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LET'S END CHILD MARRIAGE

UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage

Canada



Government of the Netherlands



ACCELERATING AND AMPLIFYING CHANGE - 2017 RESULTS

Through the Global Programme, we are accelerating action to end child marriage, and UNFPA and UNICEF are able to reach more girls. The Global Programme is leveraging investments to increase outreach and sustainability. In 2017, it spent over US\$24 million with complementary investments of over \$22 million from other sources.

In 2017, over one million girls and four million community members in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia were reached with information, skills and services related to ending child marriage. Nine of the 12 countries have developed national strategies to end child marriage, five of which are costed – including three newly costed in 2017 (Ghana, Nepal and Zambia).

Burkina Faso: 12,000 adolescent girls were able to remain in school because they received support in the form of payment of their educational fees, cash or in-kind transfers, or bicycles, and 35,000 adolescent girls at risk of child marriage were provided with social, judicial and health services.

Sierra Leone: Over 12,000 adolescent girls strengthened their leadership and decision-making skills, sexual and reproductive health knowledge, and economic empowerment through life-skills training conducted by 340 trained mentors in 160 newly established safe spaces for girls.

Ghana: The policy environment for girls' rights and development was improved through the drafting and launch of the budgeted National Strategic Framework on Ending Child Marriage, the costed Adolescent Pregnancy Strategy, and the Government's Free Senior High School Policy.

Niger: 250 communities publicly declared the abandonment of child marriage after 50,000 individuals had been engaged in intensive community dialogues over a 6–12 month period. Mediation and dialogue with parents prevented 229 planned cases of child marriage and helped 614 children (about 80 per cent girls) return to school.

Zambia: A national multisectoral action plan on child marriage was developed with an allocated budget, targeting quality education, adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, social and child protection services, recreation and vocational training, as well as employment opportunities for adolescent girls. It is now being implemented in two pilot districts, with a total estimated population of over 320,000 people.

Yemen: Through awareness-raising sessions on child protection-related issues in the communities, 100,000 community members, community leaders and religious imams gained improved knowledge of the benefits of delaying marriage and keeping girls in school during adolescence.

Mozambique: 74,000 adolescent girls were provided with access to safe spaces in their communities and referrals to adolescent-friendly services. As a result, over 9,500 girls used these services; 424 started using a family planning method; over 2,300 enrolled and remained in school; 570 accessed birth registration services; and 122 obtained an identity document.

Nepal: 9,600 adolescent girls at risk of marriage increased their social and financial skills through the Rupantaran programme and gained greater access to sexual and reproductive health services through regularly organized visits to adolescent-friendly health centres.

India: The multisectoral state action plan on ending child marriage launched in Rajasthan (population 69 millions), one of the states with the highest prevalence of child marriage in the country, ensures that the relevant sectors – health, education, social empowerment, local government and rural development – commit to addressing child marriage.

Bangladesh: Nearly 68,000 adolescents received counselling and gender-responsive health services through 70 newly established adolescent-friendly health service corners within government health facilities.

Ethiopia: More than 100,000 adolescent girls benefited from improved quality of education because 460 schools were strengthened through training of teachers on gender-responsive pedagogy and school-related gender-based violence prevention and protection systems.

Uganda: 27,000 adolescent girls strengthened critical skills through school clubs, Go Back to School campaigns, and life-skills and financial literacy training. This enabled them to know their rights and better exercise their choices.

“WHEN I SAW TEENAGE GIRLS WHO REFUSED TO MARRY, I THOUGHT THEY WERE REBELS... BUT NOW I UNDERSTAND THEIR REFUSAL. THEY JUST WANT TO DEFEND THEIR RIGHTS.”

— Ramatou Abdoul Hamidou, 14



Girls in Niger are expected to defer to their parents' decisions, but Ramatou took a stand when her parents arranged a marriage for her last year. She protested, and after her mentor and the local imam intervened, her parents relented. © UNFPA Niger/Tagaza Djibo]

TURNING COMMITMENT INTO TANGIBLE ACTION THROUGH FIVE PROVEN STRATEGIES

Empower adolescent girls at risk of child marriage, or who are already married, to express their views, exercise their choices, and facilitate their participation in education.

Girls must be fully informed about the consequences of child marriage and learn to advocate for their own interests. Providing them with information and fundamental life skills while helping them build support networks and remain in school can promote their learning and self-esteem. They will then be more able to make informed decisions and negotiate life on their own terms.

Educate and mobilize families, communities and leaders to invest in adolescent girls. Parents and community members, including men and boys, are often primary

decision-makers on child marriage. Engaging them in discussions on the value of educating girls and the negative consequences of child marriage can persuade families and communities to opt out of early marriage and support girls to realize their aspirations by showing alternative possibilities for their future.

Strengthen the accessibility, quality and responsiveness of services for adolescent girls in key sectors. Improved access to quality education, health, child protection and social protection leads to better outcomes for adolescent girls. These services can support them in preventing adolescent pregnancy, continuing their education, and building their own future.

Foster national laws and policies that protect and promote the rights of adolescent girls. Governments can protect girls from harmful practices by strengthening legal provisions, harmonizing statutory and customary law, and effectively enforcing laws. National strategies and plans are an opportunity to address multiple issues affecting adolescent girls—including and beyond child marriage.

Generate and use robust data and evidence to inform programmes and policies relating to adolescent girls. Investing in data, and generating and disseminating evidence on what works to prevent child marriage is essential to developing smart, effective policies and programmes that can lead to large-scale change.



12 MILLION GIRLS EACH YEAR ARE MARRIED IN CHILDHOOD. THAT'S ONE IN FIVE GIRLS.

- By 2030, over 150 million more girls will marry before their 18th birthday – unless we make further strides in ending child marriage.
- Girls are disproportionately affected by the practice – about five times more than boys.
- The prevalence of child marriage is decreasing globally, but progress must be significantly accelerated to end the practice by 2030 – the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target.

Ending child marriage is essential to enable millions of girls the opportunity for a better life and to realize their full potential. It also helps avert significant economic costs related to fertility, health, nutrition, education and earnings – not only for the girl brides, but also for their families and the countries where the practice prevails.

Since 2016, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Children's Fund

(UNICEF) have been tackling child marriage through the Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage. The programme's 15-year vision is to promote the rights of girls to not get married or pregnant as children, and to enable them to achieve their aspirations through education and alternative pathways.

The Global Programme has contributed to building and maintaining strong social and political will to eliminate child marriage globally. This is reflected in:

- multiple resolutions on child, early and forced marriage in the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council; and
- political gatherings such as the 2017 West and Central African States High Level Meeting on Ending Child Marriage in Dakar, Senegal, which led to reaffirmations to scale up actions by key governments.

The Global Programme is uniquely positioned to accelerate action on ending child marriage. It builds on the well-established country presence of UNICEF and UNFPA to engage critical influencers and decision-makers—international and regional actors, such as the African Union and the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children, governments and community leaders, as well as parents, girls and boys.

The Global Programme is leveraging partnerships that are fundamental to achieving results on the ground and scalable and meaningful change. It builds the capacities of governments and non-government organizations to be responsive to girls' needs and engages with civil society (e.g. members of the global network Girls Not Brides, faith-based organizations, academia and the private sector) for more harmonized action and accountability. The Global Programme also works in the humanitarian sphere, with critical interventions in protracted humanitarian crises such as in Yemen.

The Global Programme focuses on empowering adolescent girls aged 10–19 at risk of marriage or already in union in 12 high-prevalence and/or high-burden countries: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia.

SCALING UP AND INNOVATING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

LEVERAGING GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

The Government-run Kanyashree Girls' Clubs in India, supported by the Global Programme, strengthen girls as agents of change through awareness sessions and outreach activities on child marriage and other adolescent-related topics. The Clubs are linked to a government conditional cash transfer scheme that supports girls' enrolment in education, which increases the possibility to create social and behavioural change.

In Uganda, the Presidential Initiative for Aids Strategy for Communication to Youth (PIASCY) has been integrated into the National Action Plan on Ending Child Marriage and is being rolled out in 11 districts. The Global Programme is collaborating with the PIASCY to develop and implement the National Strategy for Girls' Education to enable adolescent girls to remain in school. Through PIASCY, over 51,000 adolescent girls have been provided with life-skills training.

#ENDChildMarriage

ENGAGING YOUTH

Through the U-Report mobile platform system, used by the Global Programme in Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia, with over 470,000 users aged 10–24, young people can directly obtain and share information, voice their opinions, and discuss issues that affect them through their mobile phones.

In 2017, the Government of Bangladesh, with support of the Global Programme, launched a multimedia campaign with the theme 'Raise the Beat for Ending Child Marriage'. Short films from the campaign were shared on UNICEF's social media platforms and engaged more than 15 million people, mostly adolescents.

INVOLVING RELIGIOUS LEADERS

In Mozambique, the Global Programme partners with the Interfaith Council of Religions and the Inter-religious Campaign against Malaria in Mozambique (PIRCOM) to bring different religions together to end child marriage and to train religious leaders on a multi-sectoral package developed together with the Ministry of Health. This package includes sessions dedicated to debates on sexual and reproductive health issues, and child marriage prevention, rooted in biblical and Qur'anic verses.

Religious leaders are receiving training on child rights, child marriage and gender in Nepal through the Global Programme's partnership with the National Inter-Religious Network. The trained leaders are mobilized in the community to denounce child marriage and to engage community members by delivering messages on ending child marriage during religious preaching.

To learn more about the Global Programme, visit www.unicef.org/end-child-marriage or contact Nankali Maksud, Coordinator of the Global Programme, at nmaksud@unicef.org