Ending child marriage: What does the latest evidence say?

THE FIRST DISCUSSION IN THE GIRLS NOT BRIDES 2018 LEARNING SERIES
Welcome to the Girls Not Brides 2018 Learning Series!

• This webinar is the first in our series – you can find the programme for the next six months here
Ending child marriage: What does the latest evidence say?

Why is evidence so important?

Webinar objectives:
• Give a snapshot of what we know from the latest evidence reviews
• Demystify any differences in conclusions
• Highlight on-going research and evidence gaps
Key resources and speakers

Resources we will be discussing

• Chae, S, and Ngo, TD. The global state of evidence on interventions to prevent child marriage. GIRL Center Research Brief No. 1. New York: Population Council, 2017


Moderator:
• Ellen Travers, Girls Not Brides secretariat

Panellists:
• Amanda Kalamar, Population Services International
• Thoai Ngo, The Girl Center at Population Council
• Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli, World Health Organisation

Discussants:
• Margaret Greene, GreeneWorks
• Rachel Marcus, Overseas Development Institute
• Jeff Edmeades, ICRW
INTERVENTIONS TO PREVENT CHILD MARRIAGE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE PUBLISHED AND GRAY LITERATURE

Amanda M. Kalamar, Ph.D., Susan Lee-Rife, M.P.H., Ph.D., and Michelle J. Hindin, M.H.S., Ph.D.
Objective, Strategy and Ranking

- Identify high-quality interventions and evaluations to guide program managers, country officials, and donors to invest in successful approaches.

- Searched published literature (PubMed, Embase, PsycInfo, CINAHL Plus, Popline, and the Cochrane Databases) as well as gray literature through November 2015.

- Multi-rater scoring of both the intervention and the evaluation and an overall ranking.
Selection Criteria

- High quality intervention AND
- High quality evaluation
- Must have a behavioral outcome
  - Proportion of girls married
  - Age at marriage
- Most recent analysis of the outcome
### Summary Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Evaluation age range (years)</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Proportion married (decrease expected)</th>
<th>Age at marriage (increase expected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malawi [20]</td>
<td>13–22</td>
<td>Conditional cash transfers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia [14]</td>
<td>13 on average</td>
<td>School voucher program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya [23]</td>
<td>15 on average</td>
<td>School uniforms; teacher training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe [16]</td>
<td>Age 12</td>
<td>School fees, uniforms, books, and supplies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia [18]</td>
<td>10–19</td>
<td>School support; life-skills curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh [21]</td>
<td>13–22</td>
<td>Life-skills curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India [17]</td>
<td>11–17</td>
<td>Life-skills curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India [22]</td>
<td>14–24</td>
<td>Multicomponent</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Summary**: The table provides a summary of high-quality early marriage interventions and evaluations. Each entry includes the country, evaluation age range, intervention type, and the expected proportion of married individuals (decrease or increase). The table also notes whether the effect is significant at specific p-values.

- **Notes**:
  - Among baseline out-of-school girls; no impact among baseline in-school girls.
  - Among those in the unconditional transfer arm—no impact in the conditional transfer arm.
  - Declines among girls aged 10–14 years; increase among girls aged 15–19 years.
Discussion

- Overall, of the >3,900 articles screened from the published literature, we retained 6 (.15%) and found five gray literature articles for a total of 11 high-quality interventions and evaluations. Six had a statistically significant impact in the expected direction.

- Most of the economic interventions (including cash transfers, school vouchers, payment of school-related costs) had a significant impact on reducing the proportion experiencing child marriage or increasing age at marriage.

- Interventions with no statistical impact often had defined goals much broader than child marriage.

- Range of strategies to address child marriage, providing flexibility for future impactful evidence-based programs suited to given context, population, or situation.
Articles included in analysis:


THE GLOBAL STATE OF EVIDENCE ON INTERVENTIONS TO PREVENT CHILD MARRIAGE

Sophia Chae and Thoai Ngo
Objectives

Describe the types of interventions that have been implemented

Describe the approaches used in these interventions

Assess which interventions are effective and which are ineffective

Investigate the impact of interventions on other aspects of girls’ well-being

Report the costs of implementing these interventions

Make recommendations for future child-marriage interventions
Inclusion Criteria

• Rigorously evaluated interventions
  – Randomized-controlled trial (RCT), quasi-experimental study, natural experiment

• Measured the prevalence of child marriage and/or the age at first marriage

• Implemented over the past 20 years, since 1997
Types of Approaches

- **Empowerment**: Life-skills training, livelihoods training, gender-rights awareness training, exposure to future careers, RH training, etc.

- **Community**: Community dialogue, street theater, etc.

- **Schooling**: Free school supplies and/or uniforms, payment of school fees, tutoring, etc.

- **Economic**: Conditional/unconditional cash or asset transfers
### FIGURE 2. INTERVENTIONS AND APPROACHES USED TO REDUCE CHILD MARRIAGE BY SUCCESS STATUS AND YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Successful</strong></td>
<td>Bangladesh26</td>
<td>India30</td>
<td>Bangladesh35</td>
<td>Bangladesh39</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bangladesh27</td>
<td>India31</td>
<td>Uganda23</td>
<td></td>
<td>Economic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colombia22</td>
<td>Mexico31</td>
<td>Zimbabwe34</td>
<td></td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>India26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Schooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mixed success</strong></td>
<td>Nepal29</td>
<td>Ethiopia38</td>
<td>Kenya36</td>
<td>Burkina Faso24</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Malawi36</td>
<td>Tanzania25</td>
<td>Economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unsuccessful</strong></td>
<td>Bangladesh19</td>
<td>Pakistan32</td>
<td>India21</td>
<td>Kenya57</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tanzania38</td>
<td>Economic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Success status measures whether one or more components of an intervention successfully reduced early marriage according to the definition used in the study. Superscripts cite interventions listed in References.
FIGURE 3. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF APPROACHES BY SUCCESS STATUS OF CHILD-MARRIAGE INTERVENTION

- **Community (n=6)**
  - Successful: 17%
  - Mixed success: 30%
  - Unsuccessful: 53%

- **Economic (n=10)**
  - Successful: 40%
  - Mixed success: 30%
  - Unsuccessful: 30%

- **Empowerment (n=14)**
  - Successful: 21%
  - Mixed success: 22%
  - Unsuccessful: 57%

- **Schooling (n=7)**
  - Successful: 57%
  - Mixed success: 43%
Key Findings

• Empowerment is the most popular and most successful approach for reducing child marriage

• Interventions also improved schooling outcomes and lowered the risk of pregnancy/childbearing

• Very few studies reported the costs of implementing interventions
Recommendations

- Incorporate an empowerment approach in the design of child-marriage interventions
- Strengthen the evidence base of what works and what does not work to delay child marriage
- Analyze the impact of individual components of interventions to determine the most cost-effective interventions
- Measure the quality and coverage of interventions when evaluating child-marriage interventions
- Carefully review the state of evidence on child-marriage interventions when planning an intervention
- Conduct more rigorous evaluations of child-marriage interventions
- Include information about interventions in published studies and reports
Council Research on Child Marriage
What Does Not Work in Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health: A Review of Evidence on Interventions Commonly Accepted as Best Practices

Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli, a* Catherine Lane, b* Sylvia Wong c

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Interventions have limited effects because they are delivered piecemeal.

There is little evidence that laws on their own make any substantial contribution to discouraging or eradicating child marriage.
Interventions that have been shown to be effective are often delivered with inadequate fidelity or low ‘dosage’

Impacts were generally greatest when

- girls attended regularly,
- programmes ran over a long period,
- involved outreach with gatekeepers, and
- addressed poverty-related barriers to participation.
Popular interventions that have been shown to be ineffective continue to be implemented.

High-profile public meetings to inform communities about the risks of early marriage have shown to have little effect...yet such activities continue to be conducted.
How can effective interventions be scaled up and sustained?

How can we ensure that we understand changing trends and reach girls with the greatest need?
An additional area of priority

How can we ensure that we respond to the health & social needs of child brides?
Questions?
Please type into the chat box
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