



GIRLS NOT BRIDES

The Global Partnership
to End Child Marriage

CHILD MARRIAGE IN CONFLICT- AND CRISIS- AFFECTED SETTINGS



Learning Series 17 June 2025

INTERPRETATION

ENGLISH - This session will have presentations in **English**. To access simultaneous interpretation, please click on the globe icon at the bottom bar of your screen and **select your preferred language (English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Hindi, Bangla, Nepali or no interpretation)**.

FRANÇAIS - Cette session comprendra des présentations en **anglais**. Pour accéder aux services d'interprétation simultanée, veuillez cliquer sur l'icône globe que vous trouverez dans la barre inférieure de votre écran, et **sélectionnez la langue de préférence**

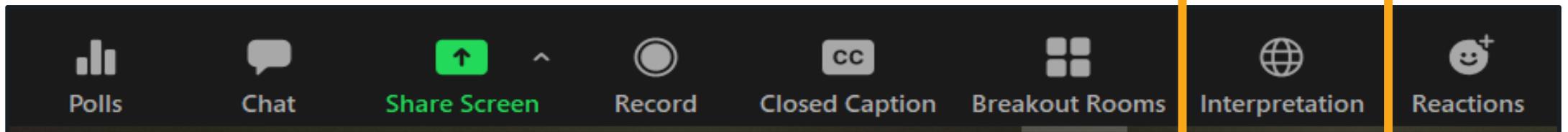
ESPAÑOL - Esta sesión tendrá presentaciones en **inglés**. Para acceder a los servicios de interpretación simultánea, por favor haga clic en el icono del globo que encontrará en la barra inferior de su pantalla, y **seleccione su idioma de preferencia**

PORTUGUÊS - Esta sessão terá apresentações em **inglês**. Para aceder à interpretação simultânea, clique no ícone do globo na barra inferior do seu ecrã e selecione a sua língua preferida

यह सत्र अंग्रेजी में प्रस्तुत किया जाएगा। अपनी सुविधा अनुसार अनुवाद सुनने के लिए, कृपया अपनी स्क्रीन के नीचे दिए गए ग्लोब आइकन पर क्लिक करें और अपनी पसंदीदा भाषा चुनें — अंग्रेजी, स्पेनिश, फ्रेंच, हिंदी, बांग्ला या विकल्प "कोई अनुवाद नहीं"।

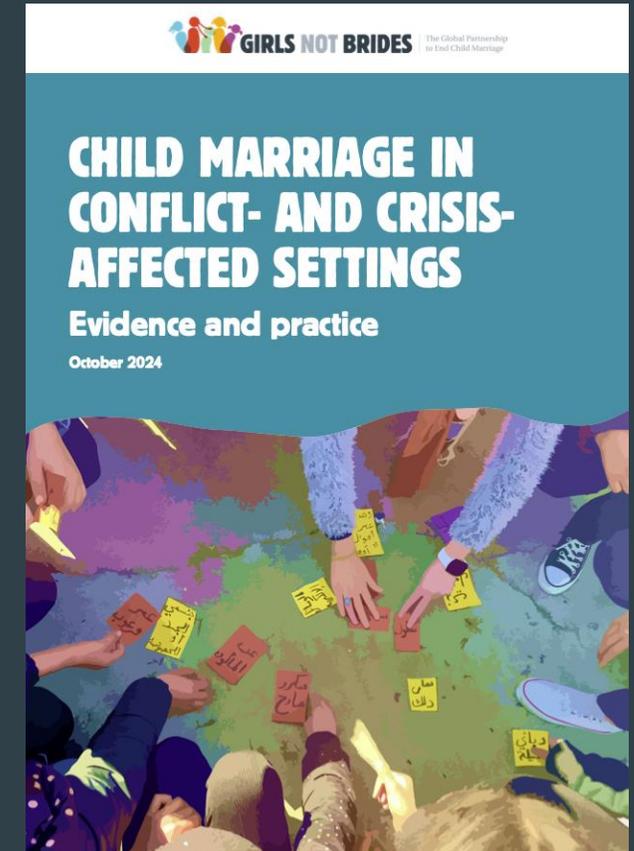
এই সেশনটি ইংরেজিতে পরিচালিত হবে। আপনি যদি নিজের সুবিধামতো অনুবাদ শুনতে চান, তাহলে স্ক্রিনের নিচে থাকা গ্লোব আইকনে ক্লিক করুন এবং আপনার পছন্দের ভাষা নির্বাচন করুন — ইংরেজি, স্প্যানিশ, ফরাসি, হিন্দি, বাংলা অথবা “কোনও অনুবাদ নয়”।

यस सत्रमा अंग्रेजीमा प्रस्तुतिहरू हुनेछन्। एकसाथ व्याख्या पहुँच गर्न, कृपया आफ्नो स्क्रिनको तलको पट्टीमा रहेको ग्लोब आइकनमा क्लिक गर्नुहोस् र आफ्नो मनपर्ने भाषा चयन गर्नुहोस्।



AGENDA

- ❖ Setting the scene - Aicha Awa Ba
- ❖ Child Marriage in Conflict- and Crisis- affected settings – Amy Harrison & Jean Casey
- ❖ Uholo Case Study - Zaina Cuna, Pathfinders
- ❖ Marriage is Not a Game Case Study – Anthony Keedi, Abaad.
- ❖ Q&A
- ❖ Resource Round up
- ❖ Wrap up



PICTURED: Girls Not Brides (2024) 'Child marriage in conflict- and crisis-affected settings: evidence and practice'

MODERATOR



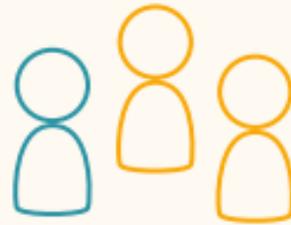
AICHA AWA BA

Setting the scene: Why focus on child marriage in conflict- & crisis-affected settings?

1 Risk factors increase in conflict & crisis settings.

9 OUT OF 10 COUNTRIES

with the highest child marriage prevalence are experiencing humanitarian crises.²



OVER 1 IN 3 GIRLS

in contexts considered fragile are married before age 18.⁴



10 X INCREASE
in conflict-related
fatalities
= **7%¹⁶ INCREASE**
in child marriage.



A 10% CHANGE
IN RAINFALL
due to climate change
= **1%¹⁷ INCREASE**
in child marriage.



2

Increased risk across **different forms of crisis**.

3

Child marriage is connected with many **other thematic areas & rights**.

MEET THE SPEAKERS



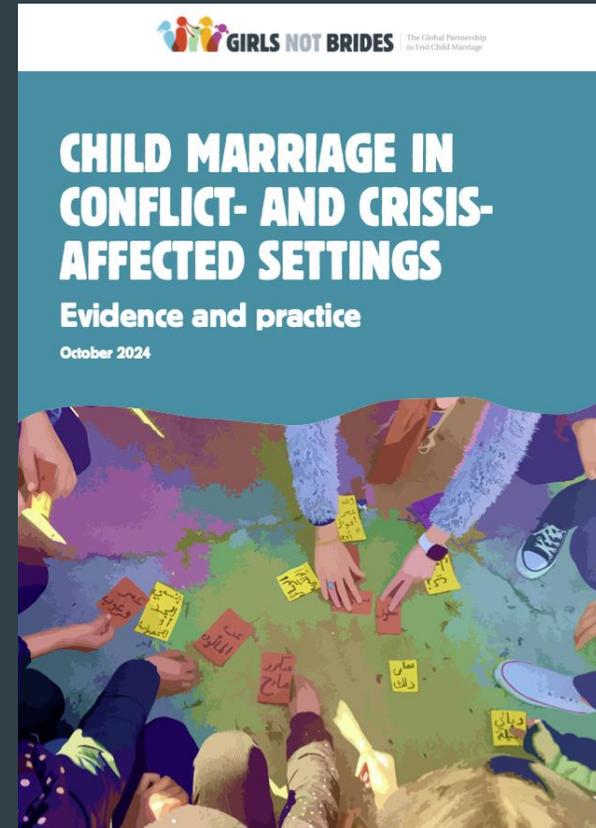
Amy Harrison



Jean Casey

What is in the report?

- **Review of evidence and practice 2020 - 2024**
- **Key intervention areas - education, health, economic strengthening, girl centred programming etc**
- **Girls Not Brides and Partners Case studies – promising practice**
- **Spotlight on Gender Transformative Approaches**
- **Toolkit - support translating evidence to action**
- **Recommendations for donors, governments, UN agencies and cluster leads, civil society, and researchers**



Income and economic strengthening

- **Cash-based assistance** is increasingly used in humanitarian settings – evidence it is effective (particularly for education access), generally viewed as supportive of local agency and dignity
- **Unrestricted transfers can have significant positive impact** on displaced GBV survivors and girls/women at risk of GBV—especially if recurrent and part of a broader programme of support
- Girls value opportunities to **develop their earning potential**
- Combining **vocational or skills-focused interventions with gender-transformative approaches** may increase the impact, inclusivity, and sustainability of such interventions – and counter the ‘feminisation of poverty’



Further study is needed on the significance of who receives transfers (mothers, fathers, families or girls themselves) in reducing child marriage in conflict- and crisis-affected settings.

Education and life skills

- **Girls' education is a consistent protective factor against child marriage**, but of 224 million children and adolescents affected by crisis, ~72 million are out of school, 53% of whom are girls
- **Supporting girls' schooling through cash/in-kind transfers** can be highly effective in preventing child marriage in development settings - more research needed in humanitarian settings
- Evidence shows **benefits of cash-plus programmes tied to education** – increasing girls' school attendance and reducing child marriage – but more evidence is needed on how they can facilitate long-term transformative change (likely as part of a **multi-sectoral approach**)

72 MILLION
crisis-affected children
are out of school –
that's the population
of Thailand.⁷³

 **53%**
of these
are girls.⁷⁴

The likelihood of a girl
marrying before age 18 is
**6 PERCENTAGE
POINTS LESS**
for every year in
secondary school.⁷⁵



Education and life skills

- Girls face huge restrictions in accessing education in crisis settings - but accessing education is **often a priority for girls and their caregivers** in these settings
- The **supply-side of girls' education** can be a barrier even when demand exists; this needs to be addressed as part of education-focused humanitarian, development and peace nexus programming.



More research is needed to understand how cash-plus education interventions as part of a multisectoral approach can facilitate longer-term transformative change.

Sexual and reproductive health

- SRH interventions may work best when **paired with norms-based/economic support** interventions – but norms-based interventions may have limited impact without addressing practical, systemic, structural barriers girls face in accessing services
- Addressing **discomfort about SRHR** (and sexuality specifically) is essential
- Emerging evidence on benefits of **flexible, tailored, creative approaches to SRH service provision** in humanitarian settings

Further study is needed on the positive potential of CSE to prevent and respond to child marriage when integrated into formal and out-of-school education interventions in humanitarian settings. This should build on growing evidence from development settings.



Mental health

- Adolescent girls face **heightened and unique challenges to their mental health** in conflict- and crisis-affected settings, but their mental health needs are consistently overlooked
- **Ever-married girls can be particularly isolated in crisis-affected or displaced settings**
- Evidence suggests **building girls' peer networks and friendships**, alongside building positive relationships with husbands and mothers-in-law, can be critical – particularly for ever-married girls and in displaced settings
- Recent research shows that **including cash assistance as part of a broader GBV case management intervention** can encourage girls to access psychosocial support – but may not reduce feelings of depression

Girl-centred and empowerment interventions

- **Designated safe spaces in humanitarian settings** can be critical for girls and adolescents in crisis settings – to have their voices heard, connect with peers, access services, and make choices that affect their lives
- **Ever-married girls and adolescent mothers may need their own dedicated groups** and tailored curriculum content, given their unique and often heightened needs
- Girls' access to peer networks can have a huge impact on their **sense of empowerment and uptake of services** – incorporating peer support-focused activities within multi-sectoral rights-based programmes may be beneficial
- Girls are increasingly using **social media and mobile technology** to build and maintain networks, often especially in conflict and crisis settings – this poses both an opportunity and a risk with regards to child marriage

Laws and registration processes

- Laws alone cannot end child marriage – but they are an **important foundation**
- **Multi-sector-led training** on gender justice and safe implementation of marriage laws – for key government officials in the judiciary, for law enforcement officers, and for religious leaders – is needed to ensure laws are used to address the cultural acceptance of CM
- Interventions clarifying (and helping to navigate) local legal, health and other registration systems may prevent child marriage
- Women and girls should be engaged and represented in all aspects of **climate-related decision-making processes, policy and legislation**



Further investigation is needed into the impact of child marriage laws on prevalence in humanitarian settings, as what studies we do have show mixed results that are highly context dependent.¹⁷⁰

Women's rights organisations and movements



90.7% OF WROS/WLOS fear their organisation is at risk due to a lack of institutional or core funding.¹⁸⁷

- **WROs and feminist movements play a key role in driving progress towards gender equality** – there is evidence that countries with strong feminist movements often have more comprehensive GBV policies than those weaker or non-existent movements
- WROs and WLOs are **chronically underfunded + underrepresented** in development + humanitarian work - **receive 0.13% of total Overseas Development Assistance and 0.4% of all gender-related aid**
- There is a growing body of **guidance, recommendations, and good practice examples** on how to meaningfully engage (and fund) WROs and WLOs



Less is known about the role of WROs specifically in relation to child marriage prevention and response.

Spotlight: Gender-transformative approaches

Girl-centred interventions and safe spaces

- **Girl-centred safe spaces** often focus on individual, interpersonal, community levels
- These may have **limited impact without a systemic and structural focus**
- ✓ **Promising practice:** combining skills-focused/income-generating interventions + contextualised GTA

Gender-transformative education

- Addresses gaps within education systems that drive exclusion and marginalisation
- Closes the implementation gap between education policy and practice



More research is needed to understand how “cash-plus” education interventions – implemented as part of a multi-sectoral approach – can facilitate longer-term transformative change.

INDIVIDUAL
girls

INTERPERSONAL

families, friends,
social and peer
networks

COMMUNITY

place/community-
based organisations,
faith-based
organisations, WLO/
WROs, girls' clubs,
youth groups

**HUMANITARIAN
CAPACITY &
COORDINATION**

UN agencies, cluster lead
system agencies; humanitarian
actors – INGOs, civil society,
WROs, youth-led organisations;
national/local government and
authorities, donors

**SYSTEMS/
INSTITUTIONS**

service systems,
social institutions

**POLICIES/
LEGISLATIVE**

national, sub-
national, local

Gender-transformative approaches

- Evidence that **challenging social norms and reducing GBV (including child marriage) is possible in conflict and crisis settings** over time through interventions that are community grounded, place-based, and take a multi-component approach. Success factors may include:
 - Working with faith leaders
 - Engaging boys and men
 - Working with WROs and WLOs (including through long-term, flexible funding)
- There is a need to understand how social norms manifested pre-crisis
- Further study is needed on how to engage and sustain engagement from different family members, including husbands, and to assess long term impact

“As part of a GTA, it is important to shift power to girls and women within programming. GTA also requires commitment from – and collaborating with – all sectors involved in addressing child marriage at all levels. Collaboration and joint working across sectors and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus is essential to increase the use of GTA and secure the rights and agency of girls, young women, and young mothers at scale”

Dr Aisha Hutchinson, King’s College London

Recommendations

Recommendations

1. Integrate CM prevention and response as a priority across all actors and sectors within the humanitarian architecture
2. Address structural and institutional barriers that impact the provision of key systems and services
3. Design, deliver and evaluate multi-sector, multi-component interventions

Recommendations (cont.)

4. Increase funding to and integration of girl-centred and – where possible – girl-designed interventions
5. Commit to multi-year funding for gender-transformative interventions and to pilot promising approaches, including robust measurement, evaluation and learning
6. Increase funding to women-led and community/place-based organisations.

Call to action!

We need:

- Urgent, coordinated, systemic action
- To better understand and respond to all girls' needs in conflict- and crisis-affected settings
- Girl-centred, gender-transformative approaches
- To amplify community + place-based expertise

✓ Progress needs to happen faster:

69 MILLION
child marriages
averted over the
last 25 years.¹¹



Progress needs to be
20 X FASTER
to achieve the SDGs.¹²

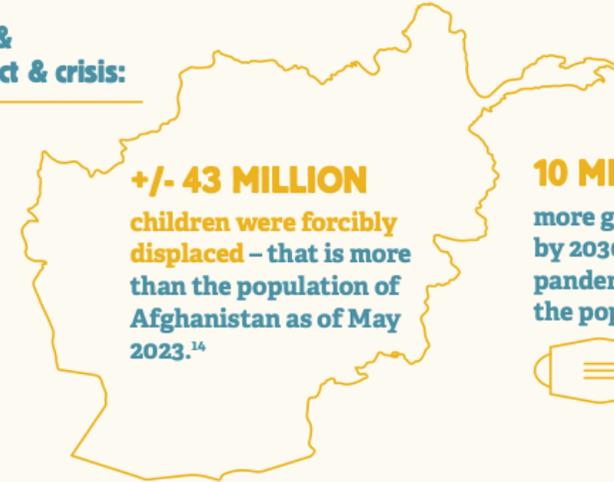


✓ Progress is uneven & threatened by conflict & crisis:

3 X MORE
marriages averted
among girls
from the richest
households than
from the poorest
over 1997-2022.¹³



+/- 43 MILLION
children were forcibly
displaced – that is more
than the population of
Afghanistan as of May
2023.¹⁴



10 MILLION
more girls expected to marry
by 2030 due to the COVID-19
pandemic – that is more than
the population of Hungary.¹⁵



10 X INCREASE
in conflict-related
fatalities
= **7%¹⁶ INCREASE**
in child marriage.



**A 10% CHANGE
IN RAINFALL**
due to climate change
= **1%¹⁷ INCREASE**
in child marriage.



More funding is needed to meet the necessary scale & urgency of response:



LESS THAN 1%
of humanitarian assistance spent
on GBV in humanitarian settings.¹⁸

CHILD MARRIAGE IN CONFLICT- AND CRISIS-AFFECTED SETTINGS

Evidence and practice

October 2024



Recommendations: Evidence-based actions for all actors

Drawing on the evidence, we call for:

- **Urgent, coordinated action at all levels** to better understand, recognise and respond to the **needs of girls and adolescent girls** – unmarried and ever-married – to prevent and respond to child marriage in conflict- and crisis-affected settings.
- Interventions that take a **girl-centred** and **gender-transformative** approach.
- Approaches that amplify **community/place-based expertise** and the expertise of civil society organisations, frontline women's rights and feminist organisations, and child rights organisations.

Here are **six actions** for UN agencies & cluster leads, governments, donors, civil society and researchers to address child marriage in conflict- and crisis-affected settings:

- 1 Integrate child marriage prevention and response as a priority across all actors and sectors within the humanitarian architecture. Recognise it as a complex issue requiring change across sectors and levels. Support this with funded efforts to improve cross-sector coordination, collaboration and monitoring at all levels, with governments positioned to drive and coordinate change at the national and sub-national levels.
- 2 Address the structural and institutional barriers that impact the provision of key systems and services – including girls' access to education and SRHR – as part of a political commitment to addressing the structural drivers of child marriage, and rights of refugees and displaced persons to access critical services.
- 3 Design, deliver and evaluate multi-sector, multi-component interventions that recognise the huge and catalytic potential of engaging in key sectors – like education – to prevent and respond to child marriage in conflict- and crisis-affected settings.
- 4 Increase funding to and integration of girl-centred and – where possible – girl-designed interventions. Engage at-risk and ever-married, pregnant and parenting girls and adolescents, and work in collaboration with families and communities to build support and trust on key issues, including SRHR.
- 5 Commit to multi-year funding for gender-transformative interventions and to pilot promising approaches, including robust measurement, evaluation and learning to build the evidence base. This commitment to building the evidence base should be integrated across all child marriage interventions – including community/place-based and community-led (with appropriate adaptation) interventions – to ensure ongoing learning and appropriate scaling of promising interventions in different contexts.
- 6 Increase funding to women-led and community/place-based organisations. Integrate these organisations as equitable partners – and as thematic and context experts and funding recipients – from the design phase of interventions and within key national and international decision-making fora.

Evidence and practice: Promising prevention and response interventions

In this section, you will find:

- An exploration of the **links between child marriage and key sectors and themes** in conflict- and crisis-affected settings:
 - Income and economic strengthening interventions
 - Education and life skills interventions
 - Sexual and reproductive health and rights
 - Mental health
 - Girl-centred interventions and empowerment approaches
 - Interventions to change discriminatory gender and social norms
 - Interventions focused on laws and marriage/birth registration policies
 - Women's rights organisations and movements.
- Examples of **promising prevention and response practice**.
- Challenges and areas for **further research**.
- A series of **toolboxes** to support evidence-based action.

The section looks at each key sector in turn, but the relationships and synergies between and across sectors are also highlighted, and the importance of multi-sectoral, multi-level, multi-component approaches to addressing child marriage in conflict- and crisis-affected settings are emphasised.

Toolbox: Practical tools to support policy and programmatic work on child marriage in conflict- and crisis-affected settings

Education

Education Cannot Wait, Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and UN Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI), 2022. [EIE – GenKit](#). Available in English, French, Arabic and Turkish.

This resource package includes practical tools for education practitioners to promote gender-responsive programming from crisis to peace and sustainable development. It offers tools for practical and immediate use, including checklists, tip sheets and assessment templates supporting practitioners to ensure that each phase of an EIE intervention is gender-responsive.

UN Women, n.d., [IASC e-learning on gender equality in humanitarian action](#). Available in English.

This three-hour e-learning course provides introductory guidance – through information and practical examples – on the fundamentals of applying a gender-equality approach across all sites of the humanitarian programming cycle, from assessment and planning to implementation and monitoring. It is intended for humanitarian actors from the UN, NGOs, government and civil society, and based on the [IASC gender handbook for humanitarian action](#).

Mental health

INEE, n.d., [Mental health and psychosocial support in and through education in emergencies \(EIE\)](#). Available in English.

An online, self-directed course on how EIE programmes can incorporate activities to actively address distress caused by emergency situations for students and teachers in humanitarian settings.

Girl-centred programming

International Rescue Committee, 2023. [Girl Shine: Early marriage curriculum for married/unmarried girls and their parents](#). Available in Arabic, English and French.

Girl Shine is a programme model and resource package that seeks to support, protect and ensure girls in humanitarian settings can make and act on their decisions. It supports them to build skills and knowledge on GBV and how to seek support services. It can be used in multiple humanitarian settings and phases of emergency response. It includes practitioner guidance, curricula for adolescent girls and caregivers.

Don't forget...



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THANK YOU!

<https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/>

MEET THE SPEAKERS



Zaina Cuna



Anthony Keedi

'UHOLO - RAPARIGAS E JOVENS'

Preventing Child Marriage in Cabo Delgado

Improving adolescent girls' lives in Mozambique's, Cabo Delgado province

2020 – 2024

Presented by Zaina Cuna

(Case study prepared by Mwema Uaciquete)



Photo: young women group in the community (Pemba, Cabo Delgado). Pathfinder.



CEFM (Preventing Child, Early and Force Marriage)– UHOLO PROJECT, Mozambique

Improving adolescent girls' lives in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province, where social, economic, and health challenges are intensified by extremist violence

- From 2020 to 2024, **Pathfinder Mozambique** with funds from USAID, implemented The **CEFM project** in Cabo Delgado project – locally known as “**Uholo-Raparigas e Jovens**” – worked to improve the lives and livelihoods of 22,000 adolescent girls and young women aged 10-24 in northern Mozambique
- Cabo Delgado, one of Mozambique's poorest provinces, has the second highest early unions and the highest adolescent pregnancy prevalence in the country:
 - 61% of girls are in unions by age 18
 - 18% are in unions by age 15
 - 65% of adolescent girls aged 15-19 are pregnant or parenting
- ❑ Violent insurgency in the province has compounded the existing social, economic and health challenges.

How Uholo works

Uholo applied a **gender-transformative approach (GTA)** to address the root causes of early union

- ✓ Gender inequality and girls' and women's. limits socio-economic and political power
- ✓ It brought together girls, young women, their families, communities, schools, health teams, judicial and law enforcement authorities and legislators for support on ends early unions together.



Photo: Group session with adolescent's girls and boys in School Ancuabe, Cabo Delgado Mozambique

Results and implications

Strengthened agency of adolescent girls and young woman through social support and economic opportunities

223,479

Adolescent girls and boys contacted through **in-school activities** for SRHR matter (increasing their knowledge on early unions, contraception, decision making, financial literacy, peer support groups, & social cohesion).

55,912

Adolescent girls and boys contacted through **out-of-school activities**

684

Young women and their partners participated in young couples' **first-time parents** group sessions on healthy and equitable relationships, responsible fatherhood, healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies, and GBV.



Photo: small girls' group in secondary school with peer educator (Pemba, Cabo Delgado). Pathfinder.

% Adolescent's girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy or marriage

Ancuabe: **BL: 42%** - **EL: ↓ 29%**

Pemba: **BL: 16%** - **EL: ↓ 11%**

✓ **AGYW with increased voice & agency**

Young women empowered with social support and economic opportunities

Accomplishments:

1,449

AGYW members of the **saving and credit groups**



601 received credits



- ✓ **262** initiated or expanded their **income-generating activities**
- ✓ **135** members of the **rural fund** to **improve agricultural production** received agricultural tools
- ✓ **101** improved professional skills.

8566 Community dialogues around girls education

63 Judicial representatives trained on interpretation of **Child Marriage Law and other GBV law**



Photo: Group of girls and adolescents from the Secondary School Ancuabe, Cabo Delgado Mozambique

Key elements of success to consider include **PATHFINDER**

- a **rights-based approach that encouraged reflection and dialogue** with the community
- **Addressing gender norms with girls and boys at a young age**
- Ensuring discussion groups are **facilitated by members of the community or school** who have **appropriate training**
- Working with **community/locally-based networks** to continue work during periods of violence
- **Recognizing traditional justice systems** and engaging community courts to strengthen the protection of girls and women, and to promote a rights-based approach
- **Integrating SRHR into economic empowerment activities** to enhance adolescent girls' and young women's agency
- **Enhancing adolescent girls' and young women's participation in decision-making spaces** – like school councils and health co-management committees – to foster more gender-responsive services

Young women empowered with social support and economic opportunities



Photo: small girls' group in secondary school with peer educator (Pemba, Cabo Delgado). Pathfinder.

✓ AGYW with increased voice & agency



Photo: young trainees in vocational training – metalwork course (Pemba, Cabo Delgado). Pathfinder.

- ✓ Greater economic power for young women
- ✓ Challenged inequitable gender norms that hinder women's economic opportunities

OBRIGADA



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THANK YOU!

<https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/>

Marriage is not a game

الزواج قبل سن الـ ١٨
يعرض حياة وصحة الفتاة
والجنين للخطر، خلال
فترة الحمل والولادة





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Q&A

10 April 2025

CRANK research meeting: The interlinkages between climate change and child marriage – Learning from emerging evidence and practice

Research Meeting to discuss emerging evidence, practice and strategies for interventions, coordination and policies that prevent and address the crisis.



The interlinkages between climate change and child marriage: Learning from emerging evidence and practice

CRANK research meeting brief May 2025



Child marriage and climate change? ... due to climate change, child marriage increases 1% ... severely impacted by both issues. ... in isolation. Girls and adolescents – including those who ... represented in climate policy. ... climate shock or marriage and net



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

YOUTH-LED RESEARCH TO ADDRESS POWER DYNAMICS IN KNOWLEDGE AND ADVOCACY PROCESSES TO END CHILD MARRIAGE AND PROMOTE GIRLS' EDUCATION IN WEST AFRICA

Findings from Burkina Faso and Niger July 2024

Resources...

STRATEGIES TO END CHILD MARRIAGE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

LITERATURE REVIEW OCTOBER 2024

Wrap up

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GLOBAL



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