



# MAPPING OF CHILD MARRIAGE INITIATIVES IN SOUTH ASIA



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The information contained in this resource is drawn from multiple sources, including interviews and a review of materials available online and provided by organizations. The content offers a representative range of work being done on child marriage by a number of organizations in the countries selected, but may not include each and every organization focusing on the issue.

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Cover photo: Children skip rope at a UNICEF-supported temporary learning centre in the flood-affected village of Fakir Jo Ghot, in Thatta District, Sindh Province. © UNICEF/2011/Noorani

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>A2A</b>	Awareness to Action	<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
<b>ABAD</b>	Apni Beti Apna Dhan	<b>GNB</b>	Girls Not Brides
<b>ADP</b>	Adolescent Development Programme	<b>ICRW</b>	International Center for Research on Women
<b>ACMI</b>	Asia Child Marriage Initiative	<b>IEC</b>	Information education communication
<b>AFPPD</b>	Asia Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development	<b>IFA</b>	Iron and Folic Acid
<b>APWR</b>	Advancement of Promoting Women's Rights	<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>ARSH</b>	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health	<b>INGO</b>	International non-governmental organization
<b>ASA</b>	Aagahi se Agay	<b>MCI</b>	Meena Communication Initiative
<b>ASK</b>	Access, Services, and Knowledge	<b>MOLSAMD</b>	Afghanistan Ministry of Youth Affairs and Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disables
<b>AusAID</b>	Australian Agency for International Development	<b>KGBV</b>	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
<b>BALIKA</b>	Bangladeshi Association for Life Skills, Income, and Knowledge for Adolescents	<b>MICS</b>	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
<b>BPS</b>	Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat	<b>MIS</b>	Management information system
<b>CCPA</b>	Child Care and Protection Act	<b>MoHA</b>	Bangladesh Ministry of Home Affairs
<b>CEDPA</b>	Centre for Development and Population Activities	<b>MSK</b>	Mahila Shikshan Kendras
<b>CPAN</b>	Child Protection Action Network	<b>MSI</b>	Marie Stopes International
<b>CYF</b>	Choose Your Future	<b>MSPACW</b>	Multi-Sectoral Program on Violence Against Women
<b>DFID</b>	UK Department for International Development	<b>NACG</b>	National Action and Co-ordinating Groups Ending Violence against Children
<b>DIDHA</b>	Development Initiative for Supporting Healthy Adolescence	<b>NAPCAW</b>	National Plan of Action on Violence against Women
<b>EECR</b>	Enabling Environment for Child Rights	<b>NEFEJ</b>	Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists
<b>ELA</b>	Employment and Livelihood for Adolescents	<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>ESCAP</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	<b>NHE</b>	Nutrition and Health Education
<b>EVAW</b>	Elimination of Violence Against Women	<b>NSPD</b>	National Skill Development Program
<b>EWN</b>	Empowering Women of Nepal	<b>NYKS</b>	Nehra Yuva Kendra Sangathan
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based Violence	<b>PAGE</b>	Planning Ahead for Girls Empowerment and Employability
<b>GEC</b>	Girls' Education Challenge	<b>PEWR</b>	Protection and Enforcement of Women's Rights
<b>GEMS</b>	Gender Equity Movement in Schools	<b>PHR</b>	Protecting Human Rights
<b>GEP</b>	Community-Based Girls' Education Project	<b>SAARC</b>	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

<b>SACG</b>	South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children	<b>UNFPA APRO</b>	UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office
<b>SAIEVAC</b>	South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
<b>SRH</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health	<b>UNICEF ROSA</b>	UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia
<b>SPC</b>	Strengthening Parliament's Capacity in Integrating Population Issues into Development	<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>SSMK</b>	Saathi Sanga Manka Kura	<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>UN</b>	United Nations	<b>VAW</b>	Violence against Women
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Action Framework	<b>VAWG</b>	Violence against women and girls
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	<b>VCPCs</b>	Village Child Protection Committees
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund	<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

# 1. BACKGROUND

**G**lobally, more than 14 million girls marry each year as children (under the age of 18 years), and many of these under the age of 15. Over 700 million women alive today were married as children. Almost half of these live in South Asia. Overall 46% of women aged 20-24 in South Asia were married before the age of 18, and 130 million girls are likely to marry as children between 2010 and 2030.<sup>1</sup> Child marriage often brings social isolation, adolescent pregnancy and cessation of education, thereby limiting future opportunities. Three countries in South Asia have a prevalence of child marriage (as percent of women currently aged 20-24 who were married by age 18) at over 40%-Bangladesh (52%), India (47%) and Nepal (41%)—with some other countries, such as Afghanistan, having more than one in three women married by the age of 18.<sup>2 3</sup> India, due to its high population, has higher numbers of child brides than most countries globally combined.<sup>4</sup>

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) adopted the *Kathmandu Call for Action to End Child Marriage in South Asia* in November 2014, formally recognising and denouncing child marriage as a human rights violation.

Gender equality is one of 17 Global Goals that make up the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), and includes a target on eliminating child, early and forced marriage. UNFPA and UNICEF’s Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage (2015-2018) plans to enhance investments in and support for married and unmarried girls and make visible the corresponding benefits; engage key actors – including young people as agents of change – in catalyzing shifts towards positive gender norms; increase political support, resources, positive policies and frameworks; and improve the data and evidence base.

In the inception phase (2015), the global programme will strengthen partnerships with government line ministries, the private sector, and civil society in South Asia. This work was commissioned to provide an up-to-date status report on child marriage initiatives/programmes (government, UN and/or NGO) in the South Asia region<sup>i</sup>. This report will serve as a basis for sharing information with and between partners, and identify good and promising practices in the region.

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<sup>i</sup> South Asia countries covered by SAARC: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

## Organization of this report

This report lays out by country significant pieces of work that contribute to ending child marriage. It starts with an overview of major regional initiatives, and then it covers each of the eight SAARC nations in turn. If a programme has been evaluated, the findings related to child marriage are mentioned in the notes. An attempt was made to group programmes according to whether the lead agency is governmental, UN, or civil society/ NGO, but these are roughly drawn distinctions due to the high level of cooperation and partnership across different types of organizations. A number of policies, key studies, and national plans are included as well for a better understanding of the legal foundation of child marriage and adolescent empowerment work. These are not comprehensive.

The final section of the report classifies each programme according to their strategies. The framework of classification is described therein.

## Notes on terminology<sup>5</sup>

The term “child marriage” is used within the UN to mean a marriage or union in which one or both spouses is under the age of 18. The vast majority of those in child marriages are girls, although in some parts of South Asia, it is not uncommon to find boys under the age of 18 who are married. “Early marriage” is a related term with less concrete parameters and can include any marriage in which a spouse may not have gained the psychosocial maturity that enables them to freely and fully consent to the terms of marriage. Therefore, it is sometimes used to denote marriages happening later than age 18 but before a nation’s legal of marriage, which in some cases is 20 without parental consent, or 21 for males. There has been debate over which of these terms is most useful to defining the problem and building support for solutions. In this review, the two terms are generally used interchangeably, the exception being when a specific initiative or policy involves those over age 18, in which case “early marriage” is used.

“Delaying age at marriage” refers to upwards movement in the average age at marriage within a group. This is different than decreasing the rate of child marriage, because, for example, a programme may be successful at raising the average age of marriage from 15 to 17 years, an accomplishment that would not change the number of those getting married under 18.

## Methodology

The parameters of this review were to include programmes from any of the SAARC nations, that operated at some point between 2005 and 2015, and that also met one of the following criteria:

- Directly aiming to impact rates of early marriage or delay age at marriage, or raise awareness of the risks of child marriage;
- Adolescent sexual and reproductive health information and services—because of the evidence that such programmes equip girls to make wise choices, advocate for their health, and prevent unplanned pregnancies that can provoke marriage, as well as mitigating the risk of poor health knowledge and care among married adolescents;
- Girls’ secondary education programmes or return to school programmes for adolescent girls—because of strong links between educational achievement and early marriage;
- Conditional cash transfers or other forms of material support linked to marital status and/or girls’ school attendance;

- Girls' and adolescent rights projects when they include empowering girls to impact decisions about marriage, for example, through building negotiating skills or strengthening parent-adolescent relationships or boy's and men's support for girls' rights;
- Legal frameworks beyond minimum age of marriage and personal status laws; most cases relate to violence against women and girls, victim-survivor response, and youth and adolescence, but a few countries have set forth national action plans to end child marriage;
- Initiatives to improve implementation and enforcement of relevant law;
- Protection services when there is evidence of adolescents using the services because they feel at risk of being married or have been married against their will. Few of the existing stand-alone helplines, for example, have data on users calling for these reasons. However, this does not discount that South Asian affiliates of Child Helpline International are potential allies in child marriage prevention.<sup>6</sup>

Note that the various pieces of legislation that set minimum ages of marriage are, for the most part, not listed in this document. While most SAARC nations have set the age of marriage at 18 or higher (the exceptions are Afghanistan and most of Pakistan, where the age for females is 16), these laws often conflict with personal status laws applicable to religious or ethnic groups (such as Muslim and Hindu personal law). The legal frameworks relating to child marriage are more complex than it may seem, and are therefore beyond the scope of the present review. The reader is directed to a number of other publications that catalogue and analyze the legalities of child marriage.

Neither does this review attempt to include all the numerous organizations across South Asia that participate in coalitions like Girls Not Brides or joint advocacy efforts such as shadow reports to UN Treaty Monitoring Bodies and Universal Joint Reviews. While these activities are essential in the movement against child marriage, there are too many actors involved to name them here.

The author located information on programmes through several means:

- Contact with UNFPA and UNICEF staff and reviewing reports of each regional and country office
- Web searches for programmes mentioned in key background pieces
- Visiting UN, government, and NGO websites with known programmes
- Communication with author's contacts in numerous organizations and regional bodies in South Asia
- Document review in the author's personal library on child marriage
- Web searches using key words, in particular for countries with lower rates of child marriage and without dedicated programmes

Despite these varied methods, there are certain to be numerous small-scale efforts that are not well-known and lack a virtual presence or documentation, or within which child marriage prevention and related work is diluted within broader social change or service provision efforts. Decentralized countries such as Pakistan are likely to have programmes at the provincial or district level that are not represented here. Also, because India is such a large nation with an active civil society and several government schemes, several smaller programmes were not included in this document.

## 2. REGIONAL

### South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC)

SAIEVAC is a body of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) whose aim is to end all forms of violence against children. It is made up of government representatives of SAARC nations; is organized in countries through coalitions of State agencies, civil society organizations, UN agencies, and children's groups; and has a regional secretariat body. Child marriage is a priority issue for SAIEVAC. The 2010-2015 workplan aimed to build stronger legal frameworks and practices to prevent child marriage.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, SAIEVAC developed the Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Asia (2015-2018), which names the following outcomes towards the objective of delaying the age of marriage for girls in at least four countries in South Asia by 2018:

1. Effective enactment, enforcement and use of national policy and legal instruments to increase the minimum age of marriage for (both boys and) girls to 18.
2. Improved equal access to quality education, particularly secondary education.
3. Increased mobilization of girls, boys, parents, media, religious and community leaders to change discriminatory gender norms.
4. Increased prevention of child marriage by addressing its root causes and creating alternative social, economic and civic opportunities for girls. New and existing evidence collected on status of married girls below 18 years, and on good programme practices to address their needs.
5. Enhanced advocacy to mobilize action and support for girls who are already married (through options for schooling, sexual and reproductive health information and services, including HIV prevention, livelihoods skills and recourse from violence in the home).
6. Improved monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of programmes to end child marriage in South Asia.

**Notes:** The Girl Power Programme Mid-Term Review notes that South Asian countries (compared to other world regions) have a higher likelihood of sustainability of institutional protection services due to SAIEVAC/SAARC networks.

### Kathmandu Call for Action to End Child Marriage in South Asia

SAIEVAC sponsored a regional convening of state actors in November 2014 which resulted in this declaration by SAARC nations. The Kathmandu Call to Action calls for nations to recognize child marriage as a human rights violation, harmonize laws and policies related to child marriage and personal law, provide legal and social remedies for victims and services for married girls, punish marital rape, strengthen enforcement, and ensure access to sexual and reproductive health information and services for children. It also directs nations to support a target on child marriage in the Sustainable Development Goals, and to effectively resource and implement the Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Asia 2015-2018.



Plan International's Asia Child Marriage Initiative (ACMI) is a multi-country initiative, started in 2010, aimed at preventing child marriage and mitigating its negative consequences by gathering evidence on child marriage and identifying pathways for addressing the problem. In 2013 a first round of research was carried out by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) in India, Bangladesh and Nepal.<sup>13</sup> The findings from this first round of research informed Plan's programmatic response to child marriage in Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Cambodia. From 2014 to 2015 a second round of research was carried out by Coram International in Indonesia, Bangladesh and Pakistan to gather information about prevailing customs, moral rules and social norms around child marriage. The summary report looks at the main stakeholders in sustaining and eradicating child marriage and how changes in the areas of education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, policy, and livelihoods can affect the acceptability of child marriage.<sup>14</sup>

## **Girls Not Brides (GNB)**

Girls Not Brides is a global coalition of civil society organizations working to end child marriage. Over 70 countries have a national chapter, each of which sets requirements for membership. For example, some chapters limit membership to national and local organizations, while others include international agencies as well. GNB does not have a structure at the regional level, although it has supported collaborations among countries in South Asia and other areas. The Global office is based in London and provides services to members in capacity building, convening, and technical support, along with advocating on the issue to donor countries, multilaterals, and UN bodies.

## **ECPAT**

ECPAT is a global network of organizations working on child protection from sexual exploitation. ECPAT supports its 85 members in 77 countries by coordinating research, advocacy, and action to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children. ECPAT recently released a thematic report titled Unrecognised Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in Child, Early and Forced Marriage, which makes the case for treating some forms of child marriage as sexual exploitation of children.<sup>15</sup>

## **Improving adolescents' lives in South Asia**

UNICEF (ROSA) with funding from IKEA is implementing a multi-country programme in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan with the goal of to improving the lives of adolescents in three countries by increasing the autonomy that adolescent boys and girls have over decisions affecting their lives. More details are included in the individual country sections.

# 3. PROGRAMME AND SELECT POLICIES BY COUNTRY

## Afghanistan

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

<p><b>Policy:</b> National Action Plan to Eliminate Early and Child Marriage<sup>16</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Ministry of Youth Affairs and Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MOLSAMD); UNFPA; Hewad</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2014-ongoing</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Nascent; consultations only, although an End Early and Child Marriage campaign supported by UNICEF started in 2014, with media spots airing for 6 months.<sup>17</sup></p>
<p><b>Policy:</b> National Youth Policy<sup>18</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Ministry of Youth Affairs, UNFPA, UNICEF and other partners</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The plan calls for a strategy focused on reaching adolescents through health services, among other initiatives. UN agencies have developed a forum—the Interagency Network on Youth Development in Afghanistan—for the implementation of the policy.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2013</p>
<p><b>Policy:</b> Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) Law<sup>19</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, supported by United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), UNICEF, other agencies</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2009</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> It makes illegal the selling and buying of women for marriage, forced marriage, marriage before the legal age, forced isolation, forcing a woman to commit self-immolation, denying the right to education, work and access to health services among other harmful practices. The law prescribes preventive measures for seven Government ministries to implement and establishes a national High Commission for the Prevention of Violence against Women. Weaknesses are that it does not criminalize honor crimes and does not distinguish between rape and consensual extramarital sex. Provincial Commissions on Elimination of Violence against Women have been established throughout the country.</p>

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

<p><b>Policy:</b> National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan<sup>20</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Ministry of Women's Affairs</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2008-2018</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> This is the national government's main tool to implement its commitment to protect the rights of women and girls. The plan contains several objectives and activities related to awareness of the legal age of marriage, forced and child marriage, and reproductive health and rights, as well as a goal to achieve gender parity in formal and non-formal education and monitor sexual harassment in schools. There has been weak monitoring of progress according to the plan.</p>
<p><b>Policy:</b> New marriage contract and marriage registration awareness campaign<sup>21</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Supreme Court of Afghanistan; Ministry of Women's Affairs</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2007</p>
<p><b>Policy:</b> Child Protection Action Network (CPAN) [under the National Strategy for Children at Risk]<sup>22</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disables (MOLSAMD), UNICEF</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Community-based child protection and family support system with national, provincial, and district arms. The network is made up of governmental, non-governmental, organizations responding to child protection issues, including case management and referral to services. Prevention of child and forced marriages is among CPAN's activities.</p> <p><b>Dates:</b> 2007-ongoing (with pilot projects from 2003)</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> As of 2014, CPAN was active in 31 provinces and 63 districts.<sup>23</sup></p> <p><b>Notes:</b> A 2011 study found that local CPAN bodies rely on law enforcement to report cases to them, and therefore most of the case management work is with children in conflict with the law. Out of 9,189 cases reported from 2007-2011, 316 were related to child marriage (3.4%). Only a small number of these marriages were recorded as resolved (through prevention or dissolution of the marriage).</p>

UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVES

<p><b>Programme:</b> Improving adolescents' lives in South Asia [multi-country with India and Pakistan]<sup>24</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> UNICEF (ROSA)</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The overall goal of this regional project is to improve the lives of adolescents in three countries by increasing the autonomy that adolescent boys and girls have over decisions affecting their lives. Youth federations, awareness of adolescent rights, religious and local leaders and communities mobilized on violence against children, Child Protection Action Network (CPAN) and other services active. Planned results: 6% reduction in child marriage; 15% increase in secondary enrolment, 20% decrease in adolescent pregnancy.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2015-2019</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 51,330 adolescents in Badghis, Bamyan, Kandahar, and Paktiya; indirect reach to 655,580 adolescents</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> IKEA Foundation</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Youth Health Line<sup>25</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Ministry of Public Health, UNFPA, and Afghan Family Guidance Association</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Adolescents can ask questions about SRH, life choices, issues they are facing</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2012-ongoing</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Receives 3000 calls/ month</p>

UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVES

<p><b>Programme:</b> Violence against women<sup>26</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> UN Women, Ministry of Women Affairs</p> <p><b>Description:</b> A key goal is to advance implementation of the 2009 Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women. The project will build capacity of VAW commissions and departments for protection services and community resource/information centers.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2011-ongoing</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Bamyan, Balkh, Herat, Nangarhar, Parwan, Badakhshan provinces (6)</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> Government of Japan</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Teacher Malalai's Adventures: Mina's Early Marriage<sup>27</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> UNFPA; Ministry of Women's Affairs</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The first episode of Teacher Malalai Adventures in which the teacher helps her student Mina, a 13 years old girl, who is forced to abandon school because her parents arranged her marriage.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2011</p>

NGO/ CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES

<p><b>Programme:</b> Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) and Community-Based Girls' Education Project (GEP)<sup>28</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> BRAC</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The main purpose of these two projects is to provide education through community-based schools giving Afghan girls a chance to attain standard literacy and numeracy skills. Activities include educational stipends and teacher training, among others.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> GEP Phase I: 2007-2012; GEP Phase II and GEC: 2013-2017</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 170,000 girls in 5,670 schools</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> DFID-UK and DFATD-Canada</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> As of January 2015, 19,000 children (74% girls) graduated from BRAC schools.</p>
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Among the most tragic consequences of harmful traditional practices is self-immolation – an apparently growing trend in some parts of Afghanistan. The doctor in charge of Afghanistan's only special burn unit has described the main cause of self-immolation as forced marriage. *"Young women married to old men, sold, swapped for sheep or even opium....Under pressure from abusive husbands and mothers-in-law they sometimes go to mullahs and community councils to ask for help, but even there they face humiliation and abuse."*

The Government has reported that depression is the main cause for women to set themselves on fire and estimates that some 2,400 women commit self-immolation each year. For most, such action is a cry for help to escape an abusive, violent family life. Although not all women and girls who take this action intend to kill themselves, most die of their burns. Child and forced marriages, the handing over of girls to settle disputes, and sexual and domestic violence are the main causes of self-immolation.

*-From Harmful Traditional Practices and Implementation of the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women in Afghanistan, p. iii and p. 36.*

# Bangladesh

In 2014, Bangladesh considered revising the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 2014 to lower the minimum age of marriage to 16 for females and 18 for males. Amidst ongoing opposition from civil society and international groups, the government amended its stance to suggest they would set 18 as the minimum age but the law would allow for earlier marriage in special circumstances, which could include parental consent or evidence of a relationship, among others. Clearly, this would be a step backwards for a nation that has previously shown a strong commitment to ending child marriage. At the time of writing, no revision to the law has yet been announced. A National Plan to End Child Marriage is also under development.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

<p><b>Programme:</b> Female Secondary School Stipend Program<sup>29</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> World Bank, Government of Bangladesh, and local partners</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Tuition plus monthly stipends for unmarried girls up to class 10; girls had to maintain 75% attendance and score 45% marks. Expanded to higher classes in 2002.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 1993-2008</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Phase I: Girls married ages 13-15 declined from 29% to 14%; ages 16-18 from 79% to 64%. Some evaluators question attribution to the program.<sup>30</sup></p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Birth and Death Registration Project<sup>31</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Government of Bangladesh; UNICEF; Plan</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Digital birth registration system set up and linked to other government services. Electronic registration makes it more difficult to falsify a girl's age for marriage registration.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 1996-2009 (digital system from 2006)</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> National</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> MICS data showed registration increased from 9.8% in 2006 to 53% in 2009. No available analysis of how well the system is linked to marriage registration.</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Multi-Sectoral Program on Violence Against Women (MSPVAW)<sup>32</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and Government of Denmark</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Aims to build capacity in relevant ministries, prepare agencies for improved integrated prevention and response to VAW, and strengthen procedures. Establishes One Stop Crisis Centres, a VAW database, a National Plan of Action on VAW (NAPVAW), helpline and counseling for victims, and other activities. Recent activities have included a review of national curriculum to better address issues of dowry, child marriage, sexual harassment, and trafficking.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2000-2016</p>
<p><b>Policies:</b> Operational Plan for Maternal, Neonatal, Child, and Adolescent Health<sup>33</sup>; Adolescent Reproductive Health Strategy; and the National Action Plan on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (in progress)</p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Ministry of Health and Family Welfare</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Objectives include reducing adolescent pregnancy, providing reproductive health care and nutrition information and services to adolescents, life skills education for adolescents delivered through the School Health program, and reducing the negative health consequences of sexual abuse.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2011-2016</p>

<p><b>Policy:</b> National Children Policy</p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Ministry of Women and Children Affairs</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Includes protection of adolescents from marriage</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2011</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Advancement of Promoting Women's Rights (APWR)</p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and UNFPA</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Aims to increase awareness, knowledge, and positive attitudes towards reducing the vulnerability of women, including the incidences of violence against women and child marriage. The project supports survivors of GBV and child marriage through geographical targeting, local level planning, institutional capacity building, multi-sectoral coordination and partnership, modeling for future expansion, advocacy, effective social mobilization for behavior change, and mainstreaming emergency preparedness to address GBV and child marriage in emergencies.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2012-2016</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> District level (Patuakhali, Jemalpur, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar)</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Protection and Enforcement of Women's Rights (PEWR)</p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) and UNFPA</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Aims to increase the availability of and access to shelter, medical, psychological and legal support and vocational training for survivors of GBV and child marriage in selected areas. The project addresses GBV and child marriage issues through institutional capacity building, ensuring systematic and appropriate service delivery procedures for the protection of GBV survivors and prosecution of the cases, enhancing practical skills, knowledge, and positive attitudes of MoHA/police personnel at all levels in handling GBV cases in a gender-sensitive manner. This is done through in-service trainings and workshops, establishing women-friendly police stations with "women help desks" in the selected 15 police stations, developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to operationalize women- and girl-friendly police stations, and strengthening the management information system (MIS) by incorporating GBV and child marriage data into the Crime Data Management System (CDMS) and its monitoring.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2012-2016</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> District level (Patuakhali, Jemalpur, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar)</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Strengthening Parliament's Capacity in Integrating Population Issues into Development (SPCPD)</p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat (BPS) and UNFPA</p> <p><b>Description:</b> This programme aims to enhance the capacity of Parliamentarians and the Parliament Secretariat officials to enact necessary laws and policies for eliminating child marriage and preventing gender based violence. The Bangladesh Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (BAPPD), formed under the leadership of the Speaker, Bangladesh Parliament, has adopted an advocacy plan, which includes three policy priority issues, of which one is "eliminating child marriage". The sub-committee on "eliminating child marriage", works with a range of Standing Committees to guide relevant ministries on the enforcement of laws, policies and regulations related to prevent child marriage issues. Key issues addressed through the sub-committee include allocating adequate budget for mandatory education till class 12 for all, increasing employment opportunities, especially for girls, and improving maternal health to ensure safe delivery.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2012-2016</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> National and district levels</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> District Administrations have adopted preventing child marriage as an agenda item in their monthly coordination meetings and are taking legislative and official action to prevent child marriage.</p>

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

**Programme:** Enabling Environment for Child Rights (EECR)

**Organization(s):** Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and UNICEF

**Description:** This project has strong components to address child marriage, with an objective to create a culture of respect for child protection rights and an enabling environment by changing social norms through social protection services, strengthened capacity in government and civil society responses to protection issues and by establishment of protective mechanisms against abuse, exploitation and violence. The implementing strategies are institutional strengthening, introducing a suitable child protection system, and social norm changes through adolescents and communication for development.

**Date:** 2012-2016

**Scope:** 21 upazilas in 7 United Nations Development Action Framework (2012-2016 UNDAF) districts

UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVES

**Programme:** Kishori Abhijan

**Organization(s):** UNICEF supported by the European Commission

**Description:** Kishori Abhijan (Journey of Adolescents) is aimed at lowering the school dropout rates of girls and encouraging them to participate in independent economic activity and delay marriage. The five-year project looked to improve the quality of life of vulnerable adolescents by empowering them to participate in decisions that affect their lives through education, livelihood strategies and increasing the age at marriage. The project was implemented through MoWCA, BRAC, CMES and Save the Children. There is evidence that girls targeted under this project waited significantly longer to marry. This is a strong foundation for future social and behavior change communication programs to combat child marriage in Bangladesh.

**Date:** 2006-2010

**Scope:** 27 districts of Bangladesh; 600,000 adolescents including 50,000 boys

**Programme:** Meena Communication Initiative

**Organization(s):** UNICEF

**Description:** The Meena Communication Initiative (MCI) stimulates national discourse on child marriage and other issues through entertainment in education, developing films, comic books and other interventions to reach children. Meena is an animated cartoon series that began to celebrate the Decade of the Girl Child (1990-2000) and is still effective. Meena - the main animated character - is a brave and spirited 9-year old South Asian girl created to raise awareness on the benefits of different aspects pertaining to children's rights - the right to an education and health for girls, and protection from corporal punishment and child labor. Several Meena films and comic books are designed to make young girls aware of the harm of child marriage, the benefits of delayed marriage and the importance of education, for example, Too Young to Marry, Say No to Dowry, Count the Chickens, and Will Meena Leave School? The series is broadcast through multiple forms of media - television, mobile cinema and in centers for out-of-school children. It is also used in primary schools.

**Date:** 1991-ongoing

<p><b>Programme:</b> Bangladeshi Association for Life Skills, Income, and Knowledge for Adolescents (BALIKA)<sup>34</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> The Population Council; Population Services and Training Center; Centre for International Development Issues; Nijmegen; mPower</p> <p><b>Description:</b> BALIKA seeks to generate programmatic evidence to delay marriage. There are 3 intervention groups and one control group. All receive community mobilization, safe spaces for girls, and SRH information. The intervention groups in addition receive one of the following each: rights-based life skills; livelihoods support; and education support.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2012-2016</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 96 villages in the districts of Khulna, Narail, and Satkhira, with 120 girls enrolled in each site</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> The baseline finds that early marriage and childbearing persist despite progress in girls' education. 20% of married girls were enrolled in school.</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> Government of Netherlands</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Gender Quality Action and Learning<sup>35</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> BRAC</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Gender equity awareness raising in Village Organizations (targeted primarily to adults)</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2005-2006</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 10 upazilas in 2 districts: 1200 men and women</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Pre and post surveys: adults' knowledge of legal age of marriage and support for daughters' decision making around marriage increased somewhat. Significant increase from 7.3% of boys and girls who had been able to give opinions about their marriage at baseline to 31.5% at endline.</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Adolescent Development Programme (ADP)/ Employment and Livelihood for Adolescents (ELA)<sup>36</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> BRAC, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Department of Youth Development, British Council</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The program started with the goal to retain literacy skills among adolescents after primary school. It has evolved to have multiple components, among them adolescent learning clubs, street theatre, sports; later phases added financial skills. There are several sub-programs under ADP and ELA.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> Qualitative evidence of girls' increased status. School enrollment dropped from 81% to 71% in control area from 2010-2011 but remained constant in program area. ELA participant girls significantly less likely than controls to get married during a two-year period of programme operation. ADP intervention group had increased mobility index scores compared to control group.</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> UK Department for International Development (DFID); Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID); Canadian International Development Agency; Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands; OxfamNovib; Women Win</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Raising the Age of Marriage for Young Girls<sup>37</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Pathfinder International and Swarnirvar</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Education stipends, local advocacy, vocational training (40 girls)</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2004-2006</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Kishoreganj- 5 upazilas- 4,092 girls</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Non-rigorous evaluation: early marriage went from 50% (as reported by local media in 2004) to 42% (registration data 2006)</p>

<p><b>Programme:</b> SHOUHARDO<sup>38</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> CARE and local partners</p> <p><b>Description:</b> SHOUHARDO was primarily a food security program, with objectives in empowering women and girls' decision making power in the household. Empowerment, Knowledge, and Transformative Action (EKATA) groups of 20 women and 10 adolescent girls each developed skills in problem analysis and solving, power analysis, communication and negotiation skills, and functional literacy and numeracy. The groups then worked to mobilize communities to address VAWG, child marriage, dowry and other issues. The project also responded to issues emerging from the group in health, advocacy, and disaster preparedness.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2004-2010</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 12,000 women and adolescent girls in 18 districts of Chittagong, Kishorgonj, Rangpur, and Tangail</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Evaluation: Communities showed increased awareness of early marriage consequences, and signs of improved relationships between girls and adult women.</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Girl Power Programme<sup>39</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Child Rights Alliance; Plan and local partners</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Objective is to "ensure empowerment to girls and young women." Diverse activities with girls' groups, life skills, livelihood skills, self-defence; local campaigns, media, and child protection groups; government and police advocacy</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2010-2015</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Gazipur, Nilphamar, Lalmonirhat, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Kishoreganj: 95,000 girls, 61,000 boys</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Midterm review: Increase in girls who feel they can say no to sexual activity and know protective services. 125 villages declared Child Marriage Free, but it is acknowledged that girls still leave the village to marry. Other improvements in gender attitudes in community.</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> MFS-II (co-financing system of Dutch government)</p>

### District level advocacy in Bangladesh

**Girl Power Programme** partners held workshops with government representatives. During these workshops, government officers pledged several commitments to jointly address the issue, including:

- **Sharing of information.** On each level of the district administration, information will be shared among the marriage registration officials and the corresponding government authorities. Through this process of information sharing, all government stakeholders receive information on possible child marriages. For example, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (head of local administrator) issued a letter to the marriage registrar on submitting their monthly marriage report to, respectively, Union Parishad (lower level unit of local government) and Upazila Women Affairs Officer (sub-district level government official).
- **Preventing fake marriages.** With the support of district register, Upazila Nirbahi Officer distributed the list of authorized marriage registrars and gave them an identification card to prove their official position as a marriage registrar. By distributing the actual list of marriage registrars to Union Parishad, fake marriage registrars can be identified who are mostly involved in child marriage. In addition, Upazila Nirbahi Officer instructed the marriage registrars to always verify the birth registration certificate before registering a marriage.
- **Access to a complaint system.** Upazila Nirbahi Officer introduced a complaint box in front of his/her office for gender based violence related complaints.
- **Awareness raising at the district and local level for Child Marriage Free Villages/Unions.** With the support of Plan Bangladesh, local partner organizations have been working to declare villages/unions in targeted upazilas as child marriage free. The villages undergo a formal declaration ceremony to become a child marriage free village. This also includes the display of a signed board indicating in the village that child marriages will not be tolerated. The declaration created a moral obligation among community and duty bearers. Union Parishad, Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Upazila Women Affairs Officer and Law Enforcement Agencies jointly cooperate with Plan Bangladesh and local partner organisations to declare child marriage free villages.

-From Child Rights Alliance, "Girl Power Programme Annual Report," 2013, page 39-40.

<p><b>Programme:</b> Kishoree Kontha<sup>40</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Save the Children, Bangladesh Development Society, JPAL, Poverty Lab MIT</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Goal was to promote social competency and support for staying in school among girls, primarily through peer education sessions. Program from 6-9 months. 4 intervention arms: the “basic” package—group-based peer education on child rights, life skills, RH knowledge, and youth-parent relationships; “basic” plus livelihoods training; the “full” package—“basic” plus livelihoods plus nutrition incentive to delay marriage; and control group. The basic intervention ran for 6 months for around 2 hours per day, 5-6 days per week, with each group of girls.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2006-2010</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 460 villages, each with 40+ adolescent girls, in Barisal, Patuakhali, and Bhola</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Development Assets Profile (DAP) used to compare each group’s change at pre and post intervention. All intervention groups significantly increased in DAP net of change in the control group, with less increase in the “basic” plus livelihoods and the full package. Authors conclude that girls are more likely to be active in determining their futures due to the program, and that the livelihoods and incentive components may have exceeded girls’ capacity to absorb information in a short period of time.</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> The Nike Foundation</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Tipping Point<sup>41</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> CARE and local partners</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The goal of the project is to address the underlying causes of child marriage, through intensive community mobilization and media, public theatre, Elimination of Violence Against Women groups, girls’ groups and boys’ groups, and social dialogue for normative change. The project also coordinates with School Management Committees to enable teachers to recognize girls at risk of marriage and facilitate the return of girls who have left school.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2014-2017</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 90 villages in three Union Parishads of Sunamganj</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Report on a Community Participatory Analysis (a qualitative baseline) is forthcoming.</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Asia Child Marriage Initiative<sup>42</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Plan</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2005-ongoing</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Program goal is to increase the mean age of girls at marriage from 15 to 18 in Plan’s working areas, through girls’ solidarity groups, local and national advocacy, community campaigns, designating Child Marriage Free communities, working with police stations on systems, and supporting the government’s digital birth registration system.</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Large number of communities in Dinajpur, Gazipur, Lalmonirhat, and Nilphamari, and in Dhaka city.</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Qualitative evaluation found examples of girls’ solidarity groups opposing planned marriages. Digital birth registration holds promise for preventing child marriage, as once a girl’s age has been entered in the system, it is extremely difficult to falsify a birth certificate.</p>

<p><b>Programme:</b> KAISHAR adolescent program<sup>43</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Save the Children Fund</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The program aimed to encourage adolescent to learn life skills, raise awareness on SRH issues among gatekeepers, and improve communication between parents and adolescents to encourage men to take more responsibility for family planning. Activities were in youth-friendly SRH services, community education with parent workshops, advocacy and media.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2003-2008</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 1500 adolescent facilitators, 6000 girls in 13 Union Parishads</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> From baseline to endline, the average age of marriage increased by several months, and age of first birth increased by 18 months. There was also increased reproductive health knowledge and greater discussion of adolescent sexuality.</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative<sup>44</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> CARE and local partners</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Goal of the project is to improve girls' success in school. In Bangladesh, the work involves community organizations (such as School Management Committees) and parents' groups, students, and government officials to address reasons why girls are out of school. These include improving teacher attendance, inclusive teaching methods, ensuring girls can travel safely to and from school, and others.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2007-2017</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 139 School Management Committee members in 12 communities of Sunamganj</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Monitoring activities show that 100% of students in the project area now agree that girls are good at school.</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Protecting Human Rights (PHR)<sup>45</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Plan, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association, International Center for Research on Women, and 11 local NGOs</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The goal of the program is to lower prevalence of domestic violence and other related human rights abuses including child marriage. PHR advocates for laws and policies against child marriage, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and other abuses against women and children; capacity building of service providers; provision of legal, psychosocial, medical and other services to survivors; and community education campaigns including formation of community groups.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2011-2016</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 102 unions of 8 upazilas in 6 districts: 8,683 survivors have received legal assistance; thousands of government employees and advocates trained; school based awareness in over 100 schools.</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Social Protection Groups (made of local community members) and youth groups saw their main role as preventing child marriages from taking place, in the program's mid-term evaluation process. Their success in doing so has not been measured.</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> USAID</p>

# Bhutan

The review did not find any programs directly addressing child marriage in Bhutan. Generally adolescents have the freedom to choose partners and living arrangements, and dowry is not practiced; yet 26% of women aged 20-24 were married by the age of 18.<sup>46</sup> There are efforts by the government to lower adolescent pregnancy and improve literacy and numeracy, and these services are largely availed by women and adolescent girls. Bhutan is also strengthening its national child protection systems.

BHUTAN

<p><b>Policy:</b> Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA)<sup>47</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Government of Bhutan and UNICEF</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The CCPA is accompanied by a costed plan and an assessment of the existing system. Under this law, marriage to or sex with a child is deemed statutory rape.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2011</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> National Adolescent Health Strategic Plan and Youth Friendly Health Services<sup>48</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Ministry of Health</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The plan sets out 8 objectives, including life skills education for adolescents, safe environment for youth, and better implementation of the 7 standards for youth friendly services developed previously. The standards are for ensuring that adolescents have access to and feel welcome using health services, they are equipped with health and SRH knowledge, and practitioners are skilled in adolescent health. Services are comprehensive, including a range of contraceptives, safe sex supplies, termination of pregnancy, HIV/STI testing and counseling, sexual concerns, substance abuse, physical and sexual abuse screening, mental health, nutritional counseling, immunization, and many others. Indicators include mean age of marriage and teen pregnancy rate.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> Youth Friendly Health Services standards: 2008. Strategic Plan: 2013-2018</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Non-Formal Education Program<sup>49</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Nonformal Continuing Education Division of the Ministry of Education supported by UNICEF, UNESCO</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Community based classes in literacy, numeracy, general education</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 1991-ongoing</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> National: annual enrollment about 13,500 (70% women and girls)</p>

# India

The draft report, Reducing Child Marriage in India: A model to scale up results, from the Centre for Budget and Policy Studies for UNICEF India, contains a thorough review of child marriage programming in India and substantial analysis of lessons learned to date. The report lists a number of governmental and NGO programmes that are not included in the present review due to the bulk and diversity of relevant programmes across this large nation. The reader is encouraged to see this paper for a more in-depth look at India.<sup>50</sup>

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

<p><b>Policy:</b> National Strategy on Prevention of Child Marriage<sup>51</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Ministry of Women and Child Development, supported by UNICEF</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Strategic directions for center, state, and local actions: law enforcement (and helpline), girls' empowerment, community mobilization, multi-sector convergence</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2013</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> The National Action Plan associated with the Strategy has not yet been finalized.</p>
<p><b>Policy:</b> National Adolescent Health Strategy and Operational Framework<sup>52</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Central Government of India</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Includes components of adolescent empowerment, child protection, and child marriage.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2013/2014</p>
<p><b>Policy:</b> National Youth Policy<sup>53</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Focuses on adolescents</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2014</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Apni Beti Apna Dhan (ABAD)<sup>54</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Government of Haryana; evaluated by International Center for Research on Women</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The goal of ABAD was to increase the value of girls in communities and families. The programme offered cash transfers at two different points: 1) a small cash disbursement to mothers (500 Rupees) within 15 days of delivering a daughter; and 2) a savings bond in the name of the girl that was to be redeemable for an expected 25,000 Rupees when the girl turned 18, provided she was unmarried.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> In 1994-1998 girls were enrolled; in 2012-2013, the first cohort of girls turned 18.</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Haryana. For the evaluation, around 10,000 girls and their mothers were interviewed.</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> ICRW's rigorous study found that the programme did not affect the likelihood of marriage before age 18. The programme increased the likelihood of finishing Grade 8, but made no difference to finishing Grade 12. Girls in the programme were more likely to marry exactly at age 18, suggesting that families delayed to age 18 to receive the benefit. Three-quarters of the programme girls who married at age 18 used the disbursement for marriage costs such as dowry. The evaluation authors conclude that conditional cash transfers (CCTs) alone are not enough to raise the value of girls, significantly delay marriage, or ensure girls' completion of higher secondary education, but can help catalyze change when accompanied by efforts to change attitudes and social norms.</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)<sup>55</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Central Government of India</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Residential school for girls in Classes 6-8</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2004-ongoing</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 187 KGBVs in Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Anecdotal successes in delaying marriage, but no follow-up after girls leave the programme.</p>

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

<p><b>Programme:</b> Mahila Shikshan Kendras (MSK)<sup>56</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Government of India</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Programme oversees an 8-10 month residential education programme for girls above 14 years, covering the content of Classes 1-5; some life skills and sexuality topics as well. After graduation, some girls join mainstream schools or KGBVs.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> From 1992-ongoing</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> In 2014, there were 102 MSKs with 2989 learners. In total, there are 28,507 alumni and 62% of these have been mainstreamed into formal schools.</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Nehra Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) Teen Clubs<sup>57</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports; UNFPA</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Safe spaces and youth-led community action; focus on out-of-school youth</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2007-ongoing</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 64 districts across 31 states</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls/ SABLA (and sister programme Kishori Shakti Yojana)<sup>58</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Central Government of India, UNICEF, Landesa</p> <p><b>Description:</b> An integrated package of services for adolescent girls: i. Nutrition provision; ii. Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) supplementation; iii. Health check-up and referral services; iv. Nutrition &amp; Health Education (NHE); v. Counseling/Guidance on family welfare, ARSH, child care practices and home management; vi. Life Skill Education and accessing public services; vii. Vocational training for girls aged 16 and above under National Skill Development Program (NSDP). In 2013, Landesa piloted adding asset management training, land-based livelihoods, and life skills for girls, with components for boys and for parents on dowry practices and girls' rights to inheritance.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2011-ongoing</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> SABLA and KSY are nation-wide; Landesa initiative in West Bengal</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> From the Landesa pilot: Compared to controls, girls were 20% more likely to earn income and programme girls married 1.5 years later. This is one of very few programmes that have addressed dowry and inheritance practices and how these relate to early marriage through changing community attitudes. There were positive attitude changes among parents and boys about dowry, land, and inheritance, and legal knowledge increased among girls.</p>

UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVES

<p><b>Programme:</b> Improving adolescents' lives in South Asia [multi-country with Afghanistan and Pakistan]<sup>59</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> UNICEF (ROSA)</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The overall goal of this regional project is to improve the lives of adolescents in three countries by increasing the autonomy that adolescent boys and girls have over decisions affecting their lives. Activities include adolescent mobilization and peer outreach, parents and communities create protection mechanisms such as Child Protection Committees, service providers and authorities enforce laws and policies. Planned results: 20% reduction in child marriage, 20% increase in secondary enrolment, 10% decrease in adolescent pregnancy.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2015-2019</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 1,070,000 adolescents in Assam, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Jharkhand</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> IKEA Foundation</p>
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- Programme:** Deepshikha (under Adolescent Girls and Gender Empowerment program)<sup>60</sup>
- Organization(s):** UNICEF, Government of Maharashtra, and local partners
- Description:** Integrated empowerment and livelihoods programme that aims to provide life skills (including financial and entrepreneurial skills) education and mobilize adolescent girls into self-help groups. Adolescent girl groups are trained in health/SRH and gender issues, followed by entrepreneurial skills. After 40 meetings, the group can start a revolving loan fund for members.
- Date:** 2008-2015
- Scope:** 2850 groups with 70,000 girls in Maharashtra
- Notes:** The Phase I (2008-2011) evaluation states that over 280 child marriages were averted and more than 3 million rupees were saved by adolescent girl self-help groups. From baseline to endline, there were large increases in SRH knowledge and confidence to express oneself in both project and comparison groups, and improved gender attitudes in the project group compared to the comparison group. It is more difficult to assess the change in decision making power, mobility, and ideal and legal age of marriage because the baseline values are not offered and project and comparison groups had comparable results. In civic participation, there were substantial changes from baseline to endline for the project group, with more girls doing community service work.

- Programme:** Girls Gaining Ground<sup>61</sup>
- Organization(s):** Bhavishya Alliance (Hindustan Unilever, UNICEF, Synergos Institute)
- Description:** Girls' groups built skills to negotiate with parents and knowledge of their rights to refuse marriage, along with other life skills. The primary goal was to improve girls' health and nutrition through empowerment.
- Date:** 2005-2009
- Scope:** 10,000 girls in Maharashtra
- Notes:** Qualitative evidence that girls felt empowered to discuss marriage with their parents.

- Programme:** PRACHAR and JAGRITI<sup>62</sup>
- Organization(s):** Pathfinder International, Government of Bihar, and several local partners
- Description:** Reproductive health training for boys and girls, including economic benefits of delaying marriage and childbirth and session on resisting community pressure to marry and sexual abuse and some material on gender roles. Phase 1 included training for adolescents: male change agents who conducted group meetings and female change agents who conducted home visits as well as increased access to reproductive health services. Phase 2 scaled up the programme and government frontline health workers were recruited as change agents. From 2012, affiliated programme JAGRITI established 25 councils of unmarried youth.
- Date:** 2001-2012
- Scope:** Bihar: 376,956 youth and community members
- Notes:** Young women in PRACHAR married more than 2 years later and had their first birth 1.5 years later than women not exposed to PRACHAR. However, note that average age of marriage was above 18 in both groups. Young men exposed to PRACHAR were less willing to marry early, and young women more likely to talk with parents about desired marriage age than those in the comparison group. Young women who had participated in PRACHAR were 44% less likely to be married than comparison groups.
- Funder:** David and Lucile Packard Foundation; UNFPA

- Programme:** Planning Ahead for Girls' Empowerment and Employability (PAGE)<sup>63</sup>
- Organization(s):** International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) and Magic Bus Foundation
- Description:** In-school intervention on "Empowerment and Employability" curricula for girls
- Date:** 2013-2016
- Scope:** Delhi: 2318 girls in 4 schools
- Funder:** MacArthur Foundation

<p><b>Programme:</b> Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS)<sup>64</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> International Centre for Research on Women, CORO, TISS</p> <p><b>Description:</b> School based gender equity awareness curriculum. By examining the social norms that define men's and women's roles in the society and questioning the use of men's use of violence against women and girls including early marriage, the movement encourages equal relationships between young women and girls and young men and boys.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2008-2011 Mumbai; 2014-2016 Jharkhand</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Mumbai: 200 schools/ 20,000 children; Jharkhand: 40 schools/ 3500 children</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> By end of intervention almost all students believed the appropriate age of marriage was over 18. Greatest increase in perception of 21 as appropriate age of marriage occurred in schools that were given the non-formal education component and the IEC campaign compared with IEC-only or control schools.</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Creating Agency of Youth<sup>65</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Restless Development</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The goal of the project was for young people to be able to take informed decisions related to SRH, basic health, career, gender and civic participation. It was delivered primarily through peer educators.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2009-2011</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 2 districts of Tamil Nadu</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Non-rigorous evaluation found youth efforts to oppose planned early marriages</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> Hivos and Robert Christie Foundation</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Knot So Young/ United Action for Child Marriage<sup>66</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Restless Development and dance4life</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Local campaigns on impact of child marriage, engage boys and men, build public pressure</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand, Odisha</p> <p><b>Date:</b> Unclear</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> These are two separate programmes, but they appear to be implemented in the same communities</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Udaan<sup>67</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> CARE and (in Haryana) SRF Foundation</p> <p><b>Description:</b> A residential education programme that takes girls through Class 5 content and explicitly seeks to increase girls' sense of agency and independent thinking, considered psychosocial empowerment.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 1999-ongoing</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Initially in Uttar Pradesh in one district; replicated in Odisha and Bihar, and in 2011 in one district of Haryana with Muslim girls</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> In a 2014 comparative study, comparing Udaan girls in Haryana with girls in public, private, and no schooling, Udaan girls were the most comfortable expressing themselves and had more diverse viewpoints than the other groups of girls. When discussing a scenario of a 14-year-old girl married to a much older man, only the Udaan girls said they would be able to talk to their parents against marriage if they found themselves in the same situation.</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Nation Against Early Marriage<sup>68</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Breakthrough</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Media campaign with training at block levels with NGOs and youth groups and community mobilization. Includes involving high school students in leadership training, folk theatre, video vans and mobile shows.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2013-ongoing</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Jharkhand and Bihar</p>

<p><b>Programme:</b> A More Equal Future: A MenCare Manual to Engage Fathers to Prevent Child Marriage in India<sup>69</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> MenCare, World Vision, Promundo</p> <p><b>Description:</b> This is a manual of 10 sessions for fathers' groups that introduces concepts and experiences of gender and power as a backdrop to discussion about empowering women and girls in daily life. Although the goal of the manual is to promote gender equality in the home and prevent child marriage, few of the sessions included require addressing the issue within families; rather the focus is on how decisions are made and how traditions of violence persist in families. One session is a father-daughter dyad, and two sessions are for the fathers and their spouses.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2013</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> The manual does not explain how it has been used, although formative research was done in Agra.</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Development Initiative for Supporting Healthy Adolescence (DISHA)<sup>70</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> International Centre for Research on Women and local partners</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The project sought to improve youth reproductive health knowledge and life skills, delay marriage and childbearing, provide alternatives to early marriage, and build capacity to address the interconnected issues of youth. Select youth were trained as peer educators and contraceptive distributors, and medical providers were trained in youth-friendly services. Youth groups built skills and capacity in SRH and livelihoods, and adult groups built community support.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2005-2007</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 12,200 youth in 200 communities of Bihar and Jharkhand</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Average age at marriage increased by nearly 2 years from baseline to endline, to just under 18 years. Compared with matched controls, participant girls experienced a significant increase in feeling they could discuss their marriage with parents, but there was no significant impact on feeling their wishes were taken into account. Adults exposed to DISHA were 7% more likely to support delayed marriage. Married adolescents increased contraceptive use by 60%.</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> David and Lucile Packard Foundation</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative<sup>71</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> CARE and local partners</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The programme aims to "make a difference for marginalized girls: Ensuring their rights to appropriate education and development; supporting their positive participation in their communities and society; and empowering them to fulfill their greatest human potential." In India, the programme created new forums where teachers are working together in peer groups to enhance their teaching methods and support each other, with training in gender-sensitive methods, multiple learning styles, and countering notions that girls have lower abilities.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2007-2017</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 69 teachers serving 4,200 students (boys and girls) in Uttar Pradesh</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> As teachers have become more gender equitable in their methods and thinking, there has been a 77% increase in students' math scores.</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Asia Child Marriage Initiative<sup>72</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Plan India and Urmul-SETU</p> <p><b>Date:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Goal is to promote knowledge, attitudes, and practices with regard to child marriage and children's rights, implemented through community-based children's group. Plan also supports Urmul-SETU to run a residential education camp for girls as a bridge programme to returning to formal education.</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Residential education programme is in Rajasthan.</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Qualitative review found that some girls' experiences at the residential camps suggest their marriages have been delayed by a few years.</p>

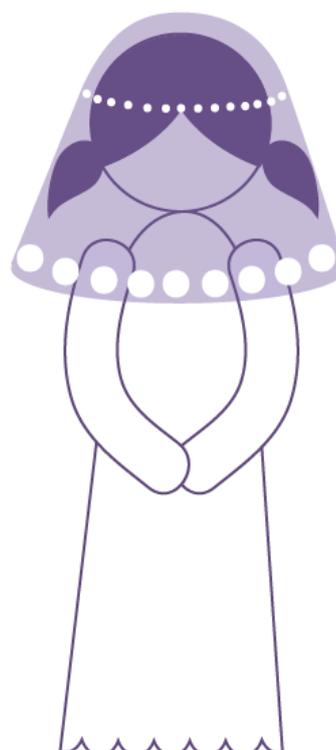
In *Reducing Child Marriage in India*, the author proposes adjusting strategies based on prevalence of child marriage in a locality.

Practice is common and deeply entrenched as a social norm (>50%)	Transition has begun (20-50%)	Change has occurred and child marriage in pockets (<20%)
<p><b>Broad-based social policy, media and advocacy initiatives:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Agenda building</b> with specific constituencies</li> <li>2. Use of <b>mass media</b>, alternative role models</li> <li>3. Address barriers to upper <b>primary and secondary education</b></li> <li>4. <b>Incentivize change</b> for individuals, agencies, parents and other actors</li> <li>5. Form/ energize <b>adolescent and youth groups.</b></li> </ol>	<p><b>Intensive work to amplify and accelerate the child marriage transition:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Widen <b>education, training and other choices</b></li> <li>2. <b>Disincentivize the practice:</b> bar access to certain public benefits</li> <li>3. Focus on <b>empowerment</b> and changing gender norms and expectations.</li> <li>4. Public <b>identification and celebration</b> of child-marriage-free communities.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Targeted interventions in pockets of high prevalence; governance approaches:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strict <b>vigilance and law enforcement</b></li> <li>2. Public identification and <b>censuring of the action</b></li> <li>3. Public identification and <b>celebration of child-marriage-free communities</b></li> <li>4. <b>Intensive engagement</b> with “closed” communities</li> </ol>

- Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, *DRAFT Reducing Child Marriage in India: A model to scale up results*, for UNICEF, New Delhi, 2015, page 40. Shared by UNICEF India in November 2015.

Almost half of all  
**child brides**  
 worldwide live in  
**South Asia;**

**1 in 3**  
**are in India**



## Maldives

No programmes addressing child marriage were found in Maldives. However, a National Child Abuse Campaign “AHAN-Listen to Us”, was recently launched by the Ministry of Law and Gender and UNICEF. The campaign’s goals include to increase awareness and knowledge of violence against children, including sexual abuse and neglect, and provide target audiences with the knowledge and skills they need to recognize, prevent, and protect children from all forms of violence. In addition, the Department of Gender and Family Protection Services drafted a behavior change communication strategy for prevention of child abuse, in 2011.<sup>73</sup>

## Nepal

### GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

<p><b>Policy:</b> National Strategy to End Child Marriage<sup>74</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Inter-ministerial Steering Committee on Ending Child Marriage chaired by Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare, UNFPA, UNICEF; Girls Not Brides members</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2015; follows formative research and a baseline survey</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Awaiting full government/cabinet endorsement. Will establish technical working groups at national and district levels and develop costed action and monitoring plans</p>
<p><b>Policy:</b> National Framework of Action on Holistic Adolescent Development<sup>75</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> National Planning Commission, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, UN Women, WHO, ILO, 9 ministries, 5 NGOs</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2013</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Program<sup>76</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Ministry of Health, UNFPA, GIZ, UNICEF, MSI and several other partners</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Works to make public health facilities adolescent friendly, increase use of contraceptives and other services by adolescents, and involve adolescents in shaping health services. Complemented by the National ASRH Communication Strategy, Implementation Guidelines, ASRH Training Package for health workers, IEC materials and aids, and quality assurance tools.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2009-ongoing</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Over 3 years the use of services among adolescents increased from 10 to 19%.</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Village Child Protection Committees (VCPCs)<sup>77</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> National government mandate, made up of local community members, and implemented at local level through the Child Welfare Boards and Child Rights and Child Welfare Officers. UNICEF has supported their capacity building in child rights and protection and case management.</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Approach of each committee and which violations of children’s rights they respond to varies. The most visible response of some committees to cases of child marriage is to threaten calling police on priests and families.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> To date there are at least 1000 VCPCs and 20,000 Child Clubs</p>

**Programme:** Kishori Bikash Karyakram/ Choose Your Future (CYF)<sup>78</sup>

**Organization(s):** Women in Development Office of Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, UNFPA, UNICEF, CEDPA

**Description:** Life skills education, SRH knowledge, and child marriage awareness for out of school girls

**Date:** 2008-ongoing

**Scope:** In 2009 the government scaled up this programme to 20 districts

**Notes:** Some evidence of increased confidence among girls to make decisions about their lives and understanding of harmful traditional practices such as child marriage. More than half of graduated girls starting communicating about child marriage, domestic violence, trafficking and VAWG. The programme did not succeed in strongly involving out-of-school adolescents.

**Programme:** Rupantaran

**Organization(s):** UNICEF and several ministries; implemented through Department of Women and Children, Ministry of Youth and Sports/Scouts, UNFPA and multiple partners

**Description:** Training package on adolescents' social and financial skills in 15 modules; orientation packages for more than 10 different adult stakeholders including parents, local media, religious leaders and police. The package was also adapted for an emergency context to focus more on disaster risk reduction and resilience building after the Earthquake in 2015.

**Date:** 2014-ongoing

**Scope:** To date, the modules have been used in more than 27 districts, around 40,000 adolescents enrolled in 2015.

**Notes:** Per UNFPA, has also been implemented through Madrasas in 3 districts with the Muslim Women Welfare Society.

**Study:** Legal gaps and reform needs in child marriage prevention and remedies for married girls

**Organization(s):** Center for Reproductive Rights, UNFPA

**Description:** An assessment of normative as well as implementation gaps of laws related to child marriage in Nepal in light of the constitutional and international human rights obligations. The research will be followed by development of strategic tools that trigger rights-based awareness, implementation of existing legal provisions related to child marriage, and legal reform that ensures actions against child marriage and providing remedies to married girls.

**Date:** 2015-2016

Although there is a heavy concentration of programs on child protection and life skill education for girls and boys in Nepal, very few programs explicitly address prevention of child marriages and elimination of harmful practices as measurable outcomes. Most child protection programs and life-skills programs assume child marriages will be addressed automatically if girls are provided with life skills and education. In reality however in the absence of a targeted strategy and rigorous evaluation it is difficult to claim that the programs that address violence against women and girls or improve life skills or promote education for the girls will reduce child marriages too.

*-From Engaging Men and Boys, Communities and Parents to End Violence against Women, Child Marriage and Other Harmful Practices in Nepal, page 16*

<p><b>Programme:</b> Chunauti<sup>79</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> CARE and local partners</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Multi-dimensional community-based programme aiming to delay age of marriage through transformation of community social norms. Activities included community awareness raising, peer educators, establishment of Child Marriage Eradication Committees (made of local community members), scholarships for girls, work with boys, public hearings with media coverage, street drama, codes of conduct for government officials, and private sector partnerships with wedding service providers to refuse service to child weddings. Due to local ethnic and political makeup, diverse religious, caste, and political party leaders were engaged.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2008-2011</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Nearly 500,000 home visits were made by 1,008 peer educators in 112 Village Development Committee areas in 3 districts (Dhanusha, Mahottari and Rupandehi). 16,000 people participated in public hearings, and 180,000 attended rallies. 220 scholarships were given to girls for schooling.</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Large increase in knowledge of legal age of marriage, penalties, and risks to girls of early marriage and dowry, from baseline to endline.</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> USAID's Women in Development Office</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Tipping Point<sup>80</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> CARE and local partners</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The goal of the project is to address the underlying causes of child marriage, through intensive community mobilization, girls' groups and boys groups, parent committees, exchanges between sisters and brothers, daughters and fathers, and an emphasis on social dialogue for normative change involving multiple stakeholders (religious and local leaders, national consortia, Village Child Protection Committees, and others).</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2014-2017</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 16 Village Development Committee areas in Rupandehi and Kapilbastu districts</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> By Year 2, 87 girls had re-enrolled in school. Other changes anecdotal but are being tracked. Baseline research finds that distinguishing between age of marriage and age of co-habitation is important. Girls that are married but not yet living with their husbands' families are the most vulnerable to neglect and isolation, because neither their natal nor marital families want to invest in their health and education. Report on a Community Participatory Analysis (a qualitative baseline) is forthcoming.</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> The Kendeda Fund</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Her Turn<sup>81</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Her Turn and Oxfam</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Provides a four-week curriculum through education and empowerment workshops for adolescent girls based on results of a needs assessment. Topics include health, sexuality, menstruation, child marriage, violence, trafficking, and others. The final week a group is given a small fund and agrees on how to use it to benefit the community. The programme is beginning to integrate radio drama and other outreach on adolescent girl issues.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2013-ongoing</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> In 2014, 1,086 girls in Sindhupalchok and Gorkha districts</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Pre- and post-tests in workshops show increases in knowledge</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Girl Power Programme<sup>82</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Child Rights Alliance; Plan Nepal, CWIN Nepal, Empowering Women (EWN) of Nepal and Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ)</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Objective is to "ensure empowerment to girls and young women." Leadership skills, savings and credit groups, life skills, through girls' clubs and women's groups; material support for school</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2010-2015</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Sindhuli, Makwanpur, Myagdi, Sunsari: 511,000 girls, 36,000 boys</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Mid-term evaluation: Reduced acceptance of VAWG, increase of case reporting; more girls feel they can say no to sexual activity and have better knowledge of and access to protection services.</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> MFS-II (co-financing system of Dutch government)</p>

<p><b>Programme:</b> SAMVAD</p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Stromme Foundation and local partners</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Integrated livelihoods, financial services, education/NFE, adolescent rights and community outreach</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2011-2015</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Surkhet, Rupandehi, Makawanpur and Rautahat: 5450 girls and 8400 families</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Saathi Sanga Manka Kura (SSMK)/ VOICES Radio</p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> UNICEF and Equal Access</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Adolescent radio programmes; presentation of a listener's dilemma followed by discussion with hosts. Listening groups have been set up across the country.</p> <p><b>Dates:</b> 2001-ongoing</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Nationwide through 29 radio stations</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Inter-faith dialogue</p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> National Inter-Religious Network on Ending Violence against Women in Nepal, UNFPA, UNICEF</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Inter-faith networks and community groups hold dialogues on girls' rights and marriage.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2014-2015</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 6 districts</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Choices, Voices, and Promises<sup>83</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Save the Children Nepal and Institute for Reproductive Health</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Choices is a 3 month curriculum led by peers in groups, for ages 10-14, boys and girls. Topics in gender relations and norms. Voices uses a set of videos from positive deviant parents followed by facilitated group dialogues with parent groups. Promises includes 6 posters that provoke community discussion on adolescent girls' potential and aspirations.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2010-2011</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 2 communities of Siraha</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> External evaluation found that girls felt empowered to talk to parents about continuing their studies and avoiding early marriage. Girls who participated in Choices reported that their brothers advocated with their parents for their sisters' education and delayed marriage and were more likely to help sisters with housework.</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Asia Child Marriage Initiative<sup>84</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Plan Nepal</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The programme fits within Plan's programme of protecting women and girls from gender-based violence. It includes community awareness about the negative effects of early marriage, commitment building and peer and community pressure, and girls' groups using CEDPA's Better Life Options Program curricula in life skills.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Several districts within Plan Nepal's operating areas.</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Qualitative reports that adolescents felt better able to express themselves.</p>

# Pakistan

Following the decentralization of many powers to the provinces and territories in 2010, Sindh, in 2013, became the first province to enact a law increasing the age of marriage to 18 for females. In 2014, the Council of Islamic Ideology, which gives Islamic legal counsel to the Pakistani Government, stated that setting a legal minimum age of marriage was un-Islamic, a position that has been widely criticized but that resulted in the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Religious Affairs' rejection of the Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Bill of 2014, which would have raised the age of marriage to 18 for girls across Pakistan.<sup>85</sup> Efforts to raise the age of marriage at the provincial level continue, particularly in Punjab province.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

<p><b>Policy:</b> Provincial legislation on age of marriage<sup>86</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Punjab and Sindh Governments</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Sindh: Child Marriages Restraint Act, 2013 - minimum age of marriage raised to 18 for both men and women; Punjab: Child Marriage Prohibition Act, 2014 (enacted in 2015) - legal age of marriage for girls remains at 16 years of age, although penalties articulated in the federal law have been increased at the provincial level.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> Sindh in 2013; Punjab in 2015</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Provincial</p>
<p><b>Policy:</b> Provincial Youth Policies<sup>87</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Respective provincial governments and UNFPA</p> <p><b>Date:</b> The original National Youth Policy was passed in 2008<sup>88</sup>; but the Federal Youth Ministry dissolved in 2010 under devolution. Punjab created Youth Policy in 2012; several other provinces and territories have draft youth policies yet to be approved.</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Punjab Female School Stipend Program<sup>89</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Provincial Government of Punjab</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Goal of the programme was to promote girls' participation in public education. Girls in Grades 6-8 received a quarterly stipend of 600 PKR as long as they maintained an attendance rate of 80%. In 2007, the programme expanded to include girls in Grades 9-10.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2004-ongoing</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> By 2007 there were 245,000 beneficiaries in the middle grades (51% of eligible girls).</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> An evaluation in 2011 found that beyond the early gains in female student enrollment of 9%, five years into the programme beneficiary girls are more (between 3-6%) likely to complete middle school. There is suggestive evidence (marginally significant) that participating girls delayed marriage by 1.4 years and had fewer births by age 19.</p>

UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVES

<p><b>Programme:</b> Improving adolescents' lives in South Asia [multi-country with Afghanistan and India]<sup>90</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> UNICEF (ROSA)</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The overall goal of this regional project is to improve the lives of adolescents in three countries by increasing the autonomy that adolescent boys and girls have over decisions affecting their lives. Objectives: adolescent groups aware of rights, local stakeholders mobilized for protection, service providers prepared to prevent and respond to abuse. Planned results: 10% reduction in child marriage, 100% increase in adolescents' participation in alternative basic education; 3% decrease in adolescent pregnancy.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2015-2019</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> 117,500 adolescents in Punjab and Sindh; indirect reach to 705,200 adolescents; broader reach to other stakeholders.</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> IKEA Foundation</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health Services<sup>91</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> UNFPA, Population Welfare Department, and Department of Health</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The project aims to integrate and strengthen adolescent sexual reproductive health services into primary health care programmes. Major activities include to provide counseling and SRH services to married and unmarried boys and girls through adolescent counseling centers; train health care providers and community workers to reach out to young married couples aged 15-19; promote SRH among young people through peer education programmes; and conduct advocacy with local leaders to support an enabling environment for youth to access services.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2014-ongoing</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Ghotki, Dera Ismail Khan and Sargodha districts (in Punjab and Sindh): 15 service delivery points</p>

NGO/ CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES

<p><b>Programme:</b> Madadgaar Helpline and affiliated programmes<sup>92</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Madadgaar</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Helpline for youth; girls' skills-building in sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence, marriage, and protection; media to engage men and boys; advocacy and lawyer capacity building</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2000-ongoing</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> National</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> 16% (approx. 11,000) of calls from girls were related to child marriage from 2000-2013. 76% of child marriage calls in 2012 were from girls, remainder from boys. Unclear how these cases are handled.</p>
<p><b>Programme:</b> Girl Power Programme<sup>93</sup></p> <p><b>Organization(s):</b> Child Rights Alliance; Plan and local partners</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Objective is to "ensure empowerment to girls and young women." Fast Track Learning Centres, school support organizations and planning to improve quality; support to Madadgaar helpline; provincial and district advocacy for improved legislation on child marriage.</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 2010-2015</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> Chakwal, Vehari, Multan, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta: 8,400 girls in Fast Track learning; 40,000 youth and 10,000 women through Madadgaar</p> <p><b>Notes:</b> Midterm evaluation found greater stated support for girls' continuing education after marriage/childbirth; many Fast Track students are married adolescents with children. Partners contributed to passage of Sindh and Punjab child marriage laws.</p> <p><b>Funder:</b> MFS-II (co-financing system of Dutch government)</p>

**Programme:** Aagahi se Agay (ASA)<sup>94</sup> and Awareness to Action (A2A)<sup>95</sup>

**Organization(s):** RutgersWFP and local partners

**Description:** Primary aim to delay marriage, through life skills and economic empowerment (school based). A2A is a continuation of ASA with the addition of adolescent friendly SRH services.

**Date:** 2010-2012 (ASA); 2013-2016 (A2A)

**Scope:** 15,500 girls in 70 schools, Gujranwala, Sanghar, and Karachi (ASA); 65,000 girls, 1000 parents, 75 Reproductive Health leaders, 75 teachers (A2A)

**Notes:** Girls had increased confidence in having discussions at home and facing harassment outside. Economic skills were greatly valued; some girls started businesses. Little effect on marriage practices but greater support for delaying. Evaluator's recommendation was to advocate for adoption of curricula in public and private schools (Sindh and Punjab) and for policymakers to build adolescent empowering policies

**Funder:** David and Lucile Packard Foundation

### CRITICAL LESSONS

- 1) Girls and their parents are receptive to the uptake of life skills and economic opportunities;
- 2) When framed in a culturally sensitive and nonthreatening manner considerable attention and debate can be generated on the risks of ongoing traditional practices such as early age marriage and low school enrollment for girls;
- 3) Endorsement of a wider group of stakeholders such as school principals, teachers, and education officials is helpful both for legitimacy and sustainability;
- 4) Changing cultural paradigms requires creating space for informed and civil dialogue between household members and the larger community.

*-From Aagahi Se Agay End Project Evaluation, RutgersWFP, p. 46.*

**Programme:** Access, Services, and Knowledge (ASK)<sup>96</sup>

**Organization(s):** RutgersWFP, 8 helplines, 9 NGOs

**Description:** Youth friendly SRH information and services online, through SMS, and 8 (pre-existing) helplines

**Date:** 2013-2015

**Scope:** National

**Funder:** Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Programme:** Promoting Gender Justice in Pakistan<sup>97</sup>

**Organization(s):** Norwegian Church Aid and partners

**Description:** The overall goal of the programme is to reduce deprivation of women's rights to inheritance and choice in marriage in target communities in Pakistan through social and collective action. Activities include negotiation training for adolescents and community organizers; and promoting consensual marriage and inheritance rights among religious leaders.

**Date:** 2009-2012

**Scope:** 3 districts of Punjab and 2 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhawa

**Notes:** 10% increase in women receiving their share of inheritance according to personal laws. Partner organizations assisted in preventing 659 of 1075 cases of impending forced marriages in 2012.

**Programme:** Pakistan Child Marriage Initiative

**Organization(s):** Rahnuma-Family Planning Association of Pakistan

**Description:** The aim is social and behavioral change to prevent child marriage and legislative reforms in marriage laws. Youth groups are formed at Union Council and District levels to act as agents of change in communities.

**Date:** 2013-2016

**Scope:** 3 districts in Southern Punjab

**Funder:** Plan Sweden and Swedish Postcode Lottery

## Sri Lanka

There were no programmes dealing with child marriage found in Sri Lanka. A report by UNICEF, *Emerging Concerns and Case Studies on Child Marriage in Sri Lanka*, explores evidence for an increase in early marriage practices within conflict-affected groups. It concludes that while child marriage was not a traditional practice in Sri Lanka, during the conflict and post-conflict periods, it was not uncommon for girls under age 18 to cohabit with boyfriends, and the community would recognize these unions as informal marriages. The paper considers the legal framework for these unions and the relation between child marriage and statutory rape. It provides recommendations to the State on addressing policy issues and preventing adolescent pregnancy and cohabitation.<sup>98</sup>



# 4. SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES

This section identifies the key strategies of each programme included in this review, according to a number of categories. The categories build on those used in Girls Not Brides-Global's *Universal Theory of Change* for child marriage programming<sup>99</sup>, which are 1) Empower girls; 2) Mobilize families and communities; 3) Provide services; and 4) Establish and implement laws and policies. This review adopts the same categories but expands on a number of them and provides a loose grouping, as follows:

**Creating capacity for choice:** These categories are grouped together to reflect changes in girls' agency and changes in girls' immediate social environment that support their ability to make strategic life choices for themselves.

## **A. Empowering girls with information, life skills, solidarity groups, and support (38 programmes)**

This category is focused on change within a girl herself through building self-esteem, "soft" skills and social capital (as opposed to vocational or academic skills). It often includes awareness of rights, SRH knowledge, decision-making and communication skills for negotiating with parents and others with great control over girls' lives, peer education and support, and "safe spaces" for girls to build solidarity with others facing the same challenges.

## **B. Mobilization of parents, religious and community leaders, and boys/men, creating norms (36 programmes)**

These strategies are focused on the social milieu surrounding adolescent girls. They may be working to create new social norms, change attitudes, strengthen key relationships in girls' lives, impact gatekeepers of opportunities for girls (for example, community school boards), rally visible public support for girls' choices, highlight champions of girls' rights or role models, and/or pressure family members and local power holders to do things differently. Media campaigns are included here.

## **C. Improvements to quality of services, adolescent-friendly services (in education, health, access to information, justice, etc.) (16 programmes)**

These programmes work within specific pre-existing institutional governmental or non-governmental services to improve their quality in order to produce better outcomes for girls. Several programmes of this type are working with schools, health facilities, or legal systems to make them more accessible, safe, and relevant for girls and their needs, such as adolescent-friendly clinics and girl-friendly schools.

**Alternative paths:** This group of strategies directly provides alternatives to early marriage or material incentives for following alternative paths.

## **D. Alternate/ accelerated learning, non-formal education (including residential and bridge programmes) (6 programmes)**

Most of these programmes run residential schools for girls who have dropped out of mainstream education and/ or bridge courses that accelerate learning to help girls who have been denied some part of their educations to return to mainstream schooling. Non-formal learning programmes in literacy and numeracy are included here as well.

**E. Material support or incentives for girls to attend school and/or delay marriage (including scholarships and CCTs) (9 programmes)**

These are instrumental approaches to getting and keeping girls in school or delaying marriage. They involve some form of material transfer in return for attendance at school or maintaining an unmarried status. Scholarships for fees and other costs of schooling (such as books, uniforms, etc.) are also grouped here when they are targeted to girls in secondary school.

**F. Livelihoods for girls (13 programmes)**

This group comprises efforts to involve girls in livelihood activities, community savings and loan groups, or micro-finance. These are not necessarily targeted only to unmarried girls, but they are included here when they are open to unmarried adolescent girls' participation.

**Structures and response:** These strategies build legal structures that work to prevent child marriage and respond to present threats to individual girls' autonomy in making choices about marriage.

**G. Legal and policy improvements and implementation (13 programmes)**

These include advocacy for stronger legislation against child marriage or the factors that sustain its practice, or harmonization of legal codes that give different ages or conditions of marriage for different groups (such as personal and religious laws). Fuller implementation of laws and policies fall in this group as well, such as improved birth and marriage registration systems, enforcement by criminal and justice systems, and improvements in information and data management systems.

**H. Protective services and helplines (18 programmes)**

A programme is grouped here if it directly provides protective services for adolescent girls at risk of being married or related abuse. Because child marriage is often considered a "child protection" issue or, alternatively, a "violence against women and girls" issue, community-based groups and national helplines for children and women are in some countries contacted by adolescents facing an imminent marriage or recently married against their will.

Seventeen (19) of the programmes employ a single type of strategy. The remaining 50 have multiple strategies. Still, no programme should be thought of as an initiative in isolation. Many programmes and services in a setting coordinate among themselves through working groups, coalitions, or government units. These collaborations are essential for a "whole girl" approach that takes into account the social, physical, intellectual, familial, and economic dimensions of girls' lives, but they are difficult to capture in a desk review. It is expected that their impact is underrepresented here.

There are some notable gaps in this set of programmes. First, there was no programme that strongly focused on prospective grooms or their families in ending child marriage. This has been called the "demand" side of a marriage market. Some programmes and studies have looked at why grooms and families prefer younger brides, but at the family level, the onus of preventing child marriage is nearly always seen to lie with future brides and their families rather than future grooms. Related, no programme has fully taken into account—through programming or research—the phenomenon of child grooms which exists in certain localities. Tipping Point in Nepal may be an exception, as the project views former child grooms as potential strong allies in ending child marriage. Second, there are few examples of systematic strengthening of local

procedures for marriage registration, and linking those to birth registration or other proof of a girl's age. The best documentation of this approach comes from initiatives in Bangladesh.

Finally, there were few services targeted explicitly to married girls. Those that this review uncovered were in family planning and reproductive health, and in return to school programmes. Given the evidence that many married girls would like to continue their education and increasingly are supported to do so by husbands and in-laws,<sup>100</sup> they will need health and education facilities that meet their needs.

It is also worth noting that many programmes using community mobilization and awareness strategies highlight the negative effects an early marriage can have on a girl—maternal mortality and morbidity, psychological trauma, forced sex and physical abuse, and reduced earning potential, among others. While this is important knowledge for community members and families, education about the harm of a practice has not been found to be a sufficient deterrent in behavior change literature. Social norm theory is a relatively young field of thought, but it has great promise for insights on how to shift a whole group's thinking and actions in a positive direction.

The tables below only include country programmes (rather than policies or regional programmes). Note that Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka are excluded due to the paucity of relevant programmes.

Programmes that have addressing child marriage as one of the primary objectives are highlighted in orange.

Programme	Empower girls	Mobilize communities	Quality services	Alternate education	Material/incentives	Livelihoods	Legal structures	Protective services
<b>Afghanistan</b>								
Child Protection Action Network (CPAN)								X
Justice and Human Rights in Afghanistan (JHRA)							X	
Improving adolescents' lives in South Asia	X	X	X					X
Youth Health Line	X							X
Violence against women programme							X	X
Teacher Malalai's Adventures: Mina's Early Marriage	X	X						
Girls' Education Challenge and Community-Based Girls' Education				X	X			
<b>Bangladesh</b>								
Female Secondary School Stipend Program					X			
Birth and Death Registration Project							X	
Multi-Sectoral Program on Violence Against Women			X				X	
Advancement of Promoting Women's Rights (APWR)		X						X
Protection and Enforcement of Women's Rights (PEWR)			X				X	X

Programme	Empower girls	Mobilize communities	Quality services	Alternate education	Material/ incentives	Livelihoods	Legal structures	Protective services
<b>Bangladesh (continued)</b>								
Strengthening Parliament's Capacity in Integrating Population Issues into Development (SPCPD)							X	
Enabling Environment for Child Rights (EECR) and Engaging Communities for Social and Behavioral Change (ECSBC)		X						X
Kishori Abhijan	X					X		
Meena Communication Initiative	X							
BALIKA	X	X			X	X		
Gender Quality Action and Learning		X						
Adolescent Development Programme (ADP)/ Employment and Livelihood for Adolescents (ELA)	X	X				X		
Raising the Age of Marriage for Young Girls		X			X	X		
SHOUHARDO	X	X						
Girl Power Programme	X	X					X	X
Kishoree Kontha	X	X			X	X		
Tipping Point	X	X						
Asia Child Marriage Initiative (ACMI)	X	X					X	X
KAISHAR		X	X					
Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative (PCTFI)		X	X					
Protecting Human Rights (PHR)		X	X				X	X
<b>India</b>								
Apni Beti Apna Dhan (ABAD)					X			
Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)				X				
Mahila Shikshan Kendras (MSK)				X				
Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) Teen Clubs	X	X						
Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls/ SABLA/ Kishori Shakti Yojana	X					X		
Improving adolescents' lives in South Asia	X	X	X				X	X
Deepshikha	X					X		
Girls Gaining Ground	X							
PRACHAR/ JAGRITI	X		X					
Planning Ahead for Girls' Empowerment and Employability (PAGE)	X					X		
Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS)	X		X					
Creating Agency of Youth	X					X		
Knot So Young/ United Action for Child Marriage		X						
Udaan	X			X				

Programme	Empower girls	Mobilize communities	Quality services	Alternate education	Material/ incentives	Livelihoods	Legal structures	Protective services
Nation Against Child Marriage		X						
A More Equal Future		X						
Development Initiative for Supporting Healthy Adolescence (DISHA)	X	X	X			X		
Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative		X	X					
Asia Child Marriage Initiative	X			X				
<b>Nepal</b>								
National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Program			X					
Village Child Protection Committees		X						X
Kishori Bikash Karyakram/ Choose Your Future	X					X		
Rupantaran	X	X				X		
Chunauti	X	X					X	X
Tipping Point	X	X						X
Her Turn		X						
Girl Power Programme	X				X	X		
SAMVAD	X	X			X	X		
Saathi Sanga Manka Kura/ VOICES Radio	X							
Inter-faith dialogue		X						
Choices, Voices, and Promises	X	X						
Asia Child Marriage Initiative	X	X						
<b>Pakistan</b>								
Punjab Female School Stipend Program					X			
Improving adolescents' lives in South Asia	X	X	X					X
Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health Services		X	X					
Madadgaar Helpline and affiliated programmes	X	X						X
Girl Power Programme			X	X			X	X
Aagahi se Agay (ASA) and Awareness to Action (A2A)	X		X			X		
Access, Services, and Knowledge (ASK)	X							X
Promoting Gender Justice in Pakistan	X	X						
Pakistan Child Marriage Initiative		X					X	

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