



# GIRLS NOT BRIDES

The Global Partnership  
to End Child Marriage



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**IT TAKES A MOVEMENT: REFLECTING ON FIVE YEARS  
OF PROGRESS TOWARDS ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE**

## **Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage was born in 2011 out of a recognition that child marriage is a widespread and devastating problem for girls everywhere, but that it can be tackled if interested people from around the world join hands.**

Since then, civil society organisations have worked together through the Partnership to increase public awareness about child marriage, strengthen political commitment to ending the practice, and facilitate learning and coordination about what needed to be done.

Working together with UN agencies, donors, governments, networks of parliamentarians and others, the members and partners of *Girls Not Brides* have stimulated unprecedented action to end child marriage in the five years since the Partnership's launch. It Takes A Movement report reflects on what progress has been made in those five years, how working in partnership has helped catalyse this change, and what remains to be done.

### **There have been exciting advances in a number of areas, including:**

#### ■ **New global and regional commitments:**

Child marriage was included as a global development priority in target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Resolutions at the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council have mobilised political support and strengthened the global normative framework. Other regional and intergovernmental bodies, including the African Union and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, have set out plans of action to end child marriage.

#### ■ **Strengthened legal and policy frameworks:**

National strategies have been developed or are being developed in at least 14 countries. Many countries have also taken steps to strengthen their laws to address child marriage.

#### ■ **New programmes:**

The number of programmes addressing child marriage has grown dramatically, with increased action from international NGOs, community based organisations and many others. UNICEF and UNFPA have launched a new Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage in 12 countries.

#### ■ **A movement to end child marriage:**

Once a taboo topic with little political or public recognition, child marriage is now an issue of international concern; it is the subject of discussions of governments, international organisations, parliamentarians, youth groups, religious and traditional leaders, communities and donors. *Girls Not Brides* has grown to over 600 members in more than 80 countries.

#### ■ **Growing consensus of what needs to be done:**

There is an increased global understanding of the range of approaches needed to tackle child marriage and the role of different sectors.

#### ■ **More funding:**

Donor governments and private foundations have invested millions of dollars into efforts to end child marriage. However, the funding available is nowhere near enough to tackle the scale of the problem.

## Many challenges remain and much more needs to be done.

The global movement must now shift from raising awareness and making global commitments to ensuring that commitments are implemented to achieve tangible change in the lives of girls. Work needs to be scaled up, coordination improved, and more support given for community based efforts. National strategies need to be properly costed, funded and implemented. We also need a better understanding of what really works. And the voices of girls affected by child marriage need to be at the centre of the global movement.

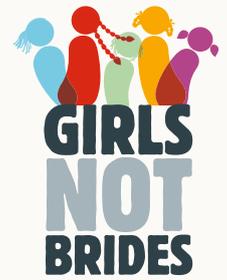
For collective efforts towards ending child marriage to be taken to the next level in the coming years, a number of critical actions are needed:

- 1 Hold governments accountable to their international, regional and national commitments**, in particular to developing ambitious plans for implementing target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals with clear indicators for progress.
- 2 Develop, implement and fund comprehensive policies, programmes and plans** to end child marriage and support married girls, in partnership with civil society and other key stakeholders. This might involve the development of targeted national strategies and/or integration of child marriage into related strategies for girls and children.
- 3 Continue to grow and strengthen the movement** by involving new stakeholders, developing new partnerships, and supporting new champions. Ensure that young people are at the forefront of the movement.
- 4 Celebrate and share successes**, including case studies of individuals overcoming child marriage, of communities who have united to promote a better future for their girls, of policy change or programmatic initiatives which have had a large-scale impact and ultimately of regions and countries where child marriage has been tackled in a holistic and comprehensive manner.
- 5 Engage related sectors** – such as those addressing education, health or violence – at global, regional, national and local levels, so that they integrate a focus on ending child marriage into their work.
- 6 Learn from what works and what doesn't** so that efforts to end child marriage are based on the latest evidence. Ensure the necessary research, documentation and evaluation of programmes and policies, and learn from other sectors and initiatives which address social norm change.
- 7 Increase funding for efforts which prevent child marriage and support married girls**, and ensure the necessary support for grassroots groups working directly with those affected. In particular, target investment in education and health programmes for girls, as well as in initiatives which tackle social norm change over the long term.

# 'WE ARE MILLIONS AND WE ARE MOVING IN WAVES.'

## IT TAKES A MOVEMENT: REFLECTING ON FIVE YEARS OF PROGRESS TOWARDS ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE

*Girls Not Brides* is a global partnership of over 600 civil society organisations from more than 80 countries committed to ending child marriage and enabling girls to fulfil their potential.



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to End Child Marriage

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