**RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

***Breaking the chains: Investigating Early Marriage in Budalangi and crafting sustainable mitigations to curb the practice***

1. **Title of the study**

Breaking the chains: Investigating the drivers to Early marriages in Budalangi, its impact and providing sustainable solutions

1. **Introduction**

Early marriages remain a deep concern especially in the rural parts of Kenya. Budalangi is one of the areas affected by this practice. The under 18-year-old girls being subjected to early marriages end up quitting education, getting health issues and being financially dependent on their partners. This practice heavily affects the socio-economic lives of these young girls. The study will investigate the prevalence of early marriages and help the policy makers to come up with sustainable measures to curb this practice. Community leaders will also be involved in providing solutions for mitigating this malpractice.

1. **Statement of the problem**

The high prevalence of early marriages in Budalangi hinders continuity to education, gender equality, economic progress and human rights. While there are studies that provide some data about early marriages, we do not have one that directly links to the practice in Budalangi. Without this study, interventions provided remain ineffective.

The study aims to fill this gap by addressing the following:

* Investigating the root causes of early marriages in Budalangi
* Measuring the impact the practice has had in the area
* Exploring the perceptions the people of Budalangi have towards this practice to identify any potential resistance in mitigating this issue
* Developing strategies and measures that are culturally appropriate to the people of Budalangi, that will curb the practice of early marriages

Through qualitative and quantitative research, the study will provide sustainable mitigations to curb this practice.

1. **Objectives**
   1. **General Objectives**

To investigate the drivers of early marriages, perceptions of the community towards the practice and provide scalable interventions and measures that would curb this practice

* 1. **Specific Objectives**
* To identify the social and cultural practices that drive the to the occurrence of early marriages
* To investigate the short term and long-term impacts of early marriages to education and health
* To evaluate the effectiveness of the current laws and policies around early marriages
* To develop data driven based measures and interventions that can be scaled for impact

1. **Research Questions**

* What are the primary cultural, social and economic driving factors of early marriages in Budalangi?
* How does the early marriages practice affect education and health?
* What are the perceptions, attitudes and resistance factors of the locals regarding early marriages
* How can policy and other measures be involved to effectively reduce the practice of early marriages in Budalangi?

1. **Significance of the study**

* The study is going to provide a data backed evidence of the extent to which early marriages has impacted the area
* Community leaders will also be a part of the policy makers to curb the practice in Budalangi
* Local and International organizations will be equipped with data-based evidence that will help them develop policies and scalable measures to curb the practice of early marriages
* Locals will be educated on the dangers of some cultures that lead to early marriages and their impact

1. **Literature Review**

Thorough analysis will be done on the existing information available focusing on the following:

* Perceptions of the international communities and Africans about early marriages
* Culture, poverty and gender inequalities perpetuating from early marriages
* Policies and measures adopted that are not being embraced by the locals
* Case studies of successful interventions of early marriages

The review will identify gaps and how the current study will address and provide new insights.

1. **Methodology**
   1. **Research Design**

Both qualitative and Quantitative methods will be used.

* 1. **Target Population**
* 15 – 17-year-old girls
* Parents and guardians
* Local and religious leaders
* Policy makers
* Teachers and other educators
  1. **Sampling Methodology and Sample size**

Stratified random sample will be used to select a sample size of 385 participants obtained from the scientific calculation of sample size.

* 1. **Data Collection Method**
* Structured surveys will be used to collect the quantitative data
* Focus Group Discussion will be used to explore community perspective and resistance to policies currently provided to curb the early marriage practice
  1. **Data Analysis**
* Quantitative data: SPSS and Excel for descriptive and inferential statistics
* Qualitative data: Thematic Analysis for identifying patterns and recurring themes

1. **Ethical Considerations**

* Consent will be asked from all participants before engaging in the study
* There will be confidentiality to all information provided
* The study will consider culture during the research

1. **Expected Outcomes**

* Detailed reasons of factors contributing to early marriage practice
* Policies to curb early marriages that are tailored for the Budalangi locals
* A model that is culturally relevant that NGOs and the government can implement
* A scalable community engagement model that can be used beyond Budalangi to curb the practice of early marriage

1. **Budget Estimates**

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| **Expense Category** | **Estimated Cost (USD)** |
| Research team training | 1,500 |
| Data collection & logistics | 3,000 |
| Community engagement | 1,500 |
| Data analysis & software | 2,000 |
| Report writing & dissemination | 2,500 |
| **Total** | **10,500** |

1. **Study Timeline**

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| **Phase** | **Duration** |
| Literature Review | 1 month |
| Data Collection | 2 months |
| Data Analysis | 2 weeks |
| Report Writing | 2 months |
| Dissemination of Findings | 1 month |

1. **References**

A detailed review of authors, publishers, peer reviewed journals and reports will be included