

Regional Caribbean

# Annual Narrative Programme Report

01 January 2020 – 31 December 2020

An initiative of the United Nations funded by the European Union



<p><b>Programme Title &amp; Programme Number</b></p> <p>Programme Title: Strengthening Regional Cooperation to Prevent and Respond to Family Violence in the Caribbean</p> <p>MPTF Office Project Reference Number:<sup>1</sup></p>	<p><b>Priority regions/areas/localities for the programme</b></p> <p>Caribbean: Inclusive of all independent Member States of CARICOM</p>																		
<p><b>Recipient Organisation(s)</b></p> <p>UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF</p>	<p><b>Key Partners</b></p> <p>UN: ILO, PAHO, ECLAC  Regional institutions: CARICOM Secretariat, OECS Commission, CDB, CXC, CDEMA, CAJO, Government  Regional NGOs working on GBV  Regional trade unions and employers' federation  Academia working on Gender Studies – (UWI)</p>																		
<p><b>Programme Cost (US\$)</b></p> <p>Total Phase I approved budget as per the Spotlight RPD: USD 11,360,711 USD  Phase I Spotlight funding:<sup>2</sup> \$9,552,830 USD  Agency Contribution: \$1,807, 881 USD</p> <p>Spotlight Funding and Agency Contribution by Agency:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="180 1052 850 1451"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name of RUNO</th> <th>Spotlight Phase I (USD)</th> <th>UN Agency Contributions (USD)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>UN Women</td> <td>\$4,715, 845</td> <td>\$209, 750</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNDP</td> <td>\$1, 893, 461</td> <td>\$301, 156</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNFPA</td> <td>\$1, 490, 725</td> <td>\$270, 975</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNICEF</td> <td>\$1, 452, 799</td> <td>\$1, 026, 000</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>TOTAL:</b></td> <td><b>\$9,552,830</b></td> <td><b>\$1,807, 881</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Name of RUNO	Spotlight Phase I (USD)	UN Agency Contributions (USD)	UN Women	\$4,715, 845	\$209, 750	UNDP	\$1, 893, 461	\$301, 156	UNFPA	\$1, 490, 725	\$270, 975	UNICEF	\$1, 452, 799	\$1, 026, 000	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$9,552,830</b>	<b>\$1,807, 881</b>	<p><b>Programme Start and End Dates</b></p> <p>Start Date: 24 July 2020</p> <p>End Date: 31 December 2022</p> <p><b>Report Submitted by:</b></p> <p><b>Name &amp; Title:</b> Didier Trebuq, Resident Coordinator  <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:didier.trebuq@un.org">didier.trebuq@un.org</a>  <b>Physical Address:</b> UN House, Hastings, Christ Church, Barbados  <b>Telephone:</b> T +1 (246) 467-6101</p>
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<sup>1</sup> The Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#).

<sup>2</sup> The Spotlight Contribution refers to the amount transferred to the Recipient UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#).

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## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ASRHR	Adolescent Sexuality and Reproductive Health and Rights
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCS	Caribbean Community Secretariat
CGL	Caribbean Congress of Labour
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CEC	Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC)
CXC	Caribbean Examination Council
CFPA	Caribbean Family Planning Affiliation
CNSM	Caribbean New School Model
CARPHA	Caribbean Public Health Agency
CMEU	Child Marriage and Early Unions
CDM	Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSRRG	Civil Society Regional Reference Group
CXC	Caribbean Examination Council
DSG	Deputy Secretary-General
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DV	Domestic Violence
ESP	Essential Service Package
EU	European Union
FV	Family Violence
FPAs	Family Planning Associations
GDIGM	Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education
HOA	Head of Agencies
HRD	Human Resource Development
HSD	Human and Social Development
IMPACS	Implementation Agency for Crime and Security
ICT	Information and Communication
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
IGDS	Institute for Gender and Development Studies
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean

MoE	Ministries of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
POWA	Productive Organisation for Women in Action
PMU	Programme Management Unit
PVAC	Prevention on Violence Against Children
RSC	Regional Steering Committee
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
RUNOs	Recipient United Nations Organisations
SOGI	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SBCC	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
SI	Spotlight Initiative
SCLAN	Spouses of CARICOM Leaders Action Network
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
ToT	Trainer of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UWI	University of the West Indies
VAC	Violence Against Children
VAW	Violence Against Women
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WEE	Women Economic Empowerment

## Executive Summary

The Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional Programme focuses on the reduction in prevalence and incidence of family violence (FV). The Programme focuses on four pillars: i) working to ensure institutions are gender-responsive; ii) establishing comprehensive and evidence-based prevention programmes aimed at changing social norms and gender stereotypes; iii) promoting the collection and use of quality, comparable data to inform public policy, advocacy, policy-making, and delivery of complimentary services to improve prevention; and iv) supporting autonomous women's movements to influence, and monitor policy and to ensure accountability. The regional programme complements the investments of regional institutions and contributes to the scale, sustainability, visibility, lessons learnt and replication of FV and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) programming in the Caribbean.

Implementation of the regional programme began in earnest in 2021 following disbursement of funds in December 2020. The Programme Management Unit (PMU) only became fully operational in mid-April 2021. Laying of foundational processes started in the second half of 2020 and continued in the first half of 2021. The programme picked up momentum by the second half of the year. As of 31 December 2021, the programme's delivery rate was at 62%.

There are several regional political and socio-economic contextual issues that impacted delivery of the programme in the year under review.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in extended lockdowns as well as continued gathering and travel restrictions which created uncertainty, shrinking economies, job losses, closure of schools and services. These factors increased the risk of VAWG and FV. Natural and humanitarian disasters such as the la Soufriere volcano eruption in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, earthquake in Haiti and hurricanes in Barbados, St. Vincent and St. Lucia exacerbated the vulnerability of women, girls and marginalised groups in the region.

By the end of April 2021, all coordination and governance structures were set up and fully functional. The Steering Committee and the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) met three times each, while the Civil Society Regional Reference Group (CSRRG) initially met every fortnight but by the end of the year the frequency was reduced to one meeting a month. Delivering as 'One UN' was at the core of the programme approach through dedicated Recipient United Nations Organisations (RUNOs) monthly meetings to plan together, find synergies, solve common problems and aggregate results. From December 2021 these were complemented by a monthly Regional Spotlight Collaborative engagement, which was pioneered to accelerate implementation of the Programme. The Spotlight

Collaborative brought together key stakeholders from regional institutions, UN agencies, implementing partners and programme consultants and CSRRG Members to: accelerate programme delivery; streamline communication and collaboration; strengthen partnership and collective problem-solving and support transparency and accountability. The invitation to these collaborative meetings was extended to the EU. There is also a Collaborative online platform (<https://caribbeanspotlight.org>) for sharing, learning and collaborating, which is dedicated to the Regional Spotlight partners only and is not public-facing. Access to the platform requires login credentials.

This was not without its challenges. Adopting a new, interagency approach to programming, as the Spotlight Initiative is working to do, is inevitably complex. Transitioning to interagency processes takes time, as UN Agencies work to understand and coordinate each other's implementation rules and procedures and identify areas for harmonisation. As a result, many activities needed additional time for recruitment and procurement actions. As Spotlight Initiative teams work closely with a range of partners, these partnerships require tailored support and adaptive responses to challenges.

The European Union (EU) was fully engaged throughout the year. There was a direct communication line between the UN Resident Coordinator and the EU's Head of Delegation and Head of Development Cooperation, as well as between the EU Gender Focal Point who is also the EU Technical Lead for Spotlight Initiative and the UN Regional Programme Coordinator and Technical Coherence. EU participated in all Regional Steering Committee and TAG meetings, gave remarks at two events and contributed [an article](#) to the first SI newsletter and a foreword for the report on a Formative Assessment of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in the region.

At least three civil society organisations (CSOs) were engaged as implementing partners while nine CSOs out of 38 CSO applications for the Small Grants were at an advanced stage by year-end. The Regional SI leveraged virtual meetings to ensure engagement with CSOs due to travel restrictions. While a budget was set aside to help CSO Reference Group Members to access data bundles for ease of communication, this is yet to be implemented after the administrative processes to facilitate this have been finalised. CSOs and the CSRRG formed part of reference groups or advisory committees supporting various interventions.

During 2021, there was increased visibility of the Spotlight Programme through two published newsletters, at least two newspaper advertorials on UN Day and during 16 Days in Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, an episode of #WithHer Talks, use of social media, partner websites and sharing a Spotlight promotional video during key events.

The programme contributed to some strong early results under the 4 Pillars (please see results section on page 27 for detailed information on each result):

## Pillar 2: Institutions



- Guidelines on the integration of VAWG/FV in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRR/M) including COVID-19 response were developed. The guidelines are expected to support the Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy and promote awareness of definitions, tools, databases, key publications and reports available on GBV in the Caribbean.
- A manual on gender responsive budgeting has been drafted. Data collection is in progress from key government and regional institutions in Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, CARICOM Secretariat, OECS Secretariat and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).
- An Essential Services Package Community of Practice (ESP CoP) was created as a new regional inter-agency and multi-sectoral cooperation mechanism. The CoP serves to promote exchange, cooperation and learning among regional institutions representing the health, social services, justice and policing, and education sectors, under the framework of the ESP. There is additional focus on the Minimum Standards for GBV in Emergencies Programming to ensure a humanitarian-development nexus approach. The Caribbean is on the way to becoming the first region to integrate the education sector within the ESP for women and girls subject to violence; and Spotlight is working with education actors to ensure that the education sector and school systems promote gender equality and non-violence from teaching practices to curricula.
- The Caribbean Observatory on SRHR was launched in collaboration with the CFP. The Observatory is a platform designed to support the improvement of quality analysis, disaggregated and comparable data on SRHR in the region, an avenue to better inform laws, policies and programmes, and thereby supporting more enabling environments for SRHR for all communities, and the under-served in particular.

## Pillar 3: Prevention



- A Formative Assessment of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in the Caribbean was completed in the last year which has provided a better understanding and data to formulate policies and programmes on CSE within the HFLE curriculum in schools .
- International Guidance on Out-of-School CSE was adapted to the Caribbean context and a Caribbean Toolkit for CSOs developed to implement out-of-school CSE reaching the most vulnerable and marginalised youth. 35 representatives from six countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, and Suriname) with capacity to train others, has been created following an online Training of Trainers (ToT) of the Caribbean toolkit.
- A Social and Behaviour Change Communication strategy has been drafted and assets for a communication campaign to address VAWG in the Caribbean have been developed using a participatory design, production and implementation approach. The campaign is designed to address stereotypes and underlying VAWG drivers in collaboration with Caribbean media, advertising communities, traditional and non-traditional influencers as well as the private sector.

## Pillar 5: Data



- There is notable progress towards building a better understanding of child marriages, early unions in the Caribbean. The IGDS, UWI - St Augustine, is leading this work with support from an established Advisory group. The methodology and interview guidelines were developed, CSO researchers trained, and data collection is underway. Based on a criteria list and costs associated with this undertaking, the CMEU study selected the following countries for data collection: Guyana, Suriname, Haiti, Belize, Trinidad & Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda. The study will also be complimented with data from a U-Report that was conducted in Belize, Haiti and Trinidad & Tobago.
- Spotlight is increasing regional capacity of undertaking economic costs of gender violence and sexual harassment in targeted sectors. Five young researchers, competitively selected, are accompanying and understudying a lead researcher who is conducting a regional study on economic costs of sexual harassment in the workplace. Therefore, building a talent pipeline in the region. The Economic Cost of VAWG study has been extended to Grenada and Guyana. Approval has been received for both studies. There is also a component looking at the Economic Costs of VAWG in the workplace, which is also in progress.

## Pillar 6: Women's Movement



- Nine CSOs were selected from 38 applicants to receive small grants aimed at building the business capacity of emerging women's rights organisations to provide FV /VAWG services or to conduct FV advocacy work.
  - Materials for capacity building of CSOs, including individual mentoring and business coaching have been completed. A formalised and comprehensive training component will accompany these materials, over a 6-month period to support sustainability of gender and women's rights organisations and contribute towards increased capacity for the movement.
  - Regional guidance for social accountability has been developed and consultations are undergoing with CSOs working on accountability mechanisms and the Civil Society Regional Reference Group.
  - The training, materials and regional events are being extended to all CSOs across the region, under the Regional Programme, as part of a comprehensive capacity building programme to facilitate partnerships, networking and knowledge exchange
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### Contextual Shifts and Implementation Status

## **Contextual Shifts**

### **Geo-political Shifts**

The Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, a key partner of the Regional Spotlight Initiative, retired leading to a change of the guard. A new female Secretary-General, Dr Carla Barnett and Deputy Secretary-General (DSG), Dr Armstrong Alexis were sworn in September and November respectively. This led to slight delays in a few key activities due to the transition. The DSG is the new focal point for the Regional Spotlight Programme and has demonstrated strong support through attending at least four monthly stakeholder events for the Programme between November and mid-December.

During this reporting period, it is notable that Barbados elected a female, Ms Sandra Mason, the former Governor-General of Barbados as the first President of the country. She replaced the Queen of England as Head of State when the country became a Republic on 30 November 2021. Increasing women in leadership further propels the gender equality agenda forward in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The assassination of the President of Haiti, Jovenel Moïse exacerbated persistent political instability, the socio-economic crisis, high levels of violence, including gang-related insecurity and the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. The situation remains a cause for concern in the region. In 2021, the regional programme demonstrated solidarity with Haiti through a consultative meeting between CSRRG Members, UN agencies and CSOs in Haiti and agreed on areas of support based on the country's needs. Apart from agreeing to conduct joint advocacy and amplify the voices of women and gender non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Haiti, a dedicated call for regional NGOs to support and strengthen capacities of CSOs providing VAWG services in Haiti specifically will be issued in Q2 of 2022.

### **Socio-economic Consequences of COVID-19**

As subsequent waves of the COVID-19 pandemic bore down on the Caribbean region, countries struggled to keep economies afloat and governments' efforts were directed towards response and recovery. Like much of the developing world, the region was slow to benefit from vaccine availability and faced high levels of vaccine hesitancy in several jurisdictions. Contracted economies, job losses and extended periods of lockdown, which resulted in the closure of schools, services, and businesses have worsened economic insecurity, stress and uncertainty. This increased the risk of VAWG and FV within the home. In several countries, media reports of domestic violence (DV) increased substantially. The crisis exposed the weaknesses of violence prevention and response efforts, and

consequently service providers and non-governmental agencies were also expected to scale up support services.

### **Natural Disasters a Constant Threat to Caribbean Human Security**

Coupled with this, the eruption of the La Soufriere volcano in St. Vincent and the Grenadines on 9 April 2021, created a humanitarian crisis requiring emergency assistance and support. Over 20,000 people were displaced and many others were impacted as plumes of volcanic ash rose over 10 km into the air, covering miles of land and neighbouring islands. This posed a disruption to health and emergency services and placed heavy demands on state entities to provide long-term support, as many homes and businesses became uninhabitable. Haiti experienced a 7.2 magnitude earthquake on 14 August 2021 affecting more than 800,000 people including 340,000 children particularly in the Sud, Grand'Anse and Nippes. This meant that some of the Caribbean regional and Member States' resources had to be channelled to the country in addition to international assistance. On 2 July 2021, Hurricane Elsa descended on the region directly affecting Barbados, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia. It was the first hurricane in 66 years to directly hit Barbados resulting in widespread damage due to flooding and high-winds; particularly in the south of the island. Several persons were displaced, including women and children, and had to be provided with temporary housing, offered by the local government, while their properties were repaired.

### **Pandemic Exacerbated Vulnerabilities of Marginalised Groups**

The pandemic exacerbated pre-existing inequalities which, in turn, placed some groups at higher risk of contracting the virus and of suffering from its impact, including increased exposure to violence (UNICEF, 2021; <https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/19616/file/violencia-against-children-and-adolescents-in-the-time-of-covid19.pdf>). Growing evidence shows that for certain groups - such as girls, ethnic and racial minorities, individuals with disabilities, and migrants - the risks of violence are compounded by structural inequalities and historical forms of discrimination (UNICEF, 2021; <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/COVID-and-Children-Research-Library-Innocenti-Digest-October2021.pdf>).

Remote learning resulted in reduced learning for the marginalised, reduced access to CSE services and increased risk of adolescent pregnancies and child marriage and early unions (CMEU)

During this period, all of the countries and territories in the Caribbean experienced at least some level of school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, the situation across the Caribbean remains mixed with schools closed in some countries, either partially or fully, and open in others. The extended closures forced schools to implement remote learning in an effort to maintain continuity of education for students. Given the extensive use of digital strategies for remote education, the main

challenge has been the students' low level of access to the internet and to digital devices at home. The issue is particularly pronounced for students belonging to marginalised groups such as migrants, refugees and indigenous peoples who are more likely to live in rural areas or have lower socioeconomic status.

Apart from reduced learning time, COVID-19 specifically threatens to reverse the gains on gender equality and women and girl's empowerment and increase the marginalisation of adolescent girls. This is not limited to issues of sexual and gender-based violence but includes adolescent pregnancies and child marriage and early unions (CMEU), which has accelerated into a 'shadow pandemic'. UNICEF projects that more girls will be at risk of CMEU as a result of the pandemic. In this context, while there are actions of young women and girls leveraging technology to respond to the pandemic, there are also girls that may face disruptions / lack of access to learning and schooling due to the 'gender digital divide' (UNICEF, 2021; <https://data.unicef.org/resources/covid-19-a-threat-to-progress-against-child-marriage/>)

The school closures also exacerbated challenges accessing CSE services, especially for youth who rely on these services within school systems. In March 2021, world leaders met at the World Health Assembly (WHA) Global Education Coalition high-level ministerial meeting to take stock of lessons learnt and discuss possible education strategies required in the second year of COVID-19. Because digital content can influence knowledge, attitudes and practices of adolescents and young people, leaders considered using these tools to disseminate COVID-19 information -including around vaccination rollout - alongside CSE and Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR) education. When harnessed safely and thoughtfully, access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and digital spaces can add value to CSE delivery. At the WHA meeting, ministers commended innovative new teaching methods that prioritise learner wellbeing and psychosocial support in the pandemic context.

COVID-19 pandemic and other stated regional political and socio-economic context had an impact on Spotlight programme delivery

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected the implementation timeline and programme delivery. The unpredictability of the pandemic continues to pose restrictions in travel and gatherings, as well as an increased demand on CSO and inter-governmental partners, which require a change in the delivery approach of the programme. In this regard some of the travel budget for 2021 was used to facilitate virtual connectivity or replace regional consultations with methodologies to aggregate national consultations; while activities that require in-person contact were postponed to 2022 where possible.

While no changes to the scope, objectives, and expected results of the programme – there were a few adjustments made to the programme in 2021. The Spotlight Initiative undertook a programmatic and budgetary review as part of efforts to accelerate implementation and take into consideration the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from increasing CARICOM Secretariat capacity per the previous section, the OECS also received support to integrate the prevention, protection, and essential services responses to FV within regional response plans. CSOs were supported to embed VAWG prevention in school reopening plans.

One UN agency increased their agency contribution due to delayed release of the Spotlight funds to avoid further delays in implementing the programme. The additional funds were directed at Pillar 2 activities on coherence mapping with the CARICOM Secretariat and Pillar 5 on data management.

School closures and transition to digital learning due to COVID-19 affected the implementation of activities in Pillars 2 and 3, which focus on prevention interventions within the Education sector. To respond to this, funds were increased in the Education Sector to strengthen actions in line with Spotlight programme's regional and national realities while ensuring this is aligned to the Caribbean New School Model and similar regional strategies.

## **Implementation Status**

Evidence-base for policy and programming created; two sets of regional standards developed and 35 Practitioners were trained on the Toolkit on CSE.

Through the Spotlight Initiative, the region has a better understanding and data to formulate policies and programmes on CSE within the HFLE curriculum in Caribbean schools. A report on a Formative Assessment of CSE within HFLE provides insights on the current state of school-based CSE in the Caribbean, as well as recommendations on how to strengthen regional partners' ability to advocate for and deliver quality, evidence-based and informed CSE in schools throughout the Caribbean. This is benchmarked against international best practices, in particular the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education.

In addition, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) guidelines and tools to assess the impact of CSE through HFLE are being developed. These guidelines are primarily intended for persons at the school (micro) and ministry/department level (macro) who are required to plan, organise, monitor, or evaluate CSE through HFLE in schools in the region.

In relation to the out-of-school CSE, the international guidance on out-of-school CSE was adopted to the Caribbean context and the development of a Caribbean Toolkit for CSOs to implement out-of-school CSE, reaching the most vulnerable and marginalised youth. Thirty-five representatives from Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname attended the online Trainer of Trainers (TOT) using the Caribbean Toolkit.

Due to delays in getting the Pan-Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP) onboard as an implementing partner, the youth consultations on the toolkit under development, which will be conducted with CSOs will be carried out in 2022. The toolkit will be finalised after the youth consultations.

### **Caribbean SRHR Observatory Launched**

In the period under review, the Caribbean Regional Spotlight Initiative launched the Caribbean Observatory on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in collaboration with the Caribbean Family Planning Affiliation (CFPA). The Observatory is a platform designed to support the improvement of quality analysis, disaggregated and comparable data on SRHR in the region, an avenue to better inform laws, policies and programmes, and thereby supporting more enabling environments for SRH for all communities, and the underserved in particular.

The next step will include development of frameworks to guide operations of the SRHR Observatory, a resource mobilisation strategy to ensure sustainability, a communications and advocacy plan and a plan to monitor and evaluate the performance of the Observatory in meeting its expected results.

### **Initial Steps taken towards the establishment of the Essential Service Package - Community of Practice (ESP CoP)**

The implementation of the ESP CoP was delayed in 2021 due to technical and administrative capacity challenges, which impacted the operationalisation and speed of implementation. However, initial steps have been taken by the UN in partnership with CARICOM Secretariat towards the establishment of the ESP CoP. Following an agreement with key stakeholders to upscale Spotlight interventions, the UN will co-chair the ESP CoP for the first year of operationalisation, in order to support CARICOM Secretariat in building their technical capacity around the ESP and GBV.

An inception workshop was conducted on the 3rd and 8th of November 2021, with all regional institutions representing multiple sectors. It was the first time that regional representatives from gender, health, justice/policing, social services, humanitarian response and education sectors, participated in a joint meeting. Participants from national gender machineries represented their respective countries. The CoP serves to promote exchange, cooperation and learning under the

framework of the ESP with an overall additional focus on the Minimum Standards for GBV in Emergencies Programming, that will ensure a humanitarian-development nexus approach.

Overall, the programme is delayed with a number of activities off-track. In order to accelerate progress, the Regional Spotlight Initiative is employing the Rapid Results Approach with support from an expert to set and achieve aggressive goals while building capacity for large-scale change. An initial period for acceleration is November 2021 to April 2022.

### Implementation Progress by Outcome Area

Total Funds received as of 31 December 2021	USD \$3,821,132
Total Expenditure & Commitments as of 31 December 2021	USD \$2,363,684
Delivery rate as of 31 December 2021	<u>61.86%</u>

Table 1. Progress against total budget for Phase I per Outcome

Spotlight Initiative - Outcome areas	Implementation progress as of 31 Dec 2021
Outcome 2: Institutions	15%
Outcome 3: Prevention and Norm Change	47%
Outcome 5: Data	11%
Outcome 6: Women’s Movement	5%
TOTAL (expenditure + commitments/total budget for Phase I); excludes direct management costs	18%

## **Programme Governance and Coordination**

A robust programme governance and coordination mechanism has been established to drive coherence and efficiency in the implementation of the Phase 1 work-plan of the SI Regional Caribbean programme

The United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) leads implementation of the Caribbean Regional Spotlight Initiative supported by a Programme Management Unit (PMU) that reports directly to his office. The PMU became fully operational in April 2021 and is staffed by the following: i) Regional Programme Coordinator and Technical Coherence ii) Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, iii) Communications Officer, and iv) Finance and Administration Officer. The coordinator has a dual reporting responsibility to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women) Representative who leads on technical coherence for the regional programme.

The operations are guided by Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) developed by the SI programme stakeholders and approved by the Technical Advisory Group in September 2021. They outline the governance and management structures, working relationships, roles and responsibilities related to the implementation of the Spotlight Initiative including the PMU functions to ensure a coordinated approach to delivery.

### **a) Regional Steering Committee (RSC)**

The RSC is established and has two co-chairs - The DSG for the CARICOM Secretariat and the UNRC for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. Other members of the Steering Committee include a high-level representative from the OECS Secretariat; the Delegation of the European Union to Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean States, the OECS and CARICOM/CARIFORUM; Representative from IGDS, UWI and Representative from CDB (regional institution). The UN Women Representative, Multi-Country Office - Caribbean, UN Population Fund (UNFPA) Regional Director; United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Regional Director and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Director

represent the four RUNOs. The Chair of the CSRRG is also a member, while the UN Women Haiti Representative who represents the UN system in Haiti serves as a permanent observer on the RSC.

The functions of the RSC are guided by Terms of Reference (TORs), which were shared and adopted at the Committee's first meeting held in March 2021. The Steering Committee per its mandate performed its functions in overseeing and guiding the Implementation of the Spotlight Initiative. For example, while the Steering Committee's TORs stipulate that it meets twice a year, the Committee held three meetings in 2021 on 1 March, 24 June and 2 December. This was to try to identify and support acceleration measures for the regional programme, which was lagging behind due to its late start. It is noteworthy that the meetings could have been four but the September meeting was delayed due to the then co-chair CARICOM DSG Ambassador Manorma Soeknandan demitting office on 31 August 2021 after the then Secretary-General retired. The RC sent a letter to the newly-appointed Secretary-General Dr Carla Barnett for guidance on the new co-chair. The SG appointed Dr Armstrong Alexis of St Lucia after he took up his position on November 1st as the new DSG of the CARICOM.

**Key decisions made during the reporting period included:**

- Finding a mechanism to ensure sustainable access to Information Technology services for CSOs given that business was now being conducted virtually to enable their full and meaningful participation in the programme but also to avoid delays in execution.
- Agreed on acceleration measures to improve the delivery rate. The following measures were approved:
  - Budgetary revisions to address the implementation challenges including adjustments to planned activities that involved travel, which were moved to online. The money that would have been used was reprioritised and channelled towards institutional strengthening of inter-governmental regional bodies such as the CARICOM Secretariat. This also meant replacing physical regional consultations with methodologies that would facilitate aggregating inputs from national consultations. For example funds were reduced from Pillar 2 to Pillar 3 to accommodate strengthening of CARICOM Human and Social Development (HSD) team and support inter-divisional collaboration with HSD Gender programme and acceleration of programme.
  - The programme would identify and utilise opportunities for linkages and synergies between regional and national programmes that add value and accelerate progress. For example, using the methodology and expertise for establishing economic costs of violence used in Jamaica for the regional programme.
  - RUNOs and partners would continue to ensure coherence amongst Pillars and RUNOs to avoid duplication in efforts and support the agility of administrative processes across

Regional Institutions. For example, sharing consultants for similar actions and coordinate pillars and actions that target the same stakeholders and sectors.

- The RSC approved the idea of experimenting with the Rapid Results Approach to enhance collaboration, sharing and coherence in order to deliver rapid high impact initiatives. This involves a systematic way to pull capacities of OneUN along with partners, stakeholders and rights-holders/beneficiaries. This methodology is currently being tested for an initial period of four months as a strategy to increase the pace of implementation from November 2021-April 2022 (with a break during December holidays).
- Communication strategy was approved after feedback and request to recirculate key messages for further inputs. In 2022 the key messages will be translated to Dutch, Creole and French which are spoken across the Caribbean to ensure that they are accessible to all levels of society.

### **b) Civil Society National or Regional Reference Group (CSRRG)**

The establishment of a permanent CSRRG was finalised in January 2021. Fourteen nominations were received, and an evaluation committee was established, comprising representatives from the RUNOs, CSO, the Delegation of the European Union in Barbados, and the CARICOM Secretariat. It was also agreed that a representative from each of the national civil reference groups from the six Spotlight countries (Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago) would sit on the CSRRG to ensure coordination and coherence with engagement of CSOs throughout the Programme. There is no representative from Belize though in the Regional Reference Group and steps will be taken in 2022 to ensure the country is represented. They are governed by approved ToRs, which also form part of the SOPs.

A budget of USD 61,216 has been allocated to support the functioning of the CSRRG and the establishment of linkages with the country reference groups, as well as the creation of a virtual platform for dialogues, and knowledge sharing.

In 2021, the CSRRG met on 27 May when it held its first meeting and began to meet fortnightly initially but this was changed to monthly. A chairperson and two Vice-Chairs were selected to lead the group. To raise awareness of the members of the CSRRG, their profiles were shared on various platforms and partner websites but also in the inaugural Caribbean Spotlight newsletter published in August 2021.

Members of the CSRRG have a better understanding of the programme after RUNOs held an orientation session during the first meeting. The CSRRG produced a work-plan, but it took a while to

implement the agreed actions as the Programme got off to a slow start. The plan was rolled over to 2022, hence there is a 2021/2022 CSRRG work-plan in place.

The institutional mechanism that harnesses civil society expertise has been an important source of technical support across pillar activities. In order to facilitate meaningful engagement, opportunities were provided for the CSRRG to influence and support several interventions as active participants or members of advisory, reference or steering committees that are driving implementation. Examples include the Chair and Vice-Chairs are part of the SRHR Observatory; ESP CoP Member, including a mapping of integrated VAW/VAC services under Pillar 3 that will contribute to the generation of policy dialogue on VAW/VAC intersections in the Caribbean Social Behavioural Change campaign and consultations on the Social Accountability Framework. CSRRG members have also been invited to provide inputs on strategies, ToRs and shaping various activities. Some members, though, have not been active and this is being reviewed to understand why and if remedial action can be taken to facilitate full participation or the replacement of CSO members.

### **c) Inter-agency coordination, technical committees and other governance mechanisms**

Inter-agency coordination and delivery as 'OneUN' as part of the UN reforms was facilitated through seven monthly dedicated RUNO and PMU joint meetings held from May – November 2021. This provided a platform to strategise, build synergies, brainstorm solutions to common challenges as well as ensure coherence. For example, RUNOs agreed to share consultants for similar actions across programmes; and through sharing of information avoided duplication of processes. This was complemented by quarterly Heads of Agencies meetings where the RC engaged the Regional Directors and Representatives of RUNOs to review progress and identify areas of action.

This is supplemented by the TAG established in November 2020. In 2021 the TAG met four times as per the ToRs. They met to review progress of the Programme, brainstorm solutions and agree on issues to be tabled at the RSC for decision making. For example, most of the acceleration measures approved by the RSC were first discussed at the TAG meetings.

There were several other governance technical committees and governance mechanisms established to guide a number of Spotlight interventions to ensure that they benefit from the expertise of the multiple and diverse stakeholders including ensuring meaningful participation of CSOs and representatives. Examples but not limited to:

#### **i) Comprehensive Sexuality Education Reference Group**

A CSE reference group was established during the development of M&E tools and guidelines. Members of the reference group function as advisors to implementation of CSE within the SI Regional Programme and as advocates and partners for the realisation of its objectives. One of the key activities of this collaboration is the development of guidelines and tools for the M&E of CSE in schools. During 2021 following initial consultation and the first M&E Reference Group meeting, the guidelines and tools have been developed with due consideration to our regional specificities and peculiarities. The concerns raised by and recommendations of Country CSE focal points, Chair of the CSRRG and other representatives have been indispensable to the development of the draft of the M&E tools and guidelines for the delivery of CSE in the Caribbean.

#### ii) SRHR Observatory

The SRHR Observatory is governed by a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee mainly comprising 'on-the-ground' CSOs, working with different vulnerable groups along with members of academia, professional organisations and international development partners. The proposed members of the Steering Committee were approved by an Advisory Task Force (including the EU Delegation in Barbados, CSRRG Chair, UN agencies, and CARICOM) set up to guide the initial steps of establishing the Observatory. The Steering Committee has a ToR outlining its technical/operational guidance to CFPA while it carries out the work of the Observatory and ensures that its mission and scope of work is in line with the Spotlight Initiative outcomes.

#### iii) ESP CoP

The ESP CoP was created as a new regional inter-agency and multi-sectoral cooperation mechanism. The Regional ESP CoP seeks to promote exchanges, cooperation and learning among regional institutions representing the sectors of health, social services, justice and policing, and education, as well as overseeing governance and coordination across the region. The ESP CoP will standardise and facilitate the launch of relevant technical tools to guide the work around a multisectoral prevention and quality response to GBV. These efforts will enhance the region's technical capacity, coherence and complementarity by adhering to a humanitarian-development nexus approach, where institutions, governments and services will be survivor-centred and accountable to the affected communities.

The ESP CoP held an Inception Workshop on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2021. Starting in 2022, it is estimated that during periods of relative stability, the ESP CoP will meet every four months. The ESP COP will be develop their workplan and schedule during the first in-person meeting. Standing members of the ESP CoP are as follows, by sector of work:

- I. Governance and Coordination: CARICOM Secretariat, Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), Directorates of Gender from Grenada, Guyana, St. Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, Belize, UNFPA, UNDP, PAHO, UNWOMEN, UNICEF. It is envisioned that all the National Gender Desks across the region will eventually be included as standing members
- II. Social Services: CARICOM Secretariat, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
- III. Health: Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)
- IV. Justice and Policing: CARICOM Secretariat, Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS)
- V. Education: CARICOM Secretariat
- VI. Observers: International Planned Parenthood Federation, Women Against Rape, Red Thread, GuyBow

The Caribbean Regional CoP aims to facilitate coherent and effective promotion of exchanges, cooperation and learning under the framework of the ESP, with an additional focus on the Minimum Standards for GBV in Emergencies Programming, to ensure a humanitarian-development nexus approach. Providing a platform for an innovative approach, the ESP CoP will also work to support the integration of the education sector as part of the ESP. The operationalisation of a regional ESP CoP will be implemented as a phased approach, where the first step will be for regional institutions leading in the areas of health, police, justice and social services, as well as education, to support each other in endorsing a regional roadmap to adopt a coordinated set of essential and multi-sectoral standards, priority actions and innovative methodologies. Consequently, this will result in the establishment of a leadership structure for the provision of systematic and technical coherent guidance around the prevention and response to GBV across the Caribbean.

The second phase of the implementation of the ESP CoP will consist of engaging in meaningful and context-specific consultations with national authorities responsible for leading in the implementation of the ESP at the national level. This will inform national strategies of cooperation that align with the regional approach but are particular enough for each specific context.

Phase 3 will result in a concrete action plan and interactive space where regional and national stakeholders will align efforts. It is expected this will lead to cooperation and contribution to mitigating the consequences of GBV on the lives of women and girls, assist in recovery and empowerment of women and girls, and contribute to endorsing key actions to stop the recurrence of violence, all the while ensuring a survivor-centred approach.

#### **d) Use of UN Reform Inter-agency Tools**

The Regional Programme formulated a new inter-agency platform termed the Regional Spotlight Collaborative which meets monthly. Spurred by the importance of delivering as ‘One UN’ and the

need to accelerate delivery using the Rapid Results Approach, the platform provided an opportunity for all stakeholders including RUNOs, regional institutions, CSRRG members, implementing partners and consultants to come together to: i) Accelerate delivery ii) Streamline communication & collaboration iii) strengthen partnership and collective problem-solving and v) support transparency and accountability (see Figure1)

Four task teams were identified to work on four areas, which stakeholders felt, if bottlenecks were removed, would fast-track delivery – 1. Enhancing collaboration, 2. Streamlining administrative processes, 3. Risk Management and 4. Enhancing Communication. This is in addition to the programme's mandatory governance structures.



Figure 1: The Regional Spotlight Collaborative

To streamline communication and share information in a timely manner an online platform was created – <https://caribbeanspotlight.org>. This is not public facing but limited only to the regional spotlight collaborators. The challenge will be to ensure that stakeholders use the platform.

## Programme Partnerships

The Spotlight Initiative engages with a wide-range of partners such as inter-governmental agencies, UN agencies, civil society including social and cultural partners, such as academia, media, influencers, and the private sector. In the year under review, the Initiative endeavoured to ensure that Programme activities are developed with partners and ensure they are aligned with regional and local priorities. While partnership agreements can take time to formalise, there is focus on leveraging existing partnerships and coordination mechanisms and harnessing global and regional partnerships for stronger advocacy and sustainability of the interventions.

### a. Inter-governmental agencies

In 2021, the Spotlight Initiative consolidated its partnerships with inter-governmental agencies building on 2020 successes. At least one Contribution Agreement was finalised between the UN and CARICOM Secretariat. In October 2021, the CARICOM Secretariat and UNICEF signed an agreement as part of implementation of the Spotlight Caribbean Regional Programme. The agreement will contribute to Pillar 2 and 3 of the Spotlight Initiative with the HSD Education Department on education standards for VAWG, the adoption of a whole-of education sector approach to addressing VAWG, and support gender competencies for front-line workers and parenting guidelines to address harmful norms. The agreement will also contribute to the HSD's Gender Programme under Pillar 5 with a focus on developing evidence informed KAP and VAWG tools. This is being used as a template for the four pending Contribution Agreements that are being finalised between CARICOM Secretariat, OECS and UN Agencies under the Spotlight Initiative. These are the two main inter-governmental mechanisms leading functional cooperation in the region and are key to delivering on several Spotlight Initiative interventions. The institutions will receive funding to increase their capacity to develop regional standards and assets, as well as an enabling regional legal and policy framework for addressing VAWG and FV.

A key development in 2021 is the partnership with the Gender and Development Programme of CARICOM Secretariat to drive the formation of the ESP CoP, that will ensure sustainability of the Spotlight Initiative and the provision of technical capacity to support the work of Gender Desks across the region. A key challenge with the partnership is a lack of technical and administrative capacity to implement such.

Other regional institutions engaged are Caribbean Examination Council (CXC), CDB and the IGDS. They serve as members of the RSC and TAG as well as actively participate in project reference groups or advisory committees as required during implementation of various interventions.

## **b. Civil Society Organisations**

Stronger partnerships with CSOs are being forged as part of implementation of the Regional Programme. Overall, at least three CSOs have signed implementing partner agreements with UN agencies under Pillar 2 (Caribbean Family Planning Affiliation (CFPA) and Pillar 3 (PCI Media and Geena Davis Institute), while nine CSOs are at an advanced stage for receiving small grants. The names will be provided as soon as finalised.

CSOs in the Caribbean are 'on-the-ground', possessing the ability to reach vulnerable, marginalised, hard-to-reach, grassroots populations. They also provide services that help to plug gaps left by governments in the region. In providing these services, CSOs work to uphold human rights principles including providing a stigma-free environment and respecting people's rights to non-discrimination. CSOs, regionally, also act in the people's best interest, conducting advocacy work to hold respective

governments accountable. They are often deemed to be more trustworthy than state actors to represent citizens' interests and rights.

Notwithstanding, there are only a few CSOs operating regionally, and due to resource constraints experienced by most CSOs in the Caribbean, there is a difficulty to sustain efforts. There is also low capacity to deliver comprehensive programme delivery with effective M&E. In addition, some CSOs have low capacity to manage donor funds and by extension, challenges with absorption and expenditure.

Specifically, the Spotlight Initiative is partnering in the following ways:

The Spotlight partnered to increase capacity of CSOs through Small Grants

To date, nine CSOs have partnered with the Spotlight Initiative through the small grants' partnership mechanism. These comprise grassroots organisations, service providers, charitable organisations, organisations representing marginalised/vulnerable groups including the disabled, helplines, regional entities and feminist and LGBTQ+ advocates. The CSOs were selected from various countries including St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Antigua and Barbuda.

Over 38 applications were received in 2021 and the review process commenced but the selection process was finalised at the beginning of 2022. This is an overwhelming increase compared to those received at the onset of the national country programmes in the Caribbean. The process took a little longer because additional guidance and feedback was provided for short-listed organisations to refine their objectives, activities, indicators and budgets so that they could better align with the overall programme objectives and technical coherence. Additional short-listed organisations were provided with feedback to further strengthen their proposals for consideration. This process is still ongoing.

The Spotlight Initiative included the small grant modality in the programme design to target organisations that are in early stages of organisational development. The Spotlight deliberately ensured that the application process involved fewer steps than other partnership mechanisms. The small grant modality specifically seeks to scale up the technical substantive capacity of organisations, in this case, working on VAWG or FV.

Organisations were invited to apply to a small grant funding opportunity in August 2021, and a series of virtual town-halls were hosted to prepare proponents for the application process and to provide an overview of the requirements, guidelines in the development of proposals and budgets, and reporting and M&E requirements.

**CSOs host an independent SRHR Observatory**

The CFPA was selected and is the ideal partner to host the SRHR Observatory due to its regional positioning, making it a leading advocate for SRHR at all levels – community, national and regional. The CFPA has strong regional presence, comprising 16 Member Association - 12 Member Affiliates, 4 Associate Members, and 4 partner Family Planning Associations (FPAs), which are leading SRHR focused CSOs in the Caribbean.

The organisation's mandate is to promote SRHR with particular focus on marginalised populations in the Caribbean, providing SRH services, education and awareness, and advocacy to end discrimination against women, girls and key populations. Built into the roadmap of the SRHR Observatory is the establishment of meaningful partnerships with other CSOs (focused on women, youth, disabilities, LGBTQI+, migrants) and actors such as community networks, regional advocates, gatekeepers and other influential actors through regional consultation meetings, community dialogue, joint partnerships in executing various advocacy initiatives and furnishing them with evidence-based materials to help them undertake advocacy and reform work in their respective spheres.

But there are still challenges around the political dimensions to GBV, CSE and SRHR in the Caribbean

Youth in the region are at high risk for all forms of violence, particularly sexual violence, abuse and exploitation. However, there are strong sentiments against progressive liberal views of gender identity, adolescent pregnancy rates among vulnerable groups remain high, access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, including testing and treatment for HIV and other STIs, is insufficient. Contraceptive and safer sex methods are used inconsistently. This includes, in particular, condoms, which indicates a high risk for STI transmission in addition to unplanned pregnancy. Without sufficient policies and political will, access to quality CSE, GBV and SRH services will be hampered.

Becoming a parent too early can limit a person's future prospects for education, marriage and financial independence. Lack of financial independence is directly linked to harmful practices, gender-based violence and gender inequality worldwide, as well as in the Caribbean. Gender roles and gender inequality have a significant impact on young people's access to sexuality-related information and services which is related to unwanted pregnancies and unsafe childbirth. Although the region cannot be considered a monolith, a trend in the available information indicates that male dominance and additional gender role stereotypes remain impediments to accessing and communicating about sexuality-related topics.

Cultural sensitivity is also linked to the political dynamics as the behaviour of young people is affected by their beliefs, values and practices, and it is important in all communication to use language that is culturally sensitive. In the region, reproductive health and sexuality are topics that are culturally

sensitive, particularly with regards to adolescent sexuality. As a result, these topics are either never talked about, or only talked about within the context of preventing potentially negative outcomes. These cultural constraints create a barrier to recognising young people's reproductive health rights.

CSOs engaged towards developing a Caribbean Model of Cultural and Behavioural Change

Further, the Spotlight Initiative facilitated a network of partners that agreed to jointly develop a Caribbean Model of Cultural and Behavioural Change. The principle implementing partner is the IGDS and works closely with the Caribbean Male Network and the Caribbean Alliance of National Psychological Associations. This process will involve the application of the lifecycle approach to identify and analyse the norms, practices and systems that enable and perpetuate the intergenerational cycle of FV paying particular attention to male behaviour across the life course. This objective will result in a model that serves as a conceptual framework for future FV prevention strategies that target behaviour change interventions for men and boys across the region.

### **Caribbean Workers' and Employers' Organisations**

The Programme brought the Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC) and the Caribbean Congress of Labour together to start the process of designing and rolling out a campaign to raise awareness on the linkage between VAWG in the family and the world of work; to develop a regional strategy for the inclusion of GBV policy at 80 percent of the places of work where CEC and CCL affiliates have standing. The partnerships were established and the interventions will be executed in 2022.

### **CSOs Supporting Media Engagement for FV and VAWG Prevention**

The Programme has partnered with two International CSOs - PCI Media and the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, to support advocacy strategies and guidance to address underlying VAWG drivers within the Caribbean media and advertising community. Through these partnerships, there are efforts to further engage with the broader media community such as the Media Institute in St. Lucia and the Women's Media Watch in Jamaica as well as the private sector advertising and marketing companies.

In collaboration with Girl Up, Dance for Life, Regional SI led Inter-generational Dialogues to transform Gender Norms and Break the Cycle of Violence through an online "girl talk". There was broad participation from youth and girl-led groups in the region including Girl Guides.

The way the Programme has ensured meaningful partnerships with CSOs is also through the engagement and intergenerational dialogues around adolescent girls' empowerment to transform

harmful gender norms and interrupting the cycle of violence. These activities are particularly important for the work on girl's empowerment index.

### **CSOs form a Core Part of Advisory and Reference Groups of Spotlight Interventions**

The Programme supports representation of CSOs as advisory groups or reference members across various interventions. For instance, there is concerted effort to ensure youth and adolescents are represented to ensure inclusive and meaningful participation across working groups. Also, the programme is supporting field trainings for researchers on CMEU with the Productive Organization for Women in Action (POWA), which illustrates working with diverse local/grassroots organisations, including feminist or women's rights organisations across the region.

### **c. EU Delegation**

The Spotlight Initiative ensured that the EU was engaged throughout the programme implementation in 2021. The UNRC remains in direct communication with the Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation. The Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation is part of the Steering Committee and attended all three meetings held in 2021. The EU gender focal point who is also the Spotlight Initiative technical lead at the EU Delegation, attends the TAG meetings as well as the Spotlight Collaborative meeting, which is also technical but brings together all stakeholders involved in direct implementation. She attended all three TAG meetings as well as one Spotlight Collaborative meeting. The technical officer has, however, mentioned that she may not necessarily attend all Spotlight Collaborative meetings because she is not involved in the day-to-day implementation.

The gender focal point influenced the formation, ToRs and appointment of the Steering Committee for the SRHR Observatory as she participated in the small Technical Advisory Committee of the SRHR Observatory. She also participated in the committee for the ESP COP, consultations for Social and Behavioural Change campaign as well as consultations to inform the CSE formative research.

The EU wrote a Foreword for the report: Formative Assessment of CSE within the HFLE Curriculum in the Caribbean. The EU attended and gave remarks at two events organised by the Regional Spotlight including the launch of the SRHR Observatory, 16 Days of Activism UN House Lighting Ceremony led by Programme. The Regional Spotlight Coordinator and EU Gender Focal Point have regular bilateral exchanges as required.

## 5. Other Partners and Resource Mobilisation

The Spotlight Initiative is working with non-traditional partners. For example, as part of the CMEU Study (Pillar 5), Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) community consultations and life histories interviews were undertaken to understand the manifestations of CMEU in the Caribbean. The study engaged with religious based organisations in Trinidad and Tobago to ensure broad participation of Muslim, Hindu and Christian women and girls (through Heart of a Sister NGO). In Suriname, the study has engaged with diverse cultural-ethnic groups including the Javanese group, the Maroons and Indigenous people. In Guyana, Afro and Indo urban girls (through Red Thread NGO) and Indian and Indigenous rural girls (through The FACT NGO) were mobilised to participate in KAP sessions.

## Results

### Capturing Change at Outcome Level

The Caribbean Regional Spotlight Initiative identified four key areas of programming: i) working to ensure institutions are gender-responsive; ii) establishing comprehensive and evidence-based prevention programmes aimed at changing social norms and gender stereotypes; iii) promoting the collection and use of quality, comparable data to inform public policy, advocacy, policy-making, and delivery of complimentary services to improve prevention; and iv) supporting autonomous women’s movements to influence, and monitor policy and to ensure accountability. Below are the key results achieved for 2021 under each of these areas.

### **OUTCOME 2 - Regional and Sub-regional Systems and Institutions Plan, Fund and deliver Evidence-based Programmes that Prevent and Respond to VAWG, including FV, including in Other Sectors**

Under the Regional SI, and for the first time in the Caribbean, Guidelines on the Integration of VAWG/FV in DRR/M in the Caribbean including COVID-19 response were developed. This is a significant achievement in positioning gender and VAWG/FV considerations in the work of the CDEMA on DRR/M. The Guidelines will be finalised and officially endorsed by CDEMA by mid-year in 2022; and are expected to support the Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy (CDM) and promote awareness of definitions, tools, databases, key publications and reports available on GBV in the Caribbean. One key element of the Guidelines are “checklists” that stakeholders working in DRR/M

can use to ensure the integration of VAWG/FV in their project cycles. Figure 2 is an example of the checklists.

Programme/Project Cycle	VAWG and FV Checklist
<b>Identification</b>	<p>A gender analysis should be undertaken that includes answers to the following GBV related questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What is the legal, social, and epidemiological situation of GBV in the community/sector/country/region prior to the disaster?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What vulnerabilities in the intended beneficiary population are being exacerbated by GBV?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What are the root causes of GBV in the target area, particularly among the most vulnerable?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How is GBV currently being addressed in the target area?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How can DRM address the root causes of GBV?</li> </ul>
<b>Design and Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Was the development of the Theory of Change a participatory and inclusive process? Were agencies and other local stakeholders that address GBV engaged?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Were careful considerations given to complex social settings, social norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes in the identification of assumptions along the theory of change for the project?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Were the findings of the gender analysis incorporated into the design and approach of the DRM project/programme?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Are women and girls empowerment and rights being prioritized by the project/programme?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Are the needs of victims of GBV prioritized?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the design and approach of the DRM project/programme minimize harm to women and girls?</li> </ul>

Figure 2: Example of the Checklists for Mainstreaming VAWG/FV Considerations into DRM Projects and Programmes

### Community of Practice – GBV ESP

Groundwork for a regional Community of Practice (CoP) on the ESP has commenced in partnership with the CARICOM Secretariat. The CoP serves to promote exchange, cooperation and learning under the framework of the ESP with an overall additional focus on the Minimum Standards for GBV in Emergencies Programming, that will ensure a humanitarian-development nexus approach. An Inception Workshop was conducted with all regional institutions representing sectors of work, results of which informed the development of the ESP CoP ToRs document. This consultation was the first time that regional representatives from gender, health, justice/policing and social services participated in a joint meeting.

- A legal expert was contracted to support the revision of common standards for Police and Justice Regional Institutions to integrate gender and VAWG/FV. The expert is expected to identify gaps in the coordination mechanisms between justice and policing departments in Caribbean countries with respect to the processes of VAWG/FV cases and identify practical methods that will improve documentation, reporting, transmitting and data analysis systems while ensuring the protection of victims/survivors’ data and identities. The development of the common standards is expected

to take place in cooperation with the Council for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE) which includes Member States from CARICOM.

- There is progress towards strengthening the capacities of Gender Bureaus in six Caribbean countries (Grenada, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Haiti) in Gender, Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) and VAWG/FV. An agreement was signed between UNDP and IGDS-UWI. To date, consultations were held with the Heads of the Gender Machineries from Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica, who confirmed the need for capacity building as their work on the ground provides support for the link between VAWG and WEE. Further, a Pre-Training Needs Assessment was completed, and findings indicate the need for a comprehensive approach to WEE interventions that addresses the different dimensions of women's economic vulnerability, including those linked to the wider socio-cultural environments in which women pursue the fulfilment of their economic rights.
- The CARICOM Secretariat Gender Equality Strategy and OECS Gender Action Plan were reviewed with the objective to ensure that adolescent girls, in particular, are well reflected within the regional policy commitment on Gender Equality. In close collaboration with the CCS Gender Bureau and the OECS Gender Equality Unit, the coherence mapping will be consulted across pillar activities and strengthen intergenerational strategies and measures within the Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan. This is to ensure coherence among strategies and policy positions with respect to gendered forms of family violence.
- Gender mainstreaming advances were made to strengthen CCS and OECS normative framework on gender equality and VAWG with a view towards long-term shared accountabilities on gender equality and VAWG prevention. A review was undertaken of key strategies and policy positions across the three sectors involved (Gender Bureau, Child Protection Systems and Education) to suggest enhanced alignment with international and regional standards on gender and FV, and in line with evidence around the impacts of intimate partner violence and gender equality in early childhood, the co-existence of VAW and VAC within households (among other data sources) and the intergenerational transfer of both gender inequality and GBV. This review was able to identify common and complimentary areas of action, and measurement across the three strategies and policy positions, supporting the inclusion of multisectoral actions across all three within each regional institution.
- VAW-VAC policy mapping to identify good practices across Caribbean countries has commenced. Building on a 2019 UN Inter-agency study to explore the intersections between violence against girls and boys and violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Spotlight

programme has adapted and applied a service mapping methodology previously developed to identify promising practices of integrated services for VAW and VAC and outline risks and benefits of integrated services with mitigation pathways. A special focus will be on adolescent girls who are often being overlooked in either approach. The mapping will amplify the existing data (8 Spanish Speaking Caribbean countries with comparable prevalence data on VAW and VAC) from the foundational study and include data from Belize, Grenada, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, Jamaica and Haiti. This is yet to be finalised. Currently, the consultant is conducting interviews in the above-mentioned countries with diverse actors and with the support of UNFPA and UNICEF at regional and country levels. The results of the mapping will bring together policymakers and service providers and culminate in VAC and VAW policy dialogues in the last quarter of 2022 to determine actions to address both forms of violence based on regional evidence of their intersections.

- Operational research to build the evidence that will identify the essential services and standards to be provided by the education sector for women and girls experiencing violence is in progress. In addition to health, police, justice and social services, the education sector will be introduced as an essential service into the ESP in the Caribbean. In partnership with the CCS Human Resources Development (HRD), the research is engaging with key and high-level education actors to determine the content and proposed roll out for such standards. It will support regional institutions to develop and extend at the national level, standardised tools for school- and non-school-based life skills programmes from early childhood through adolescence. It is important to note that the CoP, led and co-chaired by CCS and the UN, to support the regional roll-out of the ESP, will also be an opportunity to engage core regional institutions and CSOs in the content of such standards for the education sector within the ESP. The Caribbean would be the first region to integrate the education sector within the ESP for women and girls subject to violence.
- Gender competencies across a range of institutions and sectors (education, health and police sectors) have already been identified as part of foundational activities with the participation of CARICOM Gender Bureau and Eastern Caribbean service providers. Building on these efforts, the existing conceptual framework and identified gender competencies will be adapted and applied in the Caribbean under the Spotlight Initiative. The activity will validate core and sectoral gender competencies across key sectors addressing VAWG in the region and to standardise gender capacities among service providers to ensure that they meet the needs of women and girls. These gender competencies for frontline workers will ensure gender equality is a standard of quality service delivery to respond to FV.

## **Gender Responsive-Budgeting**

The Regional Programme engaged key regional and national entities through the RSC and TAC. The CARICOM Secretariat, as a regional convening and governing body, co-chairs the Regional TAC, along with representation from the OECS, CDB, and CSOs. This multi-stakeholder mechanism has supported increased visibility in the region for the Spotlight Initiative and additional buy-in for further engagement at the activity level. This buy-in has supported the introduction of Gender-Responsive Budgeting into the regional conversation and context. An expert on GRB from the UN Women Global Academy, was recruited to develop a strategy, guidance document and tools for GRB across select countries and entities within the region. Initial data gathering templates were developed and disseminated to key Government partners in Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and to the CARICOM Secretariat, the OECS and the CDB. A draft manual on GRB was also developed, following an extensive desk review and internal consultations on the regional approach to budgeting and gaps within GBV policies and programming. A pilot test is expected to be conducted in at least two of the target countries in 2022, using the data collection tools, manual and reporting templates. Following this, training workshops will be designed to enhance the capacity of key public officials and stakeholders to plan, budget and sustain financing on gender-based and family violence programmes and initiatives.

### **Outcome 3: Gender inequitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours change at community and individual levels to prevent violence against women and girls, including family violence**

#### **Caribbean SRHR Observatory**

The Caribbean Observatory on SRHR was launched in collaboration with the CFPA, with 157 attendees from around the region, including government, civil society and development partners. The launch of the Observatory is critical as the mechanism is designed to support the improvement of quality analysis, disaggregated and comparable data on SRHR, to better inform laws, policies and programmes, thereby supporting more enabling environments for SRH for all communities, and the underserved in particular.

The Observatory is being hosted by the CFPA offers the advantage of increased quality engagement of civil society organisations (CSOs) through its strong regional presence of 12 island Member Associations, 6 Associate Member Associations in the Caribbean, and four (4) partner Family Planning Associations (FPAs), which are leading SRHR focused CSOs regionally.

- A Formative Assessment of CSE within the HFLE Curriculum in schools in the Caribbean was completed. This assessment was performed to compare what is currently being provided against international best practices; in particular, the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education. As part of the formative assessment key stakeholders from countries in the region were surveyed and invited to participate in focus group sessions. Curricula and lesson plans solicited from country-level partners and HFLE teachers were assessed for CSE inclusion and whether they integrate and reflect international best practices using the Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool (SERAT) (UNESCO, 2020). The report on the formative assessment provides the current state of school-based CSE in the Caribbean, as well as recommendations on how to strengthen regional partners’ ability to advocate for and deliver quality, evidence-based and -informed CSE in schools throughout the Caribbean.

## Countries Represented

Focus Groups	Educational Materials	Surveys
Anguilla Aruba Bahamas Barbados Guyana Jamaica Montserrat Suriname Trinidad and Tobago	Antigua/Barbuda* Bahamas Barbados Belize Bermuda Cayman Islands Dominica Grenada Guyana Jamaica Montserrat* Saint Lucia Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Trinidad and Tobago	Anguilla Antigua/Barbuda Belize Guyana Jamaica Montserrat Saint Lucia Suriname Trinidad and Tobago

\* Indicates reports found pertaining to HFLE/CSE, but not actual standards or teaching materials

- M&E guidelines and tools were also developed to assess the impact of CSE through HFLE. These guidelines are primarily intended for persons at the school (micro) and ministry/department level (macro) who are required to plan, organise, monitor, or evaluate CSE through HFLE in schools in the region. The tools and guidelines were drafted with input from and for Teachers, School Administrators, CSE focal points and Planning Officers in government departments and ministries. While the guidelines were prepared for persons closely involved in M&E at the micro and macro levels of the school system, they can and should be used as a reference for any stakeholder and/or partner engaged in supporting CSE through HFLE in schools, by the media or by the public. The M&E framework is designed to ensure consistent and standardised data collection and analysis so that CARICOM, UN agencies and other partners can measure regional progress and compare data across countries.
- In relation to the out-of-school CSE, the international guidance on out-of-school CSE was adapted to the Caribbean context and the development of a Caribbean Toolkit for CSOs to implement out-of-school CSE reaching the most vulnerable and marginalised youth. Thirty-five representatives from Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname attended the online ToT using the Caribbean toolkit.
- In partnership with the Directorate of Human and Social Development (HSD) of the CARICOM Secretariat, a concept note was developed and members of an Advisory Group have been established to support a whole-of-education approach to VAWG. The group is comprised of members who have professional knowledge and experience related to the topic, and who represent the diversity of actors who work in this field in the region (UNGEI, UNESCO, CSOs, youth members, etc.). Within the framework of the Caribbean New School Model (CNSM), the whole education sector approach activities (development of education standards and guidelines) will be an opportunity to take stock

of what is already done in the region and identify gaps. It will also support synergies between the CARICOM PVAC strategy, the New School Model and the international standards to prevent and respond to VAWG and family violence.

- A consultant was recruited to support the development of guidelines to address violence prevention in parenting for early childhood in Care for Child Development programmes. The parenting guidelines and resources will link child development with a gender transformative approach to raise awareness on the importance of positive parenting and gender socialisation as a key strategy to prevent violence in early childhood and exposure to family violence as well as improve the wellbeing for young people and their families across the Caribbean.

- On parenting practices for adolescents, Spotlight Caribbean is building upon existing guidelines and Caribbean experiences developed by Parenting Partners Caribbean to complement and contribute to the scale of a compendium of guidance materials on non-violent parenting practices as a key strategy to contribute to the CARICOM VAC Prevention Strategy.

### **Caribbean Model of Cultural Change to prevent VAWG**

The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media (GDIGM) has been contracted to assess gender and adolescent representation in regional advertising media. The inception report is completed and a technical working group has been established. In order to ensure that the diversity that exists within the region is captured as part of the sampling frame in the media content analysis, while also considering local media production capacities, an inclusion criteria list was developed to select the four countries for the study (Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, St. Lucia). Working with the Media Institute of the Caribbean based in St Lucia, a total of 600 advertisements (television and digital) will make up the overall sample size using advertisement expenditure as a proxy for reach/popularity. The GDIGM standard codebook will be tailored and customised for Spotlight's needs as part of the project set up, in discussion with partners. The end product will serve as a baseline in order to drive gender responsive media content across the region, with a particular focus on addressing the gender norms that sustain and reproduce VAWG, as well as provide an evidence-base for action towards shifting such norms.

- A Partnership has been established with PCI Media to develop a Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) strategy and communication campaign to address VAWG in the Caribbean. PCI Media is taking a participatory strategy design and implementation approach and is following a four-phase approach and methodology (formative research, strategy design, production and dissemination). Formative research that includes a mapping of the media landscape in the region is completed, while the design of the communications strategy and campaign and related products is underway. The formative research on the region allowed for a deeper understanding of the most relevant communication channels, audience groups, regional and national level partners, and past VAWG advocacy programmes, in order to inform an evidence-based strategy and branding that resonates across regional and country-level audiences. With the support of the Technical Working Group that has been established to provide technical oversight throughout the project, a strategy design that incorporates a proposed branding package is currently being developed. The campaign will address stereotypes and underlying VAWG drivers in collaboration with Caribbean media and advertising communities,

including engaging traditional and non-traditional influencers and the private sector. At the regional level, PCI Media's reach will allow for the programme to engage with media houses, institutions and networks of traditional and non-traditional influencers which have a high potential to transmit prevention messaging.

- As part of the Girls' Empowerment as a VAWG prevention strategy, partner-mapping has commenced with girl-focused groups in the Caribbean. An inaugural "Girls Talk" was held on 7 December in collaboration with [Dance4Life](#) (Barbados) and [GirlUp](#) (global office that will bring in their local Girls' Clubs across the Caribbean). The virtual space, held during the 16 Days of Activism, started a series of engagement and intergenerational dialogues around adolescent girls' empowerment, transforming harmful gender norms and interrupting the cycle of violence – which is particularly important for the work on girl's empowerment index. Spotlight will partner with a CSOs working primarily with and for adolescent girls, with experience in the Caribbean, to support a girl-led methodology around girls' empowerment as a VAWG prevention strategy. The adolescent girls' empowerment index is a key innovation in that it begins from the perceptions of girls in defining their own pathways to empowerment – as opposed to an inherited framework for empowerment that may or may not be relevant to the context of their lives.

## **Outcome 5: Quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on different forms of VAWG and harmful practices, collected, analysed and used in line with international standards to inform laws, policies and programmes**

### **Regional Health Sector Capacity**

A rapid assessment of the regional health sector capacity within the framework of the Caribbean SI was undertaken. The purpose of the assessment was to identify gaps and provide recommendations to enhance the capacities of key regional governmental and civil society health and non-health organisations including the CARICOM Secretariat CARPHA, PANCAP, OECS Commission, Spouses of CARICOM Leaders Action Network (SCLAN) and the Caribbean International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) Affiliate to prevent and respond to VAWG and FV. The assessment revealed several gaps related to the health sector's capacity to respond to FV, including lack of a multi-agency coordinated approach for effective response; lack of targeted programme funding and family violence specific focal points; limited collaboration with non-health institutions; and expiration of several regional plans and strategies to address to VAWG.

### **Caribbean Model of Cultural and Behavioural Change**

The Regional SI facilitated a network of partners that agreed to jointly develop a Caribbean Model of Cultural and Behavioural Change. The principle implementing partner is the IGDS and works closely with the Caribbean Male Network and the Caribbean Alliance of National Psychological Associations. This process will involve the application of the lifecycle approach to identify and analyse the norms, practices and systems that enable and perpetuate the intergenerational cycle of FV, paying particular attention to male behaviour across the life course. This objective will result in a model that serves as a conceptual framework for future FV prevention strategies that target behaviour change interventions for men and boys across the region.

- A research expert was recruited to conduct a study focusing on protection and response to FV experienced by LGBT Youth. The study aims to generate new knowledge on VAWG and FV and map existing KAP evidence regarding norms and behaviours around VAWG and FV in the Caribbean. To date, the study outline was completed, including study protocol, study chapters, research questions, and methodology.
- In close collaboration with the CCS Gender Bureau, a concept note has been developed on evidence generation to address KAP by identifying gaps in existing KAP information from adolescent girls and boys, and other relevant stakeholders, around different forms of FV. A strategy will be developed to ensure sustainability is embedded into the knowledge products, such as the Model KAP Tool, and the training module on social and gender norms and VAWG, existing Regional Compendium of VAWG tools. The training module will be a guide on how to implement the evidence-based Model KAP on VAWG and will strengthen standardisation of the methodology across the Caribbean. All\_knowledge products will consider the needs of marginalised and underserved populations, such as sexual orientations and gender identities (SOGI), persons with disabilities, rural women and girls, among others.
- Caribbean Spotlight is working in partnership with the IGDS, UWI - St Augustine, to conduct a regional study to map manifestations and impact of early unions and child marriages in the Caribbean. Early in 2021, an advisory group participated in review of research tools and supported stakeholder mapping. A methodology was developed to support the selected CSOs in the six countries included in the study (Guyana, Suriname, Haiti, Belize, Trinidad & Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda) to implement consultations with adolescent girls/activists to understand their perceptions of CMEU in the Caribbean. The CSO researchers identified were trained in each country in the last quarter. And the interview guides, KAP survey tools and U-report tools developed were used in the data collection activities – which were completed at the beginning of 2022. As well as identifying specific groups of girls with multiple vulnerabilities, the study will ensure the use of an intersectional lens. The study explicitly sought out partnerships with CSOs

that focus on and represented a group with specific intersecting vulnerabilities, such as religion, ethnicity, Indigeneity or rurality. It has also focused on girls and adolescent girls who are most affected by this situation because many of their rights are violated and their personal development during childhood is impeded. Despite regional advances on gender equality, the prevalence rate of CMEU has remained stagnant over the past decades in the region and these issues are typically not part of the regional or national development agendas. The results of the study will bring visibility and therefore actions to solve it. It will also do so by working in alignment with the existing UN Inter-Agency Regional Joint Programme to accelerate actions to end the CMEU in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

### **Multi-Country Study on the Economic Costs of Violence and Component on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace**

In Guyana and Jamaica, significant progress has been made on obtaining approvals for the study and in the data collection phase. However, in Grenada, delays and bottlenecks within government have led to delays in obtaining approvals and advancing the study, however, strong relationships with the Gender Bureau and other key partners will be leveraged to ensure the component for Grenada is accelerated in 2022. The Multi-Country Study on the Economic Costs of VAWG will fill a key knowledge gap in CARICOM drawing from insights from the two countries. It aims to estimate the annual economic cost of VAWG at the national level, estimate the indirect costs including income loss due to missed work and other impacts, estimate the annual service provision costs to the workplace, including the public and private sector and to develop macro-estimates including aggregated costs for the workplace, service provision and productivity loss. Accompanying and understudying the Lead Researcher are five young researchers including young feminists, who were selected and evaluated across the region, to develop the capacity of the regional pool of experts capable of undertaking economic costs of VAWG at national level.

Groundwork has been laid for commencement of the second component which is economic cost of sexual harassment in the workplace including identifying consultants (this will be carried out by the same consultant undertaking the first component). This will begin in the 3rd quarter of 2022.

**Outcome 6: Women's rights groups, autonomous social movements and relevant CSOs, including those representing youth and groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination/marginalisation, more effectively influence and advance progress on GEWE and ending VAWG**

## **Social Accountability**

Consultations were held with civil society stakeholders, including the CSRRG, CSOs working on accountability mechanisms under other Spotlight programmes, and members of the Spotlight implementation team. A guidance document was developed and presented to the CSRRG along with other stakeholders, outlining the approach to the development of the strategy as well as highlighting global best practice examples and the role of civil society. The development of Public Accountability Scorecards as an accountability mechanism under the Spotlight Initiative Guyana was also highlighted as a potential tool and mechanism which could be scaled up and deployed at the regional level, and a presentation was done demonstrating the use of accountability scorecards in different regions, and the benefits to be derived.

## **Small Grants**

Small Grants were advertised across the region in August 2021, and a series of virtual town-halls were held to guide interested parties on the application process. This call specifically supported CSOs working in the area of FV, especially responding to the needs of women and girl survivors as well those who face discrimination or marginalisation. Expressions of Interest, which also integrated intersectional issues and/or communities most impacted (e.g., rural women and girls, young people, women and girls with disabilities, queer, transgender, marginalised and gender non-conforming communities etc.) were prioritised and highly encouraged. Further guidance defined that Small Grants could be used for a diversity of activities such as strengthening advocacy; fostering coalition-building among the women's movement and civil society; building internal/institutional capacities; learning and capacity-building; adapting services and referrals or advancing an intersectional analysis or data on VAWG.

Over 38 applications were received, an overwhelming increase from the onset of the national country programmes, and further guidance and feedback was provided for short-listed organisations to strengthen their proposals to ensure close alignment with the programme as well as feasibility and impact. Initially, nine organisations were selected to proceed with projects beginning in 2022, and additional short-listed organisations were provided with feedback to further strengthen their proposals for consideration. Organisations were selected from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Antigua and Barbuda and comprise grassroots organisations, service providers, charitable organisations, organisations representing marginalised/vulnerable groups including the disabled, helplines, regional entities and feminist and LGBTQ+ advocates. Agreements with the organisations are expected to be in place by the second quarter of 2022.

## **Capacity Building**

The programme involves the completion of a CSO Assessment and Mapping in selected countries, stakeholder consultations, and the design of individual capacity development plans and objectives. A formalised and comprehensive training component will accompany individual mentoring and business coaching, over a 6-month period. Participants will be drawn from across the whole Caribbean region. The materials and tools have already been developed, and an online academy offering asynchronous learning options is also available. This programme is one of several components to be deployed in early 2022, another being the launch of a CSO Signature Event - an in-person movement building, networking and capacity building retreat in one Caribbean territory. These materials will be shared with the six national programmes as well as CSOs from across the region.

## **Challenges and Mitigating Measures**

The following challenges were experienced by Caribbean Regional SI during the reporting period.

### **COVID 19**

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in strained healthcare systems, disruptions in care and redirected resources. There have been adverse effects on the supply chain for contraceptive commodities with the disruption of the manufacturing of key contraceptive commodities such as condoms and delaying their transportation. In addition, many governments restricted people's movements to stem the spread of the virus, resulting in decreases in maternal and new-born care and some providers were forced to suspend several SRH services that were not classified as essential. Simultaneously, prolonged quarantines, curfews and other movement restriction measures have led to increased reports of DV due to forced cohabitation in confined residential quarters, no doubt worsened by the anxieties related to the economic and health consequences of the pandemic. Also, when women lose their jobs and with it their financial independence, they can find themselves dependent on a violent partner.

## **Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**

There are particular risks of SEA when working with implementing partners. Given this risk the UN Protocol on allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse involving Implementing Partners (UN Protocol, April 2018) is designed to ensure that UN agencies do not partner with entities that fail to address sexual abuse and exploitation. Entities are required to take appropriate preventive measures, including investigation and corrective action, in accordance with the UN Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13). The Protocol requires UN agencies to assess the PSEA capacity of prospective implementing partners, ensure that partners meet minimum standards, and screen out those who do not. However, in a region with high levels of gender-based violence, it is expected that cases of SEA appear and are adequately addressed. To mitigate this staff and consultants either have to take a compulsory UN Anti-Sexual Harassment course or implementing partners, sub-grantees and service providers have to commit to preventing and adequately responding to sexual harassment as part of the contracting process for most UN agencies. However, cases of SEA in one programme country in the Caribbean occurred which impacted Spotlight implementation at both national and regional level.

## **Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

All of the countries and territories in the Caribbean have experienced at least some level of school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although more than half reopened their schools in September 2020, some of those countries subsequently had to close schools again, either partially or fully. Currently, the situation across the Caribbean remains mixed with schools closed in some countries, either partially or fully, and open in others. The extended closures forced schools to implement remote learning in an effort to maintain continuity of education for their students. Survey responses from Ministries of Education (MoEs) in the region showed that a wide range of remote learning strategies were implemented, particularly digital strategies.

The most commonly used strategy has been synchronous online classes and the online delivery of learning materials and assignments to students, which was reported by MoEs, followed by the direct delivery of learning materials to students. Online platforms have also been used to deliver recorded video or audio lessons. Given the extensive use of digital strategies for remote education, the main challenge has been the students' low level of access to the internet and to digital devices at home, as reported by key stakeholders, representatives from the MoEs and schools. The issue is particularly severe for students belonging to marginalised groups such as migrants, refugees and indigenous peoples who are more likely to live in rural areas or have lower socioeconomic status.

## **Capacity and Readiness of CSOs to implement New Initiatives**

Challenges contracting CSOs to support several SRHR related interventions, such as the CSE Observatory. This resulted in delays in implementation and also highlighted the lack of capacity among CSOs in some technical areas. It was observed that despite some registered CSOs working in gender, youth, SRHR etc, there are very few organisations that have ventured out beyond what is already mainstreamed and could not demonstrate capacity to implement specific, new and progressive initiatives modelled from international best practices. The recommendation is to ensure that the regional entities contracted by UN partners are being provided with consultative assistance. In this regard, the regional entities were required to provide sustainability plans to ensure there is ongoing consultative guidance which is critical for the sustainability of programmes beyond spotlight support. These consultation activities are also directly correlated to the successful implementation of other strategic activities that are required to achieve the SDGs in the region.

### **Processing Time for Document Completion and other Essential Processes**

Unexpected delays due to long processing time to schedule meetings or complete collaborative documents have resulted in project delays. It is recommended that we continue to work to improve communication within and among agencies and synchronise the various business models that are being used by key stakeholders.

Despite the challenges the Programme has created an online community to break the silos between the pillars and to make sure that Spotlight delivers as one. The PMU continues to coordinate and facilitate this process, particularly when working with the different partners.

## **Lessons Learned and New Opportunities**

The below lessons were learned by Caribbean Regional SI during 2021.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, like other public health emergencies, has resulted in strained health care systems, disruptions in care and redirected resources. From the perspective of the service users, disasters and health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic also tend to deepen inequalities that existed before with women being less likely to have power in decision-making around the outbreak, and as a consequence their general and sexual and reproductive health need may go largely unmet. Differences in power between men and women meant that women did not have autonomy over their sexual and reproductive decisions, which was compounded by their inadequate access to health care and insufficient financial resources to travel to hospitals and healthcare facilities for check-ups.

The COVID-19 school closures exacerbated challenges accessing CSE services, especially for youth who rely on these services within school systems. In March 2021, world leaders met at the World Health Assembly (WHA) Global Education Coalition high-level ministerial meeting to take stock of lessons learnt and discuss possible education strategies required in the second year of COVID-19. Because digital content can influence knowledge, attitudes and practices of adolescents and young people, leaders considered using these tools to disseminate COVID-19 information -including around vaccination rollout - alongside CSE and ASRHR education. When harnessed safely and thoughtfully, access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and digital spaces can add value to CSE delivery. At the WHA meeting, ministers commended innovative new teaching methods that prioritise learner wellbeing and psychosocial support in the pandemic context.

Most countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) now have some kind of institutional support for CSE programmes in formal education, and have undertaken important curricular activities to incorporate the same in the processes of educational reform. The recent formative assessment of CSE in the Caribbean region, observed a “generally enabling policy environment for sexuality education, as part of Health and Family Life Education (HFLE)” and “widespread acceptance of the need to have some level of Sexuality Education in schools”<sup>3</sup>

Stakeholders being actively included in the design of the ESP CoP from the beginning increases a general feeling of ownership of this initiative. Through the Inception Workshop, aside from actively engaging stakeholders, the Spotlight Initiative has been able to start building capacity on the ESP and GBV in Emergencies (GBViE) Minimum Standards, which has been appreciated by partners.

Adopting a humanitarian-development nexus approach will be crucial for partners and to ensure technical coherence across the region, as most of these regional institutions’ focal points are overseeing both development and humanitarian interventions in both prevention and response matters.

#### **a) New Opportunities**

The CoP on the ESP aims to scale up the focus from four key thematic sectors (health, social, police, justice) to five (incl. education) as well as expand to the humanitarian response sector. This is unique in the world and a direct requirement to make the CoP in the Caribbean meaningful in the context of COVID-19 as well as its vulnerability to geo-physical hazards.

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<sup>3</sup> A Formative Assessment of Comprehensive Sexuality Education within the Health and Family Life Education Curriculum in the Caribbean

Caribbean Regional SI has an implementing partnership agreement with the Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC), the Cipriani College of Labour and Cooperative Studies/Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCLCS/CCL) to develop a campaign to raise awareness on the linkage between VAWG in the family and the world of work, as well as to influence regional policies. The Spotlight Initiative Regional Programme is a significant opportunity for workers and employers to join forces to create and shape workplace policies and cultures to address GBV with the overarching objective of eliminating all forms of VAWG. The CEC and the CCL will develop an evidence-based and participatory campaign to raise awareness on the linkage between VAWG in the family and the world of work, as well as to influence regional policies. They will also jointly identify data gaps and develop a research agenda to inform GBV advocacy among workers and employers.

As a result of the lack of a gender and life course perspective, the specific needs and vulnerabilities of adolescent girls often remain invisible or “fall through the cracks” in the development of policies and strategies and programs to end violence in the region. Across pillar activities, efforts are made to bring more visibility and address the specific conditions of adolescent girls and their vulnerability to violence, as well as examine opportunities for strengthening regional policies and strategies for responding to and preventing violence against VAWG with a particular attention to adolescent girls.

## **Innovative, Promising or Good Practices**

**SRHR Observatory:** The partnership with CFPA is a promising practice that is integral to help advance SRHR in the region. Partnering with the regional CSO Caribbean Family Planning Affiliation, to carry out the work of the SRHR Observatory to strengthen the region's positioning to deliver on key advocacy to end GBV, and to promote SRHR through galvanising movements to advance legislative and policy changes, and to make programmatic linkages between GBV and SRHR, ensuring that no one is left behind. The SRHR Observatory promises to be an impetus for social monitoring and advocacy to improve access to, and uptake of both SRHR and GBV services for vulnerable populations, and to promote comprehensive and integrated SRHR/GBV in the region. The SRHR Observatory will also provide timely and independent analysis and will serve as an advocacy platform to address the high tolerance for GBV and to change harmful social norms across the Caribbean, through promotion of south-south cooperation, strategic partnership, innovation and sharing knowledge and good practices. Also, promising will be the opportunity for greater empowerment of CSOs, advocacy groups, networks and coalitions to conduct evidence-based advocacy.

The Formative Assessment of CSE component within the HFLE curriculum in schools in the Caribbean and the development of M&E guidelines and tools to assess the impact of CSE through HFLE is promising because it represents an advancement of CSE efforts in the region. CSE provides young people with knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop and sustain positive, healthy relationships and protect themselves from unsafe situations. Yet access to CSE programmes delivered in keeping with international best practices remains a critical challenge in the region. This is promising because it is expected that the Spotlight CSE interventions will facilitate advocacy and capacity building in CSE across the region in ways not done before. This is expected to have a positive impact on promoting the well-being of adolescents, reaching marginalized adolescents such as girls who are out of school, married, living in extreme poverty, or engaged in transactional sex for economic survival; boys in gangs; substance abusers; HIV-positive youth; and those with learning disabilities. The delivery of CSE activities is also expected to enhance gender equality and equity as well as responsible sexual behaviour, to protect adolescents from early and unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, and sexual abuse, incest, violence and other harmful practices especially against women and girls.

**The Community of Practice** – GBV Essential Package of Services initiative holds great promise for the people of the Caribbean. Once operationalized, there will be greater access to a coordinated set of essential and quality multi-sectoral services for all women and girls who have experienced gender-based violence. The initiative focuses on the essential services to be provided by the gender, health, justice/policing and social services sectors as well as guidelines for the coordination of essential services and the governance of coordination processes and mechanisms.

Progress has been made towards introducing standards for the education sector within the ESP. This is innovative because once complete, the Caribbean will be the first region to introduce the education sector to the ESP. Caribbean Regional SI is working with education actors to ensure that the education sector and school systems promote gender equality and non-violence from teaching practices to curricula. To achieve this the SI Regional Caribbean programme is undertaking operational research and engaging key actors to determine the content and proposed roll out for such standards.

This will be aligned to global normative standards including the RESPECT Framework, the Prevention Framework, the ESP and INSPIRE principles for preventing and responding to violence against children, all of which are the agreed set of standards when working on violence against women and children. It will support regional institutions to develop and extend at the national level, standardised tools for school and non-school based life skills programmes from early childhood through adolescence.

Given that technology is a driving force in the lives of youth and adolescents, the programme is using the U-Report digital platform to give young people a voice on issues that matter to them. The U-Report has the potential to emerge as an innovative practice of youth engagement on VAWG in the Caribbean region. U-Report has the potential of reaching thousands of people across the Caribbean region where there are five country platforms. As part of the study to map manifestations and impact of CMEU, UNICEF is implementing a U-Report poll to complement the KAP survey community consultations. These activities will collect information directly from young people on their perspectives on CMEU across the Caribbean.

Further, a good practice alluded to in the coordination section, is the Spotlight Collaborative, a coordination mechanism pioneered by the Regional Programme. This is a monthly convening of all key stakeholders including regional institutions, UN agencies, implementing partners, consultants, civil society reference group members and other key stakeholders to accelerate delivery; streamline communication & collaboration; strengthen partnership and collective problem-solving and support transparency and accountability. This is complemented by robust interagency coordination which ensured streamlining of information and avoiding duplication of efforts. Bi-weekly and ad-hoc meetings have been taking place between the Programme Coordinators on joint activities. For example, as multiple RUNOs have agreements with CARICOM, several coordination meetings took place between RUNOs to ensure harmonisation of activities and allocated budgets.

Integrating VAWG/FV considerations in the work of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) on Disaster Risk Reduction/Management (DRR/M): Utilising a multidisciplinary and two-tier approach in the integration of VAWG/FV considerations in DRR/M is a good practice because it ensures faster and more efficient use of time and resources. UNDP already had the highly qualified DRR expert on board and expert was able to produce the Guidelines on the Integration of VAWG/FV in DRR/M in the Caribbean including COVID-19 response in a timely manner. On the other hand, having a signed Letter of Agreement with the government entity (CDEMA) ensured commitment from the partner and gave the opportunity to UNDP in building CDEMA's capacity.

## **Communications and Visibility**

The Programme's communications and visibility plan approved by the Steering Committee and adopted in 2021. The second half saw increased visibility of the programme within the region as witnessed through feedback and enquiries received from stakeholders. Several significant visibility events were held in 2021 and key highlights include:

### **In the Spotlight - Caribbean Newsletter**

The Caribbean Regional Spotlight Communications and Visibility Plan started to gain momentum in the second quarter of the year. The first issue of the programme's newsletter – In the Spotlight – Caribbean was published at the end of August 2021, followed by the second issue in December.

The first issue of the newsletter introduced the programme to readers and included messages from the EU Ambassador and members of the Steering Committee. The newsletter was posted to the Resident Coordinator Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean website, as well as UN Women and the global Spotlight Initiative website. A social media campaign was developed to promote the newsletter via Twitter and Facebook. [Spotlight Newsletter August 2021.pdf](#)

The second issue of the newsletter featured Messages from Head of Agencies involved with the Initiative, and shone a light on the Spotlight Coordinators. This issue also featured thought leadership pieces from RUNOs and made space for three national programmes with articles from Grenada, Jamaica and Guyana.

[Spotlight Newsletter 2nd Issue V5 Spreads.pdf](#)

## **SRHR Observatory**

The Caribbean Observatory on SRHR was launched in collaboration with the CFPA, attended by 157 participants from around the region, including government, civil society, EU and development partners. The launch of the Observatory was critical as it raised awareness of the establishment of a platform designed to support the improvement of quality analysis, disaggregated and comparable data on SRHR in the region, an avenue to better inform laws, policies and programmes, and thereby supporting more enabling environments for SRH for all communities, and the underserved in particular. This would ensure targeted beneficiaries begin to contribute to and use the platform.

The launch was covered in one of the online newspapers in Barbados <https://barbadostoday.bb/2021/10/01/regional-observatory-on-sexual-reproductive-health-and-rights-aims-to-tackle-gender-based-violence/>

## **A webinar was held to launch the Regional CSE Activities**

Participation was open to all HFLE focal points for ministries of education, development partners, CSOs, technical members of the spotlight team, youth advocates and community leaders that represent special interest groups. Participants had the opportunity to provide inputs in accelerating CSE efforts. Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, discussion also included how to prioritise CSE in these COVID-19 times, as well as examples on how the region can utilise innovative ways to strengthen the delivery of CSE during and after COVID-19.

The Programme capitalised on the opportunity to raise awareness and visibility by participating on the panel “GBV, VAW or IFV? Why Wording Matters” during the Caribbean United against GBV Virtual Summit held in July 2021. The summit was organised by the Centro de Orientación e Investigación Integral (COIN) based in the Dominican Republic, to exchange knowledge and experiences on ending GBV in the Caribbean, especially from legal and policy perspectives. It was attended by CSOs, experts, academic institutions, UN and donor agencies.

### **Leveraging existing Advocacy Campaigns for Spotlight Visibility**

During the 16 Days of Activism to End GBV, an interview with Elizabeth Riley, Executive Director for CDEMA was produced to highlight the work being done on integrating gender and VAWG/FV in DRR/M. Ms. Riley affirmed that gender, GBV and VAWG are important components of the work of the CDEMA Coordinating Unit and that the unit will use its channels to advocate for addressing these issues. The interview was aired on the Spotlight Initiative communication platforms.

Link to the interview can be found here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UMQldSglGpVlqlyF54H3bDg1gO4i02lu/view?usp=sharing>

### **#WithHer Talks**

The Regional Programme produced an episode of this series, hosted by Barbadian radio personality, Tracy Fowler and featured guests were Third Chair of the Civil Society Regional Reference Group – Kevin Liverpool, Dr Carlene Radix, Head of the Human and Social Division at the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States and Bernice Antoine, Female Co-chair of Youth Advisory Group of UNFPA.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RBq2npCvSIGxDcksXyspVoHT19e3DDxs/view?usp=sharing>

### **Observance of United Nations Day**

In observance of United Nations Day, the Regional Spotlight took advantage of the opportunity for visibility for the programme with a newspaper advertorial in the Nation newspaper in Barbados, reaching over 50 000 readers, and two newspapers in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which reached over 20 000 readers. [20211024SU PAGE 27\[59\].pdf](#)

### **UN House Lighting Ceremony**

The Lighting Ceremony was the highlight of the Regional Spotlight Initiative 16 Days activities. Presentations were made by the UNRC, Barbados and Eastern Caribbean, Representative UN Women MCO - Caribbean, DSG, CARICOM, Head of the Human and Social Division at the OECS. This event was attended by representatives of government, Heads of Agencies, civil society, EU and development partners. The event made the front page of the oldest newspaper in Barbados – the Barbados Advocate and was also covered by the two other newspapers in the country.

Link to news article in St. Kitts online newspaper:

<https://www.sknvibes.com/news/newsdetails.cfm/117667>

## **Key Messages**

A workshop to develop the Key Messages for the Caribbean Regional Programme was held and attended by Communications Officers from the National Programmes, RUNOs and stakeholders from several partner organisations and civil society. The Messages were approved at a subsequent Steering Committee Meeting. Key Messages have been shared via press releases and advertorials to raise awareness around the issue of Family Violence and Violence Against Women and Girls. Messages that shine a light on these issues include:

- Humanitarian emergencies, natural disasters and global pandemics put women and girls at increased risk of violence. The current COVID-19 crisis is no exception.
- Eradicating VAWG requires the commitment and cooperation of all CARICOM Member States to adopt specialised and comprehensive legislation and policies.
- CARICOM Member States must redouble efforts to avail the necessary resources for implementation of policies and programmes, and enforcement of FV related laws.
- End impunity by enforcing GBV laws to ensure a violence-free Caribbean society.
- Child marriage and early unions is a violation of human rights that disproportionately affects girls. The practice of child marriage and early unions between girls under 18 and adult men continues, impacting their reproductive health, education as well as social and economic well-being.
- Creating a region with zero tolerance for Family Violence begins in every home
- While the availability of data on the prevalence of Violence against Women and Girls in the Caribbean has improved through Demographic Health Surveys and other sources, only five countries (Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago) have carried out dedicated national prevalence surveys. Of the five countries, 46% of women have experienced at least one form of violence and more than one in every four (29%) of ever partnered women aged 15-64 years have experienced physical IPV in their lifetime.
- 1 in 4 young women in Latin America and the Caribbean was married for the first time or found themselves in an early union before they turned 18.
- Child marriage and early unions vary across the Caribbean, from below 10 percent in Jamaica to over 30 per cent in Belize and Suriname.
- The Spotlight Initiative is supporting the building of a vibrant feminist regional umbrella network of organisations working on Violence against Women and Girls, and Family Violence (FV).

- Joint advocacy and activism will improve state and community accountability to end FV.

Link to the Key Message can be found here: [Key Messages 260122.pdf](#)

## **Meet Paula**

Also of note is the cover illustration created for the second issue of the In the Spotlight – Caribbean newsletter. The illustration was born out of a persona, Paula, developed during the Key Messages workshop held in September 2021. Paula lives on an island in the Caribbean where she works tirelessly on Women’s Rights. She is an avid runner and a mother of three. As an advocate, Paula has made a significant contribution to the struggle and effort to make the Caribbean a safe place to live. She is passionate about life and a go-getter yet focused on her family. [UN SPOLIGHT ILLUSTRATION.jpg](#)

The scene in the illustration shows Paula jogging through a park. It’s 2024, and Paula runs a 5K every day, passing through the park on her way back home. Paula has done a lot in the past three years to ensure that her island home and the society in which she and her family lives, is safe and secure. Not only is her island safe, but all across the Caribbean is now safe, after the successful implementation of the Spotlight Initiative.

## **Next Steps**

Overall, 2022 will mark the realisation of programme results in Phase I as most preparatory was completed and significant milestones were achieved. For example, it is projected that the partnership with Pan-Caribbean partnership Against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP) as a new implementing partner will allow CSOs and other key partners in the Caribbean region to be trained using the out of school CSE toolkit which aims to reach a number of adolescents and young people, in particular young women and girls, who will develop the skills to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

There will be focus on national investments to ensure alignment with the HFLE assessment and M&E frameworks. A regional CSE advocacy strategy for the implementation of international standards on Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the Caribbean will also be developed.

An official launch of the ESP CoP is scheduled for the 24-25 May 2022, where a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed between key standing members and co-chairs. Additionally, a regional ESP implementation assessment and lessons learned study will be conducted by a consultant. The

results of this study will set the basis for priorities and needed support from member states in support of the implementation of the ESP in their countries. In order to scale up technical and administrative support, a GBV Coordinator will be hired to support CARICOM in co-chairing the ESP CoP, building around a sustainability strategy. Finally, a consultancy firm will be contracted to support the development of the ESP CoP website.

**SRHR Observatory:** The 2022 work plan for the SRHR Observatory under the regional programme includes providing technical assistance to UNFPA's implementing partner, the CFPA to develop frameworks to guide the operations of the platform including: Standard Operating Procedures - to determine standards around data collection; Resource Mobilisation Framework and Plan - to ensure the sustainability of the Observatory; Communications and Advocacy Plan - to guide the implementation of the communications and advocacy work; and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Plan - to monitor and evaluate the performance of the Observatory in meeting its expected results.