Guide for Women Deliver 2023

17 - 20 July | Kigali, Rwanda
Dear Colleagues, Leaders, and Friends,

Girls’ and women’s lives are compromised by being valued less because of their gender. This is exacerbated by emerging global crises, including climate change, conflict, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. These issues have accelerated child, early and forced marriages and unions (CEFMU), a practice that the world has promised to end by 2030 through the Sustainable Development Goals. In fact, data from UNICEF indicates that we are 300 years away from ending child marriage.

Women Deliver is one of the largest, multi-sectoral convenings to advance gender equality. Women Deliver 2023 offers a vital platform for discussions around CEFMU, where grassroot-based advocates, multilateral governments, the private sector, philanthropies, and youth, from all over the world, will come together to address challenges and identify opportunities to advance gender equality. We, at Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage, are excited to participate in this convening alongside some of the most passionate and influential people working to end gender inequality. We hope to inspire collective action, at all levels and across movements, to accelerate action to end CEFMU by 2030.

An official programme for Women Deliver 2023 can be found on the conference website and on the mobile app. Women Deliver 2023 is an opportunity to engage with and learn from others who are working to end CEFMU and gender inequality. In this guide we have highlighted some of our key advocacy messages, key evidence around the drivers of CEFMU, and a curated selection of gatherings and sessions that may be of interest. This guide also introduces our sponsored member delegation from across multiple regions, and attendees from the Girls Not Brides Secretariat - so please do reach out, we would love to meet you.

It takes collective action to bring about the change we want to see in the world. It takes a movement to end child marriage. Thank you for being part of the movement.

Dr. Faith Mwangi-Powell
CEO, Girls Not Brides

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Key Advocacy Messages

Below, we share some of Girls Not Brides’ key advocacy messages, developed with the Women Deliver 2023 objectives in mind. We invite you to use these messages and calls to action in your own advocacy efforts, because the voices of many is more powerful than any single voice.

Child, early, and forced marriages and unions (CEFMU) are not declining fast enough and interconnected global crises are putting girls at further risk.

Declines in the level of CEFMU are not occurring at a fast enough pace to reach the Sustainable Development Goal target 5.3 of eliminating the practice by 2030. According to UNICEF, at current rates of progress, it will take another 300 years to end child marriage.

COVID-19, conflict and climate change are increasing the risk of CEFMU because they aggravate the underlying drivers. This has been termed the ‘polycrisis’ by UNICEF.

- UNICEF estimates that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 10 million more girls will marry before 2030 (in addition to the current 12 million girls married per year) due to school closures, income shocks, economic uncertainty, and parent deaths.
- Child marriage prevalence in fragile contexts is twice the global average. Every tenfold increase in conflict deaths is associated with a 7 per cent rise in child marriage prevalence.
- Climate change is fostering conditions of increased vulnerability – affecting livelihoods and food security, and causing displacement. A 10 per cent deviation in rainfall (increase or decrease) leads to a 1 per cent increase in child marriage.

Progress needs to happen 20x faster to end child marriage by 2030.

We need to accelerate action urgently:

- Where progress has stagnated: West and Central Africa (WACA), and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) where the practice often takes the form of informal unions.
- Among neglected populations: girls from the poorest families, in rural areas, in humanitarian settings, and those who have been most marginalised.
- In countries with highest burdens: according to UNICEF data, India, Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Nigeria, Brazil, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Mexico, Iran, and Egypt.
- At global, national, and community levels

Collective action, at all levels, is essential to ending CEFMU.

Building and mobilising movements

Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage works with over 1400 members across 100 countries with a shared vision of ending child marriage globally. The Partnership is a collective of leaders at different levels, since we believe we do not need one organisation to take the lead, but instead need hundreds of leaders from communities all over the world to work together. Through collective action, we are building movements at different levels - national, regional, and community - to strengthen the ecosystem for change. We are calling for other movements to join us so that we can generate a broader ecosystem to help us address the emerging global crisis putting women and girls at greater risk of CEFMU.

Creating spaces for youth advocates

Young people are at the core of the movement to end CEFMU. As individuals, leaders, and future parents they have the power to end CEFMU within the next generation. Young people – including girls at risk of child marriage and already-married girls – are most affected by CEFMU and therefore their voices and views must be at the heart of solutions. We are calling for greater inclusion of girls, adolescents and young people in the design and development of programmes. We are calling for the creation of more spaces for them to influence policy and hold leaders accountable.
Addressing the root causes of CEFMU is critical to ending this practice. Gender-transformative approaches (GTA) to ending CEFMU are rights-based and intersectional, and promote gender equality by fostering critical examination of gender roles, norms and dynamics and recognising and strengthening positive norms and quality access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). We are calling for approaches to ending CEFMU that promote the relative position of girls and women and transform underlying social structures, policies, systems, and social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities.

Investing in girls’ education

Keeping girls in schools is one of the best ways to prevent child marriage. On average, the likelihood of a girl marrying as a child is six percentage points less for every additional year she stays in secondary education. Education is a powerful path to gender equality, strengthening girls’ skills, knowledge and power to challenge discriminatory gender norms. We are calling for equal access to free, high-quality, and safe education. To do this, we need to break down the barriers preventing safe access, such as school fees, lack of menstrual hygiene products and facilities, long distances to schools, and discrimination against married or pregnant girls.

Providing flexible funding

To accelerate progress, we need increased financial commitments to support national movements and coalitions, and other civil society organisations working towards long-term social norms transformation at a community level. This support needs to be alongside large structural programmes, such as quality education and access to healthcare for girls and women. We are calling for funding that is multi-year and flexible, with a focus on those regions where the least progress has been made.

Calls to action

1. **Build and leverage movements** across community, national, and global levels, and include diverse stakeholders, sectors, and geographies. Strengthen partnership to create an ecosystem for change and act collectively for greater impact, shared learning, coordination, mobilisation, and influence.

2. **Create spaces for young people** so that they have an active role in shaping policy, programmes, and solutions. Invest in those who have the power to end CEFMU within the next generation.

3. **Invest in gender-transformative approaches** that act to address the underlying social norms and structures that perpetuate gender inequality. Respect, protect and fulfill girls’ and women’s human rights, including the right to health, right to education, right to bodily integrity, right to adequate standards, and the right to be free from discrimination of living.

4. **Invest in multi-sectoral services and girls’ education**, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), and gender-based violence (GBV) interventions – particularly in crisis and humanitarian contexts.

5. **Provide flexible funding** to girls, civil society organisations, and regions with the highest prevalence and burden of CEFMU, including West and Central Africa (WACA), and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

Drivers, consequences, and solutions

Child marriage is any form of child, early or forced marriage or union where at least one party is under age 18. It is rooted in gender inequality and the belief that girls and women are inferior to boys and men. It is a global issue, and happens across countries, cultures, religions and ethnicities. Its drivers vary between communities and it looks different across – and within – regions and countries.

Prevalence, burden, and progress

Prevalence is the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in a union before age 18.

- Globally, 19% of girls – or 1 in 5 – marry or enter a union before age 18. This is down from 23% a decade ago. About 4% marry before age 15.¹
- Prevalence is highest and progress is slowest in West and Central Africa (WACA).

Burden is the total number of girls and women aged 10 to 24 who first married or were in a union before age 18.

- 640 million girls and women alive today were married or in a union before age 18.²
- Nearly half live in South Asia (45%) with the next largest share in West, Central, East and Southern Africa (29%), followed by East Asia and the Pacific (15%) and Latin America and the Caribbean (9%).
- As population growth outpaces reductions in child marriage, West, Central, East and Southern Africa is expected to make up 41% of the global burden of child marriage by 2030.

Progress has been uneven, with prevalence increasing among the poorest households and progress stalling in some regions. Progress is also being threatened by interconnected global crises of conflict, climate change, COVID-19, and rising living costs. We call this a polycrisis.

- In the past 25 years, 68 million child marriages have been averted.
- But 12 million girls and adolescents still marry or enter a union every year ³ and 10 million more girls are expected to marry by 2030 due to the COVID-19 pandemic alone.
- Progress has been slowest in West and Central Africa and in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Progress needs to happen 20 times faster to meet Sustainable Development Goal Target 5.3 on ending child marriage.⁴

Consequences of child marriage

Child marriage has lasting impacts on girls’ lives: it limits their access to health – including sexual and reproductive health and rights – education, and economic and political participation. It also limits their control over their own bodies and increases the risk of them experiencing gender-based violence (GBV).

Child marriage can lead to girls having sex before they are physically and emotionally ready, and when they know little about their own sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Child marriage is also a key driver of adolescent pregnancy, which carries serious health risks. Married girls are also at increased risk of acquiring HIV. Married girls often experience social isolation and emotional distress and are more likely to report that their first sexual experience was forced.

Once married, girls are very unlikely to remain in or return to school. They face practical barriers including household responsibilities, stigma, forced exclusion from school and gender norms that keep them at home. This has lifelong impacts for their financial security and participation.

Drivers

Child marriage is rooted in gender inequality and patriarchal systems – that is, systems that are controlled by men – that value girls less and control them more because of their sex. This is supported and perpetuated by social norms and leads to limits on female sexuality and reproductive choices. This can mean controlling how a girl behaves and dresses, where she goes, who she sees, and if, when and whom she marries. It can also criminalise her sexuality and block her access to care and information.

In many places, girls who have relationships or become pregnant outside of marriage are shamed for bringing dishonour on their family, or even stopped from going to school. In such circumstances, parents may see marriage as a way to protect their daughters and their families.

This situation is made worse by poverty, insecurity and lack of access to education. Such situations increase inequalities and can push families – and sometimes girls – to see marriage as a way to reduce economic pressure and gain financial security. In conflict- and crisis-affected contexts, child marriage may also be seen as a way to protect girls from violence. It can also be used as a weapon of war.

- Nearly 40% of girls in the countries with the lowest income are married before age 18, twice the global average.⁵
- Eight of the 10 countries with the highest child marriage prevalence are experiencing humanitarian crises.⁶
- A 10-fold increase in conflict deaths is associated with a 7% increase in child marriage.⁷
- A 10% change in rainfall due to climate change is associated with a 1% rise in child marriage.⁸
- The likelihood of a girl marrying is six percentage points less for every additional year spent in secondary school.

²UNICEF, 2022, Child marriage database.
Events

We have curated a selection of events which showcases what our partnership will be hosting and discussing at Women Deliver 2023.

Please visit the Women Deliver 2023 website for the full agenda.

Key:
- Girls Not Brides hosting, co-hosting, or sponsored speakers
- Girls Not Brides member hosting, co-hosting, or speaking
- Women Deliver 2023 Highlight

Monday 17 July

- **YOU(R) VOICES, YOU(R) POWER: YOU(TH) PRE-CONFERENCE**
  
  A space for youth delegates to build solidarity and community, to connect with each other, and to mobilise collective action at and beyond WD2023. Lays the foundation for youth attendees to leverage WD2023 to advance their advocacy through the creation of advocacy action plans and intentional relationship building.
  
  Pre-registration required.

  
  **RADICAL POSSIBILITIES FOR GIRLS EDUCATION & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**
  
  Join for a discussion of the radical possibility education offers for activism, democracy, and leadership, and learn about DISRUPTHER, a leadership and empowerment program that supports an action-oriented focus on the political engagement of adolescent girls and young women, reframing who leads and enabling power shifts.

  **GIRLS NOT BRIDES WELCOME (STAFF AND SPONSORED MEMBERS)**
  
  An informal opportunity for Secretariat staff and Girls Not Brides sponsored members to come together and have a drink before the conference begins on Monday morning.
  
  Secretariat and sponsored members only.

- **WE DESERVE BETTER: STRENGTHENING SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS**
  
  Open dialogue on how social protection systems can drive economic empowerment for women and girls.

- **OPENING PLENARY**

- **CULTURE NIGHT**
The Indaba - from Zulu and Xhosa languages, a word used in Southern African communities to describe an important meeting between peers - is an opportunity to meet other Girls Not Brides members, partners and supporters – and a space for members to showcase efforts to end child marriage and learn from others. We will convene discussions around current child marriage themes chosen by the end child marriage community. This event will be a positive space to connect, listen to insight from across the global Partnership, have coffee, dance, listen to music, and recharge as a community.

Girls Not Brides members, partners, and by invitation only.

GIRLS NOT BRIDES INDABA
UNITING ALL THOSE WORKING TO END CHILD MARRIAGE

07:00-08:30
Kigali Convention Centre, Room AD12.1

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07:00-07:25 - Registration and informal networking
Coffee provided.

07:25-07:35 - Welcome remarks from Dr. Faith Mwangi-Powell, CEO, Girls Not Brides and Zipporah Jean Alaroker on behalf of the Board.

07:35-08:10 - Conversation Cafes
Participants will engage in semi-structured discussions around four themed discussion topics: youth engagement, gender-transformative approaches (GTA), the new UNICEF data, and child marriage and the law.

08:10-08:30 - Remarks, reflections, and close
Closing remarks from Dr. Faith Mwangi-Powell, CEO, Girls Not Brides

In the last few years, we have a seen a rise in interconnected and compounding global crises. Amid these escalating risks, it is imperative to take bold and collective action to ensure the continued advancement of gender equality. Join us for this dynamic discussion, featuring multi-sectoral leaders and activists at the frontlines of safeguarding girls' and women's rights, to profoundly transform and sustain global systems.

THE STATE OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ERA OF MULTIPLE CRISIS

08:30-10:30
Kigali Convention Centre, Auditorium

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MAPUTO@20: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN POLICIES AND PEOPLE

11:00-12:30
Kigali Convention Centre, Auditorium

A high-level accountability session with thought leaders that spotlights Africa's priorities and actions taken to advance Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Africa, in light of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa turning 20 years in 2023. The session will be anchored on the 3Ps Framework of the African Union Commission's Women, Gender and Youth Directorate; Policies, Partnerships and People with Promising Practices.
**Tuesday 18 July cont.**

- **Harnessing the Power of Education to End Harmful Gender Norms & Stereotypes in Schools**
  
  Led by Global Partnership for Education, co-hosted by Partner Coalition for Ending Gender Stereotypes in Schools, Room to Read, UN Girls’ Education Initiative, UNICEF India, UN Women Bangladesh, Girls Not Brides and others. The session will spotlight the role education has and can play in breaking the cycle of harmful gender norms with benefits for all young people and the future of societies and economies.

- **From Attacks to Advancements: Charting the Path for SRHR in a Changing World**
  
  The global health landscape has undergone significant shifts, impacting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), including the emerging harmful anti-rights movements that hinder SRHR progress. Advocates, practitioners, multilateral leaders, private sector innovators and duty bearers will highlight the importance of bodily autonomy and reproductive justice. They will also share their insights on how to address urgent challenges in SRHR.

- **The Generation Equality Forum (GEF): The Kenyan Lesson in Movement Building for Change Action**
  
  This event will look at how Kenya’s GEF commitments were achieved through movement building and how they could possibly be realised.

- **Where is the Money? Financing Adolescents and Young Feminists**
  
  Led by AGIP, co-hosted by Amplify Girls, GAGE/ODI, Plan International, Save the Children and Girls Not Brides. Intergenerational dialogue between girls, donors, researchers and CSOs to discuss what needs to shift to make funding accessible for girls and young feminist-led organisations.

- **Co-Designing Gender Equality: The Role of Accountability in the Gender Equality Agenda**
  
  Addressing gender gaps requires addressing accountability gaps. Despite numerous commitments to gender equality and women’s rights, implementation and delivery remain challenging, especially for grassroots, women’s rights, youth-led, and feminist organizations. This plenary examines accountability mechanisms to ensure financial resources reach feminist movements, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.
Across the globe adolescents and young women (AGYW) continue to lead transformative actions that address systemic and structural inequalities and barriers for young women and girls. The objective of this Women Deliver 2023 side event is to showcase good practices of the power of adolescents and young feminist leaders in impacting change, individually and as a collective.
In the global discourse on addressing child, early, and forced marriages, one does not come across too many references to the girl brides of Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Yet, latest research from the region shows that across this region, many girls enter marriage or union before 18 years of age. Join UNFPA, UNICEF, MSI Reproductive Choices and IPPF, together with select government partners and the Burnet Institute, to catalyse collective action on this neglected issue.

**BEYOND MARRIAGE AND MOTHERHOOD: THE FORGOTTEN GIRL BRIDES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

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**WORKING TOGETHER TO ADDRESS SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Equality Now’s side event will host a discussion on what partnerships are needed in an ecosystem’s approach to tackling sexual violence.

**MOBILISING FOR CHANGE: ADVANCING CLIMATE AND GENDER JUSTICE AS ONE**

Climate justice and gender justice are inseparable. The impacts of climate change disproportionately affect girls and women globally, and it is time to shift power so that girls, women, and young people can take lead in meaningful climate action – crucial for advancing gender equality and enhancing resilience in the face of the climate crisis. This plenary will serve as a platform for collaboration and engagement among youth climate activists, grassroots leaders working at the intersection of gender and climate, and political leaders.

**BUILDING A FEMINIST WORLD: EXPLORING THE POWER OF FEMINIST POLICIES**

Have you ever imagined what a feminist world system would look like? This session will explore how feminist policies are attempting to tackle some of the most pressing issues of our time and challenge existing paradigms so that we may re-imagine what a feminist future can look like.

**CHALLENGING THE TIDE: EMPOWERING FEMINIST MOVEMENTS TO COUNTER ANTI-RIGHTS AGENDAS**

In the face of growing anti-rights and anti-gender movements, it is crucial to develop strategies to counter harmful agendas and protect human rights for all. This plenary brings together activists, experts, and policymakers to explore effective ways to challenge and dismantle global anti-rights movements.
**Wednesday 19 July cont.**

- **NO MORE EXCUSES! ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN**
  
  Led by AGIP and Amref Health Africa, co-hosted by ICRW, Plan International and Girls Not Brides. Discussion about funders’ accountability for girls and young women, hearing challenges, successful solutions and commitments which ensure that power can be shifted to adolescent girls.

- **BREAK THE WHEEL: REFLECTIONS ON RE-IMAGINING A JUST INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM**
  
  The global reckoning for racial justice and the increasing calls to shift-the-power have placed decolonization firmly on the global agenda. But what progress have we made towards decolonizing the international development sector and our organizations? Activists, sector leaders, and academics will gather to critically assess progress made in establishing an anti-racist sector, explore best practices and accountability measures geared towards decolonizing our organizations.

- **CHAI AND POLITICS: CONVERSATIONS WITH WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS**
  
  Join for this thought-provoking conversation with five extraordinary women leaders who have made remarkable contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment globally. H.E. Joyce Banda, H.E. Helen Clark, H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, H.E. Mary Robinson, and H.E. Graça Machel will share their extraordinary journeys, highlighting pivotal moments, challenges and triumphs, through their impactful work.

**Thursday 20 July**

- **GROWING FEMINIST MOVEMENTS: OVERCOMING CHALLENGES AND FOSTERING CONNECTIONS**
  
  Strong movements are key to the progress and sustainability of gender equality across the world. But how do we build inclusive movements and foster meaningful connections in times of crisis and polarization? This plenary is a space for the leaders of today's pivotal movements to share their knowledge and experiences.
  
  Speakers include Girls Not Brides' Founder and Global Champion, Mabel van Oranje.

- **SUSTAINING FEMINIST MOVEMENTS: TRANSFORMING POWER AND RESOURCES**
  
  In the face of persistent attacks on women's rights, grassroots feminist activists and social movements are increasingly indispensable, but 99% of foundation grants and official development assistance (ODA) do not reach feminist movements or women's rights organizations. This plenary discusses the urgent need for an inclusive feminist approach to funding that redistributes power and resources.

- **CLOSING SESSION**
Sponsored Members
Attending Women Deliver 2023

Adolf Muhumuza
Youth in Action for Development Institute
Uganda

Babrah Namara
Joy for Children
Uganda

Balkissa Moussa Assane
Committee of Young Girls Leaders (COJEFIL)
Niger

Beatrice Chisomo
Coalition for the Empowerment of Women and Girls (CEWAG)
Malawi

Benedicte Kansano
Coalition Nationale pour l'Abandon du Mariage d’Enfants (CONAMEB)
Burkina Faso

Carolyn Seaman
Girls Voices Initiative
Nigeria

Dorinda Odonghanro
Equitable Health Access Initiative
Nigeria

Karla Rax
Na’leb’ak ONG
Guatemala

Koshuma Mtengeti
Children’s Dignity Forum (CDF)
Tanzania

Luisa Castro
Girl Up
Mexico

Matina Ebri Okpo
African Girls Empowerment (AGE) Network
Nigeria

Mwema Uaciquete
Pathfinder International
Mozambique

Sumitra Aryal
National Adolescent Girls Network
Nepal

Wanjiru Wahome
Samburu Girls Foundation
Kenya

Yogesh Vaishnav
Vikalp Sansthan
India
Secretariat Delegation
Attending Women Deliver 2023

Dr. Faith Mwangi-Powell
CEO

Mabel van Oranje
Founder and Global Champion

Zipporah Jean Alaroker
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Alex Gatenby
Development and Outreach Associate

Alma Burciaga-Gonzalez
Head of Latin America and The Caribbean Engagement

Fatou Gueye Ndir
Senior Regional Engagement and Advocacy Officer

Gabriela Zavaley
Communications Associate

Georgiana Epure
Senior Advocacy and Campaigns Officer

Kate Whittington-Smith
Head of Development and Outreach

Laia Surralles Solsona
Senior Coordinator for Outreach and Events

Mundia Situmbeko
Africa Engagement Officer

Nerida Nthamburi
Head of Africa Engagement

Shreya Ghosh
Head of Asia Engagement

Sophia Lane
Advocacy and Campaigns Officer

Mary Robinson
Chair of The Elders

Graca Machel
Co-Founder and Deputy Chair of The Elders; Global Champion
Follow us on social media for live Women Deliver 2023 updates!

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