IN THE HOUR OF NEED, WHY WE SHOULD ALL BE PRIORITISING CHILD MARRIAGE & HOW TO DO IT

Hosted by Plan International & Save the Children with Girls Not Brides, International Rescue Committee and UNHCR
AGENDA

The evidence base for child marriage in forced displacement and crisis settings
**Jean Casey** – Research and Humanitarian Manager
Girls Not Brides

Challenges to responding to child marriage in forced displacement and crisis settings
**Clare Lofthouse** – Technical Advisor on Child Marriage
Plan International

Reflections from across the sector
**Rahina Hussaini** – Global Senior Advisor CEFMU
Prevention and Response
Save the Children

- Amel Amir Ali, UNHCR, Geneva
- Marian Rogers, IRC, West Africa
- Lamia Qahtan, Save the Children, Yemen
Where do you work?
Do you think that the practice of child marriage is a big issue where you work?
Child marriage in humanitarian settings

Drivers

- Pre-existing drivers of child marriage
- Gender inequality
- Legal framework and its enforcement
- Agency, and participation for girls and women
- Social norms and beliefs that accept or tolerate child marriage

Risks

- Unmet basic needs including food
- No legal identity or refugee status
- On the move
- Poorly planned humanitarian aid
- forcibly displaced
- Limited alternatives
- Female or child headed household
- Household economic hardship
- Limited access or no services
- Compounding forms of GBV
- Unstable security situation
- UASC
WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR WORKING ON CHILD MARRIAGE IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

JEAN CASEY - RESEARCH AND HUMANITARIAN MANAGER
GIRLS NOT BRIDES
Learning from the evidence - what works to prevent and respond to child marriage and support ever married girls in humanitarian settings

**Safe spaces**
- Play a key role in girls’ protection and empowerment, and often described as the only place where girls feel safe. Provide existing entry points
- Empowerment-based approaches should be coupled with addressing structural barriers e.g. insecurity, poverty and barriers to services
- More effective when paired with interventions at the family and community level

**SRHR**
- Growing evidence on promising practice for delivering flexible, context-based SRH services for adolescent girls in humanitarian settings

**Mental Health**
- Married girls are very isolated, experiencing emotional distress and extremely stressed by the demands of marriage and motherhood
- Rates of intimate partner violence (IPV) and child sexual abuse are very high, yet access to support very limited in crisis-affected settings

**Education & economic barriers**
- Address barriers to education for girls is a priority for displaced girls and a likely critical protector against the heightened risk of child marriage in these settings
- Cash assistance to overcome some barriers was cited as a possible solution for promoting girls’ continued education
- Provide vocational training, economic empowerment education, age-appropriate income generating opportunities via safe spaces accessible for ever married girls and unmarried girls

**Families and communities**
- Have the potential to serve as a support to adolescent girls, including married girls
- The community-engaged model has proven to be successful in creating supportive environment for girls
Learning from the evidence - what works to prevent and respond to child marriage and support ever married girls in humanitarian settings

**Key takeaways:**

- Humanitarian actors can play a critical role in preventing and responding to child marriage and supporting married girls - include child marriage risk and response awareness across all humanitarian assessments and strategies, including core Inter-Agency Standing Committee and cluster guidance documents.

- Efforts to support girls to enrol and remain in school and access other key services (SRHR, GBV etc.) are critical in crisis settings and important protectors against the risk of child marriage and supporting married girls.

- Pilot and evaluate new approaches to child marriage programming, allowing for the testing of different approaches and with room for a degree of failure
Challenges when responding to child marriage in crisis settings

Clare Lofthouse – Technical Advisor on Child Marriage
Plan International
Key challenges

- Heavy focus on prevention
- Limited attention on ever married girls and young mothers (response)
- Perception that this issue is outside the humanitarian mandate
- Knowledge, capacity and attitudes
- Coordination and ownership
- Understand all the dynamics in your context
- Getting stuck in diagnosing the issue and not taking action
- Technical resources are limited. Mainly from GBV sector
Overcoming challenges

- **We have a responsibility** to support and protect girls and their families.
- **Tailored services for and with, ever married girls and young mothers.**
- **Improve coordination** on child and adolescent survivors of GBV.
- **Involve the community**, including girls, in everything you do.
- **Generate and disseminate evidence** on what is happening AND what works.
Reflections from across the sector

Rahina Hussaini – *Global Senior Advisor CEFMU Prevention and Response*

Save the Children
Refugee children, documentation processes and child marriage

Amel AmirAli

UNHCR Geneva
Being a refugee increases risk of child marriage

- 4 out of every 10 refugees globally are children
- Lack of legal status and civil documentation
- Displacement and insecurity
- Limited education opportunities
- Economic hardship
- Lack of access to national protection systems
- Additional complexities related to refugee status process and access to durable solutions
Actions to prevent, mitigate the risk and respond to child marriage in refugee settings

- Strengthening inclusion of refugee children in national child protection systems
- Advocacy to align laws with International Standards
- Girls' engagement and empowerment
- Working with families and communities
- Services to ever married girls and those at risk of child marriage
- Collaborating with other sectors to tackle child marriage including education and livelihood
The Girl Shine Early Marriage Curriculum

Marian Rogers
International rescue Committee
Girl Shine Framework for Early Marriage Response

1. Empower married girls with information, skills, and support networks
2. Mobilize families and the community to support married girls
3. Support married girls’ access to services and opportunities
4. Leverage supportive laws and policies
Working with local partners on child marriage prevention

Lamia Qahtan
Save the Children
So, what can you do?

- **Understand the context and needs**: Strengthen analysis gender analyses, HNOs, HRPs and strategies to capture child marriage as a serious protection concern.

- **Target ever married girls and young mothers**: Don’t only work on the prevention of child marriage. Make sure you adapt your programme for ever married girls and young mothers to access and benefit.

- **Work with local actors**: Link and strengthen the capacity of local actors, WLOs and girl-led groups who can continue to tackle child marriage across the triple nexus.

- **Involve the community**: Involve the community, including girls, in everything you do. They are the change makers and know how to influence their community.

- **Document and share**: Evaluate, document and share your work!!
Connect with us!