



Beijing+25 and child marriage

A renewed commitment for a holistic response to child, early and forced marriage must be at the heart of Beijing+25 in order to achieve gender equality.

Every year, 12 million girls around the world are married before the age of 18. Child marriage is a harmful practice that is rooted in gender inequality, and the belief that girls and women are worth less than boys and men.

Child brides, girls and adolescents who are vulnerable to child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) face specific challenges, including barriers to quality secondary education, access to comprehensive health services and information, and increased risk of violence. Yet the needs of girls and adolescent girls are often overlooked or inadequate when it comes to service provision, funding, and policy development.

As the global community unites to mark Beijing+25 in 2020, it is **imperative that the participation, rights and needs of adolescent girls sit at the heart of discussions on gender equality.**

Girls Not Brides call on governments, donors and the private sector to:

- Develop, fund and implement gender transformative programmes and policies specific to the rights and needs of adolescent girls, including girls who are married or who are at risk of marriage or union.
- Incorporate safe and meaningful participation of adolescent girls' voices into the Beijing+25 decision-making processes and gender equality mechanisms.
- Ensure solution-based responses with girls at the centre of the feminist agenda and invest in their collective action to transform their realities and demand the fulfilment of their rights.

Including adolescent girls in the Beijing+25 platforms

Adolescent girls' participation, voices and needs must be at the heart of the political and public processes taking stock of progress made towards the Beijing Platform for Action commitments. They must play a key role in setting the agenda and developing the concrete actions that will result in a gender equal world by 2030.

It is essential that all girls and adolescent girls are involved. This includes girls from marginalised communities in the Global South, and those who are married or at risk of child marriage. They must be visible and active contributors at the Commission on the Status of Women, the Generation Equality Forums and at the United Nations General Assembly. These fora must in turn create space for collective action and specific processes so that girls' voices are fully integrated into decision-making about their futures.

Adolescent girls in the Beijing+25 Action Coalitions

The global community must include strong and progressive actions for adolescent girls within each of the Action Coalitions.

We urge you to take forward the following recommendations under each Action Coalition:

1. **Gender based violence:** End child, early and forced marriage and unions through increased investment in comprehensive community-led and evidence-based responses for adolescent girls, including in humanitarian settings and marginalised communities.
2. **Economic justice and rights:** An education, economic empowerment and social protection package in thirty global South countries (including those with fragile contexts) over five years to avoid girls, adolescents and young women being left behind.
3. **Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights:**
 - a. Action One: Ensure universal access to comprehensive sexuality education, and to adolescent- and youth-responsive sexual and reproductive health and rights services (including contraception and safe abortion), including in times of crisis. All women must have the right to freely decide if and when to get married and to whom.
 - b. Action Two: Ensure non-discriminatory access to adolescent and youth-responsive SRHR services (including contraception and safe abortion) as an integral part of Universal Health Coverage core packages and eliminate discriminatory provisions requiring third party consent.
4. **Feminist action for climate justice:** Equip adolescent girls with the skills they need to navigate the move to a green economy through including green skills and climate education, breaking down discriminatory social and gender norms that dictate career paths, and advocating for equal access to green jobs, particularly in those countries most affected by climate crises.
5. **Technology and innovation for gender equality:** Address online gender-based violence by participating in online spaces and advocating for gender transformative legislation and social network policies worldwide.
6. **Feminist movements and leadership:** Strengthen girl-led and young women-led movements working on gender equality, and young feminist activists, networks and associations, formal and informal, through increased multiyear flexible funding, and non-financial support.

We will accelerate progress towards gender equality around the world by ending child marriage and empowering adolescent girls