Early Marriage Discussion Guide

***Topic of education session*** *-* ***Early marriage/ Child marriage***

***Time needed*** *-* ***45min***

***Purpose of session - To give knowledge about the cause and consequences of***

***early marriage***

***-To reduce and prevent early marriage by girls themselves,***

***families and communities***

* First, introduce name, position, organization
* Explain the type of session and how long it will take in advance
* Say thanks to all for their participation and explain the purpose of session

**Open the discussion:**

Ask: **What does early marriage mean?**

If no response, rephrase**: what age do you think is too early to get married?**

**Information points:**

**Early or Child marriage** is defined as a formal marriage or informal union before age 18, but for many girls, marriage occurs much earlier and girls are disproportionately the most affected.

Early or child marriage is a problem that happens in all religions and countries.

* In developing countries, one in every three girls is married before reaching age 18. One in nine is married under age 15. Boys are also married as children, but girls are disproportionately affected.
  + (Facilitator resource: <http://www.unfpa.org/child-marriage#sthash.cSqqWs6x.dpuf>)
* If current levels of child marriages hold, between 2011 and 2020, 14.2 million girls annually or 39,000 daily will marry too young. Of the 140 million girls who will marry before the age of 18, 50 million will be under the age of 15.
  + (Facilitator resource: [www.unicef.org/media/media](http://www.unicef.org/media/media))
* According the 2015 UNICEF report, “[State of the World’s Children External Link](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/SOWC_2015_Summary_and_Tables.pdf) (.pdf),” the countries with the highest rates of child marriage before age 18 are:

1. Niger\* — 76 percent
2. Central African Republic — 68 percent
3. Chad\* — 68 percent
4. Bangladesh\* — 65 percent
5. Mali\* — 55 percent
6. Guinea — 52 percent
7. South Sudan\* — 52 percent
8. Burkina Faso — 52 percent
9. Malawi\* — 50 percent
10. Mozambique — 48 percent

(Facilitator resource: <http://www.worldvision.org/news-stories-videos/ten-worst-places-child-marriage#sthash.kGo8Dywa.dpuf>)

Ask: **Why do you think early marriage happens?**

# Why does child marriage happen?

# Why does child marriage happen?

At its heart, child marriage is rooted **in gender inequality** and the belief that girls and women are somehow inferior to boys and men.

**Contributing factors**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Describe each factor*** | *For each factor, discuss by using the following explanation*. |
| **Culture and tradition** | * Communities do not value girls as much as boys. * Girls’ value is often as labor for household chores and a future mother, not as an individual. |
| **Poverty** | * Where poverty is acute, families and sometimes girls themselves believe that marriage will be... * A solution to secure their future * A way to reduce family expenses by ensuring family has one less person to feed, clothe and educate. * A way to repay debts, manage disputes, or settle social, economic and political alliances. * More than half of girls from the poorest families in the developing world are married as children. |
| * **Lack of education** | * Child marriage is found in places with lower levels of schooling for girls in every region of the world * Girls may be pulled from school to be married because families see investing in their son’s education as a better investment. * Child marriage can be seen as the only option for some girls to have a secure future because they cannot be educated or earn an income on their own. |
| * **Insecurity** | * Families closely guard their daughters’ sexuality and virginity in order to protect the family honor. So, parents will marry a girl early: * To ensure her safety in areas where girls are at high risk of harassment such as in conflict or after a natural disaster. * To ensure that she can have a secure future, rather than risk waiting and having her not get married at all. |
| * **Economics** | * Girls are seen as a burden on their family. Marrying your daughter at a young age is seen as a way to transfer this ‘burden’ to her husband’s family. * In some countries, girls are forced by their families to marry much older men because parents believe they are protecting their daughters and increasing their economic opportunities. |
| * **Controlling a girl’s sexuality** | * Young girls also have little access to family planning, and if they get pregnant, their parents will want to marry them immediately. * The desire to control female sexuality, for instance, how a girl should behave, how she should dress, who she should be allowed to see, to marry, etc. |
| * **Demand** | * Parents-in-law often want their son’s wife to be younger so that she will be easier to control and stay home to take care of the household. * They also want a young bride who will have many grandchildren. |

**Consequences of Early Marriage:**

Ask: **What do you think are the consequences from early marriage?** (Listen to answers before explaining the information below.)

**Early marriage** can lead to a lifetime of disadvantage and deprivation. It affects efforts to reduce gender based violence, advance education, overcome poverty and improve health indicators for girls and women.

The pages that follow guide a discussion of the different types of consequences. If you have a shorter time, you can follow up on only a few consequences for the first discussion.

The **consequences are:**

* Health consequences to sexual and reproductive health, with complications for pregnancy and childbirth
* Reduced education opportunities
* Affect on physical and emotional well-being
* Ends a girl’s childhood before she is an adult
* Greater risk of domestic violence (increased power imbalance in family)
* denies them access to social networks and support systems
* Creates a cycle of poverty and gender inequality.
* Adds to sexual abuse and exploitation of girls.

Health

*Ask Let’s talk about the health consequences of early marriage.*

*What do you think the consequences are?*

*Remark Encourage participants to discuss*

*Using IEC material “****Teenage Pregnancy is dangerous for health”***

*Ask them to discuss how early marriage affected the girl’s health on this*

*poster*

* Early childbearing poses serious health risks for mother and child.
* Early marriage leads to **early childbearing**, with much higher maternal mortality and morbidity rates as well as higher infant mortality rates.
* Girls under 15 are **five times** more likely to die in childbirth than women in their 20s.
* Girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are **twice** as likely to die of pregnancy as adult women.
* Because their bodies are not yet fully developed and unprepared for sexual intercourse, they have higher risk of pregnancy-related complications, such as obstetric fistula and suffering life threatening complications or even death.
* Pregnancy-related health problems can have emotional and social consequences and pose a financial burden to the household.
* Child brides are often unable to negotiate safer sexual practices and are at a higher risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.
* Children of child brides are **60 percent more likely to die in the first year of life** than those born to mothers older than 19

Education

*Using IEC material “E****ducated girls make the community stronger”***

*Let discuss the differences between the girl married in early and*

*who married in adult age.*

*Ask What are the effects on girl’s education of early marriage*

*Ask How can an educated girl manage in her life better?*

*Remark Ask them to add more by focusing on individual.*

* After marriage, young girls’ access to formal and non-formal education is lim­ited because of domestic work, childbear­ing and social norms that view marriage and schooling as incompatible.
* When a girl is pulled from school, her personal development is stunted. She is left with few negotiation skills and therefore has limited decision-making power in her new household.
* Uneducated and unskilled, many child brides are completely dependent on their husbands and in-laws to survive.
* Pulling girls out of school ensures that poverty will be handed down from a mother to her daughter, and family to family, for generations to come.
* A lost opportunity for education is not only harmful for girls, but has wide-reaching repercussions for their children and communities.

Emotional wellbeing

*Using IEC material 1.“****Preventing early marriage leads to happier girls and women”***

***2. “Waiting to marry as an adult leads to successful family”***

*Let’s discuss more on next consequences with aid of this poster.*

*Remark Discuss No.1 poster fist.*

*Discuss No.2 poster afterwards.*

*Ask What does the girl married at an early age face in her married life?*

*Ask What advantages does it give a family if the wife/mother is an adult?*

*Remark Ask them to add more by focusing on individual.*

*And then explain by comparing.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Girl married in childhood | Girl married in adult age |
| * Denied their childhood before completing school life but also socially isolated- cut off from family and friends and other sources of support- with limited opportunities for education and employment. * Not yet mature or skilled enough to properly perform household tasks or care for their husbands and children * Age difference with husband can make girl more vulnerable to power dynamics in home. * Limits on leaving home to socialize with others (isolation) * Reduces ability to get and understand information on reproductive health and family planning * Limits power to negotiate contraceptive or condom use, putting them at high risk for contracting STIs and HIV. * These power dynamics can increase girls’ vulnerability to emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. * Limits access to financial resources and restricted mobility; * The vicious cycle of poverty, poor health, curtailed education, violence, instability, disregard for rule of law and legal and other discrimination often continues into the next generation, especially for any daughters she may have. | * Passes her childhood in school life and also with family, friends happily * Can manage the household well due to enough negotiation skill and decision making power in household and knowledge how to nurture the children well * Enough knowledge about reproductive health and family planning * Easily known access to get information relating her marriage life and easy to be awareness domestic violence. * Ability to make own income and can manage the household’s financial situation * Can create learning opportunity for her further development even in marriage life |

How to prevent early/child marriage?

Discuss this question and encourage the participants to answer and express their ideas. Listen and clarify which is right (if an answer is not correct, you can ask the rest of the group, “do you see it the same way?”). Add or explain the following:

* Education is the most important key to helping end the practice of early marriage and forced child marriages.
* Education may prove to be more successful in preventing child marriages than banning child marriages.
* Educating girls creates many positive outcomes for economic development and poverty reduction by improving a girl’s income-earning potential and status.
* Education of the parents is just as important as education of the children and will help convince parents of the benefits in having their children educated.
* It is important to provide education involving more than reading, writing, and math.
* Teaching these young girls life skills, including reproduction and contraception information, how to have fun and how to play in sports, is proving to be a positive way to change the lives and futures of these adolescent girls.
* By providing more educational opportunities, girls who are able to complete primary school tend to marry later and have fewer children.
* Promote awareness relating consequences of early marriage for girls and also family, communities.
* Encourage others and participate in education session or training relating early marriage, girl’s education, etc.
* Provide access or opportunity to gain vocational and life skills for their own income.

After full comments and discussion, thank the participants again for active participation, discussion and giving their own time for this session. Provide refreshment for participants.