



Girls not brides.

In Ghana 1 in 5 women aged 20-24 years were married before 18 years. Globally, more 150 million girls will be at risk of child marriage by 2030. Child marriage is a formal marriage or informal union of children under the age 18. It is considered a violation of human rights and a harmful traditional practice affecting more girls than boys which widen gender inequalities. The key drivers of child marriage are multiple and multi-faceted and are linked to gender inequality, poverty, social norms, cultural and traditional practices as well as teenage pregnancy. Child marriage robs girls of their childhood and threatens their lives and health. Girls who marry before 18 are more likely to experience domestic violence and less likely to remain in school. They have worse economic and health outcomes than their unmarried peers, which are eventually passed down to their own children, further straining a country's capacity to provide quality health and education services.

Child brides often become pregnant during adolescence, when the risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth is high for themselves and their infants. The practice can also isolate girls from family and friends and exclude them from participating in their communities, taking a heavy toll on their physical and psychological well-being. In response to this situation, fighting child marriage has become a core development and human rights issue. If efforts towards the 2030 goal are not achieved, more than 150 million girls will be married before they turn 18 years. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals call for global action to end this human rights violation by 2030.

Who is affected?

- Globally around 21% of women are married before their 18th birthday.
- 650,000,000 girls and women alive today were married as children.
- 37% of women in sub-Saharan Africa is where most women are married before they turn 18 years.
- 25,000,000 child marriages have been prevented over the decades with South East Asia having the largest decline from 49% to 30%.

Stories shared by victims around the world:

- The Hunger Project, "empowering girls": ([Learn more](#)).
- Ending child marriage - breaking the cycle of malnutrition: ([Watch now](#)).
- Mahmod shares her story: ([Watch now](#)).
- An animation about the effects of child marriage: ([Watch now](#)).
- Too young to wed, an art exhibition featuring personal narratives across the world: ([Watch now](#)).