**Concept Note and Action Plan**

**on Faith for Social and Behaviour Change Initiative (2018-19)**

**Communication for Development (C4D) and Civil Society Partnerships (CSP)**

**UNICEF, NYHQ, March 2018**

*Background*

As part of its global activities, in 2014 the UNICEF-Religions for Peace (RfP) partnership coordinated a comprehensive mapping of UNICEF’s global engagement with faith leaders, organizations and communities over the previous five years. The mapping investigated the range and types of religious groups, categories of support and thematic focus areas of the partnerships, representing a total of 149 countries, territories and areas. The mapping revealed that C4D-related activities (sensitization, social mobilization and advocacy) represented respectively 32%, 20% and 17% of categories of support, accounting all together for 2/3 of country-level FBO-related activities. It also identified religious leaders and institutions as the partners of preference for Country Offices. With evidence of UNICEF’s extensive engagement with religious communities in plain view, in December 2014 Civil Society Partnerships and RfP organized a workshop bringing together UNICEF staff from HQ and the field, who were significantly engaged in working with religious actors, with the aim to identify concrete action items to improve engagement with religious partners. Three of the areas that were identified as ones where there is a need of support to strengthen UNICEF engagement with religious actors are those of guidance, capacity building and knowledge exchange.

Since this time, the Communication for Development Section of UNICEF’s Programme Division has collaborated with individual country offices on FBO engagement and documentation on their role on social and behaviour change. In 2017, along with the Child Protection Section, there has also been collaboration with the African Union in producing an *“Introductory Guide for Faith Based Organizations on Addressing Harmful Social Norms”* which was used as part of training workshop material for a continent-wide FBO workshop for religious leaders across Africa in combatting Child Marriage. This initiative was a preliminary response to the identified need that greater technical guidance needs to be provided to FBOs if they are to facilitate dialogue in support of social and behaviour change related to the priority areas of UNICEF’s work. With plans to expand work on both primary and secondary evidence collection on C4D-related work involving FBOs, preliminary work on an evidence review on the impact of Faith Based Organizations on Child Marriage was also initiated with Zurich University Department of Behavioural Economics.

**Towards More Systematic Engagement of FBOs in UNICEF Programming**

Historically, religious leaders and faith actors in general have often been pivotal in some of UNICEF’s specific behavior change communication and advocacy strategies in these fields, given their widely recognized power as agents of change and as advocates. As a result of their congregational platforms and often highly respected status in society, faith leaders are singularly well placed to achieve cost-effective behavioral and attitudinal changes, with significant potential for triggering and sustaining significant improvements in child survival and development.

To date, the depth of the potential for working with FBOs has for the most part not been fully tapped as strategies of engagement have generally not taken a systems approach to working with FBOs. Partnerships have largely been developed by single sectors around specific activities in project mode versus a more overarching programming framework tied to country programme priorities. As a result, partnership strategies with FBOs have seldom brought together the range of engagement possibilities at country level in a systematic way required to effect change in complex behaviours and social norms that affect a range of child health, protection and development outcomes. UNICEF has acknowledged that as the leading development organization on children, addressing a full range of multi-sectoral issues across both development and humanitarian agendas, a more comprehensive national and community engagement framework with FBOs is required to advance this work. UNICEF C4D is currently the chair of the recently established Global Alliance on Social and Behaviour Change, designated global lead for the global Community Engagement and Humanitarian Action mechanism and convenor for a global inter-agency group on Community engagement standards and measurement. All these multi-partner platforms represent opportunities for influencing not only the work of UNICEF but the wider field of social and behaviour change communication.

To seize this timely opportunity for strengthening UNICEF programming in relation to communities of Faith, the Communication for Development Section of Programme and Civil Society Partnerships section of UNICEF’s Division of Communication have agreed to collaborate on a **Faith for Social and Behaviour Change initiative** around a set of strategic activities over the two year period 2018-2019, towards strengthening UNICEF’s partnership with Faith Based Organizations in support of results for children globally.

The role of CSP in this collaboration will be to continue leading the interface, convening, strategic direction and advocacy initiatives of Global partnerships with Faith organizations (including but not limited to RfP), while the role of C4D will be to provide the technical lead on the generation of evidence, normative frameworks and technical guidance on national and community engagement of FBOs for Social and Behaviour Change in relation to UNICEF’s Programmatic Priorities. With respect to the evidence generation aspects of the initiative, C4D and CSP have established a 3-year partnership agreement with the **Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI)** which is committed to building cross-sector, multi-religious, interdisciplinary, collaborative learning platforms to gather robust evidence for capacities, activities and contributions of faith groups to local community health and wellbeing.

**Alignment with UNICEF’s Strategic Plan 2018-2021**

The coinciding of UNICEF’s new Strategic Plan 2018-2021 with the roll out of the proposed partnership on the **Faith for Social and Behaivour Change initiative** provides a unique opportunity to harness the full potential of communication and engagement strategies towards greater achievement of results for children. In the Strategic Plan, Communication for Development and Communication and Public Advocacy are both positioned as part of the “HOW” strategies that are expected to contribute to the achievement of results in UNICEF’s Strategic Plan. The **Faith for Social and Behaviour and Social Change initiative** will be aligned with two major organizational thrusts in relation to the HOW strategies:

**Communication for Development**

*As one of the strategies for* ***“Programming excellence for at-scale results for children”*** *through multi-sector and cross-cutting programming, the expected contribution of C4D is to generate demand for and utilization of quality and inclusive services; promote adoption of key parenting and community practices and tackle abandonment of harmful social norms and behaviours. C4D is also expected to facilitate engagement and empowerment of communities, adolescents and children, particularly the most marginalized to hold duty bearers accountable; and to support communication and community engagement in humanitarian response, in order to contribute to the realization of child rights, directly and through policy and system strengthening.*

* As a part of this “HOW” strategy, C4D has adopted a new Community systems strengthening thrust towards developing quality standards for more convergent, multi-sectoral and at-scale programming in both development and humanitarian contexts, where Faith-Based organizations have been identified as a central stakeholder. (See C4D Global Theory of Change in Annex).

**Communication and Public Advocacy**

*Another “HOW” strategy in UNICEF’s Strategic Plan is about**“****winning support for the cause of children from decision makers and the wider public.*** *The specific objectives are to “become an even stronger advocacy, campaigning, fundraising and communications force for children and working with others to build alliances and movements for change. The goal is to recruit 100 million supporters to give, advocate and volunteer, and to help support young people and children as agents of change.*

* The “Cause Framework” initiative largely led by the Division of Communication has prioritized bringing together more effectively the strands of External Communication, Public Advocacy and Fundraising around four specific priority UNICEF global campaigns (MNCH, ECD, Violence Against Children and Children Uprooted).

**Given the thematic priority of Religions for Peace on Maternal and Newborn Health, the proposed partnership initiative will place specific focus on FBO engagement in relation to MNCH and ECD.**

The following is the proposed roadmap of milestones to be facilitated under this partnership:

**Road Map for Strategic Partnership on FBO role in Community System Strengthening for Social and Behaviour Change**

**Evidence and Knowledge Generation**

1. **Global Literature Review and Stocktake exercise** in selected countries across regions on UNICEF partnerships with Faith actors to support social and behaviour change, including identification of FBO-related advocacy strategies linked to the social and behaviour change objectives and wider programmatic objectives for ECD and new-born and maternal health. The stocktaking exercise will be an extension of the mapping done by CSP, going beyond the WHO and WHAT to investigate more specifically the HOW (the strategies used and the related outcomes in relation to social and behaviour change initiatives). (April – July)
2. **Development of Case Studies** on FBO Partnerships for social and behaviour change (April-December)
3. **Identification and assessment of tools** (eg. mapping, network analysis; capacity assessment; facilitator guides etc.) currently being used in SBC work with FBOs both by UNICEF and by other partners. (identification April-July, assessment July-December 2018)

**Development of Guidance**

1. **Development of conceptual framework and models** for systematic engagement with FBOs at scale for social and behaviour change with particular focus on ECD and new-born and maternal health, based on Stocktake Exercise, Country Case Studies and Compilation of Tools (all differentiating Public advocacy and awareness raising activities from those such as more in-depth and routine activities around behaviour and social norm change). (July to December)
2. **Development of Global Guidance** on partnership with FBOs for Social and Behaviour Change based on all previous outputs (end of 2018 – beginning of 2019) Amongst other areas, this will include specific guidelines on how to conduct **network analysis** (who speaks to who about what within a faith network); **context analysis** to assess and analyse the political landscape surrounding work with FBOs; **capacity analysis** to determine the nature of attitudes and skills of proposed FBO facilitators to lead gender transformative, two-way dialogue from sub-national to household level. (2019)

**Capacity Development**

1. **Development of training module on Social and Behaviour Change with FBOs** to be incorporated in overall set of C4D Global thematic training modules. (2019)
2. **Training Workshop to field test the modules and enhance capacity of selected UNICEF COs and key FBO representatives** in supporting more systematic social and behaviour change strategies linked to UNICEF country office priorities. (2019)
3. **Training of Trainers for C4D Country or Regional Institutions** to support roll out of Social and Behaviour Change with FBOs package. (2019)

**Proposed 2018 Process/Activities**

In order to ensure strong consultation, field engagement and knowledge exchange around the agreed milestones for 2018, UNICEF, RfP and JLI will undertake the following activities:

1. **Finalization of CSP Partnership Agreement and Workplan with Religions for Peace (RFP)** Qtr 2
2. **Finalization of C4D/CSP Partnership Agreement with Joint Learning Initiative (JLI)**  Qtr 2
3. **Webinar with Regional Advisors** (Qtr 2)

A webinar was coordinated to brief Regional Advisors on the proposed Faith for Social and Behaviour Change initiative and to agree on a select set of countries and process for the stocktake exercise based on a pre-developed set of criteria.

1. **Desk Review of literature and evidence on FBO impact on social and behaviour change** including identification of any FBO SBCC tools in use by other development partners (Qtr 2)
2. **Gathering of documentation and tools** (Qtr 2) on FBO SBC work in the 14 focal countries (survey of FBO work the 14 Focal Countries; identification of focus for Case Studies, preliminary identification of FBO-related tools)
3. **Faith for Social and Behaviour Change Workshop** (End Qtr 2)(with special focus on ECD and Child Survival)

The workshop to be convened jointly by UNICEF and RfP, and supported by the technical inputs of JLI, will be held in Bangkok from 10-12 July 2018. The venue was selected to take advantage of the presence of the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office and in consultation with RfP whose affiliate in Thailand will be handling the logistics of the event. The event will gather influential religious leaders and UNICEF practitioners (both technical staff in the two fields of expertise and C4D/Communication) from countries across the region. The main purpose of the workshop will be to review the global evidence and best practices and facilitate exchange towards the development of a conceptual framework and models for systematic engagement with FBOs at scale for social and behaviour change.

1. **Finalization and production of UNICEF-RfP publications** (Q3&4):

Literature/Evidence Review; 14 Case Studies; Assessment of Tools; Programme Brief: Mapping Report, Framework and Models for FBO SBC engagement (as precursor to the development of full Programme Guidance and Training Package to be developed in 2019).

