



# Case study: The Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) longitudinal study – Using a gender and intersectional lens to support evidence-based, gender transformative programming

## GAGE

**GAGE is the largest longitudinal study focused on adolescents in the Global South.** It follows 20,000 adolescents (from 2016 to 2026) in six low- and middle-income country contexts, including geographies affected by conflict and forced displacement:

- **Jordan and Lebanon**, which host large refugee populations affected by the Palestinian and Syrian crises living in camp and host community settings;
- Cox's Bazar in **Bangladesh**, which hosts 1 million Rohingya refugees;
- **Ethiopia** which has experienced large-scale conflict – including in Afar, Amhara and Tigray – and has a large population of internally displaced persons.



PICTURED: A 20-year-old woman who married at 14 and owns a restaurant in Afar, Ethiopia. Photo: Nathalie Bertrams/GAGE 2024.

## How GAGE works

GAGE research has a strong focus on the **adolescents who have been most marginalised**, including those married before age 18. It tracks the experiences of about **1,000 married girls** using surveys, in-depth qualitative and participatory research methods.

GAGE aims to support **evidence-informed programming and policy** to prevent child marriage and support adolescent girls and young women married before age 18. It does this through engagements with key stakeholders across programmes, policy, research and donors at the national and global level.

GAGE uses a **gender and intersectional lens** in its analyses, and sees this as a pivotal first step in supporting gender-transformative programming.

# Results and implications

- 1** GAGE research highlights the need for **multisectoral approaches** that provide critical services that protect against child marriage and support married girls, alongside interventions that address the gender norms that perpetuate child marriage.  
  
For example, research in conflict-affected communities in Afar, Ethiopia, showed that adolescent girls were at **greater risk of child marriage and early childbearing** after conflict, due to strong family, clan and community pressures to replace lost family members. Responding to this evidence, the [UNFPA- UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage](#) extended programmatic support in affected districts to work with communities to **address harmful gender norms and practices**, and including **support and referrals for married girls** to appropriate health, education, psychosocial and integrated GBV services.
- 2** Applying a **gender and intersectional lens** to the GAGE research has contributed to our understanding of which groups of girls and young women are excluded from child marriage interventions.  
  
For example, the recent longitudinal evaluation of the “Makani integrated service centres for children and adolescents in Jordan” programme highlighted that **married adolescents are often overlooked in programming for adolescents and youth**.  
  
As a result of research-based recommendations from this evaluation, UNICEF **scaled up the Makani integrated service centres** for children and adolescents programme to Lebanon. They also **introduced a gender pilot to support programming that includes married girls**. The pilot includes a gender-transformative element in the Makani skills-building curriculum and works with key community influencers to address gender norms, including child marriage and GBV.
- 3** **Greater investments are needed in tailored programming for married adolescents** rather than assuming – incorrectly – that they could participate in regular empowerment programming for adolescents.
- 4** **Greater outreach with husbands and in-laws** is needed to support married adolescents’ participation. Providing childcare or – as a minimum – infant/child-friendly meeting spaces also supports their participation.
- 5** **Programming needs to be expanded and intensified as part of post-conflict recovery interventions**, as risks of child marriage as a coping mechanism are likely to be elevated in such settings.

## Find out more

Presler-Marshall, E., Jones, N., Alheiwidi, S., Youssef, S., Abu Hamad, B., Bani Odeh, K., Baird, S., Oakley, E., Guglielmi, S. and Małachowska, A., 2020, [Through their eyes: exploring the complex drivers of child marriage in humanitarian contexts](#). Report. London: Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence.