What Works to Prevent Child Marriage and Meet the Needs of Married Adolescents

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Girls Not Brides
Theory of Change workshop

Photo Credit: Robyne Hayes, ICRW
International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)

World’s premier global research institute focused on gender equality and poverty alleviation. Founded in 1976, ICRW is has worked in nearly 70 countries.
ICRW has been working on child marriage for over 15 years
Historical Response to Child Marriage

1st Legislations on Minimum age, e.g. Sarda Act In India

First on the ground programs following Cairo 1994 & Beijing 1995

Girls Not Brides launched by Elders 2011

Launch of African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage 2014

More Legislative Reform. e.g. Bangladesh, Indonesia Minimum age laws

Expansion of programs & evaluation with more attention to girls, women, rights

UN Human Rights Council Resolution on Child, Early and Forced Marriage 2014
Drivers of Child Marriage: An Ecological Model

Societal Norms and Structures
- Poverty
- Weak laws and policies vis-à-vis marriage and family law
- Discriminatory norms and policies toward women and girls
- Political and/or economic insecurity

Community Norms and Institutions
- Social systems and structures
- Cultural practices
- Religious beliefs and practices
- Weak educational system, health services, labor market
- Limited power ascribed to women, young people
- Gender-discriminatory social norms

Interpersonal/Household Level Factors
- Lower socioeconomic status
- Limited information about rights, opportunities, consequences of and alternatives to early marriage
- Limited access to services (education, health)

Girl Level Factors
- Limited power to influence decisions
- Limited information about rights, opportunities, consequences of and alternatives to early marriage
- Social isolation
- Limited support from family
- Limited access to services (education, health)
- Early sexual activity
Solutions to End Child Marriage (2011)

- Systematic review
- 23 programs implemented between 1973 and 2009
- Evaluations published between 1991 and 2011; more than half initiated in the last decade
- Most reached < 15,000 people
- Majority of the programs implemented in South Asia
FIFTY-ONE COUNTRIES have national child marriage prevalence rates of 25 percent and higher. However, only 11 countries—indicated by a star on the map—had evaluated child marriage programs: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, Senegal and Yemen. Collectively, these programs have reached only a tiny fraction of the tens of millions of girls at risk for child marriage.

* The percentage of women ages 20 to 24 years old who were married before age 18. (Source: UNICEF (2013). State of the World’s Children 2013. New York, NY.)

** Using available data in 2011.
Strategies to End Child Marriage

- Encourage supportive laws and policies
- Provide economic support and incentives to girls and their families
- Enhance girls’ access to a high-quality education
- Educate and rally parents and community members
- Empower girls with information, skills and support networks

Societal Norms and Structures
Community Norms and Institutions
Interpersonal/Household
Girl
Strategy 1: Empowering girls with information, skills & support networks

- Life skills
- Vocational & livelihoods skills
- Sexual & reproductive health
- Mentoring & peer group training
- Safe spaces
Strategy 2: Educating & Mobilizing Parents and Community Members

- Meetings with parents, leaders
- Community education
- Parental committees & forums
- Public pledges, support by influential leaders, family heads etc.
Strategy 3: Enhancing quality & accessibility of formal schooling

- Prepare, train, support girls to (re) enroll in school
- Improve school curriculum & teacher training
- Build schools, improve facilities hire female teachers
- Incentives of cash, scholarships, fee subsidies, uniforms supplies
Strategy 4: Offering economic support and incentives for girls and families

- Microfinance, work, financial training to support income generation
- Incentives to stay in school or not marry
Strategy 5: Fostering an enabling legal & policy framework

- Establish or reform of legal minimum age of marriage
- Advocate to raise support, awareness among community & government leaders
Where the greatest efforts & evidence exist

**FIGURE 5: Geographic Distribution of Programs**

- **Empowering girls**: 18
- **Mobilizing parents, communities**: 13
- **Enhancing access to school/alternatives**: 9
- **Economic support and incentives**: 8
- **Enabling legal and policy framework**: 4

Legend:
- Asia
- East Africa
- North Africa/Middle East
- West Africa
A Note on Scale...

**FIGURE 2:** Scale of Program Outreach

- **Less than 5,000**
- **5,001–15,000**
- **15,001–30,000**
- **30,001–60,000**
- **60,001+**

Number of Programs: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25

Number of Programs in each category:
- Less than 5,000: 9
- 5,001–15,000: 6
- 15,001–30,000: 2
- 30,001–60,000: 2
- 60,001+: 4
GNB Theory of Change

**Impact**

- Girls can decide if, when, and whom to marry
- Married girls lead healthy, empowered lives

**Girls at risk of child marriage**
- Girls are increasingly aware of their rights
- Girls have the opportunity to develop solidarity with one another through peer groups and collective action
- Alternative economic, social roles for girls and women exist and are valued
- Increased access of married and unmarried girls to health, education, economic, and legal support

**Families and Communities**
- Families, communities and young people are increasingly aware of the harmful impact of child marriage and alternatives available
- Families, communities and young people value alternative options to child marriage
- Families and communities prefer not to marry girls as children
- Men prefer not to marry girls who are still children
- Increased use of media to inform and support norm change to end child marriage

**Services**
- Increased access to safe, quality formal and non-formal education for girls
- Increased access to health services for adolescent girls, married and unmarried
- Health and education services establish protocols on identifying the warning signs and addressing the risks of child marriage
- Improved economic security for girls
- Increased commitment of programmes to prevent and mitigate risk of child marriage

**Laws and Policies**
- National laws reflect international and regional human rights standards
- Robust legal framework against child marriage in place that sets 18 as the minimum legal age for marriage and protects girls' and women's rights
- Governments develop supportive policy frameworks with adequate resourcing across Ministries to increase educational, economic and social opportunities for girls at risk of child marriage and married girls
- Strengthened civil registration systems for birth and marriage
- Increased accountability and monitoring of national / regional / community institutions

**Strategies**

- **Empower Girls**
  A wide range of programmes invest in girls, their participation and their well-being

- **Mobilise Families & Communities**
  Families, communities and young people are engaged to change attitudes and behaviours related to child marriage

- **Provide Services**
  Services across sectors reinforce one another and are tailored to the specific needs of girls at risk of child marriage and married girls

- **Establish and Implement Laws & Policies**
  A robust legal and policy framework for preventing child marriage and supporting married girls is in place and effectively enforced
Program Example: Ishraq (Egypt)

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Program Example: **TESFA (Ethiopia)**

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Program Example: SoFEA (Bangladesh)

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Program Example: PRACHAR (India)

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Program Example: Integrated Action on Poverty and Early Marriage (Yemen)

Girls at risk of child marriage participate more in decisions that affect them, including regarding marriage

Girls at risk of child marriage benefit from improved educational and economic opportunities as alternatives to child marriage

Girls are better able to avoid early pregnancy and to refuse unwanted sex

Married girls are better protected from violence, exploitation, or abuse

Married girls increasingly access and use services and supports of all kinds

Community, traditional and religious leaders take greater action to end child marriage and realize the rights of girls

Community, traditional and religious leaders increasingly support alternative roles for girls beyond marriage

Man and boys increasingly take action to end child marriage

Service providers take greater action to prevent child marriage and support the needs of married girls

Families engage less in exchange of dowry and bride price

Law enforcement officials increase implementation and enforcement of legal frameworks to prevent child marriage and protect married girls

Law enforcement officials increase use of civil registration systems for birth and marriage

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Discussion

- Other program examples?
- Where are pathways strongest?
- Where are linkages less clear?
Thank You!
Important elements of girl-focused programs

- Providing information that will build knowledge of one’s self and environment, including sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Enhancing girls’ critical thinking, interpersonal and communication skills, and other practical skills that will benefit her and her household, both in the short and long-term
- Providing ongoing social support through group-based programming in safe spaces
- Promoting girls’ agency by emphasizing goal-setting and self-efficacy
- Facilitating alternatives to marriage, especially school and livelihood opportunities
- Integrating girl-focused activities with those that enhance communication with and support from her family and community
- Using gender-transformative approaches, which seek to reshape gender roles and promote more equitable relationships among women, men, boys and girls.