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## **Ending Child Marriage: What Will It Take?**

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*This brief provides a broad overview of the causes and consequences of child marriage, potential strategies to delay the age of marriage and meet the needs of married children, and factors to consider when assessing where investment is needed and where change is most feasible. The authors would like to stress the importance of developing and implementing targeted strategies and interventions based on an analytical approach that includes an analysis of the context, gaps, and opportunities in specific national and sub-national settings to ensure that efforts in this area are designed, implemented and evaluated in the most impactful and effective way possible.*

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## I. Introduction to the Issue of Child Marriage

More than ever before, there is global awareness of child marriage and its implications for both human rights and a range of development outcomes. The marriage of a girl, often to a much older spouse, effectively ends a girl's childhood, curtails her education, increases her risk of domestic violence, and puts her at risk for early, frequent and very high-risk pregnancies. Her lack of mobility, education, and economic opportunities also means that her family is more likely to be poor and unhealthy. Child marriage is both a cause and a consequence of poverty and gender inequality – reflecting and reinforcing limited economic opportunities and discriminatory gender norms.

While rates of child marriage have declined over recent decades in many regions of the world, the practice remains stubbornly prevalent in many places – particularly where crises and conflicts are present, and where poverty and/or gender inequality are rampant. According to the latest statistics from the United Nations, about 37,000 girls are married each day.<sup>1</sup> With a larger youth population than any time in history, we now also have the greatest number of married girls and girls at-risk of child marriage than ever before. If current trends continue, more than 140 million girls will be married by 2020. If we are to enable the adolescent girls of this and the next generation to live up to their potential, we must end the practice of child marriage and support married girls to be all that they can be.

Fortunately, we have more interest and investment in this issue than ever before. There is a desire by many governments, foundations, and private sector enterprises to put more targeted policies and financial and technical resources toward prevention and mitigation on the ground. Many organizations, activists, researchers, and donors have developed, implemented, and evaluated programs to prevent child marriage and to mitigate its harmful effects for married girls and their families. Through these efforts, we know more now than ever before in terms of how and where to concentrate our efforts to bring an end to the practice of child marriage and support married girls, and in so doing, empower a new generation of girls and women.

## II. What to Do (Programmatic Investments)

In order to turn the tide on child marriage, a coordinated and focused effort is needed to build girls' health, social, and economic assets and to promote gender-equitable and pro-girl social norms. A global commitment to ending child marriage should be grounded in the following principles:

- *Work in partnership with organizations, community leaders and governments in specific sub-national districts, and focus on scaling up.* Partnerships, ideally in the form of multi-year programs, should foster national and local governments' and non-governmental organizations' investment in locales or "hotspots" with high concentrations of girls at risk of child marriage and they should also leverage the expertise of international institutions and experts. It is critical for non-governmental partners to identify the most effective local government authorities with which to work. Efforts should be made to

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<sup>1</sup> UNFPA. (2012). *Marrying Too Young: End Child Marriage*. New York, NY: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

design and implement new programs where there have not been investments to date, with an emphasis on scale and evaluation. Programs that have shown proof of concept in the pilot phase should be scaled up to reach more girls and their families.

- *Increase efforts to work directly with girls as a core constituency and provide girl-only spaces.* It is critical that investments in this area start and end with girls. Programs should work with both married girls and girls at risk of marriage to build their social, economic, health, and human rights knowledge, skills, and assets. They should ensure that girls are the direct beneficiaries of substantially expanded girl-centered programs, as well as meaningful participants in programs that reach groups that are mixed by gender and age. Programs should be evaluated based on specific girl-level indicators.<sup>2</sup>
- *Define and evaluate change at the level of the girl, as well as her family and community, over time.* It is important that we view positive changes for girls as the ultimate outcome of our efforts. Changing social norms requires working with and through family and community members; however, it is important that girls are seen as the ultimate “client” of collective efforts. As such, indicators must be developed and tracked that capture changes at the level of individual girls.

### **Successful Program Strategies and Examples**

Several studies, publications, and a few scaled programs have demonstrated the potential for raising the age of marriage with concerted attention to what works. Some programs have targeted child marriage explicitly, while others have had the unintended, but positive impact of influencing the age of marriage. Programs that focus on other sectoral approaches, such as education and health, have the potential to improve girls’ lives and opportunities by addressing child marriage more explicitly. Such programs can invest in girls in a way that helps them avoid, mitigate the harms of, or leave unsafe relationships, including marriage. It is important that these programs clearly target girls and young women, with age and developmentally-appropriate information, programs and services. Special care should be taken to reach specific sub-groups of girls who are already married or who are at particularly high risk for early marriage. Information should be collected to establish a baseline and subsequently track performance toward benchmarks.

The following strategies have been identified as the most predominant and high-potential approaches for addressing child marriage.<sup>3</sup> They are often, and most effectively, implemented in tandem.

#### **1. Work directly with married girls or girls at-risk for early marriage, offering them information, skills, and support networks.**

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<sup>2</sup> Youth programs are typically dominated by males, and mixed age programs are usually dominated by older females. Girls 10-19, both married and at risk of marriage, in areas with high rates of child marriage need to be prioritized for investment. (Levine, R., Lloyd, C., Greene, M., & Grown, C. (2009). *Girls Count: A Global Investment & Action Agenda. A Girls Count Report on Adolescent Girls.* Washington, DC: The Center for Global Development.)

<sup>3</sup> Malhotra, A., Warner, A., McGonagle, A., & Lee-Rife, S. (2011). *Solutions to End Child Marriage: What the Evidence Shows.* Washington, DC: International Center for Research on Women (ICRW).

These programs work directly with girls who are either already married or at-risk for early marriage. Typically, they seek to equip girls with training, skills, information, safe spaces, and support networks to better understand themselves, their world, and their options. These programs aim to minimize girls' social isolation, enabling them to act and advocate for themselves. As girls gain skills, information, and self-confidence, their increased social capital often motivates them to aspire to jobs and enterprises as alternatives to marriage. Initial research has shown that when married girls gain knowledge and skills, their community views them differently and this may contribute to delaying the age of marriage in the next cohort of young girls. Additionally, through broader social networks, they gain access to resources, support systems, and an increased sense of self-worth.

For example, **Maharashtra Life Skills Program** in India convened groups of unmarried adolescent girls for one hour each weekday over the course of one year. The non-formal educational program consisted of the following units: social issues & institutions, local bodies, life skills, child health & nutrition, and adult health. The goal of the program was to provide adolescent girls with the necessary skills and knowledge to delay the age of marriage. Not only did girls' knowledge increase over the program period, but the average age of marriage in the program area increased from 16 to 17, while remaining unchanged in the control area.<sup>4</sup> Population Council's **Abriendo Oportunidades** program in Guatemala works to increase indigenous Mayan girls' social support networks, connect them with role models and mentors, build a base of critical life and leadership skills, and provide hands-on professional training and experience. The program consists of a one-year life skills course for unmarried girls (8-18), with a focus on out-of-school and working girls. Workshops are conducted with girls and their mothers on topics such as self-esteem, life skills, developing aspirations, planning for the future, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS prevention. The girls conduct community service and form clubs to advocate for their needs and rights at the community and national level, while the parents attend monthly educational sessions.<sup>5</sup>

Other programs use complementary strategies to reach girls who are already married, and who need concentrated efforts to improve their health and well-being. The main objectives of Pathfinder's **PRACHAR** program in India are to: 1) increase girls' age at marriage, 2) delay first pregnancy after marriage until 21, and 3) ensure spacing of at least three years between the first and second births. The program uses educational sessions with adolescents (both married and unmarried), behavior change communication such as billboards and flyers, and door-to-door personal visits by health workers to convey important health messages. The messages communicated by these many channels include the importance of spacing, reproductive health education, family planning methods, HIV/AIDS and STDs prevention, education for traditional birth attendants, and more. PRACHAR has been able to successfully delay the age of marriage as well as the age of first birth among its program participants. Most recently the program has

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<sup>4</sup> Pande, R., Kurz, K., Walia, S., MacQuarrie, K., & Jain, S. (2006). *Improving the Reproductive Health of Married and Unmarried Youth in India: Evidence of Effectiveness and Costs from Community-Based Interventions*. Washington, DC: International Center for Research on Women (ICRW).

<sup>5</sup> Catino, J., Colom, A., & Ruiz, M.J. (2011). Equipping Mayan girls to improve their lives. *Promoting healthy, safe and productive transitions to adulthood*, No. 5. New York, NY: Population Council.

partnered with the government of Bihar to increase the reach of the health workers and the sustainability of the program.<sup>6,7</sup>

## **2. Educate and mobilize parents, religious/traditional leaders, and community members.**

Girls rarely have the power to decide on their own if, when, or whom to marry. Once they are married they may have even less ability to decide what they do and when. Thus, it is essential that activities designed to inform and empower girls also include parallel efforts to educate and mobilize parents, in-laws, religious/traditional leaders, and other community members. Engaging and informing boys and men, especially fathers, can be particularly important. Awareness-raising campaigns and other advocacy efforts can help to promote social norms that will support efforts by girls and their families to delay the age of marriage.

This is particularly critical in emergency settings. In humanitarian crises and emergency situations, families sometimes see early marriage as a form of social protection from sexual violence, a way of avoiding pregnancy outside of marriage and the resulting shame to the family, and/or a method to procure necessary resources such as food and shelter. However, child brides in emergency settings often face even more dangerous threats to their well-being, including increased violence and marital rape, as well as poor nutrition during already dangerous pregnancies.<sup>8</sup> It is therefore important to inform families and communities of the often exacerbated harms of early marriage that young brides experience in such settings.

Tostan's **Community Empowerment Program** implemented in Senegal is built around informal community education and awareness-raising that facilitates community mobilization, sometimes in the form of public declarations, against harmful practices, such as female genital cutting and early marriage. When implementing the program, Tostan first seeks the approval and buy-in of the village leaders. Once the village leaders are knowledgeable about the harms of early marriage and female genital cutting, Tostan engages the rest of the community in educational sessions. As a result of the community education sessions in the Thies, Fatik, and Kolda regions of Senegal, not only did several villages make public declarations to end child marriage, but many people reported that knowledge of rights and responsibilities among both participating and non-participating women improved, particularly with respect to the place and role of women in the community. In this program, the involvement of all community members, from the highest ranking village elders to local girls, is what made change possible.<sup>9</sup>

The **Gender Roles, Equality and Transformations (GREAT)** project in post-conflict areas of Northern Uganda, implemented by USAID and the Institute of Reproductive Health (IRH) at

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<sup>6</sup> Rahman, M. & Daniel, E. (2010). A Reproductive Health Communication Model That Helps Improve Young Women's Reproductive Life and Reduce Population Growth: The Case of PRACHAR from Bihar, India. *Research and Evaluation Working Paper*. Watertown, MA: Pathfinder.

<sup>7</sup> Wilder, J., Masilamani, R., & Daniel, E. (2005). *Promoting change in the Reproductive Behavior of Youth: Pathfinder International's PRACHAR Project, Bihar, India*. New Delhi, India: Pathfinder.

<sup>8</sup> World Vision. (2013). *Untying the Knot: Exploring Early Marriage in Fragile States. Research Report*. London, England: World Vision UK.

<sup>9</sup> Diop, N., Faye, M., Cabral, A., Benga, H., Mane, F., Baumgarten, I., & Melching, M. (2004). *The TOSTAN Program Evaluation of a Community Based Education Program in Senegal*. USAID.

Georgetown University, works to improve gender equity and reproductive health by promoting gender-equitable norms and the adoption of attitudes and behaviors that positively influence health outcomes among both married and unmarried girls and boys ages 10-19. The project uses a serial radio drama as the main intervention to: 1) present a nuanced and intergenerational story; 2) pose challenging dilemmas; and 3) generate reflection, questions, and dialogue among listeners. The radio drama includes messages around the harms of early marriage and the importance of equitable gender roles in the marriage relationship. The project will also utilize a participatory process to engage key community and cultural leaders in generating change.<sup>10,11</sup>

### **3. Enhance the accessibility and quality of schooling for girls.**

While the causality of the relationship between school enrollment and early marriage is still debated, studies have shown a strong correlation between these two events. School *can be* protective against early marriage in that it enables the girl to be seen as a child and thus unmarriageable and also creates a safe space for girls. However, it is critical to ensure that schools are safe, girl-friendly, and of a high quality. Both formal and non-formal school enrollment enable girls to develop social networks and acquire skills and information to enhance their ability to better communicate and negotiate their interests. Non-formal and girl-only educational programs can build economic and social assets to keep girls (including married girls and adolescent mothers) in school through the transition to secondary level, improve their ability to protect themselves from child marriage, and enhance community norms to reject child marriage. In post-emergency settings, non-formal or accelerated education programs can help girls gain the necessary skills to re-enter the formal school system. In addition, the reintegration of married girls, who may be mothers, into formal schooling and other non-formal educational opportunities needs increased prioritization and attention.

The **Ishraq** program in Egypt prepares out-of-school girls for re-entry into the formal school system. This two year program teaches girls literacy and numeracy skills, as well as life skills and sports. The program seeks to build girls' self-confidence while also preparing them for the national education test so that they can test back into the formal school system. The majority of girls who participated in Ishraq re-entered the formal school system. After participating in the program, the girls had lower rates of early marriage and less of a desire to be married before 18.<sup>12</sup>

USAID's **Safe Schools** program works with teachers and girls and boys (10-14) to develop healthier and safer classrooms and with community members to help young people survive violent or abusive situations. The program uses a curriculum (The *Doorways* manuals) for teachers, students, and community counselors. The program has successfully been implemented in the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Malawi, Senegal, Tajikistan, and Yemen. With the help of the Safe Schools Action Planning Committee, community members have helped girls avoid early

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<sup>10</sup> USAID. (2012). *Gender, Roles, Equality and Transformations (GREAT) Project*. Gulu, Uganda: USAID.

<sup>11</sup> Institute for Reproductive Health. (2012). *GREAT Project, Northern Uganda*. Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH) Georgetown University. [Online]. Available: <http://www.irh.org/?q=content/great-project-northern-uganda>.

<sup>12</sup> Brady, M., Assaad, R., Ibrahim, B., Salem, A., Salem, R., & Zimmerman, C. (2007). *Providing New Opportunities to Adolescent Girls in Socially Conservative Settings: The Ishraq Program in Rural Upper Egypt*. New York, NY: Population Council.

marriage. Students are taught how to look out for abuses, such as early and forced marriage, and the community members are instructed in how to link adolescents to needed services. The program teaches students about the harms of early marriage and what they can do to resist it, and also provides a more general support network through creating gender-equitable and safe schools.<sup>13,14</sup>

#### 4. Offer economic support and incentives for girls and their families.

Intergenerational poverty and the lack of viable income-generating options for girls and young women are important factors contributing to high rates of child marriage. Successful programs help to offset the economic pressures for families to marry daughters through multiple mechanisms – providing a direct incentive for delaying marriage, incentivizing a behavior that is linked with delay of marriage (such as school attendance), or increasing the financial knowledge and skills of girls or other family members that help to increase financial security. Economic incentive approaches may be particularly important where the prevalence of child marriage is high and where median age of marriage is young (15 or under). Additionally, such approaches are important in fragile states and in settings with prolonged natural disasters or conflict. In such settings families may face fear of hunger and malnutrition and view marrying off a daughter as one less hungry mouth to feed or even a potential source of income. With the disruption of markets and livelihoods, families may be forced to enroll daughters in risky work, such as laboring on far away fields, to bring in income. Economic support and incentives can provide families with the relief they need to feed, protect, and foster their daughters. For married girls, having the opportunity to build their economic assets, including through earning an income and/or having the ability to save, can increase their financial security and overall well-being.

There are many programs that provide girls with financial saving skills and access to loans to help mitigate the economic motivations of early marriage.<sup>15</sup> BRAC's **Social and Financial Empowerment of Adolescents (SoFEA)** program in Bangladesh teaches girls financial literacy for micro-enterprise management, savings, and credit for economic independence.<sup>16</sup> Other programs teach girls livelihoods and vocational skills to provide them with viable income-earning opportunities. Save the Children's **Kishoree Kontha** program in Bangladesh taught girls general livelihood skills, while Pathfinder's **Raising the Age of Marriage** program in Bangladesh taught girls specific skills to become paramedics.<sup>17,18</sup> Some of these programs teach such skills

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<sup>13</sup> USAID. (2008). *Safe Schools Program Final Report*. Washington, DC: USAID.

<sup>14</sup> USAID. (2012). *Gender Equality in Education: Safe Schools Program: Pilot Phase*. USAID. [Online]. Available: [http://transition.usaid.gov/our\\_work/cross-cutting\\_programs/wid/ed/safeschools.html](http://transition.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/ed/safeschools.html).

<sup>15</sup> The economic motivations of early marriage may include the following: the need for the bride's family to pay a dowry to the groom's family wherein the expected price is lower, the younger and more "pure" the girl is; the need for the groom's family to pay bride price to the bride's family, wherein the expected price is high the younger and more "pure" the girl is; and the fact that once a girl is married, she often lives with her husband's family and is no longer a financial burden on her birth family.

<sup>16</sup> Bhattacharjee, A. & Das, N. (2011). Profile of the Adolescent Girls: Findings from the Baseline Survey for Social and Financial Empowerment of Adolescents (SoFEA) Programme. *Research Monograph Series No. 46*. Dhaka, Bangladesh: Research and Evaluation Division, BRAC.

<sup>17</sup> Poverty Action Lab. (2012). *Empowering Girls in Rural Bangladesh*. Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab. [Online]. Available: <http://www.povertyactionlab.org/evaluation/empowering-girls-rural-bangladesh>.



with the intended objective of delaying the age of marriage, and for others, delayed age of marriage is an unintended outcome of the program.

Transfers of cash or other assets are increasingly popular strategies for incentivizing changes in behavior and attitudes. The **Berhane Hewane** program in Ethiopia incentivized families by providing them with a goat if their adolescent daughters remained unmarried while enrolled in the program, thus delaying the age of marriage among those aged 10 to 14 over a two-year period.<sup>19</sup> The **Zomba Cash Transfer Program** in Malawi compared how a cash transfer that was conditional on school attendance versus an unconditional cash transfer affected the age of marriage of girls.<sup>20</sup> The unconditional cash transfer was actually more effective in delaying marriage, possibly because it was able to reach the most vulnerable, out-of-school girls. Currently, with funding from USAID, ICRW is evaluating the **Apni Beti Apna Dhan** (“Our Daughters, Our Wealth”) program, implemented by the state government of Haryana, India, which provided savings bonds to newborn girls that would be eligible for cashing out when the girls were 18, provided they were unmarried. The evaluation will assess if and how this policy impacted the age of marriage and attitudes towards girls in the communities.<sup>21</sup>

## 5. Foster an enabling legal and policy framework

Many countries with high rates of child marriage have laws prohibiting the practice, and over the years, efforts to further strengthen and/or enforce such laws have been initiated. In addition to minimum age at marriage, other laws and policies that are directly relevant to the rights of girls and women include: the right to enter into and dissolve marriage unions freely; the protection from violence in all public and private spaces; the right to own, transfer and inherit assets on an equal basis with males; and the right to access justice on an equal basis with males. Programs in this category both advocate for policy change and work to enforce and implement existing laws and policies at the national and community levels.

In Afghanistan, the **Community-based Rural Livelihoods Program** formed groups of women to mobilize for action on issues such as local marriage and strengthened “shuras” (local governance structures) to respond to gender issues and the problem of child marriage. The shuras received education from Oxfam on subjects of health and hygiene, the importance of education, and women’s rights. The shuras reported being able to link early marriage to complications in pregnancy, stopping child marriages, and resolving fights between women.<sup>22</sup> Oxfam’s **Integrated Action on Poverty and Early Marriage (IAPE)** project in Yemen sought to raise awareness of the consequences of child marriage, build the capacity of local partners, and advocate for women’s

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<sup>18</sup> Burket, M., Alauddin, M., Malek, A., & Rahman, M. (2006). *Raising the Age of Marriage for Young Girls in Bangladesh*. Watertown, MA: Pathfinder International.

<sup>19</sup> Erulkar, A. & Muthengi, E. (2009). Evaluation of Berhane Hewane: A Program to Delay Child Marriage in Rural Ethiopia. *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 35, 6-14.

<sup>20</sup> Baird, S., Chirwa, E., McIntosh, C., & Ozler, B. (2009). The Short-Term Impacts of a Schooling Conditional Cash Transfer Program on the Sexual Behavior of Young Women. *Health Policy*, 1-14.

<sup>21</sup> ICRW. *Evaluating the Power of Conditional Cash Transfers to Raise Age of Marriage in India*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.icrw.org/where-we-work/evaluating-power-conditional-cashtransfers-ccts-delay-marriage-india>

<sup>22</sup> Gandhi, K. & Krijnen, J. (2006). *Evaluation of Community-Based Rural Livelihoods Programme in Badakhshan, Afghanistan*. Oxfam GB.

employment, a legal age of marriage, self-employment through micro-leasing, and business development services. In an effort to raise awareness about the harms and enact policies around child marriage, the program created and distributed early marriage books and implemented theater plays and radio discussions. The campaign efforts targeted those of all ages and sought to build alliances among community members with different backgrounds such as journalists, doctors, and local leaders. Advocacy efforts for the passage of a minimum age of marriage law targeted parliamentarians and consisted of policy research, media advocacy, and workshops to disseminate findings and build alliances at the national level. The core challenge among these advocacy efforts was the fact that many parliamentarians were religious leaders and thus messages needed to be targeted to a religious perspective. In order to provide increased opportunities for women, the project also worked to advocate for women's employment in the government and private sector at the governorate level, micro-leasing of capital and non-capital assets, and business development services and skills training for women.

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In emergency settings, customary law often takes precedence over weak formal legal systems that are unable to protect citizens. Therefore, programs working in such settings should look to reinforce the formal legal system and create sensitization and awareness campaigns among local community groups. When citizens rely on local social norms to guide behavior, it is important that the customary law recognizes the harms of and protects against early marriage.<sup>24</sup>

### III. Where to Do It

No country is unaffected by child marriage. However, with limited resources, there must be strategic decisions regarding where and how to prioritize investments. This section provides a framework whereby public, private, philanthropic and service sectors can decide where to invest. The more coordinated these efforts are, the greater the collective impact will be.

There are a number of considerations that may influence the selection of where to invest. An accompanying table (see page 13) provides this information for the 44 "hotspot" countries where child marriage prevalence at the national level (the percent of women 20-24 who report being married by age 18) is 25% or higher and/or where two or more sub-national regions have a child marriage prevalence of 40% or higher.

Investments should be guided by several factors, including the burden of child marriage among girls < 15 and < 18; other development context data (i.e., maternal mortality, under-5 mortality, female adult literacy); where there is an enabling legal and governance environment, including considerations of a country's state of fragility; and where complementary government (and other donor) initiatives can be strengthened to address child marriage. These factors are described below:

- **Burden of Child Marriage**
  - Understanding not only the percentage of females married before age 15 and age 18, but also the number of girls in the adolescent age range in a particular

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<sup>23</sup> Pedersen, K., Mukred, A., & Qaid, E. (2008). *Evaluation of 'Integrated Action on Poverty and Early Marriage' Programme in Yemen*. Oxfam GB.

<sup>24</sup> World Vision, 2013

country, provides a picture of the magnitude of girls at risk of early marriage and thus the burden of child marriage in that country. Considerations should include:

- The percentage of 20-24 year old females who were married by age 15
  - The percentage of 20-24 year old females who were married by age 18
  - The number of females aged 10-20; Loosely applied, the percentage of girls married before 18 multiplied by the number of girls 10-20 in a specific country, represents the number of girls at risk of early marriage
- **Development Context**
    - The development indicators of maternal mortality, under-5 mortality, and female adult literacy provide an illustrative picture of the state of women's development in that country.
      - Maternal mortality: The ratio of deaths to the number of births in a given year, expressed by 100,000 live births
      - Under-5 mortality: The probability of dying between birth and exactly 5 years of age, expressed per 1,000 live births
      - Female adult literacy rates: The percentage of females 15 and older who are literate
      - Unmet need for contraception: The percentage of females (married or in a union) of reproductive age who do not want to become pregnant but are not using contraception
  - **Enabling Environment and Additional Considerations in the Prioritization of Countries for Investment:**
    - Legal/Governance context: Minimum age of marriage / consent laws
    - Failed states index<sup>25</sup>: Grade of a nation's fragility based on the summation of scores in the following categories: demographic pressures, refugees/IDPs, group grievance, human flight, uneven development, economic decline, public services, human rights, security apparatus, factionalized elites, and external intervention. The scale is between 0 and 120 with 120 being the most 'failed' state.
    - Relevant investments: Highlights investments in related health, education, and other development initiatives in the country.
    - Government Initiatives/Policies to Combat Child Marriage: Highlights host country commitments, political will or actions towards delaying marriage, specifically as stated in Every Women Every Child commitments.
    - Potential Partners and Donors: Public and private donors (foundations, corporations) with presence, investments, and/or interest in child marriage and related issues.
    - Human Rights Reports: Mention of child marriage/ early marriage in State Department Human Rights Reports, reports of the UN Special Rapporteurs or Concluding Observations of UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies.

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<sup>25</sup> The Failed States Index (FSI) is a collaboration between the US Foreign Policy Centre and Fund for Peace. The FSI assesses 177 countries according to social, political, and economic indicators demonstrating vulnerability and stability. (Foreign Policy (FP). (2013). *Failed States: An Eighth Annual Collaboration between Foreign Policy and Fun for Peace*. Foreign Policy. [Online]. Available: [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/failed\\_states\\_index\\_2012\\_interactive](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/failed_states_index_2012_interactive))

## **IV. Conclusion**

Child marriage is perhaps the most urgent human rights and development challenge of our time. Child marriage harms girls, their families, communities, economies and nations the world over. If we are to fulfill the potential of the more than 140 million girls who are predicted to be married by 2020, or for the millions who are already married today, we must act swiftly and strategically.

We know what works and where those investments are needed. It is time to leverage the contributions of donor and national governments, multilateral institutions, private enterprises, philanthropic investments and civil society around an effective and evidence-based approach. We must employ the best practices to prevent future child marriages, and we must invest equally in meeting the pressing needs of at-risk and married girls, who are among the hardest populations to reach. We must involve boys and men, community members, family members, religious and political leaders—but at the end of the day, our efforts must be singularly dedicated to the empowerment and protection of girls themselves. We must work in partnership and in a spirit of collaborative learning and we must collectively design our efforts in a strategic manner that responds to and takes into account such factors as prevalence and local context.

In closing, we offer a framework by which donors, policy makers and practitioners can choose where and how to contribute to the end of child marriage. We hope that this resource will inspire robust, targeted, evidence-based action that will directly improve the lives of millions of girls. Working together with partners from donor and national governments, multilateral institutions, private enterprises and donors and civil society around the world, we are confident we can end child marriage and unleash the full potential of girls everywhere.

Burden of Child Marriage			
Location	% of 20-24 yr old females married by 15 <sup>[i]</sup>	% of 20-24 yr olds females married by 18 <sup>[ii]</sup>	Number of females aged 10-19 in 2012 (thousands) <sup>[iii]</sup>
Afghanistan	...	40	4,244
Bangladesh (GHI+)	32	66	15,833
Benin	8	34	1,257
Burkina Faso	10	52	2,100
Cameroon	13	38	2,693
Central African Republic	No data	68	551
Chad	29	68	1,664
Comoros	9	30	86
Cote d'Ivoire	8	35	2,396
Congo, Rep. of	7	33	516
DRC	9	39	8,320
Dominican Rep.	12	41	1,008
El Salvador	5	25	671
Eritrea	20	47	725
Ethiopia (GHI+)	16	41	12,152
Gabon	11	34	184
Guatemala	7	30	1,869
Guinea	20	63	1,401
Haiti	6	30	1,135
Honduras	11	39	896
India	13	45	114,282
Indonesia	4	22	22,606
Kenya (GHI+)	6	26	5,235
Liberia	11	38	513
Madagascar	14	48	2,849
Malawi (GHI+)	12	50	2,033
Mali (GHI+)	15	55	1,867
Mauritania	15	35	445
Mozambique	14	48	3,255
Nepal (GHI+)	10	41	3,283
Nicaragua	10	41	649
Niger	36	75	2,235
Nigeria	16	39	20,109
Sao Tome and Principe	5	34	22
Senegal	12	33	1,699
Sierra Leone	18	44	730
South Sudan	9	52	1,292
Sudan	7	33	4,591
Tanzania	7	37	5,933
Togo	6	25	800
Uganda	10	40	4,911
Yemen	11	32	3,020
Zambia	9	42	1,856
Zimbabwe	4	31	1,683

*A more comprehensive version of this table will be available soon; in the interim please contact [lthompson@icrw.org](mailto:lthompson@icrw.org) for source data and other information.*