated from main centres with poor infrastructure and rail connectivity, according to interviewees;
- **weak structures:** according to interviewees, they are border areas with relatively low levels of administrative capacity and distant secondary schools;
- **economic disadvantage:** there is a substantial number of adults who migrate out for work, according to interviewees;
- **labour perceptions:** it is a reasonably common idea that children work faster and longer hours than adults, according to interviewees;
- **socio-economic:** there is a high proportion of SC/ST/BC families. Most households are quite politically aware, according to interviewees;
- **gender disparities:** child marriage (CM) is quite common and affects education for girls, and male labourers often do not like to work in cotton, according to interviewees.

These features are all highly relevant for the design and implementation of the project, as we will discuss below.

#### Cottonseed production[7]

**India is a world leader in both cotton and cottonseed production.** There has been a sharp increase in both the amount of acreage devoted to cotton and cotton yields in recent years. The period between 2003–2004 and 2006–2007 saw one of largest increases in the sector; acreage increased from 7.6 million hectares to 9.1 million hectares, which is an increase of 20 per cent in just 3 years. Yields increased by 25 per cent over the same period, with increased productivity largely attributed to the switch towards Bacillus Thuringiensis (BT) cotton hybrids away from traditional hybrids. BT cotton hybrids are now used in roughly 2/3rds of the total cotton-growing area.

[7] This section draws on our technical proposal and previous literature review work on child labour in cottonseed production (OPM 2010a,b).

Cottonseed production is a very specific type of production and is highly dominated by child labour. Activities are highly localised, with **nearly 35 per cent of total cottonseed production in India being undertaken in just six adjoining districts of two states (AP with 27 per cent and Karnataka with 8.3 per cent) — the Cotton Corridor**. However, cottonseed is also produced in other states around the country and as an industry is characterised by elastic demand — i.e. firms that buy cotton have global reach, can procure from a range of places and are sensitive to price. The high levels of cottonseed production was one of the reasons why the project was implemented in this area, and influenced the way in which the project was carried out.

## Poverty, education and political trends

**India's poverty rate has been falling over the last decades and GDP growth has recently been near 7 per cent per annum**, but as of 2011 21.9 per cent of the population, or 273 million people were recorded as living below the poverty line[8]. Rates of poverty in AP are slightly better than the national average, and in Karnataka are similar. However, there is substantial variation within these states and amongst different social groups.

**School enrolment rates are quite high, with primary gross enrolment hovering around 115 per cent over the last decade, and primary net enrolment at around 93 per cent [9].** Karnataka and AP both have gross enrolment ratios that are slightly below the Indian average[10].

**Learning outcomes in rural India are poor and worsening, as far as the data can tell.** Data from the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) indicate that reading ability in India has fallen over the last eight years, such that 40 per cent of standard III children can read at least a Standard I level text in 2014, where 48 per cent could in 2006. Mathematics ability (proxied by the proportion of standard III children who can do subtraction) is also poor and falling rapidly: from 42 per cent in 2007 to 25 per cent in 2014.[11]

**Learning in rural AP is also concerning**: reading levels hover around similar levels to the national average, although with 46 per cent of Standard III children reading a Standard I level text in 2014 this is slightly better than for all India, and 38 per cent doing subtraction is quite substantially better. Rural Karnataka is similar: 43 per cent of Standard III pupils could read a Standard I text in 2014, and 26 per cent could subtract.

Overall, the low levels of learning from Indian schools are of significant concern, as are the pockets of poor access (including those in the Cotton Corridors project areas). It is likely that these are exacerbated by social exclusion processes around caste and poverty, though the micro-level data required to confirm this within the Cotton Corridors project areas are not available. The low levels of learning make it more difficult for a project to make the case that children should be in school, and reduce the (educational) benefit of them being there, as we discuss below in the section on effectiveness.

During most of the Cotton Corridors project (2009–2014), India was governed by a coalition led by the India National Congress; in 2014, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won the national election. AP was ruled by the India National Congress from 2004 to 2014 (with an election in 2009), until the state was divided into Telangana and AP (led by the Telugu Desam Party). Karnataka was governed by a coalition including the India National Congress between 2004 and 2008, a BJP-led

[8] http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country/IND, accessed December 2015. This is the same poverty estimate as given in the 2015 Millennium Development Goal report for India, available at http://mospi.nic.in/Mospi_New/upload/mdg_26feb15.pdf
[9] http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.NENR/countries/IN-8S-XN?display=graph, accessed December 2015.
[10] See e.g. http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics/SSE_11-12Final.pdf, accessed December 2015.
[11] See http://www.asercentre.org/Keywords/p/236.html for ASER trends over time.

coalition from 2008 to 2013, and a Congress government from 2013. The division of the AP state in particular had significant implications for the way in which the project was implemented and the possibility of achieving sustainability.

### 1.3.2 Legislative, policy and institutional context

#### Government

**The policy framework operationalising child protection laws has been inadequate by the government's own admission**. It has also been developing quite rapidly at the national level. The National Policy for Children (1974 and updated in 2013[12]), National Policy on Child Labour (1987) and National Policy on Education (1986) all acknowledge economic compulsions driving children to work, and address the manifestations of child labour rather than the causes, instituting, for example, bridge schools and non-formal schooling. The National Policy for Children echoes Right to Education (RTE) in stating that "the State shall take all necessary measures to…ensure that every child in the age group of 6–14 years is in school [and that] all OOSC such as child labourers…are tracked, rescued, rehabilitated and have access to their right to education."

Overall, these and other child protection schemes amounted to 0.034 per cent of the total Union Budget in 2006–07 according to the Ministry of WCD, leading to what they called 'glaring gaps in services' and shortcomings in relation to need.

**Partly as a response to these glaring gaps, the ICPS of 2009–2010 was designed to contribute to improvements in the well-being of children in difficult circumstances**, as well as to reduce the vulnerabilities to situations and actions that lead to abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment and separation of children. The introduction of this scheme required a change in the direction of the Cotton Corridors project, and this is explored in more detail in the section on relevance.[13] The ICPS is now arguably the overarching scheme through which child protection issues are addressed, with the RTE the appropriate framework for the provision of education.

Institutionally, this means that the key government departments at state and district level are:

- **women and child development** — the nodal department for ICPS in most state.
- **labour** — the nodal department for preventing children from working;
- education;
- **health** — with responsibility for the health of children.

In addition to this, the Police have a role in enforcing legislation, particularly where children are illegally employed or not in school. *Panchayati Raj* institutions are critical to the delivery of these schemes and services, and in each *gram panchayat* the ICPS requires a CPC is formed to operationalise the community ownership of the scheme. At the district level, DC and magistrate has nominal and practical responsibility for the functioning of each department and for the enforcement of law in the district, and as such is a vital part of the institutional framework. Finally, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights and State Counterparts have been set up since 2007, though this needs further strengthening according to the Twelfth Plan.

**Overall, the complex institutional environment (in terms of multiple laws, policies and implementing bodies) contributes to the fragmentation and comparative ineffectiveness of attempts to reduce child labour and improve child protection outcomes**. Child labour and child protection are complex issues requiring a multi-sectoral response. This is challenging for

[12] Available at http://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/npcenglish08072013.pdf, accessed January 2016.
[13] The ICPS has six specific objectives operationalised through 11 approaches, as presented in Annex B.

many governments and India, AP and Karnataka are not exceptions. One of the difficulties the project faced was to work with and strengthen these complex institutional arrangements to ensure that policies enacted actually translate into services provided and child protection improved.

More on the legislation, policies and institutions around child labour can be found in Section C.2, Annex C.

### UNICEF

**UNICEF's approach to child labour and child protection in India** is circumscribed by the global strategic plans (2006–2013; 2013–2017), global strategies on child protection and the India Country Programme Action Plans (CPAP) (2008–2012; 2013–2017), which in turn are informed by the Government of India's Five Year Plans and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The relationship of the Cotton Corridors project to these plans is discussed in the section on relevance.

**UNICEF's commitment to gender equality and equity** underpins all its work on children's rights. With the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as principal references UNICEF strives to mainstream gender equality in all of its work for children[14]. After a Global Consultation in Istanbul, UNICEF drafted a three-year Strategic Priority Action Plan for Gender Equality: 2010-2012. This plan built on lessons learned, and outlined organizational priorities, activities and benchmarks to advance UNICEF's gender equality efforts. This led to a new gender policy which identifies eight areas of change: accountability and strategic framework; capacity and knowledge; leadership, influence and advocacy; programming; 'doing what we advocate'; partnership; financial resources; and communications[15].

## 1.4 Defining the problem statement

Thus, having set the broad evaluation context, it is imperative to state how UNICEF tried to tackle the challenge of improving child protection outcomes.

The evaluation recognises that the project approached the issues of child labour, CM and lack of schooling as a complex socio-political problem.

At the **community level**, there was a prevalence of CL and CM. CL is a product of both economic distress as well as social acceptance and closely connected with the problem of school dropouts and migration. CM is accepted at the familial level and receives religious sanction.

At the **government level,** there existed no single authority that worked solely on child protection. In part, this was owed to weak legislation on child protection that is detailed in Section 1.3.2**.** This was exacerbated by the fact that the responsibility to protect the child was shared by different departments — the WCD, Labour, Education and Health departments. As a result, weak legislative and government structures meant that the holistic development and protection of children was unlikely to be addressed by a single governing authority.

The Cotton Corridors project was a novel design, in that it worked with both community as well as government to strengthen child protection systems. Through iterative design and implementation,

[14] 'Gender Equality and UNICEF' as sourced from: http://www.unicef.org/gender/gender_57317.html
[15] 'Gender Equality and UNICEF' as sourced from: http://www.unicef.org/gender/gender_57317.html

the project was intended to take a whole-of-systems approach to reducing CL and CM in Karnataka and AP.

The project deployed CVs to raise awareness and provide support at the **village level.** This was done through the help of NGOs in AP and through project staff in Karnataka. Subsequently, these community structures would work together to identify problems around child labour and marriage and work towards reforming the social fabric to enable child protection by changing knowledge and behaviour at the community level to favour child-friendly practices.

At the **government level**, the project created a platform for government to converge on child protection issues. It catalysed government staff through capacity building exercises, support to engage in meetings and funds to carry out activities that were not already covered by government funding.

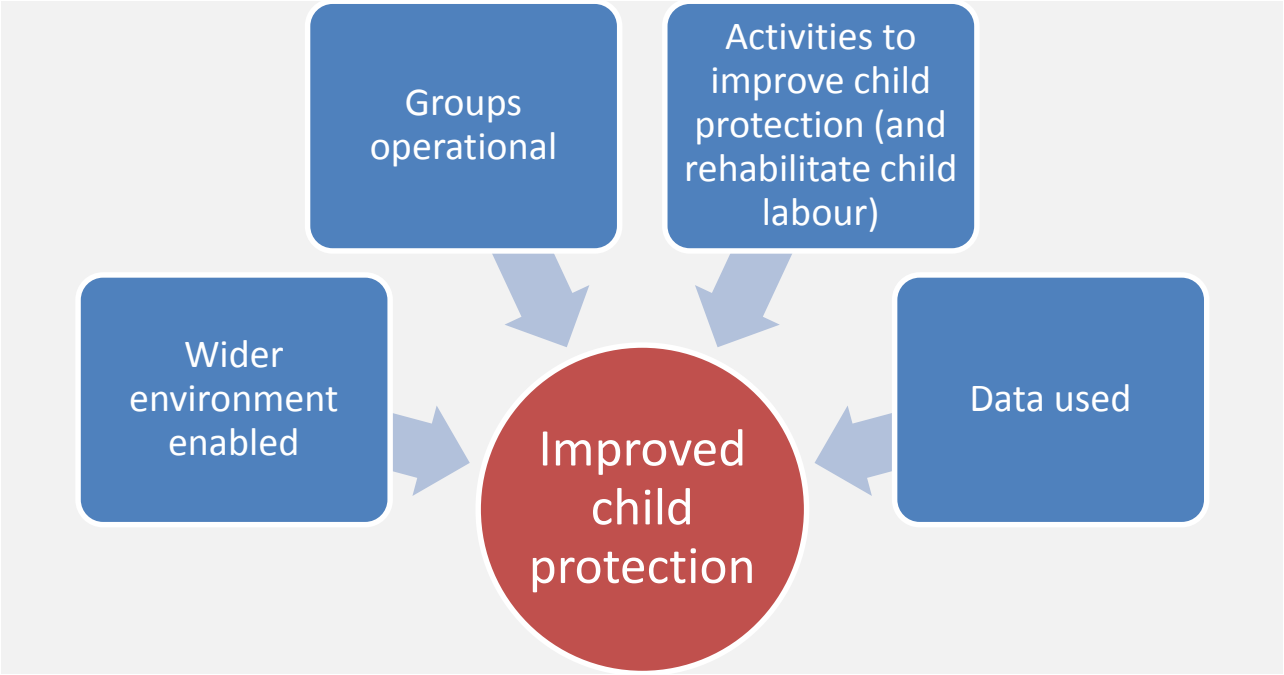
Given that change is gradual and an overhaul of community and government system requires sustained work, the project aimed to develop and strengthen structures to set the pace on child protection with the vision that they would develop and continue to grow in the intervention areas.

**The project had four strands of activities leading to four intermediate outcomes that led to this impact:**

1. Working closely with state, district and block-level government officials and community structures to **create an enabling environment for improved child protection** through engagement, technical assistance, and IEC;
2. **Forming, training and operationalising three types of community groups** in each village (a CPC, a CC, and a Girls' Collective) to work with CVs to identify and address child protection issues in their villages;
3. Collecting, monitoring and agreeing **data on children who are not in school**; and
4. Conducting with government and communities a **set of activities** designed to improve child protection outcomes.

At a very high level, this generates the following TOC:

**Exhibit 1-3: Cotton Corridors project TOC**




*Source: Cotton Corridors Project Inception report.*

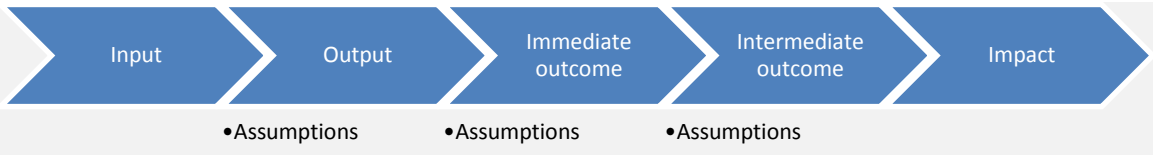
We present a more detailed TOC in Section 2.2 on effectiveness.

## 1.5 TOC, key questions and scope of the evaluation

### 1.5.1 TOC to be used in the evaluation

We now explain the structure of the TOC introduced above. In discussions with the Steering Committee, Reference Group and other key stakeholders, the evaluation team developed a TOC for the project that links inputs to expected impact as follows:

**Exhibit 1-4: TOC structure**




*Source: Cotton Corridors Project Inception report.*

This structure is useful because it makes the project more evaluable. Specifically, it allows us to trace from what IKEA Foundation and UNICEF put into the project (inputs in terms of money and staff time), to an output (e.g. 100 Self Help Group [SHG] leaders trained), to immediate and intermediate outcomes and to what they were expecting to get out of the project (improvements in child protection environments and results). At each stage we identify assumptions that would need to hold in order for the output to lead to the immediate outcome, etc. This builds on the logical framework given in the evaluation TOR, Annex A.

**We propose conceptualising the project as having an (intended) impact of 'improvement in child protection'** proxied by i) reduction in child labour, ii) increase in children in school, and iii) reduction in CM:

- this is an adaptation from the long-term result set out in the evaluation TOR and reproduced above, and a change from the initial project focus on the elimination of child labour in cotton (broadened outside cotton sector employment and to child protection from just child labour). This broadening was agreed with the Reference Group,
- the impact claim here is quite modest in the sense that the expectation is that the project will result in improvements in child protection (CP), not (as in the initial project title) in the complete elimination of child labour (CL), marriage, or poor schooling;[16]
- the impact statement here does not explicitly include the word 'sustainable', the evaluation TOR do ask the question of whether the project was sustainable. Although the TOR do not ask the impact question of whether the project activities led to improvements in child protection that lasted after December 2014, this TOC should allow us to explore whether the intermediate outcomes that contribute to this impact were sustained, and to speculate on whether the key assumptions linking intermediate outcome to impact hold over time.

### 1.5.2 Key evaluation questions

Agreed evaluation questions are set out in Exhibit 1-5, organised around the DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, but adapted to UNICEF's needs for this evaluation to focus on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability & replicability and equity & gender. Within each evaluation criterion, a key evaluation question is presented, and a set of secondary evaluation questions. These questions are intended to be hierarchical: the answer to the secondary evaluation questions will provide the answer to the key evaluation question. These differ slightly from the questions in the TOR, and were agreed with the Evaluation Reference Group and Steering Committee as being more structured. A more detailed description of the evaluation questions and an indicator wise breakup of the secondary evaluation questions has been included in Annex D.

The geographical scope of the evaluation is limited to the project districts of Kurnool and Raichur, and with those we focus on specific villages as set out in the sampling section below. The evaluation also focuses on the population that the project intends to support, specifically children out of school or with limited school attendance as a result of working (especially in cottonseed production), and their families.

[16] The elimination of these things would likely require a much more substantial transformation of the wider economic environment that is beyond the ambit of the project.

## Exhibit 1-5: Evaluation questions and sub-questions

| Evaluation Criterion | Key evaluation question | Secondary evaluation question |
|---|---|---|
| **Relevance** | To what extent were the outputs of Cotton Corridors project consistent with recipients' requirements, country needs, global priorities and UNICEF's policies? | To what extent was the project aligned to global, national and state-specific priorities and if there was a change in priorities was the project able to keep up with changes? |
| | | To what extent was the project aligned to children's needs in selected districts? |
| | | Was the project appropriate in engaging its stakeholders? |
| **Effectiveness** | To what extent were outcomes of the various strands of the Cotton Corridors project successfully achieved? | Based on the project's TOC, which of the activity areas led to the achievement of stated objectives and why? |
| | | Which programmatic activities have been unsuccessful and why? |
| | | Which partnerships, processes and strategies were successful, and which weren't? |
| | | What contribution did UNICEF make to achieving stated objectives and fostering collaboration and convergence? |
| | | What contribution did Government make to achieving stated objectives and fostering collaboration and convergence? |
| **Efficiency** | How economically were resources/inputs converted into results? | Were project results achieved in the most cost efficient way? |
| | | To what extent were partnerships with government and government budgetary outlays utilised to deliver outputs? |
| | | Were resources used efficiently? |
| | | Were outputs delivered on time? |
| **Sustainability and replicability** | To what extent have benefits from Cotton Corridors project continued after UNICEF support has been completed and why, and to what extent are the successes of the project replicable elsewhere? | Which project activities and results have been sustained after the project ended and why? Who has been responsible in sustaining activities? |
| | | Which project activities and results have not been sustained after the project ended and why? |
| | | Which features of the context and the project need to be present to achieve success in other places? |
| **Equity and gender** | To what extent have activities affected marginalised communities, addressed differences in gender, and empowered both girls and boys? | Was the project design and delivery equitable to different groups and gender? |
| | | Did the project achieve the same level of success in different places and with different groups? |
| | | Were there any negative effects felt by any groups? |

*Source: Cotton Corridors Project Inception report.*

### 1.5.3 Limitations of scope

While the five evaluation criteria and questions within them have offered answers of great interest to the government and UNICEF (satisfying the third evaluation characteristic above), the scope of the evaluation was limited in two ways by data and resource constraints.

#### Evaluation criteria we could not explore

- **impact**: The DAC criteria normally include an assessment of impact, but this was explicitly excluded from the scope of this evaluation in UNICEF's initial TOR, because the evaluation was being carried out ex post without the requisite data to assess impact rigorously. The limitations of data, particularly on child protection impacts (such as percentage of children working or marrying or not in school or suffering abuse) and the lack of an effective counterfactual group either in time (e.g. before the project) or in space (e.g. in similar districts) meant that an impact evaluation was not possible. Our approach to effectiveness therefore lead to speculation about the impact of the project on child protection (CP) outcomes, but it was not aimed to provide a rigorous assessment of the contribution of the project to these impact level variables. CP outcomes were taken as the impact of interest even though project log-frames focus on taking children out of work and into school, because the project broadened its scope when ICPS was implemented in 2010. Reducing CL remained a key CP outcome, but impact was also considered to include a reduction in CM and improvement in school attendance and retention. However, data on these impacts was extremely difficult to measure, both because there was limited data on these impacts and because we lacked comparisons, as we have discussed next.

#### Evaluation questions we could not answer

- **rigorous comparisons:** many of the evaluation criteria indicate asking a question about the performance of the project in relation to something else. For example, an efficiency question could ask how efficiently the project reduced CL *in comparison* with another project that tried to reduce CL. Or, impact and effectiveness questions might ask whether CL (or marriage or being out of school) was reduced. However, this would require a comparison with a similar context in order to assess whether this reduction took place only where the project was working or was a general reduction caused by some other factor. The data required to make this comparison were not available, and the possibility of controlling for other factors, was not there. This meant that the scope excluded rigorous comparisons for any sort of question, whether this was related to impact or efficiency or effectiveness. We proposed to mitigate this limitation by working through detailed contribution stories attached to the TOC.

#### Geographical areas and groups we could not explore

- **geographical areas**: the project took place over a wide range of areas in the two districts. Ideally, an evaluation would look at all of those areas and a similar comparison group where the project was not functioning. We were not able to do this due to limitations of time and budget. This meant that we may have missed out some of the diversity within the project areas, both in terms of diverse implementation success and diverse conditions to begin with. We could not have eliminated this problem but have mitigated it through purposive sampling in order to select a diversity of project experience, as we have set out below.

- **groups we could not explore**: Similarly, the project worked with a wide range of social groups, and in the short timeframe for the evaluation, we were not be able to work with all of

them. Again, this could be eliminated but was mitigated through purposive sampling, as detailed in the next section.

## 1.6 Methodology

### 1.6.1 Evaluation approach

**The overall approach to the questions outlined above, as suggested in our technical proposal and building from the TOR, is to use a theory-based approach**. The approach to different evaluation criteria is slightly different, but the overall approach is based on using contribution analysis to assess the contribution that the project has made to changes in key outcomes. As noted above, this does not extend to an assessment of the project's impact, as this is not feasible.[17] However, we propose to use contribution analysis to answer questions on effectiveness, and in implementing this approach, we will also answer key questions on relevance, sustainability/replicability and equity/gender. The approach to answering questions on efficiency uses a slightly different approach, but is consistent with the contribution analysis methodology.

On a reductive level, the effectiveness/impact part of the evaluation is seeking to measure the extent to which the activities under the Cotton Corridors project strengthen the CP system (proxied by the reduction of CL in cottonseed production, the reduction in CM, and the improvement in schooling indicators), and the extent to which this translates into improved public service delivery, and, ultimately, improved child outcomes. In general, this requires analysis to understand whether changes in input and output indicators cause changes in outcome and impact indicators. Measuring these changes is important, but to understand if Cotton Corridors has been effective and had an impact, the influence on these changes needs to be elucidated.

#### Lack of a counterfactual

The TOR for this assignment mentioned the lack of counterfactual as a limitation. Project implementation ended in December 2014, and moreover, the project was not conceived with an impact evaluation ex-ante. Therefore, attributing changes in observed outcomes and impacts to activities under Cotton Corridors will be very difficult. This is because demonstrating attribution requires a valid counterfactual and experimental or quasi-experimental design. As mentioned earlier in the report, since the evaluation was commissioned nine months after the project ended, there was no possibility of a counterfactual. Moreover, the fact that there are many other sorts of processes that will affect the desired outcome (in this case the ICPS, changes to economic and poverty environments that may reduce employers' demand for child workers or households' desire to find jobs for children, ongoing efforts from NGOs and government to improve CP, etc.) need to be accounted for.

Although the TOR does mention that "it is not envisaged that the evaluation team will conduct an endline study. Comparison of data points will be done using studies from baseline, midline, and MIS. No comparison between baseline and endline data will be done". However, also highlighted as a limitation is that we were not able to develop a convincing counterfactual on any indicators due to the unavailability of data, and so were reliant on a somewhat weaker statement of effectiveness than would be possible with a counterfactual. We have mitigated this by constructing a contribution story around effectiveness, using the TOC and its assumptions.

In such circumstances, a more valid approach will be to establish how the Cotton Corridor activities have contributed to observed outcomes and impacts. A robust and recognised methodology for

[17] We are not expecting to produce rigorous evidence on impact due to the methodological limitations noted in the TOR and subsequent documents, although of course this is of interest, so we will collect whatever data may be available on impact to support the contribution story that will focus on effectiveness.

establishing contribution is Contribution Analysis. The approach we describe below is guided by (Mayne 2001). To establish contribution, we have:

### Step 1: Set out the cause-effect issue to be addressed

- acknowledged the causal problem: the hypothesis that the four project areas of activities will lead to sustainable improvements in CP. *This was set out more fully in the sections on the TOC above;*
- scoped the problem: determined the specific causal question being addressed; determined the level of confidence needed in answering the question. *This was set out in the evaluation matrix;*
- explored the nature and extent of the contribution expected. This was difficult to stipulate ex ante but the contribution was largely around the mobilisation of existing institutions (such as government and NGOs), community groups and mechanisms and the provision to these institutions of financial and technical support;
- determined the other key influencing factors. *This was set out above in the context the evaluation was set in;*
- assessed the plausibility of the expected contribution given the intervention size and reach. At this stage, given the feedback from interviewees, this appeared to be a plausible contribution within the project areas.

### Step 2: Developed the postulated theory of change and risks to it, including rival explanations

- set out the postulated TOC of the intervention, including identification of risks and assumptions and links in the TOC. *This was done in the sections on the TOC, building on the interviews and review of literature, and the interactions between the evaluation team, Steering Committee, and Reference Group;*
- identified the roles of the other influencing factors and rival explanations. These were explored while analysing the data, and have been discussed in the findings section of the report;
- determined how contested the postulated TOC was. This was undertaken in the interactions with the Steering Committee and Reference Group, and it has also been discussed further in the section of the evaluation criteria of effectiveness (Section 2.2).

### Step 3: Gather the existing evidence on the theory of change

- assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the links in the theory of change. We spent most of phase 1 articulating a TOC, and gathered further evidence on the TOC, the assumptions behind it, and the links in the chain in phase 2;
- gathered the evidence that existed from previous measurement, past evaluations, and relevant research (1) for the observed results, (2) for each of the links in the results chain, (3) for the other influencing factors, and (4) for rival explanations. *This was done in phase 2.*

### Step 4: Assembled and assessed the contribution claim, and challenges to it

- set out the contribution ‘story’: the causal claim based on the analysis;
- assessed the strengths and weaknesses in the postulated TOC in light of the available evidence, the relevance of the other influencing factors, and the evidence gathered to support rival explanations;
- if needed, refined or updated the TOC.

### Step 5: Sought additional evidence

- determined what kind of additional evidence was needed to enhance the credibility of the contribution claim;
- gathered new evidence.

### Step 6: Revised and strengthened the contribution story

- built a more credible contribution story;
- reassessed its strengths and weaknesses;
- revisited Step 4.

The iterative processes in steps 4, 5 and 6 were conducted through the data collection and analysis in phase 2. As set out in the detailed evaluation matrix (Annex D), the data sources and methods to measure indicators of achievement of objectives and sustainability of activities are related to the TOC.

Questions on **relevance** will largely be approached in a simpler way by comparing the project design, evolution and engagement with policy documents (already partially analysed at the inception phase) and the views of key stakeholders on the project's approach. This is analytically straightforward and builds on the indicators set out in the evaluation matrix.

Questions on **efficiency** are similarly analytically quite straightforward, particularly as the benchmarks available for efficiency are relatively simple. In other words, the comparative projects will generate data only at a highly macro level (the amount spent per year, perhaps on particular activities, and the number of children reached), and the Cotton Corridors project can therefore be evaluated only at a similar macro level. Judgements about the efficiency with which the project leveraged funding will be made to a large extent, on the basis of the perceptions of key stakeholders.

Questions on **sustainability** will be relatively straightforwardly answered because the evaluation takes place more than 12 months after the project closed in December 2014. Just as this presents difficulties for the evaluators in some of the other areas (due to the challenges and veracity of recall and the movement of key informants), it also offers a reasonably easy way to assess sustainability, by simply asking respondents whether structures and outcomes are in place today. Building on this, an evaluative judgement will be made about whether these structures and outcomes are likely to be sustained further into the future. This will build on the contribution analysis set out above and will be couched in the TOC for the project. This links with the questions on **replicability** — which based in the project's TOC and the sample variation generated will generate a set of factors that appear to be necessary for the project's success.

Questions on **equity** and **gender** will be covered using the same evaluative approach; we will explore variable effects of the projects on different social groupings both by sampling different villages (red and green in the project parlance) as well as interviewing individuals from different potentially marginalised groups. We know from the review of literature that CL is more common amongst girls and children from poorer households, often overlapping with socially excluded groups, and so we will ensure in our interviews that we differentiate between girls, boys, poorer and richer households and ST/SC and BC families.

As noted above, the data required to provide a comprehensive account of a) changes in desired outcomes and b) all possible contributory factors to changes in those outcomes are not available, so we focus our evaluation approach by:

- seeking to triangulate different sources of information on changes in CP outcomes, including the perceptions of key stakeholders of how these outcomes are changing;
- seek to explore variations in the way and context in which the project is implemented in order to develop causal explanations of the project's effectiveness and replicability;
- limiting our set of alternative contributory factors to those identified by key stakeholders in our phase 1 analysis and literature review.

As the previous section on limitations of scope (Section 1.5.3) makes it clear, due to the limitations of data, particularly on CP impacts and the lack of an effective counterfactual group, either in time or in space, meant that an impact evaluation was not possible.

Though, we did collect and have presented the results of analysis of the scale scores of 144 community groups (the sampling strategy of these has been discussed further in Section 1.6.3). These results were representative only of the chairs interviewed, not of a wider population.

### Cost analysis

In the section on evaluation findings, Section 2.3 on efficiency analyses the economy with which resources were converted into results. This does not discuss allocative efficiency (i.e. whether the most vital activities were spent on — this is covered more under relevance) but focuses instead on whether spending was on time and in full, and whether the project was able to leverage additional funding from government.

The scope of questions under efficiency is limited by the availability of data — particularly comparative financial data — and the limited rigour with which additionality can be claimed.

In the inception report, we suggested that we could compare the cost of this project with the cost of other projects if those data were provided by UNICEF. These costing data haven't been received at this point, so this comparison has not been carried out.

The methodology has been discussed in greater detail in Annex E.

## 1.6.2 Data sources

There are three broad sources that the analysis has referred to: documents, data and the views of different stakeholders.

The **documents** cover:

- documents about the Cotton Corridors project and related baselines and midlines, shared by UNICEF and project partners, in order to establish what the project did and whether this has been effective;
- additional documents setting out government spending and financing positions in order to establish the efficiency and effectiveness of the project;
- other documents covering the policy positions of government and UNICEF (listed in Section B.1 and available online as a matter of public record) in order principally to assess the relevance of the Cotton Corridors project;
- other background documents, including publicly research reports (such as the Young Lives and other academic research) and evaluations of other UNICEF projects to be supplied by the UNICEF team, in order to assess relevance and make some sorts of comparisons with other projects on efficiency and effectiveness.

The evaluation matrix relied on many of these documents supplied by UNICEF, and this was agreed in the Evaluation Reference Group meeting.

The names of documents that have been referred to have been listed in Section B.1, Annex B.

There is always an evaluative judgement to be made on the reliability of some documents, and (in the case of budgets and strategic plans) their links with what actually takes place. Where relevant, the evaluation has commented on the likely veracity of information contained in documents, and triangulated with information gleaned from other data sources.

The evaluation used **data** from various sources:

- project Management Information System (MIS) data was used for sampling and to make a judgement on the number of children out of school. The validity of these data was difficult to establish firmly, but was strengthened by the collective process that the project went through to generate them. The coverage of this MIS data was partial — data in Raichur are much less universal and there was weak coverage of data over time. Both gaps were significant limitations of the evaluation;
- data from government sources on education statistics (District Information System for Education [DISE] data) and population (census data). These data sources were important for sampling and for establishing context (for relevance and replicability). However, neither data source was sufficiently well disaggregated or regular or linked with project data to be of great value. For example, project data used a different location code to census and DISE data, so it was not possible to generate with any sort of confidence a data set of the proportion of children out of school over the duration of the project. This meant, for example, that we could not track impact indicators in project areas and non-project areas in order to support a contribution story. We therefore did not include substantial DISE and census data in the evaluation matrix, relying instead on secondary project and qualitative data;

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- data from government administrative processes and records, such as school attendance data, *panchayat* meeting data and expenditure data. These data sources were difficult to obtain and mixed in their reliability. The evaluation matrix did not therefore rely on them to answer key evaluation questions.

The final group of data sources in the evaluation matrix was **key stakeholders**, a range of individuals that were involved in some way in the project, whether as implementers or participants or as external experts. It was here that the bulk of our data collection efforts will focus. The remainder of this methodology section explored how we will select and interview these key stakeholders (using both in-depth qualitative interviews, semi-structured questionnaires and FGDs). These sources were used where the data above were absent and in order to triangulate the secondary data.

The proposed list of data sources was translated into tables that map data sources, data collection methods and the indicators that they will yield. This has been set out in the exhibits in Annex D, with the exhibit below summarising the respondents and type of interview.

### Exhibit 1-6: Tools for data collection by categorised by respondents and interview type

| Interview type | Respondent type | |
|---|---|---|
| **Focus group discussion** | • Child Clubs (CC)<br>• Children 5–9 in school<br>• Children 10+ in school | • Child Protection Committees (CPC)<br>• Balika Sanghas (BS) |
| **In-depth interview** | • Children<br>• CVs<br>• Employers | • Parents (of the children interviewed)<br>• Priests<br>• Teachers |
| **Key-informant interview** | • Govt. staff at district level<br>• NGO/project staff at district level<br>• Police at district level | • Experts at state level<br>• Govt. staff at state level<br>• UNICEF staff at state level |
| **Scale score questionnaire** | • CC chair<br>• CPC chair | • BS chair |

### Exhibit 1-7: Scale score questionnaire template

The exhibit above shows a scale score questionnaire being administered to a CC. To make the exercise clearer, a laminated sheet with the scale options was shared with the respondent. After being asked a statement, the respondent was then asked to point to an option s/he deemed appropriate.

Two points are worth noting about the annex exhibits:

- there are four broad data collection methods: desk review (we have separated out the documents that UNICEF provided), FGDs, IDIs and key informant indicators (KIIs). The table is structured around these data collection methods. Under each data collection method is more detail on the data source (such as project documents or state and district policy documents, parents, or experts). Under each data source is the indicator that was collected from it.
- this incorporates both the indicators from the matrix and from the TOC.

As a follow up, the Glocal field teams collected additional data on the number of children mainstreamed during the project. This was done in a sample of five villages in Kurnool; including villages designated as red and green villages. Some of the findings of this data have been captured in the section on sustainability (Section 2.4).

We now go on to explore the sampling, data collection and analysis methodologies in more detail.

### 1.6.3 Sampling strategy

This section outlines how we sampled for the data collection tools listed above, to obtain the indicators outlined in the exhibits in Annex D. The sampling approach was as follows:

#### Village selection

First we selected villages purposively to reflect the three factors as being likely crucial factors to project success: i.) a diversity of project experience in terms of success and failure; ii.) the NGO implementing the project, and iii.) initial conditions.

To do this, we categorised villages by the grading initially given to them by the project before starting (i.e. at baseline). This was divided into three categories:

- red for villages containing more than 100 children out of school;
- yellow for villages with between 50 and 100 children out of school; and
- green for villages with less than 50 children out of school.

Ideally, we would have liked to reclassify these villages in terms of the proportion of children out of school, but data on child population were not available for all villages so we had to retain the initial classification. However, when we drew the sample, we did not select red villages with a low proportion of OOSC (where we had measurements of this).

In Raichur, this categorisation was not possible because we did not have baseline data on the number of OOSC for all the villages, so NGO grading combined with available data were used instead (see pilot report).

Next, we asked each implementing NGO to give an endline rating of red, yellow and green based on whether or not they have been successful. This grading was subjective but based on their view of the following factors in the village. We then retained villages that were red (denoted ‘failure’) and green (‘success’).

### Exhibit 1-8: Factors used by NGOs to give endline village grading

| Factors determining the success or failure of a village (judged by NGOs) | |
|---|---|
| • Out of school children<br>• Child labour<br>• Child marriage<br>• Influence of stakeholders | • Community response towards Child protection<br>• Right providers<br>• Awareness regarding Child rights |

*Source: Cotton Corridors project staff team*

This purposive selection generated a list of villages with each categorised by i) NGO that operated there, ii) baseline conditions, and iii) endline conditions. From this list, we sampled 48 villages for fieldwork, divided as per the exhibit below.[18]

### Exhibit 1-9: Criteria for selection of villages

| Baseline grading of village | Endline grading of village | SVK Kurnool | Sadhana Kurnool | MVF Kurnool | UNICEF Raichur | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Green | Success | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 |
| | Fail | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 |
| Yellow | Success | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 |
| | Fail | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 |
| Red | Success | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 |
| | Fail | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 |
| **Total** | | **12** | **12** | **12** | **12** | **48** |

*Source: Authors*

As per our initial hypotheses about the project's TOC, this sampling gave us some diversity of experience. However, we note that the purposive sampling was not aimed to generate information that was representative of the project areas — that was not possible given the resources available for the evaluation and the diversity of contexts within which the evaluation took place. Representative sampling was not envisaged in the TOR. Rather, the evaluation has generated information that is indicative, and was sufficient to populate the contribution stories.

In all 48 villages, we interviewed the chair of the three community groups supported by the project (the CCs, the CPC, and the BSs) using a scale questionnaire.

We further focused the remainder of our fieldwork on the 16 villages that were red at baseline (i.e. with more than 100 OOSC at baseline), as highlighted in the exhibit above. We focused on these villages because they were those with the greatest need at the time of baseline, and where the project would have focused its resources as well.

In these 16 red villages, in addition to the scale interviews above, also conducted in-depth interviews and FGDs with the respondents listed above.

The final village sample has been presented in Exhibit 3-18 and Exhibit 3-19.

## Respondent selection

The second sampling stage is the selection of respondents. We present in the exhibit below, our approach to selecting each type of respondent, the tools we used, the number of villages where we

[18] Note that this approach to sampling also allows us to say something about the relevance of the project (did the project focus on villages where need was greatest in terms of proportions out of school?) and success (how many 'red' villages at baseline ended up being green or yellow at endline?). We will discuss this in the analysis section below.

intended to talk to them, the number of interviews or group discussions that were supposed to be held in each village, and the way in which we sampled these respondents. Overall, this implied:

- 64 focus group discussions (with CC, CPC and BS members, and children in 16 villages);
- 144 scale questionnaires (with CC, CPC and BS chairs in 48 villages);
- 192 in-depth interviews in 16 villages; and
- 19 in-depth interviews at district and state level.

The actual number of interviews that took place in each village sometimes differed slightly from the proposed sampling numbers; these have been presented in Exhibit 3-17. This was because of the non-availability of a particular respondent in the village.

Overall, as we explored in the pilot and set out in the pilot report, we proposed to sample using two types of process: i) a pre-established list of OOSC and other individuals from the MIS data shared by UNICEF (where this existed), and ii) asking locally to undertake a form of snowball sampling through children, teachers, AWWs and so on.

We also conducted interviews with government officials at the state and district level, local NGO and project staff who worked on project implementation, UNICEF staff and key experts. The name and details of these respondents are presented in Exhibit 3-16, Annex F.

The purposive selection criterion we followed aligned with the purpose of the evaluation, which was to evaluate the progress of the Cotton Corridors project, and to assess the contribution that the project had made to changes in key CP outcomes. Thus, at the sampling stage, greater importance was given to village grading, rather than stratifying on other factors. Stratifying the sample on the basis of factors, such as, socio-economic features of the project locations or gender and equity considerations were not seen to be the primary focus. Moreover, these factors were not used as ex ante sampling criteria because the data for this were not available. That said, wherever possible, within the sampling categories, children were chosen from different caste and religions in order to add more variation to the sample.

## Exhibit 1-10: Criteria for selection of respondents

| Respondent | Tool | Number of villages | Interviews per village | Total | Sampling approach |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CCs** | FGD | 16 | 1 | 16 | CCs convened with assistance of schools using contacts provided by UNICEF. Up to eight members of the clubs participated in a focus group. |
| **Children 5-9** | FGD | 8 | 1 | 8 | 5–9 year olds were selected from the school with the help of the teacher, were largely in-school children. FGD was conducted in one success and one fail village per NGO. |
| **Children 10+** | FGD | 8 | 1 | 8 | 10+ year olds were selected from the school with the help of the teacher, were largely in-school children. FGD was conducted in one success and one fail village per NGO. |
| **CPCs** | FGD | 16 | 1 | 16 | CPCs were convened with the assistance of the *panchayati* members using contacts provided by UNICEF. Up to eight members of the CPC participated in an FGD. |
| **BSs** | FGD | 16 | 1 | 16 | BSs were convened with the assistance of local leadership using contacts provided by UNICEF. Up to eight members of the BS participated in an FGD. |
| **Children** | IDI | 16 | 4 | 64 | Selected three categories of children in each village: i) one child who remained in school up to 14, was selected with the help of teachers and pre-existing lists, ii) two children aged 11+ who had moved from work to school under the auspices of the project and stayed in school, and iii) one child aged 11+ who continued to work, or had moved from work to school under the auspices of the project and then gone back to work. These children would have been at least 5 when the project started. Children of type ii) and iii) were likely to have been working and in case required, were interviewed at or near fields. We ensured that from each village there was at least one child from a marginalised area/group and that there was in each village, a balance of girls and boys (two each). Respondents were selected using a random walk and check of knowledge of the project. |
| **CVs** | IDI | 16 | 1 | 16 | No sampling was required — interviewed volunteer. |
| **Employers** | IDI | 8 | 1 | 8 | One employer from each success and fail village per NGO was selected; anyone who was willing to be interviewed. |
| ***Sarpanch*** | IDI | 16 | 1 | 16 | No sampling was required — interviewed *sarpanch* or if unavailable, their deputy. |
| **Parents** | IDI | 16 | 4 | 64 | Parents of selected children, were interviewed. Mothers got first preference; fathers if the former were not available. |
| **Priests** | IDI | 8 | 1 | 8 | One priest from each success and fail village per NGO was selected; anyone who was willing to be interviewed. |
| **Teachers** | IDI | 16 | 1 | 16 | Teacher in the government school, who was most aware of the project and volunteers, was interviewed. |
| **CC chair** | Scale | 48 | 1 | 48 | No sampling was required — interviewed chair or if unavailable, their deputy. |
| **CPC chair** | Scale | 48 | 1 | 48 | No sampling was required — interviewed chair or if unavailable, their deputy. |
| **BS chair** | Scale | 48 | 1 | 48 | No sampling was required — interviewed chair or if unavailable, their deputy. |

*Source: Cotton Corridors pilot report*

### 1.6.4 Fieldwork

The questions for the interviewees were developed by taking the indicators required from each data source in the evaluation matrix and from the detailed TOC and turning these into question areas. These questions were piloted from the 4th–8th January 2016, and revised and updated in the final pilot report. For some respondents (such as the police, priests and employers), we used the pilot phase as an opportunity to explore the feasibility of obtaining information on this sensitive topic, and found that it was possible.

Fieldwork was conducted by two Glocal teams (one for each state) with support and supervision from OPM staff (who conducted more of the interviews that could be done in English). Rigour was improved using the following steps:

- extensive piloting of the research tools (4th–8th January) and subsequent revisions (revised versions were attached to the pilot report;
- extensive training of the (qualified) research teams;
- close supervision of data collection by research teams, including having two interviewers conducting groups together and having OPM staff sitting in initial interviews and producing feedback to researchers on performance and how to improve. UNICEF Steering Committee and Reference Group members were also invited to participate in training and data collection, in order both to learn about the evaluation and to support this supervision function;
- recording interviews and groups where appropriate. These were not expected to be used for transcriptions in each case but to ensure that researchers had access to recordings to deepen analysis;
- interviews and discussions were held in the preferred language of the participant;
- Clear permissions and informed consent was obtained for each research participant (see Section 1.7 on ethics);
- daily debriefs with research teams to cross-check emerging themes and direct interviews and research focus were during days of fieldwork. This peer cross-check supported rigour and creativity within the research teams;
- researchers were encouraged to make observations about context and, building on their previous knowledge, used this to feed into their discussions in daily debriefs;
- the fieldwork experiences were recorded as part of the thick description of the methods and the context that supported rigour in qualitative research.[19]

### 1.6.5 Data analysis

Data analysis for primary qualitative data and documents followed the structure of the evaluation matrix, using the analytical ‘nodes’ that were identified above (a structured approach to analysis), together with nodes that emerged during fieldwork or analysis (an unstructured approach), to code the evidence collected. The full set of nodes used has been presented in Annex E.3.

The analytical process started in the field with regular debriefs, but continued in such a way to maximise rigour. This meant:

- using coding sheets that are intuitive in order for peers to review and reanalyse;
- having peer checks where different members of the research team check each other’s work and peer review during the analytical process. This was greatly facilitated by the research team

[19] OPM are developing a guidance note on rigour in qualitative research that has been used in draft to guide this approach.

working together from OPM's Delhi office and being able to check interpretations with the Glocal team through regular calls;

- ensuring that we adhere to professional ethics of integrity and truthfulness in the interpretation of data. This was critical in order to adhere to our own ethics, to UNEG guidelines, and to maintain the evaluation characteristic of independence.

We have also analysed secondary data as we set out in the evaluation matrix. This included an analysis of the MIS data where possible, and existing project documentation.

Analysis of the data collected was conducted using 'Dedoose' — a cross-platform software that enables several researchers to work together to analyse qualitative and mixed methods data. Prior to developing a bespoke coding platform for the Cotton Corridors project, the evaluation team created a framework for analysis. This framework was based on the project TOC. It was a guide that enabled analysts to break down data collected into small themes such as CL or CM and then aggregate them again, to study them across respondent identifiers such as type of respondents (teachers or chairs of clubs) or according to project area (Kurnool or Raichur).

The framework also formed the basis of a code-book. A code book is a guide for analysts on how to interpret data and organise it. The code-book is developed in collaboration with all the analysts working on the project and is an iterative process. Each 'code' is a bucket into which data is dropped. Within the code, there are smaller 'nodes' that are lower in the hierarchy. Data can be further disaggregated and dropped into smaller nodes. This hierarchy of codes is also called a node-tree.

Each interview was given a unique identity number, then, the respondent of the interview was marked according to their identity — such as type of respondent, age of respondent, sex of respondent etc. The interview was, then, read and the responses were broken down and dropped into the 'code' buckets on Dedoose. Often, more than one code was applied to the same response.

Once all the interviews were coded, the software enabled us to run an analysis to break down and regroup the data based on themes identified in the TOC. This data was read, and when required, further analysis was conducted through the software for greater clarity.

This led to a write up that included a thick description of methods and context. Results were written up, with emphasis on presenting an equitable view, without quantifying responses or an over-representation of a single respondent or respondent type.

The data collected for the evaluation has been analysed to present conclusions on overall trends and patterns, including where respondents disagreed. We have tried to illustrate these viewpoints through quotes that represent them — in order to make bring out the richness in data. Throughout the section on findings, the selection of individual quotes was made on the basis of their ability to represent a point.

Rigour was improved through an internal peer review process as well as the subsequent external peer review process that will take place and has been set out by the Reference Group and IRB.

## 1.7 Ethics and UNEG standards

Our approach to the evaluation was based on the Norms for Evaluation for the UN system, and the Standards that in turn derive from them.[20] This underpinned our approach to ethics, which was also governed by OPM's own Institutional Review Board (IRB).

There are four broad areas of UNEG standards. The institutional framework and management of the evaluation function refers principally to arrangements made by UNICEF for the management of the evaluation and we believe that these standards were met, including in the governance arrangements for this evaluation that we have outlined below. The second area, competencies and ethics, was ensured by the procurement process for the selection of the OPM/Glocal team to conduct the evaluation, and by the ethical processes below. The third area, on conducting evaluations, includes a set of standards that are detailed in this report. Finally, we adhere to the reporting standards. We expect that the GEROS peer review process will provide an independent check that these standards are adhered to.

Both the evaluation team and the IRB were clear that the participation of children in research was particularly sensitive and at all times the rights of children were respected, as were the rights of all research participants. The four UNEG ethical standards are:

- evaluators should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relationships with all stakeholders;
- evaluators should ensure that their contacts with individuals are characterised by respect;
- evaluators should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual information; and
- evaluators are responsible for their performance and conduct.

A large part of the respect of these ethical standards involves simply upholding our own standards of professionalism and good conduct. But in addition, there are some practical steps that we took. These have been discussed in detail in Annex Section E.5.

## 1.8 Deviations from the TOR

We have already set out the deviations from the TOR where they have arisen. These deviations were not substantial, and were agreed, in terms of scope and the formulation of questions, by the Reference Group and Steering committee. This has been described above. Here, we note the deviations from the TOR in terms of evaluation methodology and approach:

- we amended the number of interviews and FGDs, to generate more feasible analysis given the time available. This was in line with our technical proposal and the methodology we have discussed at the initial workshop and with the Reference Group;
- we also proposed a substantial quantitative component to the questions that was not present in the initial TOR. This was again in line with our technical proposal and was to enable greater analytical traction and to gain a stronger approach to cross-case variation in order to test replicability and explore effectiveness using contribution stories. This was again discussed with the Steering Committee;
- we, with the agreement of the Reference Group, reformulated the ToC as outlined above. This changed slightly the approach to the evaluation matrix and indicators, but was not substantial.

[20] http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/22, accessed November 2015.

## 1.9 Limitations

We have noted throughout, the limitations to the evaluation approach. We have briefly summarised them here, together with our chosen mitigation strategies for each:

- we were not able to develop a convincing counterfactual on any indicators due to the unavailability of data, and so were reliant on a somewhat weaker statement of effectiveness than would have been possible with a counterfactual. We mitigated this by constructing a contribution story around effectiveness, using the TOC and its assumptions;
- we were reliant on obtaining data from UNICEF and government for significant parts of the evaluation, but particularly the efficiency questions that required budget documents and evaluations of similar projects. Without these data available in a format that could be compared sensibly, the answers to these questions were weak. This was a risk. We mitigated this by working closely with UNICEF, who planned to obtain the data from the government.
- the sampling was designed to maximise variation in cases but did not amount to a sample that was representative of the project areas (or anything else). This was in our view the best approach to a rigorous evaluation of the project. Even though it did not allow us to make strong statements from a statistical point of view, it allowed us to draw inferential conclusions instead;
- the fieldwork took place over a year after the project closed (in December 2014). This presented a good opportunity to look at sustainability but made it more complex to review changes that took place during the project from 2008–09 to 2014. This was difficult for accurate recall but also to find all individuals who were relevant to the project and evaluation. This may have led to gaps or uncertainties in our analysis. We tried to mitigate this by using a range of documentation and interviewees, but it was not possible to remove entirely;
- in addition, CL and CP are sensitive topics and though the study had high quality researchers, not all respondents were willing to talk. For some groups, including the police, priests and employers, we used the pilot to assess feasibility, while piloting other tools. As a result of the pilot, we were more confident that we would be able to talk to these groups, working closely with our experienced fieldwork partners;
- overall, there were challenges in accessing the data on the key outcome and the data's applicability to the evaluation was limited. The data availability was somewhat better in Kurnool due to the MIS. Raichur had a baseline and midline report, but these were not directly comparable, and Kurnool had no equivalent pre-project baseline but had a midline report. Government data from DISE and the census were not sufficiently disaggregated and coded to be used directly to measure changes in key indicators. We were thus reliant on the (recalled) views of key stakeholders, triangulated with suggestions from data where possible. This was comparatively weak but the strongest available to the evaluation team;
- access to, and meetings with, key informants was facilitated by UNICEF. This was true in both states. It is plausible that facilitation by UNICEF could have biased their responses.

# 2 Findings

The chapter is structured by the evaluation criteria and broadly follows the evaluation matrix structure. Under each section, findings are guided by project documentation, evidence from interviews and field insights. We have tried to answer evaluation and secondary evaluation questions as closely as possible. That said, even though we intended to capture information about particular indicators through our data collection instruments, respondents have not always provided responses to capture evidence for these indicators.

Based on the evidence detailed out in the rest of the chapter, we begin by assessing the impact of the Cotton Corridors project by giving an overall ranking of the evaluation criteria. The table below sets out headline answers to evaluation questions. Green cells are fully achieved, yellow partly achieved, and red not well achieved.

Throughout the report, while interpreting responses that respondents have given, it is important to remember that they have often used 'UNICEF' and the 'project team' interchangeably. This happened because the respondents often identified the Cotton Corridors project as the 'UNICEF project'.

**Exhibit 2-1: Status of the evaluation criteria**

| Evaluation Criterion | Key evaluation question | Secondary evaluation question |
|---|---|---|
| Relevance | To what extent were the outputs of Cotton Corridors consistent with recipients' requirements, country needs, global priorities and UNICEF's policies? | To what extent was the project aligned to global, national and state-specific priorities and if there was a change in priorities was the project able to keep up with changes? |
| | | To what extent was the project aligned to children's needs in selected districts? |
| | | Was the project appropriate in engaging its stakeholders? |
| Effectiveness | To what extent were outcomes of the various strands of the Cotton Corridors project successfully achieved? | Based on the project's Theory of Change, which of the activity areas led to the achievement of stated objectives and why? |
| | | Which programmatic activities have been unsuccessful and why? |
| | | Which partnerships, processes and strategies were successful, and which weren't? |
| | | What contribution did the project team make to achieving stated objectives and fostering collaboration and convergence? |
| | | What contribution did Government make to achieving stated objectives and fostering collaboration and convergence? |
| Efficiency | How economically were resources/inputs converted into results? | Were project results achieved in the most cost efficient way? |
| | | To what extent were partnerships with government and government budgetary outlays utilised to deliver outputs? |
| | | Were resources used efficiently? |
| | | Were outputs delivered on time? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Sustainability and replicability** | To what extent have benefits from Cotton Corridors continued after the project team support has been completed and why, and to what extent are the successes of the project replicable elsewhere? | Which project activities and results have been sustained after the project ended and why? Who has been responsible in sustaining activities? |
| | | Which project activities and results have not been sustained after the project ended and why? |
| | | Which features of the context and the project need to be present to achieve success in other places? |
| **Equity and gender** | To what extent have activities affected marginalised communities, addressed differences in gender, and empowered both girls and boys? | Was the project design and delivery equitable to different groups and gender? |
| | | Did the project achieve the same level of success in different places and with different groups? |
| | | Were there any negative effects felt by any groups? |

*Source: OPM*

## 2.1 Relevance

Evaluation questions for effectiveness are set out in the exhibit below.

### Exhibit 2-2: Relevance evaluation questions

| **Relevance: Key evaluation question** |
|---|
| To what extent were the outputs of Cotton Corridors project consistent with recipients' requirements, country needs, global priorities and UNICEF's policies? |
| **Relevance: Secondary evaluation questions** |
| • To what extent was the project aligned to global, national and state-specific priorities and if there was a change in priorities was the project able to keep up with changes?<br>• To what extent was the project aligned to children's needs in selected districts?<br>• Was the project appropriate in engaging its stakeholders? |

*Source: Cotton Corridors project evaluation matrix.*

We answered these questions by:

- **examining Cotton Corridor's project documentation** to identify design aspects directed at ensuring equity in project execution;
- **conducting a detailed literature review** on global and national policy frameworks on CP, UNICEF's country action plans and legislation in India including the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, the Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act (JJA) and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006;
- **seeking evidence** on the achievement of impact, intermediate outcome, immediate outcome and output indicators, and the validity of assumptions in the TOC;
- **exploring the perceptions of key stakeholders** on different aspects of the project.[21]

[21] The inception report contains the agreed theory of change (reproduced in the introduction above and described in detail in Annex B) and the evaluation matrix (reproduced in Annex D) which contains details of data sources and key stakeholders.

This section explores the extent to which the Cotton Corridors project was consistent with requirements of boys and girls, especially through global priorities as stated in the MDGs and SDGs and legislative frameworks, India's immediate policy requirements, and UNICEF's policies.

Analysis of the project design finds that Cotton Corridors project closely aligns with current (and past) international and national priorities to protect the rights of children. The project engaged government to work together to address CL and child CM in the project areas. In addition, the project drew on the institutional strengths of each district it worked in and engaged key stakeholders in CP.

### 2.1.1 Was the project aligned to global, national and state-specific priorities?

#### 2.1.1.1 Aligning to Global priorities on CP

**Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals**

**The Cotton Corridors project aligns with specific Millennium Development Goals** (MDG)[22] that were drafted in 2000 and so are more applicable to the project design. Since then, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)[23] have been formed and we compare the ongoing relevance of the project design against current global goals, too[24].

The project aligned with two MDGs. These are:

- **MDG 2**: that aimed to **'achieve universal primary education'** and ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. The project's emphasis on enrolling OOSC and mainstreaming dropouts and irregular students back into school, especially through CCs as well as the contribution to Residential STCs reflects a close alignment with this MDG;
- **MDG 3**: that aimed to **'promote gender equality and empower women'** by eliminating gender disparity in education. The project's efforts in designing BSs to counsel girls and mainstream students as well the drive to reduce CM speak to this MDG.

In order to evaluate if the design of the project continues to be relevant to global priorities, we compare the project to the three SDGs that speak to the needs of young and vulnerable children. We find that project goals are aligned to the SDGs that aim to eliminate CL, CM and gender disparities in education.

- **SDG 4:** that aims to '**ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all'** by eliminating gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to education and vocational training. As mentioned above, the project's goals continue to be relevant to global priorities of improving access to education;
- **SDG 5** that aims to **'achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'**. Specifically, it seeks to eliminate harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. The project's efforts to reduce CM continue to align with this goal;
- **SDG 8** that aims to **'promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all'**. An integral part of this goal is to

[22] http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/ [last accessed on 04.05.2016]
[23] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs [last accessed on 04.05.2016]
[24] Since the project was formulated before the SDGs were drafted, we do not evaluate the project against the SDGs.

ensure that countries prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of CL and by 2025 end CL in all its forms, which was the foundation of the Cotton Corridor Project.

#### 2.1.1.2 Following UNICEF's global and country-specific plans

UNICEF's global medium-term strategic plan (2006–2013 and strategic plan (2013–2017), define the organisation's approach to CL and CP and the India CPAP (2008–2012; 2013–2017). The CPAP is also informed by the Government of India's Five Year Plans and the UNDAF. This section briefly summarises those plans and strategies.

Globally, UNICEF is mandated to promote the rights of every child. Practically, UNICEF's global strategic plans set out UNICEF's engagement in key areas of health, education, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and AIDS, and CP (and now nutrition). The 2014–2017 plan is also specific about priorities within education and CP.

We tracked the evolution of the Cotton Corridors project through a detailed literature review of Kurnool and Raichur Annual Progress Reports from 2010–2014 and the Final Project Report 2015 and mapped project activities against UNICEF global priorities below. We find that the key elements of the project correspond closely with UNICEF's overarching agenda in education and CP.

**Exhibit 2-3: UNICEF global strategic priorities and Cotton Corridors project**

| Global priorities in education | Cotton Corridor's activities |
|---|---|
| Improved learning outcomes and equitable and inclusive education | |
| System strengthening to provide multiple and alternative pathways for disadvantaged children | Supported formation of CPC, BS and CC that in turn improved child protection at the village level.<br>Designed age appropriate education intervention up to 18 years of age for all vulnerable children specifically enable enrolment of children and adolescents into RSTCs, NRSTCs, National Child Labour Project (NCLP) schools, *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas* (KGBVs), open schools and skill training programmes |
| Innovations with potential to improve education outcomes for marginalised children | Held training sessions for group leaders and members on education (as well as CP) and group operations |
| Generate knowledge and data on education disparities | Created an up to date database on out of school children |
| *Source: UNICEF 2014* | Source: Cotton Corridors project Annual Progress Reports 2010– 2014, Final Report 2015 |

| Child protection | Cotton Corridor's activities |
|---|---|
| Improved and equitable prevention of and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children. | |
| Strengthening child protection systems | Developed community structures such as the CPC that closely involved the *Sarpanch*, AWC, teachers and police |
| Taking account of interplay between child protection systems and social norms | Organised public information campaigns on child protection issues.<br>Project staff discussed activities to improve child protection with government and community members and other stakeholders |
| Strengthen protective capacity of families and communities | Facilitated meetings with panchayats, CPCs, priests, employers about child protection issues |
| Build on and emphasise inter-sectoral approaches, including between health, education and social protection. | Catalysed convergence between Departments of Education, Labour, WCD (responsible in these States for ICPS), the police |
| Institutional competence and research in child protection. | UNICEF staff provided technical guidance, preparing key policy documents, preparing and printing IEC materials, convening key meetings and supporting the bringing together of government officials through convergence and collaborating with community stakeholders |
| *Source: UNICEF 2014* | *Source: Cotton Corridors project Annual Progress Reports 2010–2014, Final Report 2015* |

### Country Programme Action Plans

Country Programme Action Plans are joint documents between UNICEF and governments setting out agreements on what UNICEF will do in a country over a five-year horizon. The key strategies in the 2008–2012 and 2013–2017 CPAPs are set out below. CP was a key thematic priority of both plans, with the mid-term review of the 2008–2012 CPAP noting the Government of India's adoption of the ICPS and praising the CPAP's CP advocacy work. CP remains central to the 2013–2017 CPAP, including support to the development of structures that support CP in India, such as CPCs and support to the collection of data on OOSC. Specifically, under CP objectives, the 2013–2017 CPAP states that:

*The objective of the Child Protection program is to ensure that all children grow up free from violence, exploitation, abuse and unnecessary separation from their families in their homes, their communities and at school. The program will aim to: strengthen child protection systems at national, state, district, and sub-district levels through the roll out of the ICPS; develop capacities of families, communities and service providers; establish improved reporting and monitoring systems; and promote evidence based policy advocacy.*[25]

Overall, the CPAP approach to CP remains strongly focused on strengthening decentralised community-based structures and working through government systems.

[25] UNICEF India CPAP 2013-2017, page 21.

**Exhibit 2-4: UNICEF CPAP strategies**

**2008–2012**

1. Replication of innovations in Integrated Districts
2. Strengthening of systems and capacity development
3. Advocacy and partnerships
4. Knowledge management for policy and programme influencing
5. Social exclusion (as an approach and in sector programmes)

**2013–2017**

6. Capacity development at individual, institutional and policy levels
7. Promoting decentralisation and improved governance for child rights
8. Partnerships
9. Social inclusion for equity
10. Knowledge management

*Source: UNICEF 2011, 2013*

### 2.1.1.3 Adapting to Indian legislative, policy and institutional context

#### Government

The project aligns with India's legal frameworks that mandate the government to attempt to eliminate CL:

- three articles in the **Constitution of India** (24, 45 and 39) prohibit CL and mandate compulsory schooling up to 14 years;
- the United Nations **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (ratified by India in 1992) states that primary education should be free and compulsory (article 28) and that children have a right to be protected from work that hazardous, or poses a danger to their development or education (article 32);

Several laws support these conventions, including at the national level:

- **The Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act of 2009** (which came into force in 2010) mandates the state to provide compulsory and free education to children up to the age of 14;
- **The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act of 2006** replaces the earlier legislation of Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929.The Act continues to prohibit child marriage, protect the child and punish anyone who promotes, abets or solemnises child marriage. This Act was instrumental in creating the position of a Child Marriage Prohibition Officer to implement this Act;
- **The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act of 2000** outlaws employment children in hazardous occupations;
- **The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986** bans the employment of children (under 14) in specified hazardous occupations and regulates the work of children in

other industries. This does not cover agricultural work, and so work in cottonseed is not covered by this act;

- **The Minimum Wages Act of 1948** prescribes minimum wages for employees in different sectors.

In addition, The National Policy for Children (1974 and updated in 2013)[26], National Policy on Child Labour (1987) and National Policy on Education (1986) all acknowledge economic compulsions driving children to work, and address the manifestations of CL rather than the causes, instituting, for example, bridge schools and non-formal schooling.

The introduction of the Cotton Corridor's project coincides with two significant changes in the legislative and policy framework pertaining to children.

1. **The RTE Act was passed in 2009**

   This gave every child a right to full time, free and compulsory elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards. The Act stressed that **schools should make provisions for an OOSC to be admitted to an age appropriate class — and the project aligned itself to this goal.** It also mandated the formation of School Management Committees (SMCs), thus including the parents and community in ensuring parental participation in the school — and **the project ensured that a member for the SMC was also part of their CPC.**

   From Financial Year (FY) 2009 to 2014, **Government of India's allocations for elementary education increased over two-fold**[27]. The increased funds and impetus in policy had a positive impact on several states in India, and AP was one of them. In FY 2012–13, AP had amongst the highest per student allocations at over Rs. 7,000. In FY 2013–14, AP had spent 100 per cent of the funds allocated for community training and mobilisation and teacher salaries.[28]

2. **The ICPS was introduced in 2009**

   The Scheme was designed to contribute to improvements in the well-being of children in difficult circumstances, as well as the reduction in vulnerabilities to situations and actions that lead to abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment and separation of children. **The introduction of this scheme required a change in the direction of the Cotton Corridors project.** Under the ICPS, each gram panchayat requires a CPC to be formed to operationalise the community ownership of the scheme. At the district level, DC/Magistrate has nominal and practical responsibility for the functioning of each department and for the enforcement of law in the district, and as such is a vital part of the institutional framework.

**It is likely that at state level and below, UNICEF and government were both encouraged by the new policy (RTE) and scheme (ICPS) but also by the renewed agenda of the project**. Cotton Corridor's annual Project Reports see a shift away from raising awareness about CL and protection in 2011–12 to convergence - with the linking of CPCs formed under the project to ICPS structures, and the use of *mandal*/*taluk* level data on OOSC to support the elimination of CL and mainstream children under the RTE Act.

[26] Available at http://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/npcenglish08072013.pdf, accessed January 2016.
[27] Budget Briefs-Education Sector Vol 6 Issue 1 Accountability Initiative (2014)
[28] Similar data was not available for Karnataka

### 2.1.1.4 Alignment with geographic and economic changes

**The project years saw substantial change in AP and Karnataka**. Occasionally the project adapted itself to changing situations. For example, in 2009, the floods in Karnataka and parts of AP hit Raichur and Kurnool hard. Data indicated that 130 villages were displaced in Raichur and 180 villages were displaced in Kurnool. Project staff's attention shifted to flood-relief work. According to project staff, while this may have slowed implementation, working together with the government on flood relief helped build strong relations with them.

**Exhibit 2-5: Media reports of flooding in Kurnool and Raichur**

THE HINDU

» TODAY'S PAPER » ANDHRA PRADESH October 3, 2009

Worst flood in 100 years; Kurnool devastated

Unparalleled: Mosques flooded at Roza in Kurnool city on Friday. (Right) Students of Veltoor village in Uppununthala mandal who were stranded on Thursday night in Dundubhi rivulet rescued on Friday.

Special Correspondent

*Half the city under water; Mahabubnagar ravaged; thousands wait for help; rail, road services paralysed*

KURNOOL: Tungabhadra river ran amok on Friday letting loose a huge deluge of water that engulfed

THE HINDU

» TODAY'S PAPER » KARNATAKA October 14, 2009

Flood loss in Raichur put at Rs. 476 crore

Destruction: More than 1.22 lakh houses and over 13,000 huts have been damaged, fully or partially, owing to the rain and floods in Raichur district.

Staff Correspondent

*Toll in rain-related incidents rises to 35; 1.35 lakh families in 130 villages have been rendered homeless*

*So far, the Government has released Rs. 32 crore for relief work*

*The crop loss has been put at Rs. 165 crore*

Raichur: According to an updated preliminary assessment made by the district administration on Tuesday, the total loss in Raichur district owing to the torrential rain and floods has been put at Rs. 476 crore.

Source: The Hindu, October 3, 2009 and October 14, 2009 respectively[29,30]

**Drought was and continues to be an ongoing cause of CL and a threat to the relevance of the project.** At the village level, the major changes that affected the project outcomes were to do with the weather and general trends in poverty and labour supply, which determined for many children whether they were in school or working.

**During months of drought and years where there was a poor agricultural yield, the pressure on low-income families to migrate for work increased**. While the project tried to address some of these needs, the project team said that they consciously chose not to discuss the impact on family income while talking to the community/parents about CL issues. As a project representative explained, this was because UNICEF as an organisation did not design or implement large scale poverty alleviation projects as part of its mandate. The team decided to concentrate on issues of CP rather than designing poverty alleviation projects for families engaged in CL. Staff felt that if family income was made part of the debate, the focus of the project would have shifted away from CL. The project's inability to address this underlying problem to CL in its design and approach is likely to be one of its biggest shortcomings.

[29] http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-andhrapradesh/worst-flood-in-100-years-kurnool-devastated/article153895.ece [last accessed on 21/06/2016]
[30] http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-karnataka/flood-loss-in-raichur-put-at-rs-476-crore/article161211.ece [last accessed on 21/06/2016]

#### 2.1.1.5 Different implementation models in districts

**Despite the geographical and economic similarities between the two districts, each district had unique structural problems and priorities, and the project evolved to reflect these differences**. Moreover, the model for implementation of the project in each district was different.

- Model 1: Implementation in Kurnool was carried out by three local NGOs. The geographical spread and scale of the project was bigger than Raichur. The project grew in size — from five *mandals* in 2009 to 17 *mandals* in 2010–11 due to the incorporation of the phase 1 *mandals* where child migration remained high. This had been possible because of the funding UNICEF received from the IKEA Foundation;
- Model 2: Implementation in Raichur was carried out directly by the project manager and staff recruited by DC. The spread of the project was contained to two blocks in Raichur district.

According to UNICEF staff at the state level, the differences in the local structures in both states were instrumental in shaping different methods of operating in the two states. In Karnataka, local structures functioned better. Panchayats were better organised and funded and were important structures at the community level. Schools also functioned better there. In AP, panchayats were not as strong as Karnataka. Therefore, while in Karnataka, the project could build on existing structures, in AP, the project had to first create structures and then operationalise their project. Therefore, in AP, the project was designed to play to the strength of the NGOs that had been working in the area for a long time, and had staff from the same project sites, who were likely to be familiar with local systems. UNICEF staff also felt that working with SHGs would be especially be strategic in AP since the groups had been strengthened by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank funded projects and had a strong influence in the community. SHG work was also integrated in Karnataka by the project team.

#### 2.1.1.6 Adapting to local needs

**In both AP and Karnataka, the scope of the project grew ambitiously — changing its focus from the narrow goal of reducing CL by mainstreaming OOSC to strengthening CP systems by working with the community and government.**

In AP, the team changed strategies when they realised that their goal of reducing CL was met with minimal enthusiasm from government, given other issues identified by the project staff such as “the high levels of migration, illiteracy and general backwardness in these districts”. In Karnataka too, the project team welcomed the change in focus to CP. After two years of working in Raichur, of which the initial months were spent helping the government with flood relief and then raising awareness against CL in the blocks, they changed the annual plan in 2011–12, “to reflect the larger challenges faced on the field”.

Project structures evolved simultaneously — for example, CPCs initially included teachers and were called Child Labour Prevention Committees. These were broadened, to include the Panchayat Secretary who was made the convenor because she/he was influential at the village level and had the statutory duty of registering births — thus being able to identify underage labour. The Village Revenue Officer who was influential, and had the statutory duty of registering marriages, was also made a member so she/he could play a role in preventing CMs.

In the section below, we examine the relevance of the project’s focus on CP in addressing the needs of children and engaging the project’s stakeholders to work on CP in the districts.

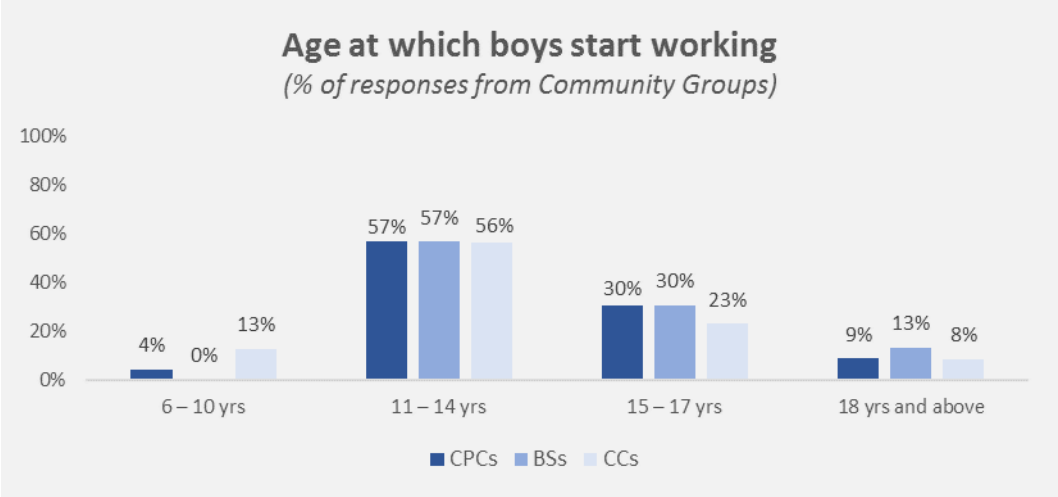
### 2.1.2 Was the project aligned to children's needs in selected districts?

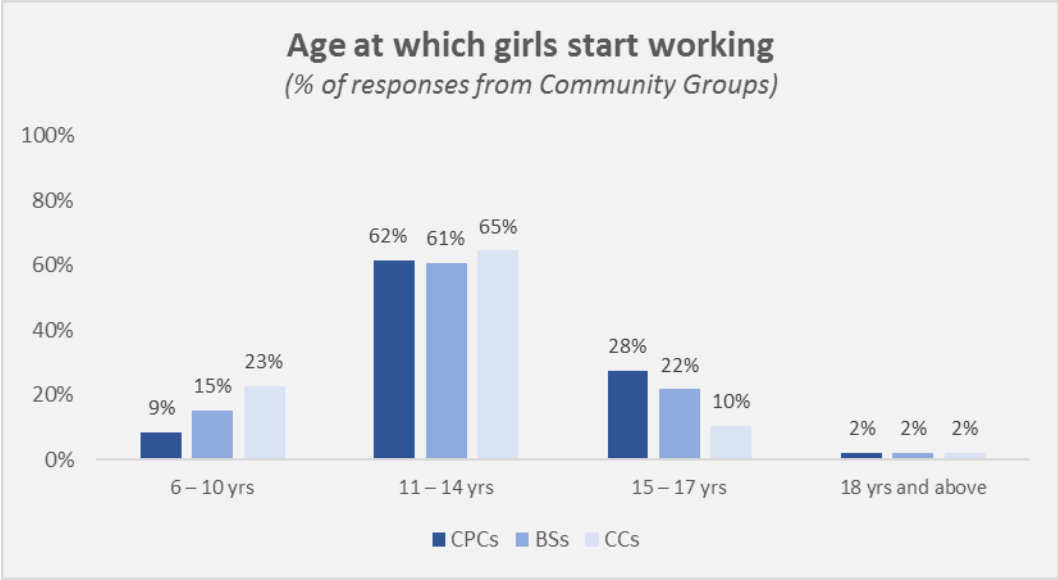
#### Cotton Corridors project's alignment to CL

The Cotton Corridors project began with a focus on eliminating CL, especially in cotton fields in 2009. Even though the scope of the project grew to strengthen the community and administration's capacity to protect its children, eradicating CL continued to be an important element in the mix of intervention activities.

To gauge the success of the project's effort in reducing CL, we administered a scaled response survey with community groups supported by the project teams in Raichur and Kurnool. The following graphs depict their perceptions of the age at which children begin work in their community (Exhibit 2-6).

**Exhibit 2-6: Perception among community groups about age at which children generally begin work**



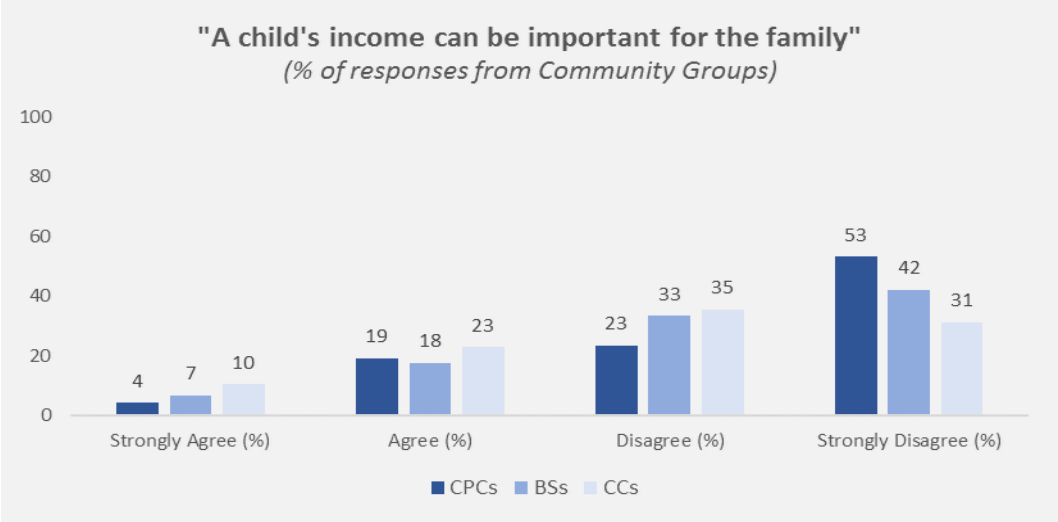

*Source: OPM Analysis of Scaled Response Questionnaires from Community Groups*.

A majority of respondents said boys and girls begin work before they turn 15. A smaller, yet significant number of respondents believe children begin work even earlier — between 6–10 years

old. We followed scaled questions with in-depth discussions with members of community groups, parents and children.

Their responses suggested that economic deprivation led to CL. Specifically, children whose families do not own land, have large debts or children who have single parents are more likely to work when they are younger. We also asked community groups about the importance of a child's income to their parents. A majority of the respondents answered in the negative — they either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that the income a child earns was important for their family. However, young respondents from the CCs perceived a child's income to be important more than respondents from BSs or CPCs.

**Exhibit 2-7: Community groups' perceptions on the contribution of a child's income**




*Source: OPM Analysis of Scaled Response Questionnaires from Community Groups*

The most compelling explanation for increased CL was seasonal migration out of the project areas that resulted from extended period of droughts. While some respondents said they observed low incidence of labour in their area due to low rainfall which consequently led to a low crop area and low yield, others said that the lack of work around their villages only resulted in poor families moving out of the village. This out-migration was highest between October and February. When both parents migrated, they preferred to take their children along with them as there was no one to look after their children. The year OPM conducted the survey (2015–2016), the project areas were struggling with drought and respondents recorded an increase in families migrating out for work and a subsequent increase in CL.

Respondents said that the work children engaged in ranged from picking cotton pods and chillies and flowers and well as occasionally weeding and watering the fields. Besides chilli and cotton fields, children were also known to have worked in *jowar* (sorghum) fields, cotton ginning factories and cattle-grazing.

While most respondents perceived an overall decline in CL over years, the current drought in the region had led to families migrating out with their children.

The project attempted to address the prevalence of CL through a multi-pronged strategy. These have been discussed is the next section.

### Seasonal hostels to dissuade migration

The project team supported the government in Andhra Pradesh to provide a temporary solution to families who migrate out of the village. The government, under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), had set up seasonal hostels at the *mandal* level that were designed to cater to children whose parents would leave the village for work. Similarly, RSTCs run by NGOs catered to the needs of these children. However, both seasonal hostels and RSTCs had limited capacity. The project attempted to address the lack of a system by creating an alternative structure to look after the children left behind in village when their parents migrate out.

Village-level Child Migration Prevention Centres (CMPC) were created in some villages in Kurnool. Children would stay with their grandparents, and the project would provide breakfast and dinner made by the school cook in addition to the mid-day meal. This process was monitored by the CPC. However, this was a small exercise that ran for two (labour) seasons only.

This initiative is arguably one of the most relevant measures to encourage parents to leave their children behind when they migrated out for work, especially since the project used existing initiatives such as the mid-day meal to ensure children are fed and encouraged village members including grandparents to care for young children when their parents were away.

### Raids on vehicles carrying children to work

Project staff spoke of frequent raids conducted by a team of officers from the Police, Labour, MWCD and Education departments. The officers would stop a vehicle carrying children and their parents to fields. The children would either be sent to residential hostels or their school and parents could go back to their work if they wished. The vehicle would be seized and only let go if the owner paid a fine.

While this activity addressed the symptom of the problem — i.e. migration that caused an increase in children dropping out and accompanying their parents to work — it is less relevant in the face of a severe drought such as the one that has led to hundreds of individuals leaving their homes, especially in Kurnool and migrating out to find some work for themselves.

### Educating and raising awareness among employers

Under the project, employers were dissuaded from employing children through two measures:

- involving employers in the CP agenda by asking them to sign a pledge and put a sign in their field saying they do not employ child labourers;
- conducting raids and levying fines against employers who fail to comply.

While increasing awareness against CL is relevant to the project's goals, it is difficult to gauge the benefit of fining employers or conducting raids especially if drought and seasonal changes affect entire families and villages, and compel them to migrate for work.

## 2.1.3 Did the project engage its stakeholders?

### Children

By creating CCs in schools and including children (or in practice youth) in the CPC, the project was designed to involve children in the implementation. The project staff ensured that the involvement of children was “not just an informal arrangement”, by requesting the DC to sanction these groups. Where functional, members of CCs were trained to speak to parents and peers to mainstream

them into school. In addition, the project intervention was successful in encouraging children to complete their education, even if they had dropped out of school or if they had failed to complete their Class 10 exams. This has been explained further in Section 2.2.2.3. For those children who had stayed back in school after being mainstreamed, the project had been successful in encouraging them to complete their studies.

**Parents and guardians**

Parents were asked if they had heard of the CPC, CC and BS. A majority of parents had never heard of these structures. However, some parents said that a teacher visited their homes to enquire why their child had not come to school, and this visit prompted parents to try and send their child back to school. In some cases, in Kurnool, a few parents had heard of the CV — who had counselled them on the importance of the school and against CL. While perceptions about schooling were favourable, parents continue to hold strong views about marrying their daughter early. Relevant to the success of the project is the perceptions parents and guardians hold of 'work' and 'school'. As is highlighted in Case Study 1 below, parents often viewed work as a temporary but necessary part of life. Work did not detract from the importance of schooling, and as a result children dip in and out of school and labour. Given this perception of labour, the project's emphasis of stopping vehicles taking parents and their children to work, and conducting enforcement drives in fields and other areas that employed children would be unlikely to deter parents and children from engaging in labour.

**Government**

In Karnataka, almost all the district-level government respondents interviewed had been transferred out to positions in Bengaluru, the state capital. Since Raichur was not considered a favourable posting most government staff were looking for a transfer out of the district. During the interviews, they spoke favourably of the project team. According to several respondents, the project gave them the space to innovate, as well as attracted the political buy-in required to make CP an important issue. The increased attention towards CP encouraged the government to inquire about the progress on decreasing CL and increasing schooling regularly.

Several respondents agreed that prior to the project, coordinating across different departments was challenging, and they appreciated the project staff's efforts to follow-up with the administration regularly. Largely, government respondents felt that relationship and influence that the project team shared was pivotal in ensuring that different departments worked together towards CP.

**Employers**

Employers spoke of enforcement drives conducted by the police and increased awareness and advertising against employing children on their fields. In interviews, employers said that they had no incentive to hire children over adults as they paid both parents and children the same flat rate. Often parents brought their children to the field as an extra-hand or because there was no one who could look after them at home.

### Case study 1: On children dropping in and out of both labour and school

**The following case study highlights the perceptions of a child's grandmother/guardian about why the child was asked to work. Contrary to perceptions of community groups that view child labour to be an important contribution to the family's income, the respondent said that their need was temporary and connected to demand for labour rather than a more systemic economic need for the child to work. While the case study may be contrary to overall perceptions, it highlights that child labour is not a continuous engagement and prone to change depending on the need of the market or family.**

Respondent (R): [Child's name] enjoys going to school because she likes the school environment.

Interviewer (I): Could you tell us why your child stopped going to school? When and why did [child's name] decide to not go to school?

R: There was a lot of work to be done in the cotton field and no coolies were available at that time. Then I asked the [child's name] to take a break from the school and come to the field to work. This happened in January and for one week the she stopped going to school.

I: Did someone counsel [child's name] against dropping out or offer their help to enable her/him to join school again? Who did so? Why did [child's name] still not go to school?

R: No one counselled [child's name] to go back to the school but the school teacher came and asked "Why your child not coming to school?" By that time the work was over and the child went back to school.

I: Has [child's name] felt like going back to school? Why or why not? What is stopping her/him from returning?

R: Yes. The child wanted to go back to the school and now she is going regularly. But on holidays and Sundays I take her to work if there is any work in the field.

I: At what age do you think children should start contributing to the family income? What work can they do to help the family?

R: I don't think there is a need for the child to contribute to the family income. They should study well and achieve a good position in the life.

I: Have you (or anyone else in the family) ever asked [child's name] to not go to school and help out with work at home or outside? If yes – why? What happened that enabled your child to continue their education?

R: I asked [child's name] to come and work in the field when we could not get workers. She works in the field sometimes when we do not find workers. But generally the children won't come to work. If there is any urgency of work and difficulty to find workers then [child's name] comes and works."

*Source: OPM Interview, Kurnool, 2015*

## 2.2 Effectiveness

Evaluation questions for effectiveness are set out in the exhibit below.

### Exhibit 2-8: Effectiveness evaluation questions

| Effectiveness: Key evaluation question |
|---|
| To what extent were outcomes of the various strands of the Cotton Corridors project successfully achieved? |
| **Effectiveness: Secondary evaluation questions** |
| • Based on the project's theory of change, which of the activity areas led to the achievement of stated objectives and why?<br>• Which programmatic activities have been unsuccessful and why?<br>• Which partnerships, processes and strategies were successful, and which weren't?<br>• What contribution did the project team make to achieving stated objectives and fostering collaboration and convergence?<br>• What contribution did Government make to achieving stated objectives and fostering collaboration and convergence? |

*Source: Cotton Corridors project evaluation matrix.*

We answered these questions by:

- **developing a project theory of change** and agreeing it with the evaluation Steering Committee and Reference Group. This describes how different activity areas will in theory lead to outputs, immediate outcomes, intermediate outcomes and eventually impact, and under what assumptions this will take place;
- **seeking evidence** on the achievement of impact, intermediate outcome, immediate outcome and output indicators, and the validity of assumptions in the theory of change;
- **exploring the perceptions of key stakeholders** on different aspects of the project.[31]

We do not estimate the degree of change that can be attributed to the project or try to account for the number of children returned to school, adolescents trained, or leaders developed, as set out in the project objectives. Rather, we note changes in key outcomes and unpick the different causes of that change, whether to do with the Cotton Corridors project, government or some other exogenous change (such as weather or economic change).

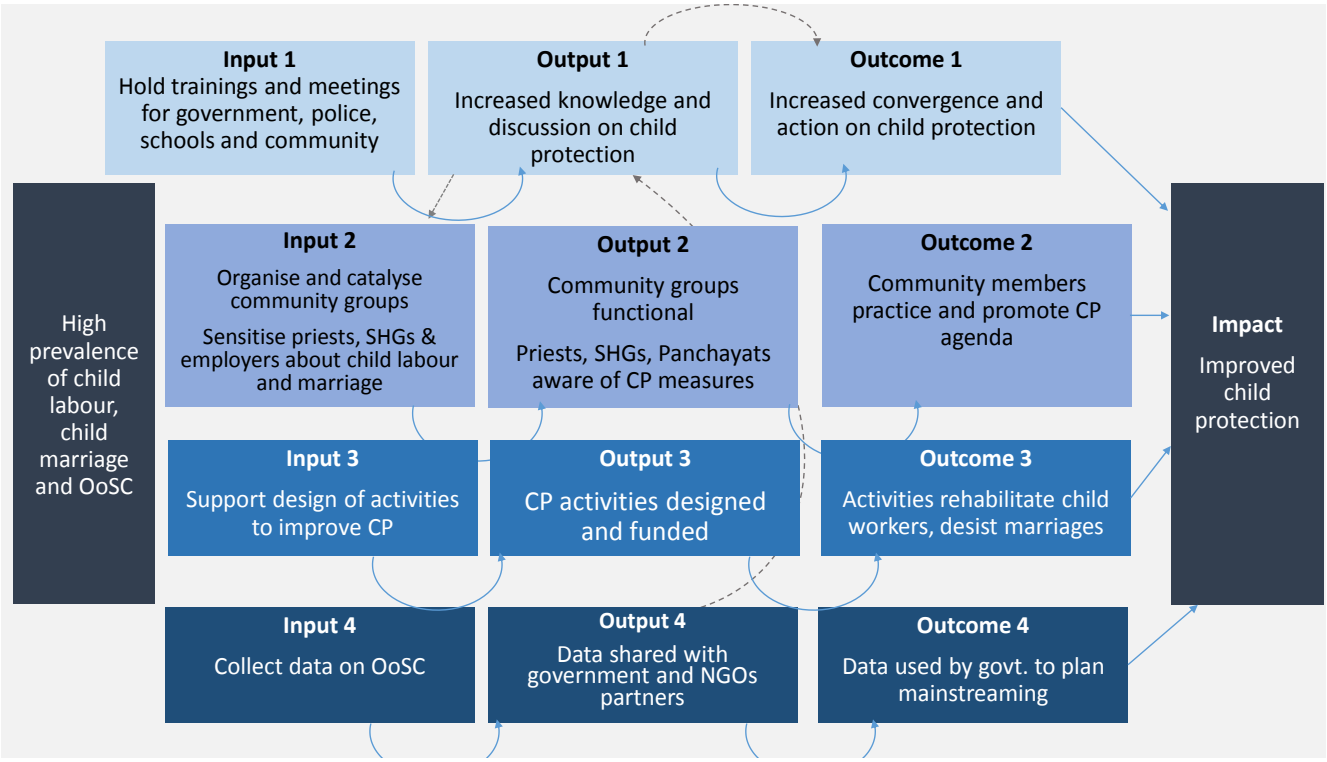
Wherever possible, findings were analysed from the gender and equity lens. However, there were cases when disaggregating data did not yield specific trends for the required indicators.

### 2.2.1 Based on the TOC, which of the activity areas led to the achievement of stated objectives and why?

Exhibit 2-9 presents the high level TOC, with four intermediate outcomes leading to an impact of improved child protection. The TOC for each of these four input streams has been presented in Section B.4, Annex B.

[31] The inception report contains the agreed theory of change (reproduced in the introduction above and described in detail in Annex B) and the evaluation matrix (reproduced in Annex D) which contains details of data sources and key stakeholders.

**Exhibit 2-9: Cotton Corridors project TOC**




*Source: Authors*

At a high level, this TOC assumes:

- no adverse social, political or economic changes;
- the continued availability of funds in government to fund activities.

From Section 2.2.1.1 – Section 2.2.1.5, we have explored evidence for changes in CP outcomes, and the four intermediate outcomes. We explored the assumption about social, political or economic changes in the section on relevance. The assumption of continued availability of funds is explored in the sections on efficiency and sustainability.

In the following sub-sections, the evidence we draw on comes from sources, such as:

- responses from scale questionnaires we administered;
- paraphrased quotations from IDIs and FGDs we conducted; and
- project documents and secondary documents;

However, it should be kept in mind that none of these sources individually is highly robust. It is the combination of evidence from all these sources (summarised in the blue boxes in each section) that helps to achieve one of objectives of the evaluation, that is, to triangulate different sources of information on changes in CP outcomes, including the perceptions of key stakeholders of how these outcomes changed.

### 2.2.1.1 Child Protection outcomes

Assessing changes in CP outcomes caused by the Cotton Corridors project or the changes in project objectives is not possible given data and methodological limitations. However, a high level assessment of change in three indicators of improved CP provides useful context for the analysis below:

- reduction in CL;

- reduction in CM; and
- increase in children in school.

Sufficiently disaggregated data on CL, CM, and enrolment are not available to draw conclusions on changes within the project sites.

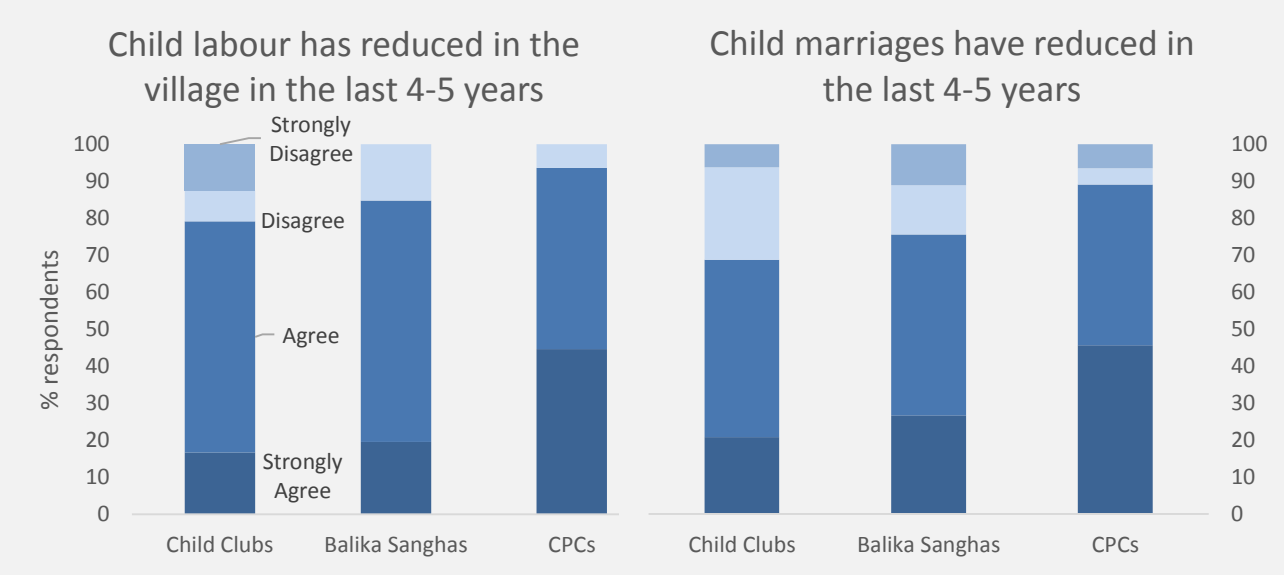
**Overall, the evidence on changes in CP outcomes during the project is positive**. The balance of evidence from different sources suggests that CP outcomes improved during project implementation, and that this was related to the project. Changes appeared more significant for CL and schooling than for CM.

### Overall results disaggregated by questionnaire type

Through semi-structured scale questionnaires, we asked the chairs of 47 CPCs, 46 BSs and 46 CCs whether they felt CL and marriage outcomes had changed in their villages over the last 4–5 years. Results are given in Exhibit 2-10. These results do not represent particularly independent evidence — the activities of the CPC, BSs and CCs was supposed to lead to reductions in CL and marriage — and are not statistically representative. However, they provide a useful indication of whether any change had occurred.

Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that CL and CMs have reduced in the last 4–5 years. The CC chairs, who were children, were the least likely to agree as compared to their older counterparts — i.e chairs of BS and CPC. A higher proportion of respondents in all groups felt that CL had reduced than the proportion that felt CMs had reduced.

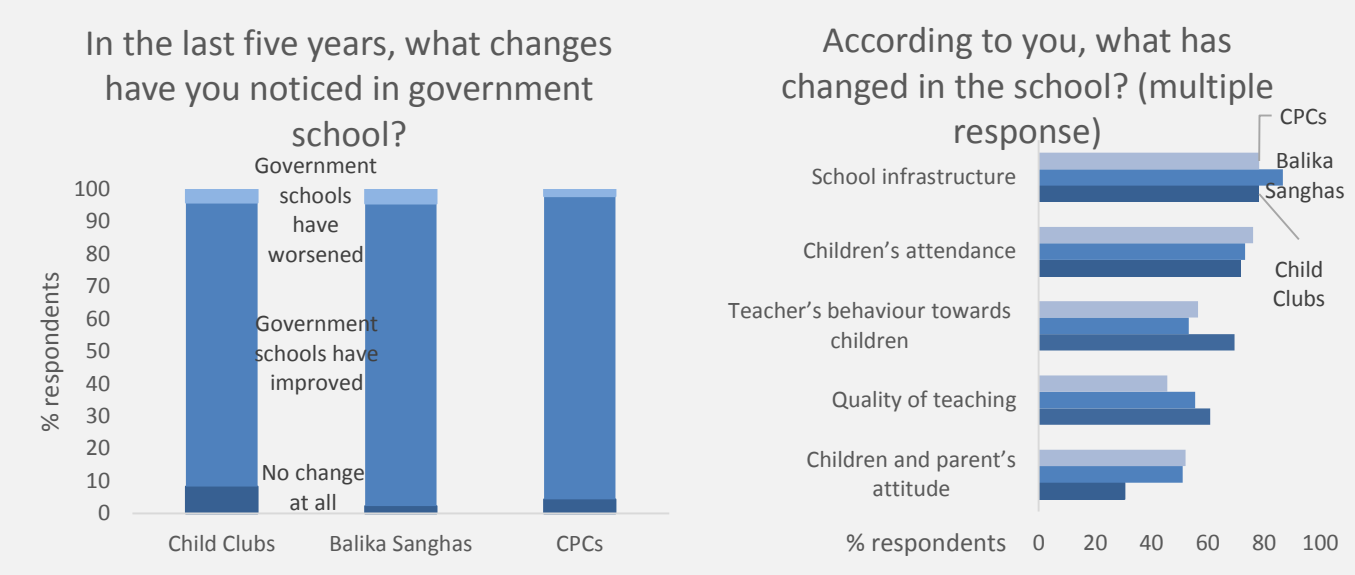
**Exhibit 2-10: Respondents' views of changes in child marriage and labour outcomes**




*Source: UNICEF Cotton Corridors project phase 2 data collection. Note: Ns are as follows, from left: CPC 47, BS 46, CC 48, CPC 46, BS 45, CC 48.*

Most respondents also felt that government schools had improved, in particular in terms of infrastructure and children's attendance. This is shown in Exhibit 2-11. While views were generally positive, only 30 per cent of CC chairs felt that the attitude of children or parents to education had improved.

**Exhibit 2-11: Respondents' views of changes in government schooling**




*Source: UNICEF Cotton Corridors project phase 2 data collection. Note: Ns are as follows, from left: CPC 46, BS 45, CC 48, CPC 46, BS 45, CC 46*.

**Qualitative research methods, IDIs and FGDs, yielded more nuanced and mixed results than the scale scores**. In general, respondents were most positive about effects on schooling, particularly for the 10th standard open schools, then on reducing labour, and less positive on marriage. Children and their parents were less positive about changes than respondents in positions of authority (CPC members, CVs, *sarpanches*, and teachers) and respondents operating at district or state level. There are no clear patterns of success between villages of different perceived levels of performance. Broadly, positive claims were made about all caste and tribe groups, although at least one CV claimed that the impact was greatest on SC groups.

We now present detailed results for the three CP outcomes in the order of most change noticed to least change noticed.

### Schooling

An improvement in school attendance was felt by some respondents to directly improve CP outcomes by putting children in a safe(r) environment, even if it did not necessarily lead to learning gains. This section looks primarily at changes in attendance and retention, which were generally positive, and briefly discusses the quality of schools, which also improved in high-performing villages. In this section we draw primarily on the views of children and their parents (who were responsible for deciding), and also discuss reports from teachers.

**Improvements were felt most in the area of school attendance.** Teachers reported to have seen this change clearly. To illustrate with an example – a teacher in Kurnool felt that more children now attend school, particularly amongst SC, Muslim and some BC groups, though many still work due to their financial situation.

Some parents devoted significant resources to getting their children to attend school. For example, a 5th standard child in Kurnool:

"*My parents said: "You must take care of the cow, so you cannot go school. If you go to school, who will take the cow for grazing." If I did not go to school, sir used to come home and scold my parents; so, father sold the cow and sent me back to (enrolled me in) school. So now I go to school*".

It is less clear where change in education comes from. Several respondents referred to the open schooling intervention in 10th standard as an example of positive change. Community structures supported by the project team such as the community groups, CVs, project field staff further provided support (moral and financial) to youth taking the open 10th examinations.

Others noted that RSTCs were helpful in increasing enrolment in schools. Other than this, most parents and children did not identify a clear cause of this change; it was mostly the village teacher who counselled them to attend school. It is likely that in addition to being members of the CPC, a teacher's involvement in mobilising children to enrol could be due to the RTE Act and the increased focus on getting children into school.

**However, improvements in school attendance were not felt uniformly.** In a village in Raichur, the children said they had noted no difference in school attendance. In many of the cases where there was no improvement, this was because children needed to continue to work due to financial constraints (see below). In particular, many respondents discussed the negative impact of migration for work on school attendance. Overall, most respondents felt that parents were more supportive of schooling for their sons than their daughters, for several reasons including that after 5th class most girls had to travel to school, which was both more expensive and less beneficial in terms of the safety of the girl child.

**Moreover, dropout remained a major problem**, particularly for girls and at 5th standard in remote villages where only a primary school existed up to 5th standard, and 7th standard elsewhere. This was also the age group (10 – 12 years) when children started dropping out of school in order to go work in the fields and contribute towards their family's income.

**In other schooling indicators, such as school quality and parental attitudes towards education, respondents noted slight positive shifts too.**

**In some villages, respondents discussed improvements in school infrastructure.** For instance, children in a well performing village in Kurnool noted new buildings, floors and fans. In another well performing Kurnool village, children noted that many changes had taken place in their schools – bathrooms were constructed, water was ensured, the playground was cleaned and a kitchen room got erected. They also noted an increase in children coming to school who were previously not attending. In a poorly performing village in Kurnool too, children said that the school ground was cleaned for sports, toilets were constructed, new chairs and benches were bought and that they were being provided good quality food and education. Improvement of school quality, an important activity taking place under the project has been analysed further in Section 2.2.2.7.

**Parents and children often felt that education was good for children.** This was not only because they learnt useful skills at school, but also because they felt that children were safer in school than out of school or at work. Many children reported in FGDs and IDIs that they "should" go to school, but that this was their parents' decision — and parents agreed with this responsibility.

This child from Kurnool was particularly clear about the link between regular schooling, aspirations, and work:

*"I get 20 out of 25 marks, because I am regular to school and listen to every class. By being regular to school my teachers will give good view of my future, I am learning many new things, playing games. I am very happy to come to school as I love to learn. Learning improves my knowledge so I have decided to not to leave school. On the other hand if I am not regular to school then my parents might send me to work is a fear so I am regular to school. I want to become a doctor.*"

There were very few examples of respondents who said that children in general would be better off out of school. That said, there were cases of children who did not enjoy school because of the poor quality of teaching and found it hard to follow the curriculum. Children also reported that sometimes it was difficult for them to attend school regularly, which was exacerbated by work and migration.

**Some respondents also questioned the value of what was learnt in school**, particularly where school quality was low.

### Child Labour

There are some small improvements in CL, but not everywhere. There is a striking contrast between the accounts of most CPC members and CVs who tended to be very confident about reductions in work, and those of children who were typically very clear that they continued working. We judge the views of children as more convincing in this case.

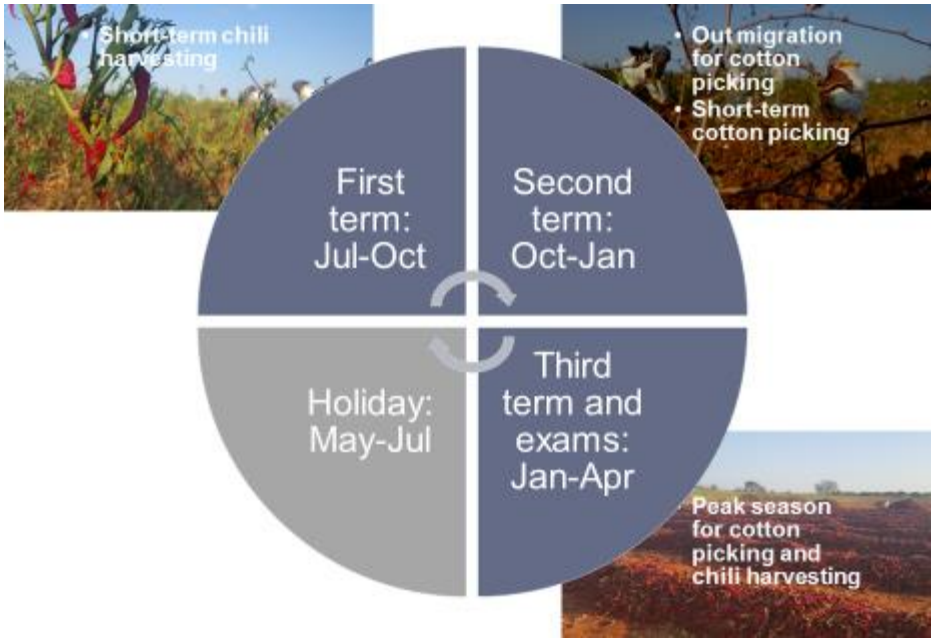
Before discussing changes in CL we have presented below, some of the evidence gathered, around the perceptions of different respondents about CL and why it still persists.

**Work persists as families are financially constrained.** This has been explored extensively in the relevance section (Section 2.1). Thus, here we reiterate the argument by giving examples from the interviews conducted. In a poorly performing village in Raichur, a priest argued that there may have been some reduction, but eradicating work and marriage would not be possible given the living conditions. While parents asked their children to work, in some cases, children also receive some of the money, which is attractive to them. Evidence also indicates that sometimes, this need not imply working on the field, but caring for younger siblings as adults were absent. Poor adult health status can also impose constraints on families and compel children to work.

Financial constraints were related by many respondents to SC or BC status, with CL being more common amongst these families. This view is supported by our sample of children from marginalised groups in the village. On balance, this appears to be more strongly related to familial financial situation and the means of production the household was engaged in than social norms in a specific group, though norms in some sub-groups do play a role (for instance in taking children for migration).

**Work is dependent on labour supply and demand, varying with the time of year and the weather**. Apparent labour supply constraints mean that children usually join their parents working in peak seasons (November–December cotton picking or August–September and February–March for chilli harvesting). Most children referred to the peak season for agriculture when they continued to migrate with parents or had to work on the harvest of cotton or chilli, missing a few weeks or days of school when they did. As an employer noted, they face a labour shortage in February and March, and parents usually bring their children to help them, even if employers try to dissuade them from doing so. Some employers went further to claim that children are better suited than adults to some work, such as weeding and planting, and that they were less troublesome than adults. The overlap between agricultural seasons and the school terms are given in Exhibit 2-12.

**Exhibit 2-12: Agricultural seasons and school terms**




*Source: Authors*

**Migrating for work is a particularly problematic aspect for schooling.** Several families reported migrating for work, and observed that this was constrained schooling, even where they wanted to continue. For instance, a parent in a poorly performing Kurnool village (without migration centres) said that due to their financial condition, they had to migrate to Bangalore in search of labour opportunities. Since they had no other family members in their village to take care of their daughter, they had to take along with them to Bangalore.

**Positive perceptions of respondents against engaging in CL.** Some children felt that while CL persists, people were more aware of the harmful effects of children working and understood that education was vital for them and their future. According to a Raichur CPC member: “Sending children is good as they get an opportunity to learn educative skill, time management, discipline, and overall behavioural pattern with outside world.”

**However, some respondents also identified benefits of working**, in particular in terms of learning farm work, which was considered important for later life. A BS in a well-performing village in Kurnool said that some parents were of the opinion that it is when their children are growing up that it’s easy for them to learn skills essential for work, and that this becomes difficult after the age of 18 years. According to these parents there were no jobs and no guarantee for youth who had completed their degrees. This was the reason they chose to send their children to work in the fields.

The challenge of the comparative benefits of school and work was pointed out by CVs, often frustrated with the scale of their task even in a well performing village in Kurnool: “No one in this village has got a government job so there is no incentive to study…nothing to look up to even after getting a degree.” In some villages, these perceptions have started to change as children aspire to be doctor or government servants, but the persistent absence of role models remains a problem (as the same children who say that they want to be doctors go to work after 5$^{th}$ standard). In many villages, this was seen as a balance between learning fieldwork and learning school work; the challenge is that interruptions to schooling can be fatal in terms of outcomes.

**Since CL is so closely related to the financial circumstances of the household, weather conditions and labour requirements, the changes witnessed in CL can also partly be explained by these factors.** As discussed in Section 2.1, Raichur and Kurnool are witnessing drought years and poor rain. This is seen to have different effects on CL. Some respondents reported a decrease in CL; an employer in Raichur noted that due to untimely or poor rainfall, some farmers had reduced the land under cultivation, hence number of labour required for the work had also come down. On the other hand, a condition of drought also saw increases in CL. Some CPCs acknowledged this trend. In a well performing village in Kurnool, a CPC member felt that while CL had reduced during the project, it was increasing in the current year because of the ongoing drought. In such villages, due to poor livelihood conditions families and their children had to migrate in order to find gainful employment.

**Declines in CL also appear to be due to enforcement drives.** An employer from Kurnool felt that the incidence of employing children had declined due to greater media awareness and enforcement drives conducted by the police. But this is not an entirely successful strategy, as this employer from Raichur explained: *"Police come off and on and book cases if they locate child labour on our farms. Their (workers') age is not our concern during the labour shortage period, we bring in labour from nearby villages on auto rickshaws, those people bring one or two children with them and plead for work, we cannot send these children back at such peak time for that day we give them work and tell them not to repeat the same next time."*

**Thus, we can infer that even though CL declined in the project duration, changes in CL were often depended on different factors in different areas.**

**Moreover, some children noted a slight decline in the numbers working, but certainly not to zero**. Girls still typically work more than boys, until they are married. Parents are the main decision-makers, and are now slightly more aware that schooling is better for children than working. CL continues, particularly, respondents felt, for poorer households or households with illiterate parents.

Where numbers did decline, this was most often related to the school-based interventions. For example, some children in a well performing village in Kurnool felt that the nearby RSTC helped to avoid long migrations for work — which are the most damaging to school progress.

### Child marriage

**Most respondents noted only a small improvement in CM**, though with no obvious pattern between well and poorly performing villages. This probably reflects a gradual trend as well as project activity. Figures in authority were generally slightly less positive about changes in CM than they were about labour and schooling; as were BSs who felt that while progress had been possible with labour and school, marriages were more complex. According to one BS member in a poorly performing village in Kurnool, the group's efforts did not yield good results in preventing CMs. She acknowledged that even though they did not face problems with parents regarding CL, however their efforts against CM were not as successful.

**This improvement occurred where parents' awareness had improved, most often because of enforcement drives by the government**, but also greater awareness of health risks and the independence of children. Most marriages were felt to take place amongst the SC community due to the poorer economic conditions.

A teacher in Kurnool who conducted weddings said that no one asked him to marry underage children for fear that he may inform the authorities if he thought the people getting married looked too young. A few priests in the sample mentioned checking identification before marrying people so

that they did not marry children below 18 years of age. Additionally, respondents mentioned marriage ceremony bookings in temples requiring online bookings and a proof of age before getting approved. These efforts contributed towards deterring child marriages.

The role of the police was also emphasised by a BS in a poorly performing village in Kurnool: “Our friend got married before legally permitted age, someone informed the police, who came and called both the parties to the police station and fined them, with an instruction that the parties would be arrested if similar incidences are repeated. This fear is working internally among parents.”

**Most respondents were quite clear about the negative effects of CM**, even in poorly performing villages where child marriages persisted**.** Several different types of respondents discussed the health problems that arise for girls and their children from early marriage and early pregnancy. Others — particularly parents — noted that now children attend school up to at least 10th standard, they are more strongly involved in making decisions about marriage, and prefer to delay. Moreover, some parents felt that attending school offers a secure environment for girls without which marriage would be more necessary. Others mentioned the difficulties of adjusting to their in-laws’ house at an early age. Several respondents mentioned the project in spreading these messages, and the positive role of the media.

**Being able to list negative effects does not always mean that people felt CM was bad.** Indeed, some children admitted that they had been coached on these questions: a CC in Kurnool told researchers that “sir told us yesterday that when asked about marriage we have to say 18 for girls and 20 for boys.” This was also mentioned as a limitation of the evaluation (Section 1.9).

**There are various reasons why CMs persist, particularly for girls, and those coming from poorer households**. Parents usually play a decisive role in the decision, and prefer girls to marry early for a range of reasons. A priest from a poorly performing village in Kurnool explained social customs in his village that contributed towards early marriages of girl children - if the daughter did not marry (between 9 – 12 years of age), it is said that there would be no *mukti* or salvation for the father (after death). Furthermore, according to a CC in Kurnool, parents want to marry their girls early to get rid of the responsibility and to ensure the dowries are small. A CPC suggested that this may also be in order not to miss good matches, and because children become less obedient as they get older. Unmarried boys contribute earnings to the family; so some parents prefer to delay their marriages.
Several respondents noted that parents worried about unmarried children having love marriages, influenced by the media, so prefer to marry girls as soon as they show ‘signs of maturity’. A BS in Kurnool discussed: “*their parents arrange marriages without considering the opinion of girls, with the intention to reduce with their responsibility. Parents are more worried that, their daughters may fall in love/ trap of boys leading to humiliation in the society. Parents not aware of bad effects of early marriages and want to complete marriage when they have money in rotation also leading to early marriages. Late marriages will create awareness on how to adjust in society was expressed by one girl. Parents having more number of girl children are tempted to have early marriages.*”
These ideas were summarised by a parent from Kurnool, who claimed their son married at 20 but their daughters at 15 or 16: “Because we are poor, it is good to marry off when they are young and slim. We don’t have to give a huge dowry.”

#### 2.2.1.2 Wider environment enabled

The TOC for enabling a wider environment is broadly that meetings with and training community and government groups and bodies, together with public information campaigns, would generate greater awareness of CP issues in the community, and greater awareness and budgetary allocation in government. Together, this would enable the wider environment for CP.

**Evidence from the evaluation indicates that the wider environment is reasonably conducive to improved CP, but has not changed substantially**. Broadly, communities remain aware of the potential benefits of schooling in comparison with work, and the dangers of early marriage, but often either also see the other side of the case or are unable to act on this perception. Due to the project, the government at different levels, was more strongly motivated to be involved in CP activities.

### Awareness within the community

**Data from the scale questionnaires was positive about specific awareness-raising activities.** Around two thirds of respondents felt that plays or activities had been carried out to raise awareness against CM or CL, and over 80 per cent felt that these activities were able to change people's perceptions about children.

As discussed in the previous section, IDIs and FGDs too have corroborated this view that there have been **changes to the levels of awareness on CP issues in the community.** Parents — almost always the key decision-makers — appeared to be increasingly aware of the importance of sending children to school, the problems of child work, and the dangers of CM. However, there are still mixed views on most of these CP issues amongst parents:

- views of school are typically positive, but some parents and children wonder whether skills help teach schools that are valuable for children in adult life;
- views of work are typically negative, but some parents and children feel that working can teach useful skills — and of course provide money and address labour supply problems. Employers do not appear to view children working as unambiguously negative. Some employers argue that children are better workers than adults in general or for some tasks;
- views of early marriage are often negative, but there are still strong beliefs in parts of communities about the value of marrying girls early: to reduce dowries, to avoid them getting into trouble, and to get good matches for their daughters.

**There are many examples, from almost every village, of the role that groups played (or felt they played) in dissuading parents and children from working or marring early**, and of the substantial public information campaigns or plays run under the auspices of the project. Many respondents discussed the plays and rallies held with the support of NGOs, such as this CPC in Kurnool: "The activities taken up by UNICEF are incredible, the noisy rallies with songs and drum beats at *mandal* level villages, the songs and the *kalajataras* [awareness projects] for creating awareness have good impact on general public." As one priest from Kurnool noted, "there was a lot of impact of these *kalajataras*." Teachers also noted a positive change in the attitudes of parents and children to education, and suspected that this led to increased enrolment in early grades. One student and one parent in Raichur specifically mentioned attending a play and deciding not to stop studying, and several respondents mentioned the role of specific people in the CCs or BSs persuading them to stay in school. Some employers and a few parents mentioned the role of TV or movie screenings in deciding not to marry their children early or start them working.

However, **on balance most respondents were unenthusiastic about the ability of public information campaigns and other group-based advocacy to change parents' views on these subjects both quickly and sustainably**. As one BS put it: "during the campaign parents say they will enrol their children but they will not do it". Another BS put this slightly differently: "We are telling [them] but the parents are doing what they have been doing and what they are habituated to do according to their tradition or beliefs." Or as a *sarpanch* noted, "there is no impact, only wall paintings."

Parents' views of the relative merits of school and work appear more likely to be influenced by a realistic assessment of what quality schools have to offer, and the existence of role models, particularly from poorer or SC/BC households. While schools have improved, role models remain rare. It is possible that the effects of public information and advocacy will be felt more strongly in a subsequent generation.

Moreover, **public information campaigns did not reach all the programme villages**; for instance, there were several parents and children in different villages who when asked about such campaigns or street plays knew nothing about them. Many respondents in positions of authority felt that it was more difficult to reach, or persuade, illiterate parents. This is partly because some materials are written, and it is much more resource intensive to communicate with illiterate parents verbally. We did not receive reports at village level of the use of radio, though this was discussed by project staff.

Of course, other factors also played a role in changing opinions. These are various, but include particularly memorable or traumatic events. For instance, a Kurnool BS noted that "One of the brides of this village died at the time of delivery, her marriage was a child marriage, this incident, after knowing the causes of her death, parents started give second thought in committing for child marriages."

In terms of other members of the community enabling the environment — the *sarpanch*, teachers, AWW and SHG members — it is not clear to what extent their views have changed. The project strategy of involving these individuals in many groups seems to have been effective in terms of aligning them — at least rhetorically — in favour of CP, if they were not before. Some of them have clearly been involved in detail in activities to improve enrolment, reduce work and delay marriage, as respondents detailed their leadership of particular campaigns to reduce labour and marriage.

The views of employers and priests do not appear to have changed substantially, though some of them are more acutely aware now of the risks of police prosecution. Project staff in Raichur also referred to a strategy of encouraging the DC to ask priests and printers not to conduct marriages or print wedding cards for underage children, and community interviews substantiate that this took place and had some effectiveness.

### Awareness within government

At district and state level, various individuals in relevant departments in government have become more sensitised to the importance of CP, their ability to improve it and the possibility of converging with other departments. **This has been one of the most important and effective aspects of the project**. Indeed, it may be that the IEC materials had a stronger effect on government officials than at the village level. There is a huge set of materials produced in both states designed to showcase the achievements and strategies of the project, and this has clearly been important in persuading individuals in government. It is striking that amongst our interviewees, government officials were often by far the most positive about the project.

In practice, it has operated at different levels of effectiveness at different times in different states. This turns particularly on the attitude of the DC. In some states and at some times, this was positive and there was effective convergence. At other times, as in many of the months towards the end of the project in Kurnool, the DC was less well disposed towards the overall objectives of the project, and this stalled all of the activities. This underlines that while the project appears to have been successful in changing the perspectives of some members of government, overall, this change is slightly vulnerable to the perspectives of key individuals, and to the high levels of turnover in all these positions.

Any change of attitudes of the government has had only a limited effect on activities at the village level. The three community groups (CPCs, BSs and CCs) and other respondents noted that while they received support from NGOs and project team, they typically received very limited support from or interaction with the government. There was some involvement with the activities of the CPC, and more involvement with the activities of the police against marriage and against CL, and some involvement in the improvement of the quality of schools, within the limited education budget available (that did not include hiring additional teachers). More than this, there was some involvement in and support for some of the school related interventions, including access to open school after 10th standard, and RSTCs. All of these activities required a supportive attitude from government in addition to the inputs from the project staff.

#### 2.2.1.3 Groups operational

The TOC for this area of work is that the formation, training and operationalisation of groups within the community would lead to the creation of an agenda for CP, participation in CP activities, and persuasion of parents and employers against CL and CM. Project documentation indicated that 389 CPCs, 750 CCs and 1,631 BSs were formed.

**Overall, groups were formed in most villages by 2011–12 but had limited functions and were not operational at the time of the survey**. Group members were able to articulate their role and some achievements, particularly for CPCs, but other respondents at village level were rarely able to identify the groups or what they did. Groups tended not to discuss the formation of their own agendas, but instead implemented specific activities largely designed around the project. Members were largely selected from outgoing and talented members of the community. They received limited training and support from NGOs.

**Overall results disaggregated by questionnaire type**

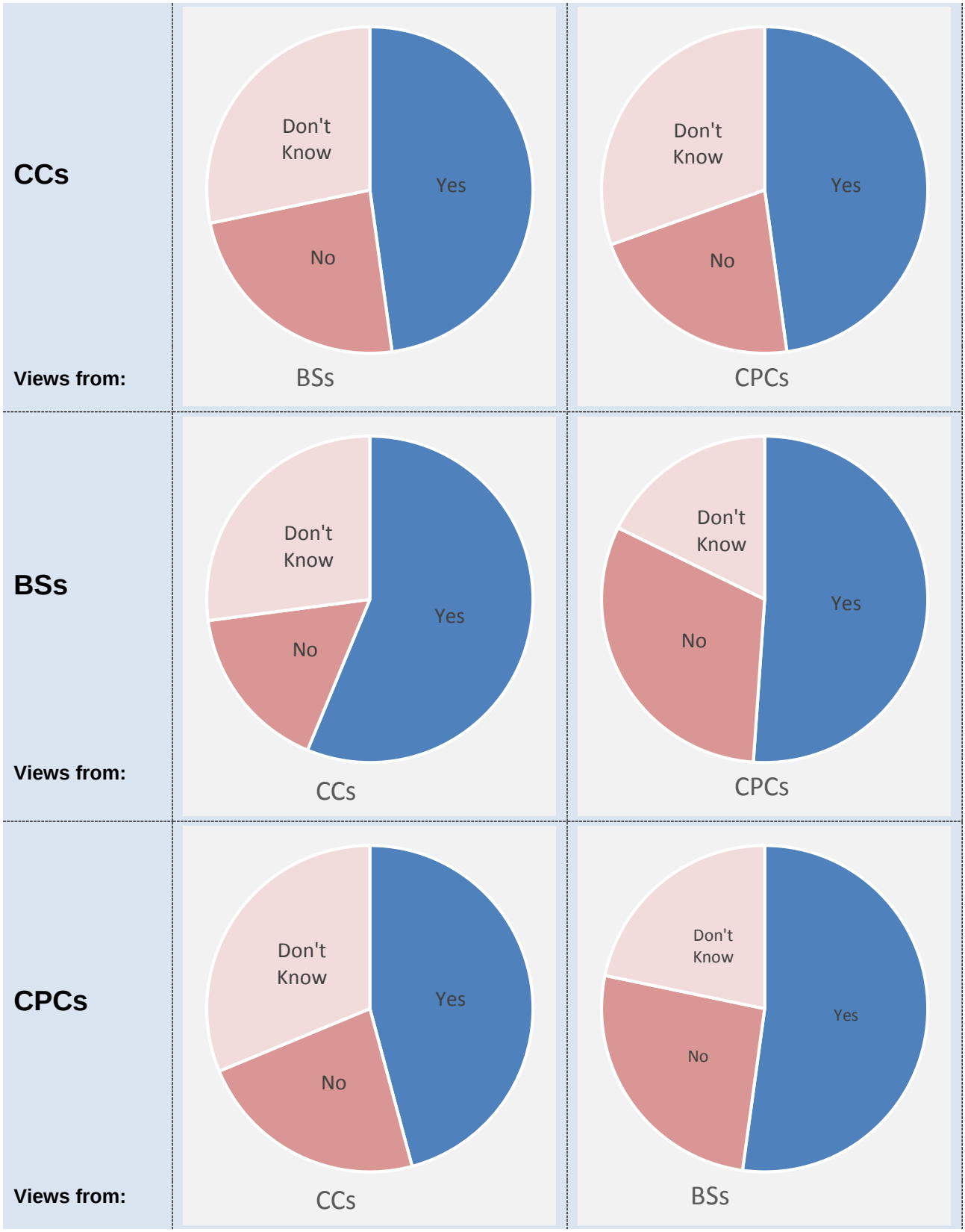
We asked the chairs of 47 CPCs, 46 BSs and 46 CCs about the operations and functionality of their and other groups.

Most groups reported that they were set up between 2010 and 2012. Once founded, most chairs said that groups met once a month or more during the project.

Some groups received training, but not consistently, and not much. Around 60 per cent of group chairs of each type reported receiving training ‘rarely’ or ‘never’. When training was received, it was almost always considered helpful.

We asked chairs whether *other* groups were carrying out activities relating to CP during the project. Only around half said yes, as shown in Exhibit 2-13. A marginally higher proportion of respondents felt that the BSs were carrying out activities, though a higher proportion of CPC chairs said that the BSs were not conducting activities than any other group. These results are not at all conclusive on their own, but are not encouraging about the functioning of the groups: if any one individual should have known about what other groups were doing, it would be the chairs of groups.

**Exhibit 2-13: Views of whether other groups were carrying out child protection activities**




*Source: UNICEF Cotton Corridors project phase 2 data collection. Note: Ns: CC 48, BS 46, CPC 47 on view of CC and 46 on view of BS. The column on the left hand side is the group about whom the views are. The names under the pie charts are who the views are from.*

Overall, the results from our interviews and focus groups tallied with those from the scale questionnaires above. In general, while the groups tended to have been formed and most group

members were able to talk about what they did, few others had heard of them or their activities. This quote from a child in a well performing village is typical:

*"I have heard of the CPC, Balika Sangha and Child Club, but I am not aware of the activities taken up by these committees. Neither I am aware the members who are in the committees nor do I know when these committees were formed."*

Groups functioned best when they had an active volunteer and active group members. Of the three groups, the CPC was typically best informed and most active, responsible for coordinating activities, raising awareness, and following up on individual cases.

In several villages, it appeared as though the groups had certainly been moribund for some time (see more under sustainability), and in some cases had been constituted just for our visit. None of the groups we met appear to be continuing to function effectively in the absence of the project.

**Child protection committees**

The CPCs were the most important committees in the running of the project, and also appeared to function most effectively. Initially, called the Child Labour Prevention Committees and then broadened to cover all of child protection, they were responsible for conducting activities, raising awareness and following up on individual cases. For instance, the CPCs were the groups who took responsibility for the enrolment of students in open schooling for 10th standard. They would also follow up on CL and CM by talking to parents and referring employers and those participating in marriage to the police. In some cases, CPC members reported that this made them very unpopular. CPCs tended to be clearer about their role and what they achieved, and to be quite active, as in this well performing Kurnool example:

*"The NGO has given good support in reducing child labour and child marriages. We took processions with slogans of reducing child labour and child marriages. They sent drop outs to schools & motivated to write open 10th and also sent them for tailoring training. The CV used to be behind members of CPC asking to attend meetings regularly and constructed hand wash basins at school. All activities of project were good. Organized meetings with Kishora Balikas, provided prizes to children at events, given papers, pencils, cycles, etc. although giving such inputs stopped now as project is closed. In meeting we identify issues, solutions also and implement decisions."*

Or in another Kurnool village, this time poorly performing, the CPC said:

*"Yes we know and conducted meeting once in a month. They did the activities with Balika Sanghas and conducted rallies, facilitated to dropout children for open tenth exam. These activities helped for child protection. We are thinking that most significant contribution of UNICEF project is helping dropout students to appear for open tenth. [anon] a drop out student passed open tenth exam. Dropout students are continuing their studies and some of them are writing exams. And working children brought back to school because of the project."*

Typically, the meeting of CPCs was organised by the CV, and as such the effectiveness of the CPC depended on the effectiveness of the CV, as well as the interest of the members in addressing issues. CVs in some cases used the CPCs to follow up on issues that they had identified but were unable to prevent themselves (such as individual child marriages).

By design, the panchayat secretary was the convenor of the group, and the village revenue officer a member, together with the CV. Children were asked to participate. In practice, it was not always clear that the panchayat secretary was active or that children were members. As with other groups, CPC members who were not ex officio were selected because they were considered active. CPC

members reported receiving support from NGOs, and unlike the other groups, were able to coordinate with higher level officials in government. Respondents did not tell us of disagreements within the CPC.

Even for the CPC, many other village level respondents had not heard of them or their activities, although they were better known than the BS and the CC. Some children noted that they would refer issues relating to the school to the CPC, as well as to the head teacher and *sarpanch* (both usually members). In some villages, teachers knew of the CPC but not of what they had achieved. Where others had encountered the detail of their activities, this was not always of a very high quality. For instance, one child noted that the CPC visited their home and requested parents not to send children to work, and then left. Where respondents had heard in more detail about the CPC, this was often because they had a relation to or knew someone personally on the committee. For instance, one child in Kurnool remarked that "the AWW is our grandmother…I talk about eggs and feed with her."

*Mandal*-level CPCs were also envisioned by the project but not in practice formed or active.

**Balika Sanghas**

Members of BSs interviewed had a reasonably clear idea about what their responsibilities and activities were, and on their relationship with the CV. The groups reported that they were formed by the CV selecting particularly active children from each class. Their responsibilities (as they themselves saw it) included gathering data (in Kurnool) and following up on irregular students and drop outs, and preventing CM. Where there was disagreement between the groups, they would consult with the volunteer and the *sarpanch*.

Typically, BSs felt that they did not receive any support from government, but some support from project team or (different) NGOs after selection. They requested additional support to their group's activities.

Even in well performing villages, most respondents had rarely heard of BSs, or if they had heard of them, did not know what they did. Where they did know about them, this response from a teacher in a poorly performing Kurnool village was fairly typical: "Yes I heard about BSs, they are up to 5$^{th}$ class level but there is not much impact in our village." Two exceptions to this were the CPC and teachers, both of whom tended to be better informed about BSs.

There was, however, an impressive exception in one well-performing Kurnool village where the BS were both well informed about their responsibilities, and other respondents, including the teacher and children, were clear about what they did. A child from this village noted:

*"Balika Sanghas are there. They are taking responsibility of enrolling children in schools, taking steps for their retention, motivating the parents for sending their children to schools are the different activities they do. Balika Sangha and CV work together for reducing child labour, enrolling and mainstreaming children, and create awareness among parents on the issues of child marriages."*

Experts and NGO staff acknowledged the variance in performance in BSs, noting that successful groups were the result of both effective CVs and dynamic individuals in the group, and the support that they can get from other key individuals, such as AWWs.

### Child clubs

Only CC members, teachers and CVs were able to discuss the activities of CCs. CC members were generally less well informed about the activities of their groups than BS members or CPC members, but some were able to discuss their role on improving attendance and retention and reducing marriage. While some of the groups recounted stories of them encouraging children to go to school and preventing marriages — and this recounting in itself may be valuable — our judgement is that some of these were coached shortly before the visit to do this. When asked to provide more detail or corroborate these stories, few groups were able convincingly to do this.

Few other actors or children outside the CC had heard of these groups. Overall, it seemed that CCs — also the youngest of those involved in the project — struggled to participate in a meaningful way.

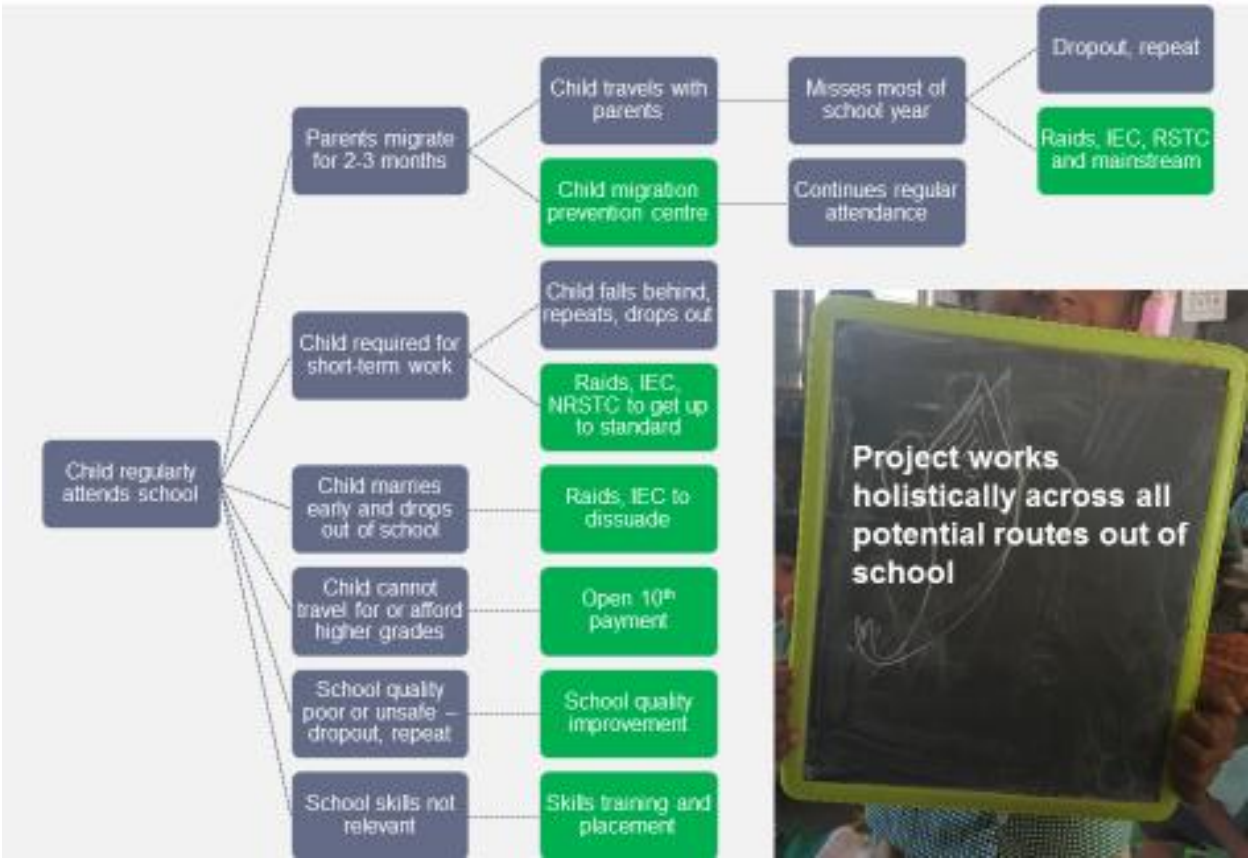
CC group members were selected as bright pupils by the CVs. This may have given the most likely possibility of an active group, but was not likely to involve marginalised children in CC activities. Members reported that they received training from the CV on visiting children and persuading them to go to school, but no support from the government or the NGOs.

## 2.2.1.4 Activities carried out

The TOC for this area is that key activities to improve CP are designed, funded and carried out with support of community members. In theory, these activities will vary in different places and times depending on the priorities articulated in the different villages.

The relationship between these activities and children's work, school and marriage status is given in Exhibit 2-14. This indicates that the project took a holistic approach to these issues.

**Exhibit 2-14: Project activities and child work, school and marriage**



*Source: Authors*

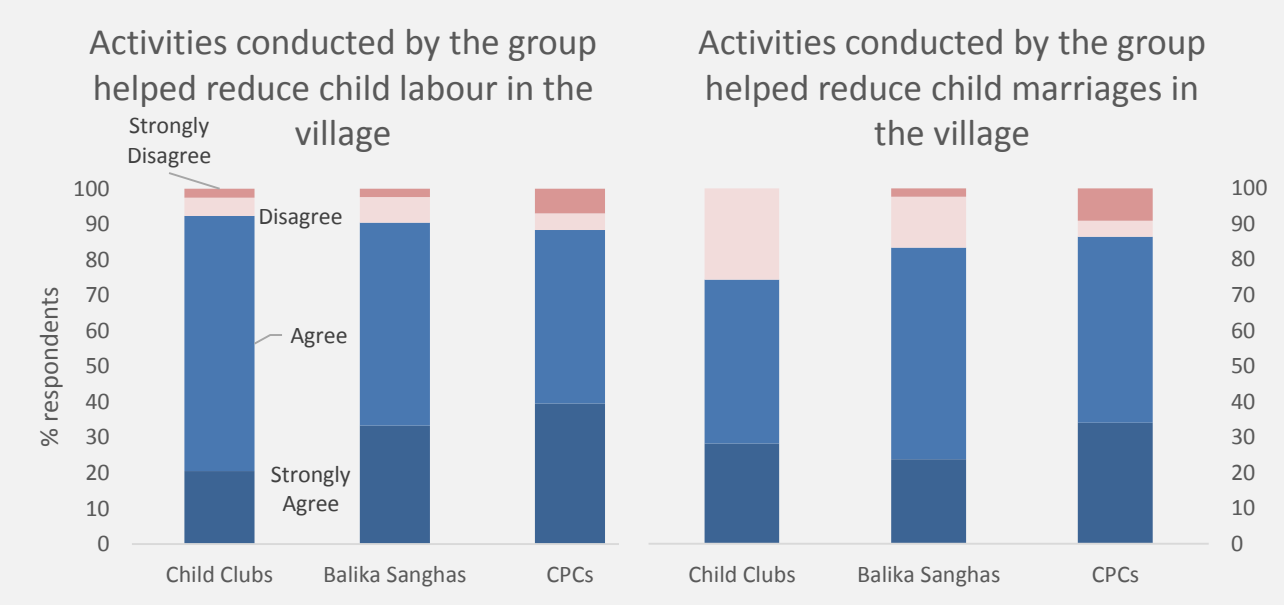
There were several specific activities undertaken with support from the project that have an effect on CP outcomes. We discuss them further in the section on project activities' success below. These are:

- enforcement drives for CL and subsequent prosecution;
- enforcement drives for CM and subsequent prosecution;
- open schooling for children from 10th class;
- NRTSCs and RSTCs;
- child migration prevention centres in villages;
- skills training for adolescents;
- improving the quality of schools.

**Overall results disaggregated by questionnaire type**

**Most respondents felt that the activities of their groups had helped reduce CL and CM**, as seen in Exhibit 2-15.

**Exhibit 2-15: Respondents' views on group activities**




*Source: UNICEF Cotton Corridors project phase 2 data collection. Note: Ns: CPC 43, BS 42, CC 39, CPC 44, BS 42, CC 39.*

The progress of each of these activities has been analysed in depth in Section 2.2.2.

### 2.2.1.5 Data used

The TOC on data use is that through surveys on OOSC and discussions, key stakeholders agree on data at the village level and use them to identify OOSC and design and monitor activities to return them to school. Project documentation claimed that, at least in Kurnool, "the development and display of complete children information in *panchayat* offices led to usage of these information by CPCs, CCs and girls' collectives," (UNICEF 2015: 12).

The objective of the novel child-tracking database was to track (through their name) and update the status of each OOSC listed in the baseline data.

**This activity was limited largely to Kurnool, AP. At NGO and project level, this appears to have been a strength of the project**. Between 2009 and again in 2010–2011, comprehensive data collection on children out of school, and categorisation of these children into dropouts, never attended and irregular, using SSA definitions, took place. This led to a comprehensive list, however, there was a mismatch in the number of OOSC between government data and that collected under the project. In this context, the DC ordered a joint verification that took place in several project villages. **There was some informal agreement on lists of OOSC** that were then apparently publicised at village and *mandal* level. It was difficult to contest these data because of the level of detail — the identification and listing of individual names. However, it was also hard for head teachers formally to agree how many children were out of school without exposing themselves to difficult questions from the district and *mandal* education officers, so in practice, project and NGO leads reported, these data were largely agreed informally, with communities.

**At village level, it is clear that in many cases, these data were used to follow up on children** identified in 2009, 2010 or 2012 as out of school. Some teachers in Kurnool were also aware of these data. Overall, the project was able to focus the attention of the CV and groups on this set of children, and project MIS data suggest that a substantial proportion of them were returned to school.

However, **there were some major challenges with the design and implementation of this system that limited its impact**:

- regular updates to the list were not made uniformly;
- where updates were made, the data from the previous update was simply over-written, so it was not possible to track children over time;
- once children were returned to school, there was very little follow up, so if they subsequently dropped out *again* (which was likely), they were not added back into the database;
- there was no independent monitoring of the data after baseline or support to CVs to use data. The quality and use of data was largely down to the very variable quality of volunteers.

Overall, therefore, the potential of the innovative approach to the collection of data on OOSC was not realised in full, either at the village level (for improvement in CP), or at the project level (for learning).

### 2.2.2 Which programmatic activities have been successful and unsuccessful and why?

#### 2.2.2.1 Enforcement drives for CL and subsequent prosecution

**These overall appeared to be reasonably effective in the short-term**, but not everywhere, and with limited sustainable impact.

As this CPC in Raichur noted, the presence of the police in the conduct of these raids was important in changing the way that people felt about CL, at least short-term: "*The activities of UNICEF program has brought in some positive changes by creating fear among the general public, people are afraid of sending their children to work, employers allocating works to them and both the parties for celebrating child marriages, because all such activities were booked as child atrocity cases and people are afraid to continue them. We feel satisfied with what we did, preventing child*

*marriages always raised quarrels between parents and our groups but they are pacified by the intervention of Government Officials or police."*

**Employers in both Kurnool and Raichur were aware that enforcement drives took place and claimed that the drives acted as a deterrent to employing children**. The evidence is clear that, especially at peak times, many children continued to work, and employers to employ children, despite these raids, although they did deter this to some degree. These were generally more effective for fields near the roadside which were more likely to be raided.

**The incentives around drives were not entirely clear**. The penalties were on employers but they generally felt that the responsibility for responding to the threat of raids lay with parents: "Parents assure that they would convince the police or the organizations if they come for verification, basing on their consent we allocate them work." Fines from employers (usually Rs 20,000 per child under the Child Labour Act, implemented by the Labour Department) were supposed to be set aside in a trust to be used for the education of the child or given to the child on maturity.

According to project staff and the labour department, though enforcement drives were conducted in cotton fields during the project period, in the majority of cases oral warnings were given and no cases were filed against the employers. In a few instances where cases were filed, they were filed under the minimum wage act and not under the CL act, as agriculture is not included under hazardous work. Only if the case was booked under the CL act was Rs. 20,000 collected and deposited under the child's name.

For children who migrated with parents — and therefore missed most of the schooling, these were not effective at all, because they typically moved outside the district where the focus of the drives was.

**Some respondents felt that the groups were able to follow up on the enforcement drives by working closely with children** and having them act as informants, though there was limited evidence of this at village level. Indeed, the involvement of the police in these drives in some cases led to tensions in the village.

**Some key informants queried whether the drives were beneficial in the long-term** if they were unable to deter CL, since they may simply have the effect of traumatising children. We did not find any direct evidence of this, but project officials reported that they organised meetings between police and communities to improve the relationship between them, and at least one BS group confirmed this. Other key informants queried whether these drives were an effective way of changing opinions about CL; they operated as a punitive measure only. This seems right; the contribution of enforcement drives to reducing CL needs to be seen in the context of other work to raise awareness of the benefits and costs of CL and school, and the feasibility of children attending school.

**Other stakeholders questioned the effectiveness of the drives even as a deterrent**. One government official felt that the drives were principally for the benefit of the media; that workers returned to factories the next day, that in some cases vehicles for raids were not available, and that there were inadequate numbers of police officers to conduct raids seriously. A Raichur employer was also sceptical: "*The organizations that approach us tell and sometimes warn that polices cases would be booked against us if we employ children in work, then they disappear forever. They tell words, but do not help the families that are sending their children for work in any possible way, they tell words."*

**The convergence of different government departments around enforcement drives was harder to assess**. There was clearly effective convergence with the police who carried out

enforcement drives, and the final project report (page 10) refers to USD 500,000 of expenditure by government on raids[32], and 450 rescue operations in Kurnool alone, booking 399 cases and constituting 26 open courts. Some government officials noted that raids took place before the project, but increased in intensity. There was a design for the involvement of many different departments in the raids, including Agriculture, Labour and WCD, depending on the offence. Typically, project staff reported, prosecutions were made under the minimum wages act administered by the labour department, because the Child Labour Act has requirements around the number of hours worked that are difficult to prove. As noted above, it is not clear how well the allocation of funding worked. A police officer interviewed reported that this convergence did not continue after the project ended.

#### 2.2.2.2 Enforcement drives on CM and subsequent prosecution

Again, many respondents had heard of these drives, and they clearly had some effect in the short-term. Several respondents were aware of police activity around CM, including priests. One priest from Kurnool reported that three years back there was some disturbance because mass weddings (of under-age children) were being performed at the Karnataka-AP border. The Police had come and stopped the weddings; since then the Trust (that conducted the marriages) stopped accepting under-age children. They checked if the girl was above 18 years of age and the boy above 21 years of age. They checked the age proof certificated of children, and only when the age criterion was met did they allow the wedding to take place. This incident was confirmed by the school teacher of that Kurnool village. Moreover, the priest had said the following:

*"At the time of writing the Lagna Patrika (wedding card), usually 5 or 6 days before the wedding, we tell them clearly that we would not conduct under-age weddings, and also that the government will punish if under-age weddings take place. Bookings for slots for weddings at most of the temples are online; parents should furnish all the proofs before the wedding, and because of that number of child marriages declined."*

A priest in Raichur reported that the police and NGO had come to him and had told him to agree to perform marriage ceremonies of girl children only after verifying their age by checking their date of birth on their Aadhar Cards or school certificates. The priest confirmed that he was doing as they had asked him to. In one Raichur village, the CC claimed that they had informed the police about impending marriages and that now "parents are giving second thought before committing for child marriages." Parents in Kurnool villages also reported that police visits took place.

As with labour enforcement drives, convergence with the police was clearly important here; they had the required authority to create a deterrent and respond to marriages, in ways that CVs or NGOs were unable to do. Moreover, in some cases CVs felt vulnerable in trying to prevent marriages:

*"I was beaten up by the parents of the bride in preventing a child marriage case, police include my name as witness, I have to face troubles both the sides. The parents of the girl are still harassing me, there is no support from the public, police do not support us always."*

#### 2.2.2.3 Open schooling for children from Class 10

**The provision of fees and support for open schooling for children from Class 10 and above was one of the most effective aspects of the project in Kurnool**. Together with the other

[32] These seems an extremely large figure, but is recorded in the project report.

education activities, the project reports indicate that 24,183 children were reported enrolled into schools, special training centres and open education projects.[33] These were considered effective by most respondents, including parents and children who were able to refer to this. As one Kurnool child noted:

*"I learnt some useful skills at school and because I did 10th in open system, I can apply for a driving license. When I attended school, I used to go happily, because of problems at home and farm work, I could not continue. UNICEF gave me an opportunity to resume studies and so I did open 10th and intermediate. I was very sad when I dropped out of school. No problems, when I resumed studies because it was open 10th. The earnings of children are necessary only after marriage. I want to become a constable in the future."*

Respondents felt this was the most important contribution made. In several different villages, CPCs noted that this was the biggest contribution that their group made. As one explained:

*"Yes, there have been changes with this scenario for the past few years. With the support provided by UNICEF some students were able to complete Tenth and Intermediate in open schooling. Among the completed students some are going for non-professional jobs and some are going for higher studies."*

Others agreed. As this BS noted: "The support given to children for appearing open 10th class is most praise worthy activity, 10th class has become the minimum standard for any support given by Government and ensuring the minimum qualification is remarkable work, done by UNICEF." In one village, even an employer had heard of this project. In another in Kurnool, a teacher noted that this "was the most successful activity."

Project staff also saw this as one of the most successful activities of the project: 5,436 children benefited from this in Kurnool. Additionally, according to KIIs, during 2013-14 more than 80 per cent of the children who appeared for open 10th examinations in Kurnool district were from the Adoni division.

**Overall there appeared to be good convergence between project teams and government in the implementation and budgeting of open schooling**. However, in the absence of the project, this support appears not to continue (see sustainability section).

We did not find evidence on the effectiveness of this activity in Raichur. This could be because the intervention feasible in the local context of AP state, rather than in Karnataka. The open school system in Karnataka is different, more rigid than that in AP. In Karnataka, OOSC can directly appear for Class 10 examinations, but the syllabus and level of the examination is the same as regular school going students. However, in AP, the syllabus is much easier for students who want to write Class 10 examinations, senior secondary and degree examinations directly. These are conducted by the AP Open University.

#### 2.2.2.4 NRSTCs and RSTCs

**There is a disconnect between very positive views of STCs by project staff, and minimal evidence of them at village level**, best explained by the relatively small scale. Project reports emphasise the roles of special training centres, the provision of government funding of USD 1 million for them, and the integration of RSTCs run by NGOs with government residential training

[33] In earlier reports those in open education projects were treated separately, so it is not clear how these relate.

centres. STCs were considered a high potential intervention by stakeholders in NGOs and at *mandal* and district level, if they could be made to work.

The design was that long-term drop outs would be identified in villages, referred to RSTCs and returned to age appropriate classes in formal schools. In practice, it proved difficult for the government to run the prescribed one RSTC per *mandal*/block, due to lack of funds and personnel, so most of the time RSTCs were run by NGOs. However, the quality of RSTCs was not felt to be strong, and it was particularly difficult to cater for girls for reasons of infrastructure, so there were dropouts reported from RSTCs.

A model to integrate RSTCs with KGBVs for girls was tried on a small scale in Kurnool. KGBVs are schools intended for girls at the upper primary level belonging to SC, ST, BC and minority communities, set up in areas with low female literacy and/or a large number of girls out of school and there is generally one per *mandal*[34]. They receive comparatively reliable funding under SSA, and tend to have pukka buildings and safety for girls. Through the project 17 RSTCs were set up in KGBVs and 14 felt by project staff to be effective. Despite this and initially favourable views from state bureaucrats, this model was eventually discontinued, apparently because some NGOs who ran RSTCs felt that they were missing out on valuable funding and lobbied at state level for the reversal of the proposal. According to one KII, the reason for discontinuation was reported to be due to political interference, however, this needs further probing and corroboration.

For short-term dropouts and dropouts from RSTCs, the project innovated NRSTCs at village level, setting up 230 in Kurnool alone, which catered to 3,500 children. These NRSTCs were supposed to operate in school buildings, staffed by a locally recruited teacher, funded by the project and overseen by CPCs. Children would attend the NRSTCs and then be mainstreamed back into formal school. Project staff viewed these as more successful than RSTCs, but again there was minimal evidence of these institutions functioning at village level.

Some respondents at village level mentioned RSTCs. For instance, a CPC in Kurnool reported a nearby RSTC where four children were enrolled.

The differential perception is probably best explained by the small scale of these interventions in relation to the requirements of children who migrate for work with their parents.

Although the DC in Kurnool wrote instructing the continuation of these centres, it is not clear whether in practice funding was provided after the project ended, given the challenges with state division and reduced funding.

#### 2.2.2.5 CMPC in villages

**Project staff highlighted these centres as a key innovation of the project, but again, there was limited mention of these in villages**, reflecting the very small scale at which they operate. This activity spanned across 12 centres in 12 villages in 2013–14, each covering about 30 children. However, although they were unable entirely to prevent migration, these were considered by stakeholders at *mandal* level and above to be one of the most effective potential models for dealing with issues of migration.

These centres were designed to address the problem of children needing to migrate with their parents during peak agricultural seasons (roughly November–December and February–March), and therefore missing most of the school year that starts in earnest in October and has exams in April. There are formal (often NGO-run) hostels at *mandal* level for these children, but there were

[34] http://apkgbvs.in/

not felt to work very effectively and were difficult for many children to attend. Moreover, when the project tried to support the establishment and running of these hostels, they apparently received pressure from politicians to fund certain NGOs to run them.

Instead, therefore the project established centres in some villages in Kurnool. Instead of migrating, children would stay with relatives (usually grandparents), and be provided with breakfast and dinner in addition to the MDMs under RTE. CPCs would monitor. Eight hundred children were reported as prevented from migrating in the two seasons in which this ran from 2013.

It appears that some of these centres have been continued beyond the project, in villages with particularly active CPCs and volunteers. Moreover, government and panchayats have attempted in 2016 to scale this up by asking head teachers to make proposals to open centres if they have more than 30 children eligible for it.

#### 2.2.2.6 Skills training for adolescents

Project documentation noted that 2,115 adolescents were provided with skills training, and of these 680 found work placements. However, this was not widely discussed by respondents, perhaps reflecting the relatively small scale of the adolescents placed. One BS referred to “such a good training project” in tailoring for adolescent girls, but otherwise there was limited recognition of this. In phase 1 we spoke to a training coordinator for the Kurnool district. She was in charge of training CVs, SHG groups (that had mothers, of children involved in CL, as members) and AWWs. By providing training on issues related to girls (such as CMs, girls’ education, child abuse, heath, hygiene and life skills), the aim was to train girls who then became ‘change agents’ of their villages.

On balance it is probably difficult to achieve substantial quality at scale with this particular model, though it has made a difference for some of those who attended it. Much remains unclear about processes of selection and monitoring for this training.

#### 2.2.2.7 Improving the quality of schools

Taking off from a brief discussion of improvement in school quality under Section 2.2.1, the following section analyses the project activity in detail.

**In well performing villages in particular, the quality of school infrastructure improved substantially** as a result of direct project funding or work with government to improve funding and materials. Project documentation indicated that infrastructure was improved in 150 schools and libraries in 750 schools. This was widely noticed by students, parents and teachers, as discussed previously. The photographs below indicate the successful level of infrastructural quality to which schools improved. Materials in the improved classroom included substantial teaching aids, a working TV and DVD player with DVDs, materials for drawing, individual blackboards for each student, and (outside) functioning and clean toilets.

The **improvements in infrastructure were typically felt to have contributed to improved enrolment**, and, to the extent that they made schools more pleasant places to be, attendance. This was noted by parents and children, as well as teachers. As one child from a well performing village in Kurnool noted: *“Many changes have come in, schools had bathrooms constructed, and children who were not attending are coming to school now. Water is ensured, the playground is cleaned and a kitchen was erected.”* Children in another Kurnool village echoed this but noted that this has limited effect particularly for girls after 5$^{th}$ standard when children need to travel to school:

*"Yes some of the infrastructure developed, provided drinking water facility and constructed toilets. some children. Some children stopped working and joined school because of the project. Girls study up to 5th class and after that due to lack of public transport facility they are stopping school. Parents think that no protection to girls. Parents are stopping girls' education and getting the marriages."*

However, **there were severe limitations in how much educational quality could be improved**, because of the fixed numbers of teachers and the challenges with transition. In the same examples below, the teacher in the improved classroom had 53 students from five different grades in her class, each at different levels and requiring a different curriculum and levels of engagement. As the sole teacher, this was clearly impossible, with or without materials, and it seems likely that the teacher made use of the stick on her desk for discipline. These challenges were compounded by the high levels of dropout: there were 17 children from grade one but only 5 from grade five. By contrast, the 'unimproved' class photographed below had fewer students from fewer grades, and as such the teacher possibly delivered a better standard of education to those students. This limitation was also recognised by respondents in villages and NGOs.

Overall, this arguably goes some distance to explaining the quite poor measured learning outcomes found in ASER and other surveys cited in the inception report.[35] So while remaining in school may be beneficial for CP reasons, it is unclear in practice how much it adds to learning outcomes for most children.

**It was also unclear how school improvements were allocated**; most probably, as with other activities, effective CVs and structures were able to obtain additional support for school infrastructure. In less well performing villages with less active CVs and poorer relationships with government, infrastructural improvements were much less common.

### Exhibit 2-16: School improvement

[35] According to ASER 2014 data, reading levels hover around similar levels to the national average (40 per cent), although with 46 per cent of Standard III children reading a Standard I level text in 2014 this is slightly better than for all India, and 38 per cent doing subtraction is quite substantially better. Rural Karnataka is similar: 43 per cent of Standard III pupils could read a Standard I text in 2014, and 26 per cent could subtract.

*Note: OPM fieldwork photographs. These schools were in neighbouring villages*.

### 2.2.3 Which partnerships, processes and strategies were successful and unsuccessful and why?

**The project was implemented in partnership with three NGOs in AP, and through an NGO in Karnataka that was later replaced with a project network of staff**.

Overall, this model worked well, with the exception of the experience with the NGO in Karnataka which was later replaced. However, there is some evidence of differential effectiveness of these NGOs, and there was certainly scope for improvement in the management and monitoring of the activities of the NGOs.

**NGOs themselves noted some significant challenges in the arrangement**. The NGOs had an agreement with the Government of Andhra Pradesh (GoAP) and not with UNICEF directly. Annual planning of activities was done by UNICEF staff with the NGO and project staff. However, budget allocation for activities was done by the Government quarterly; this meant that the NGOs did not know what budget would be sanctioned to them for the year and if the Government decided not to fund particular activities, the NGOs had no way to pay salaries or conduct activities, which made continuity extremely challenging. According to one NGO staff, in 2014, massive amounts of salaries remained unpaid. Poor financial planning and management (discussed in efficiency below) meant that NGOs were unable to conduct time-sensitive activities and some money was left unspent. According to NGO partners, there were slight delays in the release of funds before the state bifurcation, however a major issue for them was that they were not aware of the annual allocation of funds to them and on an ad hoc basis they were asked to submit quarterly demands and budgets were released on quarterly basis. Moreover, sometimes NGOs were unable to utilise the funds because several activities required collaborating with the government departments (for instance for the enforcement drives, training programmes etc.). As a result of these challenges, almost no activities were carried out in 2014 in Kurnool, and there was no effective communication around or sustainability plan for the end to the project.

**In Raichur, there were slightly mixed views of the effectiveness of the project set up.** Some felt that it worked well, and that having project staff familiar with Raichur was helpful (and indeed possibly having more project staff familiar with Raichur would have been an improvement). In addition, getting the official sanction of the Government of Karnataka was an important and effective strategy for continuity in the face of the high turnover of government officials, as Raichur was reportedly 'no one's choice of posting'.

The project team had a difficult strategic choice between offering direct support to implementation of government activities and offering a set of good ideas or models for improving CP. In practice, understandably given the scale involved, the project appeared to do a small amount of direct support (particularly around convergence), while trying to implement promising models. Different individuals in government and the project had different perceptions of where the correct balance was — at times, for instance, collectors appeared to want direct implementation, at others they preferred the project team only to support.

This was overall a sensible strategy, but it often turned out that the models they offered quickly ran into implementation constraints through government rules and budgets. Moreover, each of the new individuals involved in the project (whether project coordinator or collector) was interested to experiment, leading to a rapid proliferation of different models. Some respondents felt that this was a common problem with UNICEF: that promising models were tested but that lessons learned from the reality of implementing them were not applied to the next round of project.

In both states, it is clear that UNICEF as an organisation has status and influence. UNICEF's international brand helped them persuade the governments to give attention to CP in a way that local NGOs would not have been able to achieve. Most respondents at district level would have been happy had UNICEF staff been more directly involved with the project to exercise that influence, in order to overcome some of the political and fiscal challenges involved in testing and funding different models. For example, during the problems faced with the district administration in AP, though NGO staff pointed out that eventually the UNICEF project team intervened and funds were then released to NGOs for their staff's salaries and other project activities, however, it took six months to resolve this issue which seriously damaged the project's exit plan strategy. Some respondents felt that the UNICEF staff, supervising the project, could have stepped in sooner in 2014 to resolve this issue.

At the village level, many group members were able to name the NGOs (in Kurnool) working on the project, and to describe the support they received from them. Typically, they felt they would have benefitted from more support from the NGOs, who were limited to one or two training sessions for these groups and volunteers. In some cases, however, the NGOs gave monthly support. Typically, MVF and Sadhana were best known and most involved of the NGOs, and to some extent the Cotton Corridors project enabled them to continue some activities that they had been in any case implementing in these areas.

We will not in this section repeat the findings of the sections above. Overall, the project was not able to achieve significant improvements in CP everywhere, but contributed some extremely effective models and approaches. The largely well-designed strategies tended to be hampered by challenges in implementation and insufficient project staffing (discussed in detail in Section 2.3) to overcome them:

- the strategy of persuading government officials of the importance of working together on CL seemed both effective and sensible, and led to very substantial government expenditure and activity during the project, but was limited in its long-term success by the levels of turnover in government and the requirement constantly to rebuild that awareness in new officials. The

support to convergence was effective while it happened, but seems unlikely to have led to long-term convergence: that would take decades, not years;

- the strategy of generating regular data on OOSC was sensible but only partly effective because CVs were not adequately supported to collect and use panel data;
- the strategy of setting up models for different types of institutions to mainstream children back into school was sensible, but the implementation of these models was at small scale, and scaling them up was challenging given political and fiscal constraints;
- finally, the strategy of working through community groups built on what had been relatively strong community institutions in both states, but the support to and oversight of these groups was insufficient to make them work well everywhere unless there were particularly dynamic CVs or individuals. However, interviews conducted for this evaluation suggest that the effectiveness of these groups was then related to the strength of the community overall, and this was typically greater where need was less.

### 2.2.4 What contribution did the project team make to achieving stated objectives and fostering collaboration and convergence?

This section speaks about the perceptions of government, NGO and project staff about their role in project design, implementation and management. It focuses on the components of convergence and collaboration, and also mentions challenges faced in ensuring these.

**The project played a crucial role in enhancing convergence between governments departments on CP issues.** Evidence suggests that this was stronger at the *mandal* level departments than at state and district level ones. However, despite effective convergence during the project duration, government was not able to sustain it sufficiently in order to have impact after the project ended.

#### Convergence

Convergence is collaboration between different government departments and community teams at the village, *mandal*/ block and district level. Apart from other things, it would involve departments acting jointly and pooling budgets. This convergence was aimed to lead to improved government responses to multi-sectoral issues of CP, and the institutionalisation of CP programmes into various departments' work.

We came across various examples of convergence at different levels in project documentation and interviews.

**A state level government officer said that the project team had helped organise regular state level meetings between government departments (such as SSA, district administration, collectors, social welfare, child welfare and police).** In AP, one state level government officer's opinion was that the project was a "watershed" one mainly because of convergence and that there was a close liaison between the project team and the government. A UNICEF staff member from the UNICEF Hyderabad office, upon probing about reasons that facilitated convergence, said that it had been possible because of the project staff's good connections, relationships and shared vision with the government.

**At the district level, the collector was the head of the project. The Cotton Corridors project played a critical role in enhancing programmatic and financial convergence between departments.** This was done through joint enforcement drives against CL (that started in Kurnool and were later expanded to all the districts), regular joint review meetings and generalised

instruction to cooperate from the DC. The annual progress report for 2014 mentioned enhanced convergence resulting in leverage of funds from different government programmes under the RTE, ICPS and NCLP. Around EUR100,000 had been leveraged from government departments[36].

However, in Kurnool, one of the project NGO leads believed that little convergence had happened at the state and district level, and as a result the benefits of the project could not be sustained. According to him in order to sustain the momentum of the project, support and convergence of the state and district level administration was very crucial, in its absence, serious challenges (such as constant transfer of teachers, retaining children in school and school dropouts due to migration) could not be addressed. Even in Raichur, a project team member felt that the project was successful in linking district level institutions, but only to a certain extent.

**Overall, therefore, there was some convergence at the district level, but primarily, greater joint implementation by officials at the *mandal* level.** At the *mandal* level, convergence between departments was facilitated mainly by the project NGOs in Kurnool and through the project field staff in Raichur. Government officers spoke of regular meetings that were held by the project staff in generating awareness not only amongst the government departments (such as SSA, ICDS and labour) but also amongst community members. Sending children to school, leaving children behind in the village when their parents migrated for work, disadvantages of early child marriage, cooperation and collaboration between departments were some of the CP and other issues that were discussed during these meetings.

**However, the sustainability of convergence is less clear.** A government staff member at the *mandal* level in AP expressed that once the project had ended, convergence between lower level departments reduced drastically as there was no one to coordinate meetings amongst government officers. We discuss sustainability further in Section 2.4.

### Collaboration and support

**The project team collaborated with the government, NGOs and the community in different capacities.** In interviews with government at the state and district level, many officers spoke highly of UNICEF's involvement with child protection issues in the project areas. Officers also appreciated the technical support provided by the project team in areas such as implementation of SSA, functioning of NCLP schools and facilitating training of government staff. A state level officer in AP acknowledged that the funds provided by UNICEF to departments went a long way in giving a much needed boost to government activities. UNICEF's funding had enabled the government to conduct capacity building workshops of staff at state, district and block levels. When the project ended in 2014, the funding for these workshops stopped, which resulted in department staff in AP feeling the crunch and "missing" UNICEF's financial support.

In AP, the project team supported the District Project Manager and NGOs set the agenda for and planned the activities the NGOs had to deliver in different geographical areas of the project. NGO staff appreciated the technical project implementation models introduced by the UNICEF staff supervising the project.

### Challenges

While discussing the perceptions of project team's role in project design, implementation and management, key informants spoke of some challenges that they believed hampered convergence and collaboration. We discuss two of these below; different interpretations of project team's role in project implementation and human resource constraints within the project team and the

[36] Annual Progress Report, 'Cotton Corridors: Preventing exploitation and protecting child rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka' (January 2014).

government. In fact, project staff members in both Kurnool and Raichur mentioned these challenges.

**As we presented in the section above, Government and the project staff seemed to have conflicting interpretations of the project team's overall role in project implementation.** According to a project staff person in Raichur, the project team's role was not to lead on implementing child protection policies in the district; on the other hand, it was supposed to support the government in implementation. However, everyone began calling the project coordinator for any work related to CL. In a review meeting, the DC said that implementation was not project team's job. Thus, in the end the project staff ended up providing not only direct support (for example, convergence), but also extending technical support to the community groups.

Another challenge that came up in some interviews, in AP, was major human resource constraints within the project team as well as within the government that were felt during implementation. These capacity problems have been explained from an efficiency perspective in Section 2.3. For example, a state level government officer who had been working on UNICEF supported projects for many years insightfully said that for any kind of partnership to work, there should be sufficient number of persons within the government and partner organisation to work exclusively on the programme. Unless adequate human resources, financial and physical support was provided, the problem could not be eliminated completely. This kind of support was needed from the government as well as from the external organisation.

Raichur, on the other hand, did not face similar constraints; project staff in the district said that the project team was deliberately kept small in size. This was done so that the government did not entirely depend on them as the handover at the end of the project would have been difficult.

**Moreover, there was no one assigned to conduct internal monitoring of the project,** although project management and monitoring was allocated 8 per cent of the project budget. In the Hyderabad UNICEF office, according to a staff member, there was limited ability to follow up on activities in villages due to a very small project team overseeing the NGOs. Thus the project was unable to engage in any independent monitoring of the data. Another UNICEF staff person, too, voiced his concern over the lack of importance given to and incorporation of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) during the project planning phase.

### 2.2.5 What contribution did Government make to achieving stated objectives and fostering collaboration and convergence?

This section discusses the perceptions of government, NGO and project staff about the government's role in project design, implementation and management. It focuses on the components of convergence and collaboration, and also mentions challenges faced in ensuring these.

During the project duration, different government departments converged to discuss the child protection agenda. However, evidence did not indicate of effective collaboration between the departments to implement this agenda. Challenges such as frequent transfer of government officials, conflicting interests with the DC in Kurnool and overall unavailability of money with government departments to spend on child protection hampered implementation.

## Convergence

The project's organisation was explicitly arranged to promote convergence with government and sustainability. The DC was the head of the project in both districts, with particular responsibility for convergence, amongst other things, and with support from the project team.

During the initial stages the project was able to link together district level institutions such as ICPS, JJ Bill and CWC run by WCD, District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) and Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU, run by the police). The district administration in Kurnool was supportive of project implementation. For instance, according to a district-level government officer, after the DC sanction (which was meaningful for government officials), the scope of CPCs was broadened. Moreover, different departments coming together led to effective implementation of activities such as CL related raids and stopping CMs.

An officer who was one of the DCs in Raichur during project implementation years said that child protection became a subject in every review meeting — which hadn't happened as frequently before. She appreciated UNICEF's support and said that it 'helped her generate a sense of commitment towards the entire system'.

**On convergence, project staff members in Kurnool and Raichur broadly agreed that the project had led to better social investment by the government with regard to child related issues and education and that there certainly was greater government accountability now.** However, according to one project staff member in Raichur, after the project ended, even though project activities were still being carried out, implementation was not to the same degree as it was during project's time. According to him, this was not due to the lack of money; the respondent was of the opinion that the government had enough money to carry out these activities, but it was because of the lack of convergence and monitoring of what was happening at the ground level.

## Collaboration and support

A government officer from the district administration in Raichur said that during his tenure, he ensured that the government machinery under him was working on CP and he made all his officers visit villages, instructed police officers to visit temples on auspicious days in order prevent CMs and called AWW meetings and asked them to be the 'eyes and ears on the ground'.

In Kurnool and Raichur, most of the community level stakeholders (such as teachers and CVs) mentioned receiving help from government departments, especially from the police in implementing different rights based activities related to children such as enforcing the movement against CL through raids.

Some community members in Kurnool and Raichur said that the government was providing free books, mid-day meals and uniforms for children in their village, which was very helpful.

One CV also mentioned that government officers asked them to mainstream CL in schools and to try to motivate children to continue their schooling. The CV spoke of a *mandal*-level meeting that was held in which all government officials gave their phone numbers and asked the community members to contact them at critical periods, especially in cases when CMs were being performed.

For this project, the NGOs in Kurnool had associations with the government and not UNICEF, and they had to collaborate with the district administration for their funding procedures. The implications of this are discussed further in section 2.3.2.

### Challenges

**As far as the government's role in project implementation is concerned, key informants spoke about several challenges that came up, such as frequent transfer of government officials, conflicting interests with the DC in Kurnool and overall unavailability of money with government departments to spend on CP.**

Frequent transfers of government officials was a recurrent theme across the KIIs. These transfers made the continuity of implementation, especially convergence, hard. Priority areas in governance changed with government staff turnover. The focus on convergence under the project was especially helpful for a place like Raichur, where officers were frequently transferred out, subject to disciplinary hearings or they themselves chose to leave. However, the problem still continued — and there weren't regular ICPS officers at the district level, which slowed the momentum of work at the district level. A *mandal* administration officer working in a less-developed *mandal* in Kurnool spoke about the rampant problem government schools of that area faced: of teachers wanting to transfer out. 'These teachers want to get transferred to their own areas and don't get involved in teaching, neither are they interested to.' Moreover, the movement against the bifurcation of AP state resulted in the closing of schools and government departments from July to September 2013. This also stalled the recruitment of teachers and there were around 600 teacher posts vacant in project areas.[37]

Due to conflicting interests of a particular DC in Kurnool, there were many problems that the project encountered during its last stages. In the final year of the project, panchayat elections meant a change in the personnel working on the project for four years, leading to a requirement to train more. However, the DC in Kurnool did not give any appointments to the project team nor any approvals. This meant that the project staff were unable to strengthen the project activities in order to facilitate the handover of the project to the government, as had been intended and was needed.

Key Informants spoke of CL and education to be systematic issues that required sustained effort and that it was in part, the government's role to provide residential schools and colleges. However, government officers in their interviews voiced severe funding issues faced by departments. A state level officer from AP said that because of a lack of funds, the departments were not able to engage officials to the extent that was required to address important issues. Moreover, the central government was giving the state government limited funds that were not sufficient to address the problem of CL. She also said that for the years 2013–2015, the government had had to resort to taking money from other sources. These ranged from other departments (such as the Labour Department taking funds from the Building and Construction Department or the SSA Department) or from donors (such as UNICEF and ILO).

An example of the inability of the government to provide the required infrastructure has been highlighted in Section 2.2.2. Under the Cotton Corridors project, the government provided USD 1 million for the special training centres, and the integration of RSTCs run by NGOs with government residential training centres. Evidence suggests that it proved difficult for the government to run the prescribed one RSTC per *mandal*/block, due to lack of funds and personnel, so most of the time RSTCs were run by NGOs.

## 2.3 Efficiency

Evaluation questions for efficiency are set out in the exhibit below.

[37] Annual Progress Report, 'Cotton Corridors: Preventing exploitation and protecting child rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka' (January 2014).

**Efficiency: Key evaluation question**

How economically were resources/inputs converted into results?

**Efficiency: Secondary evaluation questions**

- Were project results achieved in the most cost efficient way?
- To what extent were partnerships with government and government budgetary outlays utilised to deliver outputs?
- Were resources used efficiently?
- Were outputs delivered on time?

Efficiency asks about the economy with which resources were converted into results. This does not discuss allocative efficiency (i.e. whether the most vital activities were spent on — this is covered more under relevance) but focuses instead on whether spending was on time and in full, and whether the project was able to leverage additional funding from government. The scope of questions under efficiency is limited by the availability of data — particularly comparative financial data — and the limited rigour with which additionality can be claimed.

We addressed the evaluation questions by:

- **examining project documentation** to identify design aspects directed at ensuring cost efficiency of project expenditure;
- **exploring the perceptions of key stakeholders** on funding patterns, timeliness of payments, financial management systems and overall efficiency of project funds;
- **seeking evidence** from budget documents and annual plans.

In the inception report, we suggested that we could compare the cost of this project with the cost of other projects if those data were provided by the project team. These costing data were not received, so this comparison was not carried out.

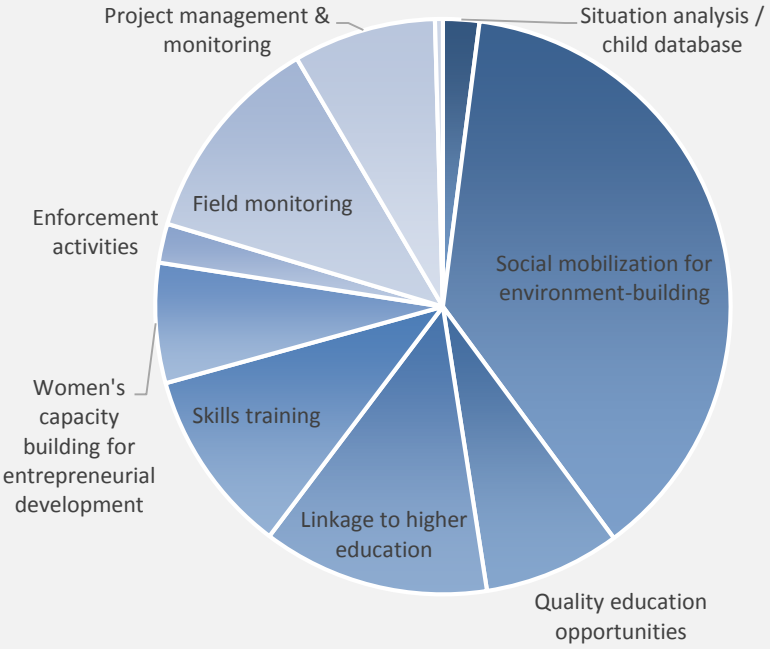
### 2.3.1 Were project results achieved in the most cost efficient way?

The budget allocated for the project was EUR 4,794,135 or USD 6,813,722.[38] This was largely funded by IKEA Foundation, but, as noted in annual reports, the government and communities also made contributions to activities that are not captured by these figures.

Data allowing a detailed breakdown of expenditure for different activity areas of the project were difficult to piece together. We have used data from a 2011 report on expenditure from 2008 to 2011 to generate the following exhibit on the division of expenditure by different categories:

[38] Calculated at the March 2011 EUR/USD exchange rate of 0.7036. Note that in the 2011 annual report, the budget was given as USD7,055,550. As we see, not all of this was spent.

**Exhibit 2-17: Distribution of expenditure, 2008–2011**




Note:
Social mobilisation represented 36% of expenditure.
Together, education activities represented 29% of expenditure
Field monitoring and project management and monitoring were 29% of expenditure.
In addition, 6% 'recovery' costs were allocated.

Source*: Calculated from Cotton Corridors project revised Kurnool project document final, 28th March 2011*.

In the absence of comparable data on the cost of different projects, it is difficult to assess the cost efficiency of the project. On balance, the project appears reasonably cost efficient. Expenditure on management and monitoring appears high in comparison with the amount of time that managers felt able to spend on these activities, and it is not clear why this is. The 6 per cent recovery rates are slightly below the UNICEF norm of 7 per cent but still perhaps comparatively high in comparison with other agencies. On the balance of evidence on effectiveness presented above, it is not clear that the skills training, at 10 per cent of total project cost, was cost effective, but this is not robust evidence.

### 2.3.2 To what extent were partnerships with government and government budgetary outlays utilised to deliver outputs?

**Leverage of resources from government was considered by the project and government staff as one of Cotton Corridors project' most impressive achievements**. The final project report includes comments on some of the resources leveraged from government, including:

- USD1 million from government for special training centres;
- USD200,000 from government on communication materials;
- USD500,000 from government for enforcement drives and related activities;
- over USD100,000 from CPCs, SMCs and community members for school improvements.

It is difficult to determine whether these estimates are accurate, and what would constitute additional expenditure. If taken at face value, this indicates that a project expenditure of around USD 6 million achieved counterpart spending of nearly USD 2 million, which is a reasonable return.

The leveraging of government resources was also recognised by respondents at district and state level, and there are several examples of government documentation where this is clear.

### 2.3.3 Were resources used efficiently?

**According to project documents, of the total budget of EUR 4,794,135, EUR 3,732,202, or 78 per cent, was spent**. Project reports offer more detail for some specific years:

- year one: EUR 700,000 spent, around 60 per cent of the budget;
- year two: EUR 790,106 spent, around 75 per cent of the budget;
- year four: EUR 513,996 spend, or 50 per cent of the budget.

Analysing the trend of underutilisation, most of this happened in the last year of the project duration. In 2012–2013, less than 50 per cent of the planned budget was utilised on the following activities.

**Exhibit 2-18: Per cent of planned budget that was utilised on particular activities in Year 4 (2012–2013)**

| Activities | Planned budget utilised (in per cent) |
|---|---|
| Situation analysis/ child database | 21 |
| Social mobilisation | 41 |
| Linkage to higher education | 37 |
| Skills training | 17 |
| Enforcement activities | 16 |

*Source: Project donor reports.*

Project documents suggest that this was largely due to efficiency savings and the funding of activities by government or community. This would be indicative of impressive performance, as discussed in the section above. This was also the reason given by one respondent, arguing that the project team spent money only on IEC materials and social mobilisation, with government spending on training. The project staff also mentioned that funds were leveraged in discussion with the state governments. And based on this discussion and commitment from the government in early 2013, the budget of the project was downsized.

However, interviews suggest that this is not the only explanation for the under-spending. Rather, it appears that there are also challenges in financial management and accounting that, at least in one state (AP), where we have information prevented available resources from being spent. This story is somewhat complex, but it appears from interviews that:

- there were insufficient project staff to manage NGO activities and accounting, particularly at key times when project staff members left and needed replacing. In at least one instance, a planned recruitment to support a coordinator could not take place due to challenges finding the right candidate and a lack of interest from the DC. This short-staffing also meant that there was insufficient capacity to follow up in villages and with NGOs, checking, for example, that the CV was able to collect data accurately. In terms of efficient resourcing, it may have been valuable to allocate some additional project staff and UNICEF staff time to the project to help address these issues;
- accounting procedures were complex, requiring the NGOs to submit detailed reports of expenditure to the project, and detailed project reports to the UNICEF staff supporting the project, before receiving the next tranche of funds. Often, this delayed the release of funds, which delayed the implementation of activities. Where those activities were time sensitive, they could not be rolled over into the next quarter;

- in 2014, a new DC required an inspection of all project activities before signing off on the release of budgets. At the same time, a key project staff member was absent and a replacement was less familiar with the project. This meant that the signoff was delayed for eight months, and due to the quarterly budgeting this meant that some NGOs had no funds to pay salaries, and therefore activities were adversely affected in 2014. This was a major reason for the under-spend in the last year, and extremely detrimental to the sustainability of the project as no exit strategy was put in place. Indeed, most respondents in villages in this district were unsure about when and how the project ended. This was exacerbated by panchayat elections leading to changes in personnel, requiring additional training.

### 2.3.4 Were outputs delivered on time?

There was no clear outline for when specific activities should be implemented that was set out at the beginning of the project. Indeed, one of the design features of the project is adaptability to evolving circumstances, implying that a fixed timeline would be inappropriate. As set out in the inception report, therefore, our answer to this question relies on perceptions of timeliness from key stakeholders. And as noted above, the delays to expenditure caused significant delays to activities in some years and in some states.

## 2.4 Sustainability and replicability

Evaluation questions for sustainability and replicability are set out in the exhibit below.

| **Sustainability and Replicability: Key evaluation question** |
|---|
| To what extent have benefits from Cotton Corridors project continued after the project team's support has been completed and why, and to what extent are the successes of the project replicable elsewhere? |
| **Sustainability and Replicability: Secondary evaluation questions** |
| • Which project activities and results have been sustained after the project ended and why? Who has been responsible in sustaining activities? |
| • Which project activities and results have not been sustained after the project ended and why? |
| • Which features of the context and the project need to be present to achieve success in other places? |

This criterion assesses if project benefits are likely to continue after donor funding was withdrawn[39]. This considers continued benefits of project interventions, if any, and the factors that led to achievement (or non-achievement) of sustainability within the project.

We addressed these questions by:

- **examining results** from a follow up study to assess the sustainability of results achieve;
- **seeking evidence** on the sustainability of key impact, outcome and output indicators;
- **analysing the perceptions of key stakeholders** on the sustainability and replicability of the project.

It is important to note that the analysis tried to incorporate the lens of gender and equity in answering the evaluation questions for this section. The project design envisaged a model of training adolescent girls in BSs and training SHG members. These women and girls were then expected to sustain the project objectives. The evaluation examines the overall sustainability of the

[39] DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance, as sourced from http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/49756382.pdf

BSs and explores the sustainability of gender and equity outcomes through this community group. Unfortunately, this evaluation was unable to examine the role of SHGs in any detail.

Sustainability was a key component of the project.[40] The project planned for sustainability by:

- promoting convergence and coordination amongst government departments, which would help institutionalise child protection therein;[41]
- creating community group structures and create ownership for CP activities amongst them. This would ensure continued involvement of these groups in promoting project objectives.

The project intended to build capacity within the government departments and community structures; which would ensure continuation of CP work after the project. Sustainability was expected through the involvement of SHGs, the preparation and display of child data at village level by *panchayat*s, linkages between CP structures (BSs, CCs and CPCs) and related government departments, the integration of CP issues in the monitoring and review systems of related departments, the development of capacity in key district CP unit officers, and the integration of residential special training centres into formal residential schools.[42]

This section explores the sustainability of the measures undertaken by the project. As explored in detail in Section 2.2.4, the project was successful in promoting convergence between government departments and cooperation and fostering community activity. However, OPM found that the project withdrawal was not accompanied by an adequate exit plan. This created a situation where most of the community-level structures and governmental cooperation built during the project period became somewhat ineffective after the project. Replication of the Cotton Corridors project model needs to be accompanied by well thought-out exit plan and thorough handover process.

### 2.4.1 Which activities have and have not been sustained and why? Who is responsible in sustaining activities? Which project activities and results have not been sustained after the project ended and why?

Section 2.2.1 explored the key activity areas and the overall effectiveness of the project. In this section, we look at the sustainability of three crucial strategies of the project:

- **sustainability of CP outcomes achieved during the project:** This section looks at the gains made in reducing CL and CM during the lifetime of the project;
- **sustainability of wider environment enabled by the project:** This section uses key informant interviews (KIIs) with government and NGO staff to examine the current state of cooperation between government departments. Here, we also look at social norms around child rights and perceptions of change; if any.
- **sustainability of groups operationalised by the project and their activities:** This section analyses scaled responses, FGD with the community groups and IDI with village functionaries to assess the functionality of community structures that were strengthened or created as a part of the project.

[40] Donor Report, 'Cotton Corridors: Preventing exploitation and protecting child rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka' (January, 2013)
[41] Donor Report, 'Cotton Corridors: Preventing exploitation and protecting child rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka' (January, 2013)
[42] Final Report to IKEA Foundation; Inception Report

#### 2.4.1.1 Sustainability of CP outcomes achieved during the project

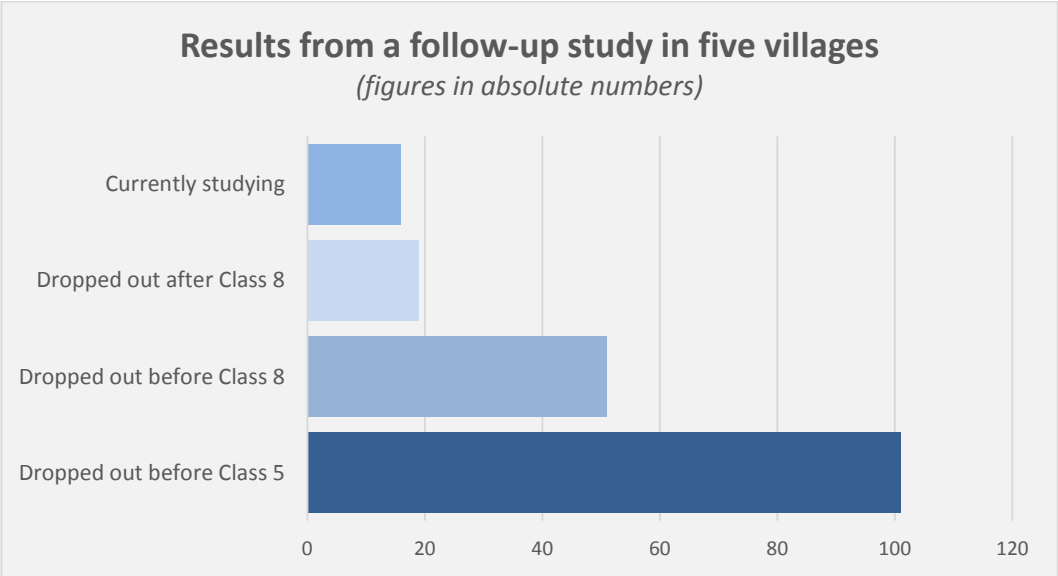
**While attitudes towards schooling and education were positive, practices in CL and CM did not change on a sustainable basis**. Interviews with various stakeholders suggest that the project contributed to, and operated in, an environment that was increasingly positive about CL and marriage. However, in the absence of rehabilitation measures and the fear of punitive action, community practices in these two areas lapsed.

As discussed in Section 2.2.1, the project contributed to improving, and raising awareness on, CP in the two districts. Attitudes towards schooling and education were found to be generally positive at the time of the evaluation. Respondents continued a positive attitude towards the importance of schooling and the need to reduce CL within communities. A teacher in Kurnool was able to directly link this to the awareness activities carried out under the project.

*"I have observed some changes in our school, especially attitude of parents and children has slightly changed and dropouts drastically declined. Because of the NGO's activities and regular interventions, the credit goes to the NGO."*

**However, it is unclear if this change in practice was sustained**. During the evaluation fieldwork, a follow up study of children mainstreamed during the project was conducted. This was done in a sample of five villages in Kurnool; including villages designated as red and green villages by Glocal. Worryingly, we found that of the 187 children who were mainstreamed in these five villages, 54 per cent of them dropped out from school before they completed class 5 and another 25 per cent dropped out before completing class 8. A further 20 girls were married by this time, with 12 of these girls under the legal age of marriage. Only 16 children were reported to be still studying.

**Exhibit 2-19: Results from a follow-up study of children in five villages**




*Source: Follow up study after the UNICEF Cotton Corridors project phase 2 data collection*

This follow up is not representative of all the villages that the project operated in, and was not a random sample. It is plausible that the trends noticed here are not reflective across all project areas. However, the trends noticed here suggest that the long term impact of mainstreaming children and merely enrolling them in school may be minimal. This sentiment was reflected in KIIs with labour and education department staff. Government officials in AP also raised concerns around adequate rehabilitation of children who were taken out of the fields. During their interviews,

the officials were sceptical of the lasting influence of this action, in the absence of other measures to rehabilitate these children.

The project needs to operate in a larger environment of improving education and economic opportunities, and work towards identifying rehabilitation opportunities, for these gains to be truly sustainable.

**Concerns on the longevity of project impact were also realised with respect to CM outcomes**. In some areas, CMs were stopped due to fear of police action and penalties. A BS member pointed out that parents were more likely to listen to UNICEF officials than a community group member. Once the project ceased, and the threat of enforcement drives conducted by the police and project intervention reduced, these gains were lost. This sentiment was reiterated by a CV in Raichur who pointed out that people had reverted to earlier practices of CMs after the end of the project. Similar to CL, this is indicative of the need to change perceptions and practices surrounding marriage. Punitive measures can be successful only if they are accompanied by change in attitudes.

*"The program has ended and now the situation is going back to as it was before the project, now there is no one to stop child marriages. People have started thinking generally once again as there is no one to question them or to stop their old practices*."

#### 2.4.1.2 Sustainability of wider environment enabled by the project

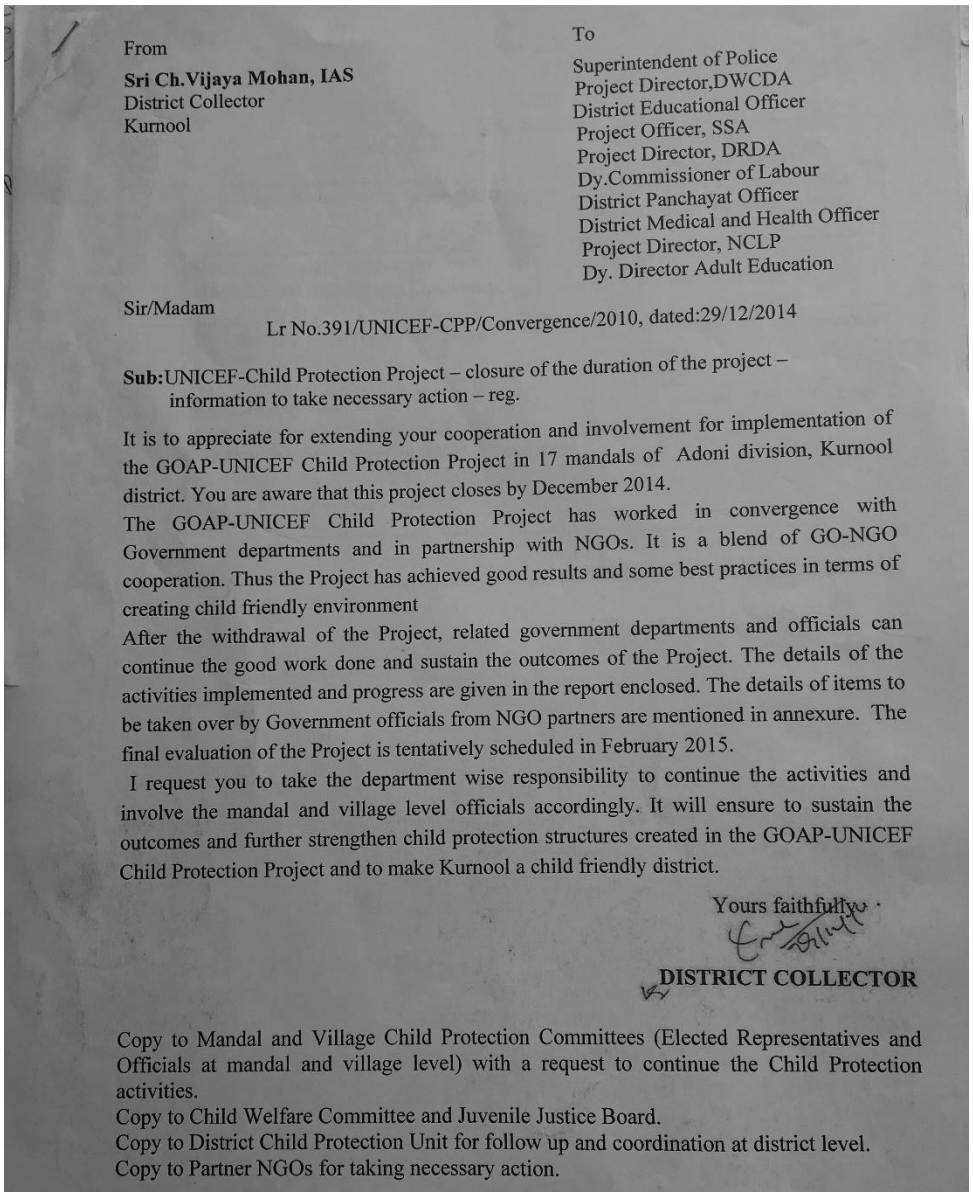
The project tried to create and promote awareness of child awareness amongst the community and within government departments. This section looks at the state of this wider environment after the project ended.

**While there continues to be greater awareness within the community, we find that gains made in government convergence lost steam after the project withdrawal**. Interviews with key staff in the government suggests that without facilitation from the project team, government departments stopped aligning their actions and objectives. This was particularly true in the state of AP where bifurcation of the state affected functioning across all government departments.

**Government Convergence**

**Facilitating greater cooperation amongst government departments was a core achievement of the Cotton Corridors project**. From KIIs with government and NGO staff, it would seem that the Cotton Corridors project was successful in creating greater convergence and focusing CP activities across different departments. One respondent even labelled it as *"the biggest contribution of the project"*. This was noticed across state-level and block-level departments, promoting greater cooperation amongst different officials dealing with child issues. The project staff were keen to highlight that efforts made to coordinate working of district officers and community level groups were important in designing relevant CP measures. This had official sanction, as the document below indicates.

## Exhibit 2-20: Government orders on maintaining project activities and convergence



From

**Sri Ch.Vijaya Mohan, IAS**
District Collector
Kurnool

To

Superintendent of Police
Project Director,DWCDA
District Educational Officer
Project Officer, SSA
Project Director, DRDA
Dy.Commissioner of Labour
District Panchayat Officer
District Medical and Health Officer
Project Director, NCLP
Dy. Director Adult Education

Sir/Madam

Lr No.391/UNICEF-CPP/Convergence/2010, dated:29/12/2014

**Sub:** UNICEF-Child Protection Project – closure of the duration of the project – information to take necessary action – reg.

It is to appreciate for extending your cooperation and involvement for implementation of the GOAP-UNICEF Child Protection Project in 17 mandals of Adoni division, Kurnool district. You are aware that this project closes by December 2014.

The GOAP-UNICEF Child Protection Project has worked in convergence with Government departments and in partnership with NGOs. It is a blend of GO-NGO cooperation. Thus the Project has achieved good results and some best practices in terms of creating child friendly environment

After the withdrawal of the Project, related government departments and officials can continue the good work done and sustain the outcomes of the Project. The details of the activities implemented and progress are given in the report enclosed. The details of items to be taken over by Government officials from NGO partners are mentioned in annexure. The final evaluation of the Project is tentatively scheduled in February 2015.

I request you to take the department wise responsibility to continue the activities and involve the mandal and village level officials accordingly. It will ensure to sustain the outcomes and further strengthen child protection structures created in the GOAP-UNICEF Child Protection Project and to make Kurnool a child friendly district.

Yours faithfully,

**DISTRICT COLLECTOR**

Copy to Mandal and Village Child Protection Committees (Elected Representatives and Officials at mandal and village level) with a request to continue the Child Protection activities.
Copy to Child Welfare Committee and Juvenile Justice Board.
Copy to District Child Protection Unit for follow up and coordination at district level.
Copy to Partner NGOs for taking necessary action.

*Source: Cotton Corridors project evaluation*.

**However, these gains did not survive in practice much beyond the end of the Cotton Corridors project**. Once the project team withdrew from the project, government convergence appeared to have reduced and became largely dependent on the individual officers and their motivation. Interviews with project and government staff found convergence amongst different departments had not reached a stage of self-sufficiency. Without facilitation by the project team, the government departments did not meet as often. This was expressed in KIIs in AP and Karnataka.

However, the situation was better in Karnataka where these activities have continued but with a much lower intensity.

*"All of the activities mentioned above are still being carried out, but not to the same degree as it was during UNICEF's time. It is because of the lack of convergence and monitoring of what is happening at the ground level."*

In AP, convergence activities seem to have lost steam and the government has not been able to achieve convergence at the state and district level. One NGO staff member lamented that this lack of sustainability had led to loss of gains made in CP. Since government departments had stopped meeting, issues which required coordination of government efforts were left unresolved. The official felt that education outcomes had once again dipped in the district.

In Kurnool, better relations with the previous collector helped the project in the initial years. This collector was keen to see progress in CP. Due to lack of a similar relationship with a later appointee, many gains of the project were lost. We found that many appointments to the project team did not get approved at this time. Additionally, budget delays during this time period led to under-funding of NGOs and cessation of most activities in 2014. This substantially weakened the hand over process. Government staff admitted that frequent transfers obstructed involvement with projects and was a key factor affecting sustainability in Kurnool district.

*Bifurcation of the state of AP:* In the state of AP, sustainability was further weakened due to bifurcation of the state. In 2014, the Indian Parliament passed a bill dividing the state of AP into Telangana and AP. This division is ongoing and has taken up most of the focus of the state government. There is also uncertainty regarding the allocation of financial resources and human personnel to the new state divisions. Consequently, this has reduced the focus on CP in the region. Most government staff were focussing on operationalising the bifurcation of the state.

**It does appear that there are important exceptions to this limited sustainability**. One of these is the attempt by the AP government to implement child migration prevention centres, although it is not yet clear whether this will in practice lead to them being funded and implemented. However, this type of continuation could not be said to be a generalised feature.

#### 2.4.1.3 Sustainability of community structures that were strengthened or created as a part of the project

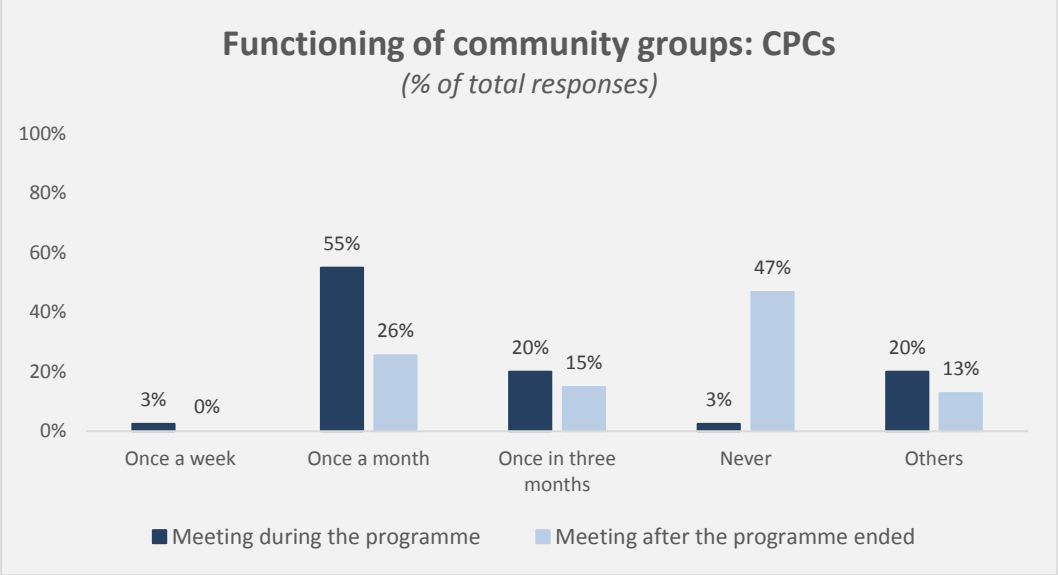
Community groups (BS, CC and CPC) were a key part of the project; promoting awareness and accountability within each village. During the course of the project, a CV or NGO worked with the group members to organise meetings and focus group activities around CP. Once the project ended, it was hoped that these groups continue these activities on their own.

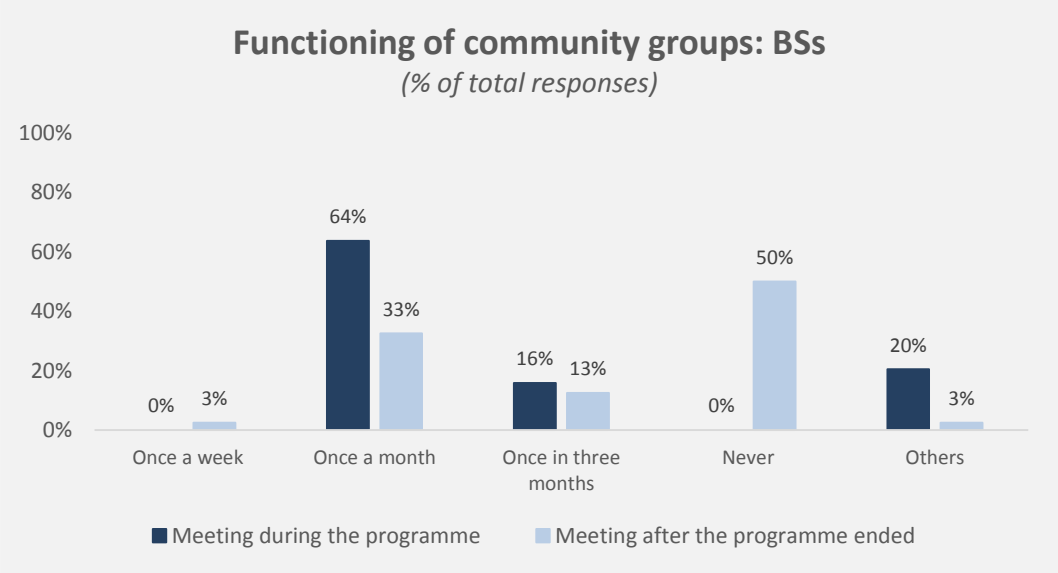
**Overall, sustainability of the community groups was low.** Most community groups stopped being operational and discontinued their activities once the project ended. We find that lack of an adequate exit plan left most groups without any idea of their future responsibilities.

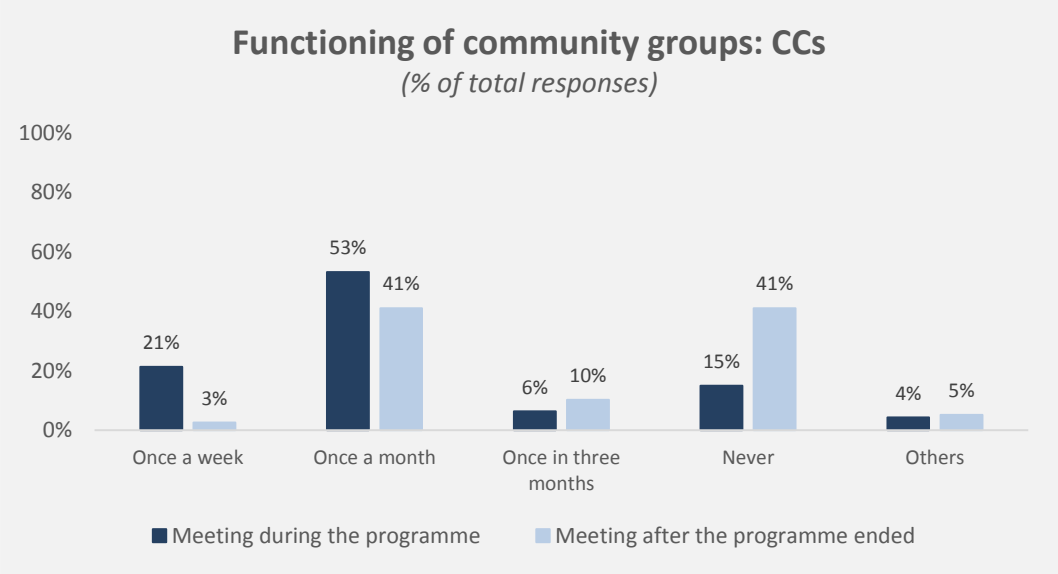
Our interviews and FGDs reveal that while a few community groups, and related activities, continued after the project, most community structures were barely functional after the end of the project. This was noticed across both districts and across all three community groups.

The scaled responses indicate that within the evaluation sample there was a steep decline in the community group meetings. Nearly 50 per cent of all CPCs interviewed reported never having met after the project. During the life of the project, only 3 per cent of these CPCs had not met. Similarly, 50 per cent of sampled BSs reported not having met after the project ceased. There was a slight difference noticed in the functioning of CCs. While a high percentage of sampled CCs reported never having met after the project, 41 per cent of them continued to meet every month. While this was a decline from the earlier number of 53 per cent, it still indicates that a sizeable number of CCs continued to meet after the project.

## Exhibit 2-21: Functioning and sustainability of community groups




*Source: UNICEF Cotton Corridors project phase 2 data collection*

Information from the scaled responses indicates that activity within community groups substantially scaled down after the project team stopped facilitating meetings and activities. Detailed interviews with community group members substantiated these findings.

From our interviews, it was clear that the project was successful in building momentum within these groups and in creating awareness about CP within the villages. Several respondents reported that the groups were actively functioning during the lifetime of the project. Of the committees which reported continued functioning, CCs appeared to be the most active. The most common activities that functioning community groups engaged in involved enrolment of working children or children who had dropped out.

However, a large number of community groups were unable to continue these activities without external help. While the project had intended to focus on capacity building and handover to community groups, it does not appear to have happened effectively and did not result in independent functioning of the groups. Most of the groups reported no, or very limited, activity after the project ended.

Many of the interviewed community group members stated that activities stalled after the CV ceased to coordinate meetings and motivate members. This was noticed across multiple villages and all community groups. The answers received seem to suggest that while community groups were working on increasing awareness within the village, they had not yet reached the stage where they could function independent of external support. One CV in Kurnool mentioned that the withdrawal of the project came at a point when activities were at their peak period. This proved disconcerting for the members of the community groups involved.

*“We used meet for monthly once but now there are no regular meetings. As there is no one to supervise and monitor we couldn’t meet often now.”*

*“All the activities got stopped as funding from UNICEF has stopped. Some activities we take up voluntarily, CV madam told that all activities got stopped.”*

Over and over again, group members mentioned that they had not met since the CV stopped facilitating the meetings. They were not receiving any help from the government either.

Hearteningly, community group members expressed their desire to see the project activities continue, and were keen to be involved in CP activities within the area. This suggests that the awareness and momentum created by the project survived. However, the lack of a structured engagement model gave them no avenue to channel this motivation. A few groups continued sporadic engagement with the local government school.

Of the three community groups, fieldwork indicated that CCs were most likely to continue functioning after the cessation of the project. A CV in Raichur indicated that part of the reason for this could be their location within the school and membership of school students. Teacher motivation in preparing lists of dropouts and out-of-school children helped focus the activities of these clubs. This contains important lessons for leveraging existing structures to achieve CP objectives. This is discussed in more detail in the next section.

A couple of responses from BS members stated that many members of the group had gotten married or moved out of the village. Since there was no process to renew the membership of the group, these quickly died out once the original members moved away. Ensuring succession in community groups would be essential for sustainability. Since BSs, unlike CCs, did not operate within an existing structure it may have been difficult for them to induct new members.

We have been unable to discuss in detail the following indicators in the evaluation matrix: the number of project activities currently funded and run by government and/or partners, the extent of empowerment felt by women to promote child rights; and current accountability of the existing systems working for children in the selected districts. This is because of the difficulty of gathering data in these areas.

### 2.4.2 Which features of the context and the project need to be present to achieve success in other places?

This section addresses key-learnings on sustainability and the factors that are necessary if the project is to be replicated in other districts.

**Necessary conditions for project success**

- ✓ Detailed and comprehensive handover process
- ✓ Adequate capacity within community groups to function independently
- ✓ Effective models to address challenges to CP
- ✓ Leveraging existing structures to promote CP objectives
- ✓ Institutionalising rules and processes to promote convergence across government departments
- ✓ Efficient financial management
- ✓ Responsive models with qualified partners

**Detailed and comprehensive handover process**

One of the key concerns voiced by community groups was around the abruptness of the project's end. Many respondents were unaware of project discontinuation and one CPC member claimed to have heard of it through newspaper articles. In most cases, it would appear that the project end was communicated by the volunteer/and community groups which had worked towards CP awareness were abruptly disbanded.

Timely communication of the project's end, budgeting sufficient time for handover of responsibilities and creating a future roadmap of activities could have helped improve the sustainability of community groups. This needs to be adequately accounted for in the design phase of any future project.

The importance of exit plans is crucial not just for the community groups but also at higher levels in the government. Future plans are important in helping government officials understand their continuing roles and activities. This was highlighted by project staff themselves who wanted to ensure the presence of an exit plan for future projects.

*"When the project is going to end, there needs to be an exit plan. For each government department there needs to be a plan on how they aim to carry it forward. Sustainability will always be in threat if a proper exit plan doesn't exist."*

**Adequate capacity within community groups to function independently**

From our interviews, it became clear that community groups were not in a position of self-sufficiency. Many of them were interested in CP issues but were unclear on what their role in promoting child rights awareness should be.

For a similar project to be successful, sufficient resources must be allocated to capacity building of communities. BS, CPC and CC members must be trained in how to act independently and responsibilities must be allocated within the group. This is particularly important for groups such as BSs where there were no formal mechanisms for inducting new members or conducting meetings. CPCs had great potential to influence norms and ensuring their continued role on CP could have a lasting impact on CP norms in the community. Identifying key members of their committee and making CP a priority for them would help sustain the project model.

**Effective models to address challenges to CP**

The Cotton Corridors project has tried to be flexible in order to address a variety of factors that challenge CP. This was seen through constant incorporation of the changing local and national context, as highlighted in Section 2.1. The project was also successful in innovating and making use of different models to tackle specific issues, especially around migration for instance the aim to strengthen the CMPC and integrating RSTCs within the KGBVs. NRSTCs were also an intervention that allowed children who had missed school on account of migration to catch up with their studies.

**Leveraging existing structures to promote CP objectives**

The most active role in CP, outside of the project, was played by teachers and head teachers within schools. These functionaries frequently interacted with parents and children, and worked on issues of schooling and enrolment beyond just the ambit of the project. Repeatedly, we were told that teachers continued to motivate parents to send their children to school and followed up on drop outs. There were many instances in which parents were unable to recall any of the community groups but did mention discussions with teachers who encouraged them to send their children to school.

*"There are no organisations or institutions working with children in the community. Only school teachers come and ask if the child stops going to school."*

*"I do not know anything about CPC but our school teacher comes and tells us about sending our daughter regularly to school."*

We find that this holds important lessons on future project design. Future projects must leverage existing structures that are involved with children. Since it is already a part of their role, they will be motivated to continue action in the area. Additionally, they have social capital and can influence community norms as these functionaries are identifiable with child rights. Working with teachers and school officials on child protection could help maximise the impact of the project.

**Institutionalising rules and processes to promote convergence across government departments.** As pointed out in Section 2.2.5, partnership with government was crucial in getting their buy-in and promoting convergence at the state and block levels. To some extent, this is tied into the individual bureaucrats and their relationship with UNICEF. Given the high transfer rate of government officials, this can face many hiccups. More emphasis must be given on institutionalisation of child protection activities within the government departments. This might require a long term liaison with the government to operationalise rules and processes that promote a culture of convergence amongst different departments. Meetings on child protection and coordination of efforts need to be formalised through inter-departmental rules and regulations. This would help maximise the impact of the project.

**Efficient financial management**

An efficient financial plan that adapts to the changing needs of the project, and supports programme activities, is crucial. Release of timely funds allows stability and gives the implementers

adequate opportunity to focus on the project activities. Efficient financial management also permits funds for design and operation of a handover process. As highlighted in Section 2.3.3, inefficiency and delay in release of funds adversely affected the sustainability of the project. Without well-timed fund release, many activities stalled and there was no time to implement the exit plan. Future projects must institute better financial processes that ease the achievement of the programme objectives.

**Responsive models with qualified partners**

The ability of the Cotton Corridors project to change in response to the local context and its success in working with varied partners must be carried forward into future programmes. Programme design must allow for implementation models that are relevant to the capacity of the areas in which they are operating. A key component of this will be working with qualified partners who are best placed to implement the programme agenda. In the Cotton Corridors project, both CVs and NGOs worked as implementation partners, in line with institutional capacity of each state. Similar flexibility will be key for the success of future programmes.

## 2.5 Equity and gender

This section pertains to gender and social inclusivity in the scope, design and implementation of the project. Evaluation questions for equity and gender are provided in the exhibit below.

**Exhibit 2-22: Equity and gender evaluation questions**

| Equity and gender: Key evaluation question |
|---|
| To what extent have activities affected marginalised communities, addressed differences in gender, and empowered both girls and boys? |
| **Equity and gender: Secondary evaluation questions** |
| • Was the project design and delivery equitable to different groups and gender?<br>• Did the project achieve the same level of success in different places and with different groups?<br>• Were there any negative effects felt by any groups? |

*Source: Cotton Corridors project evaluation matrix.*

We addressed these questions by:

- **examining project documentation** to identify design aspects directed at ensuring equity in project execution;
- **seeking evidence** on the achievement of impact, intermediate outcome, immediate outcome and output indicators;
- **exploring the perceptions of key stakeholders** on different aspects of the project.

### 2.5.1 Was the project design and delivery equitable to different groups and gender?

In this sub-section, we explore the emphasis laid in the project design on ensuring inclusivity on the basis of gender and of vulnerable communities into the project ambit. It further discusses the extent to which project activities were able to exert gendered impact on improving child protection issues, with a particular focus on engaging women and girls. We look at changes in awareness of CL and CM issues, and in patterns of decision-making surrounding these.

**The project design focused on gender empowerment by bringing to the fore CP issues faced by girls.** Project activities, such as the institution of BSs and child rights training to women, were aimed at increasing awareness and female participation in CP issues within the household and the community. Formation of community groups was based on engaging well-performing students — but did not emphasise inclusion of children from marginalised groups.

### Focus on Gender

**Stark differences, on the basis of gender, exist between the conditions related to CP.** It was observed that parents tend to de-emphasise girls' education. This was seen to be due to a range of socio-cultural factors. Girls begin working at a younger age and exhibit higher dropouts in response to seasonal demand for agri-labour. They are also required to undertake responsibilities for family care and household tasks. Girls are married at a younger age, a practice reportedly prevalent in several communities; as they leave maternal homes after marriage, parents were seen as attaching lesser importance to girls' education. CM is also likely to be more directly associated with dropouts from school. Furthermore, several respondents noted safety concerns for girls in attending schools.

**In the light of these gender differences, the project activities throughout maintained a clear emphasis on engagement of women and girls.** This was aimed at inculcating leadership and addressing CP issues. Several facets of design were aimed at increasing female participation and decision-making. As per the project documentation, the endeavour was to encourage women's leadership by increasing awareness and imparting training to female panchayat members and community women. This would enable them to recognise children's rights and to engage with community leaders on CL, CM and education issues.

As stated in the End of Project Report for the Cotton Corridors project, within the area of implementation 80 per cent of child marriages were found to be conducted in the families of women SHG members.[43] Consequently, training on CP and gender empowerment were incorporated into the functioning of SHGs. The project focused on building awareness and capacity of women's groups to enhance their socio-political engagement and decision-making on child rights within the household and the community.

**The establishment of BS community groups was undertaken, endeavouring to engage young girls in the implementation areas.** The groups' activities centred on providing skills for leadership and information dissemination. According to the project design, BS members were meant to stimulate discussions on issues surrounding CP, adolescent health and empowerment. The groups were intended to spread awareness on the importance of girls' education and late marriage, and encourage girls, parents and the wider community to take steps in alleviating CP issues.

**Qualitative discussions indicated that girls are often unable to attain higher levels of education due to an inability to access schools.** We learnt that this usually arose from the distant location of higher education facilities, and a dearth and low safety of transport facilities. The project undertook expenditure in infrastructure and facilities to curb dropouts and lower barriers to access. In line with local needs, the project undertook investments to enhance schooling infrastructure and residential training facilities for children of migrant workers. The End of Project report prepared by UNICEF states that: *"700 children of 60 difficult villages were provided transport facility to go to schools"*.

[43] "Cotton Corridors: Preventing Exploitation and Protecting Child Rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka". UNICEF India. 2015.

**Certain project activities and expenditures were targeted specifically towards improving schooling access for girls**. This included: conversion of KGBVs into model schools for implementation of Special Training Programmes, integration of RSTCs with KGBVs in Kurnool, and the provision of bicycles to young girl children. However, as discussed under Section 2.2.2, one key informant felt that RSTCs that are typically operated by NGOs, faced difficulties in catering to girls due to inadequacies in infrastructure.

Other project activities undertaken by the project team towards improving CP outcomes for girls included improvements in school sanitation to retain female students and the provision of livelihood skills, with an emphasis on girls who were earlier child workers.

**Focus on Vulnerable Communities**

**Socio-economically marginalised groups were included in project's scope by design.** This was evident in the selection of areas for project implementation. As outlined in the introduction (Section 1.3), the project districts of Kurnool and Raichur are characterised by a high proportion of SC, ST and BC communities, and high levels of OOSC. Further, we were informed by a key informant that street plays and community mobilisation activities were targeted towards areas where minority communities reside. This indicates that the intended benefits of the project were clearly targeted towards socially and economically vulnerable communities.

We were apprised that project staff endeavoured to conduct community meetings in 'neutral' locations to ensure interaction with and representation of all socio-economic groups. However, in the data collection for the summative evaluation, field teams encountered counterexamples where community meetings were held inside temple premises, which would preclude participation of those belonging to lower socio-economic groups.

**Mixed views were encountered towards ensuring inclusivity of religious minorities in project coverage.** A key informant stated that Muslim religious and political leaders were covered in project outreach. Training and capacity development activities included Muslim women, particularly in Adoni division in Kurnool. We were further informed that government teams, BS groups and SHG women leaders also directed efforts to reach out to the Muslim community to ensure coverage. In spite of these aspects highlighting the project's focus on religious minorities, one key informant perceived that the project team could have laid greater emphasis on improving child protection in the Muslim community as a segment of child labourers belonged to Muslim families. We were informed that promoting convergence with the relevant government bodies pertaining to Minority Affairs in the implementation states could have been carried out. It is also noteworthy that the project design documents did not specify whether the project activities or resources were to be targeted towards particular religious minority or other vulnerable communities.

**The formation of community groups did not take social inclusivity into account.** The project documents do not clearly stipulate whether the formation of community groups emphasised on inclusivity of marginalised groups. Regarding the formation of BS groups, the project proposal for Phase 1 states that: *"The community mobilisers in every Mandal will help identify articulate, active young girls who can be involved in the project to motivate their peers."*[44] OPM was informed that, during the project implementation, BSs and CCs similarly selected members from amongst proficient students — FGDs with these community groups noted that intelligent and fluent young children tended to be included.

[44] "Eliminating Girl Child Labour in the Cotton Seed Industry in Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh, India — A Project Proposal". UNICEF India. 2006.

The approach of choosing well-performing students may have been directed at safeguarding continued functioning and effectiveness of the community groups. However, given the background conditions in the project areas, these students may have belonged to families with relatively higher socio-economic positions. The inclusion of children from marginalised sections may have enabled community groups to form a deeper understanding of issues faced by these children and to improve outreach. Similarly, as discussed further below, ensuring inclusivity in the composition of CPCs may have facilitated targeting and coverage of marginalised communities in project activities.

**Human Rights Approach to Project Activities**

UNICEF endeavours to embrace a human rights framework in the design, implementation and monitoring of its project activities. The Cotton Corridors project — with its central focus on CP, child rights and empowerment of girls — imbibed this approach to secure fulfilment of human rights for the targeted communities. As highlighted above, **the core project design was sensitive towards improving child protection outcomes for girls and SC, ST and BC socio-economic groups.** This was ensured in the selection of implementation areas, creation of community groups and focusing outreach activities. Crucially, the methods and activities adopted in the project did not contravene the rights of any targeted persons or communities. Additionally, we were informed that the project team conducted a training with government staff to underline the significance of human rights-based programming.

**Greater emphasis could have been laid on responsiveness of project implementation and monitoring to a human rights approach.** The project objectives and design were geared towards inclusivity of vulnerable communities and equity in outcomes. However, qualitative discussions highlighted instances of difficulties in safeguarding inclusivity in project implementation. A key informant mentioned that project activities sometimes faced resistance in their efforts to change prevailing norms surrounding CL and marriage, particularly in communities with strong adherence to caste beliefs. In response, project staff initially intended to withdraw their activities from these areas. Adopting this measure would have entailed that project implementation precluded those communities where acceptance of CL and marriage practices were the most entrenched. However, project implementation was able to continue in these spaces through the intervention and support of *panchayat* leaders and local influencers.

According to the Project Documentation compiled for Kurnool and Raichur districts, project initiation included a baseline survey that collected data on OOSC, CL and migration.[45] We were informed that the data collection was conducted in sufficient depth to enable disaggregated analysis on the basis of gender and socio-economic status. This would, in turn, allow for problem identification and targeted project efforts. However, it is inconclusive that this data was used to identify vulnerable groups and priority areas for implementation. As discussed in section 2.2.1, an innovative child tracking system was built into the project activities — however, systematic follow-up of OOSC was restricted to Kurnool. Adequate monitoring of children during the project lifecycle would have facilitated recognising particularly vulnerable individuals and groups, and addressing issues faced by them in a concerted manner.

With regards to project delivery, BS and CC community groups had been created under the project and had generated awareness on the significance of CP. The comparatively lower level of female representation in CPCs reflects low level of women's agency in community decision-making on CP. Children stated that labour and marriage decisions within the household were typically made by the father or by both parents. **Although some discussions suggest progress in CP outcomes for girls, the overall evidence in support of this was limited.**

[45] "Our Village, Our Children". Division for Child Studies, CESS-UNICEF (2015).

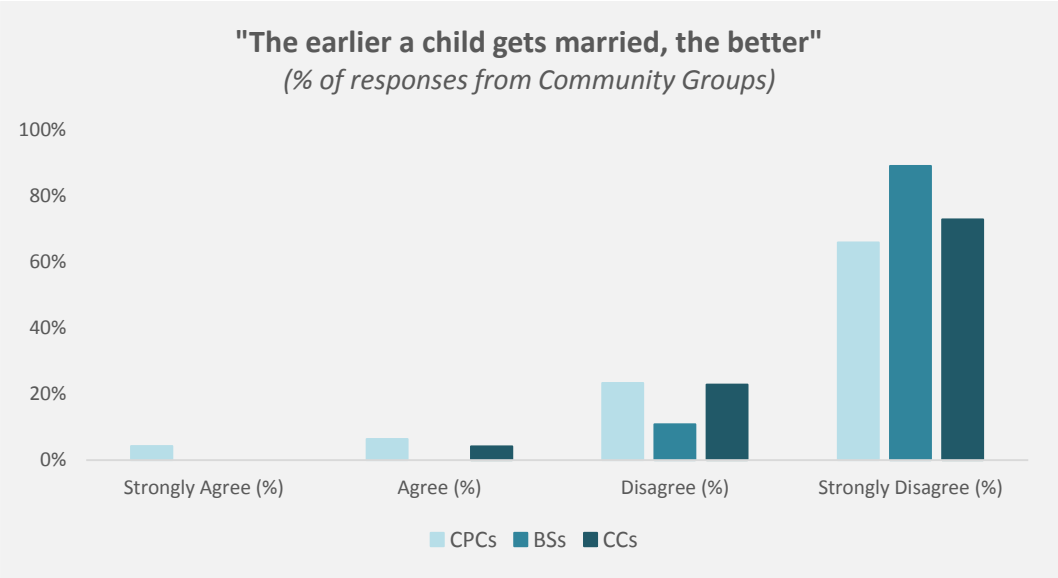
### Increased awareness of CL and marriage issues

**The project activities raised community awareness on child rights and protection, particularly amongst marginalised communities and women.** Study respondents indicated that BS and CC groups had been set up and carried out their activities during the project lifecycle.

In our qualitative interviews and collection of scaled responses, parents and children displayed positive perceptions of the significance of schooling. Certain discussions also highlighted that greater awareness led to a change in perceptions towards ensuring girls' education. Instances of girls being married at a younger age had reduced, and OOSC were focusing on attaining schooling.

The qualitative study and scaled response questionnaires also revealed that attitudes towards marriage were largely positive. The graph below illustrates this trend with majority of the responses from community groups "strongly disagreeing" with the preference of early marriage for girls. Several respondents indicated that marriage norms had witnessed changes over time. Delayed marriages were preferred — particularly, in case of girls — with reasons pertaining to girls' reproductive health and adjustment within the marital homes being cited.

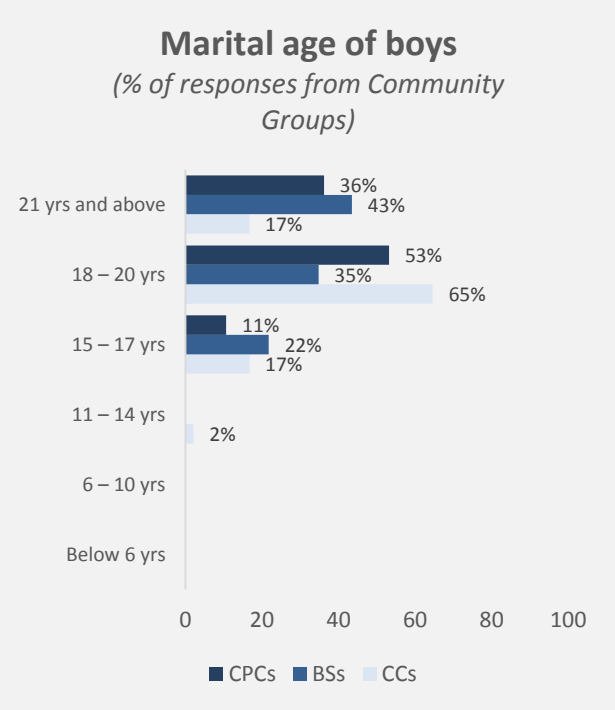
**Exhibit 2-23: 'The earlier a girl gets married, the better' — Scaled responses from community groups**

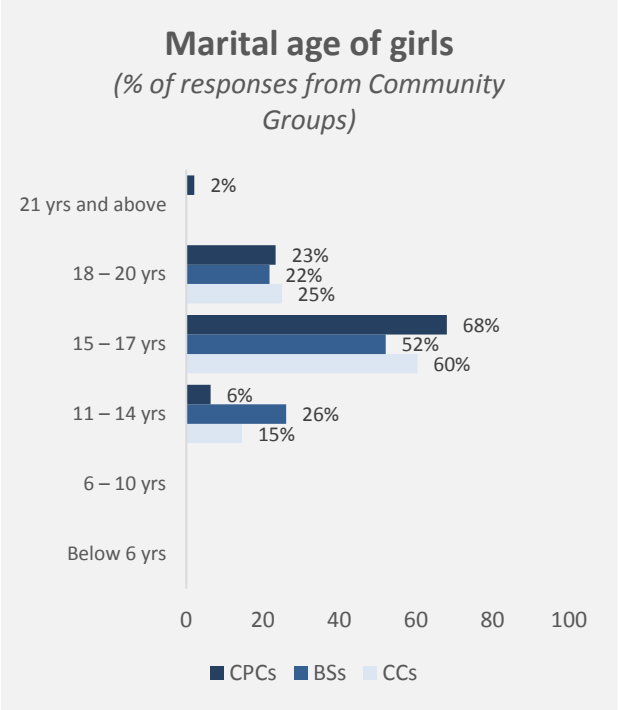



*Source: UNICEF Cotton Corridors project phase 2 data collection*

However, in accordance with cultural norms, the prevalent social practices were characterised by differences in marital age for boys and girls. The data from scaled response questionnaires administered to community groups indicates that girls are married at a comparatively earlier age. The exhibit below indicates that community group members specified the prevalent marital age for boys as 18–20 years (21 years and above, in case of BSs), and 15–17 years for girls.

### Exhibit 2-24: Marital age of boys and girls — Responses from community groups




*Source: UNICEF Cotton Corridors project phase 2 data collection*

It is important to note that responses denoting positive attitudes towards delaying marriages for girls may not be reflected in personal practices. Community groups reported relatively higher effectiveness in lowering CL and improving schooling outcomes, as compared with stopping CMs.

IDIs and FGDs suggest that project activities — through the involvement by the NGO partners, CVs and community groups — contributed to enhancing awareness on CP issues.

#### Women's Involvement in Decision-making towards CP

The project endeavoured to increase women's engagement on CP issues by extending knowledge and training on child rights to members of women's SHGs and female *panchayat* leaders. The table below shows that, as compared with men, a small proportion of women were members of the CPC. Hence, **women's representation in project decision-making at the community level was limited.**

### Exhibit 2-25: Membership of CPCs disaggregated by gender

| Description | Number of CPC Members |
|---|---|
| *Mean no. of females* | 4 |
| *Mean no. of males* | 10 |
| N *(number of CPCs analysed)* | 47 |

*Source: UNICEF Cotton Corridors project phase 2 data collection.*

We asked children about the pattern of decision-making within the household. Respondents indicated that decisions surrounding labour, education and marriage were mainly taken by fathers or by both parents. Certain respondents also reported that decisions on marriage may be influenced by aspirations of grandparents and relatives. The qualitative research did not probe women SHG members who had received training under the Cotton Corridors project. Hence, we

could not explore changes to intra-household decision-making patterns experienced by these families.

**Effect on CP Outcomes for Girls**

**The evidence on improvements in CL, schooling and marriage outcomes for girls was limited and inconclusive**. We were informed by some respondents that the number of girls attending schools had seen progress — families had begun to permit girls to continue schooling and even attain college education. A child reported that frequency of CMs had fallen and girls' marriages were performed after completion of 10th or intermediate level of education. However, the evidence through the qualitative interviews on this account was limited.

### 2.5.2 Did the project achieve the same level of success in different places and with different groups?

This evaluation sub-question assesses differences in project performance and outcomes across areas, especially in light of the variance in implementation models in the two project districts.

**The project did not face any challenges specific to the project location or implementation stakeholders.** The project team and NGO partners were able to carry out community activities in their respective implementation areas.

**Difference in Impact across Implementation Areas**

On-ground project activities were implemented by three NGO partners in Kurnool (MVF, Sadhana, and SVK) and by a project team in Raichur. The underlying administrative aspects in the two districts that entailed the adoption of different implementation structures have been discussed in Section 2.1.1.

**Interviews with key informants and project functionaries indicated that there was no geographic differential in the implementation.** The project team and NGO partners were able to carry out community activities (organisation of community groups, awareness generation and capacity building) in their respective implementation areas. The project did not face any challenges specific to the project location or implementation stakeholders.

Positive performance of both the project team-led and NGO-led implementation 'models' suggests that project activities may be similarly replicated in other areas by utilising local NGO partners to drive implementation.

**Difference in Impact across Communities**

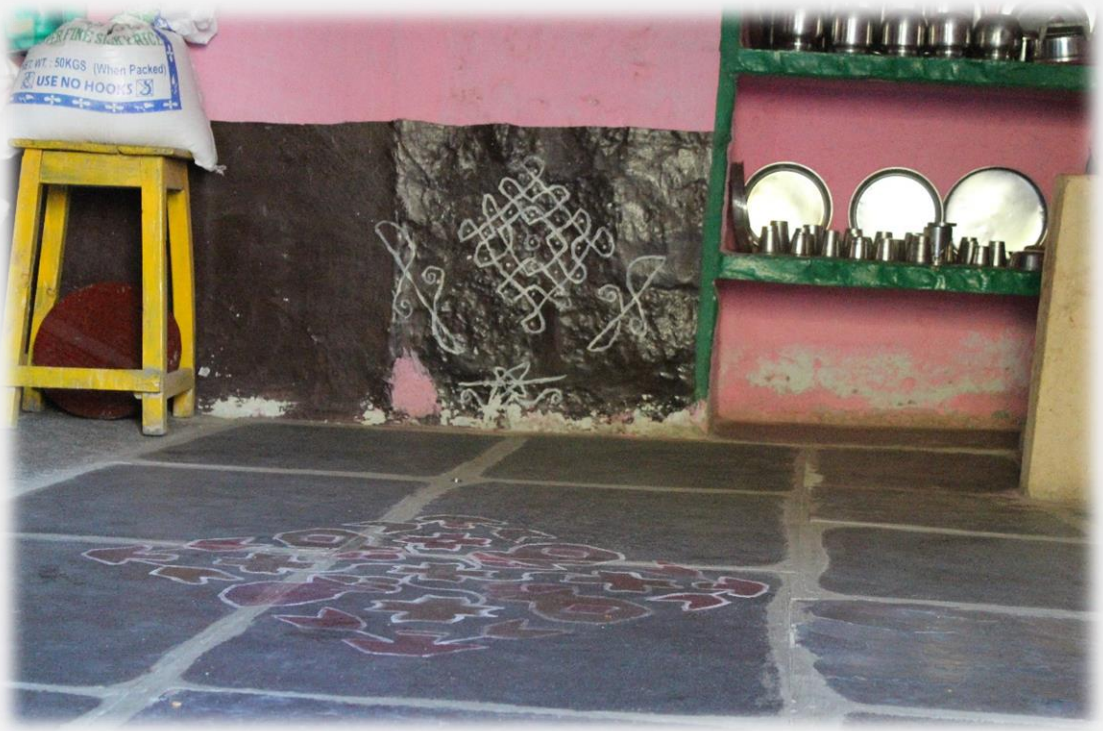
**Qualitative discussions with a range of stakeholders provided mixed responses on the effectiveness of impact for SC, ST and BC communities.** As mentioned earlier, the selection of districts for project implementation allowed the project team to target benefits towards marginalised communities. Certain respondents noted that positive effects were experienced particularly by vulnerable communities – citing as examples castes such as *Valmiki* and *Pinjara*; religious groups such as Muslims; as well as SC and BC communities overall. Respondents primarily attributed these improvements to the high prevalence of CP issues within these groups. Conversely, some other respondents mentioned groups — such as *Kurvas*, and the wider SC and ST communities — who did not enjoy benefits. These responses and experiences were seen to vary across different project areas and no overall trends could be identified.

### 2.5.3 Were there any negative effects felt by any groups?

**Qualitative discussions did not indicate the occurrence of any unintended or unexpected consequences — particularly, negative outcomes — through project activities on any particular communities.** Occasional incidents of difficulties in carrying out project activities were reported, but these were not sustained occurrences and were not reported to exert wider impact.

**Qualitative discussions with government officials, project staff and community stakeholders did not reveal any negative effects arising from project design or implementation.** As noted in section 2.5.1, project implementation was met with resistance in certain areas with strong divisions along caste definitions and ingrained norms around CL and marriage — project activities required the support of local leaders in these areas. Certain instances of difficulties experienced while intervening in CM were reported: incidents of altercations were reported by CC members, a CV as well as a government official. The CV further claimed being implicated in a police complaint and continuing to face agitations from the parents.

Overall, we did not encounter any indications that the project design or implementation resulted in a detrimental impact on any groups. An employer noted a fall in the availability of children labourers as a result of project activities. This had impelled him to ask auto-rickshaw drivers to bring young children from other neighbouring areas for work. However, such a trend was not reported in other interactions, this points to the likelihood of negative impact that may be engendered by activities aimed at curbing employment of CL. Consequently, shifts in labour supply and other trends ought to be mapped out and kept in mind during implementation in order to track unplanned or unintended effects of the project.


50KGS (When Packed)
USE NO HOOKS

# 3 Conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned

**This evaluation has provided an independent assessment of the Cotton Corridors project**, and particularly whether its strategies and approaches contributed to the achievement of its objectives. Section 3.1 builds on the findings above briefly, to summarise the strengths and weaknesses of the project, identify key issues underlying them, assess the views of key stakeholders. Section 3.2 presents prioritised recommendations for different stakeholders in the project. Section 3.3 focuses on learnings that can be carried forward for future projects on CP.

## 3.1 Conclusions

**The project's overall strengths and weaknesses can be seen against the five evaluation criteria.** Broadly, the project performs well against the criteria of relevance and equity and gender, quite well on effectiveness and efficiency and much less on sustainability. In terms of overall approach, working through the community and government, and working with NGOs are, in our judgement, the right approaches, even if they ran into challenges in implementation and did not achieve the expected benefits in terms of sustainability.

**The Cotton Corridors project is an innovative example of a holistic, community-based and government-led approach to addressing the complex issues of CP in two districts with large numbers of working children.** The project was highly relevant, introduced innovative models for dealing with child work and schooling, was very effective at changing the attitudes and approaches of government officials and leverage government expenditure for CP, and focused on girls. However, the sustainability of these positive changes is not assured either at community- or government-level, and the changes in CP outcomes remain fairly small — reflecting the enormity and difficulty of the challenge.

**Stakeholders' views were curiously mixed**. A striking feature of our interviews is the juxtaposition of extremely positive views of the project from government officials at state and to some extent district level, with the much milder enthusiasm of individuals in villages and in blocks. This mix of views reflects the strengths of the project: it worked at its best where project staff were directly involved in the provision of IEC materials and technical assistance to government officials, and the project was able to build some highly effective relationships and positive attitudes in this way. It was much weaker, however, in ensuring that these positive attitudes were translated into serious action on child protection at the front line.

**To some extent, this weakness is indicative of the most significant challenge facing any sort of government service provision in India**: translating policy statements into service delivery in the context of poor accountability, politicisation, and limited budgets and staffing. The project team's involvement should have helped to overcome or limit some of these problems, and to some extent, while the project took place, it did. However, it is not unreasonable to conclude that more should have been achieved in villages where the project worked, particularly given that the project team was able to partner, in Kurnool at least with some effective NGOs.

UNICEF's approach to CP, as exemplified by this project, recognises and seeks to address several components of the process of change. However, in part due to the limited scope of the project and UNICEF's capacity to influence, it was less able to take a position on the larger picture and is not able to influence the governance and service delivery processes that restrict the improvement of CP outcomes more fundamentally.

Other donors may be able to play a role here, and UNICEF could enlarge on its traditional convening role to engage them. There may also be scope for academia and research institutions to

explore embedded social norms that make the issue of underage marriages an exceptional challenge.

**UNICEF and Government have much to learn from this project.** In particular:

- the Cotton Corridors project showcased some potentially excellent models for improving CP outcomes. The effectiveness of these models was hard to discern because the project did not devote sufficient resources to monitoring or evaluating these models;
- sustainability would require a much longer and more intensive period of engagement to really change social norms, establish role models, address issues of poverty and poor education, and establish routines in community and government administration. In particular, genuine improvements in CP in these districts will only come about when the problems associated with migrants' access to service provision are addressed or migration reduces, and when school quality improves — which will only happen with the provision of more qualified and well-trained teachers, not through better infrastructure alone. For these improvements to occur, government will need to devote substantial resources and attention;
- the model of joint implementation led by a government official was appropriate for getting government involvement and funding, but closer and longer involvement from UNICEF staff might have strengthened aspects of the implementation and funding and improved efficiency and sustainability. In particular, the handover process was rushed and did not enable achieving genuine sustainability;
- community- and NGO-led approaches can be very effective, but the effectiveness depends substantially on the strength of the community and NGO (and individuals within them), and on the working relationship with government. The community groups, and especially the CPCs, functioned well when they had an active volunteer, and quite poorly otherwise. This sets severe limits on the replicability of the project approach outside areas where there are effective NGOs or CVs;
- unlocking the potential of community groups may have required more substantial training and support than was given. The achievements of community groups were observed to be limited. In particular, community groups in Kurnool may have been able to deliver further impact if OOSC data had been collected regularly and utilised appropriately;
- achieving equitable outcomes for different socio-economic groups is difficult in a community-led approach, because the formation of community groups in a way that is *not* reflective of the dominant political economy of a community requires substantial effort. As a result of the selection of implementation areas and structure of community groups, however, the Cotton Corridors project was able to achieve sufficient equitable outcomes, particularly for girls.

## 3.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations were formulated based on the discussion with various stakeholders in the project, analysis of community perceptions and review of project documents. Each of these recommendations incorporate the perspectives of multiple stakeholders to devise practical suggestions that can be implemented in future programming decisions. Consultations with the UNICEF evaluation team helped refine and prioritise these recommendations. These are directed towards further attempts to improve CP in AP and Karnataka. Each recommendation speaks to a specific stakeholder.

Recommendations are listed according to highest priority for each stakeholder.

**For UNICEF:**

1. **UNICEF should continue its integrated approach in working with government and NGOs on CP issues in AP and Karnataka.** This recommendation specifically speaks to the government-level gaps addressed under the problem statement in Section 1.4. Many CP issues remain unaddressed in these two states, and it will take a longer, sustained partnership to address them. The model used in this project is largely appropriate, but more detailed involvement from UNICEF staff and a longer period of engagement will increase the probability of sustainable change. Working directly with the government allowed the project team to converge the functioning of different departments and helped promote institutional collaboration. The potential impact of this streamlining is extremely important.

   The integrative project approach encapsulated thematic child protection issues, and tailored them to key CP needs in the project areas (CL in cottonseed production and other sectors). This helped develop a responsive and relevant programme. This approach needs to be taken forward in producing comprehensive, integrated CP programmes at the district level which retain contextual relevance while remaining cognizant of regulations under the ICPS, RTE and the new JJ laws. Future work should be undertaken with a clear TOC that builds on the lessons of this project.

   Future engagements with the government should include longer term planning and budgeting horizons. Such partnerships should also set out more transparent requirements and approaches to recruitment selection of staff. This will allow for more efficient functioning of programme activities and permit implementing partners to plan their tasks with adequate forethought. Inefficient financial planning and management was one of the key hurdles in the functioning of the Cotton Corridors project.

2. For future UNICEF projects, **a clear exit and sustainability plan must be designed and carefully implemented**, supervised by project staff. This should be set out at the start of the project and agreed carefully with government and other stakeholders. This may involve increasing the duration of projects.

3. The challenges of improving CP are substantial, and this project underlines the importance and relevance of taking a holistic approach. Raids alone, innovative education approaches alone, IEC and community engagement alone will not be effective. Yet even in combination, the effectiveness of these approaches was still limited by income poverty and employment options for most households that the project did nothing to address. **It becomes imperative that a CP strategy (targeted at eliminating CL) acknowledges and incorporates the angle of financial constraints on households that might disable them from adopting favourable CP behaviours.**

Additional recommendations:

- **strengthening M&E systems** is crucial in assessing the relevance, effectiveness and replicability of programmes. Collection of data stratified on the basis of gender and socio-economic categories would allow for identification of local issues, and adopting an equitable and tailored approach to project implementation. In the context of the Cotton Corridors project, more rigorous evaluation could have been designed around innovative project models, and stronger monitoring systems could have helped to make more of the valuable datasets developed in AP. A clear and flexible M&E plan should be a key part of all future projects;
- **long-term engagement with community members** is necessary to change social norms around CM. While the project met with some success in changing CM practices, sustained change requires working on changing existing social attitudes, particularly beliefs and practices surrounding gender. Future programmes should include male members of the household, key decision makers and deepen engagement at individual, household and community levels. A combined and sustained effort would be necessary to push the needle on deep-set attitudes

and norms, and engendering empowerment of female children. This recommendation helps address community and village level issues identified in the problem statement.

**For Government:**

1. **In view of the integrative practices that were developed around CP during the project, it is recommended that government officials in both states attempt to replicate, and institutionalise similar practices in other programmes.** This is particularly important in tackling government-level coordination issues identified under Section 1.4. Integration across departments should occur across state and district levels. Collectors' terms of reference should include constituting the types of convergence that have been taking place around CP, including regular inter-departmental meetings and the exchange of budgets. If there are challenges with budget execution rates, officials could consider contracting NGOs using transparent public procedures. Institutionalising convergence processes and documenting collaborative practices is important for ensuring sustainability.

2. **Inter-district and inter-state linkages will be important in tackling the impacts of child migration**. This project demonstrates the importance of tackling child migration within the child CP agenda. Since migration occurs across districts and states, this will require the development of comprehensive policies that link social protection scheme across these boundaries. Programming that integrates social protection schemes across geographical boundaries needs to be an important element of these programmes.

Additional recommendations:

- **it is recommended that the Governments of AP and Karnataka focus on tackling child migration and its impact on CP. Innovative approaches to retaining children in school used under this project should be further tested.** The Cotton Corridors project clearly demonstrates the impacts of migration (long-term migration and seasonal migration). Programmes which tackle the needs of the children of migrant families need to be designed and implemented. NRSTCs and CMPCs tested under this project have proven to be successful. However, they were tested on a small scale with only 5 CMPCs being opened under this project. Their initial success is heartening and should be tested in a phased manner. Efficient resource allocation and rigorous evaluation of these centres in expanded pilots will help develop a sustainable and replicable model.

## 3.3 Lessons learned

The evaluation generates several lessons that make useful contributions to general knowledge and thought on several important topics:

- project design;
- CP issues;
- working with government;
- working with community;
- project management and financing; and
- sustainability of development partner-financed and managed activities.

This section presents these lessons in the context of common approaches to these issues, and generalises them outside the Cotton Corridors context.

### 3.3.1 Project design

The project built on a previous phase of work and interaction with government on CP issues. It developed further in line with Acts at all-India level and in response to perceived community

requirements, expanding from a focus on CL in cotton to addressing CP issues more broadly. This evolutionary design was a key strength of the project, and the project team, the government and the funders (IKEA Foundation) seem to have dealt with this very sensibly and flexibly — a flexibility that could be well replicated elsewhere.

A further positive aspect of the project was its responsiveness to disparate CP experiences for girls and boys. The design and implementation laid categorical emphasis on improving CL and CM outcomes for young girls and enhancing women's participation in household and community decisions.

However, there are two areas where project design for this and subsequent projects could have been stronger:

- **Reflection on previous projects.** The expansion of the Cotton Corridors project was undertaken before there was a real opportunity to learn the detailed lessons from the initial pilot. It is clear that staff involved in the project have substantial insights to offer to project design, and many of these were incorporated into the design. However, this process could have been more systematic, and should have been possible with a funder that appeared flexible and sensible;
- **Detailed TOC.** The project TOC was, as far as we have been able to ascertain, fairly unclear, or at least not clearly written down. Greater clarity about this at design phase may have helped to address some of the challenges that arose subsequently (for instance, in the management of RSTCs) and to offer a clear statement of the project to new Collectors and other staff who were often unclear about the project's overall approach. Linked to the TOC, it would have been valuable at design phase to invest more in the M&E systems of the project.

### 3.3.2 CP issues

**The Cotton Corridors project offers two very important lessons for addressing CP issues.** These lessons are relevant not just in AP and Karnataka, but across India and perhaps beyond, where although the agricultural and labour cycles may differ, the same sorts of CP issues are prevalent.

First, **the project demonstrates the importance of a holistic approach — trying to address all the factors that constrain CP**. CP issues are complex, and simple solutions that address one part of this complexity are very unlikely to work. The project was a successful example of trying to address several parts at once. This holistic approach meant trying to change socio-cultural and gender norms, trying to punish those who employ or marry under-age children, and trying to improve the quality and accessibility of education (for example, through paying for open schooling or supporting RSTCs). Where these initiatives combined, the project was able to make real progress on CP. However, in cases where low income was still a major factor (leading to requirements to work, migrate or marry early), the project was less successful.

Second, **the project offers some very promising models to address specific issues, particularly around migration.** The migration of adults and children for work is in India and elsewhere a very particular problem for access to all sorts of services, including education.[46] In addition to the highly effective (but not innovative) payment for open schooling after 10th class, the Cotton Corridors project offered four particularly innovative models to address this:

- the collection of substantial amounts of data on OOSC;
- the development of CMPCs that would provide shelter and food to children whose parents migrate for work;
- hosting RSTCs within KGBVs to provide a residential centre for girls whose parents migrate; and

[46] See MacAuslan 2011 for a discussion of migrants' access to social protection.

- NRSTCs to allow children who have missed school to catch up and reintegrate.

It is very difficult to assess the promise of these models in this evaluation. While the models seem effective, few at community level were aware of the schooling models, and there were certainly implementation issues around the politics of RSTC funding and the supervision to the collection and use of data. One lesson that UNICEF may wish to apply in future projects is the need to:

- direct more attention and oversight to the implementation of promising models so that they are implemented well and thoroughly; and
- be more rigorous with the evaluation of models that are innovative, in order to be better able to take evidence to government and partners to scale them up and fund them more substantively and for longer. This 'pilot, evaluate and scale' model is used widely by UNICEF elsewhere, and it is unfortunate that it was not used in this case.

### 3.3.3 Working with government

**It is abundantly clear that the relationship with key individuals in government, particularly at the district and state level, has been one the key strengths of the project**. Government officials have appreciated the project team's role in offering technical expertise, preparing key policy documents, preparing and printing IEC materials, convening key meetings and supporting the convergence of government officials, while at the same time making the DCs head of the projects. It is also clear that strong and effective working relationships have been cultivated between some of the project staff and government officials. This stems from the belief that the government must take ownership of the CP agenda. This seems a very sensible hypothesis — not necessarily implying that government needs to deliver all services themselves, since government can supervise, regulate and/or fund the activities of NGOs that deliver key parts of the CP system, such as RSTCs.

**While the strategy of working with and through government was appropriate and delivered to the great satisfaction of most in government, and should be replicated**, there are some lessons from this experience that can be applied in future projects in which UNICEF or other development partners work with the government:

- **changing government behaviour takes time and effort.** We discuss this further under the lessons learned on sustainability, but it should be apparent that positive reports and good engagement do not necessarily add up to long-term changes in the way in which government operates. This is part because of high staff turnover, but also due to limited fiscal and policy space for change and a degree of policy inertia that is difficult to overcome;
- **government has chronic shortages in staffing and budgeting for CP and education activities**, from state-level staff through to teachers in village schools. CP is typically a relatively low priority for most governments and politicians, and as such is unlikely to be allocated significant budget or attract many staff. Throughout India there are shortages in the newly created positions under ICPS, and also in teaching positions in schools. These features introduce hard limits to what can be achieved through government systems and funding, and will take time, economic growth, and sustained effort over several parliaments to overcome;
- **government involvement is vulnerable to political influence.** Government officers are more susceptible to come under political pressure, as compared to UNICEF. Since politicians do not necessarily share the same interests as UNICEF, they might be able to influence government officers more easily. In the Cotton Corridors project, this caused problems for the allocation of budget to NGOs and the development of the KGBV model, amongst others. The project team sought to mitigate these problems by engaging politicians in advocacy, and at one level this advocacy was successful — the speeches on the floors of state assemblies indicate this. However, it was not sufficiently successful to curtail attempts to influence appointment and resource allocation at a local level. Stronger involvement from the project team and the setting out of clearer rules for recruitment might have helped this.

One response to these challenges would be to decrease government involvement in such programmes — for instance, engaging the government only in the sphere of enforcement and at a peripheral level, while developing systems and funding for running RSTCs by involving other players. This may enable more efficient delivery of services to children and their parents. However, this would also, in our judgement, be a mistake. UNICEF's funding is limited and time-bound, and there is no direct accountability. Although sustainability was hard to achieve in the present project, it would be almost impossible through a different system. Moreover, scaling up such a project across states would be much more difficult.

The appropriate response to these challenges, therefore, is to seek to overcome them through more engagement and more time, and to acknowledge the difficulty of dealing with these issues and limit expectations in the short-term. In some other states, where government is less enthusiastic or has lower capacity financially organisationally, this may be even more difficult than in AP and Karnataka.

### 3.3.4 Working with community

**Community engagement and the formation of groups was a key project strategy, and was in some villages very successful, and others not at all**. This strategy had the merits of i) being relatively low cost (the groups were not paid), ii) the possibility of developing contextually specific and gender-sensitive solutions, iii) offering a route into large numbers of households, including those belonging to lower socio-economic categories, through targeted outreach and activities of the community groups, and iv) the possibility of sustainability through the groups remaining in place after the project.

As with many other community-led projects, the Cotton Corridors project encountered two familiar problems with this strategy.

- **the extent to which these benefits were realised depended strongly on the CV and other community members**. Since the dynamism, commitment and authority of the CV and other members varied substantially across the villages, there were very different levels of effectiveness and sustainability of these groups, and of the project as a whole. Broadly, where community structures were stronger to begin with, and CP outcomes better, the project functioned better. Where the project was needed most, it had the least fertile ground. The project staffing and budget model did not permit adequate support to be given to the large number of groups formed, so this variation in quality was allowed to persist. This has significant implications for the possibility of replication outside AP and Karnataka, where community structures are strong relative to many other parts of India. Both CP outcomes and community structures are likely to be far weaker in Bihar, for example, and this model would be unlikely to work as well as it has in Cotton Corridors project districts;

- **most groups were formed on the basis of dynamism not representativeness**. This possibly made groups more effective in carrying out activities, but less favourable at incorporating the views of and reaching out to more marginalised communities. Improving the representativeness of groups may have required significant effort — in terms of greater engagement of project staff in the formation, oversight and management of CVs and their groups. The project's decision to not maintain direct management of these groups allowed a higher proportion of funding to be directed to activities and less to staff but likely had a negative impact on the representativeness of groups.

These two issues are not typical to this project, and indeed they were perhaps less significant in this project than in others that work in more fractured communities. There was a reasonably explicit project decision not to budget for dedicated monitoring and support — for instance, to check on CVs and group functioning — and there was an expectation that communities now had sufficient resources (i.e. the three community groups and links to government) to continue activities if they wished. However, this approach probably over-estimated the ability and willingness of most

communities to organise around CP with more dedicated support, and certainly over-estimated the ability of the project to transform the way in which many communities felt about CP in the short duration of the project.

### 3.3.5 Project management and financing

**In line with its national policies, for this project UNICEF jointly worked with the government in implementation and management of the Cotton Corridors project.** This involved UNICEF adopting a supervisory role to the overall project and providing technical assistance when required, rather than direct project implementation. Staff at the UNICEF field office in Hyderabad, supporting the Cotton Corridors project, tended to focus on engagement with state-level bureaucrats; and on reporting and financial arrangements both downstream to project directors and upstream to the UNICEF Delhi office and IKEA Foundation. It is easy to see why this model of project management was attractive: it seems more efficient and a sensible allocation of resources and expertise.

However, **our judgement is that this approach seems to have meant that the project capitalised insufficiently on UNICEF's comparative advantages** — strong technical expertise in CP and a global reputation. This led to missed opportunities, including:

- making the most of the data on OOSC collected by CVs either for programmatic or monitoring purposes;
- inadequate support to community groups;
- execution of a clear sustainability plan;
- sharing lessons or good practice between the different project areas;
- ensuring the smooth payment of staff and continuation of activities.

Additionally, lack of a common understanding of programme roles and responsibilities created inefficiencies for the project staff. While the government believed that the project team was aiding convergence and government functioning on CP activities, implementing agencies wanted more active involvement of the project staff in implementation, with their help being requested in day-to-day field activities. Clearly communicating roles and responsibilities of project team within the programme would have helped in efficient functioning.

At the same time, the differences between implementation arrangements in Raichur and Kurnool are instructive. The NGO-led model in Kurnool offered advantages in being able to build on strong work that NGOs were already doing, and allowed the project to reach a larger number of villages more quickly and across a wider geographical area at a given level of quality, without having to build from scratch. The project staffing led model in Raichur probably contributed to a more homogeneous approach to implementation, and was required in the absence of effective NGOs to run the project, but restricted the scope and area of work, and was highly reliant on the effectiveness of the project director. **Attempts to replicate the project elsewhere would need seriously to consider whether effective NGO capacity exists, and to build on it where possible.**

### 3.3.6 Sustainability

**Causing change that lasts beyond the period of intervention is a fundamental goal of almost any development support**. The wider development literature and experience is full of analyses of the types of assistance that lead to sustainable change.[47] One line of thought is that sustainability arises when a project can enhance institutional, organisational and individual capacity to achieve a

[47] See Matheson et al. 2011 for an assessment of UNICEF ICO's approach to building capacity.

particular goal (such as improved CP outcomes), and then that capacity remains. This last point — the requirement that the change lasts — directs us towards identifying changes that have a sense of irreversibility, and not just things that take place during a project' but not afterwards.[48]

What sorts of changes to capacity have a sense of irreversibility, or are hard to reverse? We consider four:

- **legal changes**, such as new CP legislation, that enhance institutional capacity. These are hard to undo, normally requiring another Act of Parliament, and eventually have some impact — however, this takes time. The Cotton Corridors project was not directly responsible for legal changes at the all India or State level, but did support some steps towards implementing legal changes that took place independently;

- **budget allocations to CP activities to strengthen organisational capacity.** Despite exhortations from specialists for activity-based budgets, most budgeting has a strong element of history: once a budget line is put in place for activities, it often remains. The Cotton Corridors project was able to influence budget allocations at state level to some extent. However, this was severely hampered in AP by the bifurcation of the state;

- **changes in routines that lead to the implementation of new laws and the spending of budgets.** In practice, sustainability is often strengthened by instituting a new routine — such as a monthly meeting to discuss CP matters within a *mandal* or a regular check that budget allocations for RSTCs are made available and spent. In the context of rapid turnover of government staff, this routinisation may be more effective than training individuals. The project was reasonably successful in catalysing these routines while there were active project staff and good relations with Collectors, but they do not appear to have 'stuck'. One lesson from this may be that more time is needed to institutionalise routines and spending patterns. The rapid changes in personnel and politics meant that even in the six-year project period was insufficient to achieve this. Moreover, much more attention needed to be given to a plan for sustaining routines. Partly because of funding issues in one state, this sustainability plan was not put in place;

- **Changes in social norms on CP at the community level**, both amongst parents and amongst village authorities**.** In all probability, the project design under-estimated how long it would take to change these norms, even in states like AP and Karnataka where social capital is arguably higher than in many other (northern) states in India — witness the success of the SHG movement. Part of the challenge with changing social norms is the constraining features of the economy and society. It may be possible to persuade parents that education is good and work is bad for children, but if they do not see examples of others like them who have achieved their objectives — often to become public sector workers like police officers, doctors or teachers — and if they do not see a way to survive economically without sending their children to work, this persuasion will be very limited in its impact. It may be possible to persuade CVs temporarily to supervise a CMPC, but without regular oversight and funding this will not survive. With most groups formed in 2012 and the project ending in 2014 or before (given funding problems), the Cotton Corridors project was probably not able to engage for long enough to persuade many people effectively. Nor was the project able to overcome the other major barriers to improving CP that lay largely outside its ambit and scope — such as generalised poverty.

The lessons on sustainability that emerge from the Cotton Corridors project have wider applicability and importance. The most significant of them is probably that achieving sustainable change in this

[48] See Barber 2014. This is not a claim that change must be permanent — that is never possible — but just that it is sufficiently hard to reverse.

very difficult area, overcoming the political, financial, social and economic barriers to improved CP, requires more direct engagement from the project staff and more time. The Cotton Corridors project has made an important start and offers some very valuable models for improving CP, but much more is required to ensure that these models remain and grow.

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# Annex A Terms of reference

**Summative Evaluation of the Project "Cotton Corridors: Preventing, Exploitation and Protecting Children's Rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka"**

**1. Background**

UNICEF, with the support of IKEA Foundation, has been working with partners to create and strengthen a protective environment for children with special focus on child labour elimination in the cotton sector in 17 mandals[49] of Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh and 2 blocks of Raichur district, Karnataka. Kurnool and Raichur areas are the most intensive child labour zone in India, particularly in the cotton sector. As per census 2001, Kurnool district had the highest child labour (138,350) in the age group of 5-14 years in the state of Andhra Pradesh; whereas in 2011, child labour figure in Kurnool district had reduced to 73,998. Similar reduction was also evident in Raichur district.

Kurnool and Raichur districts represent one of the most backward regions of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Based on social category distribution, scheduled caste population constitutes 8.2 per cent, scheduled tribes 2 per cent, backward caste 46.6 per cent and minorities 15.3 per cent in Kurnool; whereas in Raichur district, 21 per cent of the total population belong to scheduled castes and 19 per cent from the scheduled tribes. In the absence of irrigation facilities and industrial development, there is large-scale seasonal migration from these areas to neighbouring districts and states. Women literacy levels in the project areas are much behind state and national averages. Village communities are strongly divided based on caste and political affiliations. And these divisions are detrimental to the promotion and realization of child rights.

Since the project area constitutes border areas of both states, the presence of governance structures is weak. Many posts of government teams at the block/mandal and village level lie vacant and frequency of transfers is very high in these regions.

The project aimed to establish an enabling environment for child rights and child protection in the district, ensure child labour elimination with special focus on cotton sector, education support projects for out-of-school children and enhanced community action towards child protection. Additionally, the project worked to promote women's empowerment (especially from the socially excluded groups) which in turn directly contributed to promoting child rights. The project's immediate objectives were:

1. 18,750 of the 25,000 (75 percent) children between 6-14 years old in Kurnool and Raichur were in school.
2. 360 upper primary and high schools adopted quality education package along with other elements of child friendly school.
3. 1,500 adolescent girls (with a priority for girls who were previously child workers) were equipped with skills so that they could make informed decisions on their future livelihoods and careers.
4. 591 collectives for young people functioned as a common platform and dialogue with key influencers and policy makers on issues affecting their lives.
5. 4,500 women in Kurnool and Raichur became leaders, having been equipped with appropriate information and confidence to integrate child protection issues into their activities.

At the commencement of the project in June 2009, a baseline survey on key indicators of child labour and out-of-school children was conducted. This data was disaggregated on age and sex categories. The villages of Kurnool and Raichur project areas were demarcated as Green, Yellow and Red villages based on the baseline data. This baseline survey was done jointly by

[49] Mandal will have around 20-25 panchayats with nearly 50 villages

implementing partners and government teams. It was validated by panchayats and the local education department. A midline survey was conducted in 2012. The project concluded in December 2014.

**2. Rationale**

The Project document envisaged to undertake an end-of-project evaluation. As project has concluded, it is important to evaluate the progress made and the challenges faced during the implementation period. Additionally, it is also important to measure whether the project achieved its objectives and to what extent it was able to achieve the key performance indicators. The evaluation is also essential to assess the contribution of key strategies and activities implemented to achieve results, and whether they are replicable and sustainable. Lastly, factors outside of UNICEF's control that may have played a role in whether or not the aforementioned objectives were achieved will be examined.

This is important in the context of UNICEF India's Country Project (2013-17), where lessons learnt from this and similar interventions will inform the development of a strategic framework for child protection.

**Objectives:** The overall objective of this final summative evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project and to derive recommendations accordingly. It will also probe whether different aspects of the project are replicable and what pre-existing factors/conditions have to be in place.

**3. Use of the findings**

The findings from this evaluation will be used to understand areas where progress was made, the outputs, outcomes, and those areas where there were gaps.

The evaluation will be of interest to the following stakeholders:

- Within UNICEF: Child Protection, Education, C4D, PPE, A&P sector specialists.
- Govt. Departments: Department of Women and Child Development (MWCD), Department of Labour (DoL), *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan* (SSA), Department of School Education (DSE), and Police Department (PD).
- Other external stakeholders: IKEA Foundation (main funder), civil society organizations, State Commissions, other partners who are working on the issue of child labour and reintegrating out-of-school children into mainstream education.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the evaluation will provide recommendations and lessons learned to the governments of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka to inform them about the future programming on child protection issues in the states, in particular, and other UNICEF intervention states, in general. To share the findings of report and influence policy makers, following are the strategies to be adopted.

a) Share the summary and detailed reports with the Principal Secretaries of the DoL, MWCD, and District Collector/Dy. Commissioner of Kurnool and Raichur.
b) Share the learning document cum policy brief with State Steering Committee of Smart Village-Smart Ward Project under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.
c) Organise multi-stakeholder workshop to share the findings and learnings of the evaluation report.
d) Prepare policy briefs and meetings with senior officials to include key learnings into PIP of ICPS, enable to issue government orders to strengthen implementation of Child Labour Act, Child Marriage Act, Right to Education Act, and related projects and schemes.
e) Lead/support efforts to develop IEC materials to promote community mobilisation with the assistance of line functionaries.

This evaluation will also inform other similar projects addressing child labour, which is one of the priority advocacy areas of UNICEF India for 2013-2017.

In addition, to enhance internal and external knowledge base and sharing, the project team along with the evaluation manager will deliver targeted presentations to go through findings and their implications for further project development and scale up going forward with the IKEA Foundation, and other stakeholders.

For an internal audience, the team will present in at least one brown bag lunch or Knowledge Sharing Meeting within UNICEF India and will invite colleagues from the Field Offices to connect. Consistent efforts will be made to share the key findings and evaluation report online via UNICEF's social media channels and corporate networks. The evidence can also be used to strengthen replicability of the similar projects across states.

## 4. Scope

The evaluation will take into account the results achieved through the project intervention covering the stated objectives, to understand the processes, actions, outputs as well as the intended and unintended outcomes. Following are a few unintended outcomes listed below:

- Integration of education projects for vulnerable adolescents as an integral element of protecting them. Solid education support projects, skill training projects played key role in protecting adolescents from child labour, child marriage, migration and trafficking.
- Empowerment of adolescent girls and usage of technology, particularly, mobile phones
- Prevention of school dropouts from migrant/migration families
- Developing strong child data at village level and empowering communities to use this data to take decisions for children education and protection

The evaluation and its findings will be limited to Kurnool and Raichur districts, and at the state level where the project was implemented from 2009 to 2014. The design of the evaluation should be guided by an equity and gender perspective, i.e. data collection and analysis should pay close attention to how equity and gender have been integrated into the interventions, such as the inclusion of girls (who are more vulnerable to exploitation) and excluded communities who form a majority of the labour force in the cotton sector.

The UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards will be observed. Furthermore UNEG ethical considerations will be respected, particularly in relation to including the views of adolescent groups and community members. Sensitive information may derive from the FDGs and IDIs and the team will ensure the utmost confidentiality when conducting such research. Interviews with stakeholders will also be done with prior consent. The four OECD-DAC evaluation criteria will be applied and proposed key evaluation questions against each criterion are described below in the indicative evaluation question matrix. ***The selected agency is requested to either validate or amend the proposed methodology as appropriate.***

**Evaluation Question Matrix**

| *Evaluation criteria* | *Question* | *Sub-questions* | *Methodology* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Relevance** | 1. To what extent did the project objectives remain consistent over time?<br>2. To what extent does the project design contribute to creating an enabling | 1. To what extent are the objectives, strategies and activities of the Cotton Corridor project valid and contribute to fulfilling the national priorities?<br>2. Are the activities and outputs consistent with overall goal and | 1. Desk review of intervention documents, Baseline/midline reports, Government orders, Process documentation, Theme notes, MIS data, and other |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | environment towards promoting child rights, child protection and elimination of child labour?<br>3. Given the change in the external environment due to new legislations and schemes, were there any new opportunities or challenges? Did the project complement and/or align with the Government policies and strategies? | attainment of the objectives?<br>3. To what extent is the design of the Cotton Corridor project and associated activities appropriate to reach the children of all sections?<br>4. To what extent is the design of the Cotton Corridor project, associated activities appropriate to engage the children and elicit participation? | reports – implementation reports, reports of the exposure visits to/by states, field trip reports, monitoring reports.<br>2. IDIs/FGDs with key stakeholders – children, community members, department officials and field functionaries, NGOs, UNICEF who are aware of the project strategies and interventions.<br>3. FGDs with primary stakeholders - using participatory techniques (such as quantified participatory assessment).<br>4. Desk review, FGDs/IDIs |
| **Effectiveness** | 1. Did the project achieve the results in relation to the stated objectives and key performance indicators?<br>2. What was the role of the key players and UNICEF and how did they contribute to achieving the results? If not, state reasons.<br>3. How did different sectors within UNICEF collaborate together to achieve the results? (Convergence) | 1. To what extent were the objectives achieved? How, where and why/why not? Were there any variations from the outcomes originally proposed? If so, why?<br>2. What are the key lessons learnt? What were the major factors influencing achievements or non-achievements of the objectives? How were the risks and assumptions being reviewed and managed by project team?<br>3. To what extent has the project been effective in addressing knowledge gaps, attitudinal shifts, behavioural change among the issues it focused on, enhancing life skills among boys and girls, and raising | 1. Desk review reports, MIS data, IDIs/FGDs, baseline/midline, Case studies and MSC stories<br>2. IDIs/FGDs with key stakeholders as appropriate; desk review of reports<br>3. Baseline/midline, MIS<br>4. FGDs/IDIs with primary stakeholders, IDIs with project team, desk review of reports |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 4. Have the strategies used enabled the project to meet its objectives? If not, what are the possible reasons? | awareness about child-friendly schools and encouraging regular attendance among students?<br>4. What were the successful strategies and how meticulously were they designed by the project team? | |
| **Efficiency** | 1. Were human and financial resources utilized efficiently? Were outputs delivered on time?<br>2. To what extent was the Project able to leverage Government resources and partner with the Government to enhance the efficiency of the project? As compared to the budget outlays, was any review done to see how these were being utilized and were any changes made as per programmatic progress and linkages? | 1. To what extent was the project interventions implemented in the most efficient way compared to other alternatives (such as the IKEA Foundation Child Rights Project in Rajasthan and Gujarat?<br>2. To what extent has project optimally used resources - to what extent are the cost of implementation reasonable? Is there any deviation in project deliverables and resources?<br>3. To what extent and how were the necessary inputs (training, procurement etc.) delivered in a timely manner and what were the facilitating and impeding factors?<br>4. Was the intervention designed and/or amended throughout the implementation period to provide the best value for money? | 1. Desk review of utilization reports, progress reports, and financial data from UNICEF, review of the SSA reports, Labour Department reports, and MIS reports, analysis of training and exposure reports, review of Child Rights evaluation of the Project in Rajasthan and Gujarat<br>2. Review of data from other ICT resources<br>3. IDIs/FGDs with key stakeholders (community, children, NGOs, Government) as appropriate<br>4. Desk review/IDIs |
| **Sustainability (and Replicability)** | 1. What factors influenced and/or may influence the achievement/non-achievement of sustainability of project outputs in project implementation districts? What steps can be taken to increase | 1. What were the major factors which influenced or hindered the continuity of the project, contributing to the sustainability of the project?<br>2. To what extent did interventions contribute to the sustainability and institutionalization of project in the on-going | 1. Desk review of reports, Log frame analysis, and financial data from UNICEF, review of the SSA reports, Labour Department reports, and MIS reports, analysis of training and exposure reports |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | the likelihood of sustainability of the project outputs? What elements of the projects have been continued since Dec 2014 and why/how?<br>2. To what extent can the key strategies, approaches developed and implemented be replicable in other areas? Can this model of change be replicable in other project areas with similar needs? What were the interventions that could be replicated by Government? | government schemes/projects?<br>3. To what extent did UNICEF support (for some aspects) and monitoring contribute to sustainability?<br>4. How far did the project intervention benefit children in AP and Karnataka?<br>5. Whether and how did the results of the project continue after UNICEF funding phased out in December 2014? If not, why not? What elements have been continued since then and why/how? Have the children who have been placed in school and taken out of labour remained in school after project completion?<br>6. What factors would need to be in place for these interventions to be replicable? | 2. IDIs/FGDs with key stakeholders (community, children, NGOs, Government) as appropriate<br>3. IDIs with UNICEF colleagues and stakeholders<br>4. Review of data from MMIS and other ICT resources<br>5. IDIs/FGDs with main stakeholders including children, observational visits<br>6. IDIs/FGDs with main stakeholders and desk review and analysis |
| **Equity and gender** | 1. To what extent has the intervention been equitable with regards to gender?<br>2. Did the activities effectively cover (reach) the different population groups, especially the marginalized communities? | 1. To what extent has this intervention been able to foster equity amongst boys and girls and their perception of gender roles?<br>2. To what extent has the intervention facilitated participation and empowerment of boys and girls?<br>3. To what extent have the girls been able to relate to the intervention?<br>4. To what extent has the intervention been equitable with regards to socioeconomic status of the project beneficiaries? | 1. Desk review of reports and IDIs/FGDs<br>2. IDIs/FGDs with key stakeholders – girls, teachers, government functionaries, community representatives, staff, NGOS, parents, UNICEF<br>3. Desk review, IDIs/FGDs with girls<br>4. IDIs/FGDs with primary stakeholders; desk review of reports |

The main stakeholders involved in generating the response to the evaluation include State and District Government officials, adolescent groups, children's groups, UNICEF staff members, consultants and other involved in implementing the project, community members, school teachers, PRI members, parents groups, self-help groups, youth groups, NGOs, civil society

and other partners. This will be both at the State, district and at the village level. Efforts will be made to engage key stakeholders at the milestones of the evaluation.

**Limitations:**

a) Project implementation ended in December 2014. It may be difficult to bring all stakeholder(s) on board.
b) As this project was not conceived with an impact evaluation ex-ante, it will not be possible to fully attribute the project's impact to the intervention since no valid comparison group was chosen. For this reason, the criterion "Impact" was not chosen as the focus of this evaluation.
c) It is not envisaged that the evaluation team will conduct an endline study. Comparison of data points will be done using studies from baseline, midline, and MIS. No comparison between baseline and endline data will be done.

**5. Methodology**

The first step should be the desk review and analysis of baseline and midline survey reports and data, all documents related to the projects, e.g. project proposal and log frames, Theory of Change (ToC), monitoring reports from the 2 states, annual progress reports submitted to the donor, relevant meeting minutes, related government documents, case studies and any other field reports and publications.

**Primary Data Collection**

This evaluation will follow mix methodology as appropriate. Looking at the nature of questions and evaluation criteria, qualitative and quantitative tools shall be designed to capture data from the respondents. However, the quantitative analysis on few select common indicators will also be done using the baseline (2009), midline (2012), MIS results, and also from the respondents to make the evaluation comprehensive, as appropriately determined by the agency.

The universe (project villages) shall be stratified into better performing, medium performing and low performing villages using appropriate criteria before selecting the sample villages. The categorization made after baseline survey into Green, Yellow, and Red may be retained.

Villages falling in each category may further be stratified using female literacy as the implicit stratifying variable before their actual selection. Special emphasis shall be provided to bring out insights into what may have facilitated or hindered changes (positive or negative). *The bidding agencies are expected to propose appropriate methods to bring out equity-focus dimensions in the evaluation.* Qualitative analysis of existing materials, documents and observations should also be taken into account.

***The evaluation agency is expected to suggest the actual methodology for sampling and sample size based on broader principles given above.***

The villages should be selected using appropriate stratified random sampling from the list of intervention villages in earmarked districts. While doing so, representation is to be ensured so that the sample villages adequately reflect the geographical spread of intervention villages in a district. The District/Block-wise list of intervention villages along with ancillary information will be provided to the selected agency.

Data collection should cover, e.g. *through primary surveys, focus group discussions, quantified participatory assessments*, from frontline workers, school teachers of the bridge schools as well as regular schools, PRI members, children (boys and girls) in the age group engaged in work/adolescent groups and mothers (or fathers/caretakers). In-depth interviews (IDIs) will also be conducted with State and District administration, PRI members, teachers, Panchayat Presidents, Mandal Education Officers, Child Development Project Officers, Youth Groups, Child Protection Committees and School Management Committee (SMC) members.

All the FGDs and interviews should be conducted in the respective regional languages of the 2 states and translated into English. The transcription of the FGDs and the IDIs will be coded separately and then brought together for analysis. Verification and triangulation of qualitative information will be conducted to ensure the quality of the data. This will be achieved through discussion of results with different respondents and checking and analysis of data.

*The table below lists out the suggested tools and sample size with the category of respondents. The selected agency will hold discussions with UNICEF to further validate and finalize this information:*

| Tools | Level | Respondents/groups | Approximate Numbers | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **In-depth Interviews** | **State** | State Govt (SSA, labour, DWCD)<br>UNICEF | 5 | 2 from Andhra Pradesh, 2 from Karnataka, 1 from UNICEF, Hyderabad |
| | **District** | District Collector<br>SSA, DWCD, Labour, Police, DCPC, Project Director, NGOs | 6 | 3 from Kurnool and 3 from Raichur |
| | **Sub-district** | Line department representatives from labour, DWCD, SSA/Education (District Education officer) at block/mandal level<br>Block/Mandal Development Officers, CDPO,<br>President of GP<br>NGOs | 9 | 5 from Kurnool and 3 from Raichur |
| | **Village** | PRI, Teachers, SMC member, children, parent, adolescent and youth group members | 30 villages X 15 respondents (450 ) | 20 villages in Kurnool and 10 villages in Raichur |
| | | **Total estimated number of in-depth interviews** | 470 | |
| **FGDs/ Quantified Participatory Assessment/ Observation schedules/ Force Field Analysis/Cobb Web** | **District** | Line departments<br>NGOs | 6 | 3 from Kurnool and 3 from Raichur from both govt and NGOs |
| | **Sub-district** | Panchayat members<br>Frontline workers from line departments<br>Self-help groups<br>Adolescent Girls Groups<br>Teachers<br>Parents/community members | 10 | 6 FGDs from Kurnool and 4 FGDs from Raichur |
| | **Village** | Child Protection Committee, SMC, village volunteers<br>Adolescent groups/children's clubs, SHG members, community members/parents, teachers. Children (rescued or benefitting from the project) | 20 | 12 from Kurnool and 8 from Raichur |
| | | **Total estimated number of FGDs** | 36 | |

A pilot testing of the tools will be done at the village level and in one of the districts to ensure appropriateness of the tools used for collection of data.

## 6. Management Arrangements

A Reference Group made up of people who have a solid understanding on the subject matter, research methodology, ethical issues etc…will be formed to support the evaluation manager in quality assurance and will collectively advise the evaluation manager at key milestones of the evaluation process, such as review of technical bids, inception report and data collection tools, draft report and final evaluation report.

**Role and Tasks**

The Group is expected to collectively advise the evaluation manager at key milestones of the evaluation process. Taking into account UNICEF quality standards for evaluations and the UNEG norms, standards and ethical guidelines, the Reference Group will have the following specific tasks:

| **Tasks** | **Expected time commitment** |
|---|---|
| Discuss and comment on the **inception report**, including validation of the evaluation questions, relevance of methodology and data collection tools. | 1 day |
| Participate in the **field monitoring** of the data collection, if possible. | 2-3 days |
| Participate in the **debriefing on data collection and topline findings**. | 1 day |
| Review and comment on **draft report**. | 1 day |

All UNICEF members selected for the Reference Group should have completed the UNICEF-ISB Executive Course on Evaluation. In addition, they must have prior experience in Child Protection and Education issues, and/or a state level implementation perspective.

PPE Section New Delhi (from IMEP set-aside fund) will cover the costs of evaluation.

Child Protection Section, UNICEF, New Delhi, with the technical support of PPE wherever essential, shall carry out an orientation for the ET detailing the purpose, objectives, products/deliverables, key activities and timeline of the assignment.

## 7. Schedule of Tasks & Timeline

| **Tasks** | **Weeks** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10** | **11** | **12** | **13** | **14** | **15** | **16** | **17** |
| Conceptualization & inception report (one time) - (2 weeks) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Desk review - (2 weeks) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Preparation of tools - (2 weeks) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pilot testing of the tools (1 week) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Finalization of tools (1 week) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pilot report (1 week) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Data collection (5 weeks) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Data entry, cleaning and analysis (2 weeks) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Draft report (2 weeks) and consultation with stakeholder(s) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Final report (2 weeks) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

## 8. Estimated duration of contract: 17 weeks for start date of contract

## 9. Deliverables

1. Inception Report (as per the guidelines attached), including a theory of change and data collection tools
2. Audit trail 1 of comments on the draft Inception Report (to keep track of comments and how they are being addressed).
3. Pilot report after tools are tested
4. Topline findings (Consolidated as well as state and outcome wise).
5. Draft report of the evaluation as per the UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards
6. Audit trail 2 of comments on the first draft report.
7. Updated Audit trail 2 of comments on the revised draft report.
8. Power point presentation of the findings of the evaluation
9. Final Report as per the UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards with professional editing and copy-editing which will be reported on GEROS.
10. Raw data, fact sheets, tables

**11. Structure of the Evaluation Report**

In preparing the evaluation results, the findings will be evidence based and will have clear references to the source. The structure of the evaluation report (not more than 80 pages) could be as follows :

- Title page
- Foreword
- Table of contents
- Acknowledgements
- Executive Summary with the purpose of the evaluation, key findings, conclusions and recommendations in priority order ( 3-4 pages)
- Introduction that includes a description of the project intervention, Log frame /result matrix/theory of change
- Background/context of the evaluation
- Purpose of the evaluation
- Key questions and scope of the evaluation with information on limitations and de-limitations
- Methodology
- Findings
- Conclusions and recommendations, it will be explicitly linked to the findings
- Lessons learned

In addition, the final report should contain the following annexes:

- Terms of Reference for the evaluation
- Itinerary (actual)
- List of meetings attended
- List of persons interviewed
- List of documents reviewed
- Any other relevant materials

**12. Qualifications & Experience Required:**

A leading management consulting firm or qualified evaluation agency with proven expertise on child labour elimination issues is required for this task. The organization should have performed evaluations of similar scale and scope, demonstrable track record of producing reliable data, linked to an effective system for internal quality assistance and **ethical review board**, and can demonstrate capacity including field presence to conduct the evaluation in 2 states (Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka) and 2 districts (Kurnool and Raichur). The evaluation team should have knowledge of the 2 local languages (Telugu and Kannada) to be used.

The bidding agency should identify an evaluation team leader who should be available to work on the evaluation throughout the evaluation process. Change of the evaluation team leader or members will not be accepted without prior approval from UNICEF.

**The evaluation leader should have the following:**

- At least 10-15 years of extensive experience in designing, planning, organizing and conducting research and evaluations in rural settings, preferably associated with child labour, child protection and education issues.
- Proven experience of leading an evaluation in the last three years. (Final report of the evaluation **is required** as part of technical proposal)
- Demonstrated experience in integrating an equity and gender perspective in the evaluation design and analysis.
- Strong analytical skills and understanding on the on-going projects on child labour elimination projects across India.

**The evaluation team should:**

- Consist of 1 Child Protection Specialist (preferably Child Labour) and 1 Gender Specialist with at least 10 years of experience. The team should also have experienced research professionals with advanced degree in social sciences/development and excellent communication skills in Hindi, other local languages and English.
- To the extent possible, embody a range of perspectives (gender balance, cultural or ethnic background, etc.)
- Have experience and knowledge of state systems, budgets, experience of working with local organizations and local partner agencies
- Demonstrable ability to simplify technical language, extracting and emphasizing key points for a designated target audience
- Understand UNICEF's mandate and functions in India

**13. Duty Station**

- The consultant/agency conducting the research will be based in Hyderabad/Bengaluru/Delhi.

**14. Official travel involved**

- One visit to Hyderabad, Kurnool and Raichur and Delhi for desk review.
- One visit to Hyderabad, Bangalore for state level interviews and FGDs
- Two visits to Kurnool, Raichur during field work and interviews with district teams
- One visit during finalization of the report.

# Annex B Cotton Corridors project description

This section sets out the project's history and evolution. It was used as a basis for the TOC and the formation of the evaluation matrix.

## B.1 Source documents

This annex is based on the following documents:

- 2006, ICO, 'Eliminating Girl Child Labour in the Cotton Seed Industry in Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh, India: A project proposal'. This covers what is referred to in the Project Document Final as 'Phase I of the project';
- March 2011, UNICEF India, 'Revised Kurnool Raichur Project Document Final';
- November 2010, UNICEF India, 'Cotton Corridors: Preventing Exploitation and Protecting Child Rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka: Annual Progress Report and Next Year Plan';
- February 2012, UNICEF India, 'Cotton Corridors: Preventing Exploitation and Protecting Child Rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka: Annual Progress Report and Next Year Plan';
- January 2013, UNICEF India, 'Cotton Corridors: Preventing Exploitation and Protecting Child Rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka: Annual Progress Report and Next Year Plan';
- February 2014, UNICEF India, 'Cotton Corridors: Preventing Exploitation and Protecting Child Rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka: Annual Progress Report and Next Year Plan';
- 2015, UNICEF India, 'Cotton Corridors: Preventing Exploitation and Protecting Child Rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka: Final report';
- 2015, UNICEF India, 'Cotton Corridors: Preventing Exploitation and Protecting Child Rights in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka: Evaluation Terms of Reference'.

We have also read the annual and end of project reports from the NGOs and project teams to UNICEF, and the summary documents of the project in both Kurnool and Raichur produced by the Division for Child Studies.

## B.2 Project history

UNICEF have been working with the GoAP on CL since the early 2000s. Broadly, there have been three phases of work:

- an initial two year project in 70 villages in two *mandal*s of Kurnool, which piloted community-based action on CL with the district administration, in a departure from previous work that had focused on rescue and rehabilitation.[50] We will not discuss this phase further as we lack documentation;
- a project 'Eliminating Girl Child Labour in the Cotton Seed Industry in Kurnool District, AP' between 2006 and 2010 that is referred to in a subsequent Cotton Corridors project documentation as 'Phase I'.[51] This operated in five *mandals* of Kurnool District;[52]
- the Cotton Corridors project from June 2008 to December 2014, operating in 17 *mandals* of Kurnool district and 2 blocks of Raichur district. This is the project under the present evaluation, henceforth known as 'Cotton Corridors'. As we set out below, this project evolved quite significantly particularly in 2009 after the introduction of the ICPS and RTE and a change in project staff.[53]

[50] UNICEF 2006 provides a very brief overview of this.
[51] We have the project proposal for this first phase (UNICEF India 2006) and discuss it further below.
[52] The initial proposal is for four mandals but later documents refer to five mandals.
[53] We do not have the materials from the first year of the project's activities (2008-2009).

### B.2.1 'Phase I': 2006–2010

We have information on this phase from the 2006 proposal and the 2011 Cotton Corridors Revised Project document. The 2006 proposal outlines the context described above, noting the large size of the cotton industry in Andhra Pradesh, the number of children, and particularly girls, employed, and the poor conditions in which many of them work. It notes that any attempt to prevent and eliminate CL must deal with the multiplicity and complexity its causes, which in Andhra Pradesh range from "the chronic debt-poverty spiral, cotton seed production modalities, the lack of quality education…worsened [in Kurnool] by the fact that it is a chronically drought affected area with significant migration, inequity in terms of caste and gender entitlements, and an evolving political environment," (UNICEF 2006: 8).

Building on a previous CL project in two *mandals*, UNICEF proposed a three-year project with "a multi-pronged strategy of prevention, education, convergence and rehabilitation…to ensure that all children have access to quality education [and] work with communities and government officials to raise awareness about [hazards in the cotton industry," (UNICEF 2006: 8). The objectives and strategies are set out below, with the key point of departure from previous approaches being thatthe project is multi-dimensional.

**Exhibit 3-1: Project objectives, outcomes, and strategies (Phase I Kurnool 2006 proposal)**

**Objectives:**

- to promote an **integrated community-based strategy** involving government departments, community groups and children in 104 villages
- to pilot **quality learning packages** in at least 70 schools
- to sensitise 180 government schools on child labour
- to **raise the awareness** of state and district level government, NGO networks and employers about the hazards of child labour.

**Outcomes:**

- communities mobilised against the employment of children in the cotton seed industry
- improved cooperation among government departments around the elimination of child labour
- at least 50 per cent of all children aged 6-14 enrolled and retained in school in four *mandals* [five *mandals* according to later documents]
- at least 75 per cent of the 22,570 OOSC aged 6-14 enrolled in schools

**Strategies:**

| Community mobilisation | Strengthening quality of education | Promoting convergence | Raising awareness | Enforcement | Withdrawal strategy |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

*Source: 2006, ICO, 'Eliminating Girl Child Labour in the Cotton Seed Industry in Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh, India: A project proposal'.*

The management of the project was to be closely aligned with government and communities. It would be led by the DC with support from UNICEF, and managed by a coordinator jointly identified by the GoAP and UNICEF, who would head the Project Support Unit based in Kurnool. The Departments of Education and Labour were expected to be critical in monitoring and enforcement

activities. NGOs would support implementation by managing four mobilisers per *mandal* and supporting the government in monitoring and enforcement. The budget proposed for the project was USD1,167,040.

The 2011 Revised Project Document was positive about this Phase I project: "4,000 girls have been taken out of the workforce and mainstreamed into the education system, and 100 schools have been transformed into welcoming places where children can learn and play," (UNICEF 2011: 2). It attributed this success to community mobilisation "and specifically, building an understanding about child rights, bringing local authorities on board to focus and take action on the issue, improve the quality of education in existing schools and empower adolescent girls through collectives and enriched education opportunities," (UNICEF 2011: 2). The approach taken for the Cotton Corridors project was initially intended to "expand the model…into 17 *mandals*…in Kurnool…and two adjacent taluks…in Raichur," (UNICEF 2011: 2). The new geographical focus was on an area that employed an estimated 175,000 children: the 'Cotton Corridor'.

## B.3 Cotton Corridors project (July 2008–December 2014)

While Cotton Corridors project was largely designed to follow 'Phase I' model in a wider geographical area, the 2011 Revised Project Document outlines four departures from the Phase I approach, based on the Phase I evaluation and the changed context following the introduction of ICPS and RTE in 2009.[54] First, it includes adolescents rather than focusing just on 6-14 year olds. Second, it was more explicit about women's empowerment. Third, it aimed to improve child protection outcomes and not just CL and education outcomes. Finally, it moved into sectors outside cotton.

The objectives, outcomes and strategies are thus slightly different from the initial project, and the additional elements are highlighted in red below.

**Exhibit 3-2: Project objectives, outcomes, and strategies (Cotton Corridors Kurnool and Raichur, 2011 Project Document)**

| |
|---|
| **Long-term result**<br><br>*Improved systems and structures for preventing exploitation and protecting children in Kurnool and Raichur districts* |
| **Objectives:**<br><br>• 18,750 of the 25,000 children between 6–14 years old are in school<br>• 360 upper primary and high schools adopt quality education packages along with other elements of a child friendly school<br>• 1,500 adolescent girls are equipped with skills to make informed decisions<br>• 591 collectives for young people function as a common platform and dialogue with key influencers and policy makers<br>• 4,500 women become leaders, having been equipped with appropriate information and confidence to integrate child protection issues into their activities |
| **Strategies:** |

[54] The 2011 Project Document mentions a Phase I evaluation that we have not received.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Awareness and mobilisation** | **Education and making schools child friendly** | **Capacity building and systems strengthening including enforcement** | **Girls Collectives (Balika Sanghas)** | **Women's empowerment** | **Review, monitoring and evaluation** |
| **Activities** | | | | | |
| **Education** | | **Awareness and mobilisation** | | **Women's empowerment** | |

*Source: UNICEF India 2011 Revised Project Document. Long-term result is from the summative evaluation TOR. Differences with Phase I highlighted in red. Cotton Corridors project also included an exit strategy not presented here. The focus on capacity building and systems strengthening was more explicit in Cotton Corridors project but draws on the convergence strategies of Phase I.*

The Cotton Corridors project's organisation was also similar to that of Phase I, but broadened the involvement of different stakeholders to reflect the additional complexity of approach and the CL environment. The DC remained head of the project in both districts, with particular responsibility for convergence, amongst other things. In addition to the Departments of Education and Labour in Phase I, the Cotton Corridors project proposal was more explicit about the role of the Department of WCD (responsible in these States for ICPS), the police, CWCs, the JJB, and the Department of Rural Development, amongst others. The project was implemented by three NGOs in Kurnool and by an NGO in Raichur, which was later replaced by a team of staff hired for the project.

The budget was substantially larger than phase I, at EUR 4,794,135 or USD 6,813,722,[55] reflecting the larger geographical scope.

The following sub-sections chart the history of the project according to the annual progress reports, citing additional context from the interviews we conducted in the first phase of the evaluation. Progress is organised around the three activities of education, awareness and mobilisation, and women's empowerment, and summarised in the tables below.

### B.3.1 Year 1: July 2008–July 2009

We do not have reports of activities in the first year (July 2008–August 2009), so it is unclear what happened at this point. The DCS documents and some of the annual reports refer to formal implementation starting in 2009, but the project start date given in every annual report is July 2008. The Revised Project Document has the first instalment from IKEA Foundation received in July 2008, and project implementation from July 2009.

### B.3.2 Year 2: August 2009–September 2010

In the second year (2009–2010), it seemed that progress in Kurnool was faster than in Raichur. Overall the focus was on collecting data and initiating community mobilisation processes and forming groups. In Raichur, there was a campaign in 36 schools to raise awareness on child rights, CL and child marriage, and CCs formed in seven schools. 335 child labourers were released and enrolled in formal schools/RBCs and there were community based campaigns (including street plays) against CL and child marriage in 16 GPs (71 villages).96 literacy committee members were trained on CL, and five farmers meetings were held where 210 farmers pledged non-employment of children. Door-to-door campaigns against CL in Raichur town rescued and rehabilitated 72 child

[55] Calculated at the March 2011 EUR/USD exchange rate of 0.7036. Note that in the 2011 annual report, the budget was given as USD7,055,550.

labourers, and 468 police officials were trained resulting in establishment of Help Desks in all 24 police stations of Raichur, police teams participate in enforcement drives and children's issues part of district crime reviews conducted by police superintendent. Awareness generation sessions were held for field officers from Department of Adult literacy, hostel wardens, youth groups, Anganwadi Workers (AWWs), and restaurant owners, leading to joint enforcement drives. 700 members of SHGs were sensitised on CL, and 120 adolescent girls mobilised into four BSs. Finally, a baseline sample survey in Raichur *taluk* estimated 22 per cent of children out of school.

In Kurnool, community mobilisation with panchayats and CPCs led to the enrolment of 1,453 OOS children aged 6–8 into schools, and 1,662 working children aged 9–14 into rehabilitation centres. The project advocated for SSA to waive school leaving exam fees for 161 children aged 15+ taking private/correspondence system, and 187 children aged 15+ had 10th class exam fees paid by SSA. 25 adolescent girls were trained in garment making, and school reading kits were supplied to 560 schools. CCs were established in upper primary/high schools (unclear how many). Baseline data were shared and validated with panchayats, school teachers and AWW. .

In addition, community meetings were held in all villages to mobilise against CL, including street plays. 210 CPCs were formed in 210 villages, and 12 *mandal*-level core committees formed. Focus groups and meetings were held with farmers to sensitise them against not using children as labourers, and farmers' associations and federations formed to discuss challenges with the cotton sector. 3,675 youth participated in sensitisation projects on CL, and the Labour department conducted enforcement drives against CL leading to release of 205 children. Meanwhile, 225 women *panchaya*t and 570 SHG leaders oriented about CL. 343 BSs mobilised, and a training module developed.

The Collector organised five convergence meetings between SSA, WCD, CW, RD, Labour and NCLP, and a baseline survey on OOSC was conducted by community mobilisers and *mandal* coordinators in all 214 GPs of 12 *mandals*, and found 19,328 children out of school. The survey data computerised, shared with government and disaggregated by age, sex, caste and work sector. This represented a much more thorough process around data than that in Raichur.

Activities in the year were interrupted by heavy flooding and relief October 2009–January 2010 and *panchayat* elections in Karnataka from March–May 2010. Although this slowed implementation, working together with the government on flood relief helped to build strong relations with government, according to a respondent. Overall, activities in both districts focused on raising awareness and conducting baseline surveys on the situation of children, and as the final project report of 2015 noted "the project focused on familiarising the government teams and implementing partners on the project strategies [and] undertaking baseline surveys alongside. It became apparent that one shortcoming in the enforcement approach was that the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986 does not prohibit CL in cotton, and that adolescent girls are interested in employment near to their homes. Just over EUR700,000 were spent in the first year, around 60 per cent of the budget.

### B.3.3 Year 3: January 2011–December 2011

Reporting for the third year (2011) was not disaggregated by district, although in Raichur the project expanded to include Devdurga *taluk*. Building on the earlier data and mobilisation phase, the project started to get involved further in supporting the delivery of particular projects, and strengthening convergence with government. In particular, around government engagement, the GoAP reportedly released EUR142,000 in project areas for the establishment of Special Training Centres (STCs), seasonal hostels and enforcement projects, and replicated the quality education package piloted in Kurnool. In a brief summary of achievements, 10,016 children were enrolled into STCs in 2011 (compared with a little over 3,000 the previous year), reportedly achieved through

social mobilisation activities. 234 schools were made child friendly including the formation of CCs.[56] Skills trainings for adolescents were organised, and 518 BSs were established by the end of the period. Finally, 2,077 women were trained to become leaders of their groups, and 113,500 women were sensitised on CP issues. EUR790,106 was spent in this period, around 75 per cent of the budget.

In both districts, several challenges were identified in 2011. First, substantial teacher and block level government officials were reported to cause problems, in part because parents questioned the value of sending children to school if the teachers were not there. Second, poor rainfall led to failed crops and large out-migration. Third, *panchayat* elections in Kurnool were delayed, causing problems for the social mobilisation projects. Next, there are few quality skill training providers in project areas, and this is a new challenge for government and civil society. Finally, the problem of adolescent girls being interested in work close to home was reiterated.

After 2011, the project planned to expand geographically (into Kurnool Phase I villages, moving from 12 to 17 *mandals*), and to adapt to the implementation of ICPS and RTE by focusing more on the development of capacities of government partners.

### B.3.4 Year 4: January 2012–December 2012

Again, in 2012, donor reporting was aggregated for both districts rather than broken down, so we are not easily able to report achievement in the different districts. Only 1,719 children were enrolled into STCs this year (compared with over 10,000 in 2011), and by the end of 2012 CPCs had been formed in 90 per cent of project villages. A further 151 schools were "made child friendly by forming CCs" in 2012, meaning 385 in total, with CCs working on enrolling OOSC and improving midday meals. 4,000 teachers were trained on CP issues. Skill training was conducted for 594 adolescents in 2012, and by the end of the period, 550 of the 1,338 adolescents had found placements. A further 271 BSs were formed in 2012, meaning 789 with a membership of 11,835 in total. BSs were reported to contribute "immensely towards girls opting for skills training." 932 women were trained as leaders in their groups, and thereby sensitising their group members on CP issues. Convergence also progressed with the linking of CPCs formed under the project to ICPS structures, and the use of *mandal*-level data on OOSC to support the elimination of CL.

The major reported challenges in 2012 were the continued vacancies in teaching posts and a series of political challenges in Kurnool. These were: i) strong caste and political party divisions exacerbated by *panchayat* elections that hampered the community mobilisation work, ii) the continued absence of *panchayat* elections meaning that in many villages *sarpanches* were not appointed and CPCs do not function well, and iii) agitation for a separate state in AP disrupting project implementation. EUR513,996, or 50 per cent of the budget, was spent in 2012, largely, according to the annual report, due to cost savings through efficient implementation and working with government.

### B.3.5 Year 5: January 2013–December 2013

In 2013, an additional focus on social mobilisation led to the enrolment of 3,200 OOSC into schools or special training centres, and strengthened CPCs in 387 schools. The report declared 145 villages CL free. Over 100 schools improved their infrastructure, CCs continued to operate in 387 schools, and 1,300 teachers were trained on child protection. 824 adolescents were provided with skills training and of the 2,162 trained so far, 640 were in placements. 465 BSs were formed, with 6,000 girls as members, and 2,700 were trained as leaders. 2,500 girls were enrolled for open schooling, leading, according to the report, to the prevention of over 1,000 marriages. 1,100

[56] It is not clear whether this was in 2011 or previously.

women were trained on leadership roles, sensitising 275,000 women. Convergence continued with CPCs, SMCs and SHGs part of longer-term structures, and BSs potentially integrated into the SABLA project for adolescent girls. The annual report estimates EUR100,000 leveraged from government departments. Expenditure is not provided in this report.

No additional challenges were noted by the 2013 report, but the previous challenges continued of i) tensions around the creation of Telangana leading to closed schools and continued vacant teaching posts, ii) *panchayat* elections in both districts exacerbating existing divisions, and iii) the shortage of quality skill training providers.

### B.3.6 Year 6: January 2014–December 2014/Overall summary

The final report in March 2015 summarises project achievements overall, initially organised by output and then in a separate list. We reproduce these two ways of organising here:

**Education: Children in the age group of 6–14 years are working and not in school**

First, the final report states that "strong community mobilisation projects with the help of CPCs, youth groups, active participation of local administration and joint enforcement drives led to" the enrolment of child labourers and OOSC in schools, special training centres and residential school projects (UNICEF 2015: 7). Specifically, since 2009 24,183 children were reported enrolled into schools, special training centres and open education projects.[57] 4,371 of these were from the cotton sector. The project reports leveraging USD1m from government for special training centres.

Next, "schools, CPCs, SMCs and *panchayats* were brought together to enhance community ownership in improving school infrastructure and the management of schools," leading to capacity development affecting over 350,000 school children, improved infrastructure in 150 schools, the formation of CCs and the improvement of libraries in 750 schools. Over USD100,000 was reported as leveraged from CPCs, SMCs and community members for school improvements.

2,115 adolescents were provided with skills training during the project, and of these 680 (32 per cent) found placements. CCs were formed in 750 schools, and these were reported to play a role in reducing dropouts, retaining children, improving the quality of information in schools and acting as information points on CM and CL issues.

Various aspects of the model were reported as replicated by the government. These include:

- "the education support projects for CL and OOSC [aged 15–18] that emerged as a model project for government of AP and Karnataka.
- the child database in AP;
- the integration of RSTCs into government residential schools;
- a handbook for SMCs on social audits on the implementation of RTE at village level;
- the integration of school sanitation issues into National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGA) projects.

**Community mobilisation: young people have a common platform to address issues related to children and adolescents**

Community meetings were held involving women's groups, youth, farmers, children, parents and teachers to obtain the support of the *panchayat* and other key community members for the elimination of CL. Three hundred and eighty-nine CPCs were formed at *panchayat* level with 7,500

[57] In earlier reports those in open education projects were treated separately, so it is not clear how these relate.

members, and trained on their role to take forward community mobilisation against CL and to monitor than children do not drop out of schools. This was supplemented by a communication campaign including posters, radio shows, pamphlets, etc., and home visits and FGDs with parents and community members to develop "awareness…against child labour, child marriages, education and other child protection issues." Government spent USD200,000 on these communication materials. 7,500 farmers provided written undertakings that they would not employ children, and government funded USD500,000 to enforcement drives that led to the release of 5,000 children. 1,631 BSs were formed with a total membership of 30,565 girls, of which 4,256 girls were trained as leaders. Data management systems on OOSC were established in 700 villages and the data were used by SMCs and CPCs to monitor children and try to ensure they stayed in or returned to school. The State Governments recommended to the Government of India that cotton be added to this list of occupations banned to children.

**Women's empowerment: women empowered to promote rights of children, especially those from socially excluded groups**

Finally, the project aimed to build rapport with and build capacity in women's groups to engage them in community mobilisation projects against CL, CM and to promote school education. Specifically, 1,500 Government officials and 4,500 SHG leaders were trained on CL elimination and 1,200 female *panchayat* and SHG leaders were trained on leadership, thereby leading to the orientation of 26,300 women on child rights issues, support for the BSs, pledges from 300,000 women not to send their children to work and not to undertake CMs, and women's groups pledging to send their children regularly to school, not encouraging child marriages, monitoring the quality of education in schools, ensuring birth registration, and appointing a specific point person on children's issues. Further, 2,000 women were linked to NREGS employment, and 5,000 adolescent girls were enrolled into open school projects.

### B.3.7 Achievements in summary

The final report also summarises achievements, not grouped by output. These are (grouped slightly):

- **developing integrated CP systems at *panchayat* level**: "One of the key achievements of the Kurnool-Raichur project is the development of systems at the *panchayat* level for protecting children through establishment of Child Protection Committee, Girls Collectives (Balika Sanghas) and Child Clubs," (UNICEF 2015: 12). These systems meant that community members worked together to prevent and eliminate CL by strengthening schools and monitoring child protection issues. This approach has the potential, according to the report, to be integrated into ICPS. These systems, particularly intensive work with children in Girls Collectives (BSs) and CCs, also allowed children to "speak on their rights and [develop] approaches to protect themselves from abuse and exploitation…empowering children on a range of child protection issues," (UNICEF 2015: 12–13). In addition, CPCs, SMCs, local *panchayats* and the education department supported and encouraged relatives to look after children whose parents migrated for work, or in cases where relatives were not available to have these children stay in the school. In addition, child rights and CP issues were integrated into women's groups that decided on non-negotiables for children, and campaigning for the prevention of CL and CM and monitoring schools. Women's groups were a good focus for this partly because, according to the report "80 per cent of child marriages that are happening in the villages are from women's group families," (UNICEF 2015: 14);
- **developing child data systems at *panchayat* level.** The project supported (at least in Kurnool) the development of a strong database on OOSC, and "the development and display of complete children information in *panchayats* offices lead to usage of these information by CPCs, CCs and Girls Collectives (BSs)," (UNICEF 2015: 12);

- **convergence among government departments**. This was achieved principally through the formation of CPCs, *Mandal* CPCs and the district project coordination committee, and working together across the different government departments, as well as the management of the project by the DC.

Sustainability was expected through the involvement of SHGs, the preparation and display of child data at village level by *panchayats*, linkages between CP structures (BSs, CCs and CPCs) and related government departments, the integration of CP issues in the monitoring and review systems of related departments, the development of capacity in key district CP unit officers, and the integration of residential special training centres into formal residential schools.

### B.3.8 Challenges in summary

Three challenges were identified in the final report, repeating those noted in previous years:

- The effect of the movement for the creation of Telangana on implementation, in particular through strikes, the attention of CPCs and vacancies in government positions, including teachers.
- Poor rainfall from 2012–2014 in both districts leading to income losses and out-migration.
- The lack of *panchayat* elections between the end of a term in June 2011 and 2014, affecting the functioning of CPCs and convergence attempts.[58]

## B.4 Alternative TOC for the evaluation

As presented in Exhibit 1-2, the evaluation team believes that the project's result, objectives, outcomes, and strategies highlighted in project documents is inadequate for evaluation purposes for three main reasons:

First, the six strategies and three activities summarise an enormous variety of things that were done under the auspices of the project. These ranged from providing skills training to adolescents to forming farmer collectives to discuss issues in the cotton sector to training SHG leaders to pledge against CM to providing library books to schools. The sheer range of (sub-) activities undertaken under these broad headings makes it very difficult to evaluate each of them separately.

Second, it is very difficult to group these diverse things into these three activities. This is the case conceptually. For example, activities undertaken under 'awareness and mobilisation', such as the formation of BSs, were also seen in some reports to support women's empowerment and education. It is also the case operationally: there was not a project team working on education separate from a project team working on awareness and mobilisation.[59]

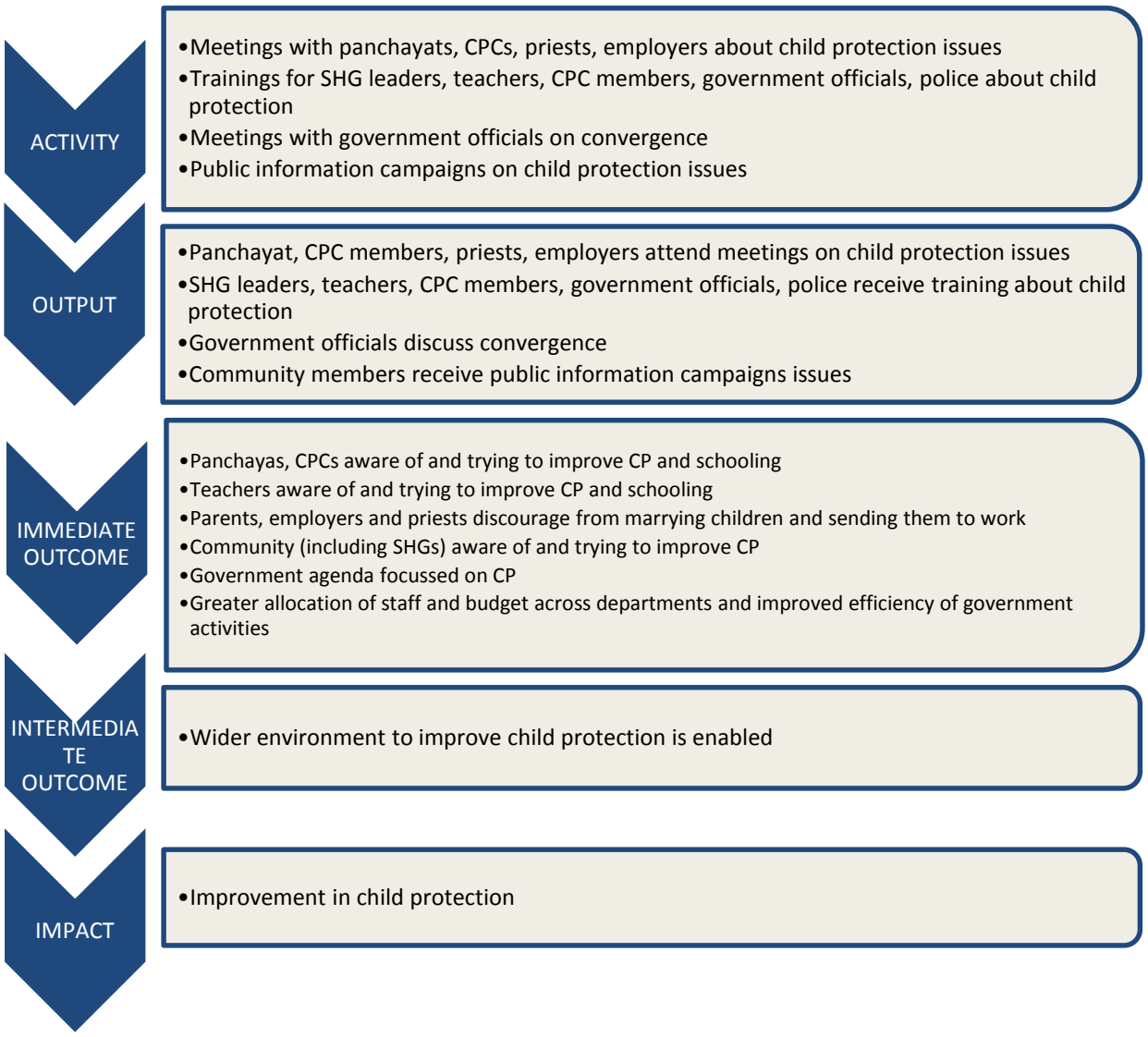
Third, this static presentation does not adequately reflect the evolution of the project over time, in relation to the changing legislative environment, new project personnel, learning from previous phases and demands from the community. For example, the long-term result in the exhibit above was introduced explicitly only after the design, as it became clear that this was an overarching way to think about the project. Following set up, the project focused in 2009–2010 on familiarising the government teams and implementing partners on the project strategies, undertaking base line surveys alongside rapport building with the communities at the village level. From 2010, the project started full scale implementation of all programmes and strategies, and to adapt to the changed policy environment, in particular the passage of ICPS and RTE. A revised project document in

[58] This is slightly confusing, as it appears elections were held in Andhra Pradesh in July 2013 (http://www.apsec.gov.in/RLBS_GPs/GP%20-Election%20Report%20-%202013.pdf).
[59] Indeed, this lack of separation was part of the convergence agenda.

March 2011 introduced four departures from the earlier phase: First, it included adolescents rather than focusing just on 6–14 year olds. Second, it was more explicit about women's empowerment. Third, it aimed to improve CP outcomes and not just CL and education outcomes. Finally, it moved into sectors outside cotton.

For this reason, going ahead from the consolidated TOC presented in Exhibit 2-9, we present below the four detailed theories of change for each input.

### Exhibit 3-3: Input 1: Trainings and meetings

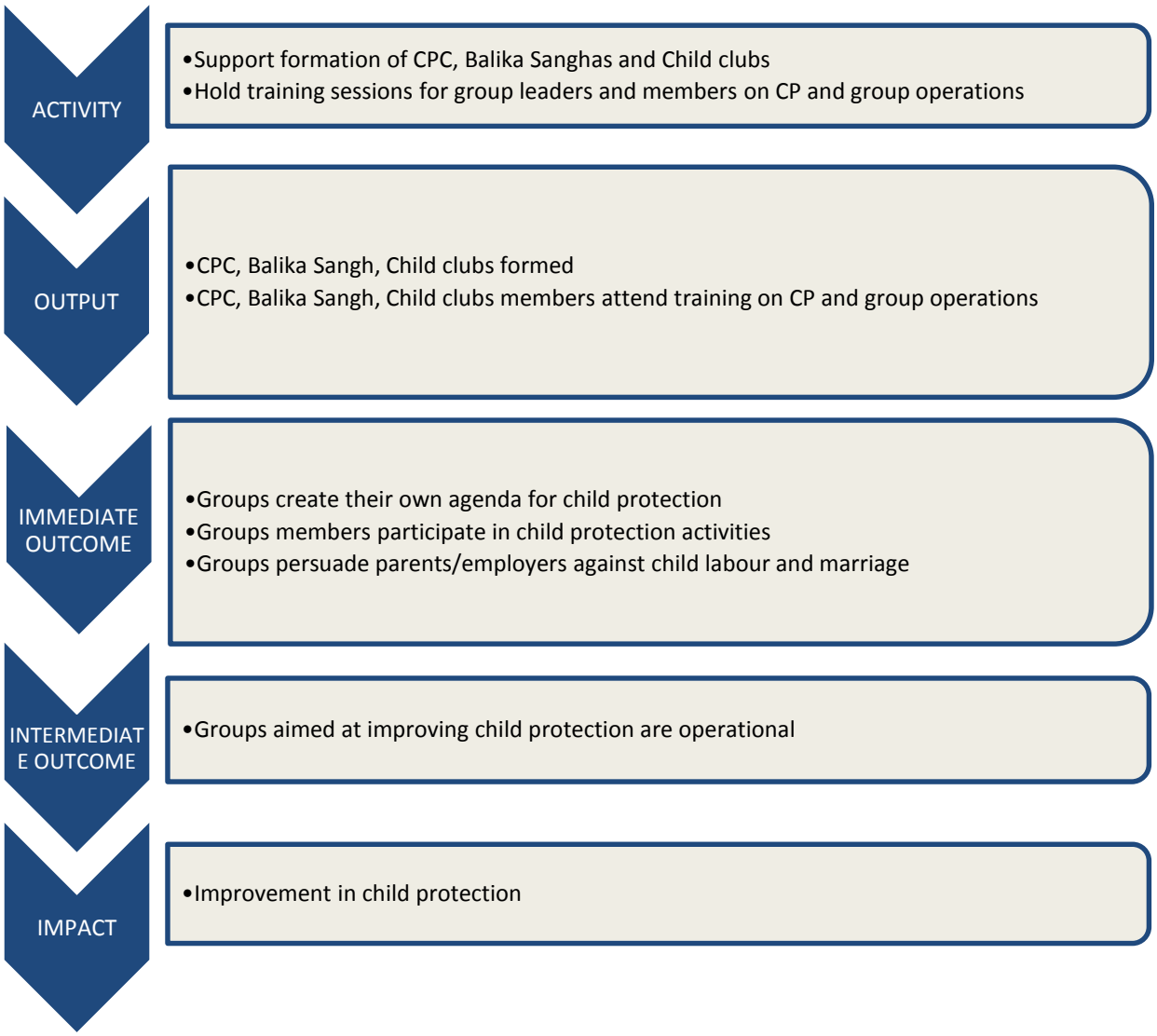



*Source: OPM Cotton Corridors Inception Report*

The project's *activities* in this first area are meetings, trainings and public awareness campaigns with key stakeholders. At *output* level, we would then see that key stakeholders have attended meetings or trainings or have read or heard the public information material. This should lead to an *immediate outcome* of them having greater awareness of and motivation to improve CP issues, with slightly different meanings for the different stakeholders. This leads to the *intermediate outcome* of enabling the wider environment for CP. This theory relies on certain *assumptions*, including that:

- community members and government officials are receptive to sensitisation programmes, and that the needs of the teachers and schools are assessed properly;
- capacity building programmes are created and delivered;
- material required by the schools is delivered;
- employers/priests/parents were identified (from all sections of the community), and are convinced of the programme;
- mass media activities are targeted to the relevant audience with relevant content;
- government officials are in post and frequent transfers don't result in loss of institutional memory;
- the government has the capacity (human resources, funds and political incentives) to act on CP issues.

**Exhibit 3-4: Input 2: Organise and catalyse community groups**



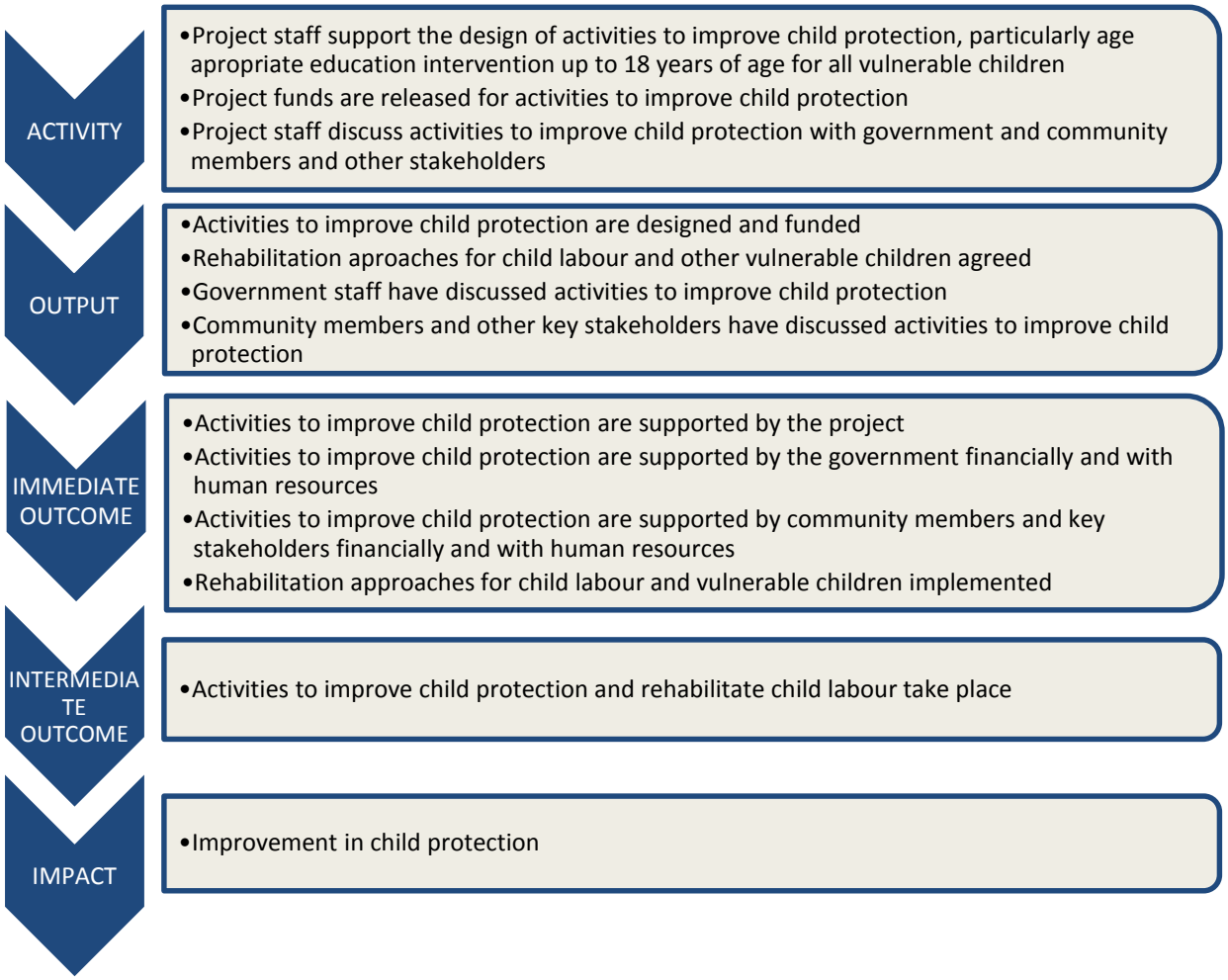

*Source: OPM Cotton Corridors Inception Report*

Area 2 involves the *activity* of forming and training the community groups, namely, the CPC, CCs, BSs and youth groups. The project *outputs* in this area are that CPC, BS, CCs are formed and their members and leaders are trained on child protection and operational issues. Formation and training should lead to *immediate outcomes*: groups are able to create their own agenda for CP,

group members participate in CP activities and groups persuade parents and employers against CL and CM. This could be summarised as an *intermediate outcome* that these groups are operational. The following assumptions are made:

- groups can be formed that represent the community and have legitimacy
- in case of conflicting views within the groups, members agree on, or work with a unanimous agenda
- The groups' goals align with the project goals and the government agenda
- community and households support these groups
- government and UNICEF support the groups in order to carry out their agenda

**Exhibit 3-5: Input 3: Support design of activities to improve child protection**




*Source: OPM Cotton Corridors Inception Report*

The third area covers the very wide range of activities to improve CP carried out under the project (ranging from school improvement packages to enforcement drives to training for adolescent girls to moving children to rehabilitation centres). This is an unusual part of the TOC because the outcomes are around activities taking place. The project *activities* that lead to this are support from project staff to the design of activities (building on the agendas put forward by the groups), the provision of funds, and the discussion of these activities with key stakeholders in government and the community. This leads to the *output* of activities being designed and discussed with key stakeholders. In particular, this led to a package of interventions to rehabilitate and reintegrate into

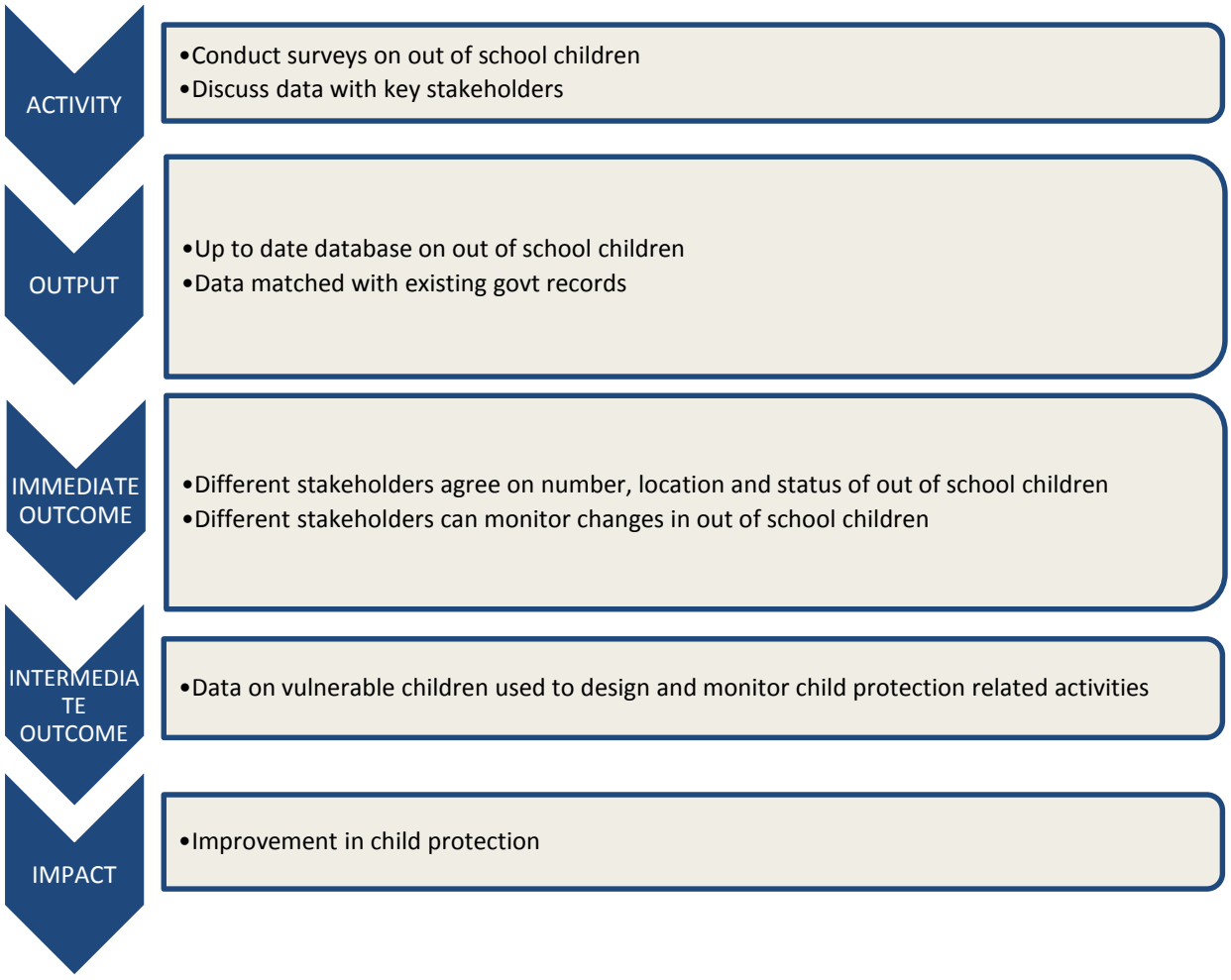
schools, vulnerable children, and in particular child labourers. This package included the enrolment of children aged:

- 3–5 years into Anganwadi Centres (AWC);
- 6–8 years into schools;
- CL 9–14 years into RSTCs, NCLP centres, NRSTCs, hostels, KGBVs;
- 15–18 years into open school and open intermediate projects;
- Vulnerable adolescents into skill training projects.

The *immediate outcomes* are then that activities to improve CP and rehabilitate CL and other vulnerable children being supported by the project, government and community, building on the enabling environment. This should lead to the *intermediate outcome* that the activities take place. This chain requires several assumptions:

- UNICEF and government funds, for each year, are released on time;
- Money is spent on time by various stakeholders (NGOs and community groups);
- UNICEF/government are able to understand the needs of the NGOs and community groups;
- Capacity of stakeholders increases;
- UNICEF/government are able to provide support to the stakeholders who needed it the most;
- The activities designed and carried out lead to an improvement on CP. This requires a lot of different assumptions depending on the activity, and would need to be explored in greater detail. For example, the implementation of package of reintegration activities would lead to an improvement in CP only if the CP environment in schools and centres was better than that in workplaces.

### Exhibit 3-6: Input 4: Collect data on OOSC




*Source: OPM Cotton Corridors Inception Report*

As depicted above, the fourth area of the project is to build an up to date data system. An assumption that is made before the activity taking place is that the existing government data is inadequate to track OOSC. Project activities include conducting baseline surveys and discussing the results with key stakeholders. The *outputs* are an up to date and agreed database on OOSC. Assuming that the survey is conducted before project initiation and information by community stakeholders is shared readily with the survey teams, the *immediate outcome* of, different stakeholders agreeing on problems facing OOSC, and that they can use these data to monitor them. The *intermediate outcome* is that these data are then used to design and monitor CP related activities. Making the following assumptions leads us to the impact of the project:

- baseline data is available and accessible to project implementation staff;
- categorisation of the data is relevant when used to inform activities in each phase;
- the social and cultural context of the region, recorded during the situational analysis, informs the project activities.

# Annex C Background and context to the evaluation

This section outlines the context for the evaluation, including the challenge posed by CL in general in India and specifically in AP and Karnataka, the social, economic and political context around the Cotton Corridors project, and the key UNICEF and government policies and frameworks.

## C.1 CL in India, AP and Karnataka

This section defines CL, provides a conceptual framework for understanding its causes and consequences, and provides an overview of relevant data and trends in India AP and Karnataka. This is not intended to be an exhaustive overview but an introduction sufficient to contextualise the evaluation in the inception report.

### C.1.1 What is CL?

CL differs from child work (Fyfe 1989, OPM 2010b) because it impairs the child's health, schooling and development. This understanding is reflected in the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UNICEF definitions of CL. UNICEF defines CL as work by children that exceeds a minimum number of hours, depending on the age of the child and the type of work:

- ages 5–11: At least one hour of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work per week;
- ages 12–14: At least 14 hours of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work per week;
- ages 15–17: At least 43 hours of economic or domestic work per week.

In India, in contrast to the international definition of CL that applies up to the age of 17, CL is generally considered by the legislative framework as applying up to the age of 14 with the exception of hazardous occupations.

### C.1.2 What are the causes and consequences of CL?

CL is by definition harmful: it prevents children from developing and attending schools. It can also, where the work conditions are hazardous, have directly negative effects on children's physical or emotional health and well-being. These issues are discussed extensively elsewhere and will not be reproduced here, but see OPM 2010a,b,c for more details.[60]

CL is the result of a number of pressures on households and children. OPM (2010a, b) developed a theoretical framework for the analysis of CL that we included in the technical proposal for this evaluation. We reproduce this framework here in summary, and refer the reader to the technical proposal and to earlier work for a more detailed analysis and explanation.

The theoretical framework set out here assumes that CL results mostly from rational decisions. These decisions are made in an identifiable education and labour market context, on the basis of household composition, income, vulnerability, and preferences, information, discount rates, bargaining power and social norms. Attempts to reduce CL will therefore have greater success through understanding these factors and constraints than through assuming foolishness or irrationality.

As set out in OPM 2010a,b,c, every child (under 18) spends time on a combination of work (paid work or unpaid household or own farm work), school or leisure. Children and their parents or guardians decide the time-use for each child to maximise the well-being of the child and the household. However, not all household members agree on whose well-being to prioritise or how to

[60] This conceptual framework was also presented in our proposal for this evaluation, and agreed by the selection team.

maximise well-being, and eventual time-use for each child depends on bargaining power within the household. Decision-makers calculate trade-offs between work, school and leisure use for each child depending on the expected current and future benefits and costs of each, and social norms around work and school. These decisions are made subject to the eventual time-use allocation satisfying the overall subsistence needs of the household and any external obligations (such as debt, labour bondage or sharecropping arrangements).

Net returns to school, leisure and work differ depending on households' socio-economic situation, the cultural and social norms to which they adhere, and the schooling and work opportunities available. For example, the costs of education depend on the public and private school infrastructure available, the requirements to buy books, uniforms, and other educational materials, and the costs of transport to the nearest school. In rural areas, these transport costs may be high. The wage differential given for additional years of schooling does not depend only on the quality of education and the child's performance. Given the segmented and discriminatory labour markets common in many parts of India (where girls and lower caste individuals often command lower wages or struggle to get jobs), this conceptual framework allows for the possibility that returns to education also depend on the gender and social status of the child. In addition, the return to an additional year of schooling in marriage markets (rather than labour markets) may be negative for girls in some areas where social norms are such that uneducated females are preferred to those with education. Decision-makers assessing returns to education will naturally consider these variables — and reduce the allocation of children's time to school accordingly.[61]

The following conceptual framework identifies the different demand and supply-side factors that may affect education access and retention.

**Exhibit 3-7: Conceptual framework: demand for education, cost and non-cost factors and types of intervention**

[61] See OPM 2010a,b,c for more detail and background references for this framework.

*Source: OPM 2015a*

This diagram sets out the types of **economic factors** that affect the demand for education:

- direct costs of school attendance, including informal fees, school materials, uniforms/clothing and transport;
- indirect (opportunity) costs of children's labour time;
- perception of the economic returns to education.

In addition, there are a range of **socio-cultural factors**, notably attitudes regarding the age of children's readiness for school and several factors that affect girls in particular: early marriage, pregnancy and school-related security concerns.

Finally, **supply-side factors** may have a demand-side impact in so far as poor quality and low performance (resulting for example in failure at exams and frequent repetition) may lead to discouragement and dropout.

We apply this conceptual framework to the analysis of the Cotton Corridors project's effectiveness in reducing CL.

### C.1.3 The number of child labourers in India, AP and Karnataka, with particular attention to cottonseed production

Data on the number of children that work in India are not straightforward (OPM 2010b). The Ministry of WCD estimates that 170 million of India's 440 million children under the age of 18 are vulnerable to or experiencing difficult circumstances. The 2001 Census estimated 12.6 million child workers between the ages of 5 and 14, but this had reduced to 4.35 million main child workers and 8.2 million main and marginal child workers by 2011.[62] National Family Health Surveys show around 12 per cent of children engaged in work. Neither of these estimates reflect CL directly (as per the definitions above). Census data from 2011 indicates 315,107 main and marginal child workers aged 5–14 in AP, and 386,032 in Karnataka.[63]

The number of children working in cottonseed production is more difficult to assess because national data sources do not offer sector-specific estimates. Venkateswarlu (2007) studied cottonseed production in four major cottonseed producing states (AP, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat) and estimated 224,960 children (aged under 14) and 191,500 adolescents (aged 15–18) working in the sector. The Project proposal documents cite a figure of 175,000 children and 100,000 under 14 employed in the Cotton Corridors project areas in 2011.

Children are usually employed on a long-term contract basis through advances and loans extended to their parents by local seed producers, who often supply to large national and multinational seed companies. They are made to work 8 to 12 hours and are paid less than the market and official minimum wages. As a result of this work, they are also exposed to poisonous pesticides used in high quantities in cottonseed cultivation. Most of the children working in cottonseed farms belong to poor families from SCs or Dalits, Scheduled Tribes (STs) or Adivasi, and Backward Castes (BCs). Farmers also hire children in preference to adults because they can squeeze out higher productivity from children per day. Children end up working longer hours, much more intensively and they are generally much easier to control than adult workers — whether through verbal or physical abuse or through inexpensive treats like chocolate or hair ribbons (Venkateswarlu, D. and Da Corta L. 2001, Ramamurthy Priti, 2000).

[62] http://labour.nic.in/content/division/child-labour.php, accessed January 2016.
[63] http://ncpcr.gov.in/showfile.php?lid=930, accessed January 2016.

Data on CL, while difficult to find in national estimates, do come from more specific surveys. Venkateswarlu's study on child bondage in the Indian Cotton Supply is one of the most comprehensive source for estimates on the incidence of CL/work in cottonseed production. Concentrating on the current study states, according to Venkateswarlu (2007), in 2006–07 there were an estimated 99,960 children and 75,600 adolescents employed in hybrid cottonseed production across AP and Karnataka. In both the states, there were more children (14 and under) than adolescents (15–18).

**Exhibit 3-8: Children employed in cottonseed production, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka**

| | Andhra Pradesh | | Karnataka | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2003–2004 | 2006–07 | 2003–2004 | 2006–2007 |
| Acres under production | 14,000 | 16,000 | 4,000 | 5,000 |
| Children employed (14 & under) | 82,875 | 70,400 | 26,800 | 29,500 |
| Adolescents employed (15–18) | | 57,600 | 8,400 | 18,000 |

*Source: Venkateswarlu (2007: 35). The numbers in the original are estimates*.

Although the data is somewhat patchy, there are some interesting trends by state. As shown in the table above, there appears to be a decline in the number of children 14 and under in AP, despite an increase in the number of acres under production. In Karnataka, by contrast, the number of children appears to have increased slightly and the number of adolescents more than doubled.

The incidence of CL varies greatly by state. According to Venkateswarlu (2007), Karnataka had the highest percentage of CL at 56 per cent (in 2006–07) of the workforce. Although this fell between 2003–2004 and 2006–2007, the percentage of adolescents increased so there appears to have been a shift from younger to older children. AP appears to have seen a reduction in the incidence of CL from 57 per cent to 43 per cent over the period.

Venkateswarlu (2007: 16) explains the reduction in CL in AP as resulting from seed farmers in certain areas slowly starting to replace CL with adult labour due to an active campaign launched against CL, by the MV Foundation, a local NGO based in the city of Hyderabad in AP. He also found that CL use was less on farms producing seed for multinational corporations (between zero and 24 per cent of total labour used on these farms) compared to those producing for Indian companies (between 15 per cent and 65 per cent ). This is attributed to pressure from local NGOs as well as campaigns by international agencies, social investor groups and the media.

Further details on the number of child labourers come from baseline surveys conducted towards the start of the project which were shared by UNICEF (Rajasekhar and Manjula 2009 on Raichur and SRI 2013 reporting a midline survey on both districts).

Rajasekhar and Manjula (2009) cite previous studies that indicate that while CL has been declining across Karnataka, this has not been uniform in all districts, and note that some studies conclude that the incidence of CL in Karnataka is quite high, with as many as 31 per cent of children working in some districts, particularly in the northern and poorer parts of the state. These studies find that work is slightly more common for girls, SC/ST children and Muslims. Most children were found to work in agriculture. They review studies that show that poverty is a major cause of CL, but that employer preference, perceived low economic returns to girls' education and poor and remote school facilities also play a part.

They also report recently collected data on Raichur *taluk* specifically, estimating the magnitude of CL and children out of school. They find that 21.5 per cent of children are out of school (including both dropouts and never attended), in stark contrast to what they report as the education department's figures of 1 per cent. According to the survey, 31.5 per cent of 5–14 year olds work

— largely school dropouts. As with the wider state, girls were more likely to work than boys. Only 9.16 per cent of children aged 5–14 did wage work, with the remainder helping their parents on fields and at home, and a very few helping their parents in business or other employment (Rajasekhar and Manjula 2009: 53). Of the children working for wages, three quarters were in agriculture, and two thirds reported working because their household needed additional income. Advances were comparatively rare, and wages are low — especially for girls who normally earn less than Rs60/day (Rajasekhar and Manjula 2009: 53).

SRI (2013) provides midline data on Raichur. These are not necessarily directly comparable with the baseline as methodologies are not identical. They find that 16 per cent of 5–11 and 21 per cent of 12–14 year olds are child labourers as per the UNICEF definition, but only 3 per cent of 6–14 year olds engaged in wage work outside the household. Around 98 per cent were found to be enrolled in school, though it is not clear from the report whether the substantial discrepancy between this and baseline figures are due to differences in methodology or the impact of the project.[64]

SRI (2013) provides midline data for Kurnool.[65] The results were somewhat similar: around 40 per cent of 5–14 year olds are child labourers as per the UNICEF definition, and 12.3 per cent of 6–14 year olds engaged in wage work (or for payment in kind) outside the household (2009: 49). Most children worked on a daily basis and between six and nine hours per day, and almost always less than five kilometres from home. Somewhat surprisingly, around 95 per cent of children were recorded as enrolled in school; again, a possible definitional issue rather than an excellent enrolment scenario.[66]

## C.2 Legislative, policy and institutional context

### C.2.1 Government

As discussed in the Introduction chapter, there are a number of legal frameworks that mandate the government to attempt to eliminate CL:

- three articles in the **Constitution of India** (24, 45 and 39) prohibit CL and mandate compulsory schooling up to 14 years;
- The United Nations **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (ratified by India in 1992) states that primary education should be free and compulsory (article 28) and that children have a right to be protected from work that hazardous, or poses a danger to their development or education (article 32).

Several laws support these conventions, including at the national level:

- **the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986** bans the employment of children (under 14) in specified hazardous occupations and regulates the work of children in other industries. This does not cover agricultural work, and so work in cottonseed is not covered by this act;
- **the Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009** (which came into forced in 2010) mandates the state to provide compulsory and free education to children up to the age of 14;
- **the JJA of 2000** outlaws employment children in hazardous occupations;

[64] The midline report refers to similar results at the time of the baseline (2013: 64), suggesting they are using a different methodology.
[65] No baseline study was conducted in Kurnool. Data on out of school children were collected as part of the project and are contained in the MIS, but these are not straightforward to compare with survey data.
[66] The reports are not sufficiently clear on definitions to allow us to understand whether the indicators are identical.

- **the Minimum Wages Act of 1948** prescribes minimum wages for employees in different sectors.

**The policy framework operationalising these laws has been inadequate by the government's own admission**. It has also been developing quite rapidly at the national level.

Partly as a response to glaring gaps in child protection services, the ICPS of 2009–2010 was designed to contribute to improvements in the wellbeing of children in difficult circumstances, as well as the reduction in vulnerabilities to situations and actions that lead to abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment and separation of children. It has six specific objectives operationalised through 11 approaches:

### Exhibit 3-9: Integrated Child Protection Scheme Objectives and approaches

**Objectives**

1. Institutionalise essential services and strengthen structures
2. Enhance capacities at all levels
3. Create database and knowledge base for child protection services
4. Strengthen child protection at family and community level
5. Ensure appropriate inter-sectoral response at all levels
6. Raise public awareness

**Approaches**

1. Prevention: outreach to identify vulnerable families, converged services and strengthened community capacities
2. Promotion of family-based care
3. Financing from Central Government to States/UTs and thence voluntary organisations
4. Integrated service provision from health, education, judiciary, police and labour
5. Continuum of services to develop an individual care plan for each vulnerable child
6. Community-based service delivery with linkages to PRIs and local government
7. Decentralisation and flexibility to focus on local needs through district level planning
8. Partnership building and community empowerment — working with civil society organisations, government structures, corporates and communities.
9. Quality care, standards for care and protection: services adhere to prescribed standards
10. Building capacities through training and capacity building
11. M&E through a child protection data management system and regulation evaluation and course correction.

*Source: ICPS 2010*

The ICPS is now arguably the overarching scheme through which CP issues are addressed, with the RTE the appropriate framework for the provision of education.

The Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012–2017) includes a chapter on women's agency and child rights (as well as, separately, education). This plan notes that "a large number of children are forced to work to earn money to contribute to families,"[67] and includes as a priority the amendment of the Child Labour Act to abolish all forms of CL for children under 14, as this would be incompatible with the Right to Education Act. It also recommends review and updating of the 1974 National Policy for Children to develop national and state action plans for children, and subsequently district action plans. Achieving this would require considerable institutional strengthening, and capacity development, as well as community action and convergence. With the change in national government in 2014 and the abolition of the Planning Commission, it is unclear that the Twelfth Plan targets remain valid.

The key government departments at state and district level are:

- WCD — the nodal department for ICPS in most state;.

[67] Page 184.

- labour — the nodal department for preventing children from working;
- education;
- health — with responsibility for the health of children

In addition to this, the Police have a role in enforcing legislation as well as *Panchayati Raj* institutions are critical to the delivery of these schemes and services. At the district level, the DC and magistrate has nominal and practical responsibility for the functioning of each department and for the enforcement of law in the district, and as such is a vital part of the institutional framework. Finally, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights and State Counterparts have been set up since 2007, though this needs further strengthening according to the Twelfth Plan.

Overall, the complex institutional environment (in terms of multiple laws, policies and implementing bodies) contributes to the fragmentation and comparative ineffectiveness of attempts to reduce CL and improve CP outcomes. CL and CP are complex issues requiring a multi-sectoral response. This is challenging for many governments and India and AP and Karnataka are not exceptions. One of the difficulties the project faced was to work with and strengthen these complex institutional arrangements to ensure that policies enacted actually translate into services provided and CP improved.

More on the legislation, policies and institutions around CL can be found in OPM 2010b. Further details of the alignment of the Cotton Corridors project to the legislation, policy and institutional environment of the Government of India will be explored under the evaluation criterion of relevance.

### C.2.2 UNICEF

UNICEF's approach to CL and CP in India is circumscribed by the global strategic plans (2006–2013; 2013–2017), global strategies on CP and the India Country Project Action Plans (CPAP) (2008–2012; 2013–2017), which in turn is informed by the Government of India's Five Year Plans and the United Nations Development Action Framework (UNDAF). This section briefly summarises those plans and strategies.

#### Global strategic plans

Globally, UNICEF is mandated to promote the rights of every child. Practically, UNICEF's global strategic plans set out UNICEF's engagement in key areas of health, education, HIV and AIDS, and child protection (and now nutrition). Within these key areas, UNICEF emphasises the importance of equity, results-based management to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, scaling up proven interventions, enhancing the accountability of national institutions and systematically strengthening the use of services, harnessing innovation and evidence, complementing multi-sector approaches with attention to synergies across sectors and multi-sectoral action, addressing gaps in data, reporting and accountability, leverage UNICEF presence and engagement with the private sector.[68]

Priorities within education CP in the 2014–2017 strategic plan have been presented in the exhibit below:[69]

[68] UNICEF global strategic plan 2014-2017, page 3.
[69] Earlier plans will be examined in the analysis of relevance

### Exhibit 3-10: UNICEF global strategic priorities in education and child protection

| Education | Child protection |
|---|---|
| Improved learning outcomes and equitable and inclusive education, focusing on primary. Including:<br>• System strengthening to provide multiple and alternative pathways for disadvantaged children<br>• Innovations with potential to improve education outcomes for marginalised children<br>• Generate knowledge and data on education disparities | Improved and equitable prevention of and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children. Including:<br>• Strengthening child protection systems<br>• Taking account of interplay between child protection systems and social norms<br>• Strengthen protective capacity of families and communities<br>• Build on and emphasise inter-sectoral approaches, including between health, education and social protection.<br>• Institutional competence and research in child protection. |

*Source: UNICEF 2014*

### Global strategies on CP

UNICEF has a global CP strategy that defines the contribution of UNICEF to national efforts to fulfil children's rights to protection. The Child Protection Strategy from 2008 sets out 'accelerating actions' that strengthen the protective environment for children. It is designed both to build on the lessons learned at country level and provide guidance for future approaches to CP. The five key strategic approaches are presented in the exhibit below, with three approaches supported by two cross-cutting issues.[70]

[70] A more recent document on Ending Violence against Children (http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Ending_Violence_Against_Children_Six_strategies_for_action_EN_9_Oct_2014.pdf) is available but is not directed at informing UNICEF strategy.

**Exhibit 3-11: UNICEF global child protection strategic priorities**

*Source: UNICEF 2008*

There are also, in India, more detailed strategies for CP (such as 'Practical Guidance to strengthen CPCs') that will be explored in greater detail in the sections on relevance.

### Country Project Action Plans

CPAPs are joint documents between UNICEF and governments setting out agreements on what UNICEF will do in a country over a four-five year horizon. The key strategies in the 2008–2012 and 2013–2017 CPAPs are set out below. CP was a key thematic priority of both plans, with the mid-term review of the 2008–2012 CPAP noting the Government of India's adoption of the ICPS and praising the CPAP's CP advocacy work. CP remains central to the 2013–2017 CPAP, including support to the development of structures that support CP in India, such as CPCs (page 21), and support to the collection of data on OOSC (page 21). Specifically, under child protection objectives, the 2013–2017 CPAP states that:

> *The objective of the Child Protection project is to ensure that all children grow up free from violence, exploitation, abuse and unnecessary separation from their families in their homes, their communities and at school. The project will aim to: strengthen child protection systems at national, state, district, and sub-district levels through the roll out of the ICPS; develop capacities of families, communities and service providers; establish improved reporting and monitoring systems; and promote evidence based policy advocacy.*[71]

[71] UNICEF India CPAP 2013-2017, page 21.

### Exhibit 3-12: UNICEF CPAP strategies

**2008–2012**

1. Replication of innovations in Integrated Districts
2. Strengthening of systems and capacity development
3. Advocacy and partnerships
4. Knowledge management for policy and project influencing
5. Social exclusion (as an approach and in sector projects)

**2013–2017**

1. Capacity development at individual, institutional and policy levels
2. Promoting decentralisation and improved governance for child rights
3. Partnerships
4. Social inclusion for equity
5. Knowledge management

*Source: UNICEF 2011, 2013*

Overall, the CPAP approach to child protection remains strongly focused on strengthening decentralised community-based structures and working through government systems. Further details of the alignment of the Cotton Corridors project to the CPAP and global strategies will be explored under the evaluation criterion of relevance.

# Annex D Detailed evaluation matrix and TOC

The chapter presents the detailed evaluation matrix, linking the evaluation criteria with key and secondary evaluation questions, and setting out indicators, data sources and data collection methods for each question. Indicators are chosen to be specific and measurable and relevant to the questions.

The exhibit below presents the detailed evaluation matrix.

## Exhibit 3-13: Evaluation matrix

| Criterion | Key evaluation question | Secondary evaluation question | Indicators | Data sources | Data collection methods |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Relevance** | To what extent were the outputs of Cotton Corridors consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and UNICEF's policies? | To what extent was the project aligned to global, national and state-specific priorities and if there was a change in priorities was the project able to keep up with changes? | Alignment of different phases of the project with evolving UNICEF global, UNICEF national and government national and state-specific priorities | Project documents and reports and relevant policy documents to map the projects strategies against policy priorities in Phase 1. | Desk Review |
| | | To what extent was the project aligned to children's needs in selected districts? | Perceptions of changes made to project approaches to tackle the changes happening in the community during implementation | UNICEF staff | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of changes made to project approaches to tackle the changes happening in the community during implementation | Parents | IDIs |
| | | | Perceptions of changes made to project approaches to tackle the changes happening in the community during implementation | Experts | KIIs |
| | | | Alignment of each of the project interventions/activities to child labour and child right statistics in selected districts | UNICEF staff | KIIs |
| | | Was the project appropriate in engaging its stakeholders? | Change in state/district level child labour/child protection policies caused by the project | Govt. staff state level | KIIs |
| | | | Change in state/district level child labour/child protection policies caused by the project | Govt. staff district level | KIIs |
| | | | Change in state/district level child labour/child protection policies caused by the project | State and district policy documents on child protection | Desk review |
| | | | Perceptions of benefit gained by community level stakeholders from each of the project activity areas | NGO staff | KIIs |
| **Effectiveness** | To what extent were outcomes of the various strands of the Cotton | Based on the project's TOC, which of the activity areas led to the achievement of stated objectives and | Achievement of impact, intermediate outcome, immediate outcome and output indicators | See Annex B, TOC | See Annex B, TOC |
| | | | Validity of assumptions in the TOC | See Annex B, TOC | See Annex B, TOC |
| | | | Perceptions of achievement of impact, intermediate outcome, immediate outcome and output indicators | See Annex B, TOC | See Annex B, TOC |

| Criterion | Key evaluation question | Secondary evaluation question | Indicators | Data sources | Data collection methods |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Corridors project successfully achieved? | why?<br><br>Which programmatic activities have been unsuccessful and why? | Perceptions of validity of assumptions | See Annex B, TOC | See Annex B, TOC |
| | | | Perceptions of reasons for success or failure of project activity areas | UNICEF staff | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of reasons for success or failure of project activity areas | Govt. staff district level | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of reasons for success or failure of project activity areas | NGO staff | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of reasons for success or failure of project activity areas | Child Protection Committees | FGDs |
| | | Which partnerships, processes and strategies were successful, and which weren't? | Reported achievement of objectives of each of the partnerships the project had during implementation | Project documents and reports and relevant policy documents | Desk Review |
| | | | Perception of effectiveness of coordination and partnerships among key players | UNICEF staff | KIIs |
| | | | Perception of effectiveness of coordination and partnerships among key players | Govt. staff state level | KIIs |
| | | | Perception of effectiveness of coordination and partnerships among key players | Govt. staff district level | KIIs |
| | | | Perception of effectiveness of coordination and partnerships among key players | NGO staff | KIIs |
| | | | Nature and frequency of the monitoring mechanism for the NGO partners involved in project implementation | Project documents and reports and relevant policy documents | Desk Review |
| | | | Perception of challenges faced while working with partner agencies | UNICEF staff | KIIs |
| | | | Perception of challenges faced while working with partner agencies | Govt. staff state level | KIIs |
| | | | Perception of challenges faced while working with partner agencies | Govt. staff district level | KIIs |
| | | | Perception of challenges faced while working with partner agencies | NGO staff | KIIs |
| | | | Awareness of partner organizations of their role in the project implementation | UNICEF staff | KIIs |
| | | | Awareness of partner organizations of their role in the project implementation | Govt. staff state level | KIIs |
| | | | Awareness of partner organizations of their role in the project implementation | Govt. staff district level | KIIs |
| | | | Awareness of partner organizations of their role in the project implementation | NGO staff | KIIs |
| | | What contribution did UNICEF make to | Perceptions of UNICEF's role in project design, implementation and management | UNICEF staff | KIIs |

| Criterion | Key evaluation question | Secondary evaluation question | Indicators | Data sources | Data collection methods |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | achieving stated objectives and fostering collaboration and convergence? | Perceptions of UNICEF's role in project design, implementation and management | Govt. staff state level | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of UNICEF's role in project design, implementation and management | Govt. staff district level | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of UNICEF's role in project design, implementation and management | NGO staff | KIIs |
| | | What contribution did Government make to achieving stated objectives and fostering collaboration and convergence? | Perceptions of government's role in project design, implementation and management, disaggregated by level of government to include district administration | UNICEF staff | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of government's role in project design, implementation and management, disaggregated by level of government to include district administration | Govt. staff state level | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of government's role in project design, implementation and management, disaggregated by level of government to include district administration | Govt. staff district level | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of government's role in project design, implementation and management, disaggregated by level of government to include district administration | NGO staff | KIIs |
| **Efficiency** | How economically were resources/inputs converted into results? | Were project results achieved in the most cost efficient way? | Cost of project (components and heads) relative to other child labour projects (components and heads) | Project documents and reports and relevant policy documents | Desk Review (UNICEF To provide data) |
| | | | Perception of project cost efficiency | UNICEF staff | KIIs |
| | | To what extent were partnerships with government and government budgetary outlays utilised to deliver outputs? | Perceptions of government involvement in project delivery and funding, including inter-departmental transfers of funds | Project documents and reports and relevant policy documents | Desk Review (UNICEF To provide data) |
| | | | Perceptions of government involvement in project delivery and funding, including inter-departmental transfers of funds | UNICEF staff | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of government involvement in project delivery and funding, including inter-departmental transfers of funds | Govt. staff district level | KIIs |
| | | | Government budget allocation to deliver each project output | Project documents and reports and relevant policy documents | Desk Review (UNICEF To provide data) |
| | | | Government budget allocation to deliver each project output | NGO staff | KIIs |

| Criterion | Key evaluation question | Secondary evaluation question | Indicators | Data sources | Data collection methods |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Extent of release of government funds to deliver each project output | Project documents and reports and relevant policy documents | Desk Review (UNICEF To provide data) |
| | | | Extent of release of government funds to deliver each project output | NGO staff | KIIs |
| | | Were resources used efficiently? | Release rate of budgets | Budget documents | Desk Review (UNICEF To provide data) |
| | | | Perceptions and explanations of release rate | UNICEF staff | KIIs |
| | | Were outputs delivered on time? | Perceptions of timeliness of expenditure and delivery | UNICEF staff | KIIs |
| **Sustainability and replicability** | To what extent have benefits from Cotton Corridors continued after UNICEF support has been completed and why, and to what extent are the successes of the project replicable elsewhere? | Which project activities and results have been sustained after the project ended and why? Who has been responsible in sustaining activities?<br><br>Which project activities and results have not been sustained after the project ended and why? | Number of project activities currently funded and run by government and/or partners | NGO staff | KIIs |
| | | | Number of project activities currently funded and run by government and/or partners | Govt. staff district level | KIIs |
| | | | Number of project activities currently funded and run by government and/or partners | Child Protection Committees | FGDs |
| | | | Current functionality status of each of the project outputs:<br>Functionality of community structures that were strengthened or created as a part of the project<br><br>Extent of empowerment felt by women to promote child rights (in particular those from socially excluded groups)<br><br>Current accountability of the existing systems working for children in the selected districts | See Annex B, TOC | See Annex B, TOC |
| | | | Current functionality status of each of the project outputs:<br>Functionality of community structures that were strengthened or created as a part of the project<br><br>Extent of empowerment felt by women to promote child rights (in particular those from socially excluded groups)<br><br>Current accountability of the existing systems working for children in the selected districts | See Annex B, TOC | See Annex B, theory of change |
| | | | Perceptions of changed social norms around child rights | Child Protection | FGDs |
| | | | Perceptions of changed social norms around child rights | Teachers | IDIs |
| | | | Perceptions of changed social norms around child rights | Parents | IDIs |
| | | | Perceptions of changed social norms around child rights | NGO staff | KIIs |

| Criterion | Key evaluation question | Secondary evaluation question | Indicators | Data sources | Data collection methods |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Perceptions of changed social norms around child rights | Govt. staff district | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of role of UNICEF in contributing to sustainability | Child Protection | FGDs |
| | | | Perceptions of role of UNICEF in contributing to sustainability | NGO staff | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of role of UNICEF in contributing to sustainability | Govt. staff district | KIIs |
| | | Which features of the context and the project need to be present to achieve success in other places? | Perceptions of contextual factors (e.g. NGO capacity, government capacity, conducive village political economy) that are necessary conditions for project success | Child Protection Committees | FGDs |
| | | | Perceptions of contextual factors (e.g. NGO capacity, government capacity, conducive village political economy) that are necessary conditions for project success | NGO staff | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of contextual factors (e.g. NGO capacity, government capacity, conducive village political economy) that are necessary conditions for project success | Govt. staff district level | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of contextual factors (e.g. NGO capacity, government capacity, conducive village political economy) that are necessary conditions for project success | Experts | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of possibility of replicating project elsewhere | Child Protection | FGDs |
| | | | Perceptions of possibility of replicating project elsewhere | NGO staff | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of possibility of replicating project elsewhere | Govt. staff district | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of possibility of replicating project elsewhere | Govt. staff state | KIIs |
| | | | Perceptions of possibility of replicating project elsewhere | Experts | KIIs |
| **Equity and gender** | To what extent have activities affected marginalised communities, addressed differences in gender, and empowered both girls and boys? | Was the project design and delivery equitable to different groups and gender? | Extent of incorporation of gender and social exclusion in the project outputs | Project documents and reports and relevant policy documents | Desk Review |
| | | | Awareness of marginalised communities and women of issues around child protection and their rights | Child Protection Committees | FGDs |
| | | | Awareness of marginalised communities and women of issues around child protection and their rights | Balika Sanghas | FGDs |
| | | | Awareness of marginalised communities and women of issues around child protection and their rights | Mothers | IDIs |
| | | | Perceptions that marginalised communities and women take decisions about child rights | Panchayat leaders | IDIs |
| | | | Perceptions that marginalised communities and women take decisions about child rights | Balika Sanghas | FGDs |
| | | | | | |

| Criterion | Key evaluation question | Secondary evaluation question | Indicators | Data sources | Data collection methods |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Perceptions that marginalised communities and women take decisions about child rights | Mothers | IDIs |
| | | Did the project achieve the same level of success in different places and with different groups? | Perception of project success evenness across geography and social grouping | Child Protection Committees | FGDs |
| | | | Perception of project success evenness across geography and social grouping | Balika Sanghas | FGDs |
| | | | Perception of project success evenness across geography and social grouping | CPCs | FGDs |
| | | | Perception of project success evenness across geography and social grouping | Child Clubs | FGDs |
| | | | Perception of project success evenness across geography and social grouping | Teachers | IDIs |
| | | | Perception of project success evenness across geography and social grouping | Parents | IDIs |
| | | Were there any negative effects felt by any groups? | Perception of negative effects | Panchayat Leaders | IDIs |
| | | | Perception of negative effects | Balika Sanghas | FGDs |
| | | | Perception of negative effects | CPCs | FGDs |
| | | | Perception of negative effects | Child Clubs | FGDs |
| | | | Perception of negative effects | Teachers | IDIs |
| | | | Perception of negative effects | Parents | IDIs |
| | | | Perception of negative effects | UNICEF staff | KIIs |
| | | | Perception of negative effects | NGO staff | KIIs |
| | | | Perception of negative effects | Govt. staff district level | KIIs |

*Source: OPM Cotton Corridors Inception Report*

# Annex E Methodology and data collection

## E.1 Evaluation approach

The evaluation approach to different evaluation criteria is slightly different, but the overall approach was based on using contribution analysis to assess the contribution that the project has made to changes in key outcomes.

**Contribution analysis** offers a more systematic way to arrive at credible causal claims in the absence of experimental approaches (Mayne, 2012; p. 272). What contribution analysis does is '…measuring with the aim of reducing uncertainty about the contribution made, not proving the contribution made' (Mayne 2001, p. 21). This was appropriate because as noted above there was no simple way to obtain a valid counter-factual for what would have happened to CL (and CP outcomes) in the absence of the Cotton Corridors project.

Of course, as noted above, the data required to provide a comprehensive account of a) changes in desired outcomes and b) all possible contributory factors to changes in those outcomes was not available, so we focused our evaluation approach by:

- sought to triangulate different sources of information on changes in CP outcomes, including the perceptions of key stakeholders of how these outcomes changed;
- sought to explore variations in the way and context in which the project was implemented in order to develop causal explanations of the project's effectiveness and replicability; and
- limited our set of alternative contributory factors to those identified by key stakeholders in our phase 1 analysis and literature review.

**Triangulation** implied that we took a mixed methods approach to the collection of data to inform the evaluation, and we have set this out in more detail below. In particular, we collected and used secondary data from policy documents, budgets and existing data sources (including the MIS) on key indicators in our evaluation matrix (such as the number of OOSC and working back in school), and then triangulated those with the perceptions of interviewees of whether, by what magnitude and why these indicators changed. This was important partly because of the absence of a counterfactual. To illustrate: if we were to examine changes in the number of children out of school over time in project locations and identified a reduction in those numbers we didn't know whether this was specific to the project locations and years (and so likely caused by the project) or a general trend found across the whole state (caused, for example, by another government scheme or general poverty reduction), or a general trend over a longer period (for similar reasons). The data we accessed was not sufficient to disentangle these explanations. This meant that that data must be supported by and triangulated with the views of stakeholders about these changes, and the development of explanations along the TOC of the project (see next point). The evaluation matrix in Exhibit 3-13 has set this out in detail.

**Variations** in the way and context in which the project was implemented helped to tell stories about the contribution of the project and therefore answered key questions both on effectiveness in the absence of a counterfactual, and on replicability (by understanding what factors appear to affect success). These variations were developed in the evaluation approach in various ways. The most important way of exploring variations was to sample different project locations to obtain variation in factors that we are hypothesise are likely strongly influence the project's success, and then to attempt to tell different contribution stories about these different areas. Our approach to this focuses on the following factors:

- initial magnitude of the problem of OOSC;
- implementing partner; and
- project success or failure (see Exhibit 1-9).

In analysis, we explored variation caused by the initial socio-political-economic features of the project locations, and in particular the norms around CL and CP, levels of poverty, and the initial strength of social institutions that will be key to the functioning of the project groups. These were explored as nodes in the analysis but not used as ex ante sampling criteria because the data for this were not available. The analysis using these nodes allowed us to develop a sense of whether these factors — and others that emerge through the interrogation of data — are necessary factors to the success of the project, thereby answering the replicability questions.

Finally, we explored variation in terms of the effectiveness of different project activities and outputs. This focussed on key activities as identified by UNICEF staff and other key informants — primarily oriented around the four outputs descried above, and then, in terms of projects, those that attracted the most significant funding and expenditure (which according to the end of project financial report is quality education activities). The variation in different project outputs and their differential functioning— to a limited extent possible by data — allowed us to explore effectiveness and replicability.

**Alternative contributory factors** for changes in CP were varied and could not be fully enumerated ex ante. Based on the initial interviews and the review of literature, the likely alternative contributory factors were:

- ICPS implementation, and the implementation of other government schemes not connected with the Cotton Corridors project (though this is a somewhat grey area given that the project attempts to align with ICPS and other schemes);
- changes to economic and poverty environments that may reduce employers demand for child workers or households' desire to find jobs for children; and
- ongoing efforts by NGOs to improve child protection that are independent of the project.

Our approach to contribution analysis sought to obtain data and perceptions of key stakeholders about the relative contribution of these factors, and to identify through interviews other factors that explained changes.

## E.2 Data collection

A total of 16 tools were administered during the survey. These have been discussed extensively in Section 1.6.1 and the final number of interviews conducted for each type has been presented in Exhibit 4-11. Scaled responses and FGDs with community groups helped ensure we were able to speak to a larger number of groups, while getting detailed responses from a portion of them. Sampling methodology, detailing selection of respondents, has been covered in Exhibit 1-10.

Each tool was designed keeping in mind the age, and sensitivities, of the respondent. Special care was taken to ensure that exercises with children made them feel comfortable, were broad-based and did not ask any intrusive questions. All tools were tested extensively during pilot visits. The pilot was conducted to test the sampling strategy, process of identifying respondents and ease of administering the questionnaires. All interviews were conducted in Telugu or Kannada. Insights from the pilot were incorporated into the tools design and identification strategy.

In addition to the above tools, interviews were conducted with key personnel associated with the project and CP in the state. This included interviews with state, district and block level government officers, UNICEF staff, project staff and staff from NGOs who were part of the Cotton Corridors project. All KIIs were conducted by OPM and Glocal researchers.

Paper-and-pencil interviews (PAPI) were administered and interviews were recorded on MP3 recorders. All audio recordings were transcribed and summarized in English. These interview summaries formed the basis for coding and analysis of the project.

### E.2.1 Interviewer training:

- the training for the qualitative survey was conducted from 8–13 February, 2016 in Hyderabad, AP. The training included field practice, mock sessions and note taking practice.
- Glocal conducted the training, OPM staff were present for monitoring and quality assurance. The training was conducted in English and Telugu;
- trainings were residential, largely following a 9:00 am—5:00 pm schedule;
- a training guide was prepared prior to the training, with presentations that were used to facilitate the training;
- each questionnaire was discussed in detail — during training in a more formal 'classroom' environment to convey the meaning and purpose of each question, but also in an informal setting in smaller breakaway groups to enable interviewers to familiarise themselves with the formats. Regular mock sessions were conducted, so that enumerators could practice administering these tools;
- special care was taken while explaining the tools to be administered to children. All enumerators were made aware of the sensitivities involved and the importance of making the child comfortable;
- all doubts were addressed personally, with an emphasis on peer learning;
- field-testing of took place simultaneously in two villages in Kurnool (AP). This helped them understand the complexities of the environment within which they would have to administer the tools;
- special attention was paid to training interviewers to enable them to understand the ethical considerations underpinning a qualitative research exercise involving children, and the need for anonymity and neutrality during research;
- training was also conducted on how to use the recorders and how to record notes during the interview;
- constant feedback was provided to all the enumerators during the course of the training.

### E.2.2 Fieldwork teams

There were 14 members who conducted the data collection for the study; divided into two teams of 7. Each team had one supervisor from Glocal; the remaining consisted of three interviewers and three note takers. Two survey managers in the team were responsible for coordinating survey logistics in AP and Karnataka. Interviews were conducted by a pair of team members, with one interviewer and one note taker. Extensive interview notes were taken, in addition to recording each interview on an audio recorder whenever consent for the same was given by the respondent.

### E.2.3 Fieldwork

A total of 40 villages were covered in Kurnool and Raichur. Of these, 36 villages were from Kurnool and 4 from Raichur. Fieldwork in each village lasted for a day. Fieldwork was conducted from 17 February to 2nd March.

### E.2.4 Translations

Due to time and logistical constraints, there were no verbatim translations of the audio recordings. Based on the audio recordings, Glocal staff wrote summaries for each interview. A random check was conducted by OPM staff to ensure that the summaries were reflective of the audio recordings. Wherever necessary, feedback was given to the Glocal staff and the interviews were sent back for transcriptions.

### E.2.5 Monitoring and quality control

**Field monitoring:**

- interviews in each village were monitored by OPM and Glocal staff. There was at least one Glocal staff member present in each village, monitoring interviews and giving concurrent feedback;
- as far as possible, interviewers ensured that individual interviews were administered with only the concerned respondent present;
- interviews with children were conducted with extreme sensitivity and every effort was taken to make them feel comfortable. For group discussions with children, special care was taken to locate discussions in the third person and not refer to any specific child or their experience in front of the whole group. Children were allowed to talk freely and were repeatedly told to only answer the questions they were comfortable with;
- daily feedback sessions conducted by the supervisors helped ensure that any errors were fixed immediately;
- field-team size and movement were tracked daily. Any problems being faced in the team were discussed in the daily debriefing sessions with the interviewers.

**Electronic data monitoring:**

- backup of audio files were taken on a daily basis;
- all handwritten notes and observations taken during the interviews have been retained by Glocal.

### E.2.6 Challenges faced during data collection

- over involvement and over dependence on implementation staff due to lack of systematic data. In villages where systematic data or lists on children was not available, the evaluation team had to rely on the implementation staff to identify respondents. This was not ideal and could have led to bias in the responses received. In villages where data on children was maintained, there was less involvements of the implementation staff in the evaluation;
- access to, and meetings with, key informants was facilitated by UNICEF. This was true in both states. It is plausible that facilitation by UNICEF, could have biased their responses;
- due to migration out of the villages, it was not possible to locate some children who were part of the Cotton Corridors project.

## E.3 Node trees for analysis

To provide a framework for qualitative data analysis, a ‘node tree’ was developed so that the data from the KIIs, IDIs and FGDs with project stakeholders could be organised. This would allow for the identification of the trends on project context, performance and impact emerging from the data.

The node tree developed has been outlined in the exhibit below. It consists of ‘grandparent’, ‘parent’ and ‘child’ nodes. Grandparent nodes comprise of the broad research areas identified in response to the evaluation questions on the DAC criteria as well as other key themes pertaining to the project interventions and impact. Aggregated under each grandparent node are sub-topics within these factors, referred to as parent nodes, which allow the researchers to analyse emerging trends. Some of the parent nodes contain child nodes under them that allow for a more specific analysis.

## Exhibit 3-14: Node Tree for Qualitative Data Analysis

| Grandparent Node | Parent Node | Child Node |
|---|---|---|
| **Labour** | Knowledge | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | Attitudes | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | Practices | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | Change | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | | None |
| | | Other factors |
| | Decision-making | Girls |
| | | Boys |
| | | Challenges |
| | Reasons / Context | Economic |
| | | Cultural |
| | | Migration |
| | | Utility |
| | | Other |
| **Marriage** | Knowledge | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | Attitudes | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | Practices | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | Change | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | | None |
| | | Other factors |
| | Decision-making | Girls |
| | | Boys |
| | | Challenges |
| | Reasons / Context | Economic |
| | | Cultural |
| | | Migration |
| | | Utility |
| | | Other |
| **Schooling** | Knowledge | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | Attitudes | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | Practices | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | Change | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | | None |
| | | Other factors |
| | Decision-making | Girls |
| | | Boys |
| | | Challenges |
| | Reasons / Context | Economic |
| | | Cultural |
| | | Migration |
| | | Utility |

| Grandparent Node | Parent Node | Child Node |
|---|---|---|
| | | Other |
| **Social Inclusion / Exclusion** | Caste | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | Religion | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | Gender | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| | Age | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| **Relevance** | Positive | UNICEF |
| | | General |
| | Negative | UNICEF |
| | | General |
| **Effectiveness** | Positive | UNICEF |
| | | General |
| | Negative | UNICEF |
| | | General |
| **Efficiency** | Positive | UNICEF |
| | | General |
| | Negative | UNICEF |
| | | General |
| **Sustainability and Replicability** | Positive | UNICEF |
| | | General |
| | Negative | UNICEF |
| | | General |
| **Equity and Gender** | Positive | UNICEF |
| | | General |
| | Negative | UNICEF |
| | | General |
| **UNICEF** | Support | - |
| | Capacity Building | - |
| | Awareness | - |
| | Project Finances | - |
| | Data | - |
| | Convergence | - |
| | Education | - |
| | Challenges | - |
| | Project Changes | - |
| | Impact | Positive |
| | | Negative |
| **Balika Sangha** | Functioning | - |
| | Activities | Current |
| | | Past |
| | Efficiency | - |
| | Influence | Current |
| | | Past |
| | Challenges | - |
| **Child Club** | Functioning | - |
| | Activities | Current |
| | | Past |
| | Efficiency | - |
| | Influence | Current |
| | | Past |
| | Challenges | - |
| | Functioning | - |

| Grandparent Node | Parent Node | Child Node |
|---|---|---|
| **Child Protection Committee** | Activities | Current |
| | | Past |
| | Efficiency | - |
| | Influence | Current |
| | | Past |
| | Challenges | - |
| **Government** | Support | - |
| | Convergence | - |
| | Challenges | - |
| **NGOs** | Support | - |
| | Challenges | - |
| **Community Support** | Police | - |
| | Priest | - |
| | Panchayat Members | - |
| | AWW / ASHA | - |
| | Teachers | - |
| | CV | - |
| **Miscellaneous** | - | - |

*Source: UNICEF Cotton Corridors project phase 2 data analysis.*

The grandparent nodes detailed in the node tree are as follows:

- **labour:** This grandparent node captures several aspects that underlie the practice of CL in the project areas and were also targeted through the project activities. The parent nodes encompass “Knowledge”, “Attitudes” and “Practices” towards CL, each of which is further comprised of the child nodes “Positive” and “Negative”. The parent node “Change” comprises of child nodes “Positive”, “Negative”, “None” and “Other factors” — these take into account the possible shifts in labour practices and influencing factors that not present under other grandchild nodes. The “Decision-making” parent node pertains to household-level labour decisions, further sub-divided into decisions relating to “Girls” and “Boys”, and any “Challenges”. The “Reasons / Context” parent node intends to record the underlying socio-economic factors driving the practice of CL — child nodes under this are “Economic”, “Cultural”, “Migration”, “Utility” and “Other”;

- **marriage:** This grandparent node covers the practice and factors underlying the practice of CM. The parent and child levels here mirror the nodes under the “Labour” grandparent node;

- **schooling:** This grandparent node covers the attitudes and practice, and the barriers and facilitators influencing schooling practices. The parent and child levels here mirror the nodes under the “Labour” grandparent node;

- **relevance:** This grandparent node examines the data along the DAC criteria of relevance of the project design and activities vis-à-vis the CP priorities of the government and UNICEF, as well as local needs. This explores whether the project was “Positive” or “Negative” (parent nodes) along the dimension of relevance. Both parent nodes are further sub-divided into the child nodes of “UNICEF” and “General” to capture whether the project relevance was driven by the activities of UNICEF or other actors;

- **social Inclusion /exclusion:** This intended to capture the level of social inclusion or exclusion prevalent in the context of CL, schooling and marriage practices. The grandparent node was

composed of parent nodes “Caste”, “Religion”, “Gender” and “Age”, each of which further comprised of “Positive” and “Negative” child nodes;

- **effectiveness:** This explores whether the project was “Positive” or “Negative” (parent nodes) along the DAC dimension of effectiveness, probing whether or not the intended project objectives were attained. Both parent nodes are further sub-divided into the child nodes of “UNICEF” and “General” to capture whether the project effectiveness was driven by the activities of UNICEF or other actors;

- **efficiency:** This explores whether the project was “Positive” or “Negative” (parent nodes) along the DAC dimension of efficiency, probing whether or not the project activities were carried out in a cost- and resource-efficient manner. Both parent nodes are further sub-divided into the child nodes of “UNICEF” and “General” to capture whether the efficiency was driven by the activities of UNICEF or other actors;

- **sustainability and replicability:** This explores whether the project was “Positive” or “Negative” (parent nodes) along the DAC dimension of sustainability and replicability. This probes whether the activities were continued after project completion and if these may be replicated in other areas. Both parent nodes are further sub-divided into the child nodes of “UNICEF” and “General” to capture whether the sustainability/replicability was driven by the activities of UNICEF or other actors;

- **equity and gender:** This explores whether the project was “Positive” or “Negative” (parent nodes) along the DAC dimension of equity and gender. This probes whether the project activities were inclusive on the basis of gender and socio-economic categories. Both parent nodes are further sub-divided into the child nodes of “UNICEF” and “General” to capture whether the inclusivity was driven by the activities of UNICEF or other actors;

- **UNICEF:** This grandparent node refers to the Cotton Corridors project interventions, impact achieved and challenges faced during the project. The parent nodes under this are: “Support”, “Capacity Building”, “Awareness”, “Project Finances”, “Data”, “Convergence”, “Education”, “Challenges”, “Project Changes” and “Impact” (further divided into “Positive” and “Negative” child nodes);

- **BS:** This node captures the functioning status, impact and challenges faced by BS community groups;

- **CC:** This node captures the functioning status, impact and challenges faced by CC community groups;

- **CPC:** This node captures the functioning status, impact and challenges faced by the CPC formed under the project.

- **government:** This grandparent node — further comprised of “Support”, “Convergence” and “Challenges” parent nodes — captures the role and experience of government institutions in the project;

- **NGOs:** This grandparent node takes into account the role played and challenges faced by NGO partners in project implementation;

- **community support:** This node relates to the project support provided by other community stakeholders, with parents nodes comprising of “Police”, “Priest”, “Panchayat Members”, “AWW / ASHA”, “Teachers” and “CV”;

- **miscellaneous:** This node was added to capture any aspects from the data that may be interesting from the perspective of the analysis but did not offer a clear trend or fit into the other nodes in the tree.

## E.4 Data analysis

### E.4.1 Familiarisation with the data

Semi-structured questionnaires were designed, piloted and tested by qualitative researchers at OPM. The same researchers were also present during training and fieldwork. Through this process, the researchers were able to not only draw on emerging themes during data collection, but also account for biases in the fieldwork and possible predispositions in respondents’ answers.

To ensure uniform quality, a standardised data organisation system was used. All audio files and transcripts were labelled to clearly indicate the date of interview and type of respondent. This code was consistent for each interview. A few transcripts were randomly spot-checked for accuracy by comparing them with the audio files. Personal names and other identifier information were removed from the transcripts, indexed, and stored separately for purposes of anonymity as the very first step of the data analysis process.

The primary aid to organise, index, chart and map the interview data was the computer software Dedoose (Version 7.0.22). Once transcription was complete, the transcripts were imported into Dedoose. Basic demographic and profile attributes (for example, category of respondent, gender, caste/community name) were assigned to each case.

### E.4.2 Identifying a thematic framework

A deductive framework defined the overarching conceptual framework for the study. A node was developed in accordance with the DAC evaluation criteria as well as taking into account project intervention activities and stakeholders. An inductive approach to this framework was then developed as the researchers familiarised themselves with the data. The node trees were modified based on the emerging themes and incorporated into a codebook.

The node tree was developed as follows:

- the first-level nodes (termed ‘grandparent nodes’ in the project) were identified based on the DAC evaluation criteria underpinning the overall framework for the summative evaluation and different project interventions and actor;.
- organising and defining second-level nodes (termed ‘parent’ nodes) and third-level nodes (‘children’ nodes) involved work with a sample of transcripts. Each researcher coded a sample set of transcripts and they then used charting techniques and discussions to organise and define the nodes. Modifications were made accordingly to best suit the data;
- the node tree was then used to index a sample of transcripts *(see next section)*. After piloting, minor modifications were made to the node tree to improve indexing;
- finally, the node tree was entered in Dedoose.

The final codebook with the nodes is detailed below.

### E.4.3 Indexing

Indexing is the labelling (or coding) of data into themes identified in the node trees. Indexing allowed for a comprehensive retrieval of data when analysing a theme.

The node tree and the definition of the nodes used in the research were discussed in detail by the qualitative research team to ensure that the nodes were understood clearly by each member. For the interview data, indexing occurred as follows:

- the trial round included three researchers coding a sample set of interviews using the pre-agreed node tree, noting potential areas of improvements that needed discussion;
- three researchers compared and discussed their coding and reached agreement on any differences;
- once an agreement was reached upon the implementation of the codebook, the node tree was tested again and differences corroborated;
- this process was repeated for subsequent transcripts for the supply side and demand side.

### E.4.4 Charting

This refers to Dedoose's ability to retrieve data tagged with the same code across different transcripts to help summarise data. The tagged excerpts, with their corresponding indexing details, were downloaded in an excel format from Dedoose. Applying filters on nodes allowed for exploration along particular themes in the data. Cross-referencing across code themes and respondent profiles was performed to build nuance in the qualitative analysis. The emerging patterns were noted for analysis.

### E.4.5 Mapping and interpretation

Mapping and interpretation of the data had been continual, from the data collection to the final writing. Some of the types of relationships that the researchers looked for were:

- similarities between themes;
- contrasts between themes;
- explanation of cases;
- juxtaposition of cases.

## E.5 Ethics and UNEG standards

Our approach to the evaluation was based on the Norms for Evaluation for the UN system, and the Standards that in turn derive from them.[72] This underpinned our approach to ethics, which was also governed by OPM's own Institutional Review Board (IRB).

A large part of the respect of these ethical standards involves simply upholding our own standards of professionalism and good conduct. But in addition, there are some practical steps that we took:

#### Ensured informed consent from all respondents

Research involving children ensured the safety of child participants at all times, ensuring that appropriate and fully informed consent was given by the child and his/her care-givers. We explain this further below.

[72] http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/22, accessed November 2015.

### Ensured the sensitive treatment of vulnerable respondents, especially children

It is crucial in any piece of field research to ensure that all respondents are treated with care and sensitivity including ensuring that they understand the purpose of the study and that they can be assured of anonymity where appropriate.

### Our approach to research with adults and vulnerable children

We ensured that our field work maintained high ethical standards so that participant's expectations were not raised, confidentiality was maintained and respondents were never forced to participate or encouraged to speak about subjects that may have been traumatising (especially for children). We drew on our experience of extensive fieldwork, including with children to ensure that these were met, and sought further ethical review where appropriate including from the OPM Ethics Review Committee.

Fieldwork was carried out as far as possible by experienced fieldworkers with interviews and group discussions in the language in which the participants felt most comfortable. The groups and interviews were recorded if the informed consent of participants was given, and transcribed and translated into English. The team drew on existing tools when designing instruments involving children and adults in fieldwork, including those produced by UNICEF's Office of Research.[73]

There were common ethical issues to consider in planning and facilitating the participation of both adults and children in research but there were also some important considerations when children were participating. These considerations included:

For all ages of participants:

- **how were participants being selected?** Was there any deliberate exclusion on the basis of for example, access or stigma? Were cultural and community norms understood and considered in the selection planning process?
- people were offered the opportunity to participate and, ideally, be invited to volunteer, rather than be asked, to avoid any pressure. People, especially children, had the right not to participate and to pull out at any stage;
- **permission was sought** for the interviews to go ahead, through consultation with the local community;
- **clear parameters for the interviews** were set and communicated — this meant clearly stating the purpose, the limits and what the follow up entailed;
- research teams recognised that **participants were vulnerable, particularly children and the disabled**, and that the exercise was carried out with full respect — children for example can easily be treated as inferior and such power dynamics need to be understood and purposefully mitigated in planning and implementation by researchers and facilitators;
- we ensured the safety and **protection of participants** — this meant ensuring the environment was physically safe, that there were at least two facilitators present at all times and, if possible, that a local stakeholder group was involved in monitoring activities. Facilitators were also supervised;
- we ensured that **people understand what was happening** at all times, and that appropriate language was being used (language, dialect, community terminology, etc.);
- we ensured the **right to privacy** — this included ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, in record keeping and report writing and making sure participants understood that what they do and say would remain anonymous;

[73] Graham, A., Powell, M., Taylor, N., Anderson, D. & Fitzgerald, R. (2013). Ethical Research Involving Children. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti

- **plans were in place for dealing with unexpected or adverse consequences**, such as an urgent CP issue. Provision of immediate support was planned for in advance (set up of a four person body to review cases of abuse; this has been discussed below).

**Particular considerations when children were participating:**

- we ensured that the participation of children took place only when genuinely necessary to meet the needs of the research enquiry;
- we obtained the **consent of appropriate adults** (parents, carers, teachers) for a child's participation, as well as ensuring that the **child gave their own informed consent** to take part (was happy to do and was not coerced in any way). Children's participation in research was fully informed and children were also free not to participate;
- we ensured **confidentiality**, except in circumstances where a child disclosed information about a serious CP concern, in which case the researchers referred the case to the four person body (discussed below) set up to take up review these cases. The **circumstances in which researchers would take action was pre-agreed;**
- we ensured **safety** of child participants. If there was any doubt, at any stage, the activity did not proceed and was halted;
- for both adults and children, when seeking their participation in research, we ensured that they **understood exactly what would be done** with the information they had provided.

We used the following practical approaches to operationalise our ethical standards:

**Verbal informed consent:**

Consent was recorded on audio recorders of survey respondents at the start of the interviews and FGDs. We only recorded interviews where respondents gave consent for this, otherwise we relied on the note taker's notes.

For children under 18, parental or guardian informed consent (a teacher counts as a guardian when the child is in school), as well as informed consent from the child was taken.

Consent was informed in the sense that we set out what we were doing, why and what we were going to ask them, and underlined that they could renegotiate/change their mind at any time. We also maintained confidentiality in all cases other than suspected cases of severe abuse (See below).

We took verbal consent rather than written consent because many respondents were not able to read or write, and asking (in a group setting) respondents to give written consent would have been embarrassing for them.

**Creation of a Protocol to refer cases of abuse**:

We did not actively look for cases of abuse, but if a researcher was informed of a suspected case of abuse during an interview, we developed a protocol to address this, because we are legally required under the JJ Act to report suspected cases to the relevant authority and we are ethically required as researchers to ensure that no child comes to harm as a result of the study. We agreed with UNICEF:

- that they would sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a local NGO that would provide support to any children identified in the research as suffering from severe cases of abuse;

- a four person body was constituted to review suspected cases (OPM team lead Ian MacAuslan, Glocal Director Davuluri, UNICEF evaluation manager Trang Ho Morton and representative of a local NGO that would support children);
- fieldworkers were supposed to record suspected cases and inform this committee, and were trained to do so. They were supposed to inform children that severe harm would be the single exception to confidentiality;
- the committee would review each case and decide whether or not it should be passed on to the government (the child welfare board at district level) and to UNICEF. In this case, the committee would act as an agent of the child and would take an informed decision on their behalf on whether referral was in their best interest and in accordance with the law;
- UNICEF would then fund the organisation with which they had an MOU to follow up the case to ensure legal proceedings didn't bring harm to the child.

In order to ensure that there was adequate provision to follow up cases, UNICEF agreed to set aside some funding in case detailed follow up is required to avoid harm coming to a child.

**Develop and train researchers on sensitive tools and research**:

We ensured that the questions we were asking children (and adults), and the way in which we asked them, did not expose them to unnecessary emotional or psychological harm, both in individual interviews and particularly in group settings. We trained researchers extensively on the importance of being sensitive to children, and worked only with researchers that displayed sufficient empathy and emotional intelligence to recognise when this was required (to be assessed during training and from CVs). The researchers with whom we worked specialised in research on CL in this part of India.

Care extended across all components of the research process, from introductions to the village (e.g. not marginalising anyone), to sampling (not calling children out of class because they work), to interviews (not forcing children to talk about issues that upset them), to group work (not emphasising social distinctions), to venues (not asking children to travel to settings that they find uncomfortable, such as dropouts to school), to debriefs (not discussing issues publicly).

**Avoid raising issues with negative social consequences**

A substantial risk when investigating CL was that employers have a backlash against children (either by abusing them or ceasing to employ them, forcing them to move to worse employment). We avoided this by working closely with local NGOs and local field teams to ensure that they did not ask employers direct questions that would provoke this, and kept all information confidential.

**Ensuring confidentiality of information at all times (except in cases of severe abuse (see above):**

We kept the information provided to us and the identities of those who provided it anonymous at all times (except abuse — see above). This was achieved by anonymising the questionnaires and the analysis through an effective data management protocol.

Finally, the evaluation methodology, approach and tools were submitted to OPM's Institutional Review Board (IRB), which subjects all research proposals to an ethics review. This was an independent process whereby an academic committee scrutinises proposals. We expect this to be sufficient to satisfy UNICEF's own research ethics requirements as well as our own.

# Annex F List of interviewees and sample villages

### Exhibit 3-15: Phase 1: Key informant interviewees

| Date | Institution | Name of the interviewee | Designation | Location |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2nd Nov'15 | UNICEF | Murali | Project Manager | Hyderabad |
| 2nd Nov'15 | UNICEF | Deepak | Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist | Hyderabad |
| 3rd Nov'15 | Sadhna | Mahadevappa/ Rahul | Local Coordinator | Kurnool |
| 3rd Nov'15 | MVF | Hari hara Reddy | Local Coordinator | Kurnool |
| 3rd Nov'15 | SSA/Labour Department | Mr. Janadharna | SSA/Labour Commissioner | Kurnool |
| 3rd Nov'15 | Society for Elimination of Poverty (SERP) | Vasantha | Dist. Project Manager | Kurnool |
| 3rd Nov'15 | MVF | Kandanatti Village | FGD Yellow village/ CVs | Kurnool |
| 3rd Nov'15 | SVK | Kullumala Village | FGD Green village/ Child club members | Kurnool |
| 3rd Nov'15 | SVK | Raghusekhar | Local Coordinator | Kurnool |
| 4th Nov'15 | SSA and Education Department | Mr Ramanjanaya | DY.Director of public informations | Raichur |
| 4th Nov'15 | Labour Department | Smt. Aarathi | Labour Officer | Raichur |
| 4th Nov'15 | Project Staff | Raghavendra | Project Coordinator | Raichur |
| 4th Nov'15 | Project village | Kamlapur Village | FGD Green Village (Child Rights club) | Raichur |
| 4th Nov'15 | Project village | Matmari Village | Local coordinator/ (Child Protection Committee) | Raichur |
| 5th Nov'15 | MVF | Bhaskar | Project Coordinator | Hyderabad |
| 5th Nov'15 | Sadhna | Murali | Project Director | Hyderabad |
| 5th Nov'15 | SVK | Laxmanrao | Project Director | Hyderabad |
| 5th Nov'15 | WDCW | Sridevi | District Training Coordinator (Kurnool) | Hyderabad |
| 6th Nov'15 | Division of Child Studies, Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) | Prof Vijay Kumar | Report authors | Hyderabad |

*Source: UNICEF Cotton Corridors project phase 1 data collection.*

### Exhibit 3-16: Phase 2: Key informant interviewees

| Date | Institution | Name of the interviewee | Designation | Location |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15th Feb'16 | UNICEF | Murali | Project Manager | Hyderabad |
| 15th Feb'16 | UNICEF | Deepak | Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist | Hyderabad |
| 15th Feb'16 | Govt. — state level | Mr Madhusudan | SSA Officer | Hyderabad |
| 16th Feb'16 | Division of Child Studies, Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) | Sriparna | Senior Project Manager, DCS | Hyderabad |
| 16th Feb'16 | Govt. — state level | Padmaja | Labour Officer | Hyderabad |
| 20th Feb'16 | Project Staff | Rajashekhar | Kurnool Project Incharge | Kurnool |
| 20th Feb'16 | Sadhna | Murali Mohan | Project Director | Kurnool |
| 20th Feb'16 | MVF | Bhaskar | Project Coordinator | Kurnool |
| 21th Feb'16 | Govt. — mandal level | Nageshwar Rao | Mandal Development Officer | Adoni |
| 21th Feb'16 | Govt. — block level | Shanthi Durga | CDPO: Child Development Project Officer | Adoni |
| 21th Feb'16 | Govt. — block level | P.S. Chandrashekhar | APO: Additional Project Officer (NREGS) | Adoni |
| 22nd Feb'16 | Govt. — mandal level | S. Mahboob John | Mandal Education Officer | Adoni |
| 22nd Feb'16 | Govt. — state level | Prema Kumari | State level officer WCD dept. (at the time of the project) | Bengaluru |
| 22nd Feb'16 | Govt. — district level | Savithri | District Collector/Deputy Commissioner (2011–2012) | Bengaluru |
| 22nd Feb'16 | Govt. — district level | Mohammad Jaheer Basha | Dist level labour officer (at the time of the project) | Bengaluru |
| 23rd Feb'16 | Project Staff | Raghavendra | Project Coordinator in Raichur | Bengaluru |
| 23rd Feb'16 | Govt. — district level | Annbu Kumar | District Collector/Deputy Commissioner (2009–2011) | Bengaluru |
| 24th Feb'16 | Govt. — district level | Basava Raja | Police officer of the Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU) | Raichur |
| 24th Feb'16 | Govt. — block level | Mallika Arjun | Block Education Officer (BEO) | Raichur |
| 25th Feb'16 | Govt. — district level | Mishra Koti | Factories Officer and Child Labour Inspector | Raichur |

*Source: UNICEF Cotton Corridors project phase 2 data collection.*

### Exhibit 3-17: Phase 2: Number of In-depth interviews and focus group discussions

| Respondent type | Interview type | Number of interviews planned | Number of actual interviews | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Kurnool | Raichur | **Total** |
| **Child Clubs** | FGD | 16 | 12 | 4 | 16 |
| **Balika Sanghas** | FGD | 16 | 13 | 3 | 16 |
| **CPCs** | FGD | 16 | 12 | 4 | 16 |
| **Child Clubs chair** | Scale | 48 | 34 | 12 | 46 |
| **Balika Sanghas chair** | Scale | 48 | 36 | 10 | 46 |
| **CPCs chair** | Scale | 48 | 35 | 12 | 47 |
| **Children 5-9** | FGD | 8 | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| **Children 10+** | FGD | 8 | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| **Children** | IDI | 64 | 47 | 13 | 60 |
| **Parents** | IDI | 64 | 48 | 13 | 61 |
| **CVs** | IDI | 16 | 13 | 3 | 16 |
| **Employers** | IDI | 8 | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| **Sarpanch** | IDI | 16 | 12 | 2 | 14 |
| **Priests** | IDI | 8 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| **Teachers** | IDI | 16 | 12 | 4 | 16 |
| **TOTAL** | | **400** | **295** | **89** | **384** |

*Source: UNICEF Cotton Corridors project phase 2 data collection.*

### Exhibit 3-18: Phase 2: Number of interviews, village-wise list for Kurnool

| Block name | Village name | Village grading | Interview count |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Adoni** | Jalimanchi | Red | 18 |
| **Adoni** | Pandavagal | Red | 10 |
| **Adoni** | Isvi | Red | 18 |
| **Adoni** | Narayanpur | Green | 11 |
| **Adoni** | Santhakudluru | Yellow | 3 |
| **Aspari** | Billekallu | Red | 19 |
| **Aspari** | Thogaragal | Green | 3 |
| **Aspari** | Putakalamarri | Green | 3 |
| **Chippagiri** | Nagaradona | Green | 3 |
| **Chippagiri** | Dowlthapuram | Green | 3 |
| **Chippagiri** | Degulahal | Yellow | 3 |
| **Devakonda** | Nellibanda | Green | 3 |
| **Devakonda** | Pylakurthy | Yellow | 2 |
| **Gonegandla** | Neruduppala | Yellow | 3 |
| **Gonegandla** | Chinnamariveedu | Yellow | 3 |
| **Holagunda** | Chinnayeta | Red | 16 |
| **Holagunda** | Ingladhal | Red | 21 |
| **Holagunda** | Marlamadiki | Red | 21 |
| **Holagunda** | Neraniki | Green | 3 |
| **Holagunda** | Basapuram | Yellow | 3 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Holagunda** | MD.Halli | Yellow | 3 |
| **Holagunda** | N. Thanda | Yellow | 3 |
| **Kowthalam** | Halvi | Yellow | 3 |
| **Mantralayam** | Vagaruru | Red | 19 |
| **Mantralayam** | Rachumari | Red | 18 |
| **Mantralayam** | V.Thimapuram | Green | 3 |
| **Mantralayam** | Kachapuram | Green | 3 |
| **Mantralayam** | T.Narayanapuram | Yellow | 3 |
| **Nanda Varam** | Mitta somapuram | Green | 3 |
| **Pathikonda** | Dudekonda | Red | 19 |
| **Tuggali** | Mukkella | Red | 19 |
| **Tuggali** | Pagidirai | Green | 3 |
| **Tuggali** | Jonnagiri | Yellow | 3 |
| **Yemmiganore** | Kandanati | Red | 18 |
| **Yemmiganore** | Kalagotla | Green | 3 |
| **Yemmiganore** | Kadimetla | Yellow | 3 |
| **TOTAL** | | | **295** |

*Source: UNICEF Cotton Corridors project phase 2 data collection.*

### Exhibit 3-19: Phase 2: Number of interviews, village-wise list for Raichur

| Block name | Village name | Village grading | Interview count |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Devadurga** | Hirebudur | Green | 3 |
| **Devadurga** | Ramdurga | Yellow | 3 |
| **Raichur** | Elebichali | Red | 15 |
| **Raichur** | Hoogenahalli | Red | 17 |
| **Raichur** | Gonvar old | Red | 18 |
| **Raichur** | Godihal | Red | 16 |
| **Raichur** | N.Malkapur | Green | 3 |
| **Raichur** | Palavadoddi | Green | 3 |
| **Raichur** | Thimmapur | Green | 3 |
| **Raichur** | Shakhavadi | Yellow | 3 |
| **Raichur** | Sarjapur | Yellow | 2 |
| **Raichur** | Yarragunta | Yellow | 3 |
| **TOTAL** | | | **89** |

*Source: UNICEF Cotton Corridors project phase 2 data collection.*