

BLGMUN'25

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1-Letters

a.From the Secretary General

Dear Delegates,

It is my greatest pleasure to welcome you all to BLGMUN'25, the first official MUN of our school. My name is Serra Yırtıcı and i'm the Secretary General of the BLGMUN'25. I'm an 11'th grader at Özel Artı Fen Bilgi Highschools.

As someone who prefers GA committies over any other, any day of the week; i got absolutely more and more thrilled about our UNICEF Committee while writing this study guide.

I'm looking forward to hearing about all of your remarkable negotiations and creative solutions in the committee.

I have no doubt that you will enjoy your time in and out of sessions with our excellent Chairboard and organisation team as everyone has been working with great afford.

I can surely say that Hilal is the best suit for a USG as the Hilal's soft-heartedness and joyfulness will most certainly create a charming atmosphere in the committee.

Hilal and I have been friends since elementary school, And from elementary school till now, i don't remember any day that went by where i was with her and i didn't get cramps in my stomach for laughing too hard.

So i can assure you, you're lucky to be at her committee.

To those who are participating in a MUN conference for the first time, I understand fully how it can feel nerve-wracking sometimes. However, I encourage you to speak up when you get the opportunity to, as this is your only chance to participate in BLGMUN'25. We have all been first-timers at some point and i'm no exception. Therefore, I advise you to remain calm and make the most out of your experience at BLGMUN'25.

I wish you all the best.

Sincerely

Serra Yırtıcı

b. From the Under Secretary General

Dear Delegates,

My name is Hilal Kılıçarslan. I am thrilled to serve as the USG of the UNICEF committee in BLGMUN'25. I participated in numerous MUN conferences, especially last year, and I enjoyed them all very much, therefore I sincerely hope you will find this conference just as enjoyable and rewarding as I have.

For the first time I'm attending not as delegate, but as a USG. This brings me a lot of excitement and joy, I am committed to making this committee a space you will appreciate and enjoy. Of course, we will have fun besides working; although this is a simulation of the United Nations, it is a conference, and we would like this conference to stay in your memory in the best possible way.

In the committee, each delegate should confidently and accurately present their country's stance, remaining within the bounds of its official policies. All key questions and topics are outlined in the study guide, so it's essential to do preparations thoughtfully and parallel to the idea our study guide is based on. I encourage you to stay mindful while on representing your country.

I am open to any question that you may have, not only during the sessions, but also in coffee breaks, please do not hesitate to come to me with any of your problem.

I hope you will have a very good time

Hilal Kılıçarslan

2-Introduction to the Committee

a. History of United Nations

The United Nations was founded after the Second World War with the aim of preventing future world wars therefore the League of Nations was achieved, however it was described as ineffective. On April 25, 1945, 50 nations met in San Francisco, California, for a conference and began drafting the United Nations Charter, which was adopted on June 25, 1945.

The Charter came into force on October 24, 1945, when the United Nations began its work. The objectives of the United Nations as defined in the Charter include the maintenance of international peace and security, the protection of human rights, the provision of humanitarian aid, the promotion of sustainable development and the observance of international law.

The United Nations had 51 member states when it was founded; by 2025 there will be 193 – almost all of the world's sovereign states. During the Cold War (1945-1991) the United Nations played a significant part in helping countries reach peace and provide stable diplomacy, after the war, the United Nations did not stop working on solving humanitarian crises and developing a sustainable environment. The United Nations is actively supporting and promoting human rights (which was adopted in 1948) and development goals (2015-) in the world.

United Nations mainly focus on:

1. Achieving international cooperation on solving international economic, social, cultural or humanitarian issues while promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.
2. Maintaining international peace and security by preventing or removing the threats to peace, as well as to peacefully resolve international disputes or potential conflicts according to the principles of justice and international law
3. Being a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.
4. Developing friendly relations among nations with respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of people and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace.

b. Introduction to the General Assembly

The United Nations currently has six principal organs;



The General Assembly is the UN's most democratic body, since it includes all member states. Great powers often belittle the Assembly and call it irrelevant, but its work better reflects the will of the world's peoples than does the oligarchic Security Council. Reformers have long proposed steps towards a stronger and more effective GA.

The strength of the UN General Assembly is its unique capability to bring together representatives of the world's countries. Hereby, it creates a platform through which ideally countries can share their problems with the rest of the world, so that a common solution can be found to these problems.

The General Assembly is a symbol of international solidarity. At the same time, the way in which the General Assembly is organized, is a risk to its own functioning. Given the amount of potential topics that the General Assembly deals with and given that representatives from no less than 193 countries meet at the same time in the General Assembly Hall every year to discuss and debate, one can imagine that there can be great difficulty to get to any relevant discussions or decisions. The body itself has expressed that an effort should be made to make the General Assembly more focused and relevant.

The creation of the General Assembly (1945) included the establishment of six main committees;

First Committee (Disarmament & International Security)

Second Committee (Economic & Financial)

Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian & Cultural)

Fourth Committee (Special Political & Decolonization)

Fifth Committee (Administrative & Budgetary)

Sixth Committee (Legal)

c. Introduction to the UNICEF

The United Nations General Assembly agreed to the formation of United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in 1946 through resolution 57.

The major objective after inception was to help children across Europe who had been left helpless after the Second World War. Additionally, the main purpose of the fund was to help in building shelter, provide food, enhance security for children and reduce the rising child mortality, in times of crisis.

Maurice Pate, the first Executive Director of UNICEF agreed to take his position on condition that all children regardless of their nationality or creed would be assisted by this fund. Ever since, this has always been the primary goal of UNICEF.

However, in 1950 the attempt to close the fund, the UNICEF leadership together with Member States requested the continuation of the fund and expanded its scope.

Therefore, in 1953, the General 2 Assembly resolved to change it from an Emergency Fund to a permanent Specialized Agency of sections 57 and 63 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The mandate of UNICEF was shifted from providing temporary relief to ensuring long-term sustainable development goals and helping countries be able to provide for their own children in future.

Hence, its mission has been extended to Asia which was previously not under its mandate.

Now UNICEF works in over 190 countries and territories and has spent 70 years working to improve and protect the lives and rights of every children and their families.

d. The Main Functions of UNICEF

1. Child Protection

Every child has the right to grow up in a safe environment.

UNICEF works to protect children from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect. This includes efforts to end child labor, trafficking, child marriage, and the recruitment of child soldiers by:

- supporting systems that strengthen child protection services, such as legal frameworks and social welfare services,
- working with partners around the world to promote policies to protect all children.

2. Social Inclusion

Every child has the right to grow up in an inclusive environment.

UNICEF works with partners around the world to expand access to services that protect all children by:

- advocating for national and international social policies and programs that reduce poverty and social inequities affecting children and families.
- strengthening social protection systems, such as cash transfer programs and child grants, to support vulnerable children and families.

3. Child Survival

Every child has the right to survive and thrive.

UNICEF is devoted to ensure that all children have access to quality healthcare services.

Particularly with vaccination programs and services, parental and infant care, treatment of childhood diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhea, and malaria.

UNICEF promotes proper nutrition to prevent stunting and wasting in children which is critical for physical and cognitive development. Particularly with supporting breastfeeding, supplementary feeding, and micronutrient supplementation.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH):

UNICEF works in over 100 countries to help provide access to clean water and reliable sanitation, and to promote basic hygiene practices that keep children safe from infectious disease.

By partnering with governments, civil society organizations and communities, UNICEF; focuses on technical assistance to governments for the maintenance of WASH infrastructure, as well as on the development of national standards, policies and hygiene protocols for WASH in schools and health centres.

All WASH facilities are designed to be accessible for children living with disabilities, and to support the menstrual hygiene needs of girls so they don't have to miss out on school.

Additionally, even and especially during humanitarian emergencies; UNICEF is dedicated to providing clean water and safe hygiene to affected areas and settlement camps.

4. Education

Every child has the right to learn.

UNICEF works around the world to support quality learning for every girl and boy, also focusing on disadvantaged groups, children in conflict zones, and those with disabilities while promoting inclusive education systems and working to improve learning outcomes,

5. Emergencies

Reaching every child in emergencies.

UNICEF plays a crucial role in emergency response, providing life-saving assistance to children and families affected by conflicts, natural disasters, and other crises. They ensure that children receive food, water, shelter, healthcare, and education during emergencies.



Additionally, UNICEF's goals are parallel with *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030.

e. Other UN bodies regarding children

Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC):

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the UN body responsible for ensuring children can enjoy their human rights and live with dignity, respect and equality.

The CRC consists of adequate, independent experts from 196 member states.

Once a year, the committee submits a report to the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly and the Assembly adopts a Resolution on the Rights of the Child.

CRC's main aim is to review the progress made by countries in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, provide recommendations, and address specific cases of violations of children's rights.



UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG-CAAC):

This office works to protect the rights of children affected by armed conflict. It monitors, reports, and advocates for the protection of children in conflict zones.

World Health Organization (WHO) – Child Health:

WHO works on global health issues, including child health. It focuses on ensuring healthy lives for children through immunization, nutrition, and combating diseases.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

UNESCO was founded in 1945 with the aim to;

- contribute peace, sustainable development and human rights by facilitating collaboration and dialogue among nations
- preserve regional and cultural history, and promote cultural diversity
- provide technical training and education reforms
- advance and protect natural sciences and social/human sciences.

Additionally UNESCO promotes education as a fundamental human right, particularly focusing on achieving quality education for all children.

Headquartered in Paris, France, UNESCO has 53 regional field offices and 199 national commissions. It currently has 194 member states and 12 associate members.

UNHRC (United Nations Human Rights Council)

The Human Rights Council is the main intergovernmental body within the United Nations responsible for human rights. Established in 2006 by the General Assembly, it is responsible for;

- strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe,
- addressing human rights violations and proposing solutions

It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year. It meets at the United Nations Office at Geneva.

The Human Rights Council consists of 47 Member States elected directly and individually by a majority of the 193 states of the UN General Assembly.

International Labour Organization (ILO) – International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC):

ILO, through IPEC, aims to eliminate child labor by promoting rights at work, encouraging decent employment opportunities, enhancing social protection, and strengthening dialogue on work-related issues.

The UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

UNHCR was created in 1950 to address the refugee crisis that resulted from World War II. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, with over 18,879 staff working in 138 countries as of 2020.

Mandated to aid and protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, strives to ensure that all people have the right to seek asylum and find safety after escaping violence, persecution, or war.

By 2024, UNHCR had assisted about 60 million refugees.

In most cases, as a survival strategy to cope with poverty, violence, instability, or lack of resources, families may feel obligated to marry off young girls. Thus child marriage tends to increase in crisis situations

Through partnerships with local governments, NGOs, and community leaders, UNHCR aims to strengthen child protection systems, provide safe environments, and empower girls to make informed decisions about their futures, thereby reducing the incidence of child marriage in vulnerable communities.

3.Introduction to our Agenda Item: Tackling Child Marriage and Enhancing Children’s Rights

a.Child Marriage Today

Child marriage, or early marriage, refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 and an adult or another child. Child marriages are considered “forced marriages” and are a human rights violation.

Girls account for the vast majority of those who marry as children. While child marriage does occur among both boys and girls, the prevalence is about six times higher among girls. Child marriage is deeply rooted in gender inequality and societal values that place less worth on girls than boys, deprive girls of their agency, and perpetuate systems in which women and girls have little power or voice.

One in every five children in the world is forced into marriage. 9 out of every 10 children married are girls. This means 12 million girls every year.

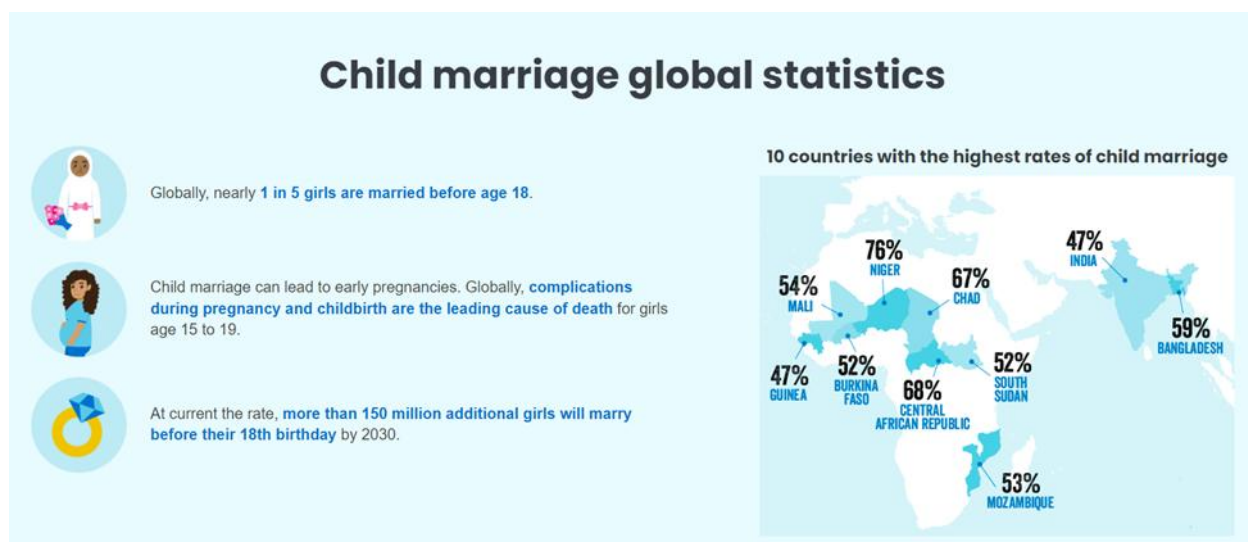
An estimated 640 million girls and women alive today were married in childhood - a grim reality that robs girls of their rights.

Once married, a girl's world narrows dramatically.

Child brides experience isolation from their family, friends and communities. Often access to education gets limited by forced removal from school.

Additionally, the child's education is no longer considered significant or necessary, whereas their role being primarily associated with house or family responsibilities,

It compromises their health by exposing them to various forms of violence (sexual, physical and emotional), contract HIV/AIDS, undermines their prospects and potential and thrusts them into experiences that their young minds and bodies are not ready for -like motherhood-. Girls who marry early often become pregnant while they are still children themselves, with great risks for their own well-being and that of their babies



b. Main Factors for Child Marriage

Gender Inequality

In many places, patriarchal norms and various gender inequality practices have been normalized by the society as it has happened for generations and now it is considered as a cultural element.

Sons are considered more valuable to their families than daughters as girls value is linked to household and familial responsibilities.

Families with few resources are more likely to invest in their sons' education.

Often girls have less time to study and earn because they have to do more childcare and household chores than boys. They can't trade, own assets or do some jobs because they aren't allowed to move freely. Further, they can't access fair employment because of workplace harassment and biased recruitment policies.

Identity

Many girls aren't registered at birth, so they aren't able to prove their true age.

Laws&Rights

Children and their families are often unaware of their rights or regarded laws aren't completely enforced.

Poverty

Nearly 40% of girls in the world's poorest countries are married as children, twice the global average.

When experiencing poverty families – and sometimes girls themselves – often see marriage as a way to ensure that their daughters will be taken care of and will be provided for.

Because girls have less access to education and low social, political and economic status, they are often economically dependent on men. They may see marriage as their only option.

Additionally it's considered as a way to alleviate a 'financial burden' and gain financial security.

Thus, girls are stuck in a vicious cycle of limited education, limited opportunities for financial independence, and limited agency and decision-making power

Emergencies

The prevalence of child marriage increases during crises.

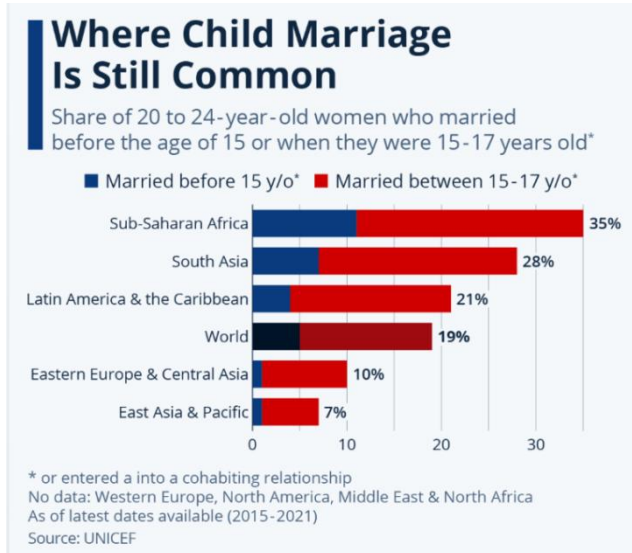
Crisis caused by conflict, war, generalized violence, natural hazards – including climate change and disease outbreaks – hunger and poverty worsen the factors that drive child marriage.

Reasonings include;

- Parents marry their daughters because they think it will protect them from increased or generalised violence, including sexual, physical and emotional violence.
- Girls may marry or enter informal unions with older men who promise to reunite them with family members who have already migrated or been displaced.
- Child marriage is used as a weapon of war and to hide human trafficking and sexual abuse.

- Access to education is reduced, and schools and children may be targeted or recruited by armed actors. This puts girls at increased risk of exploitation and abuse, including slavery and child marriage.

c. Region by Region



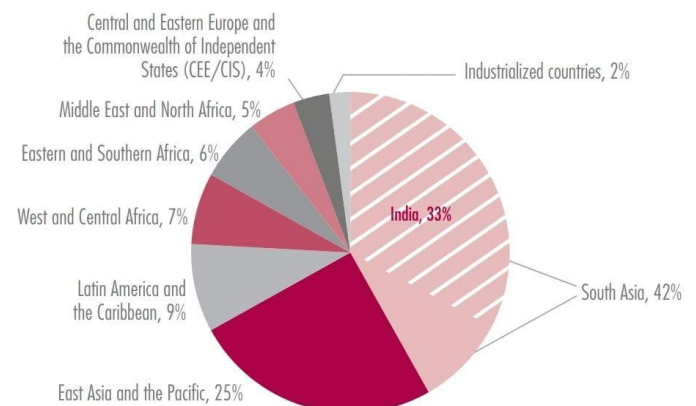
- Sub-Saharan Africa has the world’s highest rates of child marriage, with countries like Niger, Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, and Mozambique reporting exceptionally high rates. In Niger, namely, around 76% of girls marry before they turn 18.

South Asia is home to the largest number of child brides globally, with India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan facing significant challenges. Despite progress in recent years, the high population density in South Asia means that millions of girls are still at risk. In Bangladesh, around 51% of girls are married before 18, largely due to poverty, social pressure, and cultural norms.

Child marriage in India remains a persistent challenge despite legal frameworks such as the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, which sets the minimum marriage age at 18 for women and 21 for men. Cultural traditions, economic hardships, and lack of education are key factors contributing to the practice, particularly in rural areas. India accounts for the highest number of child brides globally, with nearly 23% of women aged 20-24 reporting they were married before 18.

Almost half of all child brides worldwide live in South Asia; 1 in 3 are in India

Percentage distribution of women aged 18 years and older who were married or in union before age 18, by region



Note: Estimates are based on a subset of countries covering around 50 per cent of the global population of women aged 18 years and older.

In some parts of the Middle East and North Africa, child marriage is driven by social norms and in certain cases exacerbated by conflict. Yemen, namely, has high rates of child marriage, where political instability and poverty contribute to families marrying off daughters for perceived security or economic relief.

Though not as commonly associated with child marriage as other regions, parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, including Nicaragua, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic, also report high rates. In rural or indigenous communities, traditional views and limited educational resources contribute to the persistence of early marriages.

While child marriage rates are generally lower in these regions, it remains prevalent in specific communities, especially among Roma populations in Eastern Europe and rural areas of Central Asia. Lack of education and community norms contribute to early marriages here.

- Additionally, even the country with the highest welfare struggles with the issue ;

Unlike in countries where child marriage is illegal but persists anyway, the problem in the U.S. is the laws themselves. Most U.S. states still allow marriage before 18, and the four states* that banned it did so only in the last three years.



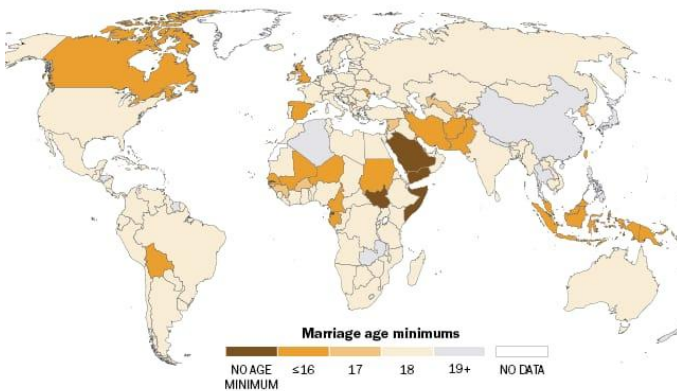
Federal law, too, allows and might even encourage child marriage. Immigration law does not specify a minimum age to petition for a foreign spouse or fiancé(e) or to be the beneficiary of a spousal or fiancé(e) visa, which allows for American girls to be trafficked for their citizenship and allows for children around the world to be trafficked to the U.S. under the guise of marriage.

The U.S. approved nearly 9,000 petitions involving a minor between 2007 and 2017, and in 95% of them, the younger party was a girl. Further, the federal criminal code prohibits sex with a child age 12 to 15 but specifically exempts those who first marry the child. This incentivizes child marriage and implicitly endorses child rape.

Therefore as consequences of legal deficits statutory rape laws gets undermined, often covering up what would otherwise be considered a sex crime.

- Almost two thirds of the countries (117) allow children to marry. Even in countries that stipulate a minimum age of 18, many have exemptions to the rule.
 - An 18-year-old in Australia, for instance, can marry a 16-year-old as long as they have judicial approval.
 - In Iraq, Jamaica and Uruguay, children can marry with parental permission.
- In about one fifth of countries (38), there are different minimum ages for men and women, and almost always the girl is younger.
 - in Bangladesh, women must be 18 and men must be 21 to marry.
 - In Sudan, girls can marry at 10 and boys can marry at 15 or at puberty.
 - In the Philippines, Muslim boys can marry at 15 and Muslim girls can marry at puberty.
 - In Tanzania, Muslim and Hindu girls can marry at 12 as long as the marriage is not consummated until the girl reaches the age of 15.

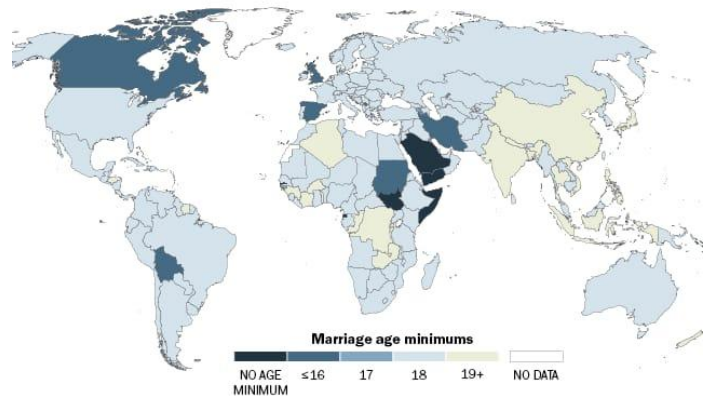
Marriage age minimums for girls



Note: Data show ages at which girls can marry without parental or judicial consent.
 Source: Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. State Department country reports on human rights practices for 2015.
 Supplemental data taken from the United Nations Population Fund. U.S. data taken from Cornell University Law School Legal Information Institute.

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Marriage age minimums for boys



Note: Data show ages at which boys can marry without parental or judicial consent.
 Source: Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. State Department country reports on human rights practices for 2015.
 Supplemental data taken from the United Nations Population Fund. U.S. data taken from Cornell University Law School Legal Information Institute.

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e.UNICEF's actions

Laws&Rights

UNICEF works with governments to strengthen and enforce laws that set the minimum legal age for marriage at 18.

Community Engagement, Education and Empowerment Programs

UNICEF; partners with local communities, religious leaders, and families. In order to reshape the social norms, raise awareness and promote alternative opportunities for girls to help them to reach their true potential by providing and empowering them with skills and knowledge as well as supporting them with their education.

Support Services

UNICEF provides support for girls who are already married by offering access to education, healthcare, and legal assistance. They also work to ensure that child brides can access sexual and reproductive health services, including counseling and support for ending harmful practices.

Working side to side with UNFPA

In 2016, UNICEF joined UNFPA to launch the *Global Program to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage*, focusing efforts in 12 countries where the practice is most prevalent: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia.

Over two dozen additional countries receive technical support through the initiative to help strengthen services and protections for vulnerable girls.

By the end of 2022, through these program efforts:

- over 21 million adolescent girls have participated in life skills training and comprehensive education
- close to 59 million community members have engaged in dialogues on child marriage and gender equality
- close to 40,000 facilities or access points are now providing adolescent girl-friendly services
- over 500 new partnerships have been established to tackle poverty
- 8 financed national strategies, 169 sub-national action plans and 156 legal instruments have been adopted to end child marriage
- dozens of research projects have produced quality data and evidence around what works to end the practice

At the current rate of progress, it will take another 300 years to end child marriage everywhere in the world, according to UNICEF's global analysis.

4- Questions to be concerned

- How do factors such as race, ethnicity, geography, and socioeconomic status intersect with gender to impact the prevalence of child marriage?
- How can we bridge the cultural gap between the West and the East to promote children's rights effectively?
- What are the most effective strategies to raise global awareness concerning children rights?
- How can developed countries assist developing countries in enhancing children's rights to sustainable education?
- How can stakeholders, governments and educational institutions work collaboratively to minimize global or statewide effects of child marriage?
- In regions affected by conflict, what cultural or economic pressures contribute to the normalization of child marriage as a coping mechanism?
- How do factors such as loss of education, economic instability, and lack of protection in conflict zones exacerbate the vulnerability of children to early marriage?
- What can the other UN bodies and NGOs take part in the process of eliminating child marriage?
- How can UNICEF improve its programs and allocate sufficient budget and resources to effectively end child marriage across different countries?
- How steps can be taken to support children who are impacted by physical and mental abuse as a consequences of child marriage to reintegrate into society?
- How can international organizations and local governments collaborate to prevent child marriage in conflict-affected regions?
- How can a balance be established between cultural traditions and universal human rights?

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"...in serving the best interests of children, we serve the best interests of all humanity."

-- Carol Bellamy

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