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GIRLS
ADVOCACY
ALLIANCE



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACCA	African Coalition for the Corporate Accountability
ACERWC	African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ADB	Asian Development Bank
APC	Alliance Programme Committee
APT	Alliance Programme Team
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
BoD	Board of Directors
CBO	Community based Organisation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CM	Child Marriage
CRC	Committee on the Right of the Child
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibilities
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DCI	Defence for Children International
DCI-ECPAT	Defence for Children – ECPAT Netherlands
DFID	Department for International Development
DV	Domestic Violence
EAC	East African Community
EC	European Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes
EE	Economic Exclusion
EU	European Union
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GAA	Girls Advocacy Alliance
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMACL	Global March against Child Labour
GO	Girls' Organisations
GYW	Girls and Young Women
HLPEE	High Level Panel on Economic Empowerment
HLPF	High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
HRC	Human Rights Council
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
L&A	Lobby & Advocacy
LGBTQ	Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgenders and those Questioning their gender identity or sexual orientation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MoH	Ministry of Health
Moj	Ministry of Justice
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NACG	National Action and Coordination Groups to End Violence against Children
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OH	Outcome Harvesting

OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PM	Permanent Mission
PME&L	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
REC	Regional Economic Communities
RNE	Royal Netherlands Embassy
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SACG	South Asia Coordinating Group on Violence against Children
SAIEVAC	South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
S4YE	Solutions for Youth Employment
TdH	Terre des Hommes
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNGC	United Nations Global Compact
UNHQ	United Nations Head Quarters
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNSP	United Nations Special Procedures
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USAID	the United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WRO	Women's Rights Organisation



INTRODUCTION

The Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA) is a 5-year joint effort (2016-2020) of Plan Nederland, Terre des Hommes Netherlands and Defence for Children - ECPAT Netherlands. The GAA is led by Plan Nederland and is implemented in strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Dialogue and Dissent framework.

Goal of the programme is that, by 2020, governments and private sector actors make sure that girls and young women in Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and the Philippines no longer face Gender-Based Violence and Economic Exclusion. To this end, the GAA aims to influence key stakeholders in governments, the private sector and civil society organizations (CSOs) as well as community leaders to initiate lasting changes in their society that will benefit girls and young women.

Most notably, we enable civil society organizations in their lobby and advocacy work, so that they can influence their governments for strengthened accountability, more inclusive growth and development, and a reduction of the inequality faced by girls and young women in their countries. We also support CSOs to make private sector players more accountable for their contribution to the economic empowerment of girls and young women. Whenever possible we involve the Dutch Government as a strategic partner in these efforts.

At the same time, the programme mobilises key decision makers to address harmful social norms and values. These norms and values often keep citizens from demanding justice and from playing a positive role in the protection of girls and young women from harmful practices and from motivating them to explore their full potential.

Finally, the programme also addresses the government and private sector in the Netherlands and uses regional and international accountability mechanisms in support of the efforts in the ten programme countries.

With 2016 for a large part dedicated to the Inception Phase of the programme, this second Annual Report covers the first complete year of implementation of the GAA programme: January – December 2017. It assesses the progress of the Girls Advocacy Alliance programme towards its objectives and considers the programme's effectiveness. It also explores changes in the external context and reflects on the relevance and validity of the programme's Theory of Change.

FINANCIAL PROGRESS

On 6 April 2018, the Girls Advocacy Alliance requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs an extension of the submission date of its financial report for 2017. The financial report will be submitted to the Ministry as soon as possible. Financial information from the alliance organisations indicates that after a long start-up phase in 2016, the rate of implementation has increased markedly in 2017. Under expenditure from 2016 has not yet been fully made up for in 2017 but is expected to be absorbed in the course of 2018 and 2019.

ADDITIONAL MFA INDICATORS

In October 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs introduced 6 additional indicators for Strategic Partnerships under the Dialogue & Dissent framework as part of its revised Dialogue & Dissent Results Framework. The GAA will report on these indicators in the designated results part of the IATI standard as requested.



1. ADVOCATING FOR GIRLS' RIGHTS

1.1. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA) envisions a world wherein all girls and young women enjoy equal rights and opportunities, and benefit equally from development outcomes. Therefore the long-term (2030) goal of its joint programme 'Advocating for Girls' Rights' is to ensure that girls and young women are free from all forms of gender-based violence and are economically empowered.

To achieve this, the GAA applies a broad spectrum of Lobby & Advocacy interventions to increase public support; to improve policies and practices of corporate/private sector actors, to seek implementation of effective legislation and public policies; and to improve practices of government actors in support of the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence and economic exclusion of girls and young women. At the same time, the GAA focuses on the strengthening of capacities of civil society organisations and networks (in particular Girls and Young Women organisations) to influence government and corporate/private sector actors to eliminate gender-based violence and economic exclusion.

The GAA programme is implemented in ten countries¹ in Africa and Asia and has two regional programme components. Two programme components, finally, address gender-based violence and economic exclusion at international policy levels and at the level of Dutch public and corporate policies.

1.2. THEORY OF CHANGE

The Theory of Change of the Girls Advocacy Alliance describes how the alliance expects change to happen. The Theory of Change first identifies the desired long-term goals of the alliance programme. Then, it identifies all the conditions and stakeholders that must change in order to achieve the desired long-term goals. It indicates the causal relationships between these conditions (pathways of change). And it makes explicit the assumptions that explain why the alliance expects changes to happen in this particular order and interrelationship. The GAA Theory of Change is annexed to this report (Annexe I).

Long-term goals, involved stakeholders and levels of change

The GAA Theory of Change aims at the elimination of gender-based violence and economic exclusion of girls and young women. In this context, the programme will pay particular attention to gender-based violence, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC), sexual violence and abuse, Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, child trafficking, child marriage, economic exclusion, access to post-primary education and vocational training, decent work and female entrepreneurship.

The Girls Advocacy Alliance's Theory of Change is structured around four strategic goals:

1. Effective implementation of legislation and public policies and improved practices of government actors in support of the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence and economic exclusion of girls and young women.
2. Improved policies and practices of corporate/private sector actors in support of the elimination of gender-based violence and economic exclusion of girls and young women;
3. Increased public support for the elimination of gender-based violence and economic exclusion of girls and young women;
4. Increased influence of civil society organisations and networks (in particular girls' and young women's organisations) on government and corporate/private sector actors to eliminate gender-based violence and economic exclusion of girls and young women.

¹ Country programmes in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Liberia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sierra Leone and Uganda; regional programme components in Asia and Africa.

The pathways of change each address one of these goals yet they are intertwined and mutually supportive. Each of the strategic goals is associated with a key stakeholder in the issues of gender-based violence and economic exclusion: Governments and international/regional inter-governmental bodies, Private sector actors, Traditional, religious and community leaders, and Civil society organisations and networks.

The GAA expects that three different stages can be distinguished in the change process in which these key stakeholders are involved. The first stage of change entails the generation of public and political attention to certain problems or issues; for which we use the term 'agenda setting'. Adoption or revision of laws and policies is the following stage of change; something which can be considered as 'policy change'. Finally, the third stage of change is about the effective implementation and follow up of existing laws and policies by key stakeholders mentioned above. This is what the GAA perceives as 'practice change'. Only policies and laws that are effectively implemented and enforced will generate positive and concrete effects in the lives of our final beneficiaries: girls and young women.

Adapted Theories of Change

During the inception phase of the alliance programme (January – August 2016), Theories of Change were developed for each of the 14 programme components. These adapted Theories of Change describe the specific goals, pathways of change and key actors as well as the underlying assumptions on how we think change happens in a particular (country/regional) context.



2. EXTERNAL CONTEXT

2.1. OVERALL CHANGES IN THE EXTERNAL CONTEXT

The external context has not changed drastically since the start of the GAA programme. Looking back at the changes and trends that have occurred during 2017, a rather mixed – sometimes even contradictory – picture emerges. The world has seen some clear and promising changes for girls and young women but at the same time there are cultural, political and economic trends that are deeply worrying. We will give a brief overview in this paragraph.

Socio-economic changes

The process of economic recovery continued during 2017, resulting in higher economic growth rates for most countries. Economic growth brings opportunities for jobs and income for young women. It also generates a more favourable environment to enter into dialogue with the private sector on how production processes can be made more sustainable, environmentally as well as socially. Inspired by international agreements and frameworks such as the SDGs, there is a growing number of businesses recognizing the need to regulate international supply chains. The Dutch covenants are an example of this trend, as well as the rise of the issue of responsible business conduct on the political agenda of the OECD and the global discussions about a new binding treaty on transnational corporations and human rights.

The positive economic outlook for most countries in Africa and Asia is potentially good for young women's economic empowerment. This is however not an automatic effect as gender biased policies and discriminatory social norms continue to distort the access to jobs and entrepreneurship for women. Furthermore, economic growth often increases the threats of exploitation and abuse. We have seen examples in several GAA countries where the growth of a certain economic activity, such as tourism or the opening up of new industrial zones by Chinese investors, is accompanied by an increase in economic exploitation and gender-based violence (like commercial sexual exploitation and sexual harassment at the work floor).

Socio-cultural changes

The year 2017 will be mostly remembered as the year of #MeToo. What started with a tweet, has become a global movement generating world-wide attention for sexual harassment and intimidation on the work floor, and bringing to the fore the persisting inequality and unequal power relations between men and women. It started in Western countries but it is spreading and reaching out to other regions as well. In European and Asian countries, it has generated new policy development initiatives for repairing the gender pay gap or to improve the prosecution of perpetrators of sexual violence. At the same time, conservative forces continued to counter progress towards equal rights for girls and young women. At the UN Human Rights Council, there is persistent resistance against the inclusion of (reference to) gender, sexual and reproductive rights and LGBTI rights in resolutions and statements. In Bangladesh, an amendment to the child marriage Restraint Act (CMRA) was approved that allows marriage below the legal age under special circumstances (without further specification of these circumstances). In the Philippines, impeachment of high women officials and sexist and women-unfriendly statements by President Duterte frustrate important progress towards women's rights and are feared to spark an increase in gender-based violence. In Kenya, the Sexual Offences Amendment Bill was rejected by parliament over 'contentious issues', including the legal age for sex.

Political changes

The duality or contradictory nature of many of the contextual changes is also visible at the level of politics. On the one hand we are witnessing the coming to power of governments which pursue nationalist, gender insensitive and exclusive policies and whose leaders are often male, authoritarian and driven by hatred. Leaders who are cultivating their image of a 'strong man' willing and able to defend the national community against foreign and domestic foes. President Duterte has already been mentioned. This political trend is observable in a lot of other GAA countries as well, from India to Kenya and Uganda. What these leaders often have in common is a strong rejection of multilateralism.

On the other hand, some of the electoral processes have been relatively peaceful and democratic. The first round of the elections of Kenya was nullified due to electoral irregularities. In Liberia the elections stirred social unrest but in the end they were largely peaceful. Nevertheless, in terms of their effects on the programme, elections are often contributing to delays in programme implementation.

























Unfortunately there are few female political leaders in the world who are able to uphold international norms around girls and women's rights. During 2017 two female leaders stepped down: the president of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and Madam Zuma, the head of the African Union Commission (AUC).

Civil unrest and war played a role in various countries in Africa and Asia. More than 655,000 Rohingya refugees sought refuge in Bangladesh from Burmese military violence. Uganda continued to receive a massive influx of refugees from South Sudan. Uganda is currently hosting an estimated 1.3 million refugees from politically unstable neighbouring countries. In both refugee crises, children and women are most vulnerable to violence, abuse and exploitation, and pressure on already vulnerable host populations is critical. Women and children were also disproportionately affected by droughts and related food shortages and deepened poverty in Kenya and Uganda.

2.2. CHANGES IN THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Observations by the GAA Programme Teams on the enabling environment for Civil Society in their respective areas of operation are in line with the [CIVICUS State of Civil Society Report 2018](#)². Among the GAA programme countries, Ethiopia stands out for its closed civic space, indicating near absence of media freedom and severe punishments for criticism on ruling authorities. Civic space in Bangladesh, Liberia and Uganda is characterized as repressed, indicating heavy constraints including risks of surveillance, harassment, and (threats of) de-regulation and closure for CSOs and Human Rights defenders who criticize power holders. In India, Nepal and the Philippines in Asia, and in Kenya and Sierra Leone in Africa, spaces for civil society are labelled as obstructed. Ghana is among the few African countries with relatively better, yet narrowed civic space, where the state allows individuals and CSOs to exercise their rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression - although violations also take place.

Table 1. Civic space in GAA programme countries

Country	2016	2017	
Bangladesh			
India			
Nepal			
Philippines			
Ethiopia			
Ghana			
Kenya			Closed 
Liberia			Repressed 
Sierra Leone			Obstructed 
Uganda			Narrowed 

Source: [CIVICUS Monitor – tracking civic space](#)³

² <https://civicus.org/index.php/state-of-civil-society-report-2018>

³ <https://monitor.civicus.org/>

Although no significant shifts were reported in the state of civic space in GAA programme countries, GAA Programme Teams observed interesting developments that are in line with the trends identified in CIVICUS' State of Civil Society Report 2018.

Conventional post-war political and economic models are increasingly failing people around the world. Alternatives thus far seem at odds with an enabling environment for civil society. GAA partners in Ethiopia report the adverse consequences of tightly-directed state capitalism in the form of Chinese investments that promote economic growth at the expense of democracy and rights. Election outcomes in the Netherlands and other European countries confirm the rise of right-wing and populist parties that feed on anger and fears of large groups of people, and on tendencies to blame minorities and excluded groups. Philippine president Duterte and his Indian colleague Modi fit the profile of strong, hard-line leaders like Trump, Putin and Erdogan, that seem to thrive in this context of increasingly polarised societies. Duterte notably, undertook attempts to associate civil society with globalism and elite groups harmful to national interests, and to undermine and erase institutional checks and balances. In Uganda and Kenya as well, GAA partners attest to examples of personalisation of power and undermining of democracy.

Independent media are under attack. In the context of the GAA programme, this was witnessed by partners from Bangladesh, where a controversial section of the ICT Act is increasingly used to arrest journalists. In the Philippines, critical social media influencers and media are accused of spreading 'fake news' and are probed by the Senate. In Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Uganda as well, critical media and journalists faced threats and intimidation. GAA partners also recognise the decline in online freedom, highlighted by the US ending of internet neutrality in December 2017. In Bangladesh and the Philippines, GAA partners see how growing surveillance and manipulation of opinions frustrate the positive potential of social media. In Ethiopia, in response to public demonstrations, the government frequently shut down internet connections and even mobile phone operations.

Specifically relevant to the GAA programme is the rise of socially conservative forces that are claiming civic space, and that influence key decision-making processes – whether or not supported by regressive governments with an agenda to weaken civil society. Notably worrying is the fact that women and LGBTI rights seem specifically targeted, as illustrated for example by attacks against the Istanbul Convention. GAA partners engaged with the UN Human Rights Council noted attempts to banish gender, sexual and reproductive rights and LGBTI rights from the agenda, for example during the negotiation on the Resolution on Violence against Women and Girls, and on the Resolution of the Rights of the Child.

As outlined above, experiences by GAA partners also corroborate the ongoing backlash of multilateralism as exemplified by the US withdrawal from several international agreements and agencies, and a cut in speaking time for CSOs at the UN Human Rights Council. With intergovernmental fora thus in dire need of funding and support, and national governments prioritizing national interests and the promotion of economic growth, the private sector gained influence in national and international governance. In many countries, including GAA programme countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and India, the private sector's role in the provision of key services is growing. This trend seems to be reinforced by the success of the SDGs, that explicitly position private sector resources as key to the achievement of sustainable development. GAA partners embrace the potential of collaboration with the private sector but also recognize the importance of regulation and binding agreements, as reflected in CIVICUS' observation that the SDGs also include goals that are unlikely to be embraced by a private sector that benefits from current models of governance (decent work, income equality, responsible consumption and corruption).

At the positive side, the year 2017 also shows that resistance works. The #MeToo and Time's Up movements sparked worldwide debate on sexual abuse and put unequal power relations between men and women under the spotlight. Formulation of a binding treaty on transnational business & Human Rights is underway at the UN Human Rights Council. In Kenya, after broad civil protests, the High Court revoked the decision of the NGO Coordination Board to deregister and raid prominent CSOs over criticism on the election process. Earlier in 2017, the Supreme Court had already recognized these claims from civil society and declared the election results invalid. And in Sierra Leone, a broad coalition of CSOs, in response to pre-electoral instability and constraints to civil society action, convinced candidates and political parties to commit to the Sierra Leone Civic Space Manifesto to safeguard civic space and protect human rights defenders.

2.3. EFFECTS ON PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES

The developments in the external context of the GAA programme as outlined above did not lead to structural changes in programme implementation, or to direct impact on its outcomes. In most cases, GAA objectives are aligned with long-term government policies and priorities that are hardly politically sensitive. As a consequence, even in countries with limited or shrinking spaces for civil society lobby and advocacy, GAA partners were able to connect with government agencies and decision-makers with a clear mandate and/or commitment to 'their' case. In Uganda for example, GAA partners noted growing difficulties for civil society advocacy. At the same time however, line ministries increasingly seek collaboration with GAA partners and other CSOs for policy development and policy review on child marriage and gender mainstreaming and are open for dialogue on these issues.

GAA partners' repertoire of lobby and advocacy tactics moreover enables them to respond to changes in the external context. Most GAA partners are well positioned for 'insider' tactics that work well in limited or shrinking spaces for civil society lobby and advocacy, including policy analysis, policy proposal development, building relationships with decision-makers, policy maker education, linking decision-makers across sectors or levels, and providing briefings and presentations. This years' reports moreover show that GAA partners are increasingly able to adjust and combine tactics and messages in response to changing circumstances. In the Philippines for example, in times of shifting of priorities away from GAA issues, GAA partners targeted district-level heads of departments to influence local officials for better service delivery. In Ethiopia, where opportunities for CSO lobby and advocacy decreased even further in 2017, GAA partners managed to influence municipal and zonal government through direct engagement with local government officials and agencies, and through faith-based organisations that indirectly influenced government officials. In Bangladesh, GAA partners shifted from blocking a harmful clause to the child marriage Restraint Act (CMRA) to mitigating the regressive effects of this clause, and influenced the Supreme Court and other key decision-makers to issue a circular that reduces misuse of the clause. In several countries including Nepal and Sierra Leone, GAA organisations have joined or supported CSO network initiatives to voice concerns on - and respond to - trends towards limiting spaces for civil society.

Although no direct impact on GAA's outcomes is foreseen as of yet, developments in some countries do raise concern and require careful monitoring in the coming period. In the Philippines, GAA partners feel forced to keep a low profile to avoid being associated with partisan and anti-government movements. In Uganda and Kenya as well, GAA partners feel pressure to avoid any association with politically sensitive issues – or issues that could be conceived as politically sensitive. For local CSOs, these kinds of associations or accusations could result in harassment by state and non-state actors, and a loss of legitimacy from communities and wider constituencies. In India, GAA organisations noted increasing reluctance from the side of local CSOs to liaise with the GAA, for fear of cancellation of their licence to receive foreign funding - a fate that has affected a mere 19.000 NGOs since 2016. For organisations (liaised to) international NGOs, risks are more related to increased surveillance and deregistration. For all organisations however, political tension and politicization of the external environment made it more difficult to liaise with government officials, especially those in legislative positions and departments. And even though collaboration is still very well possible on GAA issues, risks are that the terms of collaboration are increasingly and unilaterally set by governments, and that dissent is less and less an option.

3. EFFECTIVENESS

3.1. OUTCOMES OF LOBBY & ADVOCACY

Baseline

From the external baseline study of the Girl Advocacy Alliance Programme that was conducted in 2016, it can be concluded that in most programme countries, even though relevant legislation and policies exist, putting these into practice remains a challenge:

- Ministries and government agencies have limited capacity and commitment to implement policies and programmes on gender-based violence and economic empowerment. Responsibility and accountability systems are weak, and relevant ministries have insufficient power and resources to ensure gender mainstreaming and enforce implementation of policies and programmes;
- Government officials and the wider public have limited awareness and understanding of laws and policies on gender-based violence, economic exclusion and gender equality. Cultural traditions and community attitudes hinder the enforcement of laws on child marriage and other harmful practices;
- Service delivery in the areas of protection and economic empowerment is weak, mainly due to capacity constraints. Legal support services for victims of violence and harmful practices are, for example, limited;
- The elimination of gender-based violence and economic exclusion is further hindered by limitations to the scope for an independent civil society to effectively advocate for gender equality;
- Finally, involvement and commitment of the private sector in promoting economic empowerment, addressing gender-based violence and providing decent work and employment opportunities for girls and young women is very limited.

Assessment of outcomes of the programme in 2017

To do justice to the complex and ever changing realities of Lobby & Advocacy programmes, the GAA has adapted in its PME&L system key building blocks of adaptive programming, notably the use of Theories of Change and Outcome Harvesting. Mastering these relatively new methodologies, applying them to a newly designed and starting programme and at the same time rolling them out to more than 50 organisations across 11 countries proved quite a task. In January 2017, representatives of all Alliance Programme Teams (APTs) attended a week-long GAA PME&L training in Amsterdam, that was consequently rolled out to all organisations involved in the programme. A GAA PME&L Manual was developed and disseminated, with process descriptions, templates, timelines and other resources.

The year 2017 was the first 'complete' year of implementation of the programme. For the APTs, it was also the first experience with full-fledged Outcome Harvesting⁴. Throughout the year, all organisations involved in the implementation of the programme keep an advocacy log of relevant changes observed at the level of key stakeholders and advocacy targets. Twice a year, APTs and local partner organisations jointly reflect on the collected signs of change, and determine whether and how their interventions contributed to these changes. The first series of these half-yearly Outcome Harvesting sessions took place in August 2017 and culminated in the Annual Planning for 2018. The February 2018 Outcome Harvesting sessions were dedicated to this Annual Report 2017. During these latter sessions, APTs also determined the significance of each change in light of the expected (intermediary) outcomes for the different pathways of their Theory of Change, and assessed the progress towards these expected (intermediary) outcomes.

The APTs certainly succeeded in this first round of Outcome Harvesting, and the reported 'signs of outcomes' give a rich and varied picture of the changes happening in the countries, at regional level and in the international arena as an outcome of the programme. However, data quality and insight in the programme could be further increased with a closer quality check and alignment of the categorisation and significance ratings of the signs. This quality improvement will be included in the Midterm Review that is planned in the second half of 2018. Also addressed in the Midterm Review is the substantiation of part of the outcomes.

⁴ A good part of 2016 was dedicated to the Inception Phase and start-up of the programme. Preliminary outcome assessments were conducted in January/February 2017 to capture the outcomes of the relatively brief period of actual implementation, as reflected in the GAA Annual Report 2016.

The number of outcome signs differs per country and depends on, among other factors, the size of the programme, the number of organisations involved, and the nature of lobby and advocacy activities implemented. Also, the level of aggregation of signs differs per APT. Countries with a larger number of partner organisations and/or themes, like Bangladesh, Uganda and the Philippines, reported larger numbers of signs.

Summary of signs of outcomes

For 2017, APTs and local partners observed over 400 signs of change at the level of the key stakeholders of their joint GAA programmes, to which they assessed their interventions as a plausible contribution. Almost half of these signs were noted at the level of governments and intergovernmental agencies (30% and 17%, respectively), followed by changes at the level of community leaders and the general public (27%). Positive changes were also initiated or endorsed by CSOs (14%). A slightly smaller number of changes, finally, was observed for the private sector (11%).

Most of the signs of changes reported indicate improvements in the effectiveness of the implementation and follow-up of existing laws, regulations and policies (52%), notably by community leaders and the general public, and by government actors. There were also examples of improved practices by private sector actors and by CSOs.

A slightly smaller share of signs relates to changes in agenda setting (41%) - the first stage of change, whereby public and political attention to certain issues or problems is generated. Most of these signs involve increased priority for issues of gender-based violence and Economic Exclusion on the part of government agencies. There was also ample evidence of changes initiated or endorsed by community leaders, affecting awareness and attitudes of the general public. Increased priority for GAA issues was also noted at the level of CSOs, and - to a lesser extent - private sector actors.

According to the APTs, adoption or revision of laws and policies as an outcome of the programme occurred somewhat less often in 2017 (7%). Practically all observed cases of policy change relate to adoption or revision of laws and policies by government agencies and by community leaders (customary laws or by-laws). Some examples were also noted for policy changes by private sector agencies.

Below table shows the division of signs per actor and per change level in 2017.

Table 1: Number of signs and division per actor and change level



For comparison, in 2016, most signs of change were observed at the level of agenda setting, closely followed by signs indicating policy changes and, finally, changes in practices – whereas in 2017, most signs were at the level of practices and agenda setting, followed by policy changes. The validity of this shift and its implications for the GAA Theory of Change will be examined further during the MTR. It may confirm the assumption that agenda setting is a necessary first step in lobby and advocacy, and indicate that the GAA partners are successfully moving beyond this first level of change. However, it may also put the importance of policy change – in the context of the GAA programme - into perspective.

With regards to the two main themes of the GAA, reduction of gender-based violence (GBV) and reduction of Economic Exclusion (EE), the Programme Teams report mostly signs of changes towards reduced GBV. At the same time, there are many signs of change that indicate progress on both GAA main themes; GAA organisations in their advocacy often emphasise the need to address both issues. A much smaller number of changes was observed by the Programme Teams on Economic Exclusion specifically. This is in line with the overall focus of the programme and the expertise and experience of the GAA organisations on GBV. Besides this, it is indicative of the fact that many GAA organisations needed time to establish and build relationships with private sector actors.

In the following sections, signs of changes are presented for each of the four key stakeholder groups of the GAA Theory of Change: government and intergovernmental agencies, community leaders and the general public, Civil Society (Organisations) and the private sector.

3.1.1. Government and intergovernmental agencies

GAA organisations were quite successful at influencing key decision makers in government. They managed to get their issues on the agenda, and contributed to a number of policy changes. In Sierra Leone for example, several years of advocacy by CSOs - including GAA partners - towards the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) and the Ministry of Justice to harmonise laws on child marriage paid off: in September 2017 the Minister of Justice ordered the formation of a committee of recommendations. In Liberia, similar efforts helped move the Ministry of Gender to take up the development of a Child Well-being Policy in close collaboration with civil society. During the ILO 4th Global Conference on Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, GAA partners organised a side event 'Prioritising Girls for Zero Child Labour by 2025'. They moreover managed to engage the Indian Labour Minister as a panellist. During his statement, the minister confirmed his intention to invest more in girls to address child labour, and committed to put the issue on the agenda of the Indian government.

Changes in government policies and legislation as an outcome of the GAA programme were reported in Uganda, where the government reviewed and updated the draft National Action Plan on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in collaboration with GAA partners and other CSOs. In Bangladesh, GAA partners were actively involved in the development of the draft National Plan of Action to end child marriage, and in the analysis and review of the National Plan of Action on Combating Human Trafficking, including the organization of a round of consultation meetings. As an outcome of GAA advocacy efforts, the Bengali Minister for ICT declared to institutionalise an ICT handbook for safe internet use.

Also, in Bangladesh, despite considerable efforts, GAA partners and other CSOs did not manage to block the passage of a controversial clause to the child marriage Restraint Act. This clause allows marriages below the legal age for marriage under unspecified 'special circumstances' and is generally seen as a setback in the fight against child marriages. GAA partners acted on this unexpected and negative outcome by advocating key influencers at various government agencies to mitigate the impact. Their efforts contributed to the publication of an important circular by the Supreme Court to the judges of the lower courts that is expected to reduce misuse of the clause.

However, most changes were seen in the actual behaviour of government officials. This is in line with the GAA baseline, which states that legislation and policies are in place in most countries. The challenge lies in the implementation and enforcement of these policies and laws. The fact that most signs of changes on the part of government actors were observed with regards to their behaviour seems to indicate that progress is being made towards better implementation

and enforcement of existing policies and legislation, to the benefit of girls and young women in GAA programme areas.

As illustrated in below examples, positive changes were seen in the allocation of budget for issues affecting girls and young women, in coordination and collaboration between different government agencies and with CSOs, and in the actual enforcement of policies and legislation. GAA partners often play a key role in bringing stakeholders together and facilitating collaboration and exchange of knowledge and information, often in a very practical way.

In Ethiopia, the Standing Committee on Women's Affairs of the Amhara Region Council and regional law enforcement agencies during a series of meetings and follow-up discussions together assessed the gaps in policies and practices on gender-based violence and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of girls and young women. The GAA played a key role in the instigation of the consultations and provided training for Council members. The consultations and training, in turn, contributed to increased reporting and prosecution of cases of sexual abuse, rape and child labour by the police and judiciary agencies. In 25 rape cases, the perpetrator was tried. Also in Ethiopia, Anti-HTP (Harmful Traditional Practices) Committees, composed of education officers, women, youth, police officers and representatives from the prosecutor's office, instigated more than 1.250 age medical examinations. In 487 cases, an intended child marriage was cancelled. The GAA trained the anti-HTP Committees and continues to support them, for example through facilitation of quarterly dialogue sessions with the head of the justice office and the Women and Child Affairs office.

In the Philippines, GAA partners successfully engaged with Local Governance Units (LGUs) and the regional Interagency Council for the formalisation of Child's Rights Protection Units (CRPU) and the allocation of budget for CRPU activities and operations. GAA partners trained and supported these multi-disciplinary networks, composed of representatives of the Philippine National Police and the Department of Education, the Municipal Social Welfare Department Officer and a Health Officer. Once the networks were effectively functioning, it was easier to lobby LGUs and the Council for the necessary ordinances. In Nepal, GAA engagement and advocacy with local governments was instrumental in the announcement of Gauriganga Municipality in Kailali district to declare its territory a 'Municipality Free of Violence against Women'. The municipality moreover allocated budget for awareness rising and for the development of a strategy against gender-based violence. Five other municipalities also allocated budget to address issues affecting girls and young women.

In Ghana, collaboration and alignment at the level of key stakeholders involved in Child Protection in Upper Western and Eastern Regions has improved. The Department of Gender, the Commission on Human Rights & Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), the Department of Social Welfare, Domestic Violence and Victims Support Units (DOWVSUs) of the Ghana Police Service and CSOs now effectively work together on handling cases of sexual abuse and other forms of child abuse. GAAs efforts in organising facilitating and following-up on regular dialogue meetings with decentralised government departments and MMDAs were an important factor in this collaboration. In Liberia, GAA engagement with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture resulted in support towards securing land space and agriculture utensils for young women who completed TVET agriculture education.

Influencing intergovernmental agencies and the Dutch government

In support of the efforts of the APTs in the ten programme countries, the GAA also influences intergovernmental agencies at regional level in Asia and Africa and at the international level. Also, the GAA addresses gender-based violence and women's economic empowerment at the level of Dutch public (foreign) policies.

At the regional level in Asia, GAA partners contributed to the adoption by the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) of the Regional Strategy on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, including online safety and prevention of Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism (SECTT). This Regional Strategy will be incorporated into the overall Five Year work plan of SAIEVAC. A presentation by GAA partners on SECTT in South Asia during INTERPOL's 23rd Asia Regional Conference helped to move INTERPOL to include SECTT in its action agenda, and to set up a Desk on Missing Children and Investigation of Child Sexual

Abuse materials. Also, in Asia, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) openly expressed interest to collaborate and work more closely with the GAA and other CSOs to address gender-based violence and economic exclusion – result of months of lobby by GAA partners, culminating during a ‘Partnership Engagement Day’ hosted by the ADB.

In Africa, GAA partners and other CSOs successfully advocated the AU, ECOWAS and East African Community (EAC) for the adoption of monitoring mechanisms on GBV and EE. During the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61), they moreover pushed for the recognition of economic empowerment of girls and young women as a key success factor for the AU Agenda 2063, the AU theme for 2017 ‘Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth’ as well as the SDGs. Also, in Africa, GAA partners helped to open up spaces for girls and young women participation in the Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) during the Pre-Summit Consultative Meetings to the AU Assembly, and supported girls and young women to prepare and deliver their advocacy messages to Members of Parliament and ministers. And with a fourth GAA partner gaining observer status at the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, access to this committee for advocacy on GAA issues has improved further.

Against the background of the March 2017 general elections, advocacy efforts towards the Dutch government in 2017 focused on ensuring continued support for gender, GBV and women’s economic empowerment, notably as an element of its foreign policy. Often in collaboration with other CSOs and CSO networks, GAA partners provided inputs to position papers and briefings, and participated in consultations and meetings with representatives of various ministries. Also, the GAA supported the Girls Rights Watch, a group of Dutch young women advocates, to lobby, in collaboration with political youth organizations, members of parliament to adopt the SDG agenda. These efforts contributed to several signs of maintained priority on gender and women’s economic empowerment by the new government.

GAA partners moreover provided inputs for Dutch contributions in intergovernmental fora, including the contribution of the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs to the outcome document for the ILO IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, that highlights the position of girls and women; the inclusion by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of ‘girls’ in the agreed conclusions for the CSW61 meeting in March 2017; and the focus on women’s economic empowerment and SDG5 in the Dutch Government Report to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF). GAA partners also engaged with the ‘*Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland*’ (RVO), notably on including gender equality as a criterion for its new fund to combat child labour.

At the international level, the GAA pushed for (stronger) incorporation of girls’ rights and GAA themes by human rights mechanisms and bodies, notably the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva and UN Women in New York. GAA inputs and facilitation contributed, among other changes, to the selection of gender as a cross-cutting issue by the Working Group on Violence of Child Rights Connect⁵, the acknowledgement of GBV and gender equality in the General Recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), including 20 recommendations raised by GAA partners during the Periodic Review of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in Kenya. A notable change as well, was the inclusion of girls in ‘girls’ and women’s economic empowerment’ by the Executive Director of UN Women during the 61th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

The GAA also supported and facilitated partners and other CSOs in programme countries to influence their governments through strategic engagement with international accountability mechanisms, as illustrated by the effective engagement of GAA partners and other CSOs in the Periodic Review of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in Kenya and in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Human Rights in Ghana. Notable in this respect as well, was the uptake by the Netherlands Permanent Representation in Geneva of recommendations by a Human Rights CSO network on human trafficking and CSEC in the Philippines.

⁵ Child Rights Connect was set up in 1983 as NGO Group for the drafting of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and continues to play a central role in key child rights developments at international level, including the drafting of all of the UN treaties on child rights and is closely connected to national NGOs and coalitions, UN agencies and experts and States.

3.1.2. Community leaders and the general public

The outcome signs reported by the APTs indicate small yet important changes at the level of religious and traditional leaders, notably on GBV. These leaders play a key role in raising awareness on harmful social norms and practices in communities, and in mobilising their constituencies. Through umbrella organisations, networks or platforms, local and traditional leaders moreover have important influence at regional and even national levels. Especially in Africa, local leaders also have a key role in the drafting, ratification and enforcement of bye-laws.

Experiences from Ghana and Nepal indicate that GAA interventions in 2017 helped to convince religious and traditional leaders to openly discuss sexual violence and abuse, and to question social norms and values around these matters. In the Northern Region of Ghana, girls' groups, with the support of GAA partners, actively advocated traditional leaders as well as the district assembly to put their issues on the agenda. They organised a petition to end barriers to girls' secondary education and presented this to the Sagnarigu assembly of chiefs. They also developed a position paper on child marriage, that was officially presented to the district assembly. In Uganda, GAA partners organised dialogues with boys and men in programme communities. This helped to actively engage them in discussions with cultural leaders, peers and community elders, and to critically question child marriage. In Nepal, GAA brought religious from leaders from different beliefs together to discuss various social issues, including gender-based violence. In three districts, these discussions evolved into networks that meet regularly, and that actively participated in the organisation of a national event to mark 16 Days of Activism Against gender-based violence. In the Philippines, GAA partners' networking efforts brought community leaders and youth groups from the National Capital Region together, and inspired them to form a coordinating group for the organisation of school-based awareness raising activities and the establishment of a reporting mechanism to refer cases of gender-based violence and Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children.

The programme also contributed to policy changes by religious and traditional leaders, often after a process of direct engagement, facilitating broader open discussion and putting social norms and values on the agenda. In many cases, these changes formed part of a broader process towards actual implementation and enforcement of rules and regulations. Hence, most changes at the level of community leaders were observed in their practices and behaviour. In Liberia for example, meetings, dialogues and awareness raising activities helped to convince community members, religious leaders and traditional leaders from 10 communities in Lofa County to take a stand against gender-based violence and FGM. With the inputs from all stakeholders, bye-laws were developed that protect girls and young women from GBV, and that outlaw FGM during schoolyears. The bye-laws are now passed, and compliance is monitored by the authoritative local leaders. GAA partners in India actively engaged with religious leaders and caste-based leaders and – using, among other methodologies and tools, effective IEC materials - sensitised them on the effects of child marriage and child trafficking, and on the importance of secondary education and vocational training for girls and young women. These interventions were well in sync with government campaigns on child marriage and helped to challenge social norms to the point that religious leaders in programme areas issued and passed various resolutions against child marriage and child trafficking. In Ghana, as a result of advocacy with traditional leaders at community and district levels, progressive traditional leaders in all programme areas are speaking out against child marriage and sexual violence. They have also started to make pronouncements against these practices, and act as agents of change towards their constituencies.

3.1.3. Civil Society Organisations

Less changes were observed at the level of CSOs. Most success was achieved in putting gender-based violence and women's economic empowerment on the agenda of CBOs. There was little evidence of policy changes at the level of CSOs as an outcome of the programme, but quite a few changes were noted towards active and more effective lobby and advocacy on girls' and young women's issues by CSOs. In many cases, GAA support helped CSOs to strengthen collaboration, alignment and networking. In Bangladesh for example, CSOs were observed to make more strategic choices, including the selection of advocacy issues for stronger focus, and the charting of advocacy processes. There is also more collaboration, alignment and joint advocacy. In 2017, CSO networks such as Girls not Brides, the National Action Coordination Group (NACG) for SAIEVAC implementation and the National Girl Child Advocacy Forum (NGCAF) have collaborated, developed common strategies and undertaken joint advocacy on the child marriage restraint Act (CMRA) and the National Plan of Action to end child marriage.

The CSO members of the Sierra Leonean Child Rights Coalition members jointly developed and released the first national advocacy strategy on promoting government's implementation of the UNCRC concluding observations. This was one of the first joint initiatives after the coalition's formal commitment to take common positions and joint actions against sexual violence and GBV – with positive effects for the clout of civil society lobby on the issue. GAA partners supported the coalition through sessions on advocacy strategy and networking, and facilitated the process of alignment. In Uganda, active engagement of GAA partners in the National Task Force on the Prevention of Online Child Sexual Exploitation helped to bring on board new CSOs and strengthen collaboration between CSO actors on the matter. Networking and facilitation by GAA partners in the Philippines helped members of the Municipal federation of CSOs, faith-based organisations and other CSOs in all GAA programme areas to integrate gender-based violence and human trafficking in their action plans. Many of these CSOs are now forming Quick Response Teams or other reporting mechanisms, and have initiated surveys and mappings of incidences of GBV in their areas.

In Bangladesh, the Young Change Makers Coalition (YCMC), with the support of GAA partners, shared with the Parliamentary Caucus powerful audio-visuals addressing sexual harassment in public spaces. Against a background of increased media attention, public awareness and CSO action on GBV, and in combination with GAA partners' lobby efforts aimed at the Parliamentary Caucus and the Deputy Speaker of the National Parliament, this proved an effective action to win commitment of key decision-makers for the passing of a comprehensive law to prevent sexual harassment in public places. In Ghana, a young men's group from Shai Osudoku District - the Dodowa Parliament – has put GBV and child marriage on its agenda. The group has also set up a watchdog committee to monitor child abuse in Dodowa community. Group members challenged themselves and each other to change their attitude towards women. Meetings and discussions with GAA partners helped to convince them that, as stated by the group, "we cannot preach virtue and practice vice and hence need to stop any behaviour that abuses girls and women."

3.1.4. The private sector

In various countries, GAA partners successfully engaged with local companies to discuss GBV and women's economic empowerment, and more specifically the position of (young) women in their businesses and the role of the private sector in addressing risks and abuses. In Ethiopia for example, GAA partners successfully interacted with owners and representatives of textile factories, horticulture companies, hotels, bars and night clubs in Bahir Dar to put decent work for women on the agenda. The companies now recognise their role in protecting their women workers from (sexual) violence and abuse, and in creating employment opportunities for young women. Ugandan printing company Ambrosoli Wonders won the prestigious International Labour Organization (ILO) Uganda Young Employers' Award for its outstanding Human Resource management practices. Ambrosoli Wonders is one of the private sector companies that participated in policy reviews, focus group discussions and other data collection for GAA's private sector research, and has been actively engaged in round table meetings and follow-up around the research outcomes. The international award is an important milestone, with great potential to convince more companies to engage with the GAA and commit to address gender equality and economic exclusion.

In Kenya, Nepal and India, GAA partners engaged with business networks or associations for greater reach. GAA partners in Kenya successfully advocated private sector business owners and informal business associations to develop a joint draft Child Protection Policy. Once finalised and agreed upon, this policy will be customized and adopted by the respective businesses and associations. In India, GAA partners established constructive dialogue with member companies of CII-Telangana, the Hyderabad Software Exporter's Association and the Federation of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Several consultations were organised, focusing on the position of (young) women workers in the sectors and companies involved, on gender-based violence in the workplace, and on investment in secondary education and job-oriented vocational training for girls and young women. GAA partners are positive on the prospects for more intensive dialogue and concrete commitments. At the regional level in Asia, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between GAA organisation Plan International and the International Tourism Partnership (ITP). The MoU outlines concrete areas of collaboration, including the prevention of economic exclusion and gender-based violence in the workplace

of ITP member hotels. And in Nepal, GAA partner CWIN signed an agreement with the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN), with the approval of the Nepal Tourism Authority, for providing training and capacity building support. Furthermore, the Hotel Association of Nepal agreed to develop an MoU with the GAA to develop a gender policy and a child protection policy, and to include ethical hiring and decent work in its Code of Conduct.

The latter two examples indicate encouraging developments towards formalisation of concrete commitments into Codes of Conduct and other policies. Most changes however, were noted with regards to actual practices. Twelve RMG factories in Bangladesh agreed to conduct factory-level discussions with management and workers representatives to assess workplace safety, and to explore ways and means to promote a Safe, Equitable and Inclusive Workplace for women-workers. One of the factories committed to concrete and specific improvement measures. The process was set in motion as a result of extensive GAA advocacy, including the organisation of round table meetings and meetings with factory owners and management. GAA partners moreover organized and facilitated the in-factory multi-stakeholder meetings. In the Philippines, GAA partners successfully advocated 28 companies to create employment opportunities for girls and young women. Another 11 companies have invested in skills development for girls and young women. Transport companies in Uganda now check on unaccompanied children and other suspected victims of Child Trafficking, and refer these to the police. A round table meeting organised by GAA partners and the necessary follow-up meetings proved helpful in raising the awareness of owners and managers of these transport companies on the issue, and most importantly on their concrete opportunities to make a change.

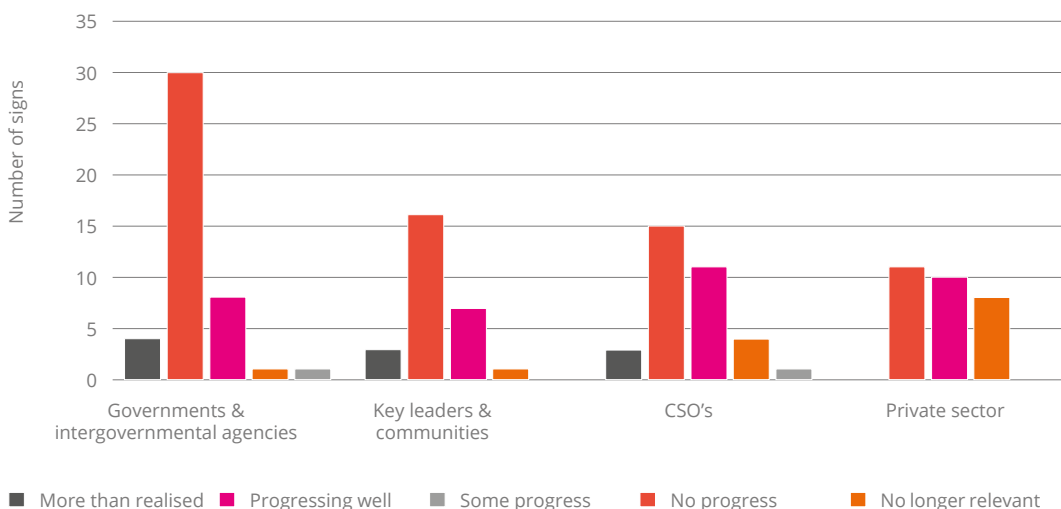
Influencing the private sector in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the GAA engaged with Dutch (multinational) companies to explore opportunities to address GBV at the workplace and EE in the supply chains of these companies, in particular in GAA programme countries. Several companies attended the GAA event for the private sector that was organised to share the outcomes of the GAA private sector survey. Participating companies asserted interest in means and ways to promote economic opportunities for girls and young women in low income countries, especially through their business and production chains. Representatives from the UN, the private sector and the Dutch government shared experiences and practices on the matter, and exchanged views on the outcomes of the survey. The event sparked exchange and learning on different ways to strengthen economic empowerment of girls and young women.

3.1.5. Progress towards intermediate outcomes of Lobby and Advocacy

Overall, the GAA programme seems well on track towards its expected (intermediate) outcomes for 2017. APTs report that almost 60% of their expected outcomes for 2017 has been (more than) realised or is well underway towards realisation. For 13% of the expected outcomes, no progress has been reported.

Table: Realisation of expected intermediary outcomes for 2017



Pathways

All APTs report that important progress has been made at the level of governments and inter-governmental agencies and community leaders. Processes of changes at the level of CSOs and the private sector are less successful. Even though for both target groups, progress was noted towards more than half of the expected changes, progress was less outspoken, and in relatively more cases absent. This holds especially for the efforts towards the private sector, most notably for towards Dutch (multinational) companies.

Above conclusion seems to reflect the main areas of expertise and experiences of the GAA organisations and their partners. GAA organisations have strong roots at the community level, and generally maintain good relationships with governments, especially at local and provincial levels. Although they also have extensive track records of working with local CSOs, it proved quite a task to build relationships and engage with a wider range of CSOs beyond direct partners. To effectively encourage these CSOs to lobby and advocate for girls and young women proved even more challenging. GAA partners found that many CSOs in their wider sphere of influence focus on the implementation of projects, often in direct service delivery, and that they lack basic resources for advocacy (budget, expertise, networks). Many GAA partners moreover targeted large numbers of individual CSOs, many of them with little interest in GAA issues. Already as an outcome of the 2017 Outcome Harvesting meetings, many APTs shifted the focus of their efforts towards more 'like-minded' organisations, and to networks, and have aligned their expectations with reality. The encouraging examples in the current annual report of improved collaboration between CSOs and in CSO networks, and of improved abilities of CSOs and CSO networks to engage with (local) government seem to confirm the effectiveness of this approach.

Most challenges were encountered in realising expected outcomes with regards to the private sector. Many GAA organisations and partners had relatively little experience in influencing private companies. Building relationships and engaging with key stakeholders formed a necessary and important yet time-consuming part of the efforts undertaken towards the private sector thus far. In many cases, notably in Nepal, Uganda, Bangladesh and the Philippines, these efforts resulted in constructive relationships and positive changes, or with good prospects for concrete outcomes in the coming years. In other cases, initial contacts did not materialise into further collaboration or commitments. Especially in the Netherlands, a lack of concrete evidence of positive changes and of successful interventions in supply chains made it difficult to convince (multinational) companies to commit to action. In the course of 2017, steps were taken towards an adjusted approach to Dutch (multinational) companies. A Plan of Action was shared and discussed with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March/April 2018. The plan foresees in a strategic focus on branch organisations, networks, multi-stakeholder fora and 'front runners' in tourism and textile, and on companies with linkages to Bangladesh, Nepal and the Philippines. It also outlines a number of concrete propositions for collaboration, based on proven concepts and concrete track record of the GAA, and it closely links the Netherlands programme component to those in the above mentioned programme countries.

Countries and contexts

In seven out of the ten programme countries, APTs report that more than 60% of their intermediate outcomes has been (more than) realised or is progressing well towards realisation: Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Uganda in Africa, and India and the Philippines in Asia - with Bangladesh just slightly below that level. At the regional levels in Africa and Asia as well, APTs report that more than 60% of their intermediate outcomes has been (more than) realised, or is progressing well towards realisation. Lower levels of progress towards the expected outcomes were reported by GAA Ghana and GAA Nepal. These relatively lower scores seem to be explained by the fact that, in comparison with other APTs, Ghana and Nepal formulated relatively large numbers of expected outcomes for their advocacy efforts aimed at CSOs and at the private sector. It should be noted though, that in Nepal, encouraging steps have been made towards influencing the private sector through the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN). The APT engaged with influencing key stakeholder in the Netherlands as well, notes lower levels of progress, notably with regards to their efforts to influence Dutch (multinational) companies.

Differences in progress towards outcomes per country or programme components do not seem to relate strongly to developments in the external environment or to the spaces for civil society

lobby and advocacy. Countries with closed or oppressed civic spaces (Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Uganda and Liberia) do not report significantly lower progress towards the expected outcomes of their advocacy work than countries with more open civic spaces. This seems in line with the observation that GAA partners are capable of adapting their advocacy strategies and messages, and probably also their advocacy ambitions, to the (im)possibilities of their context. Moreover, the GAA organisations usually work on themes and topics that align with government priorities and that are not especially politically sensitive.

3.2. OUTPUTS OF LOBBY & ADVOCACY

After a long inception phase in 2016, the rate of output delivery increased markedly in 2017. Initial delays have not yet been made up for completely, but are expected to be fully compensated in the course of 2018. Progress of implementation differs per country, and – within countries – per (partner) organisation. Implementation by Plan and its partners in Liberia was resumed somewhat later than planned⁶, in September 2017. In a number of other countries, including Kenya, Uganda and at the regional level in Asia, staff changes delayed the delivery of outputs. Elections and other contextual changes played a role in Kenya and Liberia (elections), Ethiopia (civil unrest and government responses) and Bangladesh (delays in government policy processes). In the Netherlands, implementation of activities with regards to the private sector by Plan was delayed as more time was needed to strategize and focus.

GAA partners in 2017 built on the foundations laid in the previous year. Much energy had been put into engaging key stakeholders, and into building networks and multi-disciplinary platforms at various levels. In 2017, GAA partners continued investing in the convening and linking of actors in these platforms and networks, varying from policy networks with line ministries and technical experts, advocacy networks of local CSOs and regional networks of traditional leaders, to youth groups, private sector networks and multi-disciplinary networks of community-based committees, local government agencies and service providers. GAA partners often played a key role in bringing stakeholders together and facilitating collaboration and exchange of knowledge and information.

Like in 2016, GAA partners in 2017 applied a variety of advocacy approaches to influence key actors. With regards to traditional leaders and community leaders, GAA partners undertook awareness raising activities and initiated and facilitated dialogues. Increasingly, GAA partners sought to bring together traditional or religious leaders from various communities or beliefs, or to work with existing networks of community leaders. In different countries, youth groups were supported to bring their issues and views to the fore of community leaders. In Ghana, Liberia, Ethiopia and other countries where community leaders play a role in local-level legislation (bye-laws), GAA partners brought together community leaders and the different community groups involved in these processes, and supported the development of bye-laws.

At the level of governments and intergovernmental agencies, GAA partners provided direct inputs to policy development, varying from technical inputs, recommendations, briefings and presentations, to outcomes of stakeholder consultations, youth-led research, round table meetings and surveys – often as a member of NGO networks, and in many cases taking an important role in the establishment or advancement of the collaboration. To influence governments towards better implementation of policies and legislation, GAA partners worked through local and district level government agencies, raising awareness of government staff on policies and issues, and strengthening and facilitating linkages between various government agencies, service providers and CSOs.

Interaction with CSOs was mainly aimed at building, strengthening and facilitating networks and collaboration and linkages – both between CSOs as well as with government agencies at various levels. Dialogue, training and facilitation were used as well to influence CSOs to include gender issues and gender advocacy in their agenda and operations. Dialogue and awareness raising were also the most important advocacy approaches used with the private sector. GAA partners engaged with existing private sector associations and branch organisations or tried to bring

⁶ Plan Nederland temporarily suspended the implementation of programme activities by Plan Nederland in Liberia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was informed on this decision in writing on 15 July 2016. This decision did not affect the implementation of programme activities in Liberia by alliance member Defence for Children – ECPAT Nederland. Recommendations with regards to internal organisation and financial administration were satisfactorily followed-up by the local Plan office, and implementation was resumed in September 2017.

companies together around GAA issues. Round table meetings, consultations and events were organised. As a further step towards concrete collaboration, GAA partners facilitated policy reviews, policy development and risk assessments with committed companies or associations.

Direct influencing of individual key decision-makers took place as well, at the level of community leaders and traditional leaders, at the level of the private sector and in working with governments and intergovernmental agencies. In many cases, lobbying helped to raise awareness, to get initial commitment and interest, and pave the way for further collaboration.

Advocacy tactics of the GAA partners can be considered as generally 'insider', directly engaging with advocacy targets and building on collaborative relationships. However, the many examples of coalition and network building, community mobilisation, awareness raising campaigns and media campaigns indicate that GAA partners also opt for more indirect 'outsider' approaches to influence the advocacy targets.

Across countries and programme components, some interesting observations stand out:

- GAA partners increasingly strategically combine advocacy approaches. If well timed and designed, media is a powerful means to strengthen advocacy efforts aimed at key decision-makers. GAA partners use radio spots, interviews, talk-shows and press releases to support specific advocacy actions, and to keep the public debate alive – especially around international human rights days and campaigns as the Universal Children's Day (20 November), the International Day of the Girl Child (11 October) and the 16 Days of Activism Against gender-based violence;
- Youth advocates as well, are of strategic importance. Messages delivered by youth are powerful and usually well received. GAA partners supported youth groups to produce quality, evidence-based messages, and facilitated interaction between youth advocates and decision-makers – often in alignment with advocacy actions by GAA partners themselves;
- Advocacy messages are increasingly fine-tuned to the local context and the specific interests, (social) norms and values of advocacy targets. In settings where formal laws and policies are hardly relevant, messages about the effects of HTPs on girls, families and communities bear great influence. Other decision-makers respond to theologically substantiated arguments. Business cases are not always the best way to influence companies or business associations; concrete propositions with an action perspective for the companies involved seem effective. GAA partners also note that change comes in small steps, and the power of advocacy lies to an important extent in repetition.

3.3. OUTCOMES OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

During the Inception Phase, the GAA selected 47 CSO partner organisations for the implementation of the programme in the period 2016 - 2017. In 2016, all these organisations conducted a participatory assessment of the capabilities and related competencies for lobby & advocacy, using a Capacity Assessment Tool (CAT), based on the 5 Core Capabilities framework developed by the European Centre for Development Policy Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) to plan, monitor and evaluate results of capacity development processes⁷. In line with the ECDPM framework, the GAA distinguishes five core capabilities: (1) Capacity to Commit and Act; (2) Capacity to Deliver on development objectives; (3) Capacity to Relate to External Stakeholders and (5) Capacity to Achieve Coherence. The GAA adapted the CAT by using specific indicators (pointers) for the lobby & advocacy competences related to each core capability.

The initial capacity assessment in 2016 formed the basis of a baseline of organisational capacities of GAA partner organisations, to measure the results of capacity development support in the course of the programme and the development of organisational capability of CSO partners over time. The first follow-up capacity assessment was conducted in December 2017. The outcomes of this follow-up assessment are summarized below.

Next to monitoring the development of organisational capacities of GAA partner organisations, the annual capacity assessment also provides a solid basis for the planning of capacity development support. In the second half of 2016, capacity development plans were developed

⁷ For more information on the 5 Core Capabilities framework developed by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), see <http://www.ecdpm.org/5Cs>.

in consultation with each CSO partner organisation. Each APT moreover identified opportunities for joint capacity development actions and agreed on joint interventions and actions for peer-to-peer learning and exchange as part of their joint capacity development plans. Actual implementation of capacity development plans started towards the end of 2016 and early 2017.

Summary of Capacity Development outcomes

Primary ownership of capacity development processes lies with the CSO partner organisation and the contracting Alliance organisation. In line with this approach, analysis of CAT scores is mainly at the level of individual partner organisations and CSO networks. However, comparing the baseline study with the first follow-up assessment does provide some interesting insights at the aggregated level.

Overall, the follow-up assessments show an increase in the organisational capabilities and related competencies for lobby & advocacy of GAA partners that have been involved in the programme since the start of implementation as compared to the baseline measurement. For 7 organisations, a slight decrease in one or more capabilities was seen. This was most notable in Nepal and the Philippines, where initial assessments were very high. It is likely that, with increased insight in organisational dynamics and higher levels of trust in the partnership, organisations have become more self-critical. In 8 out of the 10 programme countries, the organisational capabilities and related competencies for lobby & advocacy of GAA partners have progressed towards the targets set for the period 2016 – 2020. The two countries where this was not the case were Nepal and the Philippines, where – as noted above - baseline scores were already very high. Although factors external to the GAA programme cannot be ruled out, these outcomes suggest a positive effect of GAA Capacity Development support and participation in the GAA on the organisational capabilities and related competencies for lobby & advocacy of CSO partner organisations.

Like in 2016, alliance organisations and their partner organisations in all ten programme countries in 2017 identified the Capability to Relate to External Stakeholders as the strongest organisational capability of local CSO partners, suggesting that GAA partners are well able to identify, develop and maintain relationships with constituencies, relevant advocacy targets and other CSOs and CSO networks. The Capability to Adapt and Self-Renew was mentioned most often as the least developed organisational capability in 2017; in the 2016 this was the case for the Capability to Deliver on Objectives and the Capability to Commit and Act. Clearly, in 2017 GAA partners were more critical on their abilities to understand and navigate policy processes, and to adapt to changing contexts whereas in 2016, they were less confident on strategic planning, implementation and monitoring of advocacy work, including the framing of advocacy messages and the use of fact-based evidence and research. In 2017, apart from the follow-up assessments of the 41 partner organisations that were eventually actually contracted in 2016, and that participated in GAA Capacity Development support baseline assessments were conducted with 5 new partner organisations that join the programme from the start of 2018. Follow-up assessments for these new partners will be conducted after one year.

3.4. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OUTPUTS

In line with the GAA baseline of organisational capacities of GAA partner organisations, Capacity Development support in 2017 mainly addressed the Capability to Deliver on Objectives (C2), and the Capability to Commit and Act (C1). Practically all GAA partners participated in Lobby and Advocacy trainings and workshops, and in PME training. There were also training sessions on financial programme management, resource mobilisation and communication. GAA organisations moreover supported a number of partner organisations in the development of strategic plans, advocacy strategies and gender policies – addressing the Capability to Manage Diversity and Maintain Coherence (C5).

Capacity Development support was mostly provided in the form of trainings, most often by a representative of the contracting GAA organisation. In Bangladesh and the Philippines, Capacity Development also took the form of joint (facilitated) workshops and exchange meetings. Many partners moreover mention the Outcome Harvesting meetings as a valued Capacity Development action. Specific technical trainings were organised on a range of topics, including policy analysis, policy development, child labour, case management, women's rights, secondary education and child protection.

The Lobby and Advocacy training and the PME&L training were considered most successful. The insights from these sessions could be immediately applied and helped GAA partners and GAA organisations to strengthen the effectiveness and the monitoring of their GAA interventions. Partner organisations were noted to base their advocacy actions on better analyses, stakeholder mappings and strategic choices, using stronger advocacy messages, and to monitor their actions more systematically. The Outcome Harvesting sessions moreover helped them to focus more on results, rather than on activities only. Joint Capacity Development strengthened collaboration within the APTs, and several partners indicated that GAA Capacity Development support has also helped them to establish partnerships beyond the GAA.

For the coming period, GAA organisations in consultation with their partner CSOs updated their Capacity Development plans – based on the outcomes of the follow-up assessments and more in-depth discussions per organisation. Further investment in the Capability to Deliver on Objectives (C2) is foreseen, as many organisations identified the need for additional support on financial sustainability and/or resource mobilisation, but also on more specific and in-depth support for advocacy, including the use of social media, communication strategies, research, budget analysis and context analysis, as well as working with the private sector. To cater for these evolving needs for capacity support, elaboration of a pool of specialist resources is foreseen, and utilisation of alternative forms of knowledge sharing, including exchange visits and webinars.

3.5. INCLUSIVENESS

The strategies and activities of the GAA programme are primarily based on the contextualised Theories of Change, and on the reflections of girls who shared their views and opinions on the issues addressed by the programme during the GAA Baseline Study, through focus group discussions, individual interviews and consultations. In 2017, in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Kenya and other countries, GAA partners conducted studies, surveys or focus group discussions in which girls' and young women's experiences, views and opinions were captured. The outcomes of these researches informed programmatic choices, including advocacy messages. In Uganda, a gender Advocacy Team of girls and young women was consulted during project review and planning meetings. Other countries, like India, have plans to engage and involve girls and young women in programme design in 2018.

Girls and young women are involved in programme implementation in various ways. In most countries, they participate in meetings, club activities and in the reporting of cases of (intended) child marriage, child trafficking, sexual violence and FGM. They are also involved in awareness raising campaigns, and participate in school talk shows. The GAA moreover supports girls, young women and boys to lead advocacy dialogue meetings with community leaders, parliamentarians, media actors, civil society representatives, judiciary offices by presenting their problems, testimonies and calls to action. In Ghana, girls groups were supported to put their issues on the agenda of traditional leaders and the district assembly. GAA partners also helped to open up spaces for girls and young women participation in the Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) at the AU.

GAA partners often play an important role in the formation of girls' and youth groups. However, they also work with existing groups and organisations of girls and young women. The Africa APT for example supported youth-led CSOs to map and identify entry points for advocacy on the ratification of the Maputo protocol, and at the regional level in Asia, the GAA works with regional women-led CSO networks. In Bangladesh, GAA partners supported the Young Change Makers Coalition (YCMC) to produce powerful audio-visuals on sexual harassment in public spaces, and to share these with the Parliamentary Caucus.

4. THEORY OF CHANGE

The Theory of Change forms the basis for the planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning framework of the Girls Advocacy Alliance. Regular review and update of Theories of Change is embedded in the programme's PME&L cycle.

During the Inception Phase of the programme (January – July 2016), all Alliance Programme Teams adapted the overall Theory of Change of the Girls Advocacy Alliance to their specific programme context, including a set of underlying assumptions. In August/September 2017, as part of their strategic planning process, all APTs checked their contextualised Theory of Change against experiences of the first year of programme implementation. Where relevant, assumptions and pathways of change were adjusted and updated. The review of the contextualised Theories of Change confirmed the overall logic of the Girls Advocacy Alliance Theory of Change. Also, it did not provide grounds to revise the 11 general assumptions of the alliance.

In February 2018, as part of the Annual Reporting process, all APTs considered their (adjusted) Theory of Change against the past year of programme implementation, including changes in the external context, changes at the level of key stakeholders as well as lessons learned. Do our ideas on how change evolves still hold, or does practice show otherwise? Are the assumptions about how change processes 'work', about the context in which changes take place and about what will happen as a result of interventions still valid and relevant? And what does this entail for the overall Theory of Change of the Girls Advocacy Alliance?

4.1. REVIEW OF CONTEXTUALISED THEORIES OF CHANGE

Assumptions

In September 2017, as part of their Strategic Planning process, the APTs assessed the vast majority of assumptions underlying their Theories of Change as still valid and relevant. In some cases, the initial assumptions on the abilities, needs, interests and behaviour of key actors and other stakeholders proved too positive. These assumptions were adjusted. The identified gaps in abilities and behaviour of key actors and other conditions for envisioned changes did not appear as unassailable or as contrary to the overall causal linkages, and could be incorporated in action plans for 2018.

In February 2018, as part of their Annual Reporting process, most APTs further refined and adjusted one or more assumptions. The adjustments reflect growing insights in processes of change, as well as a number of changes in the external context. Like in 2017, most adjustments relate to the abilities, needs, interests and behaviour of key actors and other stakeholders. Reality proved more unruly than anticipated. The Ghana APT for example, observed that the prevalence of CSEC is not easily acknowledged by government agencies and companies. In Bangladesh, getting community leaders on board to actually change bye-laws will require more community mobilisation and awareness raising. In line with the observed signs of changes, a number of APTs noted that their assumptions about CSOs were too positive. CSOs and CSO networks were found to have little resources and/or interest for advocacy on GAA issues, and their influence on notably government agencies seems less than assumed. Other adjustments reflect strategic opportunities and insights. In Ghana, the regional level of traditional leaders proved an important stakeholder. The Liberia APT realised that, at community level, FGM can be gradually pushed back if it is linked to awareness raising on education for girls. Several APTs, finally, in their reflections on change processes, endorse the potential of youth advocates.

Two observations in particular, stand out. First, in Bangladesh, the Philippines and the Netherlands, GAA partners reflected on their initial ideas on influencing the private sector, more specifically on the assumed importance of business cases. Although the assumption could not yet be tested, as specific business cases had not yet been developed, experiences with the private sector led the teams to question its validity. The growing body of evidence on the positive pay-off of gender equality has not yet resulted in an increase in the number of companies that are embracing gender. Companies might be equally concerned about risks, for

business opportunities, image or profits. If the risks related to gender inequality and discrimination remain low (at least in the perception of companies), then they will not take action. Secondly, in the Philippines, GAA partners reconsidered their assessment from 2016 that the current political developments will not affect programme implementation.

Pathways of change

Above adjustments and reflections did not lead to substantive adjustments to the pathways of change of contextualised Theories of Change. However, GAA partners in the Netherlands and in the Philippines will reassess in 2018 the consequences of above reflections for their Theory of Change.

4.2. THE OVERALL THEORY OF CHANGE

The review of the contextualised Theories of Change confirms the overall logic of the GAA Theory of Change. Although the review does not yet provide grounds for revision of the 11 general assumptions, above reflections will be taken into account in a more thorough reassessment of the overall Theory of Change and its assumptions in the context of the programme's Mid Term Review in the course of 2018.

More specifically, the assumptions related to the pathway of change on Civil Society (Organisations) will be carefully monitored and discussed in the coming months, also in relation to the GAA learning agenda. Whereas the GAA Theory of Change assumes that *"CSOs, in particular girls' and women's rights organisations, have long-term commitment to shape political agendas, create political will and monitor implementation"* (assumption 1) and *"CSOs are willing and able to use increased organisational capability for effective lobby and advocacy actions"* (assumption 4), evidence and experiences from Alliance Programme Teams suggest that a considerable number of CSOs in the wider environment of GAA partners focus on service delivery, and are reluctant to move towards advocacy for girls and young women. At the same time, many signs have emerged of stronger (joint) advocacy by more like-minded CSOs. The pathway of change on the Private Sector will also be reassessed, notably the relative importance of business cases, corporate 'forerunners', legislation and concrete action perspectives as 'drivers' for change in supply chains.



5. COLLABORATION, HARMONISATION & LEARNING

5.1. COLLABORATION AND HARMONISATION

During the inception phase of GAA, alliance organisations invited Dutch embassies to contribute to the design of the programme. During this phase in almost all GAA countries dialogues took place in which potential areas for collaboration were identified. In some cases, like Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nepal, it was quite obvious that there was no common ground for collaboration. In other countries, the thematic match between GAA issues and the sector priorities of MASPs was weak. In those cases, the best both parties could do was to regularly share information on progress and changes in context. Finally, in a couple of countries, there was a greater thematic complementarity which could potentially lead to regular coordination and even the development of joint actions.

Looking back at the past year, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- In the three countries that are non-partner countries of the Netherlands (Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nepal), no efforts of harmonization have taken place, which is understandable given the lack of commonalities.
- In some countries the level of communication between Embassy and GAA partners is minimal although there are areas in which sharing of information would – at least – be fruitful. This is particularly the case of India and Uganda as well.
- In three countries (Kenya, Ethiopia and Bangladesh) there is a good level of regular exchange of information between the Embassy, GAA partners and other SP organisations.
- In Ghana, the engagement with the Embassy has become more intensive and several concrete joint actions have been discussed. This hasn't yet materialized but we expect this will happen during 2018.
- The Philippines is the country in which harmonisation has been most successful. The GAA and the Embassy are working closely together in the fight against commercial sexual exploitation, and initial steps were made to link with the private sector network of the Embassy.

We have learned that harmonisation requires commitment and a serious investment of time and efforts by all parties. These conditions are not always in place. Sometimes real harmonization is affected by limited capacity in the Embassies. In other instances it is difficult because GAA partners have not yet discovered how Dutch diplomacy can add value to the ongoing CSO advocacy. In our Annual Plan for 2018, we have deliberately set realistic goals: an ambition to strengthen our engagement with the Embassies in Ghana, Ethiopia and Bangladesh while maintaining the close collaboration with the Embassy in Manila.

Finally, there is a strong ambition to collaborate with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the level of the Dutch and international programmes. During 2017, the GAA lobby actions towards the Dutch private sector were developed after consultations with the Ministry (the Gender Taskforce). The design and dissemination of the survey among the corporate sector were done in collaboration with the Ministry and the presentation of the final report happened with the support of the Ministry. By the end of last year, both parties agreed on the need to adjust the GAA lobby strategy towards the private sector. The new, reformulated, strategy has been approved by the Ministry in April 2018. We expect that by following the new engagement strategy towards the Dutch private sector, we will also be able to strengthen the collaboration with embassies, in particular the Embassy in Dhaka.

In this latter context, initial steps have also been taken to strengthen collaboration and harmonisation with other Dutch Strategic Partnerships, notably the Fair Wear Foundation. At the international and Dutch level, GAA organisations collaborated on a regular basis with other Strategic Partnerships, for example on the drafting and finalisation of inputs for policy debates and briefings.

5.2. CHALLENGES

As outlined in previous sections of this report, a clear and focused advocacy approach towards the private sector was an important challenge for the Girls Advocacy Alliance in 2017. GAA efforts towards Dutch (multinational) companies and international corporate social responsibility (CSR) fora and networks must be closely aligned with activities and developments in GAA programme countries, notably with regards to the textile sector in Bangladesh and the tourism sector in Nepal. Extra effort will also be required to effectively link with the business networks of the Dutch Embassies in Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia and the Philippines. The adjusted Strategy for Private Sector Engagement that the GAA developed towards the end of 2017 foresees in stronger focus, and first steps have been taken to identify and elaborate concrete propositions for companies.

Another challenge was formed by the engagement of girls and young women in GAA lobby and advocacy. GAA partners in all countries recognise the importance of involving girls and young women. Advocacy messages by girls and young women are powerful, and lasting positive changes are only possible if the voices of girls and young women are represented. Efforts to involve girls and young women were undertaken in practically all programme countries, with various successful examples. Other APTs found that training and mobilising groups of youths did not result in strong youth advocacy. To further strengthen the effective involvement of girls and young women in advocacy, the GAA developed in 2017 a Youth Advocacy Toolkit, including training materials and practical guidelines. The toolkit can be used by GAA partners and other organisations but is also actively being rolled out to all GAA programme countries with the support of the International APT. A first round of training of youth advocates was conducted in the Philippines and in Ghana in 2017, other countries are planned for 2018.

Several advocacy trainings and workshops were undertaken by the GAA in 2017 to support partners and local organisations. Also, a GAA Advocacy Manual was developed and disseminated, with practical guidelines, tools and resources. The APT Annual Reports on 2017 reflect growing strategic insights in change processes and advocacy tactics. The outcomes of the Capacity Assessments of partner organisations as well, indicate that partners' capacities for lobby and advocacy have improved. However, extra investment in advocacy capacity of partner organisations as well as local offices and GAA organisations may be necessary in the coming years.

5.3. LEARNING

The GAA has a coordinated learning agenda, with key learning questions that focus on three main issues related to the 10 core assumptions of the GAA Theory of Change – see annexe II. After important preparatory steps in 2016, all APT in 2017 developed a learning calendar. In this Learning Calendar, each APT identified a learning issue and related questions, and indicated how these will be addressed in the coming years.

Although not many explicit learning activities were undertaken yet, all APTs reported relevant learnings from their involvement in the GAA in 2017. Sharing of lessons learned and best practices is included in every APT (Outcome Harvesting) meeting. Most learnings evolved around what works and what does not work (so well) in advocacy, and reflect a combination of learning-by-doing, reflection and exchange, as well as specific capacity support in the form of various advocacy trainings undertaken by the alliance and the GAA Advocacy Manual that was developed and disseminated in 2017. Many APTs moreover conducted mappings and studies to feed their advocacy work, including youth-led surveys and researches, and private sector mappings.

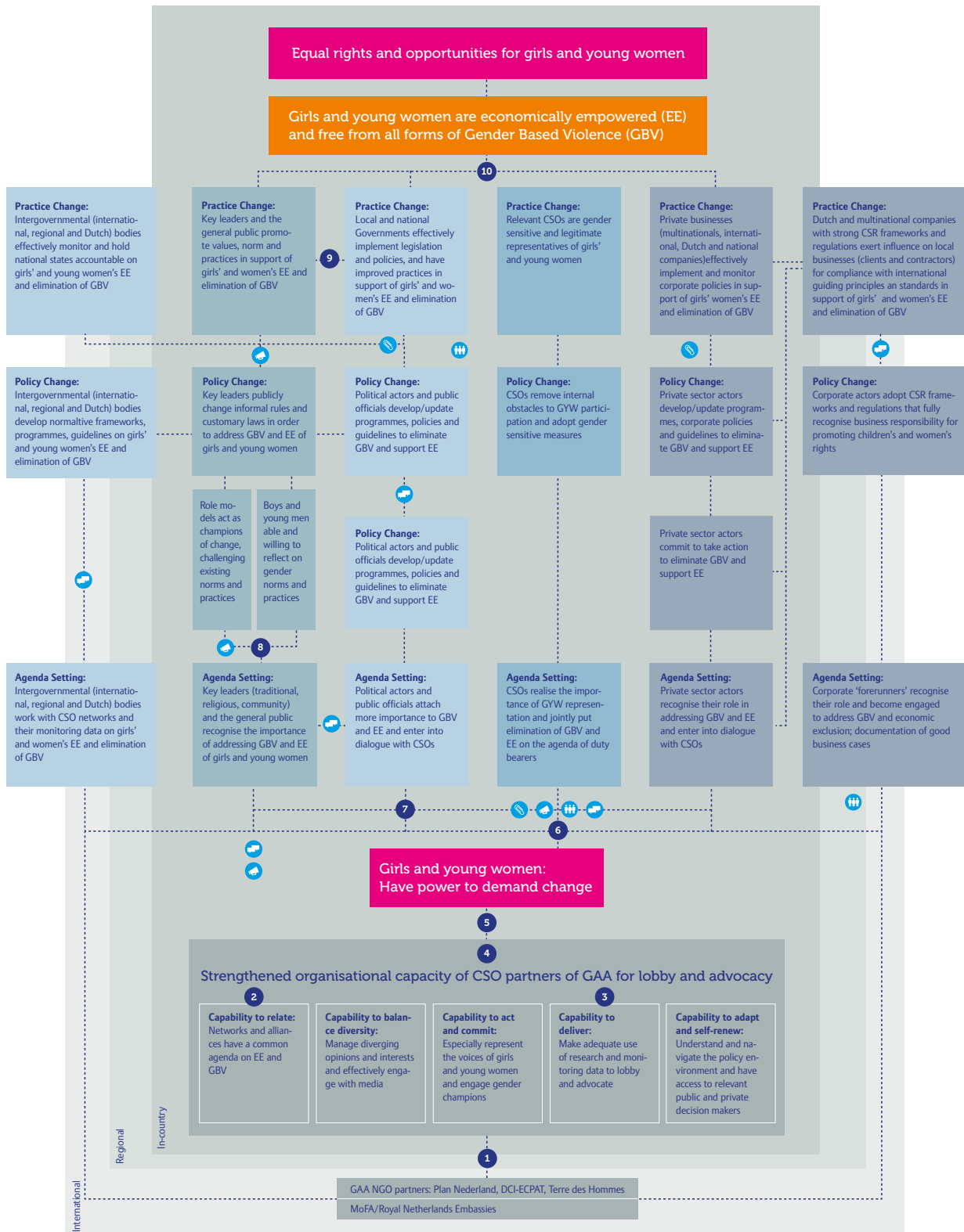
Despite differences in contexts, some learnings stand out. In addition to the observations mentioned under section 3.2. on Outputs of Lobby and Advocacy, several APTs commented on the importance of media in support of advocacy, and on the strength of youth-led advocacy. Many APTs moreover gained relevant new insights on the role of evidence, and on the different forms of evidence for different advocacy targets and messages. In some cases, real stories have more impact than figures, especially if these are brought by youths themselves. Many lessons

were learned on influencing the private sector. In several countries, companies in the hospitality sector were best approached through associations; in other sectors, a one-on-one approach worked better. GAA partners also learned a lot about CSOs and how to best work with them to unlock the potential of joint advocacy.

For 2018, more explicit learning activities are planned aimed at the key learning issues, using a variety of learning methods and actions to collect, analyse and value information on key learning questions, including expert meetings, research, literature review, Outcome Harvesting sessions, APT meetings, interim programme reviews, reflections and exchanges with partners and other expert organisations, as well as meetings and surveys with girl panels.



ANNEXE I. THEORY OF CHANGE OF THE GAA



Assumptions Theory of Change

1. CSOs, in particular girls and women's right organisations, have long-term commitment to shape political agendas, create political will and monitor implementation.
2. Collaboration between CSOs with different mandates to fight for a common goal will strengthen each individual CSO and benefit all their constituencies
3. Use of ICT, social media and research improves the quality (relevance, urgency) of lobby and advocacy actions.
4. CSOs are able and willing to use increased organisational capacity for effective lobby and advocacy actions.
5. Lobby and advocacy strategies, at all levels, have to be substantiated and supported if not carried out by a substantial part of the group they are supposed to benefit.
6. Stronger CSOs that are accountable to their constituency cannot be neglected by democratic states.
7. Stronger CSO networks ensure that the issues of Gender Based Violence and economic exclusion gain priority on the public and political agenda.
8. Involving boys and men's organisations and traditional and religious leaders increases public awareness and norms change on Gender Based Violence.
9. Mass media reflect and sustain popular norms and values.
10. Gender Based Violence cannot be eradicated without economic empowerment.

ANNEXE II. KEY LEARNING QUESTIONS OF THE GAA

ISSUES	LEARNING QUESTION	SPECIFIC LEARNING QUESTIONS (PROPOSED)
Social norms	How do gender discriminatory social norms change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which specific social norms are mostly influencing individual attitudes and behaviour towards the specific GAA issues (such as, child marriage, FGM, sexual violence, access to post-primary education and TVET, decent work and entrepreneurship) What is the influence of (new and traditional) media on processes of social norms change? What is the influence of boys and men on processes of social norms change? How do traditional and religious leaders become motivated to act as champions of change for social norms of gender equality?
Role of civil society	How do broad and effective civil society coalitions advocating for gender equality develop?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which civil society actors are most willing and able to act as 'convener' of broader civil society coalitions? Which kind of inter-organizational structures and arrangements characterize effective civil society coalitions? How to involve non-traditional civil society actors (such as, religious groups) in a civil society coalition based upon a clear agenda for gender equality? What are the most effective responses of civil society coalitions to restrictive measures undertaken by government reducing the operating space for civil society?
GBV and economic exclusion	How can governments and private sector actors effectively integrate anti-GBV measures in economic policies and programs and vice versa?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What examples of effective economic policies and programmes which have in-built anti-GBV measures do we know of? What are the incentives for political leaders and decision-makers to integrate anti-GBV and economic empowerment measures into single laws, policies and programmes? What kind of economic policies and programmes offer the best opportunities for including anti-GBV issues? What kind of protection policies and programmes offer the best opportunities for including economic empowerment issues?

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The Girls Advocacy Alliance is one of the strategic partners of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Dialogue and Dissent framework.