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Programme

Child marriage

Child marriage threatens the lives, well-being and futures of girls around the world.



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The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals call for global action to end this human rights violation by 2030.



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Nigerian refugee Hafsa Oumar, 16, stands outside a classroom in Dar es Salam camp, Lake Region, Chad. Hafsa enrolled in school for the first time when she arrived in Chad, but stopped attending once she was married.

Child marriage is often the result of entrenched gender inequality, making girls disproportionately affected by the practice. Globally, the prevalence of [child marriage among boys](#) is just one sixth that among girls.



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psychological well-being.

Because child marriage impacts a girl's health, future and family, it imposes substantial economic costs at the national level, too, with major implications for development and prosperity.

UNICEF's response

Addressing child marriage requires recognition of the factors that enable it. While the roots of the practice vary across countries and cultures, poverty, lack of educational opportunities and limited access to health care perpetuate it. Some families marry off their daughters to reduce their economic burden or earn income. Others may do so because they believe it will secure their daughters' futures or protect them.

Norms and stereotypes around gender roles and marriage age, as well as the socio-economic risk of pregnancy outside of marriage, also uphold the practice.

"If a girl of my age gets married, it's not good. I have a different perspective from many. Going to school doesn't spoil a girl – quite the contrary."

Aydoudate Abdoulaye, 15, Mali



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Syrian refugees, aged 12–17, meet in a small tent in the corner of the Saadnayel informal settlement for refugees in the Bekaa valley in Lebanon. They have come to learn from each other and discuss how to better protect their community – and children and youth in particular – from harm, including violence, sexual abuse and child marriage.

Because UNICEF works with a range of stakeholders – from grassroots organizations to high-level decision makers – across a scope of rights issues, we are uniquely positioned to identify and address the systemic barriers to reproductive health and gender equality.



[Ukraine response](#)



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UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme

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[Press release](#)

[28 June 2022](#)



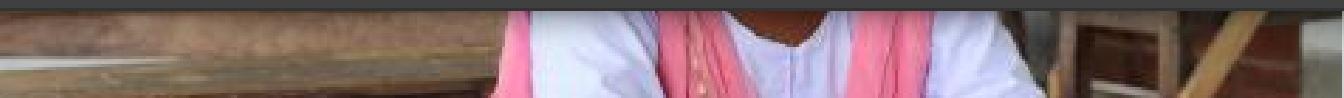
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Press release

07 March 2021

10 million additional girls at risk of child marriage due to COVID-19

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Press release

10 March 2020

UNICEF and UNFPA renew multi-country initiative to protect millions of girls from child marriage

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Four areas of influence driving child marriage

This compendium consists of findings and recommendations to strengthen the evidence base and impact of social and behaviour change interventions to end child marriage, looking at four different studies from different countries and regions.

Battling the perfect storm: Adapting programmes to end child marriage during COVID-19 and beyond

This learning brief synthesizes evidence to examine how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting child marriage risk factors and how UNICEF, within the UNFPA–UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, is pivoting to identify and respond to risk factors and adapt programming to COVID-19 limitations.

LEADS Approach to Ending Child Marriage

Developed with the African Union, this brief supports efforts to end child marriage across the continent.

Review of the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage

This brief notes learnings from implementation of the first phase of the continental campaign to end child marriage.



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