

# GIRLS ADVOCACY ALLIANCE

## SOCIETIES IN TRANSITION

Learning from roads to change

# PREFACE

We stand up for the rights of girls and young women. That is why we, the Girls Advocacy Alliance, have been working for the protection of girls and young women against violence and for their economic empowerment since 2016. Today we are active in 10 countries in Africa and Asia, and at the regional and international level.

Many of the girls and young women with and for whom we work are looking at brighter futures than their mothers and older sisters. It is especially for the millions of girls and young women who still do not have better perspectives that we invite you to reflect and learn with us. And to think about bigger, braver and better steps we can take to make sure the rights of all girls and young women are enforced. That is what our publication 'Societies in transition' is all about.

The Girls Advocacy Alliance wishes to thank all those who contributed to this booklet. This includes colleagues from Plan International, Terre des Hommes and Defence for Children-ECPAT and our partner organisations Songtaba and Restless Development in Ghana, Uganda, the Philippines and the Netherlands, India, South East Asia, Kenya. We would also like to thank the authors, Jasmijn Besorak, Jet Langerak, Dani Bender and Wout Visser from Avance-Impact and the designer Boudewijn van Diepen from Studio van Diepen.

We hope that this publication inspires you to reflect, learn, join forces and advocate for a brighter future for girls and young women!

**Helen Evertsz**

*Programme Manager Girls Advocacy Alliance*



*"Investing in women is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do. I am deeply convinced that, in women, the world has at its disposal the most significant and yet largely untapped potential for development and peace. Gender equality is not only a goal in itself but a prerequisite for reaching all the other international development goals,"*

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations (2008.)

*"We know now that without gender equality and a full role for women in society, in the economy, in governance, we will not be able to achieve the world we hoped for,"*

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN Women.

*"We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back. We call upon our sisters around the world to be brave - to embrace the strength within themselves and realise their full potential,"*

Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Peace Prize winner.

*"Girls are one of the most powerful forces for change in the world: when their rights are recognised, their needs met, and their voices heard, they drive positive change in their families, their communities and the world"*

Kathy Calvin, United Nations Foundation President & CEO.

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# INTRODUCTION

**How do you end violence against girls and young women? How do you promote economic equality for girls? How do you change laws or practices that are often deeply engrained in society?**

In the past 2.5 years, the Girl Advocacy Alliance, together with its partners, has worked on doing just that. In 10 countries (Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and the Philippines) we engaged key institutions and influential individuals to stop gender-based violence and economic exclusion for girls and young women.

We are now half way through our five-year programme and slowly but surely we can see changes taking place. New laws have been adopted and some shifts in norms are becoming visible. But how were these changes put into motion? What steps were necessary to achieve them? And what can we learn from what was done? It's time to look back on what we have accomplished so far.

## THE GIRLS ADVOCACY ALLIANCE

The Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA) is a joint initiative by Plan International, Terre des Hommes Netherlands and Defence for Children-ECPAT Netherlands. The GAA is led by Plan International Netherlands and its work is implemented in strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Dialogue and Dissent framework.





This publication showcases six different pathways of change, from the road to ending online child sexual exploitation internationally to safer workplaces for women in Uganda. We concentrated on how change happened and the knowledge and insights these changes reveal. Furthermore we reflected on how policy change theories can be put into practice in order to become an effective policy entrepreneur. And last, but certainly not least, you can learn from the stories of two powerful girls, Mellicentia and Subhashini. They teach us how to best support them and other young female leaders in their journey towards gender equality.

Whether you are working in the halls of the UN in Geneva, the palace of a traditional leader in Ghana or in the corridors of national- or regional governments we hope that these stories and learned lessons will inspire and guide your future work for a safe and prosperous future for girls and young women all around the world.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

**GAA:** Girls Advocacy Alliance

**CSO:** Civil Society Organisation

**GBV:** Gender-Based Violence

# THE ROAD TO SAFE WORKPLACES FOR WOMEN IN BUYENDE

Despite the adoption of the Ugandan Employment Act (2006) many young women in Uganda are facing economic exploitation and sexual harassment in the workplace. As a first step to end these practices the Ugandan alliance partners advocated for the appointment of district Labour Officers. These officers inspect workplaces on employment regulation compliance and thereby raise awareness about the importance of safe workplaces for women in Uganda. A successful demonstration project is the appointment of a Labour Officer in Buyende district.

This case describes the story of how these results were achieved, narrating the build-up to the tipping point for change. Therewith, we unravel the pathway of change towards an inclusive economy for girls and young women in Uganda.

## PROBLEM

- ▶ 22% of Ugandan women (15-49) experienced sexual violence
- ▶ The Employment Act of 2006 that provides workplace protection is often not complied with
- ▶ No labour officers in place to conduct workplace inspections
- ▶ Employees have nowhere to report mistreatments at work
- ▶ No maternity leave offered by any private sector companies

## POPULATION

UGANDA  
42 MILLION

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BUYENDE DISTRICT  
323.000

## POLITICS



Presidential republic with a multi-party system. Since 1986 President Y. Museveni is in power

## EMPLOYMENT



of total labour force is unemployed



young women are twice as likely to be unemployed than young men



of total employed people are in vulnerable employment

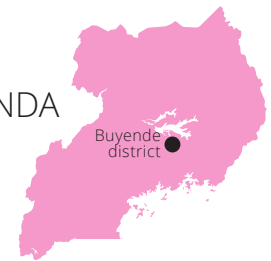


of children aged 5-14 are working fulltime

## ECONOMICS

- Uganda poorest country in the world based on GDP
- Per capita income of under US\$170
- Huge gender pay gap: Men typically earn 75% more than women

UGANDA



## CIVIC SPACE

**Repressed:** Heavy constraints - including risks of surveillance, harassment and threats of deregulation and closure - for civil society organizations and human rights defenders who criticize power holders

(Civics State of Civil Society Report 2018)

## RELIGION



## CHANGE WE SEEK

### 2017 GOAL

Labour officer at work in Buyende district to inspect compliance with the employment act and to offer women a place to turn to when facing gender-based mistreatments



### 2020 GOAL

The local governments of 10 key districts allocated budget to appoint labour officers to inspect workplaces and guard the safety of young women at work



### 2030 GOAL

Girls and young women are free from all forms of gender-based violence and are economically empowered.



## HOW DID WE DRIVE CHANGE?



**Policy analysis and research** to convince duty-bearers of the problem



**Relationship building with decision makers at national level** through dialogues and strategic meetings



**Build relationships with decision makers at district level** through dialogues and sensitization meetings

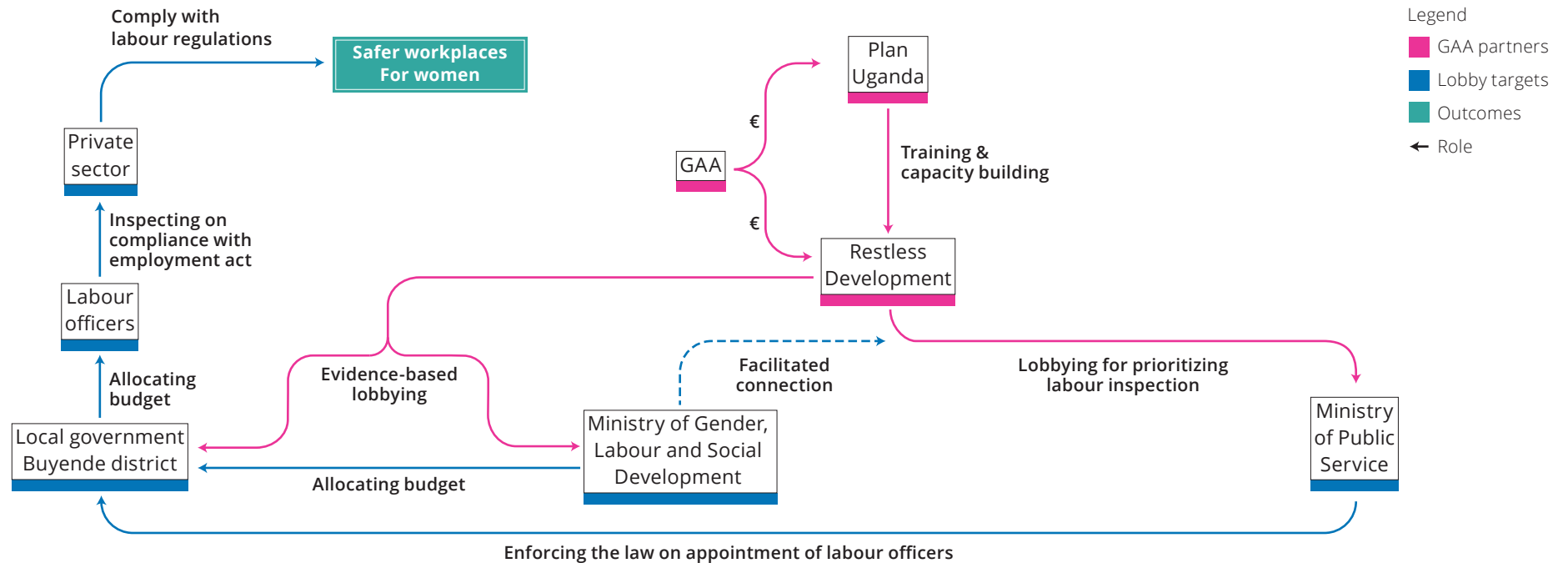


Appointment of a Labour Officer in Buyende used as a successful **demonstration project**



**Raise public awareness** of rights and regulations through dialogues with labour officer

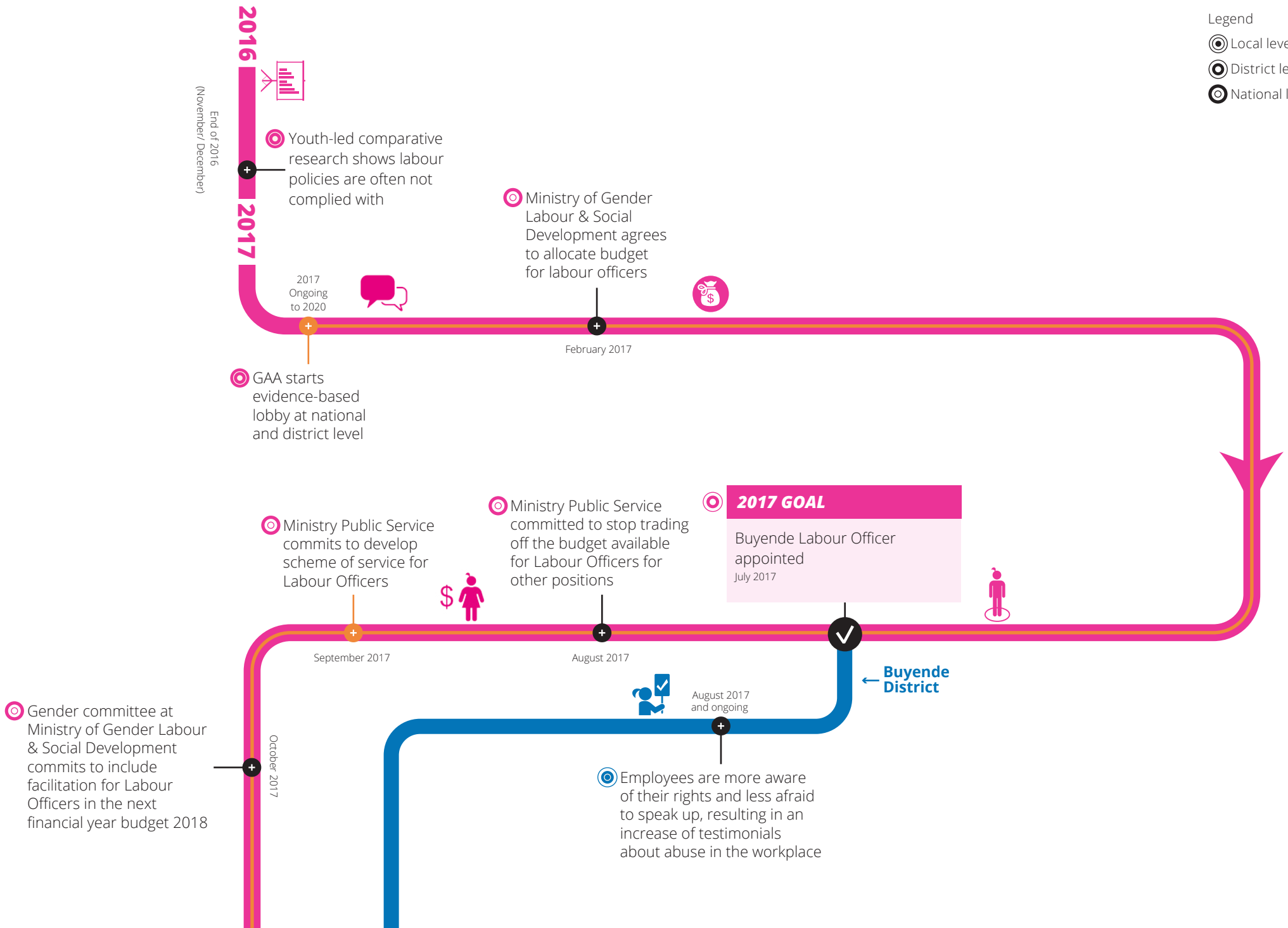
## WHO IS DRIVING THAT CHANGE?



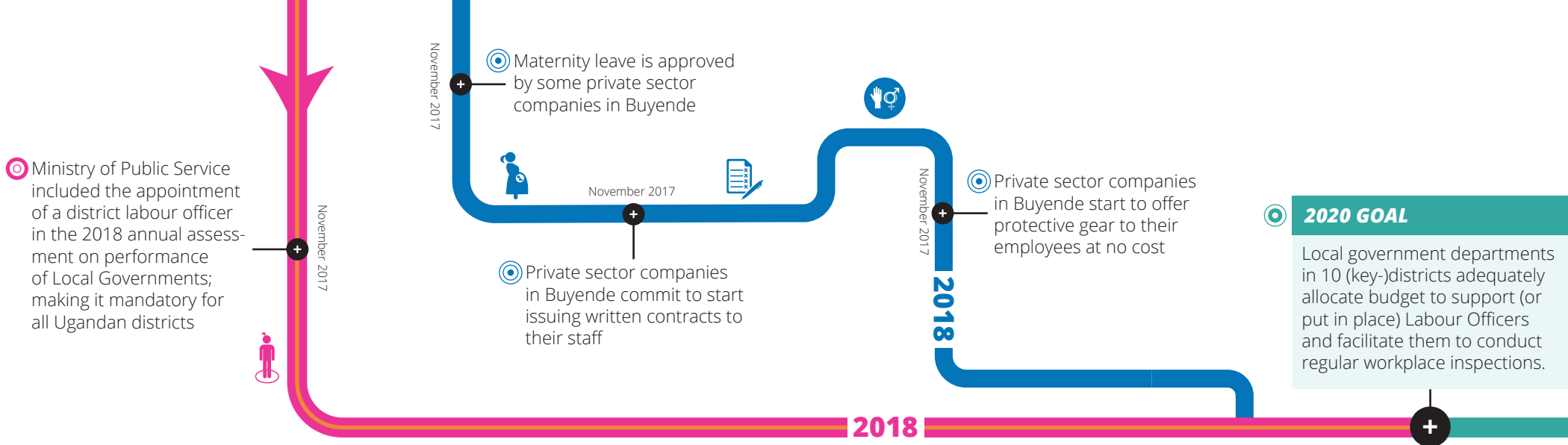
# WHAT CHANGES HAVE WE SEEN?

## Legend

- ⊙ Local level
- ⊙ District level
- ⊙ National level







## WHAT DID WE LEARN?

### PROOF IT!

Restless Development conducted field research to identify issues that affect young women in local communities. These findings were compared with an analysis of national policy and showed a gap between the policy and practice. This evidence can be used to hold leaders accountable, both at national and district level, convincing them of the need to address the problem.

### THE YOUTH IS THE FUTURE

Field research was conducted by youth advocates who best understand local dynamics and the issues that affect them. The youth advocates were able to collect information from young people in focus group discussions and testimonials about abuse. This peer-to-peer approach allowed the young people to speak openly. The youth advocates also represented their peers at district government level, convincing duty-bearers of the need for change. This proves that youth advocates are very effective in lobbying for change.

### MAKE IT PERSONAL

Putting time and effort into building good relationships at both district and national government level was effective. By attending all relevant meetings Obed Kambasu (Restless Development) became known by the national government as the face of the lobby for safe workplaces for women. Through dialogue, his personal track record and integrity, he built trust and confidence among key stakeholders. At the same time Sarah Bufamba (Restless Development) was committed to a similar role at district level. In this way momentum is built and change is initiated.

### EVERYBODY WINS

Restless Development worked hard to come up with solutions together with the duty-bearers on how to improve the situation for women in the workplace. It adapted its lobby activities so that they aligned with government policies and development agenda. The key tactic for success was to emphasise the potential gain for the district government, creating a win-win situation. The organisation convinced the local government in Buyende that appointing a Labour Officer was a promising way to perform better on national KPIs which in turn would mean receiving more money from central government.

# THE ROAD TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROTECTION OF GIRLS AND WOMEN IN EASTERN SAMAR

In the Eastern Samar province, nationally mandated Gender Based Violence protection mechanisms and policies are in place. However, local institutions often fail to provide the services that are necessary to implement them. As a result, the success of the national policy has been limited. In order to change this the Girl Advocacy Alliance wants to increase the ownership that local governments and the communities themselves have of the protection system. In order to achieve this the Alliance teamed up with two mayors to improve the functionality of the available protection systems. After successfully piloting the collaboration in 10 communities the work was expanded to 42 communities.

This case unravels the steps that were taken to start an alliance with the mayors and how they were able to expand the collaboration.

## PROBLEM

- ▶ The police identified 1125 cases of violence against women in the Eastern Samar province in 2016, an increase of more than 200 cases from 2015
- ▶ Local Government Units do not always have sufficient capacity, know-how or will to address protection issues
- ▶ Nearly 1 in 2 women between the age of 15-49 have experienced some sort of violence
- ▶ Awareness among the population about existing protection mechanisms and policies is low

## POPULATION

PHILIPPINES  
104.9 MILLION

EASTERN SAMAR  
467,160

## CIVIL SOCIETY SPACE

The legal, regulatory, and policy environment in which CSOs operate is, generally, positive. According to reports civil society space has become more obstructed since Duterte came in to power

## EDUCATION

- 43% of the women in Eastern Samar do not have an education higher than elementary school
- 35% finished high school
- 21% have finished some form of higher education

The gender gap is limited. On average women are more highly educated than men

## ECONOMICS

46%

of the population in Eastern Samar lives in poverty



## POLITICS



Governing institutions are well developed in the Philippines. However, the rule of law and application of justice are haphazard and heavily favor ruling elites. Impunity remains the norm for crimes against activists and journalists

## CHANGE WE SEEK

### 2018 GOAL

Mayors sign a Memorandum of Agreement to expand the gender-based violence prevention and protection pilot program to 42 new communities



### 2020 GOAL

All Local Government Units in Eastern Samar effectively enforce and promote legislation to eliminate Gender Based Violence and Economic Exploitation of girls and young women



### 2030 GOAL

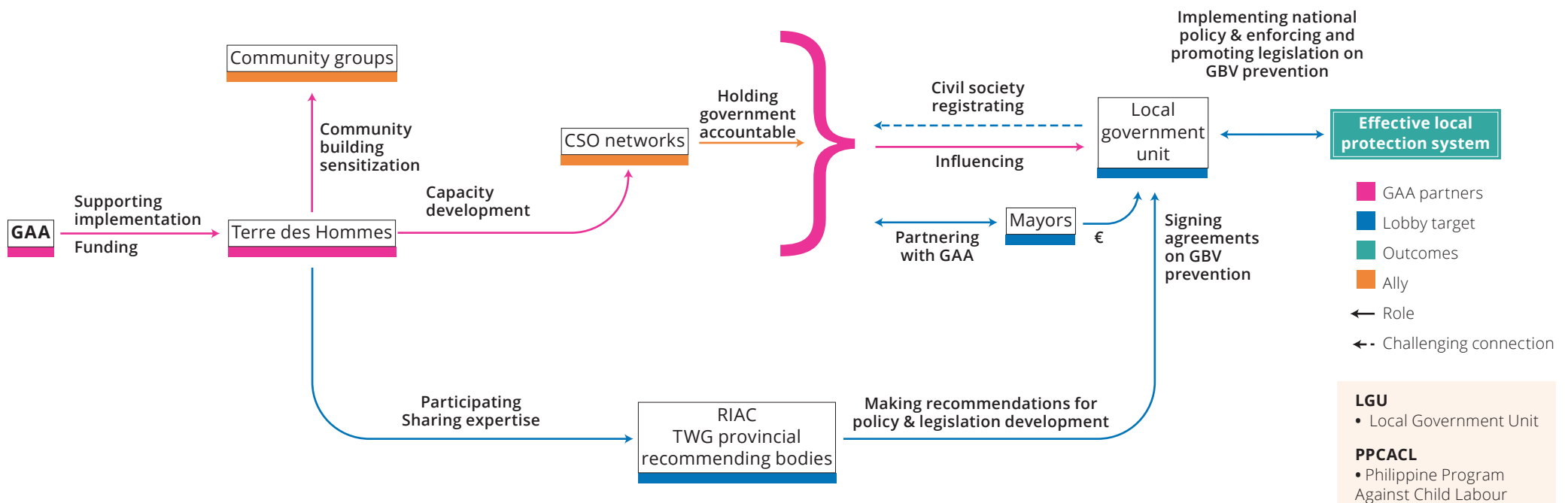
Girls and young women are free from all forms of gender-based violence and are economically empowered



## HOW DID WE DRIVE CHANGE?

- Research and policy analysis with marginalized groups**
- Develop own comprehensive database** and use this information to influence stakeholders
- Build and invest in relationships with duty bearers**
- Formulate joint plans**, to define roles, budget and expected outputs and outcomes
- Pilot approaches** for more comprehensive GBV protection
- Team up with known advocates** for women and girls rights
- Organize, capacitate and mobilize local community groups** to stand up for their rights and hold government and private sectors accountable

## WHO IS DRIVING THAT CHANGE?



# WHAT CHANGES HAVE WE SEEN?

## Legend

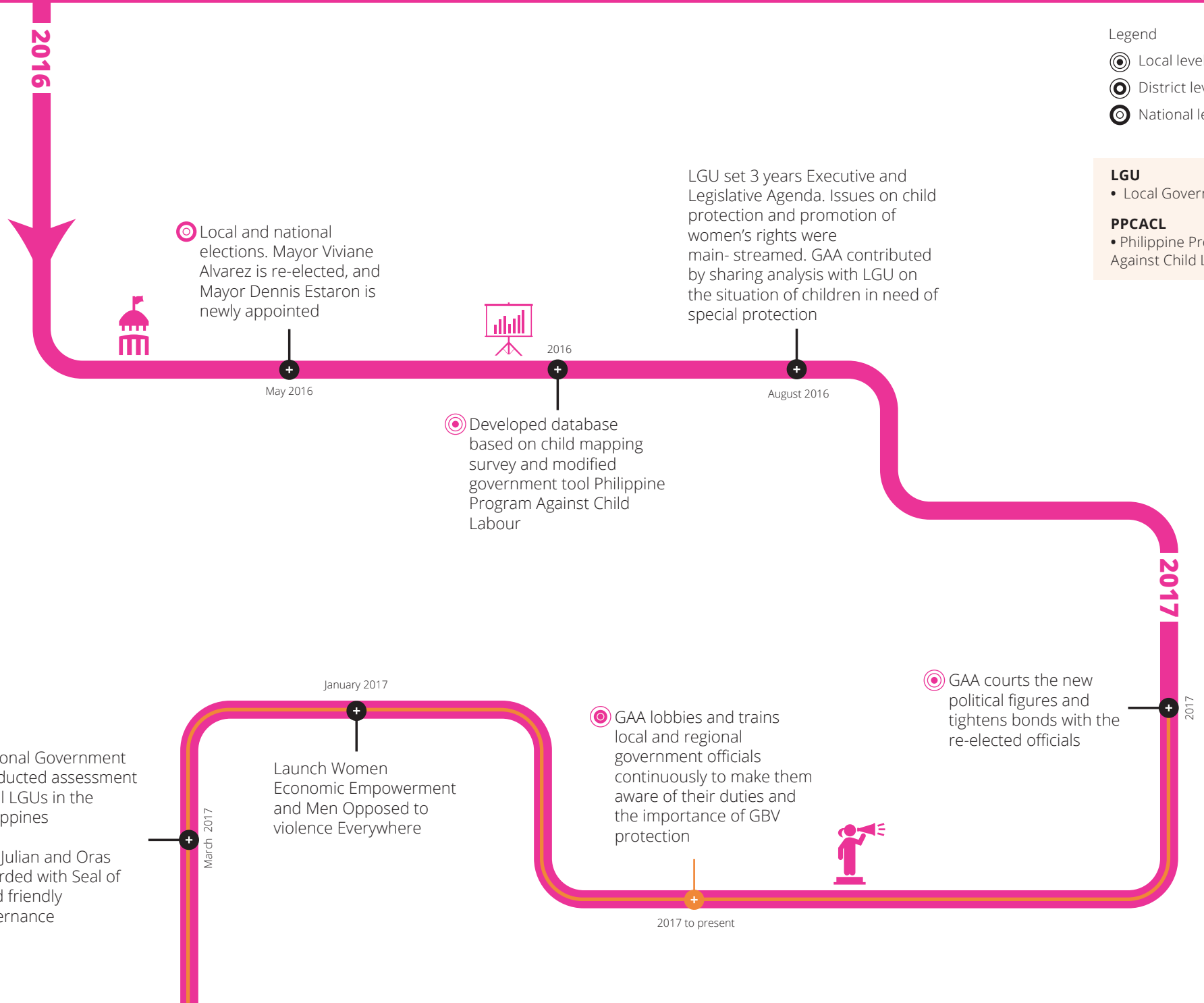
- ⊙ Local level
- ⊙ District level
- ⊙ National level

## LGU

- Local Government Unit

## PPCACL

- Philippine Program Against Child Labour



2016



⊙ Local and national elections. Mayor Viviane Alvarez is re-elected, and Mayor Dennis Estaron is newly appointed

May 2016



2016

⊙ Developed database based on child mapping survey and modified government tool Philippine Program Against Child Labour

LGU set 3 years Executive and Legislative Agenda. Issues on child protection and promotion of women's rights were main-streamed. GAA contributed by sharing analysis with LGU on the situation of children in need of special protection

August 2016

2017

January 2017

Launch Women Economic Empowerment and Men Opposed to violence Everywhere

⊙ GAA lobbies and trains local and regional government officials continuously to make them aware of their duties and the importance of GBV protection

2017 to present



⊙ GAA courts the new political figures and tightens bonds with the re-elected officials

2017

⊙ National Government conducted assessment to all LGUs in the Philippines

⊙ San Julian and Oras awarded with Seal of child friendly governance

March 2017

⊙ GAA develops a joint implementation plan with the LGUs of the ten pilot communities complementing their Gender Mainstreaming programme



April 2017

### 2017 GOAL

Local government units of the 10 pilot communities allocate budget for GBV prevention and protection activities



May 2017

National Government conducts assessment of all LGUs in the Philippines and awards Oras with a special distinction for its child protection efforts: the Seal of Good Local Governance

June 2017

⊙ The joint pilot program starts "in" 10 communities. Community groups are set up and capacitated. Local Government Units are continuously trained on GBV prevention and protection

⊙ Regional Interagency Council assesses work of local bodies and follows up with focussed trainings

August 2017



### 2018 GOAL

Mayors sign a Memorandum of Agreement to expand the GBV prevention and protection pilot program to 42 new communities

3rd of May 2018

GAA lobbies Mayors to invest in further collaboration on the prevention of and protection against GBV

January to May 2018

⊙ The regional anti trafficking body mandates use of trafficking reporting flow developed by GAA partners

October 2017

⊙ Department of Labour and Employment reactivates the Regional Child Labour Committee to address the increased occurrence of child labour in the Samar region

### Future forward

The next step is to expand the work to the 42 new communities. Furthermore, GAA will assist the community groups in the 10 pilot communities to make further steps to champion their own rights

Future forward

### 2018

December 2017

### 2020 GOAL

All Local Government Units in Eastern Samar effectively enforce and promote legislation to eliminate Gender Based Violence and Economic Exploitation of girls and young women



## WHAT DID WE LEARN?

### FIND A COMMON LANGUAGE

NGOs must be familiar with government mandates, systems and procedures and be aware of the sensitivities of coming from 'outside' and playing the role of a 'watchdog'. Where possible, they must align their programme with the government's vision and speak the same language. They must be careful not to introduce new things that will be perceived as extra workload. Local governments will be open to change when they feel supported.

### WALK THE TALK

In engaging with the government or any other stakeholder for that matter, walk your talk. Stakeholders will sense your seriousness and sincerity through your advocacy work. This approach will make them open to being held accountable and may even result in Civil Society Organizations being rewarded with an advisory role.

### MAKE YOURSELF VERY REPLACEABLE OVER TIME

The Girl Advocacy Alliance raised the awareness of local governments in terms of GBV and provided them with the right tools and knowhow to implement it. The durability of this outcome is ensured by working with communities themselves. GAA trains the communities and mobilises them in local Civil Society networks to stand up for their rights and to keep local organisations and government agencies accountable after the programme has ended.

### EMPOWER FORMER VICTIMS

The Girl Advocacy Alliance trained and coached victims of GBV and economic exclusion to facilitate awareness-raising activities. Victims of violence became advocates for anti-violence, sharing their experiences and teaching others how to access help via government mechanisms. Such interventions have proven powerful and effective and also reach government officials through invitations to speak at local meetings.

### PLACE YOURSELF IN ANOTHER (WOMEN'S SHOES

The Girl Advocacy Alliance created a clear vision for mayors on why working together with the organisation is a win-win situation for them. GAA's partners understood the position of the mayors and showed them that providing services and mechanisms to fight GBV and economic exclusion would be in their own interests. Communities would become safer which would be a political win for the mayors and result in an increase in popularity. GAA ensured that mayors were eager to collaborate on the issues of GBV and economic exclusion.

### ADJUST TO POLITICAL CHANGE

Make efforts to remain non-partisan. For example, keep a low profile during local elections. Try to build a partnership with the new leaders, regardless of who they are. This makes it clear that no matter who wins local elections, working on the themes supported by the Girl Advocacy Alliance is a national requirement.

# POWERFUL GIRLS ARE CHANGING THE WORLD

**It is not easy to defend human rights as a minor. They are inherently more dependent on adults. This makes it more difficult to move freely, to travel around and to gain access to information.**

**Girls often have to fight to be heard and taken seriously. However there are many examples of powerful girls who successfully advocate for their rights. Advocates like Mellicentia. Learn from her story on how to best support her and other brave activists in Sierra Leone.**



## MEET MELLICENTIA

by Jasmijn Besorak (Avance-Impact)

Mellicentia is 17-year old teenager who has to be taken seriously. Since she was 13, Mellicentia has been involved in the Action for Youth and Children Network and is a member of the Girls Advocacy Group. She has spoken at many events across Sierra Leone to advocate for girls rights. In September 2018, Mellicentia was invited to speak in Geneva at the biannual Day of General Discussion held by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Afterwards she visited Amsterdam to talk to the Dutch Foreign Affairs Ministry about her fight against child marriage. She was able to find me some room in her busy schedule for an interview.

**You just came back from Geneva. How was it to be there and meet young leaders like you from all over the world?**

It was so special and inspiring. I really, really loved the experience. Every single person in our group inspired me. I've made so many new friends. And even though our environments are different, many of the challenges we face are very similar. So it was very important for me to be able to discuss things and learn from each other.

**How did you come to be the one to represent Sierra Leone at the UN convention?**

We had several meetings with all the young human right defenders at the Defence for Children office in Freetown. They told us that all of us are doing really great work but that only one of us can go to Geneva. And then all of them unanimously said: 'Melli should do it. She is confident enough, she can speak well, she can represent us well, she can do it'. I was like, wow! Everyone has so much belief in me! So then I went, and I took on the responsibility to represent all of them.

**How long have you been a human rights defender? And why did you become one?**

Almost four years now. When I was 13 years old, I didn't know anything about child rights, I was just an ordinary girl, helping my mum with a small-scale business that we're doing back home in Freetown. But then there was this meeting of a national group called 'Action for youth and children's network' (ACYN).

The coordinator of this group came up to me and said that I have such a nice voice and asked if I wanted to do a song about child marriage. I was very reluctant because I was shy and I didn't know what it was all about. But he went to my parents, talked to us and then we gave our consent. I sang the song and that made me realise that there is still so much we have to do as children, so many wrong things that need to be corrected. And that's when I joined the group. That's when my passion began...

**Has it ever been an option for you to be married off as a child?**

Fortunately not! My mum really cares about education. My grandfather passed away pretty young and my grandmother didn't have enough money to send all of her children to school. So my mum and some of her siblings had to drop out of school. So she never got the option for herself but she wanted me to be educated.

**So you can you pick your own future husband?**

Yes, I can!

**Do you have friends or family who did get married off early?**

Yes, in my community we have a particular tribe, named the Fula. Fulas often give away their child for marriage before they turn 18 years old. Very devastating, because that child can be very bright, very brilliant but all of a sudden you see that they bring a very old man and say 'you can take her'. They don't want their children to get pregnant before they marry, so what they do is get them married off to someone who can take care of them. In their mind they are protecting their children but I believe that unintentionally there are limiting all future opportunities for their child.





### **Are there any changes in Sierra Leone regarding human rights that you feel really proud of? That you think, wow we're really making progress...**

Of course, we are making progress! For example there is a community called the Rokupa. Many fishermen in this community are considered rich and are known for exploiting girls. These men would say: 'I will give you fish, money, and all you have to do is give me your body, I will help you'. So what we do is to bring all community leaders together, we get all the chiefs, the chancellors, members of parliament and we get them to sign a by-law saying that no men should exploit a girl below the age of 18 through child prostitution. Signing this by-law really helped because the rate of exploitation is very low now.

### **How do you know that it's not still happening behind closed doors?**

The thing is we talk to the girls in these communities, we tell them about their rights and ask them to report cases to us because they are the ones who know best what's going on. They know that we will help them once they report a case so that makes them feel safer. They say that in comparison to the past, sexual exploitation is not socially accepted anymore. Especially since all the girls started reporting it. It used to be so out in the open now, if it's still happening, it's being done very discretely. Of course we have to stop all of it, but it's already a great step in the right direction.

### **Why do you think it changed?**

Well I believe everyone can change. We have awareness meetings and we talk to the men, we ask them: 'what if it was your daughter? What if it was your niece? What would you do? You don't want anyone else to destroy your child's life, so why are you destroying someone else's child's life?' And then we tell them, this world can be a better place, you never know, maybe this girl can change the future of our community, so why not support her in her upbringing. So the new by-laws, talking to men - and of course God is doing his part of the work - is what reduced sexual exploitation in these communities.

### **What kind of support do you need from the people around you to succeed in your work as a human rights defender?**

We need the chiefs and parents to encourage us to keep doing what we are doing. We do not need discouragement at all. We need important issues to be

part of the by-laws so that people adhere to them. Parents need to take us seriously, they have to give us their ears. We want them to work with us, we very much need the experience of older people. Their knowledge, support, network, everything they can give us...we need all of it to make things right.

### **How can Defence for Children – ECPAT continue to support your work in the best way possible?**

Defence for Children is known for giving social and legal aid and we want to thank them for that. They help many victims of rape and I hope they keep doing that important work. That children get justice. And that people who break the law receive the full penalties. To be honest, we just need more resources.

They support our teenage pregnancy awareness campaign. We want to keep on campaigning and roll out even bigger campaigns. Plus, we do not believe in just talking, we are quite practical, so we also buy school materials for girls. Often, they spend the little money that they have on uniforms and shoes and then they do not have enough money left for books and end up dropping out. We like to take those small barriers away so that they get to continue their education.

### **What is the most pressing issue that you would like to change in the coming five years?**

Two things. Firstly, continue to raise awareness about teenage pregnancy and secondly engage parents in the topic of reproductive health. In Sierra Leone parents don't talk to their children about these issues. And if children don't know about their reproductive healthcare rights then the rate of teenage pregnancies will increase. We have to get parents involved, get it out of the taboo sphere, and get them to talk with their daughter about sex, about her body.

So when I go back to my country, I want to start an awareness campaign targeted at parents. Children have to learn about these issues from their parents. My mum never told me, my grandmother never told me. But you might have a negative or bad person who says: 'oh the sex is good, you should try it'. And you're naïve and you try it and then boom...! You're pregnant. So we want parents to teach children about safe sex.

**So what will change within five years for these communities?**

Parents will talk to their children about safe sex and reproductive health so that girls can go to school and stay there. And then when they go to school their teacher talks about it and in this way they can stay safe.

**And what about the men, do they need an awareness campaign?**

Yes of course! We want to be gender equal about this and also involve the boys. The story shouldn't be one-sided. We mostly focus on the girls because they suffer the most. Most boys just have sex for fun and don't think about it too much, they kind of neglect the situation. After two to three years they realise that they have a child, and of course this can damage them as well. So if we want society to work we have to involve both sides.

**The work you do is already so impressive! So what can we expect from you in the future? What are your dreams and ambitions?**

I see myself as the world's biggest lawyer for vulnerable and poor people. I see myself as the engineer that is going to change the world. I see myself as the next Secretary-General of the United Nations!

**You started at age 13, singing a song, and you instantly became a national activist. What is your favourite song of this moment?**

The greatest love of all by Whitney Houston.



# THE ROAD TO ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE. FOREVER.

In spite of national laws prohibiting child marriage, over a third of the women in northern Ghana are married off before their 18th birthday. To fight child marriage, the Girl Advocacy Alliance works with local champions for change: traditional leaders, parents and girls' clubs. An important step in achieving change was a declaration by a group of nine traditional and religious leaders to end child marriage forever. As a result of this public announcement in 2017, several communities have developed by-laws to protect girls from child marriages.

This case explores the different pathways that led to this public announcement, an important step for girls' rights in Northern Ghana.

## PROBLEM

- ▶ Child marriage violates girls' rights to health, education and therewith independency. It often exposes girls to violence throughout their lives and traps them in a cycle of poverty
- ▶ More than 38% of girls aged 15-19 years are reported to have experienced at least one act of sexual violence
- ▶ In some areas in the Northern Region 39% of the girls are married before they are 18

## POPULATION

GHANA  
28.2 MILLION

39%

of the population is younger than 14 years old

NORTHERN REGION

45%

of the population is younger than 14

DISTRICT SAGNARIGU

149.000

DISTRICT GUSHEGU

111.000

## EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

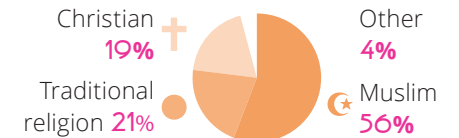
55%

of adult women finished secondary or higher education compared to 70% of male counterparts

75%

75% female participation in the labour market compared to 79% male participation

## RELIGION IN THE NORTHERN REGION



GHANA



## POLITICS



Presidential Representative Democratic Republic. Since 2017 President Nana Akufa Addo is in power

## CIVIC SPACE

The civil society space in Ghana is one of the healthiest and most free in Africa (CIVICUS, 2018). CSOs are generally able to operate freely, and play an important role in ensuring government accountability and transparency

## CHANGE WE SEEK

### 2017 GOAL

Nine paramount chiefs, female chiefs and queen mothers unanimously declare their commitment to fight child marriage



### 2020 GOAL

All traditional and religious leaders in the Northern region of Ghana publicly speak out against child marriage gender-based violence. Social norms on child marriage have shifted. The practice is no longer accepted



### 2030 GOAL

Girls and young women are free from all forms of gender-based violence and are economically empowered



## HOW DID WE DRIVE CHANGE?



**Engage champions** and facilitate their lobbying activities by **providing a platform** for them to speak out and making connections



**Regular conversations with and presentations** for the traditional and religious leaders, resisting the change, by those who are already championing the cause

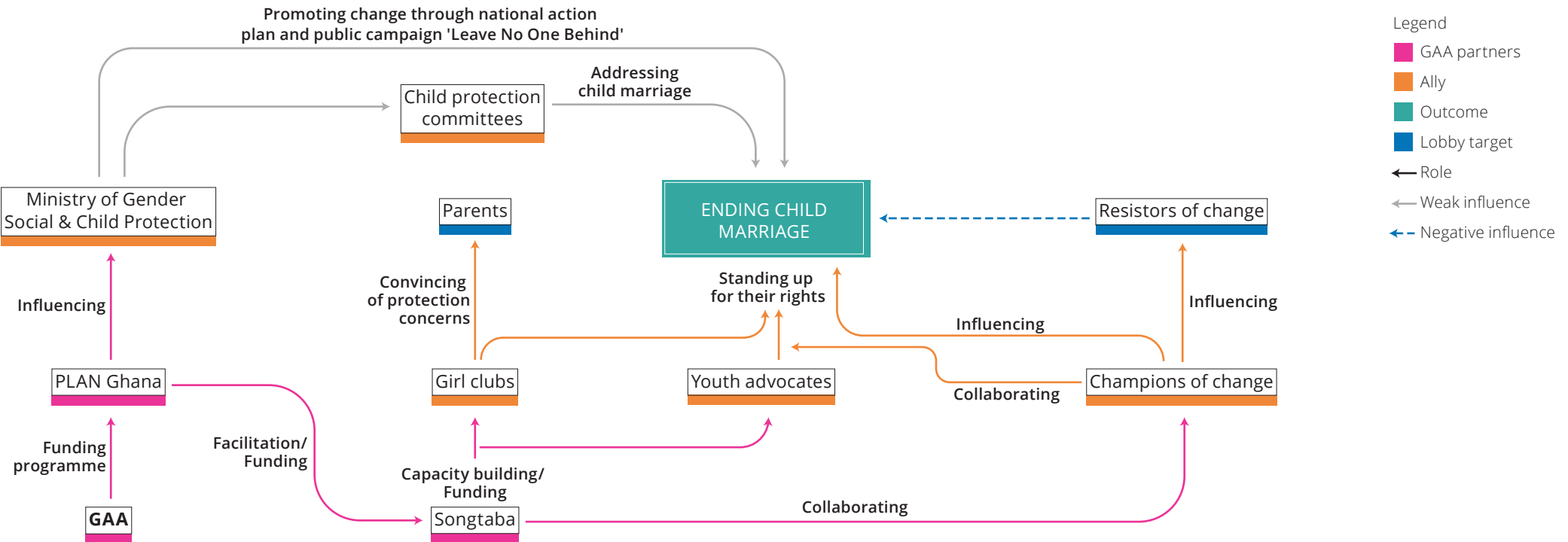


**Link leaders** from different levels (district, local, national) with each other



**Develop the advocacy ability** of girls and youth advocates and provide them with platforms to speak out

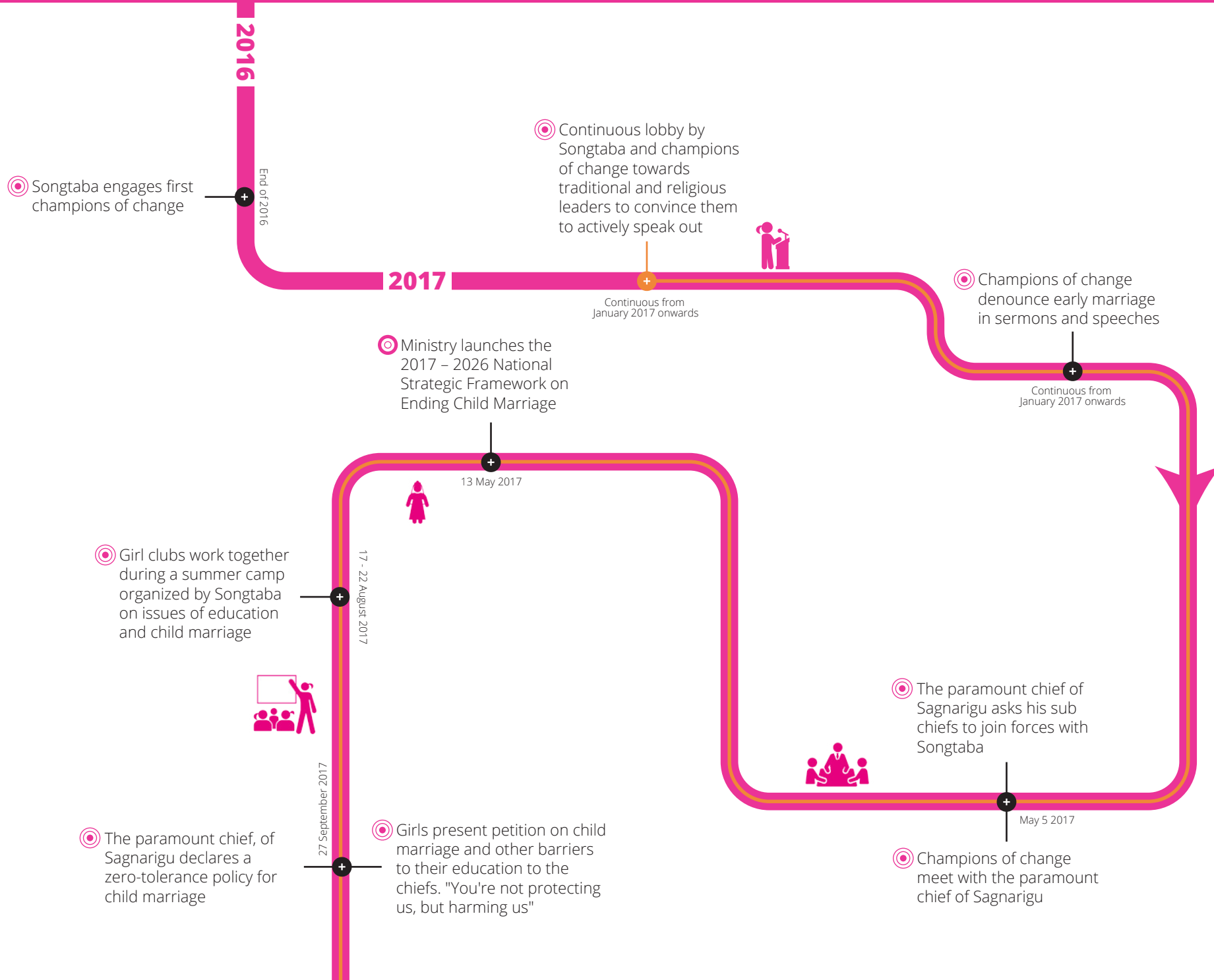
## WHO IS DRIVING THAT CHANGE?



# WHAT CHANGES HAVE WE SEEN?

## Legend

- ⊙ Local level
- ⊙ District level
- ⊙ National level



🎯 The District Chief Executives of Gushegu and Sagnarigu district declare their commitment to fight child marriage and all forms of violence against girls and young women

27 September 2017

🎯 **2017 GOAL**

Nine paramount chiefs, female chiefs and queen mothers unanimously declare their commitment to fight child marriage

11 October 2017

🎯 The girls from the girl clubs present a position paper on child marriage to the Gushegu district assembly



Throughout 2018

**2018**

22 November 2017

🎯 National campaign on gender-based violence "LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND; END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS" started by the ministry

Parents stop arranging child marriages: 9 girls have been rescued from child marriage in five communities in the Northern Region

Throughout 2018

**2020 GOAL**

All traditional and religious leaders in the Northern region of Ghana publicly speak out against child marriage gender-based violence. Social norms on child marriage have shifted. The practice is no longer accepted



## WHAT DID WE LEARN?

### A BALANCED ROLE IS KEY

In Ghana, the ability for civil society to exercise its watchdog function is considered one of the best on the African continent. Civil society organisations in Ghana therefore have a good starting point for advocacy work, both in terms of formal (government) and informal (traditional leadership) decision-making systems.

It is however important to realize that ultimately the government and its institutions remain responsible for upholding the rights of girls and young women and the laws that protect them. Being aware of the steps taken and strategy of the government and taking this into account is crucial.

### BRING THE LOCAL MESSAGE TO STAGE

A local viewpoint is often more credible and accepted more broadly than an external one. Songtaba found this to be true in its work with local champions of change. Its work proved to be effective: Songtaba did not bring in external agents of change or an external message. It identified champions of change from within the community itself. The champions of change were trained by Songtaba and received help in crafting their message. But it was their own message, communicated using their own words. The champions Songtaba works with are often in a position of power and have a large following. For example, religious leaders use their sermons to share their anti-child marriage message.

### LET THE GIRLS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

The victims of child marriage send a powerful message to leaders. Hearing the negative effects of child marriage from the girls themselves has a major effect on traditional leaders.

The Girl Advocacy Alliance and Songtaba helped girls craft and share their own message and stand up for their rights. GAA organised meetings between the girls and leaders, making sure that they got the opportunity to be heard. How powerful this is can be seen in their response. In one case it seems to have been the final push for action: shortly after receiving a petition from the girls, a group of leaders spoke out against child marriage.

### PATIENCE, PATIENCE AND YES AGAIN, PATIENCE

Change is a slow process and takes time. Working continuously on a regular basis with key leaders proved a valuable approach for the Girl Advocacy Alliance in Ghana. It took many visits to the same leaders to convince them of the importance to speak out against child marriage. Songtaba made use of existing structures to ensure regular contact. By using the access granted through the traditional leaders' weekly public consulting session, Songtaba and the champions for change could bring across their message.

### PROVIDE EXPERTISE DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF BY-LAWS

Local ownership of solutions for girls' rights issues is important and should be encouraged. However developing by-laws requires very specific expertise. It is therefore crucial to ensure that solutions are in line with children's rights. For example, a by-law which forbids children to leave home after 8pm because of safety issues would not be encouraged since it violates a child's rights.

### CHANGE THE WAY TO LOOK AT THINGS

National developments or international agreements are not always the best entry point for discussions on local change. Think from the perspective of your lobby target.

For Songtaba, using national laws to start discussions often led to resistance from traditional leaders. Other paths proved much more effective. For example, the Girl Advocacy Alliance's collaboration with a religious scholar who has worked on reinterpreting the Qur'an. He looked further than the fact that Mohammed had a child bride and focussed on the consequences of child marriage and what the Qur'an says about this. This resulted in fierce discussions but also helped people see the issue from a different perspective.

# REFLECTING ON POLICY CHANGE

The Girl Advocacy Alliance uses a straightforward, three-stage linear model to describe how civil society engagement on a policy issue is expected to result in lasting changes in the lives of girls and young women. Advocacy on issues related to protection against violence or economic exclusion follows a policy cycle resulting in agenda setting, leading to policy change, and, ultimately, culminating in practice change in the society at large. The alliance is the first to acknowledge that, while this model may have been useful to conceptualize the program, it does not represent the complexity of achieving social change through influencing policy.

## POLICY

A policy is a guide for decision-making and a commitment to a course of action. Some policy will become law. We use the term policy to include local and national government policies and those of international institutions, organisations [and companies].

In the interactive Advocacy toolkit, the alliance provides a helpful description of what policy is and how policy is made, introducing a process of five steps, including agenda setting, followed by decision making, policy design, policy implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Critically important, the toolkit highlights that “all of the steps may present lobbying opportunities”. Influencing policy can thus be done throughout the cycle, not only at the agenda setting stage. Acknowledging that influence can be exercised at different moments in the lifecycle of a policy, shows that the alliance in its advocacy work takes a more pragmatic approach to advocacy than merely following the linear model described above.

In this booklet we visualized in more detail how social change did actually take place over the past 2,5 years of working towards sustainable outcomes in the lives of girls and young women. The “roads to change” in the case studies describe

a variety of complex change process. Our stories, covering (at least) six policy contexts, provide anecdotal evidence supporting the view that the alliance, through coordinated, well-timed and persistent advocacy efforts towards policy makers and decision takers managed to influence and change various policy issues.

These successes were achieved across the various stages of the policy cycle. Examples include: the Southeast Asian region, where Online Child Sexual Exploitation is now firmly on the regional agenda (**Agenda setting**), the Philippines, where local governments are allocating budgets for GBV prevention and protection activities (**Policy implementation**), and Uganda, where youth-led research on the application of the 2006 Employment Act, contributed to the mandatory appointment of District Labour Officers to oversee policy enforcement (**Policy monitoring**).

Policy scholars, who research policy making processes more systematically and over longer periods of time than the 2.5 years of the Girl Advocacy Alliance programme, refer to the people involved in this policy process with an analogy of “the ant on the beach” (Simon, 1996: 51):

*“We watch an ant make his laborious way across a wind- and wave-moulded beach. He moves ahead, angles to the right to ease his climb up a steep dune let, detours around a pebble, stops for a moment to exchange information with a compatriot. Thus he makes his weaving, halting way to his destination. It is a sequence of irregular, angular segments: not quite a random walk, for it has an underlying sense of direction, of aiming toward a goal.”*

Looking at the path from a distance, the questions arise: Why it is not a straight line? Why does the ant not aim directly from its starting point to its goal? In the case of the ant we know the answer.



*“He has a general sense of where his destination lies, but he cannot foresee all the obstacles between. He must adapt his course repeatedly to the difficulties he encounters and often detour uncrossable barriers. His horizons are very close, so that he deals with each obstacle as he comes to it; he probes for ways around or over it, without much thought for future obstacles.”*

According to policy scholars, policy makers and decision takers have to deal with the same ambiguity and uncertainty as the ant (Cairney, 2017). In policy making issues can be framed in a variety of ways and it is impossible to have all the information about an issue. The policy making process is so complex that it is unfeasible to develop the cognitive skills necessary to oversee all implications of potential solutions. In short, it is not possible to make a rational choice. Policy makers thus have to deal with their ‘bounded rationality’ and take irrational and emotional decisions.

The most widely used theory in policy studies, the multiple streams approach, sees the policy change process as a series of windows of opportunities (Kingdon, 1984). These opportunities arise when three streams come together:

- Problem stream: A policy issue receives sufficient attention
- Policy stream: A policy solution is available for the problem
- Politics stream: A reason and opportunity exist for policy makers to act

Instead of a linear or a cyclical process, policy influencing then becomes an art of understanding and navigating these streams and pushing for change when the moment arises. Advocates who know how to create such windows of opportunities are called policy entrepreneurs (Cairney and Weible, 2018). Such entrepreneurs have three basic characteristics to increase the impact of their advocacy work in complex and often unpredictable policy contexts:

- **Framing:** First of all, they understand that agenda setting is primarily about exercising power to draw the attention to an issue, at the expense of other issues, by framing the issue in such a way that other interpretations are no longer relevant. Attention for a policy issue can be extremely short.  
Example: In Southeast Asia, the alliance deliberately chose ASEAN as a vehicle to address the growing problem of online child sexual exploitation, framing the issue as an international trend surpassing national jurisdiction. The alliance used the subsequent attention for online exploitation to also address ongoing offline sexual abuse and exploitation nationally.
- **Timing:** Secondly, they know that good timing is crucial. Because there is little time to develop solutions when a policy issue has attention, they develop realistic solutions in the meantime, that can be proposed when a window of opportunity emerges.  
Example: In the Philippines, the alliance engaged very effectively with the local government decision makers before, during and after elections. The alliance developed a database for children in need of special protection based on existing government information and tools, providing newly appointed mayors with concrete ideas for the 3-year local government Executive and Legislative Agenda.
- **Adaptation:** Lastly, entrepreneurs have the ability to adapt to their environment to make use of these windows of opportunity – or even better, how to help create such opportunities for policy makers to act when the time is right.  
Example: In Ghana, local partner Songtaba and local champions of change continuously lobby traditional and religious leaders the speak out against child marriage and harness these positive outcomes. Building on the increased formal commitments from community leaders and government officials on occasions such as sermons and speeches, alliance girls clubs take the momentum to present a position paper on child marriage to the district assembly.

The above reflection on policy entrepreneurs and examples from the Girl Advocacy Alliance programme shows that across the different contexts, the alliance puts serious efforts to engaging purposefully with the key institutions and influential decision makers and assessing opportunities for policy influencing. In doing so, the alliance members and their partners demonstrate significant (probably unknowingly) adherence to the characteristics of effective policy entrepreneurs.

# THE ROAD TO FUNCTIONING CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEES AT VILLAGE LEVEL

In the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh children face the risk of early marriage and child trafficking. Community leadership, government, civil society and the private sector have taken steps to strengthen response mechanisms. But little was done at community level to prevent these abuses. Formally the Village Level Child Protection Committees are responsible for the prevention of crimes against children. However, these committees only existed on paper.

Through well-targeted and persistent lobbying, the Girl Advocacy Alliance was successful in the developing a manual to train and guide these committees. Village Level Child Protection Committees (VLCPC's) in Telangana state are now better equipped to perform their child protection responsibilities. This case delves into this targeted approach and explores how this led to big steps towards better functioning Child Protection Committees.

## PROBLEM

- ▶ In India it is estimated that 150 million girls and 73 million boys under 18 have been subjected sexual violence
- ▶ Children between the ages of 5 to 12 are at the highest risk for abuse and exploitation
- ▶ Trafficking includes children being used for prostitution, forced into marriage, illegally adopted, used as cheap or unpaid labour and organ harvesting
- ▶ The number of children trafficked in India is reportedly highest in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh
- ▶ Trafficking is one of the hardest crimes to track and investigate; data is hard to obtain
- ▶ 50% of VLCPC's in Telangana (9500) and Andhra Pradesh (7000) not functioning

## POPULATION

INDIA  
**1.3 BILLION**  
(2nd largest population in the world)

TELANGANA STATE  
**35 MILION**

ANDRA PRADESH STATE  
**49 MILION**

**50%**

population below  
25 years old

## CHILD PROTECTION

**40%**

of births registered in  
Telangana

**40%**

of births registered in  
Andhra Pradesh

**48%**

of women between 20-24  
years are married before the  
legal age of 18 yrs Telangana

**52%**

of women between 20-24  
years are married before the  
legal age of 18 yrs Andhra  
Pradesh

## POLITICS



**Andhra Pradesh** is one of 29 states in India. Situated in the south-east of the country, it is the eighth-largest state. On 2 June 2014, the north-western portion of Andhra Pradesh was separated to form the new state of **Telangana**

**India** is the most populous parliamentary democracy in the world. Narendra Modi was elected prime minister in 2014



## CIVIC SPACE: OBSTRUCTED

India boasts an active and vibrant civil society. However the government uses tactics like restrictive legislation to deny CSOs their right to register, and in some cases suspends or withdraws CSO permits to operate

## CHANGE WE SEEK

### 2018 GOAL

Release of manual by secretary and Commissioner – DWDCW and dissemination to 3 participating District Child Protection Unit and the involved Village Level Child Protection Units



### 2019 & 2020 GOAL

**2019:** Roll out to all 31 Districts of Telangana

**2020:** Villages in all districts in Telangana and Adrah Pradesh states have functioning Child Protection Committees



### 2030 GOAL

Girls and young women are free from all forms of gender-based violence and are economically empowered



## HOW DID WE DRIVE CHANGE?



**Policy analysis & research**, assessing the problems related to the VLCPC capacities



**Policy proposal development**, taking initiative for and developing a VLCPC Manual



**Relationship building with decision makers**, engaging with and continuously supporting key individuals within government departments and communities

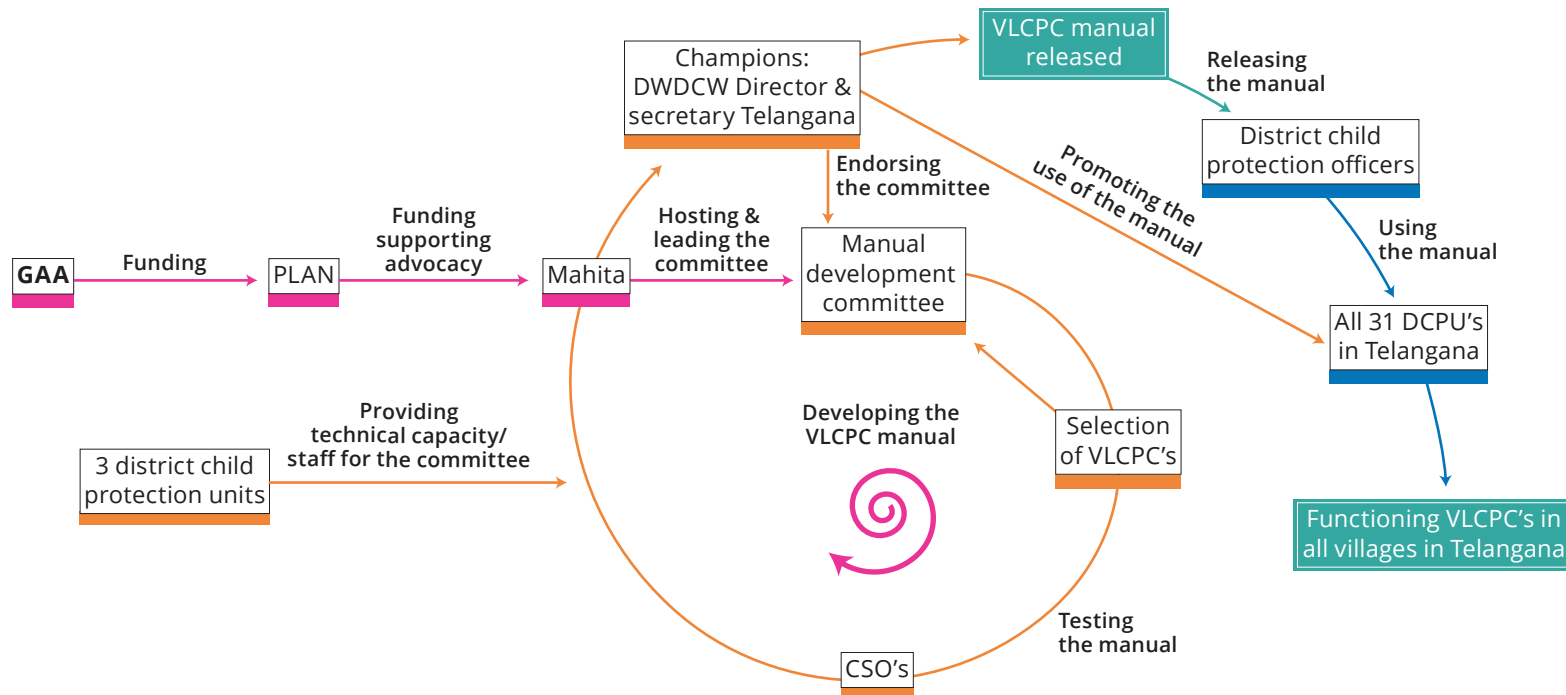


**Champion development**, giving specific key influencers a platform



**Briefings & presentations**, getting buy-in for the manual and providing updates about progress

## WHO IS DRIVING THAT CHANGE?



### Legend

- GAA partners
- Ally
- Outcome
- Lobby target
- Role

### VLCPC

- Village Level Child Protection Committees

### DWDCW

- Department for Women Development & Child Welfare

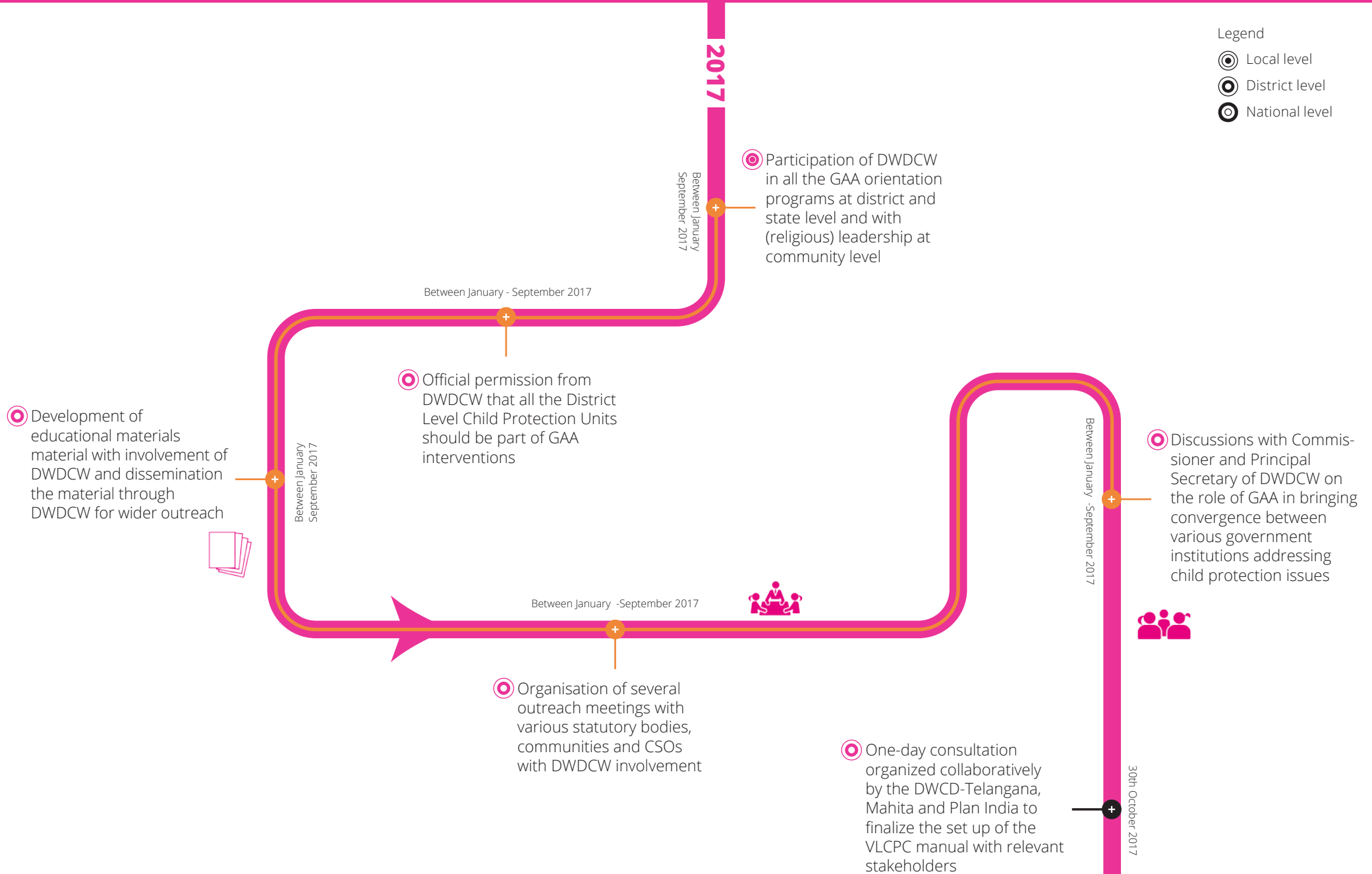
### DCPU

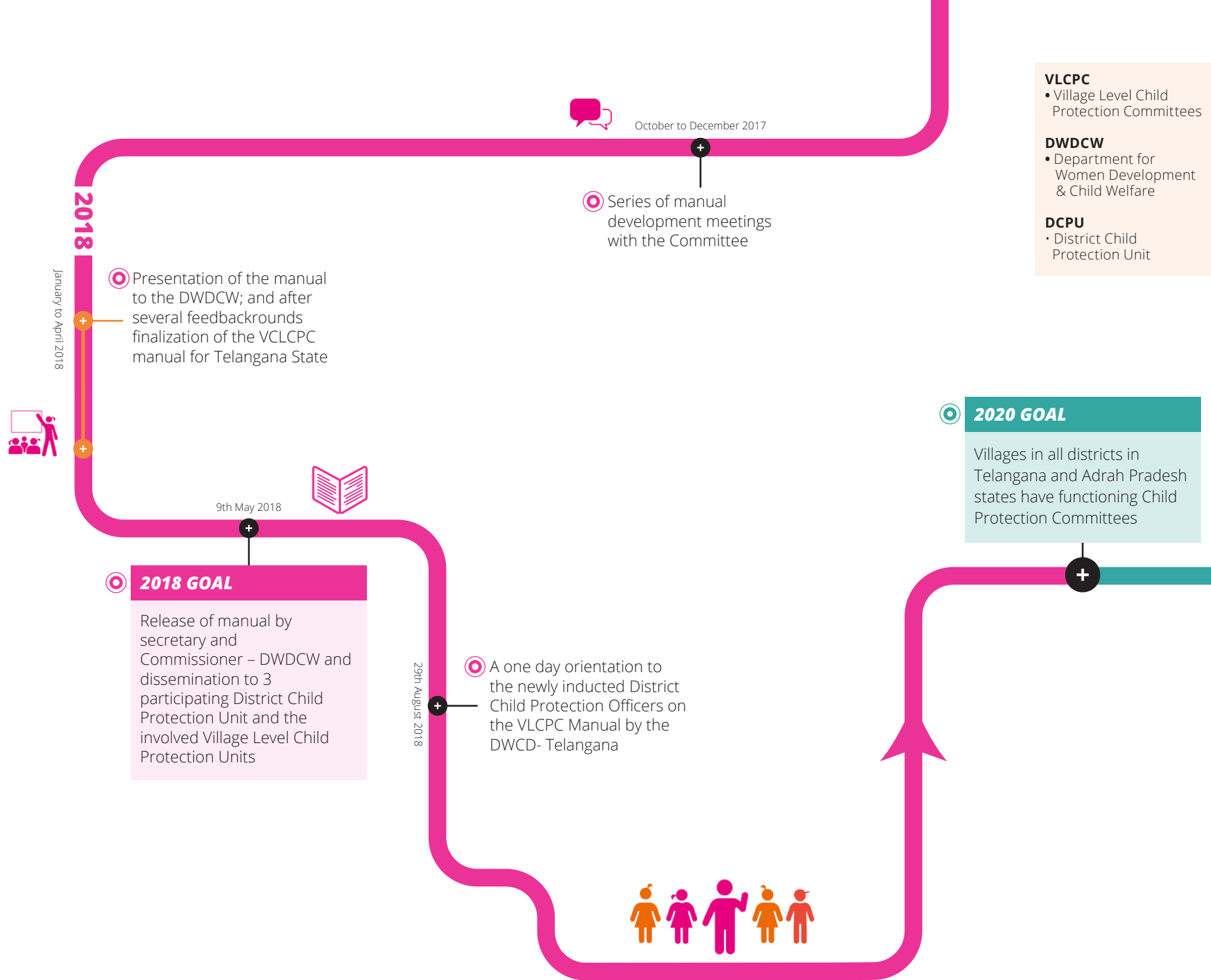
- District Child Protection Unit

# WHAT CHANGES HAVE WE SEEN?

## Legend

- Local level
- District level
- National level





## WHAT DID WE LEARN?

### GET TO KNOW THE KEY BARRIERS HOLDING BACK CHANGE

Policy issues are positioned in different phases of the policy cycle. Sometimes an issue didn't make it to the agenda of policy-makers yet. Sometimes an issue is already addressed at policy level but needs practical follow up. Knowing where your issue is positioned is critical for the success of advocacy.

The Girl Advocacy Alliance in India identified the lack of capacity at village level as the main barrier to the effective prevention of violence and crimes against children. Rallying support so that the protection committees became a reality was an important factor for success.

### FINDING WINNABLE ISSUES PAYS OFF

While persistence is a key factor for advocacy to be successful, finding out which issues or proposals already have significant support helps to achieve wins.

There was no significant opposition to implementing the protection committees. The main barrier was the number of officials that needed to be educated about and convinced of the urgency of the issue. This made it a relatively easy-win.

### SECURE DECISION-MAKER BUY-IN

Decision-makers can make things happen but they need the right platform and timing to exercise their power. They need to have the feeling that there is something in it for them.

Key stakeholders in the lobby process were well targeted. To get buy-in for the development of the manual, high-level officials had to be brought on board. Giving the Department of Women's Development and Child Welfare director and secretary an appropriate role in the process helped to secure their buy-in.

### DEFINE ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES FIRST

Effective lobbying is often a collective effort which requires different roles and responsibilities. To achieve objectives, effort should be put into finding out who can play which role within and between organisations and stakeholders.

The programme team took a leadership role to convince the Department of Women's Development and Child Welfare of the need for action. The Department's commissioner and staff provided expertise in the development of the manual thus ensuring buy-in for sustained changes.

### SHOWING URGENCY AND SOLUTIONS

Before anything else, lobby targets need to be convinced of the urgency of your issue. This can be communicated in many different ways, showing the size of the problem or the benefits of the solution.

Research showed that something had to be done about child rights violations at the village level. And the Alliance also identified a realistic solution: developing training materials for capacity building within the committees.

# POWERFUL GIRLS ARE CHANGING THE WORLD

The Alliance believes that young people will spearhead global movements for justice and rights. This has been the case for every movement for solidarity and human rights in the past. That is why our first focus is to strengthen the advocacy capacity of young female leaders.

Girls often have to fight to be heard and taken seriously. However there are many examples of powerful girls who successfully advocate for their rights. Advocates like Subhashini. Learn from her story about how to best support her and other brave activists in India.



## MEET SUBHASHINI

*Grieteke Meerman*

Subhashini (19) was unable to stop the forced child marriage of the girl next door. But as a youth advocate of the Girls Advocacy Alliance, she's been inspired to set up a local network dedicated to preventing child marriages. She wants to convince village elders, parents and local authorities of the dangers of child marriages and the importance of education.

She might be small, bespectacled and softly spoken, but make no mistake - Subhashini is a force to be reckoned with. "Eventually, I want to be a high-ranking police officer, a position from which I intend to combat child marriages," she says from her parents' one-room home in a farming village in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. And her ambition is not something that's just come out of the blue. "I've seen so many child marriages and I think it's now time to do something about it. It's the biggest problem facing this region."

### The tradition of child marriage

Despite the fact that it has been against the law in India since 2006, like so many of her compatriots, until recently Subhashini simply accepted child marriage as part of the country's tradition. She now thinks otherwise. And what opened her eyes were the efforts of a local aid organisation that prevented several child marriages in a nearby village.

Her parents, both Christians who work the land, sit peacefully next to one another. But it hasn't always been like that. When Subhashini was born, her father rejected her. He didn't want a daughter because of the dowry he would later be expected to pay from his meagre income. Instead, he chose the easy option and ran, letting her mother and grandmother share the responsibility of his daughter's upbringing. When her grandmother died, Subhashini met her father again at the funeral and wanted him to reclaim his role as a father. "I accused him of not accepting his responsibility and he replied that fresh insights had caused him to regret his decision to abandon me. He's been living with us again for about a year now and he helps out."

### Education first, then marriage

Her father, who is not very talkative, admits that a good education is the most important thing for his daughter. "She's not ready to get married yet," he says. "We'd like her to finish her studies first, so she can have an independent and secure future later."

The young girl who lived next door to Subhashini was not so lucky. At just 17, she was recently married off to an older man and now lives far away with her in-laws, laments Subhashini. "We tried to convince her parents to wait until she'd finished school but they were in a hurry because they feared that their daughter was in love with another boy and would opt instead for a love marriage."

### The dangers of love marriages

A love marriage (one that has not been arranged by the bride and groom's parents) is taboo in India. Things have been changing in the past 10 years but the general consensus is still that not you but your parents will be able to find your soul mate. This is connected to with social hierarchy in Indian society, or in other words, the caste system. If your son marries a girl from what is deemed a lower caste, you run the risk of being excluded from the community. Honour crimes are also often committed in these situations.

An information programme was recently rolled out in Subhashini's village and it really inspired her. The objectives of the programme are to promote education for girls and combat child marriages, with both being seen as two sides of the same coin. Everyone became involved in the programme, both girls and their parents, she says. "Because this is the only way to start a chain reaction for social change."

### Eradicating child marriages

Subhashini plans to set up a network in her community that is dedicated to preventing child marriages. "In practice this means being able to influence the village elders when necessary. And if we cannot convince them to stop a marriage, we'll talk to the girl's parents. If they're not willing to listen, we'll bring in the local authority because it is, after all, illegal. Finally, as a last measure I'll mobilise the whole group to take appropriate action."



### First results!

Despite not even having set up her network yet, she has already booked her first results. "In a nearby village there are far fewer girls going to school than there are here and there are many more child marriages there. Supported by police officers and employees of an aid organisation, I have been instrumental in stopping at least one child marriage there," says Subhashini.



# THE ROAD TO ADDRESSING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE

National policies, legislation and plans of action in Southeast Asia have not been enough to combat the complex and relatively new issue of online sexual exploitation of children. The Girl Advocacy Alliance has developed a new regional advocacy strategy based on the assumption that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), an influential intergovernmental body, can help create a widely supported regional approach and set minimum national standards. The Alliance worked with ASEAN's consultative intergovernmental body on women and children's rights and Unicef to get online child sexual exploitation on the ASEAN agenda.

This case examines the process and collaborations that were key to getting a new and challenging issue on the agenda.

## PROBLEM

- ▶ The proliferation of the Internet has given child sex offenders many more opportunities to sexually exploit children without ever leaving their home
- ▶ The production of child sexual abuse material in the Philippines occurs on an industrial scale, and generates up to US\$1 billion a year
- ▶ Online child sexual exploitation is a growing global phenomenon
- ▶ Findings from a 2011 investigation into sexual exploitation of children in Laos found that CD shops have child sexual abuse material available for download to mobile phones and memory sticks

## DEFINITIONS

**"Online child sexual exploitation"** refers to cyber sexual exploitation and abuse through digital technology. Examples of this include grooming, indecent images of children taken through coercion and use of children in audio or visual images of child abuse.

**"Grooming/online grooming"** refers to the process of establishing/building a relationship with a child either in person or through the use of the internet or other digital technologies to facilitate either online or offline sexual contact.

## POPULATION

ASEAN REGION  
**639 MILLION**

## REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations was founded 1967 to function as a loose regional economic structure. Since its inception, ASEAN evolved into an influential body covering the full range of policy issues affecting the region.

### Protection of women and children

In 2010, ASEAN set up the Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), comprising of twenty Representatives. Two from each Member State, one for women's rights and one for children's rights. The ACWC is mandated to develop policies, programmes, and innovative strategies to promote and protect the rights of women and children. In 2016, the Heads of States adopted the Regional Action Plan on the Elimination of Violence Against Children. The Action Plan lists "preventive measures against violence in cyberspace" as one of the priority areas for national governments. In 2019, Thailand – the champion on sexual exploitation of children issues in the ACWC - holds the annually rotating chair position.



## CHANGE WE SEEK

### 2018 GOAL

Official announcement of the working group to draft the ASEAN Declaration on Online Child Sexual Exploitation

### 2020 GOAL

Adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on Online Child Sexual Exploitation and translation into concrete national level action plans in all ASEAN countries

### 2030 GOAL

Girls and young women are free from all forms of gender-based violence and are economically empowered



## HOW DID WE DRIVE CHANGE?



**Ensuring the participation of champions of change** (the lawmakers that are leaders on the subject) in important discussions



**Providing inputs** into drafting a first version of the ASEAN Declaration



**Making briefings and presentations** for several ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and the Thai ministry

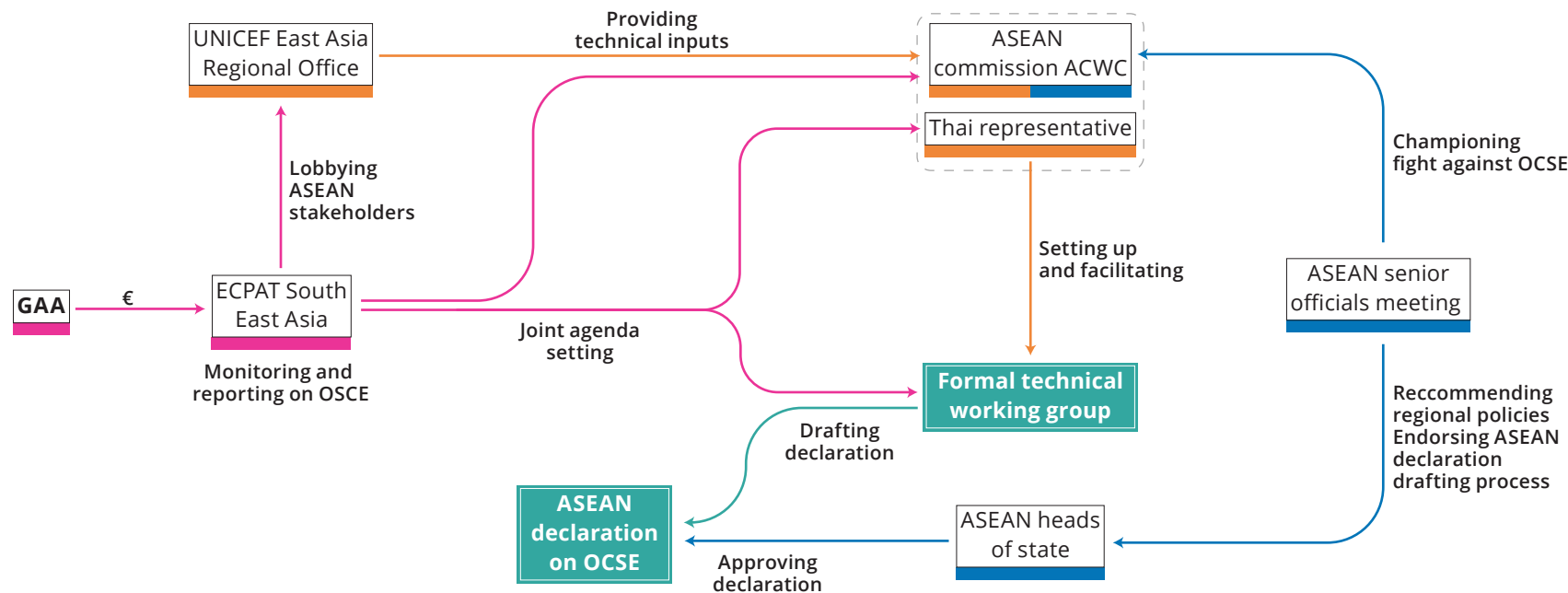


**Building durable relationships** with decision makers. Most importantly in this case the relationship with Thai representative H.E. Wanchai Roujanavong



**Providing technical assistance** during several workshops with SOMSWD and ACWC

## WHO IS DRIVING THAT CHANGE?



### Legend

■ GAA partners

■ Ally

■ Lobby target

← Role

■ Outcome

### ASEAN

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations

### ECPAT

- A child right's organisation that is solely focusing on ending the sexual exploitation of children

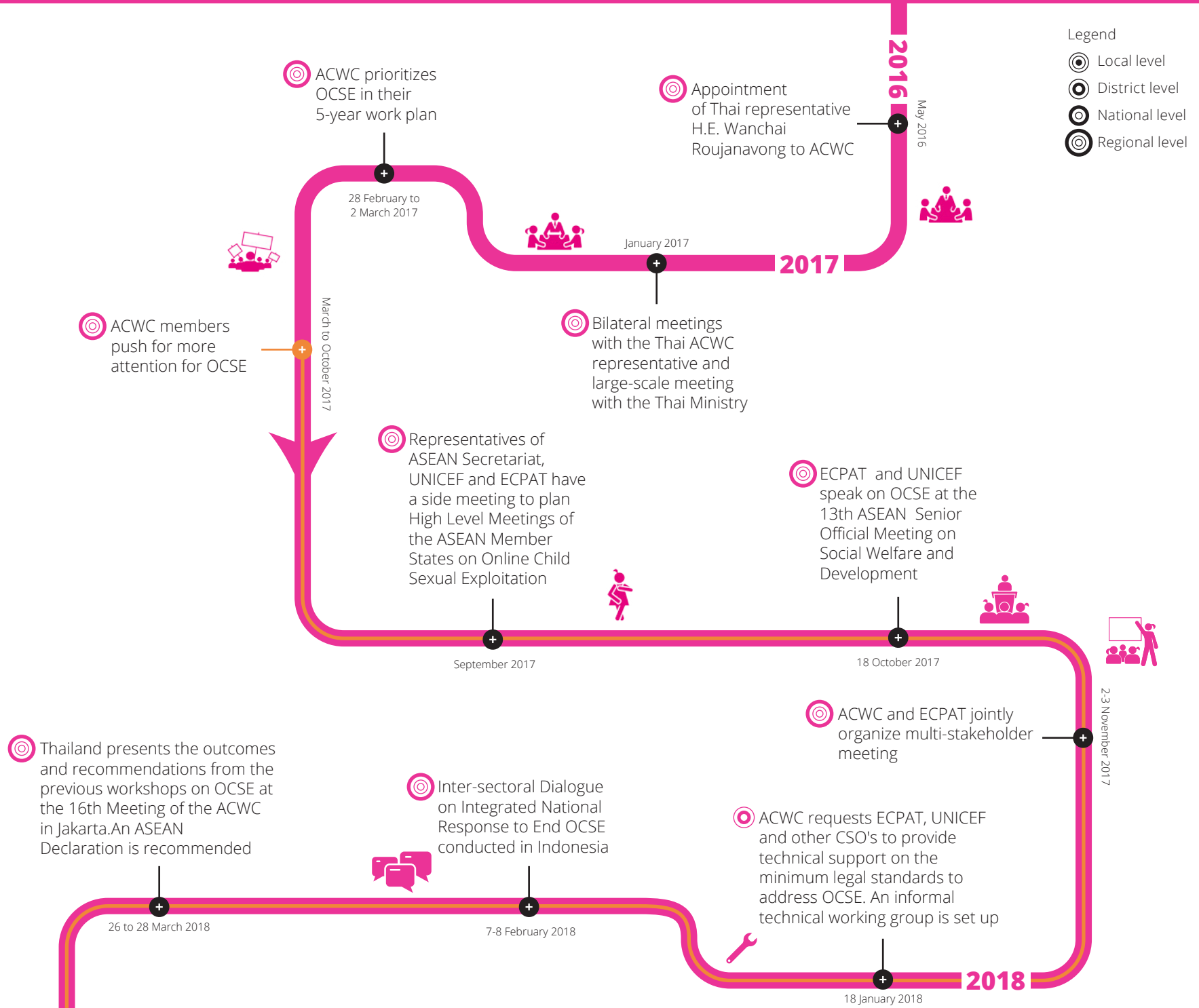
### ACWC

- The Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children

### OCSE

- Online Child Sexual Exploitation

# WHAT CHANGES HAVE WE SEEN?



🎯 ASEAN set up a working group to draft the Declaration. The working group is setting up a timeline for moving forward with the Declaration



May 2018 onwards

🎯 ECPAT provides input for the Declaration



May 2018

🎯 **2018 GOAL**

Official announcement of the working group to draft the ASEAN Declaration on Online Child Sexual Exploitation

October 2018

🎯 Tentative workshop with ACWC to review and work on the official declaration



February 2019

🎯 ACWC members and other champions of change lobby their colleagues for the Declaration

February 2019 – December 2019

🎯 ASEAN summit in which the Declaration will hopefully be adopted. The adoption will ideally lead to concrete action plans in the countries



December 2019

**ASEAN**

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations

**ECPAT**

- A child right's organisation that is solely focusing on ending the sexual exploitation of children

**ACWC**

- The Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children

**OCSE**

- Online Child Sexual Exploitation

**2020 GOAL**

The Declaration on Online Child Sexual Exploitation has been adopted and translated into concrete national level action plans

## WHAT DID WE LEARN?

### CHOOSE THE RIGHT FRAME FOR YOUR TOPIC

DCI-ECPAT chose to focus on online child sexual exploitation for several reasons but primarily because this is a major issue in the region. Two strategic factors also played a role. Firstly, online sexual exploitation of children is an emerging global trend and thus an 'easier sell' to national representatives. Secondly, as it is a relatively new issue, representatives are likely to be more receptive to addressing the issue.

Although the lobby focus lies on the online aspect of sexual exploitation, there is a clear offline element to the issue. ECPAT is very aware of this and where possible uses discussion on online exploitation as a starting point for a broader conversation.

### INVEST IN LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

Trust is necessary for influencing policy changes within government and regional bodies. Government officials in this region can be quite sceptical about NGOs.

A long-term relationship gave ECPAT a way into ASEAN. The Thai representative to ASEAN's consultative intergovernmental body on women and children's rights had a longstanding relationship with ECPAT International's regional office. Similar relationships were established and nurtured by partners at national level, giving ECPAT several good entry points for this lobby. Investing in long-term relationships may offer important opportunities.

### USE A CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH

ECPAT uses a very constructive lobbying approach rather than a confrontational one. It aims to engage stakeholders constructively providing information, advice and technical support. There are no demonstrations or criticising of regional bodies or governments. Through this collaborative approach, it has been able to build trust and form partnerships with key players in regional bodies and national governments. In a region where trust is vital in getting things done, this has proven to be a valuable and very effective approach.

### DO NOT CLAIM THE LOBBY SUCCESS AS YOUR WIN

It is important to recognise the ownership and added value of regional bodies in regional developments. They are indispensable in taking forward the promises at regional and national levels. It also means emphasising that successes, such as declarations, are attributed to the legitimate body (ASEAN and its consultative intergovernmental body on women and children's rights). Such achievements should never be overly touted as a product of lobbying by civil society organisations as this can create a backlash. ECPAT has been very careful to frame the lobby work itself as collaboration and positioned itself in a role that facilitates, rather than forces, change.

# THE ROAD TO GETTING GIRLS ON THE AGENDA FROM GENEVA TO NAIROBI.

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) holds national governments accountable for their (in)actions in realising the goals of the convention to ensure girls' and women's rights. Through a periodic review governments provide a progress update on the steps taken to combat discrimination against women. Other stakeholders such as NGOs are allowed to share their reflections as well through so-called shadow reports.

As a result of coordinated lobby efforts by the Girl Advocacy Alliance and their partners in Kenya and Geneva, the recommendations in 2018 give much more explicit attention to the situation of girls in Kenya.

Furthermore, the link between the Alliance partners in Geneva and Nairobi ensures immediate follow up with the Kenyan government on their commitments under the convention.

## PROBLEM

- ▶ CEDAW reporting focuses primarily on women in general, rather than on the specific situation of girls in e.g. Kenya
- ▶ 21% of women between the ages of 15-49 nationwide have undergone Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting with major regional differences
  - ▶ 98% in North Eastern region
  - ▶ 26% in Eastern region
- ▶ 39% of women between the ages of 15-49 in Kenya have experienced sexual violence
- ▶ 22% of Kenyan women between the age of 20-24 were married before the age of 18

## POPULATION

KENYA  
**49,7 MILLION**  
 41% of population aged 14 years or younger

## CIVIC SPACE

**Kenya** has an active NGO sector, but civil society groups have faced growing obstacles in recent years, including repeated government attempts to deregister hundreds of NGOs for alleged financial violations. The attempts were seen in part as an effort to silence criticism of the government's human rights record.

**CEDAW** guarantees civil society involvement in the process of monitoring the performance of a national government party to the Convention. While effective engagement with CEDAW requires expert knowledge of the system and its procedures, the civic space is generally conducive to civil society advocacy work.

## POLITICS



Kenya is a multiparty democracy that holds regular elections, but its political rights and civil liberties are seriously undermined by pervasive corruption, and brutality by security forces



## DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA

- RANK 142** out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index
- RANK 137** out of 160 countries on the Gender Inequality Index
- RANK 76** out of 144 countries on the Global Gender Gap index

## CHANGE WE SEEK

### 2018 GOAL

The Concluding Recommendations of CEDAW on Kenya gave more explicit attention to the specific situation of girls (22 mentions), and more recommendations are on GAA related themes (25 out of 60).



### 2020 GOAL

The CEDAW recommendations are implemented in Kenya and complied with, helping girls to be more economically empowered and suffer less from gender-based violence.



### 2030 GOAL

Girls and young women are free from all forms of gender-based violence and are economically empowered



## HOW DID WE DRIVE CHANGE



**Research and policy analysis** to substantiate issues



**Organize trainings** to strengthen technical capacity of CSOs



Actively participate in CEDAW review process through **briefings, oral statements and working group meeting**

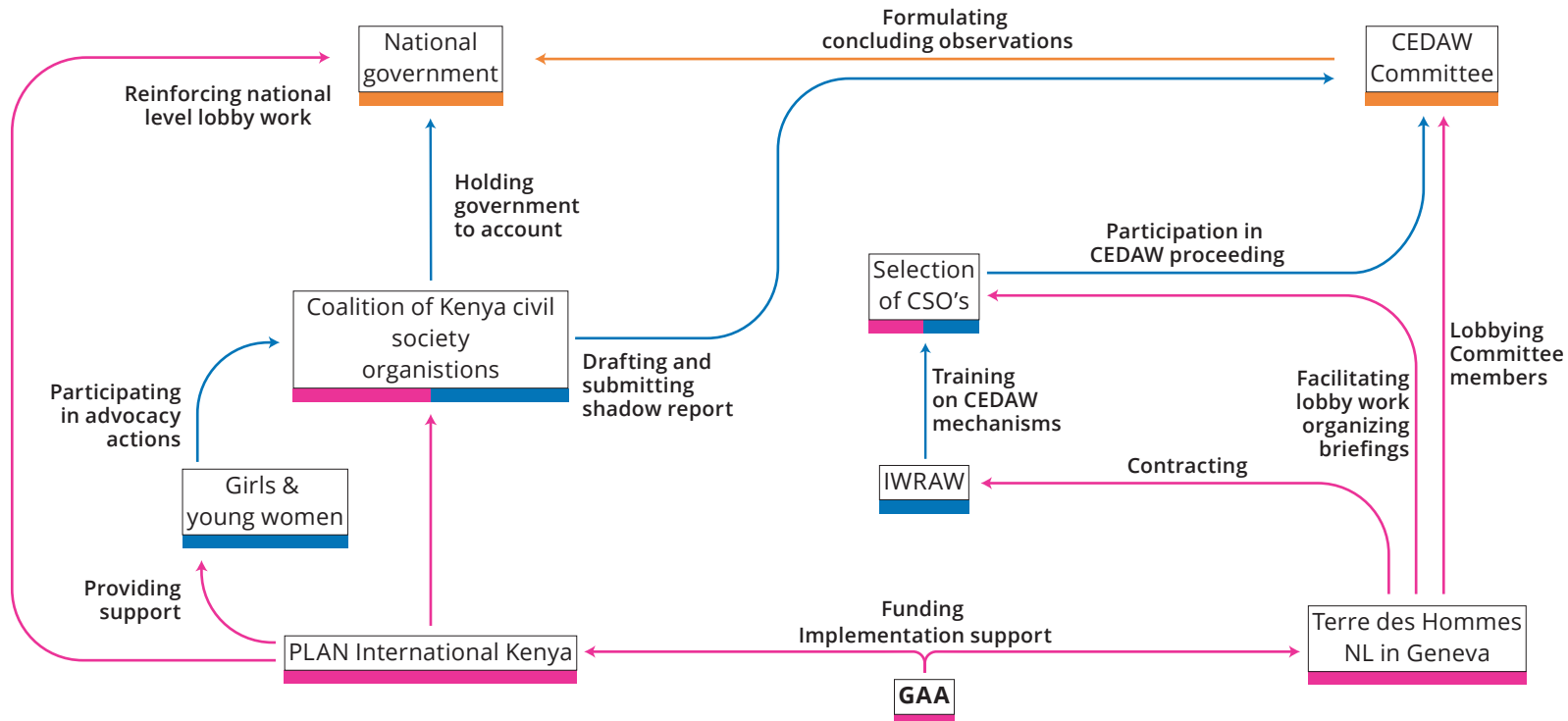


(International) advocacy **capacity development of national CSOs**



**Coalition and network building** of national CSOs on international level

## WHO IS DRIVING THAT CHANGE?



Legend

■ GAA partners

■ Lobby target

■ Ally

■ Outcomes

← Role

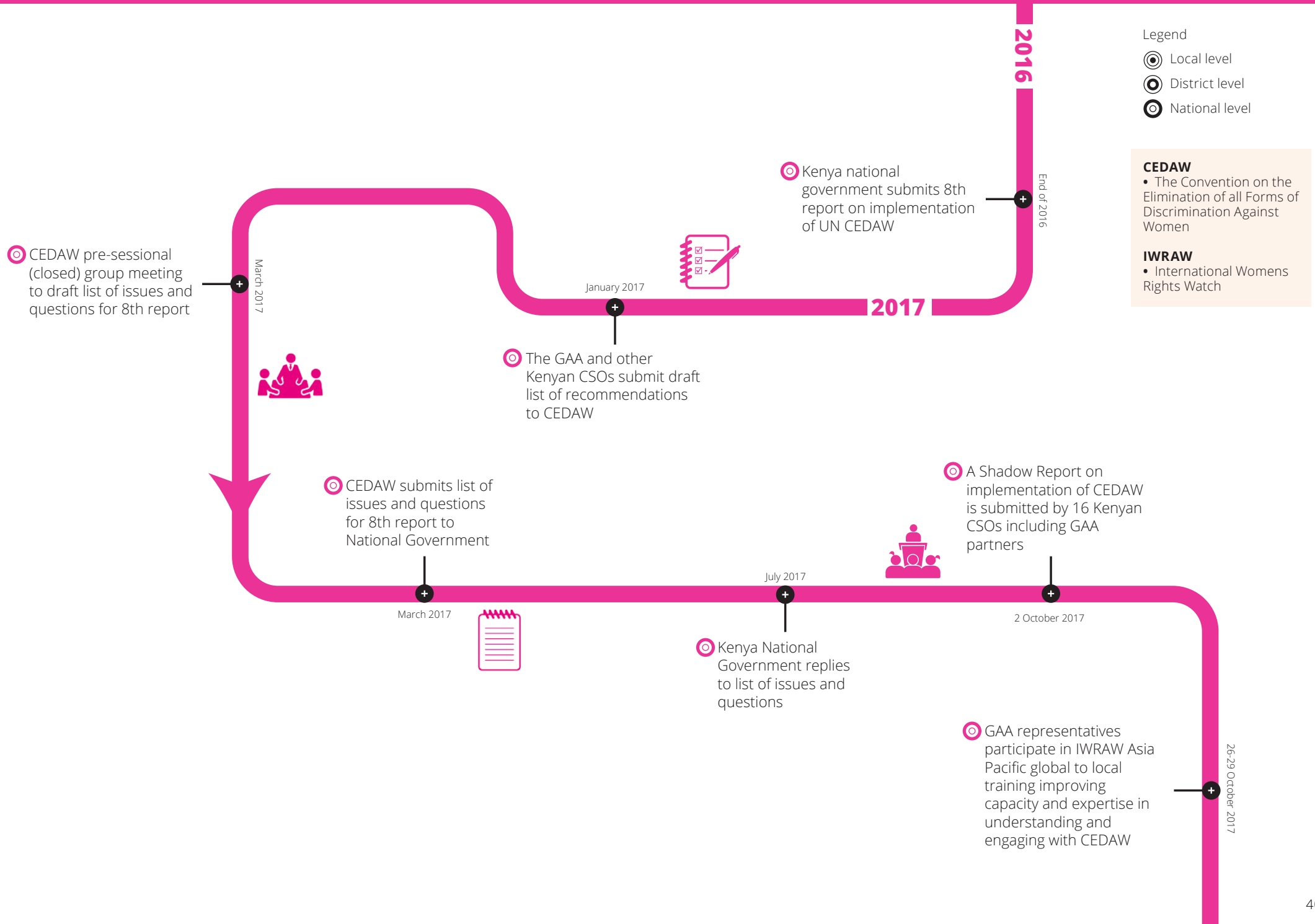
**CEDAW**

• The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

**IWRAW**

• International Womens Rights Watch

# WHAT CHANGES HAVE WE SEEN?







30 October 2017

Public meeting CEDAW and NGO's in which GAA Kenya gives short statement highlighting issues of violence against girls

Oral statement of GAA Kenya (concerning issues of violence against girls) in the review meeting with CEDAW and Kenya national government

1 November 2017

2 November 2017



NGO's discussed their issues with CEDAW in private lunch briefing. GAA Kenya moderates the lunch briefing

### 2018 GOAL

The Concluding Recommendations of CEDAW on Kenya gave more explicit attention to the specific situation of girls (22 mentions), and more recommendations are on GAA related themes (25 out of 60)



22 November 2017

## 2018

GAA Kenya APT training on follow-up to the CEDAW concluding observations - develop ToC, outcomes, prioritize recommendations to lobby the government, develop list of advocacy action points 2019

1 August 2018

Follow up to the concluding observations is included in the 2019-2020 advocacy plans of GAA Kenya in order to reinforce national advocacy work



Future steps

### 2020 GOAL

The CEDAW recommendations are implemented in Kenya and complied with, helping girls to be more economically empowered and suffer less from gender-based violence



## WHAT DID WE LEARN?

### ENSURE DIRECT FOLLOW UP

The inclusion of specific Kenyan guidance in the CEDAW concluding recommendations was a great achievement. The translation of these into concrete steps on the ground is an important next step to ensure that girls and young women in Kenya will actually benefit from them. The connection between GAA International and national partners was used to ensure quick follow up. GAA International participated in training on how to follow up nationally and as a result GAA Kenya prioritised the recommendations in their advocacy action points for 2019.

### TRAIN CSOS ON HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISM

In advance of the CEDAW review, the Girl Advocacy Alliance trained Kenyan civil society organisations on the ins and outs of this human rights mechanism. This resulted in a considerable increase in the engagement of CSOs with the review and reinforced their ownership of the process. Working as an alliance (with almost 50 civil society and community organisations, including GAA members) had the advantage of access to a wide range of expertise and experience. The process strengthened the link between national and international advocacy.

### COORDINATE TO DELIVER A STRONG MESSAGE

Given the constraints in the formal procedures and the presence of many other organisations during the review sessions, the GAA made sure to highlight key issues to ensure these were brought to the CEDAW committee's attention. As coordinator, the GAA took time, before the review sessions, to discuss the relevance of different issues and to prioritise these with other CSOs. It also appointed a spokesperson per topic to be more effective in responding to the committee's questions. As moderator, the GAA made sure clear and strong messages were delivered in the limited timeframe during the review sessions.

### CREATE LEVERAGE BY STRATEGIC INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Girl Advocacy Alliance members made considerable efforts to proactively and strategically engage in the full process of the human rights review mechanism. By playing an active role in moderating open and closed briefings and coordinating sessions with CEDAW committee members they had the opportunity to highlight the need to focus on the specific plight of girls and bring other GAA related issues to the attention of CEDAW members.

# REFLECTING ON LESSONS LEARNED

**In this booklet we shared six stories about societies in transition. Societies in which progress is made in protecting girls and young women from all forms of violence and in securing their safe and equal participation in economic activities. As we have seen through the timeline visualisations, the roads towards these positive outcomes differ considerably. These differences can partly be explained by the unique interplay between actors and factors in each of the contexts where the changes took place. Who has the real power to make change happen? What are the drivers and barriers for change to take place?**

In **Ghana** for example, the central government has little influence over changing child marriage practices in Northern communities. Real influencing power lies with the traditional and religious leadership at sub-national levels.

Some leaders provide strong support to end child marriage while others continue to fiercely oppose the change in tradition. In **India** and **Uganda** on the other hand, the respective central and State governments have considerable influence over the desired child protection and economic empowerment outcomes at subnational level. Most government officials welcome and support efforts to increase required technical and enforcement capacities at village and district levels. Child Protection Committees in villages in Telangana State for example now have a government endorsed Child Protection manual to increase the support to vulnerable girls.

In the **Philippines**, city mayors have strong ownership over the executive and legislative agenda of the Local Government Units. Two mayors buy into the idea of promoting child protection through this agenda and become examples for other cities with central government support. In the international **CEDAW Committee** (United Nations Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women) and **ASEAN** (Association of Southeast Asian

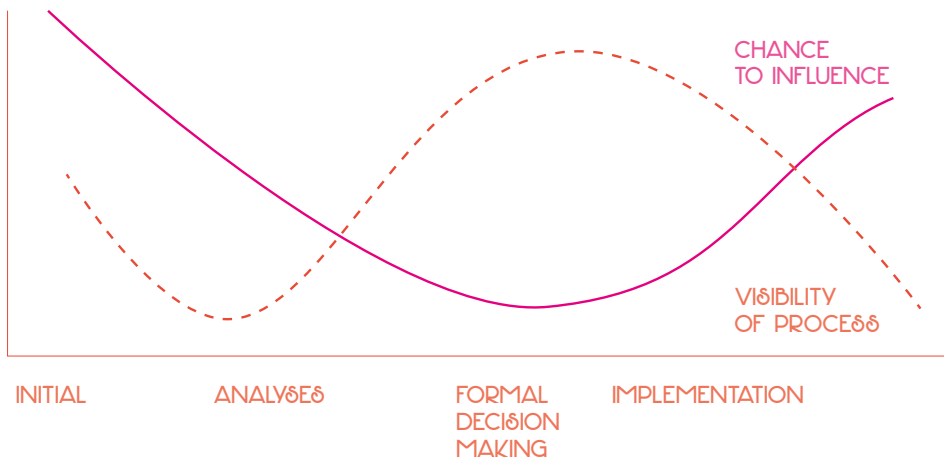
Nations) settings, influence is even more diffuse. International political and technical bodies interact with sovereign States to address domestic practices. An intricate power play of exercising peer pressure, providing technical support and leading by example determines the extent to which international arrangements materialize into actual improvements in the lives of girls and young women.

INSIDER TACTICS	GAA ACTIVITIES	OUTSIDER TACTICS
Policy analysis & research	Relationship building with decision makers	Advocacy capacity development Public awareness raising campaigns
Policy proposal development	Briefings & presentations	Coalition & network building (Social) media campaigns
Business case development	Linking policy makers across sectors / levels	Grassroots organising & mobilisation Media partnerships
Demonstration project or pilot	Champion development	Rallies & Marches Litigation
Policy maker education		

Thus, having thorough knowledge of these actors and factors in each context is critical to understanding the various roads to change. But the external contexts are only one part of the stories we saw unfolding on the previous pages. The other part of the timelines we visualised is the way in which the alliance decided to interact with these realities. The strategies, or the tactics to engage with those who have power over the issues the programme sought to change. What is the most effective way to influence decision makers? Should we collaborate with them, or confront them?

The alliance identified a range of strategies across two broad categories of engagement with decision makers and influential targets: the so-called ‘outsider’ and ‘insider tactics’. An analysis of the “How did we drive change sections” in the six case studies shows a clear preference within the alliance for collaboration over confrontation: out of 31 identified tactics, 26 were labelled as collaborative, and only 5 as confrontational (divided across CEDAW (2), Ghana, the Philippines and Uganda (1 each)).

Across the six timelines we identified many context-specific lessons. We summarized those into a generic list of nine take-aways for effective advocacy on the rights of girls and young women. The list is not exhaustive, but covers the insights from the wide range of contexts in which the Girl Advocacy program is being implemented. We hope that the list inspires you to reflect on the current and future advocacy programming.



## KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. Undertake thorough **research** on issues. Provide **evidence** to strengthen messages about urgency and solutions.
2. Facilitate **participation** of girls and young women. Invest in their **empowerment** and more sustainable outcomes.
3. Invest in **personal relationships**. Know your allies and targets. Be trustworthy.
4. Take a **systemic approach**. Balance formal and informal systems. Navigate across local, national and international levels.
5. Build on **local perspectives**. Invest in civil society **expertise** and networks.
6. Seek **alignment** between your goals and interests of allies and targets. Seek **collaboration** where possible.
7. Choose the **frame** for your issue wisely. Show **urgency** and provide **solutions**.
8. Have your **timing** right. Know where **opportunities** for engagement exist.
9. Show **leadership** and be pro-active. Maintain your **persistence**; change takes time.

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