Highlights: Girls Not Brides member meetings at Girl Summit 2014

On 21 and 23 July 2014, Girls Not Brides hosted a member meeting in London to coincide with the Girl Summit, which was hosted by the UK government and UNICEF on 22 July and which a number of Girls Not Brides members would be in London to attend.

The Girls Not Brides meetings provided an opportunity for members to align messaging and strategies in order to approach the Girl Summit with a strong, unified voice. It also encouraged members to reflect on how to communicate their work and how it fits within global efforts to end child marriage to governments and donors at the Summit.

The second meeting served as a space for members to exchange impressions following the Summit and discuss how to follow up with governments on the commitments they made. It also created a forum for members to input on the upcoming collective work of the global partnership, including an international member meeting in 2015 and to develop an understanding of members’ capacity needs.

Representatives from more than 50 Girls Not Brides member organisations attended from 29 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East and the Americas. Participating organisations ranged from local grassroots groups and youth activists to international NGOs, with diverse and complementary approaches to ending child marriage.

Member meeting one

Members’ work within the Theory of Change

Members were encouraged to reflect on how their individual and collective work fits within the wider effort to end child marriage. Members identified and placed their primary approach to child marriage within the four overarching strategies outlined in the Theory of Change on Child Marriage, which was recently developed by Girls Not Brides. The four strategies were: empowering girls, mobilising families and communities, providing services, and advocating for the establishment and implementation of laws and policies.

The exercise highlighted the diversity of approaches undertaken by members. It allowed members to reflect on how they could use the Theory of Change to describe the impact of their work and where their contributions lie, when speaking about their work with donors and other stakeholders at the Summit and beyond. The exercise also encouraged some members to discuss potential shared plans to maximise their impact when responding to child marriage in their country.

- Complete this short survey to provide further detail on how your work fits within the Theory of Change: [http://svy.mk/1nNigoC](http://svy.mk/1nNigoC)
A common messaging framework on child marriage

Members reviewed and discussed a messaging framework developed by the Girls Not Brides secretariat ahead of the summit. Providing constructive feedback and suggesting creative edits to the messages, members strengthened the framework. The final version of the framework was circulated to participants before the start of the summit.

In the same session, members applied these messages to create pitches aimed at different types of audiences who would be present at the Summit, including donor government officials, ministers from high prevalence countries, and various funding bodies. Members thought about the concept of a one-minute “elevator pitch” and provided oral feedback on each other’s instant advocacy messages in the meeting.

- Download the Girls Not Brides messaging framework for the Girl Summit: http://bit.ly/1qNz72k

Member meeting two

Following up on the summit: Discussing next steps

Following the Girl Summit, members gathered to brainstorm next steps, including what they plan to do individually, and what the partnership could do collectively. The energy level in the room was high as members exchanged ideas on how to hold governments, donors and multilateral organisations to account for the commitments made at the summit, in particular to ensure that funding allocations reach the grassroots.

A number of members decided to push their governments to host a similar summit in their countries in the coming year, while others decided to call for the creation and implementation of a national action plan to end for child marriage. A full list of the follow-up ideas is available in the Annex (end of this document).

- View all member ideas for follow up from the Girl Summit

Girls Not Brides 2014-16 strategy

Mabel van Oranje, Chair of the Board of Trustees, presented Girls Not Brides’ strategy for 2014-16. The open and honest discussion that ensued allowed members in the room to get a sense of shared ownership of the partnership’s strategy, which had been developed through a series of consultations with members, partners and other stakeholders.


Suggestions for a forthcoming Girls Not Brides member meeting

Participants were invited to suggest ideas for a member meeting in 2015 aimed at strengthening the global partnership and accelerating efforts to end child marriage around the world.
Members came up with a wide range of ideas on the sessions and activities they would find useful. They also discussed the key discussions that ought to happen at this meeting to build on the Partnership’s current momentum and to end child marriage in a generation. The secretariat will use these ideas to inform the design and structure of the member meeting. Further input is welcome and encouraged by email: info@GirlsNotBrides.org.

**Strengthening member capacity: Input on capacity-building opportunities**

The secretariat is currently exploring ways to support members as they strengthen their work on child marriage. To make sure that these ideas correspond to the needs of members, participants were invited to suggest the type of capacity building that they would find useful.

Ideas included advocacy training sessions (e.g. how to use statistics to make your case) and programming expertise (how to measure impact and scale up), communications skills building (e.g. using story-telling and effectively communicating your impact to donors) and fundraising capacity building (e.g. how to write a winning proposal).

A number of members raised the importance of peer learning among members in high-prevalence countries, and gave examples of the sessions they could deliver to fellow member organisations. The secretariat is taking all suggestions into consideration as it develops its capacity-building tools for the coming year, and welcomes any further ideas by email.

**Award ceremony and signing of National Partnership MOUs**

The member meeting concluded with the handing over of No Peace Without Justice’s Human Rights Award to Qamar Naseem (Blue Veins, Pakistan) for his work to prevent child marriage in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan. Mr Naseem dedicated the award to all his fellow Girls Not Brides members working relentlessly towards the same goal.

Lastly, the newly formed national partnerships in Mozambique and the United Kingdom officially signed their Memoranda of Understanding with the Girls Not Brides secretariat, thus becoming officially recognised Girls Not Brides national partnerships, committed to strengthening collaboration at the national level to see an end to child marriage.

The Girls Not Brides secretariat would once again like to thank all participants for their time, effort, comments and lively contributions. We look forward to working together to end child marriage and help give millions of girls around the world a chance to be girls, not brides.
Annex: Follow-up points for Girls Not Brides after Girl Summit 2014

The below follow-up points for Girls Not Brides members were suggested by participants at the member meeting on 23 July 2014. The list includes both actions for members to take individually, and ideas of what the partnership could do collectively.

Holding stakeholders accountable to summit commitments

- Approach governments that were present at the summit to push for accountability of their commitments.
- Monitor progress on political and monetary commitments, in particular pledges to fund NGOs and to girls affected by child marriage.
- Inform governments who were not present about the outcomes of the summit and call on them to make their own commitments.
- Build relationship with additional key actors at the summit (DFID, donors, UN agencies, INGOs, IGOs).
- Collaborate with UNICEF and encourage transparency of its expenditure of child marriage related funds; request a list of its chosen CSO partners. Highlight the importance of funds reaching unusual suspects at the grassroots.
- Push the UK government to play an active role and follow up with other governments on their respective commitments.

National-level advocacy

- Use the momentum of Girl Summit to push governments and mobilise people.
- Push for national action plans (NAPs) to be crafted and implemented, with clear timelines and measurable targets, and in collaboration with the private sector and civil society.
- Write public letters to governments on the issue.
- Push for any government funds to reach grassroots organisations.
- Launch national advocacy campaigns in each country.
- Inform the Girls Not Brides secretariat how it can help promote national advocacy efforts.
- Encourage governments in high prevalence countries to hold similar national or regional summits (e.g. Girl Power conference in Nepal, Child marriage and early motherhood conference in West Africa 2015).
- Collect statements from youth at the country and local levels and present to governments.

International and regional advocacy

- Influence the decision-making and negotiation process for the post-2015 agenda.
- Huge joint advocacy push for child marriage to be considered and included as a target in post-2015.
- Write public letters to the UN Secretary General for continued support.
- Utilise inter-parliamentary and regional meetings to ensure child marriage remains on the post-2015 agenda (e.g. SAARC, SAIVEC, etc).
- Hold governments accountable through regional meetings.

Strengthening programmatic work to end child marriage

- Create opportunities for girls rather than just focus on prevention.
- Learning about what works, and make efforts to scale up.
Re-framing the issue of child marriage for increased support

- Highlight links to FGM/C in efforts on ending child marriage.
- Frame child marriage as a human rights issue.
- Analyse child marriage from the economic perspective.
- Keep a clear focus on child marriage (with a clearly articulated goal on ending it, not stray to other issues).

Strengthening the global movement

- Involve more girls in the work of the partnership, including girls affected by child marriage.
- More youth engagement in a meaningful way, including youth in the West to connect with, and support the efforts of, other young people around the world.
- All members to keep the energy and momentum going within the partnership.
- *Girls Not Brides* secretariat to continue showcasing the work of member organisations to a global audience.
- Build the partnership by introducing potential members to the secretariat.
- Link/identify gaps between grassroots innovations and government implementation.
- Report back to fellow members and exchange experiences and best practices.

Country-specific follow-up points

**Bangladesh**

- Bid for DFID research call.
- Request a meeting with the prime minister.
- Mobilise funds for a Girl Summit in Bangladesh.

**Ghana**

- Follow up on national action plan (NAP).
- Follow up on minister’s promise of holding next Girl Summit in Ghana.
- Mobilise funds.

**Iraq**

- Push agenda of FGM and CEFM in the national women conference in October.

**Pakistan**

- Advocate for provincial acts for CEFM and implementation.

**Uganda**

- Evidence collection and innovative campaigning.
- Follow up on local government pledges on CEFM.
- Capacity building of national GNB members.

**Yemen**

- One-on-one lobbying to sensitise the state actors.
- Put CSO pressure on the government to complement the DFID call on “Engaging men and clerics”.