

## Helpdesk Report: The impact of girls' education on early marriage

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> September 2011

**Query:** I would like to commission a help desk review of the existing evidence on the impact of girls' education on early marriage. It would be useful to have an international review of how strong the evidence base is and any gaps in knowledge. No particular regional focus.

### Content

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2. Definitions, Legal Framework and Background
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### 1. Overview

There is a strong association between higher age at marriage and higher education levels. A global analysis of data by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) determined that girls' education is 'the most important factor associated with child marriage'. Another study found that in 29 countries, women who married at the age of 18 or older had more education than those who married at a younger age. Additionally, this report includes many case studies which show that when girls stay in education for longer they are likely to get married at an older age. There are also details of programmes which have been conducted in different regions across the world.

Education for girls can increase their age at marriage, confidence and their perception of their ability to make decisions about marriage and childbearing. This is especially effective when efforts are targeted at regions with higher child marriage levels and programmes are aimed at girls approaching the "tipping point" age — the age at which child marriage prevalence in a country starts to increase markedly. Education and awareness-raising on age gaps between husbands and wives can help minimise the associated negative outcomes.

In order to undermine gender discrimination and break the cycle of early and forced marriage, a rights-based approach to education planning and delivery is crucial. Where the education system reinforces existing gender imbalances or patriarchal power relations, children and especially girls can be pushed into child marriage. This is why compulsory and post-compulsory education of good quality can play a crucial role.

The Plan UK report in section 3 shows that timely enrolment and duration of education – specifically transition to secondary level – is also critical if schooling is to protect girls from early and forced marriage. Estimates have put the length of schooling needed to make a difference to a girl's ability to have a say in the timing of her marriage and the selection of her partner at between 7 and 10 years. Getting and keeping girls in school may be one of the best ways to achieve later, consensual marriage, while also

contributing to delayed sexual initiation, lower rates of HIV and AIDS and other morbidities, and greater gender equality.

There is a detailed list of knowledge gaps in section 6.

## 2. Definitions, Legal Framework and Background

### Definitions

**Early marriage:** (The Convention on the Rights of the Child): Marriage is a formalised, binding partnership between consenting adults. Child marriage, on the other hand, involves either one or both spouses being children and may take place under civil, religious or customary laws with or without formal registration. Children are people under the age of 18 years old.

### Legal Framework

Marriage before the age of 18 years old should not be permitted since children do not have the 'full maturity and capacity to act,' as recognised by the expert body that monitors the Convention on the Elimination on All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in its General Recommendation 21.

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that marriage should be 'entered only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.' In the majority of child marriages, however, there is often an element of coercion involved: parents, guardians or families put pressure on children or force them into marriage. Early marriage is accepted as the norm in many countries and girls may give their consent as a duty and sign of respect to their family and community. However, where one of the parties in a marriage is under the age of 18 years old, consent cannot always be assumed to be 'free and full' and is rarely in the best interest of the girl.

**Scale of Child Marriage** (Source: <http://www.arsrc.org/downloads/Breaking-Vows-Early-and-Forced-Marriage-and-Girls-Education.pdf>)

Ten million girls a year experience early or forced marriage, which is one girl every three seconds. One in every three girls in the developing world is married by the age of 18 and one out of every seven girls in the world's poorest countries is married before their fifteenth birthday. In countries like Niger, Chad, Mali, Bangladesh, Guinea and the Central African Republic (CAR), the rate of early and forced marriage is 60 per cent and over. It is particularly high in South Asia (46 per cent) and in sub-Saharan Africa (38 per cent). Although the average age at first marriage is gradually increasing worldwide, the pace of change is slow. In Nepal, Guinea and Bangladesh, for instance, the average age at first marriage for girls still remains below 18. Twelve of the 20 countries with the highest prevalence are members of the Commonwealth. Half the world's child brides live in South Asia, accounting for more early marriages than in any other region.

Region	% women aged 20-24, married or in union by age 18	Number of women aged 20-24, married or in union by age 18 (millions)
South Asia	46	32.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	39	14.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	25	6.3
Middle East and North Africa	18	3.5

East Asia and the Pacific	19	5.6
CEE/CIS	12	2.2

Source: Plan UK Report, 2011

### Causes

Early and forced marriage is most prevalent where poverty, birth and death rates are high, there is greater incidence of conflict and civil strife and lower levels of overall development, including schooling, employment and healthcare. Married young girls are frequently taken out of school, are at a higher risk of HIV infection, early pregnancy and health conditions such as obstetric fistula. If she survives childbirth her children are less likely to grow up healthy and go to school, continuing the cycle of poverty for generations to come.

Marriage frequently follows school leaving. But it is not clear the direction of causation. Is it that early marriage “causes” girls to leave school prematurely such that those girls and their families predisposed to early marriage are less inclined to invest in girls’ schooling? The interaction between the number of years of a girl’s schooling and the postponement of marriage is firmly established by demographic and fertility studies.

### Girls’ Education

<http://www.plan-uk.org/what-we-do/campaigns/because-i-am-a-girl/#>

At least 75 million girls around the world are not in school. Investing in a girl’s education is vital – it helps her to know she has rights, exercise them when she needs to and achieve her potential.

It is also central to unlocking the cycle of poverty.

- An educated girl is less likely to marry and to have children whilst she is still a child.
- An educated girl is more likely to be literate, healthy and survive into adulthood, as are her children.
- An educated girl is more likely to reinvest her income back into her family, community and country.

## 3. Key Papers

### Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls’ Education

Authors: Juliette Myers and Rowan Harvey, Researchers: Alana Livesey and Allison Wong, Plan UK, 2011

<http://www.arsrc.org/downloads/Breaking-Vows-Early-and-Forced-Marriage-and-Girls-Education.pdf>

### The impact of girls’ education on early marriage

Getting and keeping girls in school may be one of the best ways to foster later, consensual marriage, while also contributing to delayed sexual initiation, lower rates of HIV and AIDS and other morbidities, and greater gender equality. One study in rural Bangladesh highlighted that when marriage is delayed, girls are much more likely to stay in school for longer, and be literate.

There is a strong association between higher age at marriage and higher education levels. A global analysis of data by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) determined that girls’ education is ‘the most important factor associated with child marriage’. Another study found that in 29 countries, women who married at the age of 18 or older had more education than those who married at a younger age. Differences in duration of school careers by age at first marriage were evident both in countries with low levels of overall education, such as Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Mali, and in countries with higher levels of education such as South Africa, Peru and Zimbabwe.

Timely enrolment and duration of education – specifically transition to secondary level – is also critical if schooling is to protect girls from early and forced marriage. Estimates have put the length of schooling

needed to make a difference to a girl's ability to have a say in the timing of her marriage and the selection of her partner at between 7 and 10 years.

This report also gives examples of education-based interventions which delay and prevent early and forced marriage. The report also includes information on the impact of early marriage on girls' education.

### **Growing up global: the changing transitions to adulthood in developing countries**

Cynthia Lloyd (2005) National Research Council (US)

Can be read online at: [http://books.google.com/books/about/Growing\\_up\\_global.html?id=4EGF6vKb2\\_8C](http://books.google.com/books/about/Growing_up_global.html?id=4EGF6vKb2_8C)

In the book *Growing Up Global* (Cynthia Lloyd, Ed), the authors discuss education's impact on marriage, arguing that girls' education delays marriage because it enhances girls' autonomy, widens girls' worldview, increases the time it takes to find a suitable (read: more highly educated) mate, and keeps girls otherwise occupied, since school is viewed as incompatible with marriage. Investing in girls' schooling can mean investing in a future that does not include early marriage. The "Transition to Marriage" chapter is particularly useful.

The increase in girls' educational attainment during the last several decades is widely viewed as the primary cause for the delay in marriage of women (Mathur, Greene and Malhotra 2003, UNCPD 2002). In discussions of the positive association between education and age at marriage of women, the autonomy enhancing effect of school is generally emphasised (Lloyd and Mensch, 1999). While empirical validation of the particular mechanism is lacking, education is said to give young women greater influence over the timing of marriage and the choice of partner. Education is also thought to broaden a girl's perspective on the world.

### **Education and Child Marriage: Key Issues and Trajectories**

Ed Atkins and Angela Melchiorre, *Education Action*, Issue 25, August 2011

[http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/education\\_action\\_25\\_-\\_english\\_0.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/education_action_25_-_english_0.pdf)

The interaction between education and child marriage is shaped by a number of factors, attitudes, and values which are closely linked and often difficult to unravel. Research undertaken by the Right to Education Project has identified some salient issues and trajectories in this regard which need to be further exposed in order to untangle conceptual challenges and bring about change on the ground.

If children are ensured educational and vocational opportunities, they will tend to delay marriage, postpone and space childbearing, and develop increasingly fuller participation in the life of the local and wider community.

The research revealed how important it is to better analyse and articulate the impact of education on marriage practices. Simply making schools available and accessible is not sufficient to keep children away from child marriage. Nor does it actually ensure that children receive an education worthy of the name. UNICEF affirms that "*the interaction between the number of years of a girl's schooling and the postponement of marriage is firmly established by demographic and fertility studies*": the longer a girl stays in school, the later she will get married and have children. However, this direct relationship is not always as clear or as firm as this assertion leads us to believe. UNICEF itself questions whether it is child marriage that stops girls from going to school or the lack of schooling that facilitates and reinforces traditional practices such as child marriage.

This complicated jigsaw requires an equally complex answer. In families where investing in school for a daughter is still seen as a waste of money and time if the girl will in any case only become a wife and mother, it is not so much views on education but rather perceptions of gender roles that need to be challenged and changed. Where child marriage still takes place even if national legislation is in place to prevent it, both the government and civil society organisations should work hard together to facilitate knowledge and understanding of the law and its implementation (including through effective sanctions), to raise awareness about the detrimental impact child marriage has on children's health as well as on their physical and psychosocial development, and to highlight the transformative role of education.

**How to End Child Marriage: Action Strategies for Prevention and Protection, International Center for Research on Women (ICRW),**

ICRW, 2007, Washington D.C.

<http://www.icrw.org/files/publications/How-to-End-Child-Marriage-Action-Strategies-for-Prevention-and-Protection-Brief.pdf>

This policy brief outlines what can and should be done to end child marriage: changing harmful cultural norms, supporting community programmes, maximising foreign assistance, increasing access to girls' education, providing young women with economic opportunities, addressing the unique needs of child brides and evaluating programmes to determine what works.

**Increase Access to Girls' Education**

Research suggests programmes that provide or increase access to education for girls are crucial to delaying marriage. Girls with eight or more years of schooling are less likely to marry early than girls with zero to three years of education. But primary education is not enough. Women are more likely to control their own destinies and effect change in their communities when they have higher levels of education. All levels of education must be made more accessible to girls so that more girls will be enrolled and retained. Parents and community leaders also need to be sensitised to support girls in school. And married girls, too, need to be encouraged to continue their education.

Girls in developing countries often must overcome substantial obstacles in accessing educational opportunities. Research shows that low levels of education greatly increase the risk that a girl will marry as a child. Higher levels of education—particularly attending secondary school—can protect girls from early marriage. In Mozambique, nearly 60 percent of girls with no education are married by 18, compared to 10 percent of girls with secondary schooling and less than 1 percent with higher education. Research shows that schooling helps girls develop aspirations and gives them skills to negotiate who and when they will marry.

**New Lessons: The Power of Educating Adolescent Girls.**

Cynthia B. Lloyd, Population Council

[http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/2009PGY\\_NewLessons.pdf](http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/2009PGY_NewLessons.pdf)

For 15 years, the development community has known about the radically high return of investing in girls' education, yet little light has been shown on the intersection of education and adolescent girls. This report fills that gap. The authors find that staying in school through adolescence brings immediate benefits to girls during a high-risk phase of life, and long-term benefits to families and communities. This report highlights the unique educational needs of adolescent girls, provides a first-ever compendium of more than 300 past and current programmes and spells out concrete actions for change.

It is important to invest in adolescent girls. If they stay in school, remain healthy, and gain real skills, they marry later, have fewer and healthier children, and earn an income that they'll invest back into their family.

**Myth: Pregnancy and early marriage are leading causes of dropout among adolescent girls.**

**Fact: While dropout rates rise with age and are often greater for girls than boys among older adolescents, girls are more likely to drop out for reasons other than pregnancy and early marriage; pregnancy and early marriage tend to occur shortly after dropout....Pregnancy and early marriage are more likely to be consequences rather than causes of early school leaving**

Both boys and girls drop out of school for myriad reasons including illness, economic difficulties at home, lack of interest, poor performance, low value placed on education, distance to school, or school quality. Pregnancy and early marriage are often mentioned as reasons why girls in poor countries may not be able to continue in school. These reasons are unique to girls. However, pregnancy and early marriage are more likely to be consequences rather than causes of early school leaving. Typically it is the girls who are

lagging behind in school who are most likely to drop out (Grant and Hallman 2008; Marteleto et al. 2008). Given that dropout rates for girls are higher than for boys in many settings during adolescence, but their performance is no worse, this would suggest that poor-performing girls are more vulnerable to dropout than poor-performing boys. Once girls have left school, pregnancy and/or marriage are likely to follow in short order.

### **Empowering Young Women: What Do We Know?**

Rachel Glennerster and Kudzai Takavarasha, May 2010

Originally prepared for the Nike Foundation by The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab at MIT

<http://www.povertyactionlab.org/publication/empowering-young-women-what-do-we-know>

This report states that:

- Keeping girls in school reduces marriage rates
- Conditional cash transfers (CCTs) for education can reduce marriage rates among out of school girls
- Scholarships for girls have been found to have effects on age of marriage.

This report also includes case studies and evaluations.

### **New Insights on Preventing Child Marriage: A Global Analysis of Factors and Programmes**

Jain, S. and Kurz, K., 2007, International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), Washington D.C.

<http://www.icrw.org/files/publications/New-Insights-on-Preventing-Child-Marriage.pdf>

This report by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) looks at the range of existing programmes addressing child marriage, and seeks to answer the question 'what does and does not work in preventing early marriage?'. Using Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) data, the authors examined potential risk and protective factors for child marriage for the 20 countries with the highest child marriage prevalence (hotspot countries). Of the 12 factors analysed in this study, four were found to be strongly associated with child marriage:

- (1) girls' education is the most important factor associated with child marriage;
- (2) age gap between husbands and wives - education and awareness-raising on the negative outcomes often associated with age gap, such as domestic violence, helps minimise this phenomenon;
- (3) regional differences mean that intervention efforts should target efforts at regions with higher rates of child marriage
- (4) household poverty influences the age of marriage. Prevention efforts could address this by increasing girls' ability to generate income, by helping families offset the costs of postponing marriage, and by changing local norms on bride price and dowry.

The report concludes there is a **"tipping point" age**, the age at which child marriage prevalence in a country starts to increase markedly (usually 13 or 14). Programmes seeking to prevent marriage when it first becomes a serious problem should target and tailor efforts to young girls approaching the tipping point age (p.2).

ICRW's global scan of programmes that directly or indirectly address child marriage found that there were a total of 66 programmes: 49 programmes in Africa, 34 in South Asia and four in other areas of the world. No programmes were found in five of the hotspot countries with the highest child marriage prevalence - Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Nicaragua and Yemen. Only one programme was identified in six other hotspot countries - Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, and Zambia.

## **4. Case Studies**

### **Female Secondary School Assistance Project, Bangladesh**

[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEMPowerment/Resources/14828\\_Bangladesh-web.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEMPowerment/Resources/14828_Bangladesh-web.pdf)



A programme in Bangladesh that provides stipends to rural girls to attend secondary school has impacted marriage rates, though not dropout rates. The programme has contributed to reducing child marriage in Bangladesh. The marriage rate of girls aged 13-15 dropped from 29% to 14% in the first few years of the programme, from 1992 to 1995.

**Plan Case Studies (sent by email from Rowan Harvey)  
Education-based interventions delay and prevent EFM:**

- In the Indian state of Maharashtra, girls' participation in a life-skills education course has been demonstrated to delay their marriage by a year. (UNICEF, 2011)
- An innovative educational intervention offers evidence that parents are delaying the marriage of their 11–19-year-old daughters in response to a secondary- school scholarship programme. In this programme monthly stipends are deposited into a girl's bank account if she attends secondary school 65 percent of the time that school is in session and if she maintains a passing grade-point average (Cited in Haberland et al., 2004).
- The Ethiopian Ministry of Youth and Sport, working with regional and local governments as well as international partners, initiated the Berhane Hewan ('Light for Eve' in Amharic) programme in 2004 to prevent early marriage and support married adolescent girls by focusing on three areas: mentorship by adult women, continuation of school, and livelihood training for out-of-school girls. Over the course of two years the programme, which targeted girls aged 10–19 in the Amhara region, increased girls' friendship networks, school attendance, age at marriage, knowledge of reproductive health and contraceptive use. The intervention owed its success in large part to its attention to the complex social and economic drivers of girls' isolation and disadvantage. Following an 18-month pilot period, the project is being expanded to other parts of the region. (UNICEF, 2011).
- There are further case studies included in countries such as India, Kenya, Malawi and across West Africa.

**Bangladesh Case Study, Plan UK**

<http://www.plan-uk.org/news/blogs/guest-bloggers/Child-Marriage-Free-Bangladesh/>

Mingming Remata Evora, Plan Bangladesh's Country Director, states that two thirds of girls in Bangladesh are married before the legal age of 18. Plan has found that girls like Fatima can be powerful advocates for ending early and forced marriage. Laxmiper is one of five villages in Gazipur that Plan, in cooperation with the local community and government, has supported to become 'Child Marriage Free', affecting around 30,000 girls.

**Educational Outcomes and the Transition to Marriage: Results from Malawi Schooling and Adolescent Survey (2007-2010)**

Barbara S. Mensch, Erica Soler-Hampejsek, Paul Hewett and Christine Kelly, Population Council.

This project includes some analyses of the links between education and early marriage in a Malawi adolescent survey which is taking place between 2007 and 2010. Data has been collected annually beginning in 2007 when the sample was aged 14-16. Round 5 data collection has just been completed in August.

**Delaying Marriage for Girls in India: Formative Research to Design Interventions for Changing Norms**

Priya Nanda, Sonvi Kapoor, Sushmita Mukherjee, Marcy Hersh, Sharmishtha Basu and Rashi Bhargava, ICRW, 2011

<http://www.icrw.org/publications/delaying-marriage-girls-india>

This study examines the social norms surrounding child marriage, positive role models, community engagement and government-led efforts to prevent the practice in the states of Rajasthan and Bihar, which have some of the highest prevalence rates of early marriage in the country. Findings reveal that deeply entrenched norms are slowly changing through promising interventions to delay marriage and encourage girls' education. The report also makes recommendations toward the development of an integrated intervention strategy to delay marriage for girls by enhancing girl's access to education, empowerment, community mobilisation, partnership with media and strengthening of law enforcement. The study was undertaken by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) with the technical supervision of UNICEF India and the financial support of the European Commission.

### **Stop Violence Against Girls in School: A cross-country analysis of baseline research from Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique**

Jenny Parkes and Jo Heslop, Institute of Education, University of London, for ActionAid International. September 2011 (forthcoming)

In all three countries the data clearly shows that, despite widening access, many girls do not complete primary school, and many less than boys. Girls' completion rates in Mozambique are particularly concerning, and they also highlight how gender gaps widen with each level of schooling. At secondary school gender gaps widen further, with just over half of girls enrolled in secondary school in Ghana and Kenya and less than one in five in Mozambique.

These gender gaps raise questions about the gendered environment of the school as well as external economic and gendered barriers that affect girls' schooling, particularly as they enter their teenage years and face expectations of marrying early and associated pregnancy and child bearing. Sexual activity, whether consensual, coerced or forced often results in girls becoming pregnant, all too often putting an end to their education. For example, in Mozambique pregnant students have to attend night school which means they may have to travel at night to another school further away that offers night classes, which make them more vulnerable and adds costs, all of which may mean they chose to drop out. Nationally, girls in Mozambique start sexual activity earlier, have a higher risk of HIV, marry earlier and begin child bearing earlier, than girls in Ghana and Kenya. There are evidently wide disparities across regions of the three countries, so it is important to be cautious in drawing conclusions from national figures.

In some of the most marginalised rural communities in Ghana or Kenya, increased access to schooling may be shifting aspirations of young people, but still not expanding spaces for decision-making (Casely-Hayford 2009). A recent study of Kenyan Maasai schoolgirls, for example, found girls used their identities as 'schoolgirls' as a way to challenge gendered expectations about FGM, marriage and family, though FGM and early marriage remain entrenched practices (Switzer 2010).

Head teachers spoke occasionally about taking action to intervene with families who had withdrawn their daughters from school for marriage or mistreated them at home. Head teachers in all three countries, for example, referred to how ActionAid, often in collaboration with partners like AMUDEIA in Mozambique and Songtaba in Ghana, had led training workshops for teachers on violence, children's rights, and sometimes on sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS:

### **Improving the Reproductive Health of Married and Unmarried Youth in India: Evidence of Effectiveness and Costs from Community-based Interventions,**

Pande, R., Kurz, K., Walia, S., MacQuarrie, K. and Jain, S., 2006, International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), Washington, D.C.

<http://www.icrw.org/files/publications/Improving-the-Reproductive-Health-of-Married-and-Unmarried-Youth-in-India.pdf>

This programme implemented and tested a variety of models to improve adolescent and youth reproductive health for married and unmarried girls, boys and couples across India. The authors report that as a result of the interventions, girls' age at marriage increased by one year, from 16 to 17. Some of the lessons learned about what processes and models work are described on pages 3-4 and include:



- **Life skills programmes** can increase the age at marriage for girls, girls' confidence and their perception of their ability to make decisions about marriage and childbearing.
- An **integrated health care programme** with reproductive health education, clinical referrals, and sexuality counselling can be used in a rural community. However, the extent to which youth will access and benefit from each programme element may vary.
- **Village-level female health aides** are able to reach, examine and treat a larger proportion of young rural married women than a conventional doctor, even if the doctor is a woman.
- **Community involvement and mobilisation** is associated with higher levels of some reproductive health knowledge and use of services for many, but not all, health issues. It is also effective in creating a supportive environment for youth reproductive health and changing attitudes among key decision makers who influence youth's environments.

As a result of the interventions, the state government of Maharashtra is using the life skills model from IHMP's Delaying Age at Marriage in Rural Maharashtra project to improve girls' reproductive and sexual health in rural Maharashtra. The life skills course included individual projects carried out in the communities, local recruitment of teachers, and regular and planned meetings with parents. In the planning phase, mothers reported that it would be easier for them to overcome the social pressure to get their daughters married early if their daughters were in school. However, formal education beyond the 4th standard was unavailable in the communities, and they welcomed the life skills programme as an alternative. After only one year of the program, age at marriage in the area increased from 16 to 17 years. This increase was a community-level result, not just among girls participating in the life skills classes themselves, a tribute to how the communities as a whole were mobilised to change the social norm around the age at marriage.

#### **Catalysing Change: Improving Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health through DISHA, an Integrated Programme in India, ICRW, Washington D.C.**

Kanesathasan, A., Cardinal, L., Pearson, E., Das Gupta, S., Mukherjee, S. and Malhotra, A., 2008, <http://www.icrw.org/publications/catalysing-change>

This programme aims to provide youth with alternatives to early marriage through enhanced livelihoods skills and options. By focusing on youth and community attitudes towards early marriage and providing youth skills through peer education, youth groups and livelihoods training, the DISHA activities increased the average age at marriage from 15.9 to 17.9 years. Youth knowledge and attitudes around marriage improved significantly.

The evaluation included control areas (not exposed to DISHA) and the authors report that youth exposed to DISHA were 14% more likely to know the legal age at marriage for girls in India. The program's effect on changing youth attitudes around the ideal age at marriage for girls was small but statistically significant. Youth exposed to DISHA were only 4% more likely to think the ideal age at marriage for girls was 18 or older than matched youth not exposed to DISHA. Ideally, a stronger attitudinal programme effect was desired, but any change in attitudes around this deeply entrenched social norm is an important step in the right direction (p.14).

#### **CARE Nepal Strategies and Interventions on Preventing Child Marriage**

CARE Nepal, 2011

This paper notes that a total of 1,008 peer educators (PEs) have been trained. PEs identify households with children of marriageable age and make regular home visits to these households to provide information as well as to negotiate and convince the parents and all other critical people involved to delay the marriages. The project has also established Child Marriage Eradication Committees (CMECs) to help stop child marriages and prevent GBV in each of the 112 VDCs. More than 136 cases of child marriages have been postponed and cancelled by the efforts of the CMECs. The paper concludes by summarising the major findings of the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey, which CARE conducted during the first year of the project to inform their behaviour change communication (BCC0 strategy).

#### **Coverage and Effects of Child Marriage Prevention Activities in Amhara Region, Ethiopia,**

Gage, A.J. (Ed), 2009, Addis Continental, USAID, and Measure Evaluation, Chapel Hill, NC.  
<http://www.cpc.unc.edu/measure/publications/pdf/tr-09-70.pdf>

This report outlines the findings of the Early Marriage Evaluation Study (EMES), a household survey of 3,677 female adolescents aged 10-19 years, 1,737 male youth aged 15-24 years, and 4,670 caretakers in Amhara Region, Ethiopia. The Amhara region of Ethiopia has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, with 31% of women aged 15-49 years married before the age of 15 in 2000. Since 2002, USAID/Ethiopia has funded several initiatives to prevent child marriage, including activities that are: integrated into basic education programmes; integrated into community-based reproductive health programmes; public education activities; and collaborative partnerships with national and regional legal and civil society organisations. The EMES provides detailed information on the reach and effects of early marriage prevention activities in the region. Key findings include.

- **Reach of messages:** Non-print media reached more people than print media. Early marriage prevention messages were largely received by adolescent girls and male youth through religious leaders and by caretakers through community meetings.
- **Exposure to information about early marriage changed attitudes towards early marriage:** The age cut-off where respondents considered marriage to be too early tended to increase with the number of information sources they were exposed to about early marriage prevention.
- **Low levels of knowledge about marriage laws.** Although only half of respondents were aware that there was a legal minimum age at marriage, knowledge increased with regular exposure to early marriage prevention messages.
- **Stopping early marriage.** Approximately one out of four planned marriages of underage girls (younger than 18) was stopped. The impact was negligible in rural areas, but in urban settings, the proportion of child marriages that were stopped was significantly higher in programme areas than in non-programme areas (34 percent versus 19 percent).
- **Improved outcomes for girls whose marriages were stopped:** 76% of girls whose marriages were stopped were currently attending school at the time of the survey and 97% were never married. Only 5% had given birth. However, the survey recommended that future programmes address the mental health needs of girls, whose marriages had been stopped, noting that many felt unhappy, depressed, lonely and worried about their future marriage prospects.
- **Provide support groups for girls with stopped marriages.** An evaluation of a child marriage prevention intervention in Amhara region, Ethiopia concluded that many girls with stopped marriages felt depressed, lonely and worried about their future marriage prospects. The report recommends that future programmes should consider setting up support groups within the community for these girls.

**Tostan, 2009, Evaluations: The Impact of the Community Empowerment Program, Tostan International, Senegal**  
<http://www.tostan.org/data/files/tostan%20evaluations.pdf>

This report summarises the evaluations that have been conducted on Tostan's Community Empowerment Programme in Senegal. Tostan is an international NGO based in Senegal, which uses local facilitators to teach education sessions to communities on issues such as child marriage and female genital cutting (FGC). Participants pass on their new knowledge to others in and outside the community through intervillage meetings. The programme has led to public discussions and declarations against child marriage and female genital cutting in more than 300 villages. The programme also uses traditional ways of conveying messages, such as dance, poetry, theatre and song. The paper notes that Tostan's model for peaceful social change is based on the belief that communities themselves must consciously and actively pursue the process of change from within. The programme was able to bring about change in

knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in 90 intervention villages, and these were reinforced by a public declaration by approximately 300 villages against child marriage and FGC.

### **Early School Leaving in Africa (ESLA) From social exclusion to active citizenship**

<http://www.rug.nl/internationalrelations/africa/projects/esla/index?lang=en>

In the last twenty years a complex of problems is becoming visible in many sub-Saharan countries. Former research in sub-Saharan countries on early school leavers drew attention to several barriers to schooling such as direct and indirect costs of schooling to families, high repetition rate, child labour in rural areas, lack of productive relationships between schools and businesses, teenage pregnancy and the decreasing impact of traditional social structures.

In the Early School Leaving in Africa (ESLA) project, Tanzanian, Ugandan and Dutch researchers and students are collaborating to contribute to the combat of social exclusion of early school leavers in Tanzania, Uganda and other African countries. ESLA is a comprehensive research programme, incorporating a wide variety of African and European perspectives. Through (Master) student exchanges, PhD research, joint publications, conferences and seminars the ESLA project involves research institutions from a variety of countries, thereby avoiding making early-school leaving an isolated problem of the three countries participating directly in the research.

## **5. Other Useful Sources and Information**

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World Vision (2008), "Before She's Ready: 15 Places Girls Marry by 15", Monrovia: World Vision.

Keeping the Promise: Five Benefits of Girls' Education

The AED Center for Gender Equity, 2006

<http://www.aed.org/Publications/loader.cfm?url=/commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&pageid=15504>

Girls' Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Gender Equality, Empowerment, and Economic Growth

The World Bank, 2008

[http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/DID\\_Girls\\_edu.pdf](http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/DID_Girls_edu.pdf)

Promoting Gender Equality through Mentoring

Oxfam, 2009

[http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/CEF\\_GEEP\\_gender\\_mentoring\\_report\\_2009.pdf](http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/CEF_GEEP_gender_mentoring_report_2009.pdf)

Making Education Work: The Gender Dimension of the School to Work Transition

UNGEI East Asia and Pacific Region, 2008

[http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/UNC\\_UNGEI3\\_130109\\_Final\\_Web.pdf](http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/UNC_UNGEI3_130109_Final_Web.pdf)

The Role of Schools in Promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health Among Adolescents in Developing Countries

Population Council, 2007

<http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/wp/pgy/006.pdf>

### **What does it take to educate a girl?**

<http://www.viewchange.org/videos/to-educate-a-girl?gclid=CPvcm72g66oCFSkjtAodjWsbNQ>

Framed by the United Nations global initiative to provide equal access to education for girls by 2015, To Educate a Girl takes a ground-up and visually stunning view of that effort through the eyes of girls in Nepal and Uganda who are out of school, starting school, or fighting against the odds to stay in school.

### **The Burden of Educational Exclusion: Understanding and Challenging Early School Leaving in Africa**

Jacques Zeelen, Josje van der Linden, Dorothy Nampota and Maximiano Ngabirano (Eds.)

<https://www.sensepublishers.com/files/9789460912849PR.pdf>

According to statistics from the Ministry of Education in Uganda, the inability to pay school fees accounts for 62 percent of drop-outs. The second highest cause of drop-out is pregnancy and marriage, accounting for 11 percent.

### **Useful Information**

#### **Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls' Education**

Authors: Juliette Myers and Rowan Harvey, Researchers: Alana Livesey and Allison Wong, Plan UK, 2011

<http://www.arsrc.org/downloads/Breaking-Vows-Early-and-Forced-Marriage-and-Girls-Education.pdf>

Ending Early and Forced Marriage is a prerequisite to the successful realisation of the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**.

#### **MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.**

Early and forced marriage often marks the end of a girl's schooling and the beginning of a life at home. She will have few opportunities to find work, and if she does, her lack of education means it will be poorly

paid, making it almost impossible to break free from poverty. The children of mothers with lower levels of education who live in poverty are more likely to be malnourished.

**MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education.**

Early and forced marriage limits a girl's opportunity to go to school or benefit from alternative or vocational education. In turn, the children of mothers with low levels of education are less likely to be educated themselves.

**MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women.**

Early and forced marriage reinforces and exacerbates inequality between men and women. Women married at a younger age have a lower status and less decision-making power within their households than those who marry later.

**MDG 4: Reduce child mortality.**

Young brides become young mothers. Babies born to girls in their teens are more likely to be premature and less likely to survive than those born to women in their twenties.

**MDG 5: Improve maternal health.**

Early and forced marriage has a significant impact on a girl's reproductive and maternal health. A girl in her teens is twice as likely to die in childbirth as a woman in her twenties. If she gives birth before the age of 15, her risk is five times higher.

**MDG 6: Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases.**

Early and forced marriage heightens a girl's risk of HIV infection, since she is less able to negotiate safer sex with her often older partner.

**Early Marriage**

UNICEF, 2001

<http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/digest7e.pdf>

The interaction between the number of years of a girl's schooling and the postponement of marriage is firmly established by demographic and fertility studies. On average, women with seven or more years of education marry four years later and have 2.2 fewer children than those with no education. However, the precise nature of the interaction between education and marriage is not always evident. Are girls withdrawn from school to marry, or is lack of schooling for girls part of the pattern of traditional expectations and roles?

The situation in Bangladesh, however, is clear – a girl will be withdrawn from school if a good marriage prospect arises. DHS data also show a clear link in some other countries, including Nepal, Kazakhstan and Indonesia. Although attitudes towards the education of girls have begun to change even in traditional societies, many parents still believe that investment in a girl's education is wasted when she is simply going to be married and work in another household. The costs of the investment in education reinforce the impetus towards the girl's withdrawal from school. In rural areas, secondary education often means that a girl must leave home to live in a school dormitory. Parents fear that this may expose her to risks including premarital sex and pregnancy. In Northern Nigeria, for example, girls are often kept out of school for this very reason. Even where girls can live at home while attending school, fears about their possible sexual activity, about sexual harassment, or about insecurity on the journey to and from school, discourage their attendance.

Nyysolaa (2007) looked at the ways in which a mother's education level delayed the age of marriage and improved the food security for her children. However, the benefits went more noticeably to male rather than female children. Male children's weight-height indicators were more positively affected by the increased level of a mother's education compared to female children. This suggested that despite increasing women's education male preference within the family meant that girls did not automatically experience benefits in terms of nutrition.

**Girls' education: opportunities, challenges and perspectives**  
**Launch of Research Reports from Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria and Tanzania**  
**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September, London**

At this event there was emphasis on:

- The quality of education and integrating gender equity as a way to make changes. While EFA messages are clearly impacting at local levels with increasing access and reducing gender gaps at school, attitudes to gender and violence seem harder to shift despite some government efforts to challenge this through for example gender units within education services and Girl Child Education Officers. This may have a positive impact on child marriage.
- The studies confirmed the importance of particular strategic interventions concerned with teacher education and expanding girls' horizons pointing to a need for further investigation into approaches to working in a sustained and strategic way at multiple levels with teachers, parents, school committees, communities, local government and, crucially, girls themselves to transform their education. It highlights the importance of in-school and out-of-school approaches to bring about significant change for gender equality.
- The research discussed also used Gender Profile Scores (girls' opportunities and outcomes relative to boys) and the Gender Management Profile Score (gender training and outreach at and from management levels).
- Forms of violence are closely linked to poverty, with forms of punishment, early marriage, and transactional sex related to the demands on girls to provide support for their families in a context of economic hardship.
- It was also found that girls speak out more about issues such as child marriage when teachers are more qualified. Female teachers can also have a positive impact.
- There was also an emphasis on the role of the community and the context and a need to change what is culturally acceptable.
- The policy environment was also discussed and it was noted that practical alternatives need to be disseminated otherwise making policies does not change practice.
- Dr Fatima Adamu will be leading some research on early marriage and education in Nigeria for the TEGINT project.

**Transforming Education for Girls in Nigeria and Tanzania: A Cross Country Analysis of the Baseline Report**

Institute of Education and ActionAid, 2011

35% of girls in Tanzania and 43% in Nigeria stated early marriage was an obstacle to education and 67% of Nigerians and 34% of Tanzanians believed stopping early marriage would help overcome obstacles to education. This report also looks at the gender profiles of schools as a way of increasing social change and found that high levels of gender equity led to girls speaking out about obstacles such as child marriage and working to change the situation.

Another issue with regard to the effect that education has on child marriage is the view of stakeholders. This report asked girls, head teachers, school management committees and village chairs reasons for girls not attending school and only girls and head teachers saw child marriage as an issue. Therefore outreach work within the community and with other stakeholders may help increase education's impact.

## **6. Gaps in Knowledge**

Experts asked in the course on doing this report mentioned the following knowledge gaps:

- Marriage frequently follows school leaving but it is not clear the direction of causation.
- There is not much information on education as a preventative strategy for early marriage, and little available research on early marriage as a cause of school drop out.



- The effect of the educational level of the mother and father on child marriage is an area which should be explored.
- What kinds of interventions are able to delay child marriage – we know risk factors, but less about what can be done to delay it.

### **Jain and Kurz (2007)- Summarised above**

ICRW reported a research and evaluation of child marriage programmes, with only 8% of programmes involving research and evaluation. The report notes that —the programmes scan was unable to answer whether existing programmes are in fact reducing the prevalence of child marriage because evaluation results were not available for most of them. Of the 66 programmes captured in the scan, reports on results were found in only about 10 percent of programmes. Even fewer programmes provided information on an evaluation, or how results were determined (p.37).

### **Scoping Paper for PLAN Because I am a Girl 2012 Report (Forthcoming)**

Elaine Unterhalter and Charlotte Nussey, Institute of Education, University of London

- Early marriage is often symptomatic of a complex nexus of inequity associated with gender & poverty, as well as a 'culture' in some countries. 'Culture' is often a particularly crude shorthand which is not engaged with fully/unpacked and is often associated with the establishment of particular hierarchies. This nexus is not understood enough or how it relates to schooling
- We do not know why legislation outlawing early marriage is effective in some contexts (e.g. Bangladesh) but not others (e.g. Kenya)
- We do not have a global picture country by country of whether or not pregnant schoolgirls are expelled or allowed to return to school and what work is done with young parents (male and female) and how households accommodate care for the young children of teenage girls.
- Statistics on net enrolment, retention, progression to secondary school, levels of education poverty by income quintile and region are all improving the picture regarding the distribution of education, but enough is not known about which girls drop out, where, and when in the primary phase girls become most at risk of dropout. In some countries, when the primary phase ends after 6 or 8 years it can be seen that this may be associated with puberty, but there is not a complete regional map of this at the sub-national level or in relation to wealth quintiles that can help identify patterns.
- Levels of dropout have generally been discussed in relation to processes associated with households (poverty, early marriage, child labour). Very little of the work on drop out looks at conditions in school and whether or not they support girls to remain. But generally we still know too little about relations at school linked to learning, teaching, attainment, health and friendship even for girls who are not at risk of drop out.
- While good body of qualitative research has started to document what happens at school and how gender relations are played out or challenged in classrooms and the relationships pupils make with each other and their teachers (e.g. Vavrus, 2003; Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005; Maslak, 2008; Dunne, 2007; Morrell et al, 2009; Aikman and Rao, 2010) the geographic reach is still rather limited, so that there are many countries for which there are no studies at all, and in some countries there is a study only of a rural or an urban area, and no socio-economic range. In addition to the lack of geographic range, a number of aspects of girls' learning, teachers' conditions of work and actual practice in the classroom, and the gendered outcomes of schooling are not well documented.
- This review indicates that although the size of the global problem of dropout and pushout is starting to be understood and the countries where this is a major problem are being identified

there is much about the patterns within countries and regions that is not well known. The ways in which drop out may be associated with conditions in school is not well investigated, and while aspects of the link with poverty and adolescent sexuality are starting to be documented, many gaps remain.

## 7. Additional information

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