

The Child Marriage Research to Action Network (the CRANK)

Research meeting: Learning from this year's evidence reviews – Progress, gaps and priorities on child marriage

29 November 2023

Key takeaways

- **There is strong evidence showing that strategies emphasising livelihoods skills and training – including financial literacy and vocational training – reduce child marriage** and positively impact on girls' employment and access to/control over resources. They should be accompanied by investment in girls' education and safe transition into productive employment, with training for girls who are in and out of school. Macro-economic policies are also needed to promote inclusive economic growth and girls' economic participation.
- **There is strong evidence showing cash transfers conditional on schooling are effective in reducing child marriage, but should be included as “add-ons” (rather than single-component interventions) and link to services and systems to deliver at scale.** Longer and more frequent exposure to cash transfers lead to greater delays in marriage, so State-run transfers that are part of social protection systems have potential to address child marriage sustainably and at scale. Context – like dowry or bride price practices – and communication are also important, and gender-transformative plus components may support girls to resist unequal social practices. More research on the scalability and importance of targeting high-risk segments of the population is needed.
- **Multi-component, multi-level and multisectoral interventions are key to addressing structural issues in the long-term.** A broader definition of child marriage interventions should encourage links with other sectors – like education, health and violence prevention – to strengthen services, remove barriers to girls' access/participation and drive change. Making these links can also strengthen the case for governments and donors to include child marriage in other areas of work, with long-term investment.
- **Research should be conducted following gender-transformative principles.** This means involving end-users – especially girls and women – as partners in research design and implementation, aligning with the larger social change agenda and building alliances to put research to use. Gaps in the evidence, and opportunities for further research include:
 - **Supporting married girls**, including their access to and use of health, education and social services, and connections to community networks and resources. Such interventions should look at sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), violence prevention, educational and economic outcomes, and access to legal and mental health support for ever-married girls. The cost of married girls' lost education and labour force non-participation is a strong argument for inclusion and investment.
 - **Social norms change**, to gain clarity on what social norms are, pathways to change and how to measure this at the individual and community level. Research should consider the ecological and multi-level effects of programming, and the power of diffusion – where change happens beyond intervention participants. Natural experiments and observational studies may be a valuable source of evidence.

- **Conflict- and crisis-affected settings**, considering the increased scale and complexity of polycrises comprised of climate change, inflation, COVID-19, conflict and pushback on gender equality.
- **The impact of age of marriage laws**, which may push girls into informal unions where they are less visible and have fewer social and legal protections; lead to girls being punished for their sexual and marital decisions; be confused with age of sexual consent laws; may not be accessible to girls and may create barriers for their access to other services.

Presentations

Dr. Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli, formerly Scientist, Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health at the Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research, World Health Organization; currently working with a number of organisations on adolescent SRHR

- Recent research with Elsie Akwara: [*Good progress in a number of areas of adolescent sexual and reproductive health \(ASRH\), but there is much more that needs to be done*](#)
- Globally child marriage prevalence has declined over the last decade, from 25% in 2010 to 19% in 2020; but progress is uneven and concentrated in South Asia. Declines are across wealth quintiles and education levels, with gaps decreasing.
- UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) midterm report: On many indicators, the world is not on track; but in areas of ASRH there has progress, including declines in child marriage. This is despite the challenges of COVID-19, civil unrest, conflict, climate-related crises.
- But, no region is on track to meet the SDG Target on child marriage (5.3):
 - West and Central Africa requires fastest acceleration.
 - Still high in West, Central, East and Southern Africa, and South Asia; progress has stagnated in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and stalled in East Asia and the Pacific.
- Ahead of World Aids Day: Girls are less likely to marry or become mothers before age 18; they are less likely to acquire and/or die of HIV/AIDS; they are more likely to use modern contraceptive methods than their peers 10 years ago.
- Important to talk about progress because it:
 - Communicates to those working in ASRH and child marriage that investment and effort produce results.
 - Look at geographies and populations who have benefitted or not, and learn and adapt.
 - Points to expertise built over the past 25 years, which can be used elsewhere.
- In summary:
 1. There has been progress.
 2. There is a huge amount of work being done to prevent and respond to child marriage, including supporting girls who are – or have been – married (ever-married girls).
 3. There has been a huge increase in the amount of research done.

Introduction to the WHO guidelines

- In 2011, the WHO published guidelines on preventing early pregnancy and poor reproductive outcomes among adolescents in “developing countries”.^a
- Twelve years later, there is more research evidence and programmatic experience available; the field has transitioned; there is consensus among stakeholders within and outside the UN that the guidelines are useful and need updating.
- Six outcomes in previous guidelines – this update focused on preventing and responding to child marriage and improving access to and uptake of contraception.
- Guideline development process:
 1. Develop questions – identify critical and important outcomes; use PICO questions (population, intervention, comparison, outcomes) framework.
 2. Conduct systematic reviews.
 3. Rate quality (certainty) of evidence, using a strength of evidence table – the GRADE framework (grading of recommendations, assessment, development and evaluations).
 4. Develop recommendations, through discussion among a Guidelines Development Group comprised of academics, UN and government officials from around the world. They balanced benefits with harms, quality of the evidence, values and preferences regarding outcomes, equity, acceptability and feasibility.

Sajeda Amin, Senior Associate and Girl Center affiliate, Population Council

Building on the WHO guidelines using nine PICO questions. Now working on evidence briefs and op-eds to bring the evidence to broader audiences.

- Current review included 55 studies:
 - 23 randomised controlled trials/cluster randomised controlled trials (the gold standard for the GRADE process).
 - 12 quasi-experimental studies (automatically downgraded).
 - 20 observational study/natural experiments – sought out more of these than the previous guidelines.
 - Recognise the need to look beyond specifically designed studies to answer specific questions, because there is valuable evidence there.
- Still lopsidedness in geography of the evidence: much is from South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa,^b little from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), LAC or East Asia and the Pacific.
- Study identification:

^a “Developing countries” is the term used in the 2011 guidelines, today we would use the terms “low- and/or middle-income countries” to avoid suggesting that development is a linear process and end-point which some countries have already achieved.

^b We acknowledge the term “sub-Saharan Africa” has racial and colonial connotations. We use it here to refer to a geographical region which reflects the data and evidence presented.

- Since 2011, there have been five reviews, with a lot of overlap. This process added to this with evidence from another systematic review primarily focused on educational outcomes, expert-identified interventions focused on married girls, natural experiments considering the impact of policy reform and legal interventions, and observational studies considering macro-level drivers of child marriage.
- Methodology:
 - Include six systematic reviews (five on child marriage, one on education).
 - Search for more recent/updated publications to replace older ones.
 - Consult experts about recent observational studies, especially for PICO 6 (education) and PICO 8 (child marriage law).
 - Search for additional publications on interventions for married girls (PICO 7).
 - Screen abstracts and review full texts – excluded duplicates, studies not aligned with the PICO questions, and when there were concerns around study design and/or analysis methods.
 - Synthesise and GRADE the evidence, focusing on the quality of evidence and what it is saying.
- Focus on three PICO domains today, each with substantial evidence base and produced clear recommendations:
 - PICO 4: Financial or in-kind incentives to families of adolescent girls.
 - PICO 5: Improved educational environment/school-based approaches.
 - PICO 6: Approaches focused on girls' economic empowerment.
- Summary of evidence:
 - Fairly large number of studies and low quality of evidence for girls' empowerment (PICO 1) and community engagement/changing norms (PICO 2).
 - Fairly large number and moderate quality evidence on incentives (PICO 4), educational opportunities (PICO 5) and economic empowerment (PICO 6).
 - Very few studies and very low-quality evidence on engaging leadership (PICO 3), married girls (PICO 7), laws (PICO 8), and youth engagement (PICO 9).

PICO 4: Do conditional financial incentives; unconditional financial incentives (labelled or not); non-financial incentives make a difference (to reduce child marriage, increase school enrolment/attendance/completion, delay first pregnancy, lead to harms and/or unintended consequences)?

- Evidence most strongly supports cash transfers conditional on schooling.
- Some studies involve cash transfers as a component of social protection (not explicitly tied to child marriage or school enrolment).
- Cash transfers may be a key strategy for addressing poverty as a driver of child marriage.
- Questions about scalability of these interventions – what works in control settings.
- Considerations in light of new evidence:
 - There is more evidence than there was in 2011.

- Emphasise in research the importance of targeting high-risk segments of the population.

PICO 5: Do interventions to improve the availability and/or quality of educational opportunities for girls and young women play a role in the reduction of child marriage, increase school enrolment/attendance/completion, increase self-efficacy and autonomy, cause harms/consequences?

- Observational studies – policies to improve access/remove barriers to schooling have broad impact on schooling and child marriage.
- Several show the importance of investing and improving access to secondary school (and transition to this).
- Evidence for targeting most vulnerable populations to close opportunity gaps in access to education (e.g. HIV target).
- Considerations in light of new evidence:
 - Emphasise the importance of investing in access to secondary schooling.
 - Consider “access for all” approach versus targeting approaches to achieve educational equity.
 - This PICO does not include quality of education (beyond infrastructure).

PICO 6: Do interventions to improve economic empowerment of girls (through savings, bundled services, demand-driven job services, childcare, microcredit, etc.) reduce child marriage, increase the initiation/continuation of gainful employment, increase girls’ access to income and assets, increase girls’ control of/benefit from economic gains, influence social and gender norms around girls’ financial contributions, increase girls’ autonomy, cause harms/consequences.

- Strongest quality of evidence demonstrates that strategies that emphasise livelihoods skills (including financial literacy) impact child marriage and girls’ employment, access to/control over resources and/or economic autonomy.
- Considerations in light of new evidence:
 - There is more evidence than there was in 2011.
 - Emphasise the importance of investing in strategies that increase livelihoods skills, including financial literacy.

In summary:

- Prevention interventions:
 - Girls’ empowerment, promoting girls’ voice, choice, agency and collective agency, e.g. through exposure to information, skills, social networks, safe spaces. Not enough evidence to make recommendations (mixed quality and outcomes of evidence – could be because of how the studies chose to ask the question).
 - Social norm change, communication or mobilisation to change family and community attitudes towards marriage. Complex because of change from individual to community and national-level change; difficult to isolate the impact of norms change.
 - Structural shifts, increase human capital or opportunities through schooling, employment. More unambiguous evidence here.

- Interventions to support married girls: Do not have evidence to support recommendations on these, and need to focus on this.
 - Health – supporting access to and use of health services.
 - Social, facilitating connections to community networks and resources and access to education and social services.
- We think norms and attitudes matter, working through changes at the individual and community level. The evidence we have is on poverty and economic factors to change age of marriage and long-term outcomes; we do not have evidence on the impact of social norms.

Research recommendations:

- Consider add-on rather than single component interventions to recognise the importance of multi-component interventions, reflect this in research design to answer these questions.
- Consider ecological and multi-level effects in research design and analysis, and attempt to capture community and individual-level effects. Consider the potential power of diffusion – sometimes the comparison group is also affected by the intervention by diffusion.
- Place greater emphasis on natural experiments and observational studies, especially to look at broader questions around access to schooling and social norms change when new policies are introduced.
- Incorporate mixed method approaches to answering questions about what works.
- Increase investments in geographically diverse drivers of child marriage, like premarital sex and pregnancy and the implications for child marriage programmes.
- Final thought on contribution of natural experiments: Study on the impact of female local leaders – villages required to elect female leader showed huge effects in subsequent investments in girls; not because those leaders made this happen directly – seems to be a modelling effect.

Manahil Siddiqi, Technical Coordinator Strategic Technical Assistance for Research (STAR) Initiative to end Harmful Practices, UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight

Five key messages to strengthen evidence-based action towards the shared vision of a world without child marriage:

1. Adapt to polycrises and megatrends: presence of multiple and interdependent shocks and crises comprised of climate change, inflation, COVID-19, humanitarian emergencies, pushback on gender and SRHR, etc.
 - Increase in the scale and complexity of crises – impacts for all, but especially for girls and women.
 - Impacts with relevance to our programming: increase in poverty can lead to negative coping in child marriage.; disruption of critical services, (fear of) sexual violence, disrupted programming.
 - Critical need for a crisis-adaptive approach to child marriage prevention, risk reduction and response.

2. Apply, sustain and scale-up what works. Three key intervention approaches show the strongest evidence base and positive results, when well-designed and executed (aligned with Sajeda's findings):

- Income and economic strengthening:
 - Evidence shows cash transfers for schooling are consistently effective in reducing the risk of child marriage across all contexts.
 - In multi-component programmes it is often economic transfer that works, rather than empowerment programming, which may have other positive effects.
 - Cash transfers reduced child marriage risk and also reduced early sexual debut, adolescent pregnancy, and violence against women and girls – we see a multiplying effect.
 - Implementation matters; an intervention is only as strong as its design, and we need to think about:
 - The length of exposure and frequency – longer exposure to cash transfers results in greater delays in the timing of marriage.
 - How communication of the programme and engagement with participants is critical.
 - Being sensitive to the varied contexts of child marriage.
 - Integrating gender-transformative plus components, combining with policies (especially education) to equip girls to resist unequal and harmful social practices – critical to addressing deeper gender dynamics.
 - Linking to services and systems to deliver at scale – state-run cash transfers that are part of larger social protection systems offer potential for addressing key drivers sustainably and at scale; this is particularly important for plus components.
 - Example of research by Nina Buchmann, Erica M. Field, Rachel Glennerster, Shahana Nazneed and Xiao Yu Wang, [*A signal to end child marriage: Theory and experimental evidence from Bangladesh*](#) – found reduced likelihood of marriage before age 18, with results seen in the target communities and in neighbouring communities.
 - Vocational skills and training for income generation and favourable job markets
 - High-quality RCTs showing large positive effects of investing in girls' human capital and employment – e.g. studies from [Bangladesh](#) (exposure to the garment industry and visible promise of opportunities for girls) and [Uganda](#) (vocational training and financial literacy – run by BRAC).
 - Intervention matters:
 - Must invest in girls' safe transition from school to productive employment – skills training to support this transition, need to reach out-of-school girls.
 - Support macro-policies that enable economic participation for girls, especially in rural areas and inclusive economic growth.
- Education and life skills programming:

- Keeping girls in school is one of the best ways to delay marriage, and secondary education is critical; the more time a girl spends on education, the greater the reduction in risk of child marriage.
- Importance of multi-level interventions that also address structural issues – quality teachers, school infrastructure, inclusive approaches reaching married and out-of-school girls.
- Select ASRHR approaches, encompassing adolescent-responsive services tailored to young people’s needs, including access to confidential counselling, high-quality contraceptives to reduce unintended pregnancy, which is a driver of child marriage in some contexts.

3. Investigate promising approaches, but which require further rigorous evaluation:

- Gender and/or social norms – engaging individuals, families, communities to challenge harmful gender norms. There is a lack of conceptual clarity among practitioners and decision-makers on how to address child marriage – understanding precisely what social norms are, how they relate to behaviours, how to generate change, pathways to impact – there is space for evidence-based intervention design.
- Systems-strengthening and multi-sectoral and multi-level approaches – strategies and actions to improve the overall capacity, efficiency and effectiveness of policies, services and procedures through different sectors (health, education, protection).
- Response and support services for married girls – often only small scale, geographically concentrated and focus on SRHR, while neglecting violence prevention and economic and educational outcomes for girls.

4. Adopt gender-transformative research principles – in the design and research approaches we are taking. This means designing research with the end-users in mind; producing research in line with the larger social change agenda; building networks, alliances and collective action to put research to use.

- Meaningfully include and empower girls and women:
 - Value the expertise of girls, women and other marginalised groups.
 - Ensure ownership over research process and findings.
 - Privilege voices of groups that have been silenced or underrepresented.
- Understand diversity and context of lived experiences:
 - Understand intersecting systems of oppression based on gender, class, race, etc.
 - Recognise how gender roles and identities change over time and differ by context.
- Challenge power and promote equality:
 - Challenge power dynamics between researchers and research subjects.
 - Use the research process and findings to catalyse change in the lives and work of participants.
- Design and use research for purposeful action:
 - Produce research in alignment with a larger social change agenda.

- Share knowledge gains with research participants and community.
- Build networks, alliances and collective action to put research to use.

5. Achieve the 3 Rs for evidence impact:

- Responsiveness – generate research that responds to research gaps and priorities, e.g. country-level profiles, because context matters!
- Evidence rigour – to apply evidence for action, we need to prioritise research of high quality – technical support for research design, capacity enhancement.
- Evidence reach – get the research to policymakers, practitioners, donors to ensure there is a connection between the generation and application of research.

Questions:

Chandra: Multilevel, intersectoral coordination after the “big leaders” (e.g. the Prime Minister’s Office, high-profile issue) leave is a challenge – what is a promising approach to this?

Manahil: Sustainability – lots of actors across these spaces, and language on sustainability is recycled. Recommend putting an emphasis on implementation of (co-created) best practices, especially with regard our own coordination strategies and best practices in working together. Expand our definition of what a child marriage intervention is – if we are looking at education and violence prevention, we need to expand our view of child marriage interventions. Part of this work is building advocacy around the relevance of child marriage to other areas.

Margaret E. Greene, Greeneworks

- Two kinds of gaps in the literature:
 - Geographic – analyses of the distribution of the evidence in Africa and LAC.
 - Programmatic approaches – in-depth analysis of interventions in Africa.
- Database of child marriage publications – allows for systematic review, learning what works; also allows for scoping review, learning what exists, where the evidence is.
 - Result of five years of systematic searches of the literature 2000-23.
 - Global (South and North) in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese.
 - Nearly 17,000 publications.
 - Academic and grey literature: 19 academic databases, 15 websites of key institutional actors and the reference lists of the publications we identified.
 - Broad range of datapoints extracted from each publication.

Headlines from Africa scoping review:

- Knew there was strong evidence on what works from Aisa.
- Looked at 132 intervention studies to prevent child marriage and address the needs of married girls.
- Highly concentrated in Eastern Africa, focus on the impact of laws and policies.
- Less attention to norms and livelihoods approaches.

- Few high-quality impact evaluations, and many of those that do exist were focused on cash transfer programmes.
- Total child marriage intervention publications by country – lack of evidence in countries with high prevalence of child marriage through the middle of Africa.

The evidence is expanding exponentially, but not in LAC, although there are a number of countries with significant prevalence there:

- Evidence is very concentrated in Brazil, Mexico and Guatemala, and this does not exactly map onto prevalence/the places that really need evidence.
- Evidence is focused on documenting child marriage (79%) and less on responding to it (21%).
- Most publications are in English, showing they are being conducted by researchers outside LAC – momentum is not met by research in Spanish and Portuguese.

Position statement and recommendations from the Child, Early and Forced Marriage and Unions (CEFMU) and Sexuality Working Group: [Are existing laws on CEFMU working for adolescent girls and young women?](#):

- In some countries, child marriage prevalence has declined after enactment of laws.
- But they can lead to:
 - Fewer social protections for adolescent girls and young women, and more being pushed into informal unions, where they have no legal protection and their marital experience is kept invisible.
 - Adolescent girls and young women being punished for their sexual and marital decisions.
 - Confusion of age at marriage and age at sexual consent creating barriers to accessing health services.
 - Laws not accessible to adolescent girls and young women.

Key takeaways and research priorities:

- Geographical distribution of the research does not necessarily correspond to prevalence – need to be more aware of this.
- Language of publications is often not that of high prevalence settings, reducing access – database does not include languages from Indonesia, Iran and Türkiye – a lot of interesting research being done, but it is not accessible to English speakers.
- Programme approaches and existing intervention research are narrow and do not fully reflect the challenges girls face – need to expand studies of other approaches.
- Quality of evaluations of norms-related and empowerment interventions is weak and inconsistent – this is a problem, given the emphasis placed on these approaches.
- Interventions involving the passage of laws are coming under closer scrutiny, need to look at their potential unintended effects, and evaluation of impact.

Questions:

Chandra: How best can we use available research in under-researched areas (in the short term)?

Meg: Looking at a cultural practice, people are more likely to think their setting is unique and needs its own data. Need to balance – use existing research and think about how it can be adapted to a different setting, while we wait for new research to be conducted.

Q&A and discussion

What are the key characteristics of effective girls' empowerment interventions?

- Sajeda: There is a large number of studies under the category of empowerment. Empowerment approaches (e.g. safe spaces) alone do not work – that is why we emphasise the need for multi-component strategies. A couple of programmes that found non-effects were empowerment programmes about movement-building among girls or girls taking community initiatives, rather than girls' voice and agency. There is not enough evidence to say empowerment works. The solution is to do safe spaces etc. as an add-on/in addition to other existing approaches, as we did with cash transfers.

What do we know at the end of the year that we did not know at the start of the year? What are the implications?

- Manahil: A shift in research from examining child marriage as an isolated harmful practice, looking at patterns of drivers and consequences, to a growing shift looking at intersections with other issues and practices like climate change and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). These intersections are critical in terms of action to tackle child marriage.
- Meg: Learning from programmes using norms approaches to prevent or delay child marriage – they are so inconsistent in how they are conceptualised, they often do not refer to reference groups, do not think about the broader context and only measure and operationalise norms change at the individual level. The variety/inconsistency of measures – we are all talking about norms, but our knowledge of norms is a bit chaotic. People are broadly recognising this, but now we need to improve and think more about very specific outcome measure, reference groups etc.
- Sajeda: The evidence base on economic empowerment is stronger than expected; surprised by the low quality of evidence on empowerment interventions, when there is broad consensus around that needing to happen. The term “empowerment” is problematic – need to break it up into smaller pieces to understand the process of transformation better.
- Hilde Røren (Norad): Highlighting the intersectionality aspect is important for donors, to build a case internally and include child marriage in other areas of their work.

Have there been studies on the value add of gender-responsive/transformational approaches to cash transfer programmes and livelihood opportunities?

- Sajeda: [BALIKA study](#) – three skilling arms (gender rights awareness, tutoring support, livelihood support) had equivalent effects on child marriage, but the gender arm had stronger, wider effects on multiple outcomes

What could we do to make sure that decision-makers at the global, regional and country level have access to this new information and can apply it in their work?

- Sajeda: Potentially strong commonality with the labour force participation work – skilling and jobs. We need to make that connection better (girls who marry early do not enter the

workforce) to justify the investment in child marriage; think beyond labour force towards demographic impact.

- Manahil: Too often, sharing of research only happens when it has already been produced. Need to engage with end-users at the start of the project (early and often), when developing the research questions, so research responds to specific questions, and is practical and useful to policymakers and practitioners. Not everyone is familiar with phrases like “randomised controlled trials” – need greater investment to enhance capacities in understanding research; need to define and measure evidence impact – need precision in the kind of impact we are talking about (conceptual, capacity, instrumental, etc.).
- Meg: In response to non-participation in the labour force, as part of the other violations of girls’ rights through marriage – the needs of married girls, and the need to work with them to access legal support, mental health services, etc. In the evidence, there is a sense that once girls are married there is not much we can do – but they are a huge population experiencing harms and losses that will affect them for their whole lives (e.g. loss of education and potential labour force participation). Opening the eyes of policymakers to this vast loss of human capital will be persuasive.

What do we do in areas where there is no research; how do we take evidence from one context and apply it in another, while we wait for the research to be done?

- Sajeda: Intervention studies have narrow questions, but they are informed from a broader set of principles. Those principles – like that girls need an expansion not a restriction of opportunities – are what you take across contexts if you want to replicate similar results. There need to be implementation-side questions to do that adaptation – you take the theory or the concept to another context, to understand the connections and the process there. Engaging the community was a core part of the BALIKA strategy, essential in buy-in and diffusion of ideas among the community, and appropriate research design to be able to capture this.

What is the one area we need to focus on for research in 2023-25? What is the one area in which we do not need more research?

- Manahil: The goal of research is to make the invisible visible – need to think about what is still invisible – interventions and research focused on humanitarian settings, this is where a lot of question marks remain. UNICEF Innocenti in partnership with regional offices to lead a multi-country study across five countries in the Middle East and seven in Southern Africa to assess the implementation of interventions in humanitarian settings – mapping what exists, and then deep-dive into the implementation - to build the evidence in this space.
- Meg: The fact we know so little about consensual unions in LAC is a loss to the evidence base – very often you learn something about an area by understanding something on the edge of it. Informal and consensual unions are so prevalent in LAC, that they are already highlighting questions around girls’ sexual autonomy, their choice to enter into union even when it seems disadvantageous. Understanding this distinction and decisions in the region would shed light on the practice globally.
- Chandra: Quality of implementation – how can we ensure facilitators deliver sexuality education outside the school system well, in real-life conditions?

- Sajeda: We have a lot of evidence from relatively boutique programmes – how and what are the parameters that change when you go to scale? Bangladesh has a big body of evidence and diverse set of studies, but we have not moved the needle much on child marriage there.
- Chandra: Also thinking about how we go to scale thinking about equity and intersections across a larger population.
- Jose Roberto Luna (UNFPA): Working on making the findings from the WHO systematic reviews more accessible, to support implementation (with Population Council, *Girls Not Brides*, and the WHO). Secondary data and data analysis on premarital sex and child marriage – looking at the extent to which the situation is based on the lack of bodily autonomy (with Population Council).
- Suzanne Petroni: Great to hear about the humanitarian settings, which is a definite gap; another gap is around evidence regarding the impact of community-based organisations, and how their programmes at a smaller scale can create an impact that can be scaled up; norms and laws around girls’ sexuality, and the effect of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression and how that intersects with marriage.
- Jean: Across CRANK research meetings, emerging areas for evidence strengthening – lack of evidence around child marriage and mental health; conflict and crisis settings; ever /married girls; promising practice in engaging policymakers in research; and the adaptation of child marriage interventions applied at the local level: Adolescent Girls Initiative-Kenya, presented in the last [CRANK research meeting](#)).
- We will share new evidence from the impact of community-based organisations in an upcoming CRANK research meeting – watch this space!

For reflection

- What are your reactions to the evidence base on what works to address child marriage?
- How have you integrated evidence related to child marriage in your decision-making processes? What barriers have you faced?
- How has the polycrisis influenced your work?

Resources shared

- UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage Phase II [research strategy](#), now updated for Phase III (currently in design)
- STAR Initiative child marriage country profiles. The country profiles are on the STAR Initiative to End Harmful Practices [webpage](#).
 - [Sierra Leone](#)
 - [Mozambique](#)
 - [Zambia](#)
- Greene, M. E., Siddiqi, M., and Abularrage T. F., 2023, [Systematic scoping review of interventions to prevent and respond to child marriage across Africa: Progress, gaps and priorities](#).
- Akwara, E. and Chandra-Mouli, V., 2023, [Good progress in a number of areas of adolescent sexual and reproductive health \(ASRH\), but there is much more that needs to be done](#)

- Buchmann, N., Field, E. M., Glennerster, R., Nazneed, S. and Wang, X. Y., 2021, [*A signal to end child marriage: Theory and experimental evidence from Bangladesh*](#)
- Melnikas, A. J., Gaul, G., Pandey, N., Makino, M., Amin, S. and Chau, M., 2023, [*Do child marriage programs help girls weather shocks like COVID-19? Evidence from the More Than Brides Alliance Intervention*](#)
- Training to support research uptake: Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research: [*Courses on sexual and reproductive health and research.*](#)