



WorldYWCA

CHILD EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE (CEFM)



More than 700 million women alive today were married before their 18th birthday.

One in three, approximately 250 million, were married before the age of 15.

Child marriage has a devastating impact on women and girls' personal development, future opportunities, economic empowerment, education, health and well-being.

Child marriage has serious consequences for the health of girls, such as poorer pregnancy prognosis, higher risk of HIV infection, obstetric fistula, unsafe abortions, and a higher risk of suffering from domestic and sexual abuse than non-married girls or older married women.

Married girls are often forced to drop out of school: they get pregnant before their bodies

are mature enough to bear children, they suffer serious health consequences and, given the lack of formal education, they can only find jobs with minimal wages. This creates a cycle of poverty that becomes very difficult to break and increasingly challenging for governments to support, with harmful consequence for families, communities and nations.

Child marriage is a clear violation of children's basic human rights.

The global community has taken significant action against child marriage, especially within the United Nations framework.

Ending Child Early and Forced Marriage is an agreed target for Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure Gender Equality by 2030.

Global facts



15 million girls a year marry before the age of 18 . That's approximately 41,000 girls per day, **28 girls per minute.** (UNICEF)



1 in 3 girls in the developing world are married **before the age of 18** and, 1 in 9 girls are married before the age of 15. (UNICEF)



Countries with high rates of child marriage are concentrated in **Sub-Saharan Africa** but the largest absolute numbers of married girls are found in **South-Asia.** (UNICEF)



Girls who give **birth before the age of 15** are 5 times more likely to die in childbirth than women aged 20-24. (GIRLS NOT BRIDES)

Our approach

Piloting a best practice programme to ensure the health and well-being of girls in marriage and girls at risk of marriage: The World YWCA has developed community-led pilots to prevent and/or mitigate the harmful effects of child marriage on the health and wellbeing of married girls and those at risk of marriage.

Fostering community engagement and education regarding the harmful effects of early and forced marriage: Families, communities and local and religious leaders understand the harmful effects of child marriage, support and advocate for interventions in women's health, education, economic empowerment and life skills.

Developing a tailored approach to reach married girls and increase their access to health and other services: Married girls and young women have increased access to Sexual and Reproductive Health, to Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, psychosocial services and educational, legal, economic development opportunities.

Advocating for legislation and enforcement of existing laws to protect girls from child marriage: Strengthen the capacity of women who have experienced child marriage, to advocate at all levels to enforce laws, and access appropriate health care services which protect married girls and girls at risk

Our Outreach on CEFM

30 YWCAs

in Europe and the Middle East



24 YWCAs

in Asia-Pacific

24 YWCAs
in Latin American
and the Caribbean

28 YWCAs

in the African
continent

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