

AmplifyChange addresses Child, Early and Forced Marriages

It is estimated that 15 million girls (under the age of 18) are married each year. Globally the prevalence of child marriage has declined, but the number of girls marrying before they are 18 has risen due to population growth.

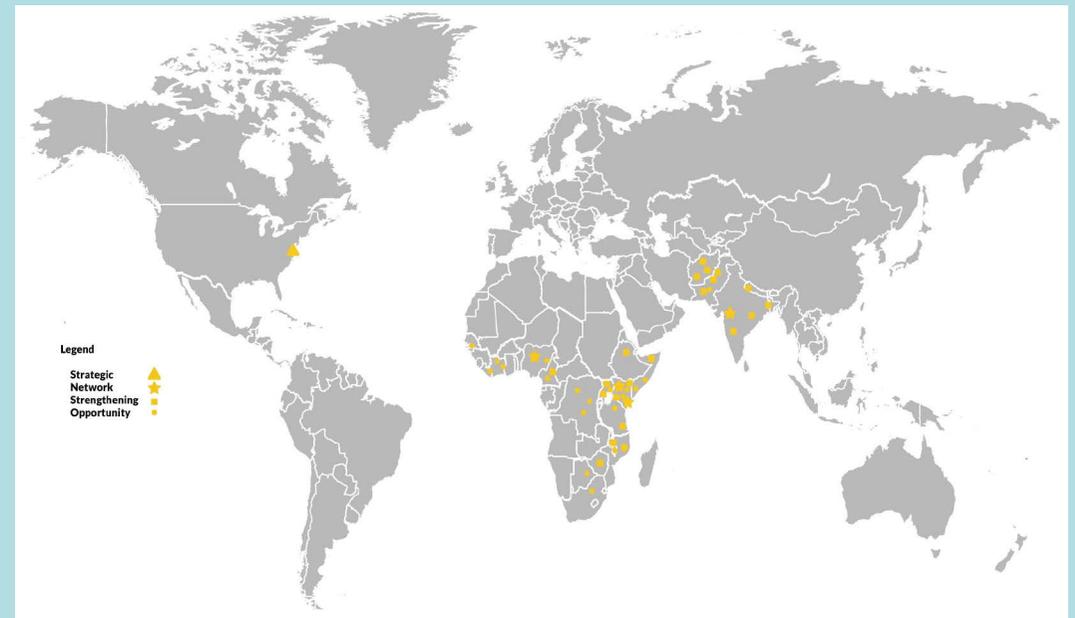
Child marriage has its roots in gender inequality and the lower status of women and girls in society, and it is a form of gender-based violence. It is fuelled by social and economic factors, including poverty, discriminatory norms and customs, and a lack of educational and economic opportunities. While the practice can affect both girls and boys, girls are by far more disproportionately affected.

Child brides are at a greater risk of being denied their rights to health, education and protection. They are more vulnerable to unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections including HIV, are at a higher risk of experiencing difficulties in pregnancy and childbirth, and are more vulnerable to domestic violence. Young married girls are also more likely to be denied access to educational and economic opportunities. Children born to young mothers experience poorer health outcomes and higher mortality rates.

A growing understanding of the reach and impact of child marriage has put the issue higher on the global agenda. The Global Goals include a specific target to eradicate child marriage under Goal 5.

AmplifyChange is supporting 62 grants to end and prevent Child, Early and Forced Marriages

The grants cover 22 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia including grants to civil society organisations working in the most challenging contexts, such as Afghanistan Pakistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Lessons learned: challenges and successes

Challenges:

1. Persistence of discriminatory cultural and social norms related to gender and sexuality, and the lower status of women and girls in society
2. Poverty and economic factors, such as dowry, which are exacerbated in times of instability, conflict or crises
3. Lack of educational and economic opportunities for girls
4. Resistance from powerful, influential religious leaders
5. Lack of legislation criminalising child marriage, or lack of implementation of existing legislation. Just 38% of countries in South Asia have put legislation in place to ban child marriage, and 46% in Sub-Saharan Africa. Where laws do exist, grantees often report that they are not properly implemented or resourced.

“If you are a woman in Afghanistan, there is a very big gap between the law on paper and the application of the law in reality”, says Humaira Ameer Rasuli, Director of Medica Afghanistan. “The Afghan government introduced the Registration of Marriage regulation in 2006 after much lobbying by women’s organisations, led by Medica Afghanistan. This legislation is really needed to avoid illegal forced and child marriages celebrated solely by religious authorities and to guarantee women’s rights as established in the Afghan law when divorce occurs. However, the reality is that this regulation is not being properly implemented and many people don’t even know about the law.”



Successful strategies:

- 1. Empowering young people.** Several of our grantees are finding that empowering young women and men with the knowledge and skills to protect and promote their rights is a powerful approach to tackling child marriage. This is supported by a recent review of the state of evidence on child marriage prevention conducted by the Population Council, which found girls' empowerment to be the most successful approach for reducing child marriage.

With the support of a strengthening grant, CINI is empowering adolescents to prevent child marriage and improve the quality of sexual and reproductive health services for young people in West Bengal, India. The young leaders have been empowered with SRHR education, leadership and advocacy skills, and mentoring support from CINI and local partner CSOs. To date, 269 child marriage cases and 5 cases of child trafficking have been prevented, 13 cases of sexual harassment cases were reported, 3 missing children cases were resolved and 19 children were re-admitted to schools. There has also been a significant (28%) increase in the numbers of adolescents accessing adolescent friendly health clinics.



Children in Need Institute (CINI)

Strengthening



India



Equality Now

Network



Tanzania

- 2. Working in collaboration,** engaging parliamentarians, and holding governments accountable.

In Tanzania, Network grantee Equality Now is working with its local partners, the Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA) and the Tanzania Ending Child Marriage Network (TECMN), to push for a new legislation outlawing child marriage. They aim to capitalise on the constitutional court ruling from July 2016, which deemed marriage under the age of 18 illegal, and the existing Law of Marriage Act (1971) that allows girls to marry at 14 with parental consent, to be unconstitutional.

The partners successfully engaged a group of 30 Tanzanian parliamentarians on the issue of child marriage in April 2017. During the meeting two young girls who were survivors of child marriage shared their moving stories. As a result of the meetings, the parliamentarians supported the fast-tracking of amendments to the Law of Marriage Act which were submitted to parliamentary committee for consideration.

Equality Now is pursuing a litigation case on child marriage at the regional level to put pressure on the government of Tanzania to act, and they are supporting the campaign in Tanzania through their extensive online social media presence.

3. **Enlisting the support of local influential and respected figures**, such as religious leaders, as allies in the campaign against child marriage can be an effective, if challenging, approach.
4. **Adopting a holistic response** by engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including engaging men and boys as allies and advocates.

How we are learning as a Fund

- **Mentorship:** Closely cooperating with grantees throughout the grant set up and implementation periods is essential
- **Cross-consortium knowledge sharing:** A working group was established across the consortium partners that provides a platform for sharing ideas and expertise on Gender-based violence, including CEFM across consortium members
- **Working with technical associates:** Exchanging information and learning with organisations with specialist expertise, such as Girls Not Brides and participation at learning platforms such as the SVRI Forum 2017

Going forward we will

- **Linking and learning:** Create opportunities for grantees to connect, share and learn from each other through different platforms, including through digital communities
- **Technical partnerships:** Continue to build on the relationship with partners, such as Girls Not Brides
- **User centred design:** Design grantee centred grant programmes and capacity building tools and resources in cooperation with grantees
- **Amplify Southern voices:** Share and learn from knowledge generated by grantees and boost their thought leadership
- **Fund the hard places, not just windows of opportunity or the easiest environments to work in:** Continue to support initiatives where they are most needed, including in challenging contexts where SRHR is weakest or civil society movements are least developed
- **Long-term, results-based financing:** Provide renewal funding to support existing, successful grantees to build on and further develop their initial projects

More information

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- [AmplifyChange on Gender-based violence / cutting](#)
 - [Blog piece for Girls Not Brides](#)
 - [Blog piece on the 2017 SVRI Forum](#)
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AmplifyChange social media:



Version 1 (Jan 2018) – this document will be regularly revised and updated with feedback from grantees and other stakeholders