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# CHILD, EARLY, AND FORCED MARRIAGE RESOURCE GUIDE



SEPTEMBER 2015

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**Project Description:** The Child, Early, and Forced Marriage Resource Guide task order under the ADVANTAGE IDIQ is a strategy to implement the plan and vision outlined in the "United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally" and USAID's "Ending Child Marriage & Meeting the Needs of Unmarried Children." Under this task order, The Child, Early, and Forced Marriage Resource Guide was designed and developed to assist USAID staff to effectively integrate state-of-the art approaches to child, early and forced marriage prevention and response into their activities. This effort documented how the global health, GBV, youth, education, economic growth and workforce development, agriculture and food security, and legal reform sectors approach child marriage, including entry points, approaches, interventions and monitoring and evaluation, and provides concrete recommendations on how to improve these approaches in the future.

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# GLOSSARY

**Behavior-change communication (BCC):** Context-appropriate messaging strategies to promote healthy behaviors created by working with individuals, communities, and societies.<sup>1</sup>

**Birth registration:** An official record of a child's birth that provides state recognition of a child's existence and establishes his or her identity, nationality, kinship, and age. Birth registration is key for one's legal protection and access to essential services, including health, education, and legal employment.<sup>2</sup>

**Birth spacing:** The practice of timing the period between births, with the objective of achieving an optimal interval between births.<sup>3</sup>

**Bride price:** The practice wherein a groom's family provides assets (such as property or money) to the bride's family as part of the marriage exchange.<sup>4</sup>

**Change agents:** People who facilitate the development, application, and advocacy for new practices.<sup>5</sup>

**Child or early marriage:** A formal or informal union where one or both parties are under the age of 18.<sup>6</sup>

**Child labor:** Work that is hazardous to a child's health, education, or physical or mental development and deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity.<sup>7</sup>

**Community-based education:** Instructional methods and programs aimed at connecting what is being taught in schools to the local communities, including local institutions, history, literature, cultural heritage, and natural environments. It is motivated by the belief that all communities have unique assets and resources that can be utilized to enhance learning experiences.<sup>8</sup>

**Conditional cash transfers (CCTs):** Programs aimed at reducing poverty or changing behaviors by distributing funds or resources directly to individuals or families who meet specified obligations. Conditions for child, early, and forced marriage-related CCTs might include ensuring girls attend school or educational workshops, or delaying marriage until a specified age. By ensuring that recipients meet certain requirements to qualify for the cash transfers, these programs incentivize behavior change and promote social responsibility while increasing empowerment.<sup>9</sup>

**Current violence:** Experience of violence in the past 12 months.<sup>10</sup>

**Dowry:** The practice wherein a bride's family provides assets (such as property or money) to the groom's family as part of the marriage exchange.<sup>11</sup>

**Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C):** All procedures involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to female genital organs for non-medical reasons.<sup>12</sup>

**Fragile states:** According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, a fragile state has a weak capacity to carry out basic governance functions, and it lacks the ability to develop mutually constructive relations with society. Fragile regions or states are more vulnerable to internal or external shocks, such as economic crises or natural disasters. More resilient states exhibit the capacity and legitimacy for governing a population and its territory. They can manage and adapt to changing social needs and expectations, shifts in elite and other political agreements, and growing institutional complexity. Fragility and resilience should be seen as shifting points along a spectrum.<sup>13</sup>

**Forced marriage:** Marriage at any age that occurs without the free and full consent of one or both spouses. It includes child and early marriage, as people under 18 are not able to give full consent.

**Gender:** The social, cultural, behavioral and psychological traits and roles associated with males and females within specific social contexts.

**Gender analysis:** A tool for examining the differences between the roles that women and men play in programs, institutions, systems, communities and societies; the different levels of power they hold; their differing needs, constraints, and opportunities; and the impact of these differences on their lives. The Automated Directives System (ADS) requires gender analysis at the strategy and project levels. USAID's gender analysis guidance includes the following domains: access; knowledge, beliefs, and perception; practices and participation; time and space; legal rights and status; and power and decision-making.<sup>14</sup>

**Gender equality:** Concerns the equality of women and men regardless of their gender roles. And it involves working with men, boys, women, and girls to bring about changes in attitudes, behaviors, roles, and responsibilities regarding the equality of individuals at home, in the workplace, and in the community. Gender equality is more than parity in numbers or laws on the books; it means expanding freedoms and improving overall quality of life so that equality is achieved without sacrificing gains for males or females.<sup>15</sup>

**Gender-based violence (GBV):** Violence that is directed at an individual based on his or her biological sex, gender identity, or perceived adherence to socially defined norms of masculinity and femininity. It includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse; threats; coercion; arbitrary deprivation of liberty; and economic deprivation, whether occurring in public or private life. GBV takes many forms and can occur throughout the life cycle. Types of GBV include female infanticide; child sexual abuse; sex trafficking and forced labor; sexual coercion and abuse; neglect; domestic violence; elder abuse; and harmful traditional practices, such as early and forced marriage, honor killings, and female genital mutilation/cutting.<sup>16</sup>

**Honor killing:** The killing of a relative, especially a girl or woman, who is perceived to have brought dishonor upon the family.<sup>17</sup>

**Human rights:** Inalienable fundamental rights to which every human being is entitled, regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, status, or other distinction of any kind. Among other rights, everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.<sup>18</sup>

**Intimate partner violence (IPV):** Physical, sexual, or psychological harm or threats of harm by current or former spouses or partners.<sup>19</sup>

**Life course:** The sequence of socially defined events and roles that an individual enacts over time, according to a theoretical approach for understanding people within the context of their social, cultural, and structural environments. Though it may be considered in terms of biological age, the life course is a social rather than biological phenomenon and reflects the intersection of social and historical factors with personal biography.<sup>20</sup>

**Marriage:** This term is frequently used to describe unions that are socially recognized and that are started or validated through a ritual or public event. Some marriage formation processes are made formal through official or religious recognition, which may include an official record. In this guide, we use "marriage" to cover official marriages, as well as formal and informal unions.

**Marriage registration:** An official recording of a marriage by the government that provides state recognition of the union. Low levels of marriage registration have an impact on the legal status of partners and on rights to inheritance for partners and offspring, as well as possibly hiding child marriages.<sup>21</sup>

**Polygyny:** The practice of a man having more than one wife. Living in polygynous unions can harm women's status, as household resources are shared among the wives and children.<sup>22</sup>

**Servile marriage:** The practice of when a person (without the right to refuse) is sold, transferred, or inherited into a marriage where he or she is reduced to a commodity over whom any or all the powers of ownership are attached.<sup>23</sup>

**Stunting:** A reduced growth rate among children when they do not experience optimal growth, particularly during the first 1,000 days of life. Stunting has long-term effects on the development of children's brains and bodies and is an outcome of chronic nutritional deficiency.<sup>24</sup>

**Trafficking in persons (TIP):** An international crime involving the acquisition of a human being through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of exploiting the individual for profit through forced labor or prostitution. The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of an individual under the age of 18 for exploitation is considered trafficking in persons, even if none of the aforementioned means listed (such as force, coercion, and abduction) are involved. Trafficking is a form of slavery and constitutes a violation of human rights in which victims are deprived of their fundamental freedoms.<sup>25</sup>

**Unions (informal, non-formal):** Self-defined relationships with a long-term commitment that are recognized socially and in practical terms within the community. Culture -or society-specific terms (such as informal union, consensual union, and common-law relationship) are used in various settings to describe the type of union, but such sub-categories are often grouped with marriage/unions for comparative analysis.<sup>26</sup>

**Vulnerable populations:** Populations who are typically excluded, disadvantaged, or marginalized based on their economic, environmental, social, or cultural characteristics. USAID's definition of vulnerable populations includes victims of torture or war trauma; people with disabilities; indigenous or tribal peoples; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals; labor activists; detainees; women; and children.<sup>27</sup>

**Youth:** According to USAID's Youth Development Policy, "while youth development programs often focus on young people in the 15- to 24-year age range, the policy recognizes that USAID youth programs likely engage a broader cohort of 10 and 29 year olds; with the critical understanding that the transition from childhood to adulthood is not finite or linear and varies across and within countries."<sup>28</sup>

**Youth bulge:** A common phenomenon in many developing countries, where a country achieves success in reducing infant mortality but fertility rates remain high, resulting in a large portion on the population consisting of children and young adults.<sup>29</sup>

# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ACDI/VOCA</b>	Agricultural Cooperative Development International/ Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance
<b>ACDS</b>	African Center for Disaster Studies
<b>ADP</b>	Adolescent Development Program
<b>ADS</b>	Automated Directives System
<b>ADS 205</b>	Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle
<b>APEP</b>	Aspen Planning and Evaluation Program
<b>ASHAs</b>	Accredited social health activists
<b>ASRH</b>	Adolescent sexual and reproductive health
<b>BCC</b>	Behavior change communication
<b>CBE</b>	Community-based education
<b>CCTS</b>	Conditional cash transfers
<b>CDCS</b>	USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategies
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CEDPA</b>	Centre for Development and Population Activities
<b>CEFM</b>	Child, early, and forced marriage
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>CRS</b>	Catholic Relief Services
<b>C-TIP</b>	Counter-Trafficking in Persons
<b>DART</b>	Disaster Assistance Response Team
<b>DFID</b>	UK Department for International Development
<b>DHS</b>	Demographic and Health Surveys
<b>DREAMS INITIATIVE</b>	Determined, Resilient, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe Women Initiative
<b>DRG</b>	Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance
<b>EPCMD</b>	Ending preventable child and maternal deaths
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>FGM/C</b>	Female genital mutilation/cutting

<b>FHI</b>	Family Health International
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GBV STRATEGY</b>	The U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally
<b>GII</b>	Gender Inequality Index
<b>HIPS</b>	High-impact practices in family planning
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	Human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immune deficiency syndrome
<b>IAI</b>	Interactive audio instruction
<b>ICRW</b>	International Center for Research on Women
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced persons
<b>IEC</b>	Information education and communication
<b>IPPF</b>	International Planned Parenthood Foundation
<b>IFPS</b>	Innovations in Family Planning Services
<b>IIPS</b>	International Institute for Population Sciences
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>IPV</b>	Intimate partner violence
<b>IRD</b>	International Relief and Development
<b>IRH</b>	Georgetown University Institute for Reproductive Health
<b>IWHC</b>	International Women's Health Coalition
<b>LAC</b>	Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>LARC</b>	Long-acting, reversible contraception
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and evaluation
<b>MEASURE DHS</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation to Assess and Use Results Demographic and Health Surveys
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>MICS</b>	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
<b>MNCH</b>	Maternal, newborn, and child health
<b>NAP</b>	US National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OFDA</b>	U.S. Government's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
<b>PAD</b>	Project appraisal documents
<b>PEPFAR</b>	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
<b>PRH</b>	USAID's Office of Population and Reproductive Health
<b>RDC</b>	Relief-to-development continuum
<b>RFA</b>	Request for application

<b>RFP</b>	Request for proposal
<b>RHS</b>	Reproductive Health Survey
<b>SACCO</b>	Savings and credit co-operative
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual gender-based violence
<b>SRGBV</b>	School-related gender-based violence
<b>SRH</b>	Sexual and reproductive health
<b>STI</b>	Sexually transmitted infections
<b>THE VISION</b>	USAID Vision for Action on Ending Child Marriage and Meeting the Needs of Married Children
<b>UCT</b>	Unconditional cash transfer
<b>UIS</b>	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNSD</b>	United Nations Statistics Division
<b>VAW/G</b>	Violence against women and girls
<b>WEAI</b>	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WID</b>	Women in Development

# TOP 12 WAYS TO USE THE CHILD, EARLY, AND FORCED MARRIAGE (CEFM) RESOURCE GUIDE

1. **What is CEFM, who does it affect, and how prevalent is it?** The Guide provides a brief, but thorough overview of the scope of the CEFM, its causes and consequence, where it occurs, and why it matters.
2. **What works to prevent and respond to CEFM?** The Guide provides evidence on the most effective, evidence-based approaches to addressing CEFM. CEFM is a cross-cutting issue that cannot be solved by efforts within any one sector. Therefore, prevention and response efforts should be integrated across various sectors to create a comprehensive strategy for preventing CEFM, mitigating its effects, and meeting the needs of married adolescents.
3. **How can CEFM be integrated across the USAID Program Cycle?** The Guide provides useful guidance on how to integrate CEFM into all aspects of the USAID Program Cycle- including the development of agency policies and strategies, Country Development Cooperation Strategies, budgeting, program design, implementation, and performance monitoring and evaluation.
4. **How can addressing CEFM be incorporated into conducting gender analysis?** The Guide provides information on how to incorporate CEFM considerations into gender analyses to produce findings and recommendations on how to design strategies, programs, projects, and activities that prevent and respond to CEFM, address CEFM risk factors, and target and empower women and girls at risk of CEFM or those who have experienced CEFM.
5. **How can CEFM be integrated into key USAID sectors and strategies?** The Guide offers sector-specific modules with tailored guidance and resources for program designers and implementers. Key sectors highlighted include: Global Health; Education; Economic Growth and Workforce Development; Agriculture and Food Security; Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance; Crisis and Conflict; the cross-cutting strategies of Gender-Based Violence and Youth; and multi-sectoral programming.

- 6. How can decision-makers and program implementers move forward with integrating CEFM prevention and response into programs and policies?** At the end of each sector section there are tailored recommendations that provide specific programming and policy approaches that can be used to prevent and respond to CEFM.
- 7. Who should be involved in CEFM prevention and response efforts?** A range of individuals and institutions perpetuate and/or influence CEFM; therefore, effective prevention and response strategies must engage a variety of stakeholders. The Guide provides guidance on involving a variety of key stakeholders in CEFM prevention and response efforts.
- 8. Where is USAID already engaging in CEFM prevention and response?** The Guide profiles seven countries where USAID is engaged in CEFM prevention and/or response programming: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Nepal, and Tanzania. Each profile discusses the context of CEFM in the country, as well as USAID programming that is either addressing CEFM or that could address CEFM through small adjustments.
- 9. What M&E indicators can be used to track progress on outcomes related to CEFM?** The Guide includes specific indicators for understanding the CEFM context in various settings and for measuring changes in CEFM outcomes. These indicators can be used by dedicated CEFM programs or incorporated into sectoral programs to measure impact on outcomes related to CEFM prevention or response.
- 10. Where can we find more information about CEFM?** There is a curated list of key resources that were used in creating the Guide. These resources include U.S. Government and international policy documents, USAID strategy documents, and a list of seminal publications containing CEFM research, program evaluations and policy guidance.
- 11. Where can implementers find practical tools for integrating CEFM into programming?** The Guide provides a list of existing toolkits, manuals and guides for sector-specific programming. Tools listed contain useful and relevant guidance to design approaches that integrate CEFM prevention and response into programming.
- 12. How can we promote the Guide?** The Guide includes a media kit with social media strategies and key talking points on both the Guide and CEFM. The media kit also includes an infographic on CEFM.

# PART I

## I.1 WHY DEVELOP A RESOURCE GUIDE ON CEFM?

This resource guide provides information on how the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) sectors, missions, and staff can integrate child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) prevention and response into their programming. The guide provides both the rationale of why and approaches to how USAID's efforts can address CEFM.

In March 2012, USAID released its *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy* with the goal to “improve the lives of citizens around the world by advancing equality between females and males, and empowering women and girls to fully participate in and benefit from the development of their societies.”<sup>30</sup> The policy directs USAID investments toward the following outcomes, which can be adapted and translated at the country level:

- reduce gender disparities in access to, control over, and benefits from resources, wealth, opportunities, economic services, social services, political services, and cultural services
- reduce gender-based violence (GBV) and mitigate its effects on individuals and communities
- increase the capability of women and girls to recognize their rights; determine their life outcomes; and influence decision-making in households, communities, and societies

The U.S. Government's recognition of the importance of GBV reduction is also evident through the release of the *United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally* (the *GBV Strategy*) by the U.S. Department of State and USAID in 2012. This *GBV Strategy* originated from a White House Executive order and aims to establish a government-wide approach that identifies, coordinates, integrates, and leverages current U.S. Government efforts and resources directed toward preventing and responding to GBV.<sup>31</sup> USAID's implementation plan for the *GBV Strategy* emphasizes integrating GBV-prevention and response efforts into all sectors in which USAID works. USAID's implementation plan calls for the Agency to:

1. Mainstream and integrate GBV-prevention and response activities into sector work
2. Sharpen program priorities by:
  - a. considering GBV early in the development and project design of country development cooperation strategies (CDCS)
  - b. assessing and strengthening GBV programming
  - c. identifying and scaling up successful interventions
  - d. collaborating in piloting an interagency approach
  - e. investing to close data gaps

3. Expand collaborative efforts by
  - a. elevating women and girls as leaders and agents of change
  - b. engaging men and boys as allies
  - c. including and addressing the needs of underserved populations
  - d. collaborating with civil society and the private sector

The [\*Executive Order—Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Women and Girls Globally\*](#) accompanied the *GBV Strategy*. Among other initiatives, this Executive Order establishes an interagency working group, chaired by the U.S. Secretary of State and the USAID Administrator, to address GBV. The *GBV Strategy* lays out a framework for strategically seeking to combat forms of violence that can include sexual abuse; domestic violence; female infanticide; sex trafficking and forced labor; elder abuse; and harmful traditional practices such as CEFM, honor killings, and female genital mutilation/cutting.

The U.S. Government has stated its intent to include efforts to end CEFM within its national commitment to prioritize GBV prevention and response. The clear articulation of a CEFM strategy is essential because child marriage is a broad development issue that cuts across diverse sectors including food security, reproductive health, and education, and hinders achievement of development goals in each of these sectors. As such, it is relevant to the work of various offices, bureaus, and agencies. Advocates and thought leaders, such as the Council on Foreign Relations, increasingly are making the case for U.S. investment in girls' empowerment and ending child marriage as key strategies to advance U.S. foreign policy goals of development, peace, and security. The current cohort of youth represent a critical access point for triggering near-term and intergenerational goals related to economic and social development, particularly given the youth bulge now occurring in many developing countries.

As such, USAID paved the way for U.S. Government efforts to end child marriage by publishing the first child marriage-specific policy document of any U.S. Government agency—[\*Ending Child Marriage & Meeting the Needs of Married Children: The USAID Vision for Action\*](#) (*The Vision*) in 2012.<sup>32</sup> *The Vision* provides a strategy that defends children's rights and supports them with access to resources and opportunities for sustainable development. This strategy includes support not only for children who are at risk of CEFM, but also for boys and girls who are already married and lack access to key resources. *The Vision* highlights the following key principles for action:

- Cultivate partnerships broadly
- Mobilize communities to shift norms that perpetuate child marriage
- Address the unique needs of married children in programs

Recognizing that efforts to end CEFM require a collaborative approach across sectors, USAID is partnering with international organizations and the private sector (while concurrently supporting change agents at the national, local, and community levels) to change attitudes and motivations that perpetuate CEFM.

As part of the first phase of actualizing *The Vision*, USAID has already provided resources to support work on CEFM in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, Nepal, and Tanzania. These countries are highlighted in this guide's [\*2.6 Key Country Profiles\*](#) section.

With leadership from the Senior Coordinator’s Office for Gender Equality and Female Empowerment and with the involvement of Gender Advisors from its technical and regional bureaus, USAID established an internal working group to document its investments in CEFM to make sectorial approaches more robust in the future. As part of this effort, USAID is developing further guidance on how its staff members can focus on CEFM in their own thematic, country, and regional programs. This ***Child, Early, and Forced Marriage Resource Guide*** is a key component of that effort. It provides a comprehensive, accessible overview of the issue of child marriage (including prevalence, drivers, trends, and solutions), a synopsis of USAID’s work in CEFM, and tools for integrating child-marriage prevention into existing USAID programs and projects.

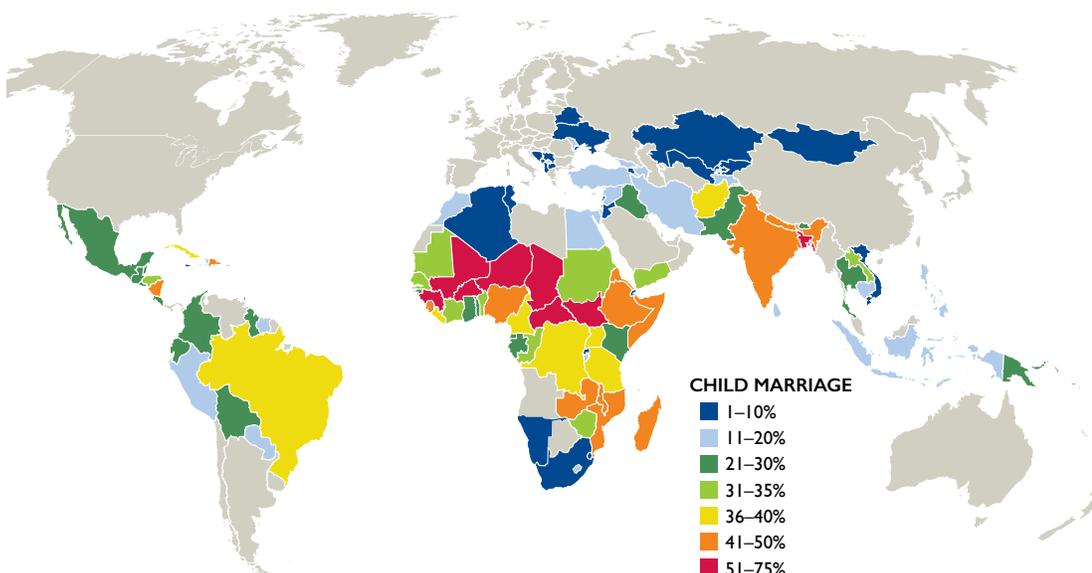
## I.2 UNDERSTANDING CHILD, EARLY, AND FORCED MARRIAGE

### WHAT IS CHILD, EARLY, AND FORCED MARRIAGE?

CEFM is a human-rights violation and an impediment to sustainable global development. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and international laws, treaties, and conventions have defined child marriage (also called early marriage) as a formal or informal union where one or both parties are under the age of 18.<sup>33</sup> Forced marriage is defined as marriage at any age that occurs without the free and full consent of both spouses; therefore it includes child and early marriage, as children under 18 are not able to give full consent. Recent guidance by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) committees further note that “a child marriage is considered as a form of forced marriage given that one or both parties have not expressed their full, free, and informed consent.”<sup>34</sup> While CEFM is a human-rights violation in and of itself, it also intersects with other rights violations that affect girls and women throughout their lives, including the rights to education, the highest attainable standard of health, and a life free of violence.

Fifteen million girls are married each year worldwide.<sup>35</sup> In the developing world, one in three girls is married before age 18 and one in nine girls is married before age 15.<sup>36</sup> While child marriage affects both boys and girls, girls and women suffer disproportionately—720 million women alive today were married as children, compared to 156 million men. Generally, girls are married at younger ages and there is often a large age difference between the female and male spouses.<sup>37</sup> For example, in Bangladesh and Mali, which rank among the top 10 countries in child marriage prevalence, the average age gap between spouses is approximately 7.8 and 7.4 years, respectively.<sup>38</sup> A range of social, economic, cultural, and political factors that vary from one context to another perpetuate this practice.

FIGURE I: GLOBAL PREVALENCE OF CHILD MARRIAGE



SOURCE: Based on data from UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), and other national surveys. Refers to the most recent year available during 2005 through 2015 in which women ages 20 to 24 reported being married by ages 18 and 15.

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

In addition to specific consequences outlined later in this guide, CEFM is a detrimental life-course shift during the crucial period of adolescence. The ages that comprise youth (10 to 24) represent a pivotal period; events that occur in this time have the potential to propel youth on paths of positive or negative development. The conditions experienced and decisions made during this time can influence their wealth, health, and wellbeing for the rest of their lives—and for future generations. Additionally, because the youth population is large and growing, programs must provide information, services, mobilization, and resources to set youth on a path to prosperity, which will ultimately contribute to stronger communities and nations. There are 1.8 billion people between the ages of 10 and 24 alive today—the largest population of youth the world has ever experienced.<sup>39</sup> Not only do they represent a critical population, but also high fertility rates among this cohort could spur population growth and momentum, crippling already poor economies.<sup>40</sup> Alternatively, delaying marriage can improve the health of girls and their future families by delaying sex, pregnancy, and childbearing; boosting girls' chances of staying in school to gain information, skills, and support networks; reducing risks of exposure to violence; and increasing agency and decision-making power. All of these benefits foster more productive, equitable, and just societies.

## HOW COMMON IS IT AND WHERE DOES IT OCCUR?

While child marriage occurs in many countries, the prevalence varies considerably across and within regions and countries. It is most widespread though in developing countries. The most commonly used and globally comparable measure of the prevalence of child marriage is the proportion of women 20 to 24 who report being married or living with a man as if married by the age of 18.\*<sup>41</sup> Fifty-one countries have a child marriage prevalence of 25 percent or more.<sup>42</sup> This threshold typically is used to define a high burden of child marriage.

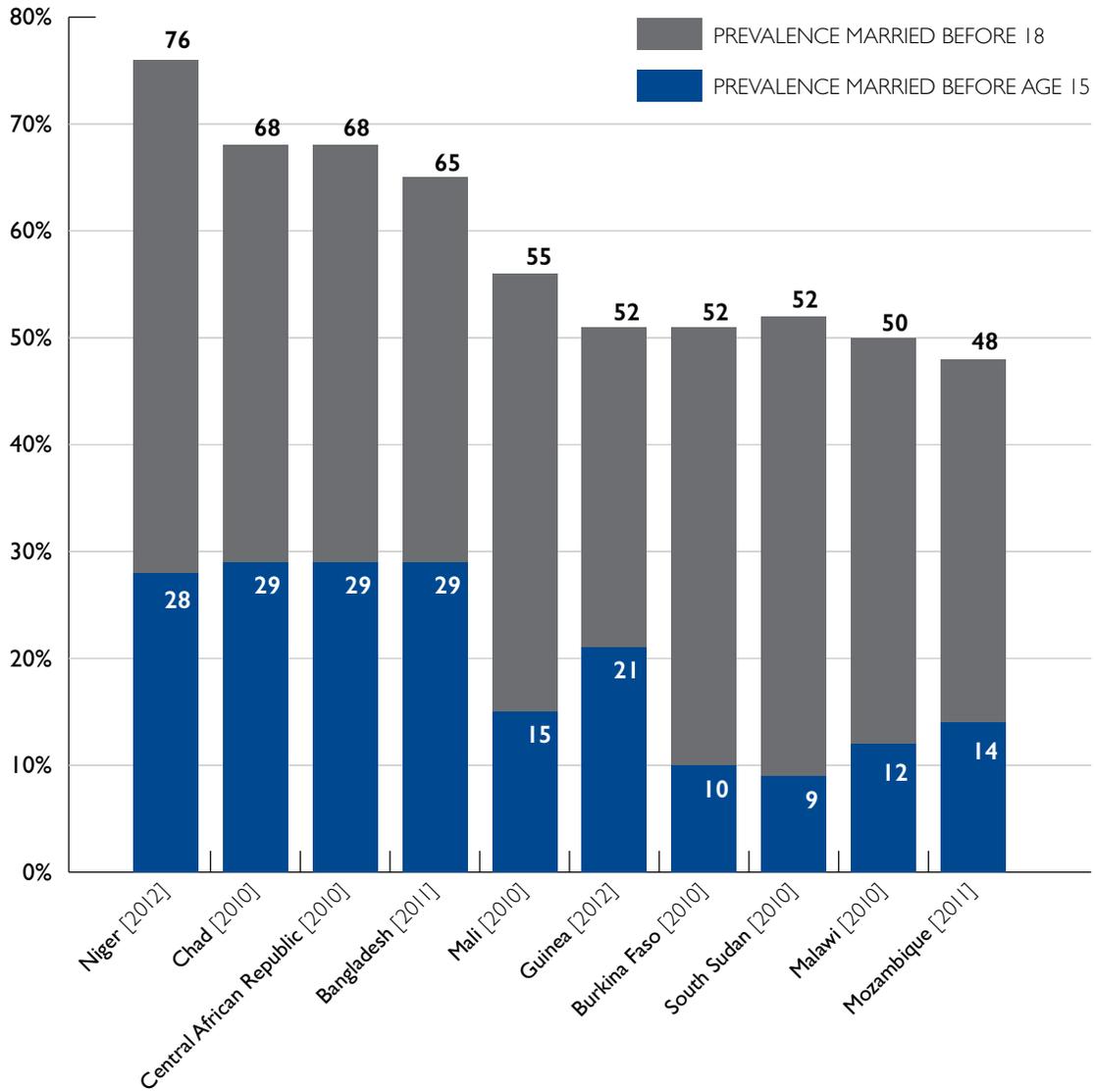
Prevalence of child marriage varies within countries, and it is important to note where there are sub-national hotspots of child marriage. For example, while the national prevalence of child marriage is 52 percent in Burkina Faso, the prevalence is 87 percent in the country's Sahel region. In Indonesia, while the national prevalence is 17 percent, two regions have a prevalence greater than 40 percent.<sup>43</sup> Child marriage can be more frequent among particular religious or ethnic groups within a country, such as indigenous groups. For example, in Kenya, rates of child marriage among some indigenous groups, such as the Somali and the Kisii, are more than three times the national average (98 and 96 percent, respectively, compared to 27 percent nationally).<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, the difference between the median age of marriage among those from urban Nairobi and indigenous groups from the North Eastern province of Kenya is six years (24 compared to 18).<sup>45</sup>

\* This measure of child marriage prevalence does not include marriages that are forced, as currently there are no valid measures that are used for this at the population level. This data point is measured through a Demographic Health Survey (DHS). After asking the question, "Have you ever been married or lived together with a man as if married?" The DHS asks: "In what month and year did you first start living with your [first] (husband/partner)?" OR "How old were you when you first started living with him?" Depending on the response that the participant is able to provide, the date of first marriage can be used to calculate the difference between this date and the woman's birth date, or the age can be used as provided.

Collecting retrospective data from those 20 to 24 is the widely agreed upon methodology for calculating child marriage prevalence due to the following reasons outlined by the United Nations Population Fund: "First, the percentage of girls aged 15 to 19 who are married or in union at any given time includes girls who are 18 and 19 and no longer children, according to the internationally accepted definition. Second, the indicator includes girls aged 15, 16 and 17 who are classified as single, but who could eventually marry or enter into a union before the age of 18. By taking a retrospective view, the preferred indicator—covering women aged 20 to 24—is not affected by these limitations and so more accurately approximates the real extent of child marriage."

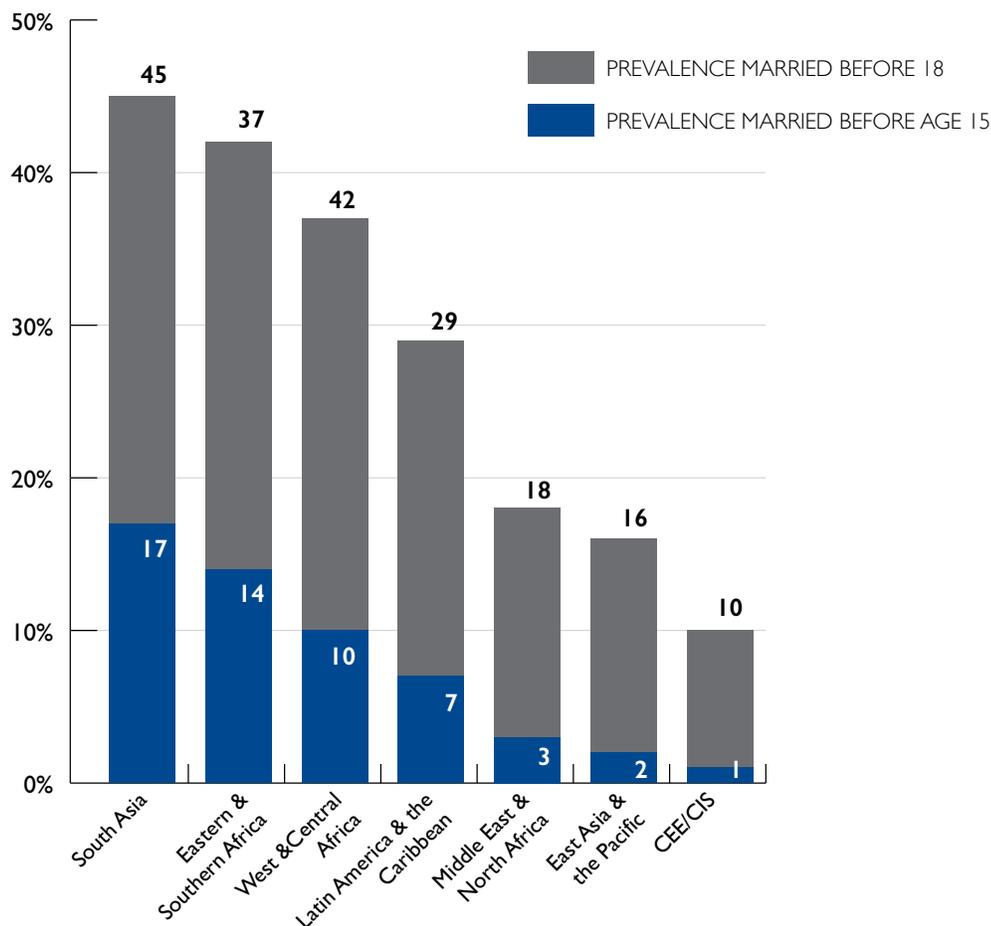
UNFPA. (2013). *Marrying Too Young: End Child Marriage*. New York, NY: UNFPA. Available at: <http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/MarryingTooYoung.pdf>.

**FIGURE 2: CHILD MARRIAGE PREVALENCE (BEFORE 18 AND 15) IN COUNTRIES WITH THE HIGHEST NATIONAL RATES**



SOURCE: Based on data from UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), and other national surveys. Refers to the most recent year available during 2005 through 2015 in which women ages 20 to 24 reported being married by ages 18 and 15.

**FIGURE 3: REGIONAL VARIATION IN PREVALENCE OF GIRLS 20–24 MARRIED BY AGE 18**

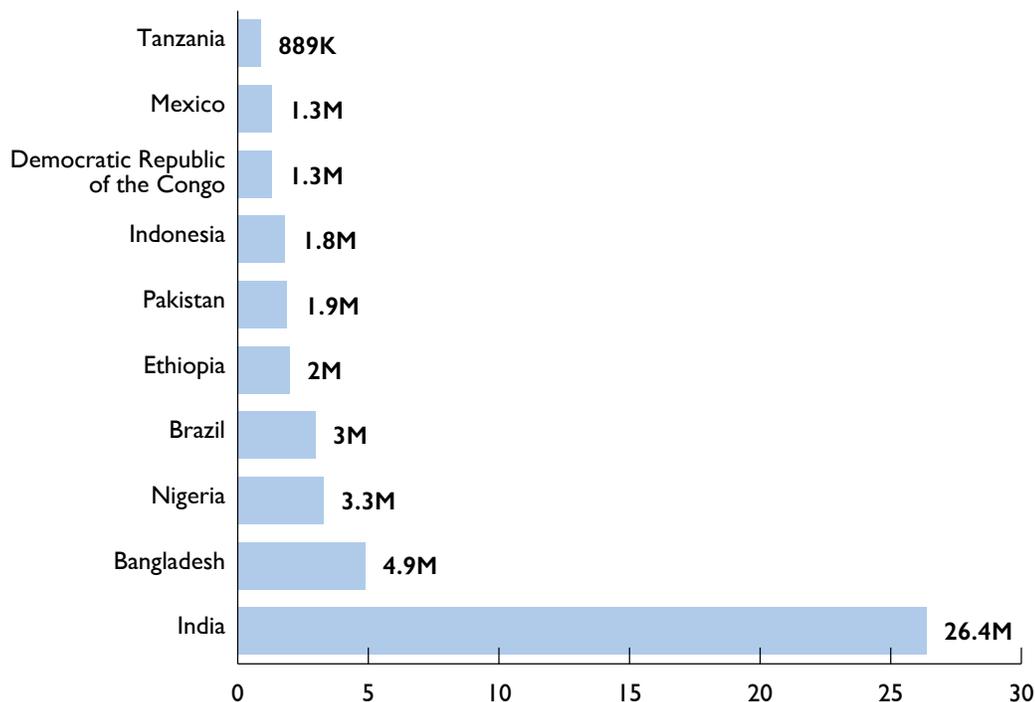


SOURCE: Based on data from UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), and other national surveys. Refers to the most recent year available during 2005 through 2015 in which women ages 20 to 24 reported being married by ages 18 and 15.

Knowledge about national and sub-national trends is often constrained by data limitations. Vital record keeping is poor in many places, contributing to a lack of birth and marriage registrations and facilitating age misreporting, thereby exacerbating the challenge of identifying cases of CEFM. For example, while UNICEF estimates that the prevalence of child marriage is 40 percent in Afghanistan and 45 percent in Somalia, poor vital record-keeping in these countries provides little official data. Sustained conflict and political turmoil also mean there is less historical data to compare trends over time.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, some countries with a high national prevalence of child marriage do not have reliable sub-national data, making it difficult to identify regional variations.

Child marriage is particularly prevalent throughout South Asia and Africa; of the 20 countries with the highest rates of child marriage, 16 are in Africa, with prevalence ranging from 41 percent in Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Madagascar to 76 percent in Niger.<sup>47</sup> While the countries with the highest rates of child marriage are in West and Central Africa, the countries with the highest number of child brides are in South Asia, due to population size. Approximately half of all child brides today live in South Asia, primarily India.<sup>48</sup>

**FIGURE 4: NUMBER OF GIRLS AGED 20–24 MARRIED BY AGE 18, IN MILLIONS**



SOURCE: Calculation based on UNICEF MICS, DHS, and other national surveys in which women ages 20 to 24 reported being married by age 18. Calculated with population data from “World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision,” on Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat’s website, [esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm) (accessed June 16, 2015).

## TRENDS

Hundreds of millions of girls are at risk of CEFM—and these numbers will increase as populations grow. Currently 1.8 billion people are between the ages of 10 and 24, 600 million of whom are adolescent girls.<sup>49</sup> If current trends in child-marriage prevalence continue, 142 million girls will be married by their 18th birthday over the next decade.<sup>50</sup> In the past decade, child marriage among those under the age of 15 has decreased. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has made the fastest progress of any region in reducing child marriage; it lowered the percentage of girls married before 18 from 34 percent in the 1980s to 17 percent in 2010.<sup>51</sup> Such declines may be subject to reversal, however, due to political upheaval in several MENA countries in recent years.<sup>52</sup> Outside of the MENA region, declines in the prevalence of child marriage have been uneven and modest. In many countries in West Africa, such as Burkina Faso and Niger, the prevalence of child marriage has remained stubbornly high—changing from 18 percent in Burkina Faso in 1985 to 17.9 percent in 2010, and from 15.6 percent to 15.8 percent in Niger.<sup>53</sup> Due to population growth, if the rates of reduction in child-marriage prevalence are sustained over the next few decades, the actual number of girls at risk of child marriage will remain virtually the same.<sup>54</sup>

## WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES?

CEFM is a violation of human rights, as well as an impediment to social and economic development. CEFM has consequences at the individual and household levels, and it impacts social, economic, and political development more broadly.

### INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

CEFM is associated with *poor health outcomes*, such as early sexual debut and early pregnancy. Due to limited autonomy and access to family planning information and services, married teens are less likely to use contraceptives than their unmarried counterparts.<sup>55</sup> Married girls are also more likely to have unprotected sex (that is, without condoms) than unmarried girls or married adult women, due to low negotiating power within their marriages.<sup>56</sup> Because of these factors, child brides face higher risks of contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and, in some settings, are more likely to be HIV positive.<sup>57</sup> Additionally, early pregnancy is among the leading causes of death among 15- to 19-year-old girls in the developing world: maternal mortality is 28 percent higher among females 15 to 19 than 20 to 24.<sup>58</sup> Of all adolescent pregnancies, 90 percent occur *within* marriage.<sup>59</sup> Early pregnancy among girls whose bodies are not ready often leads to medical complications such as obstetric fistula and hemorrhaging.<sup>60</sup> While the evidence base is limited, data suggest that girls married as adolescents also exhibit poor mental health outcomes.<sup>61</sup> Girls who are married at a young age can experience higher rates of malnutrition, isolation, and depression.<sup>62</sup> Forced marriage can also be associated with poor mental health and suicide.<sup>63</sup> A recent study in Ethiopia found that girls who were ever married or had received marriage requests were significantly more likely to have had suicidal thoughts than girls who were never in the marriage process.<sup>64</sup>

The relationship between CEFM and *education* is complex. CEFM can be both a cause and consequence of school dropout, and the timing of both are often closely linked and influenced by similar factors, such as the low value of girls.<sup>65</sup> While the causal relationship between CEFM and education can operate in both directions, there are strong correlations between CEFM and low school attainment.<sup>66</sup> Girls with only a primary education are twice as likely to marry or enter into a union under 18 as are those with secondary or higher education. And girls with no education are three times as likely to marry before 18 as those with secondary or higher education.<sup>67</sup> This disparity is greatest in Sub-Saharan Africa where girls with no education are five times as likely to marry before 18 as are those with secondary or higher education.<sup>68</sup> Some researchers have found that each year of marriage before the age of 18 is associated with a 6 percent decrease in the probability of literacy and secondary school completion.<sup>69</sup> In many contexts marriage and motherhood are considered incompatible with continued school attendance due to the household responsibilities and social expectations of a married girl's new role.<sup>70</sup> A recent study in Northern Uganda found that while the majority of dropouts are not due to pregnancy, nearly all schoolgirl pregnancies do result in dropout.<sup>71</sup> This lack of education can have harmful ripple effects on girls' lives: girls with lower levels of education often lack the knowledge and skills to participate in the formal market and are confined to informal or home-based work, typically characterized by inferior working conditions and lower incomes.<sup>72</sup>

CEFM is a form of violence in and of itself as well as a predictor of multiple other forms of violence. Married girls are at a higher risk of *sexual, physical, and emotional violence*.

Forced sexual initiation and forced marital sex frequently accompany CEFM. Adolescent girls 15 to 19 are also more likely to have experienced “current violence” (within the last 12 months) from a partner than women aged 45 to 49; in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as many as 70 percent of adolescents who had ever been married reported having experienced violence at the hands of a current or former spouse or partner.<sup>73</sup> Girls who marry early are also more likely to believe that a husband is sometimes justified in beating his wife.<sup>74</sup>

Married girls are often *socially and physically isolated* from friends, natal family, and other social networks, causing them to rely on their husband and in-laws to access needed resources. This situation often remains the case throughout the girl’s lifetime and translates into a lack of control over financial resources, limited mobility, and restricted access to information and social networks.<sup>75</sup> With limited opportunities to interact with groups and express their opinions, as well as limited mobility, girls often lack the ability to participate in community events and decision-making as well as in larger political processes. Effects of isolation and lack of voice and agency can have profound effects on girls’ mental, emotional, and social well-being.

## **FAMILY/COMMUNITY LEVEL**

Earlier marriage leads to earlier and more pregnancies throughout a woman’s lifetime, resulting in negative consequences for her own health, *the health of her children, her family’s well-being, and overall fertility rates*. Children born to mothers under the age of 15 are more likely to suffer from low birth weight, under nutrition, and late physical and cognitive development.<sup>76</sup> These children are also 2.5 times more likely to die before age 5 than those born to mothers 24 to 27.<sup>77</sup> Over the long-term, health complications can lead to increased health expenses and decreased earning potential of the mother and her children. Inequitable distribution of resources within the family, which is common in households with child brides, contributes to productivity gaps in agriculture, earnings, and investment.<sup>78</sup>

Lack of *education* also has a ripple effect on other household members. Lower educational attainment is associated with decreased participation in the formal labor market and lower lifetime earnings. Additionally, children with less-well educated mothers are less likely to receive proper nutrition, less likely to be immunized against childhood diseases, and more likely to die.<sup>79</sup> As lack of education is often a barrier to formal employment, women with low levels of education often face limited formal earning opportunities. As a result, their households’ income streams may be less diversified, causing them to be more susceptible to economic shocks such as droughts or conflict.

## **SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT**

CEFM also burdens individuals and societies with *economic costs*.<sup>\*</sup> When girls are withdrawn from school, they lose their best chance to contribute to their families, communities, and societies. For each year of primary schooling, a woman’s wage later in life increases by 10 to 20 percent. And for each year of secondary school, a woman’s wage increases by 15 to 25 percent.<sup>80</sup> Having fewer and less-educated members in the workforce can have a substantial impact on a community or country’s productivity. Studies have found

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\* While the economic costs of CEFM are not well documented, ICRW and the World Bank are conducting a study to estimate the economic costs of child marriage. Its findings are expected to be released through several reports throughout 2015 and 2016.

that a 1 percent increase in the number of women with secondary education can increase a country's annual per capita income growth by 0.3 percent.<sup>81</sup> In 2008, Plan International estimated that in 65 low- and middle-income countries, more than \$92 million is lost globally each year because girls do not have the same secondary school attainment as boys. The loss of women's contributions to the labor force impedes the development of entire economies. With fewer earners and lower earnings, there is also less investment in growth. Not only do child brides often lack the ability to contribute financially to the family, they also lack decision-making power and control over household resources. When women have greater control over decision-making and allocation of resources, they tend to invest money in their families and communities, which has important intergenerational benefits.<sup>82</sup>

In addition to reducing earnings and investments, CEFM can cost society financially through increased expenditures on social services. When girls marry later in life, it improves their health benefits and reduces the burden of high birth rates and maternal and child morbidities on the health system. Additionally, higher fertility rates are associated with less participation in productive work.<sup>83</sup> Intimate partner violence has financial costs to society in the form of missed work and increased use of social services and healthcare systems.

Additionally, as young girls are isolated from public life, they are less likely to participate in **social and political processes**. While little research demonstrates a direct link between early age of marriage and reduced political participation, CEFM frequently leads to social isolation, which diminishes participation in household and community decision-making processes.<sup>84</sup> Not only does women's involvement in these decision-making processes help ensure that community investments go toward women-friendly services, research also shows that when women are involved in political decision-making, investments are more likely to be placed into social services, including those directly related to economic growth (such as education).<sup>85</sup>

## WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS?

The specific risk factors for CEFM vary according to the social, economic, political, and cultural contexts. These risk factors can be uncovered when doing a gender analysis in a particular context, as key drivers will be related to the main domains of: 1) laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices; 2) cultural norms and beliefs; 3) gender roles, responsibilities, and time used; 4) access to and control over assets and resources; and 5) patterns of power and decision-making. More information on how to use gender analysis to identify these CEFM risk factors is in section [2.3 Considerations for Gender Analysis](#) of this guide. Some general risk factors at the individual and contextual levels, however, are consistent across most locations.

### INDIVIDUAL

CEFM is most common in poor countries, particularly in **poor** and **rural** communities within those countries. Girls living in the poorest households are more than three times as likely to become child brides as those from the richest households. Girls living in rural areas are twice as likely to marry before 18 as those in urban areas.<sup>86</sup> Child marriage is more common where there are fewer resources and incentives to invest in alternative options for girls, namely in places where there tends to be less infrastructure and fewer opportunities for education, labor-force participation, or other productive activities. Girls with little to no **education** face a much higher risk of marrying before 18 than those with more education. In

some contexts, inequitable gender norms dictate that boys receive preference for education investments.<sup>87</sup> In other contexts, parents may marry their daughters early because girls are seen as economic burdens that can be relieved through marriage.<sup>88</sup> Marriage-related financial transactions can contribute to such perceptions: in contexts where bride wealth or bride price is practiced (that is, a groom or groom's family provides assets to the bride's family in exchange for marriage), families may reap immediate economic benefits from marrying off their daughters. In such cases, families may obtain a greater financial amount the younger their daughter is when she is married. In circumstances where dowry is practiced, a younger and less educated bride may require a lower dowry, which would incentivize parents to marry off daughters at younger ages.<sup>89</sup>

**Religious beliefs and practices** can perpetuate CEFM, but no singular religion is associated with the practice. A 2007 International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) study found that child marriage was significantly associated with religion in eight different countries throughout Africa and South Asia, but that no one religion was identified consistently across all countries.<sup>90</sup> For example, more recent studies have found that child marriage is most common among Hindus in India, Orthodox Christian-dominated northern and eastern Ethiopia, and Muslim-majority countries throughout West Africa.<sup>91</sup> More conservative religious practices, however, can often reinforce patriarchal norms that are harmful to women and girls. Similarly, some social customs and cultural practices perpetuate CEFM, but these vary from setting to setting. For example, in some settings, such as some parts of Malawi, there is a belief that menarche is associated with marriage readiness.<sup>92</sup> Religious and cultural leaders often have the power to perpetuate CEFM or promote change in attitudes and practices within their communities.

## CONTEXTUAL

While minimum age of **marriage laws** are a necessary starting point for delaying marriage, the laws themselves are insufficient without **enforcement** at the local level. In 2010, 158 countries had laws stating 18 as the minimum age of marriage for women; however, 146 of these countries reported that either official or customary laws allowed girls under 18 to marry with the consent of parents or authorities.<sup>93</sup> A recent analysis of data from twelve Sub-Saharan African countries found that countries with consistent laws against child marriage- that set 18 as the minimum legal age of marriage for both marriage and sexual consent with no exceptions for parental/guardian permission, prevalence of child marriage was 40 percent lower than in countries with inconsistent laws.<sup>94</sup> Adolescent births were also 25 percent lower in countries with consistent child marriage laws compared to other countries.<sup>95</sup> In addition, other laws and policies are necessary to create a supporting legal environment for girls at risk of CEFM and for those who already have been married. For example, birth registration is a critical component in legally documenting girls' ages, and marriage registration is important for officially recognizing the union under the law.<sup>96</sup> Divorce laws, laws protecting wives in polygynous marriages, and laws regarding rape must also be supportive of girls and women and be properly enforced. In some contexts, such as Guatemala, rapists are granted impunity as long as they marry the girl they have raped. In some regions of Ethiopia, marriage customs are used to justify kidnapping and rape. Additionally, policies related to school re-enrollment and land inheritance can ensure married girls' access to important resources and opportunities.

Rates of child marriage often increase during **conflict or natural disasters, such as drought and famine**, as natural support systems, family structures, and physical and institutional

protections are decimated. Most of the 25 countries with the highest prevalence of CEFM are considered fragile states or at high risk of natural disaster.<sup>97</sup> Among Syrian refugees in Jordan, rates of CEFM have more than doubled since 2011.<sup>98</sup> Research shows that CEFM can be seen as a form of social protection or poverty reduction in crisis due to disrupted family structures, social networks, and support institutions.<sup>99</sup> Families may feel that their daughters are at a heightened risk of experiencing sexual violence and thus fear rape, premarital pregnancy, and shame and dishonor. Seeking to protect their daughters from sexual violence and its consequences, they may choose to marry them off early.<sup>100</sup> When marriage is seen as a source of income (bride price) or savings (one less mouth to feed, lower dowry for younger girls), the lack of other economic opportunities for the family and their daughter may also motivate a family to marry off their daughter as soon as possible.<sup>101</sup> All of the major drivers of child marriage are heightened by the anxiety, uncertainty, and lack of control that exist in conflict and natural-disaster scenarios.

CEFM is both a cause and consequence of *gender inequality* and the low value that societies place on girls and women. Recent analysis found that (where data is available) of the 20 countries with highest CEFM prevalence rates, all but two were among the top quartile of the most gender-inequitable countries in the world.\*<sup>102</sup> If social norms prescribe that a girl's primary role in life is to be a wife and have children, there are few opportunities available for her to go to school or earn a living. Thus, she inevitably fulfills the wife and mother roles. Furthermore, in the rare case that she chooses not to fulfill these roles, her family or community may shun her, exposing her to a host of negative consequences. Likewise, families that choose to marry their daughters later than is customary may also risk social and financial consequences if the community is not supportive, or in cases where delaying marriage will reduce the likelihood or increase the costs (dowry or bride price) of a suitable match.

CEFM is widely acknowledged to be a form of human *slavery* and can be a form of *human trafficking*. Girls and boys in CEFMs are more likely to be trafficked and re-trafficked into harmful situations.<sup>103</sup> In some cases young girls may be trafficked specifically for the purpose of early, forced marriage. In other cases, children in CEFMs may be more vulnerable to being forced into prostitution by their spouse or spouse's family. Servile marriage is also closely connected to slavery and trafficking wherein a family trades the daughter, who lacks the right to refuse, in exchange for goods or money, suggesting ownership of the husband over the wife.<sup>104</sup>

There is a complex relationship between CEFM and *child labor*. While child marriage may involve some forms of hazardous work, child marriage is not necessarily equated with child labor. When girls marry early, however, they often enter into a servitude-like relationship with their husband and new in-laws. In severe cases, CEFM can result in bonded labor, enslavement, or commercial sexual exploitation.<sup>105</sup>

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\* The Gender Inequality Index (GII) is a composite measure reflecting inequality in achievement between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labor market

# PART 2

## **2.1 MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING CEFM**

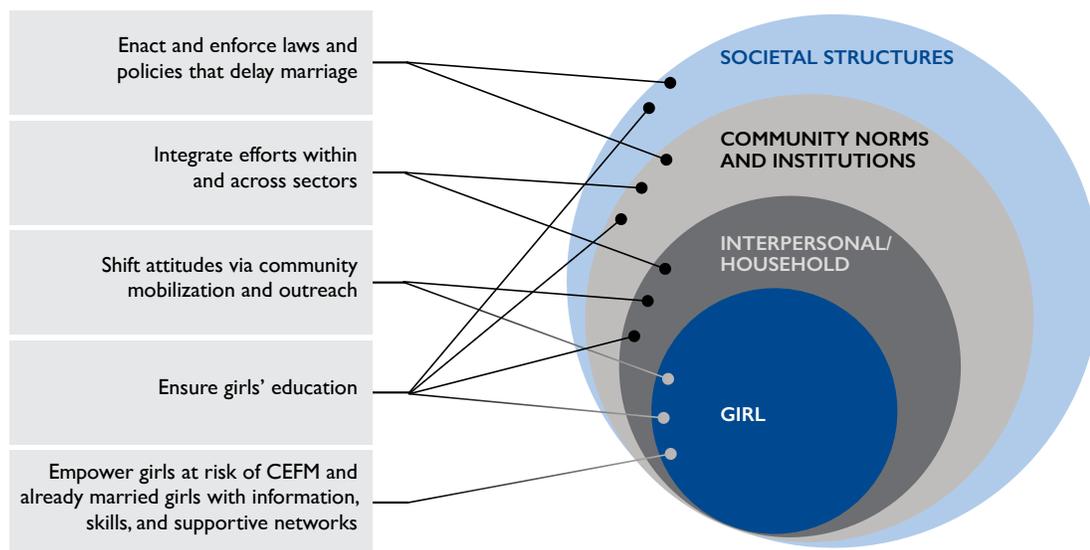
CEFM is a cross-cutting issue; efforts within just one sector cannot solve it. Therefore, prevention and response services should be integrated across various sectors to create a comprehensive strategy for reducing and mitigating the effects of CEFM, as well as meeting the needs of married adolescents. Additionally, as addressing CEFM may not be the core responsibility of any one sector, USAID sectors should leverage each other's funding and resources to develop a holistic approach to CEFM prevention and response.

Recently, attention and investment have focused increasingly on interlinked programs that aim to prevent and respond to CEFM. In fact, the most successful programs often incorporate efforts at the individual, family/community, and institutional levels. The appropriate level to focus on can depend on the cultural context of a geographic location. Many entry points exist for preventing and responding to CEFM. Some effective programs directly equip both married and unmarried girls with skills and information, increase their access to resources, and build their agency, while others shift broader social norms related to marriage formation and gender equality.<sup>106</sup> The impact of these strategies on CEFM often depends on the specific context, the implementing organization's capacity, the program's scope and reach, and the enabling environment. In identifying methods for integrating CEFM prevention and response into existing programs, efforts should be made to create scalable and sustainable approaches and to collect costing data to determine the most cost-effective strategies. In resource-constrained environments, implementers can utilize cross-sectoral funds, leverage funding from other donors (such as the United Nations or the U.K.'s Department for International Development (DFID)), and engage government partners.

## **PROMISING INTERVENTIONS TO END CHILD MARRIAGE AND SERVE MARRIED CHILDREN**

Evaluations of these programs provide the evidence to identify a few strategies that have changed marriage-related attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.<sup>107</sup> These programmatic approaches span across the ecological framework—from those that primarily focus on working with individual girls to those that operate at the institutional and policy levels. The following strategies have been identified for their contributions to reducing CEFM and meeting the needs of married girls.<sup>108</sup>

**FIGURE 5: STRATEGIES TO END CHILD MARRIAGE**



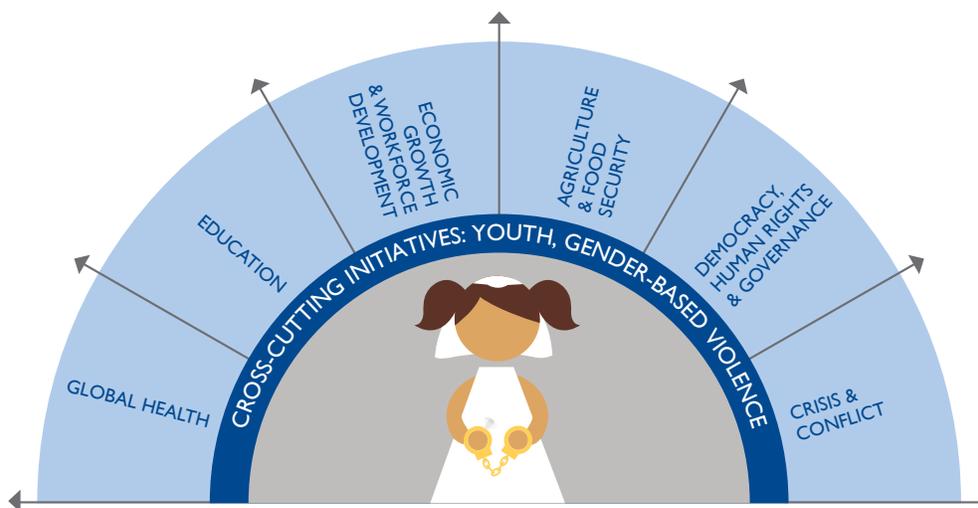
- Empower girls at risk of CEFM and already married girls with information, skills, and supportive networks:** Girls who are at risk of CEFM or are already married are often out of school, living in poor and rural communities, and among the most isolated members of society. Group-based safe-space programs provide girls with resources, life-skills, livelihood support, financial literacy, and increased self-confidence, which can increase their aspirations and reduce their social isolation. In addition, programs that ensure married girls can access needed information and services, such as sexual and reproductive health information and contraception, are important. In some cases, such programs also provide these same services to boys and husbands, as well as enhance couple communication.
- Ensure girls' education:** Opportunities for girls at risk of CEFM and already married girls should be improved to include safe, accessible, and quality schooling. While the sequencing of school dropout and CEFM is not always clear, girls with no education are three times as likely to marry before 18 as are those with secondary or higher levels of education.<sup>109</sup> Programs that keep girls in school or support girls in re-entering the school system can have positive impacts on girls themselves and also change normative environments. Education-based programs can work through existing education systems and they have the potential to be taken to scale. Providing economic support and incentives for girls at risk of CEFM and already married girls and their families can directly incentivize families to delay marriage or incentivize families to keep their daughters in school, which can indirectly reduce CEFM. Successful conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs have provided families with money or a physical resource (such as a goat) based on the condition that the daughter stays enrolled in the program, remains unmarried until 18 and/or stays enrolled in school until 18.<sup>110</sup> These programs have shown success in changing behaviors, but further research is needed to understand what conditions are most effective and how to ensure that these programs are cost effective. Additionally, programs that provide married girls, girls at risk of CEFM, and their families with income-generation opportunities may reduce the financial pressures that often drive CEFM.

- **Shift attitudes via community mobilization and outreach:** Work with girls’ parents, guardians, teachers, communities, and religious and cultural leaders to raise awareness of child marriage, discuss alternatives, and change how girls are seen and valued in their communities. Decisions about if, when, and whom to marry are rarely made by the girl and her intended spouse alone. Rather, they are tied to broader social norms and practices. To change the social norms that perpetuate the practice of child marriage, it is essential to engage families and communities in the process. It is also important to include boys for formation of equitable gender norms and reduction of GBV. A range of activities can be undertaken to inform and engage families, boys, and community members, including community dialogues, mobilization of religious and community leaders, formation of child-protection committees, and information education and communication strategies (including multimedia campaigns).
- **Enact and enforce laws and policies that delay marriage:** An enabling legal and policy framework is essential to shift CEFM, although insufficient on its own. At the very least, an enabling legal and policy framework for ending CEFM should include a minimum age of marriage that is at least 18 for both males and females. The rights of women and girls must also be maintained in marriage and family law, property and inheritance rights, birth and marriage registration, child protection, rights to education, sexual and reproductive rights, and protection from GBV. In addition to having good laws on the books, proper and human rights-based enforcement is critical. Many effective CEFM prevention and mitigation strategies include advocacy for legal or policy reform at local and national levels.
- As discussed previously, prevention and response services should be integrated across sectors to create a comprehensive and holistic strategy for reducing and mitigating the effects of CEFM, as well as meeting the needs of married adolescents.

## WORKING ACROSS KEY SECTORS AND STRATEGIES

CEFM is not a stand-alone issue. CEFM harms all areas of a girl’s life throughout her lifetime, undermining the development of her family, community, and nation. Therefore, it requires attention from multiple sectors and must include not only girls, but also boys, families, communities, and other stakeholders.

**FIGURE 6: INTEGRATING CEFM ACROSS KEY USAID SECTORS AND STRATEGIES**



Child, early, and forced marriage are forms of GBV and violations of human rights. When girls marry young they often drop out of school, experience poor health outcomes, are less economically and agriculturally productive, thus detracting from many other efforts within key sectors of USAID programming. Additionally, poverty, food insecurity, conflict and crisis, cultural traditions, and low value of girls often drive CEFM.

CEFM prevention and response should be considered for integration into the following key USAID sectors: global health, education, democracy, human, rights and governance, economic growth and workforce development, conflict and crisis, and agriculture and food security, as well as throughout the cross-cutting initiatives of GBV and youth programming. Integrating CEFM prevention and response through these sectors and into existing efforts not only will reduce CEFM and better meet the needs of those who have experienced CEFM, but it will also help sector-focused initiatives achieve their goals. CEFM prevention and response efforts will contribute to and benefit from advancements in other sectors.

While this guide refers to *girls* and *already married girls*, these terms are meant to also capture the impacts that women who were married as children experience throughout their lives.

Many USAID-funded programs are uniquely positioned to directly address risk factors for child marriage, as well as to incorporate CEFM prevention and response into existing programs. Programs already engage key stakeholders who play a major role in CEFM prevention and response, such as women and girls, men and boys, host governments and the private sector, and community and religious leaders. Many of these programs cultivate broad partnerships, mobilize communities to shift norms that perpetuate child marriage, and address the unique needs of married children—all key principles of USAID’s *Vision for Action*. To better influence CEFM, however, greater focus needs to be placed on incorporating programming messages, activities, and structures that directly target drivers of CEFM.

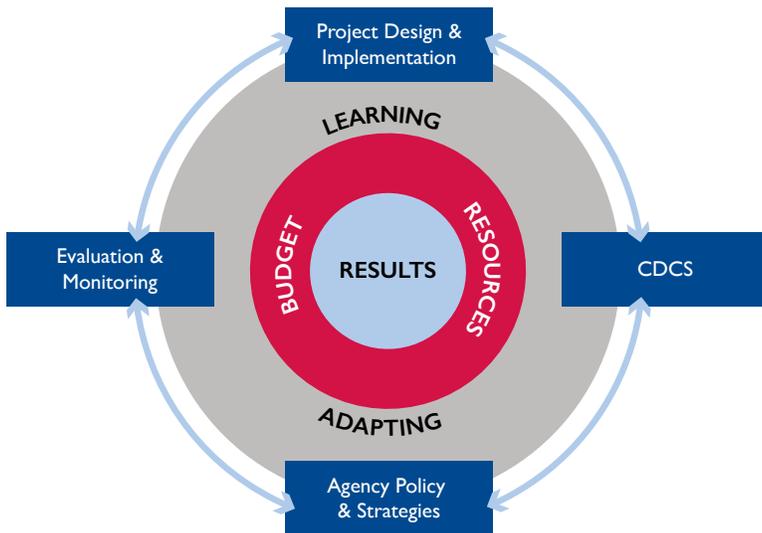
Section 2.4 of this guide includes sections on integrating CEFM prevention and response into the following key USAID sectors and strategies:

- [GBV](#)
- [Youth](#)
- [Global Health](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Economic Growth and Workforce Development](#)
- [Agriculture and Food Security](#)
- [Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance](#)
- [Crisis and Conflict](#)
- [Multi-sectoral Programming](#)

## 2.2 INCORPORATING CEFM PREVENTION AND RESPONSE THROUGHOUT USAID'S PROGRAM CYCLE

The USAID Program Cycle represents USAID's framing and terminology to describe a common set of processes intended to achieve more effective development interventions and maximize impacts. The below table outlines how policymakers and program implementers can integrate CEFM prevention and response into each component of the Program Cycle. Integrating these efforts into the various Program Cycle components will enable USAID to more effectively address CEFM, as well as use these efforts to enhance achievement of key sector and strategy goals and objectives.

FIGURE 7: USAID PROGRAM CYCLE



### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATING CEFM THROUGHOUT THE USAID PROGRAM CYCLE

#### Agency Policies and Strategies

- When integrating CEFM into agency policies and strategies, approaches should align with the following policies: [Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy](#); [United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence](#); [Youth in Development Policy](#); [United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security \(NAP\)](#); and [Counter Trafficking in Persons Policy](#).

## Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS)

- In countries with a high CEFM prevalence, CDCSs should consider key drivers of CEFM and important support structures for meeting the needs of married adolescents when developing goals and objectives.
- Goals, objectives, and progress measures specific to CEFM prevention and service provision for married girls should be incorporated into existing and new programs, especially in countries with a high burden of CEFM.
- Specifically, when creating CDCSs, countries should consider how CEFM affects sector-specific goals, such as educational attainment or protection of human rights. As appropriate, Development Objective narratives should include statistics and qualitative information from the gender analysis.

## Program Design and Implementation

- Project Appraisal Document (PAD)-level gender analysis should utilize research on the drivers of CEFM and gender inequality more broadly in program design to address context-specific causes and consequences. As part of project design and activity planning, staff should consider drivers of CEFM within a particular context by including program components that specifically address those factors.
- Programs should actively target and recruit girls who are at risk of CEFM and those who are already married as program participants. In particular, programs should reach out to out-of-school girls as they are often among the most vulnerable. These girls can benefit from opportunities to gain access to information and resources, enhance skills, and build social support through education, income generation, health information and services, and community mobilization.
- Programs should include raising awareness on the harms of CEFM, how program activities can address drivers or consequences associated with CEFM, and what alternatives are available for girls. Front-line project staff may need training on how to effectively address resistance from girls, parents, and other community members. Sector-specific efforts can incorporate components to ensure that staff understand and address the gender inequalities that underpin CEFM practices; for example, norms related to inheritance, sexual and reproductive health, and school dropout.
- Based on the CEFM-related findings of the gender analysis, Operating Units should include CEFM objectives, activities, and indicators in solicitations. As appropriate, requests for proposals (RFPs) and requests for applications (RFAs) can require applicants to consider how to target adolescents at risk of CEFM, how to mitigate the effects of CEFM, and how programs can respond to the unique needs of vulnerable married adolescents.

## Performance Monitoring

- Baseline assessments should be conducted before program implementation to allow for measuring change. At a minimum, programs should record the age, sex, and marital status of participants at the outset of program implementation as well as at the midline and/or endline.
- As part of performance monitoring, programs should track a few key indicators related to CEFM such as sex, age, and marital status of participants. Collecting this information on an on-going basis will allow staff to adjust programming to better target project activities to the needs of beneficiaries.
  - To better understand key context-specific drivers and solutions to preventing and responding to CEFM, programs must collect data on CEFM-related outcomes. (See this guide's [CEFM Monitoring and Evaluation \(M&E\) Indicators](#) section for a comprehensive list of indicators for CEFM-related outcomes.)

- Projects and activities can use surveys to monitor shifts in attitudes and behaviors related to CEFM, such as attitudes about the value of girls, educational attainment, health outcomes, participation in income-generating activities, and incidence of GBV. This information can come from third-party sources or implementing partners.
- As programs incorporate CEFM prevention and response efforts, implementing partners should be instructed to report on progress, as well as any unintended consequences that result from addressing CEFM.

## Evaluation

- In addition to the sector-specific outcomes mentioned in the performance monitoring phase, program evaluations should also measure changes in broader gender norms. Evaluations can measure whether there are changes in societal expectations for boys and girls; changes in educational and economic opportunities and outcomes for female and male adolescents; and whether girls have increased power to negotiate marriage formation, important decisions related to health (such as child bearing and birth spacing), and resource allocation within marriage.

## Learning and Adapting

- More research is needed to understand the best approaches for preventing and responding to CEFM in particular contexts and how to scale them. Research is needed to test different programmatic approaches and combinations of approaches to understand the most comprehensive and cost-effective methods of addressing CEFM.
- More research is needed to understand how to engage key stakeholders in CEFM programming. While it is understood that engaging men and boys in CEFM prevention and response efforts is necessary, little is known about what types of approaches are most effective. More research is needed to understand how to effectively engage men and boys, in-laws, and religious and cultural leaders, as well as other stakeholders in CEFM prevention and response.
- USAID and its implementing partners should share findings with host governments and, as appropriate, support host-country efforts to bring about change at the national level based on the results of programs. (This collaboration can be part of the project design.)
- More data is needed to document the cost of CEFM prevention and response interventions so efforts can be replicated and scaled up.

## Budget and Resources

- As CEFM is a cross-sectoral issue, even when there are not funds explicitly earmarked for CEFM prevention and response, integrating these efforts into other sectors and strategies can help achieve sector-specific goals, such as improved education attainment or enhanced health outcomes. Program efforts should leverage funds and resources from other program sectors, donors, partners, and local governments to integrate CEFM into new and existing initiatives. Lessons learned related to what works to prevent CEFM and meet the needs of married adolescents should be considered in future program-cycle budgets, resources, and planning.

## 2.3 CONSIDERATIONS FOR GENDER ANALYSIS

USAID's *Automated Directives System (ADS) 205: Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle* (ADS 205) provides instructions on how to operationalize gender policies and strategies across the USAID Program Cycle.<sup>111</sup> One of this integration's components is a gender analysis of country strategies and projects. Gender analysis is a type of socioeconomic analysis to identify, understand, and explain gaps between males and females that exist in households, communities, and countries. It can identify how gender norms and power relations impact opportunities, participation, and productivity within specific contexts. In conducting gender analyses for projects and programs, USAID staff and implementing partners working in high-burden areas should include a specific focus on how CEFM impacts and is influenced by gender norms and power relations. Gender analysis is required for all USAID work—and is mandatory at both the country/strategy (for example, CDCS) and project level.

Collecting information on CEFM during gender analyses will produce useful findings and recommendations on how to design strategies, programs, projects, and activities that prevent and respond to CEFM; address risk factors associated with CEFM; and target and empower women and girls who might be at risk of CEFM or those who have experienced CEFM. Essentially, examining CEFM as part of a well-researched gender analysis is the first step to integrating CEFM into programming across sectors.

### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

One additional descriptive statistic that should be collected to understand the status of CEFM in a particular context, is the age of marriage. This statistic should capture the percentage of men and women (disaggregated by sex) ages 20 to 24 who report being married before the ages of 18 and 15. This statistic will provide program implementers with a general picture of the prevalence of CEFM and where it is most common.

### DOMAINS OF ANALYSIS TO INCLUDE IN GENDER ANALYSIS

The following table provides structured guidance on how to collect and incorporate CEFM information when conducting gender analyses. Using the five domains of analysis, the table outlines guiding questions, rationales, and the stakeholders from whom to collect information. These questions will yield a wealth of information, not just on CEFM, but also about gender dynamics, opportunities, and constraints at the national, community, household, and individual levels. They will also produce information on GBV and youth issues across a wide range of sectors. Overall, these questions will help produce a richer and more effective

#### WHERE CAN YOU FIND THESE STATISTICS?

This data is collected and made publicly available at the national level via

- [UNICEF MICS](#)
- [DHS\\*](#)
- [United Nations Statistics Division](#) (UNSD)

In many countries, this data is also collected through other national censuses. Through some of the aforementioned sources, it is possible to obtain this data at the district and regional level. Additionally, more localized data could be collected via community-level or program-level surveys.

\* [DHS's STATcompiler](#) allows for creating tables on certain data points (such as percent married before ages 15 or 18) for select countries. To pull statistics on age of marriage, follow this path:

Under "Select Indicator," go to "Complete List," then select "Other Proximate Determinants of Fertility"->"Age at first marriage"->"Age at first marriage"-> 15/18. Once the table has been created, select the option for "Age in 5 year categories" on the right hand side of the screen. Deselect all of the age categories except for "20–24."

gender analysis. By integrating these questions and CEFM considerations into gender analyses, development implementers can help ensure that programs and activities do not lead to unintended consequences, such as increased rates of GBV and CEFM.

The guiding questions can be asked in focus group discussions or semi-structured one-on-one interviews with stakeholders. They can also be integrated into established gender analysis tools and toolkits (discussed later). The following guidance can be used to conduct CEFM-integrated gender analyses at all stages of the program cycle.

### FIVE DOMAINS OF ANALYSIS\*

- Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices
- Cultural norms and beliefs
- Gender roles, responsibilities, and time used
- Access to and control over assets and resources
- Patterns of power and decision-making

\* Using the below symbols, the Guide highlights how information on CEFM and key USAID sectors and strategies relates to the five gender analysis domains.

GENDER ANALYSIS DOMAINS (ADS 205)	GUIDING QUESTIONS ON CEFM TO INCORPORATE INTO GENDER ANALYSIS	RATIONALE	STAKEHOLDERS
 <p><b>LAWS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES</b></p>	<p>Are there national laws on the minimum age of marriage, marriage certification, birth registration, gender discrimination, GBV, and child-protection standards?</p> <p>Are these laws enforced at the national and local levels, including additional provisions and punishments related to the laws? Are women and girls able to access justice—including law enforcement and judiciary systems—or do they encounter constraints? Are women and girls able to or constrained in accessing justice? What constraints do they encounter including in law enforcement and judiciary systems? Are individuals, households, and communities aware of laws?</p> <p>How do laws and policies actually influence marriage decisions at the local level? Does customary law allow CEFM or associated practices? Does customary law contradict formal law? Who upholds and enforces customary law? For example, if the national law states a minimum age of marriage, is this law actually what people abide by? If local religious leaders approve and are willing to perform marriages between younger individuals, do families practice CEFM?</p>	<p>Understanding these dynamics can help implementers to design programs that either will advocate for legal change or make the current system more effective.</p>	<p>Policymakers, local legal institutions, NGOs</p> <p>Judges, police, government officials and civil servants, local legal institutions and NGOs, women and girls</p> <p>Traditional and community leaders, religious leaders, elders, women and girls, men and boys</p>



CULTURAL NORMS AND BELIEFS

What are the cultural norms and beliefs regarding marriage? What are the relevant norms and beliefs about girls' and women's roles as wives and mothers and boys' and men's roles as husbands and fathers? How do norms on marriage and women's roles as wives and mothers affect beliefs regarding women and girls' education and economic participation? What are the relevant norms on chastity and purity and how do they influence marriage practices? What do relevant gender norms say about how husbands should treat their wives, particularly younger wives?

What cultural and traditional practices accompany marriage formation (i.e., bride price, dowry, female genital mutilation/cutting, polygyny, bride abduction, and emphasizing female chastity)? Does marriage signify a financial transaction, such as dowry or bride price? How do financial practices associated with marriage affect the age of marriage?

If women and girls experience gender-based violence, such as abduction or rape, are they encouraged to marry perpetrators? If so, why?

Identifying key norm-related drivers of CEFM can inform program implementers how to design more effective programs.

In places where the practice of CEFM is deeply entrenched in customs or traditions, understanding how the practice connects to religion, culture, or tradition may help enable implementers to identify culturally appropriate solutions and key stakeholders to become involved in efforts to prevent and respond to CEFM.

Traditional/ community leaders, elders, school administrators and teachers, parents, women and girls, men and boys

Traditional/ community leaders, elders, parents, women and girls, men and boys

Traditional/ community leaders, elders, parents, women and girls, men and boys

**GUIDING QUESTIONS ON CEFM TO INCORPORATE INTO GENDER ANALYSIS**

**RATIONALE**

**STAKEHOLDERS**



**GENDER ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TIME USED**

Is there a division of labor between productive (market) and reproductive (non-market) activity among men and women? How does the division of labor influence school dropout and completion, fertility rates, and economic participation rates, as well as the age of marriage and the dynamics of the marriage relationship among males and females? How much time do women and girls spend on unpaid care work compared to men and boys? Are girls ever removed from school to carry out unpaid care work? What types of community work are women and girls engaged in compared to men and boys?

How do gender roles, responsibilities, and time use differ between women and girls who were married as a result of CEFM and unmarried girls? Between girls and boys? Between married women who were married before the age of 18 and married women who were married after the age of 18? Do women and girls who have experienced CEFM encounter unique obstacles? How can we maximize the ability of married girls to participate in project activities?

Using a lens of CEFM to explore differences in gender roles, responsibilities, and time used will enable implementers to understand how CEFM relates to these issues and how programs can better cater to girls who might be at risk of CEFM or who have experienced CEFM earlier in their lives.

Women and girls, men and boys

Women and girls, men and boys



**ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER ASSETS AND RESOURCES**

How do age of marriage, dynamics of the marriage relationship, and difference in partners' ages affect whether males and females own, have access to, and have the capacity to use productive resources (such as assets, income, social benefits, public services, and technology) and the information necessary to be an active and productive participant in society?

Do women and girls who have experienced CEFM face social isolation? Do they lack access to resources and the power and knowledge of how to control those resources? How do age gaps between male and female spouses exacerbate access to and control of resources?

How does access to and control over assets and resources differ between girls and boys? What about between women and girls who were married as a result of CEFM and unmarried girls and married women who were married after the age of 18?

Exploring these imbalances will enable program implementers to design programs that increase married adolescents' access to resources and information.

Women and girls, men and boys

Women and girls, men and boys

Women and girls, men and boys

GENDER ANALYSIS DOMAINS (ADS 205)	GUIDING QUESTIONS ON CEFM TO INCORPORATE INTO GENDER ANALYSIS	RATIONALE	STAKEHOLDERS
 <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>PATTERNS OF POWER AND DECISION-MAKING</b></p>	<p>Who within the family or community makes decisions about if, when, and who a girl should marry? How does education status, urban/rural, age, religion, ethnic group, and socio-economic status influence marriage decisions? What kind of power and decision-making do different family members exert within the household over marriage-decisions, as well as traditional practices, health, education, economic growth, and protection issues related to marriage? Which community and religious leaders influence decisions over marriage?</p> <p>How do age of marriage, dynamics of the marriage relationship, and difference in age of partners influence patterns of power and decision-making within the marriage relationship?</p> <p>Do power and decision-making dynamics within households promote GBV and exploitation for women and girls who have experienced CEFM?</p>	<p>Implementers can use this information to target programs to empower girls and boys to make these key life decisions. Information can also be used to design programs that create more equitable marriage relationships.</p>	<p>Traditional/ community leaders, religious leaders, elders, parents, women and girls, men and boys</p> <p>Women and girls, men and boys</p> <p>Women and girls, men and boys</p>

## APPLYING CEFM FINDINGS

### 1. Do no harm

In addition to these five domains of analysis, whenever performing a gender analysis, implementers should examine the potential impacts of a project on women and men, including unintended or negative consequences. Analysis should examine whether there is a risk that project activities could increase CEFM or risk factors directly associated with it. For example, implementers should assess if project activities lead to girls being pulled out of school (such as, livelihood opportunities for women could cause mothers to pull their daughters out of school to help with domestic work) or the reinforcement of traditional and cultural norms that condone or promote CEFM. Additionally, if a project plans to include women and girls who have experienced CEFM as project participants or beneficiaries, analysis should consider if participation could lead to adverse effects, such as increased risk of GBV or exploitation. Implementers can use this information to monitor for unintended or negative consequences that perpetuate, reinforce, or increase CEFM and associated risk factors. This information can also be used to design and implement measures to mitigate risk.

### 2. Gender Analysis Toolkits

A number of tools and toolkits can be used to collect information for gender analysis. Please note that none of these tools and toolkits have been adapted to specifically collect information on CEFM. Still, the guiding questions can be used in conjunction with these tools to collect relevant information. Please see [Part 4.3 Table of Key Toolkits](#) for a list and description of relevant toolkits.

## **2.4 INCORPORATING CEFM PREVENTION AND RESPONSE ACROSS KEY USAID SECTORS AND STRATEGIES**

The following sections outline key sectors and strategies within USAID’s programming with significant potential to influence outcomes related to CEFM. Each section provides an overview of how CEFM and the sector or strategy are interrelated and how addressing CEFM can help the sector or strategy achieve its goals while simultaneously improving CEFM outcomes. Each section also provides examples of programs—within and outside of USAID—that are addressing CEFM or its key drivers and have the potential to impact CEFM-related outcomes with greater focus on and measurement of CEFM. Finally, each section contains recommendations on how to integrate CEFM prevention and response measures and activities into sectors or strategies and how efforts within the sector or strategy could have greater impacts on reducing CEFM and meeting the needs of married girls.

## GBV

### CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND GBV

As explicitly stated in the *United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally*, CEFM is a form of GBV, and CEFM also perpetuates additional forms of violence.<sup>112</sup> GBV can consist of physical, mental, emotional, or sexual violence, and has many negative health consequences for girls.<sup>113</sup>

Being married before age 18 puts girls at a higher risk for intimate partner violence (IPV) than if they were married after age 18.<sup>114</sup> Husbands, in-laws, and other family members can perpetuate GBV toward married girls.<sup>115</sup> Forced sexual initiation and forced marital sex frequently accompany CEFM. Even though this forced sex happens within the marriage context, it is still sexual violence—rape—and has the same harmful effects as other forms of sexual violence. Also, girls who are married young are more likely to believe that husbands are justified in beating their wives in certain scenarios.<sup>116</sup> Girls who experience IPV have higher levels of unintended pregnancy, more complicated pregnancies, and are at greater risk for STIs, including HIV.<sup>117</sup> Child brides also often experience depression and poor mental health, as well as severe isolation.<sup>118</sup>

GBV affects not only women who directly experience all forms of violence, but it also impacts their children's health and well-being. The ripple effects of IPV can also hurt children's physical and mental health and well-being, and contribute to reinforcing the acceptability of IPV. Children exposed to violence in the home are twice as likely to perpetuate or experience IPV as adults.<sup>119</sup>

Gender norms that devalue girls often perpetuate CEFM. And in cases where dowry or bride price are practiced, the child bride can be equated to an economic asset or piece of property. In some cases, families may marry their daughters at a young age in an effort to safeguard them from other forms of GBV, such as harassment and rape. This action can be motivated by the desire to protect the girl from physical or sexual violence or to protect the family from the shame that would follow such an incident.<sup>120</sup> For example, families may pull their daughters out of school due to physical and/or sexual violence at school or on the way to and from it, which then increases the likelihood that they will be married early.<sup>121</sup> Particularly in scenarios of conflict or crisis, families may feel that they have little control over their daughter's safety and marry her off as a form of protection.<sup>122</sup>

### REFERENCES TO GENDER ANALYSIS DOMAINS

Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices



Cultural norms and beliefs



Gender roles, responsibilities, and time used



Access to and control over assets and resources



Patterns of power and decision-making



**GBV** = Violence directed at an individual based on his or her biological sex, gender identity, or perceived adherence to socially defined norms of masculinity and femininity. It includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse; threats; coercion; arbitrary deprivation of liberty; and economic deprivation, whether occurring in public or private life.

**IPV** = Physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former spouse or partner.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED STATES STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE GLOBALLY:

- **Prevention** of GBV from occurring in the first place and from recurring by working with local grassroots organizations, civil society, and key stakeholders in the community, including men and boys
- **Protection** from GBV by identifying and providing services to survivors once the violence occurs
- **Accountability** to ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and to end impunity by strengthening legal and judicial systems

USAID. (2012). *United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally*. Washington, DC: USAID.

## CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND GBV PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS

USAID aims to prevent and respond to GBV by addressing the root causes of violence, improving prevention and protection services, responding to the health and economic needs of those affected by GBV, and supporting legislation and its enforcement against GBV. As CEFM is a form of violence and also perpetuates other forms of violence, programmatic efforts that aim to delay marriage and reduce forced marriages will advance these goals. These efforts are mutually reinforcing as “USAID’s efforts to end child marriage advance efforts to end gender-based violence while strengthening the agency’s commitment to children in adversity, gender equality, female empowerment, and youth development.”<sup>123</sup> Recent developments—such as the launch of the United States President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief’s (PEPFAR’s) Determined, Resilient, AIDS-Free, Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS) initiative, which aims to tackle HIV and GBV-related issues for adolescent girls—are also prime platforms where U.S. investments in ending GBV can be leveraged to achieve goals to end CEFM as a form of GBV and an HIV risk factor.

Programs can prevent CEFM-related GBV in many ways. Primarily, they can work to prevent CEFM from occurring through mobilizing and sensitizing communities, empowering individual girls, providing girls with viable alternative options, providing economic support and incentives, and creating an enabling legal environment. These community sensitization and mobilization programs not only should educate on the harms of GBV and shift beliefs around the acceptance of violence, but they should also aim to shift broader gender norms related to appropriate roles and responsibilities for men and women, relationship dynamics, and the use of power. In addition to general community members, key stakeholders and gatekeepers (such as law enforcement officials, judicial officers, healthcare workers, school administrators and teachers, and cultural and religious leaders) should be sensitized to understand the harmful effects of GBV as well as what their role is in preventing and responding to GBV.

On the response side, programs can protect girls and mitigate the additional violence that child brides often experience through screening programs and response services, such as legal aid, counseling, shelters that focus on at-risk married girls, community mobilization related to the harmful effects child brides often experience, and training on couple communication so that young couples can solve disagreements peacefully.<sup>124</sup> All GBV programming should engage men and boys in prevention and response efforts; sensitization and mobilization programs should educate men and boys about the harms of CEFM and related IPV, encouraging them to champion women and girls’ rights.

To increase accountability around practices of CEFM, marriage-related legal structures, laws, and policies need to be strengthened. Shoring up birth and marriage registration processes and enhancing enforcement of minimum age of marriage laws (where they exist) can decrease impunity related to CEFM.<sup>125</sup> Ensuring that law enforcement and judicial officers, cultural leaders, community members, and girls and boys are knowledgeable about the laws related to CEFM and enforce and adhere to those laws can deter the practice. Additionally,



### KEY CEFM STAKEHOLDERS FOR GBV EFFORTS:

- Legal and police officers
- Judicial officers, including judges, magistrates, lawyers, and paralegals
- School administrators and teachers
- Healthcare workers
- Community, traditional, and religious leaders
- Families, including parents, and in-laws
- Community members
- Girls
- Women
- Men and boys



when laws are violated, girls need access to justice through paralegals and other legal-aid professionals who are knowledgeable about the unique needs of at-risk girls and married adolescents and can guide them through the legal system. In general, response services, including legal enforcement, judicial, health, and social support should differentiate services to the unique needs of girls who have experienced CEFM, as well as the different needs of married girls (compared to older women) who have experienced IPV in their marriage.

### PROGRAM EXAMPLES WITH A LINKAGE TO CEFM

Given the close link between GBV and CEFM, programs working to end GBV or change attitudes about violence have an opportunity to change attitudes, norms, and practices related to CEFM. Many of USAID’s investments that are directly related to CEFM fund research to better understand what works in preventing CEFM in diverse contexts. While not necessarily focused on child brides’ experience of other forms of GBV, USAID invests in many programs that work to prevent and respond to GBV. These programs typically work on engaging multiple stakeholders, including men and boys and community and religious leaders, in community mobilization efforts to change gender norms and acceptance of violence. While the following program examples may not explicitly aim to reduce CEFM, they address its relevant drivers and therefore have the potential to reduce CEFM or mitigate its impacts. If such programs include an additional focus on CEFM and measure CEFM-related outcomes, learning and adjustments can occur—and greater impact may be possible.

USAID Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p><b>A Safer Zambia (ASAZA)</b>* worked with men and women to decrease GBV through increasing knowledge and changing attitudes toward gender, in addition to improving access to comprehensive services for GBV survivors.<sup>126</sup> Components of the program included sensitization for community and traditional leaders; holding community conversations around GBV; and developing information education and behavior-change communication materials with gender and GBV themes for use on radio, print, and in public performance. The program engaged government officials and stakeholders, focused on engaging men and boys by training them as advocates, and mobilized communities to change norms around GBV. It also included a life-skills and violence-reduction component geared toward youth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child marriage was identified as a form of GBV that the program would address in the <b>program design</b> phase of ASAZA.</li> <li>• In <b>program implementation</b>, ASAZA sensitized marriage counselors on issues related to GBV.</li> <li>• Because ASAZA worked with men, women, boys, and girls to end GBV by changing norms, it was uniquely positioned to change one of the major driving forces of CEFM.</li> <li>• ASAZA incorporated CEFM into <b>program monitoring and evaluation</b> by measuring incidences of early marriage as a form of GBV throughout the program’s duration.</li> <li>• An assessment of the ASAZA program noted that neither the statutory nor customary legal systems recognize sexual or physical assault within marriage as a crime. Implementers could use this information to <b>learn and adapt</b> from the ASAZA program to create a more comprehensive legal framework that protects women and girls from sexual violence within marriage.</li> </ul>
<p>*USAID-funded ASAZA was implemented by CARE and the Zambian government from 2008 to 2011.</p>	

USAID’s Boys to Men program, also being implemented in Zambia, aims to reduce the acceptance and the prevalence of GBV by promoting positive, non-violent male development.<sup>127</sup> By working with a variety of constituencies (including boys, community leaders, traditional leaders, and schools), Boys to Men puts forward a variety of activities in rural Zambia that aim to shift attitudes, awareness, knowledge, and practices among boys and young men. Working across communities to change norms around violence, this program—very much like ASAZA—is in a prime position to include discussions around CEFM prevention and response in its curriculum.

USAID Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p><b><u>Mobilizing Religious Communities to Respond to Gender-Based Violence and HIV: A Training Manual</u></b><sup>*</sup> was designed to prevent and reduce GBV and HIV among women and girls.<sup>128</sup> The program equipped religious communities with tools to strengthen their capacity and networks to respond to GBV as it relates to HIV, deepen their awareness and understanding of GBV, and to enhance faith-based activities regarding GBV.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEFM was incorporated into <b>program design</b> as one of the training activities revolves around a discussion of early and forced marriage and how community members could advocate to stop such a marriage.</li> <li>• <b>Program implementation</b> of this type of training is critical to CEFM prevention and response, as it addresses HIV and GBV—both of which are experienced at high levels by girls who marry before age 18. This training is also applicable to CEFM as it engages women and faith leaders, both key stakeholders in CEFM prevention and response. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identifying the relationships between HIV, GBV, and child marriage can inform leaders how CEFM damages social and health outcomes for girls.</li> <li>○ As faith leaders become aware of the harms of CEFM, they may become champions of CEFM prevention, using their power and voice to influence normative and customary practices.</li> <li>○ Knowing that girls who are already married are at a higher risk for GBV and HIV, women and faith leaders can target outreach efforts towards those girls to reach one of the most at-risk populations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><sup>*</sup>Through USAID's Health Policy Initiative, Futures Group and Religions for Peace use the Mobilizing Religious Communities to Respond to Gender-Based Violence and HIV Training Manual to conduct a training on GBV and HIV for women of faith, as well as male religious leaders who were members of Religions for Peace's African Women of Faith Network and National Inter-Religious Councils.</p>	

Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>The <b><u>A More Equal Future: A MenCare Manual to Engage Fathers to Prevent Child Marriage in India</u></b><sup>*</sup> was created to combat the social norms that devalue girls and perpetuate child marriage.<sup>129</sup> The tool provides a safe space for men, their partners, and their daughters to reflect on and redefine what it means to be men and fathers. To change deeply rooted social norms, the program engages men in taking on equitable responsibility for raising their children without violence, valuing their daughters as they do their sons, and contributing more to domestic housework. The program forms men's groups with the following objectives: improve men's understanding of how gender inequality supports the institution of child marriage and impacts relationships between men and women; promote men's caring roles in the home, including supporting girls' education and sharing domestic work; promote healthier coping mechanisms and positive masculinities that reject alcoholism; increase men's understanding of violence and promote non-violent, caring relationships; and promote shared decision-making of household budgeting and investment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The training manual has incorporated CEFM at the <b>program design</b> phase in that the manual was specifically created to provide guidance on how to engage fathers to prevent child marriage.</li> <li>• While the training manual itself doesn't contain other elements of the program cycle, it encourages implementers to engage men in CEFM prevention and response along <b>all phases of the Program Cycle</b>. By shifting social norms related to gender equality, MenCare has the potential to reduce both GBV and CEFM throughout communities in India.</li> <li>• The creation of the training manual specifically involved <b>learning and adapting</b>. Formative research was conducted to understand how involved men were in caregiving and marriage decisions to identify how they could better be involved in these roles.</li> </ul>
<p><sup>*</sup>Promundo and World Vision created the A More Equal Future: A MenCare Manual to Engage Fathers to Prevent Child Marriage in India through Promundo's MenCare project.</p>	

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATING CEFM PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION OF CEFM IN GBV PROGRAMMING			
CHILD MARRIAGE			
		Prevention	Response
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE	Prevention	<p><b>Prevent both CEFM and all forms of GBV:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life skills and empowerment programs for women and girls</li> <li>Community mobilization, including education and sensitization through dialogue and communication campaigns</li> <li>Promoting gender equitable norms, including marriage as a partnership</li> <li>Strengthening birth and marriage registration</li> </ul>	<p><b>Respond to needs of married girls by preventing GBV:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging men and boys in prevention and response efforts</li> <li>Initiatives to enhance couple communication and joint decision-making</li> <li>Programs to keep married girls in school and incorporate GBV prevention</li> <li>Economic programs for married girls and their families that include GBV prevention</li> </ul>
	Response	<p><b>Prevent CEFM while responding to GBV:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Counseling and other health services targeted to women and girls who have experienced GBV</li> <li>Using health, law enforcement, and legal service providers to screen for and identify clients who might be at risk of CEFM, and then target services to their needs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Respond to the needs of married girls experiencing violence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training healthcare providers on the special needs of married girls</li> <li>Provision of legal aid services</li> <li>Strengthening law enforcement's ability to enforce laws and respond to violations of the law</li> <li>Advocacy for gender-equitable laws and policies</li> </ul>

### How can programs work with individuals to shift norms, attitudes, and behaviors that perpetuate GBV and CEFM?

- As CEFM and other forms of GBV are rooted in gender-biased beliefs and practices, programs should aim to shift gender norms and foster more gender-equitable relationships and practices.
- Programs should work with men, boys, and communities to decrease acceptance of unequal gender roles, violence, and CEFM. Notions of what are acceptable behaviors between individuals are often determined by community social norms; therefore programs should target shifts in attitudes and beliefs at this broader level to impact shifts in behavior at the individual level.
- While it is important to engage communities in social-norm change, programs should also empower women and girls socially, economically, and politically to overcome their subordinate role in society. As community members observe women and girls in new roles, their views of what is appropriate and what women and girls are capable of can shift.

- As girls often believe that it is a wife's obligation to have sex with her husband, young brides should be sensitized on girls' and women's rights to refuse sex with their husband and their right to only have sex when both parties want it.
- Programs should enhance couple communication so that young couples can peacefully discuss desires and settle disagreements.

### ***How can programs mobilize families and communities to reject all forms of violence against women, specifically including CEFM?***

- Families, communities, and religious and cultural leaders should be sensitized and mobilized around the harmful effects of CEFM and why it is a form of GBV. Programs should seek to spread messages about how CEFM deprives girls of their civil liberties and human rights, often truncates their education, and isolates them from needed resources and social support. Understanding why CEFM is a form of GBV may motivate community members to end the practice.
- Programs should also mobilize communities around broader norm changes that promote gender equality in roles and responsibilities for men and women, as well as equality in relationships.

### ***How can institutional structures prevent and respond to various forms of GBV, including CEFM, as well as forms of GBV that can result from CEFM?***

- GBV screening and response services (through health, police, judicial, and community structures) should monitor, target, and provide outreach for girls who are at-risk of early marriage or who are already married.
- Programs should reduce impunity by strengthening birth and marriage registration and knowledge and enforcement of minimum age of marriage laws.
  - Programs should educate police and judicial officers on the laws related to CEFM and how to enforce them. In settings where there are dedicated child and family protection units, programs should build these units' capacity to handle cases related to CEFM and ensure doing so is part of their mandate.
  - As girls who have experienced CEFM are often at a heightened risk of other forms of GBV, police units and judicial officers should be aware of the unique needs of married adolescents who have experienced GBV and tailor their services accordingly.
  - Programs should educate the general public about laws related to CEFM and GBV so that they can know and advocate for their rights.
- As CEFM and other forms of violence against girls can be exacerbated during situations of conflict and crisis, programs should ensure that addressing CEFM and GBV is part of the emergency-response child-protection mandate.

## YOUTH

### CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND YOUTH

There are 1.8 billion people between the ages of 10 and 24 alive today. In 17 developing countries, half of the population is under the age of 18.<sup>130</sup> These statistics illustrate that programs must meet the needs, challenges, and aspirations of this large youth population to spur social and economic progress. While CEFM affects both boys and girls, it affects girls in much higher numbers: 720 million women alive today were married as children, compared to 156 million men.<sup>131</sup> In the developing world today, one in three girls is married before she turns 18—more than 15 million girls every year.<sup>132</sup>

Females and males experience different challenges and have varying needs throughout their lifetime. Certain periods in life represent pivotal shifts that have the potential to change the trajectory of one's life course—the ages that comprise youth (10 to 24) represent one of these critical times. During these years, youth develop a system of beliefs, gain the foundational knowledge and skills that will serve them for the rest of their lives, and often begin to form families. The conditions experienced and decisions youth make during this time can influence their wealth, health, and well-being throughout their lifetimes, as well as the transmission of associated positive and negative outcomes to future generations. This life trajectory not only affects the individual, but it can also have social and economic impacts on communities and nations. Marriage formation represents a critical decision point that has the potential to propel an individual into a cycle of positive or negative development and life outcomes. While the impacts of this marriage decision will have varying impacts throughout one's lifetime, the period of youth represents the opportunity to shape and influence these decisions and set youth on a path for prosperity.

Gender inequality is a major driver of child marriage. Norms and expectations around the roles of girls and women in society, acceptance of GBV, and limited decision-making power devalue women and girls, perpetuating the cycle of CEFM. Engaging youth in efforts to shift gender norms is critical in breaking the cycle of CEFM. USAID's [Youth in Development Policy](#) acknowledges that development programs for youth often focus on people ages 15 to 24, but the reach of many youth programs often include people as young as 10 and as old as 29.<sup>133</sup> By definition, CEFM directly impacts this age group. This means that all youth programming has the opportunity to make a direct impact on the lives of those who are most vulnerable to CEFM, and it can influence the prevention of and response to CEFM.

Fostering more gender-equitable norms among youth can contribute to reductions in CEFM, as well as more productive marriages later in life. Providing youth with opportunities to learn new skills, develop social networks, and find safe spaces, builds their resilience—specifically among young girls. When girls are empowered, are provided with opportunities to learn life skills, and can build their self-confidence and self-efficacy, they are more likely to delay marriage than girls who do not have these opportunities.<sup>134</sup> This enhanced empowerment is not only essential for delaying marriage, but it can also open access to productive future opportunities. USAID defines this resiliency as building youth's assets, both internal and external, to enable them to succeed regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, or ethnicity.<sup>135</sup>

### REFERENCES TO GENDER ANALYSIS DOMAINS

Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices



Cultural norms and beliefs



Gender roles, responsibilities, and time used



Access to and control over assets and resources



Patterns of power and decision-making



## CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND YOUTH PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS

One of the guiding principles of USAID’s youth programming is to pursue gender equality. Engaging youth in activities and education to modify gender norms has changed not only attitudes but also behaviors, specifically in boys and young men.<sup>136</sup> Research has shown that gender-synchronized approaches that challenge the harmful and restrictive constructions of masculinity and femininity that drive gender-related vulnerabilities and inequalities are able to shift gender norms and influence behaviors.<sup>137</sup> Effectively working with youth to change these gender norms can begin to achieve the goal of gender equality, possibly leading to a reduction in child marriage. In addition, engaging youth in the design, implementation, and evaluation of activities can improve the relevance and effectiveness of programming. Specifically, youth-led organizations and initiatives can be effective in both addressing issues that are most important to youth and building their self-confidence, leadership, and voice. Investments in youth development should focus on building both internal assets (such as, self-motivation, responsibility, and decision-making skills) and external assets (for example, safe schools, caring neighborhoods, income-earning opportunities, and social networks).<sup>138</sup>

In addition, providing skills training programs, keeping girls and boys in school, and providing girls with safe spaces to build social networks and develop their self-awareness and self-esteem all empower and build resiliency among youth—another priority of USAID’s [\*Youth in Development Policy\*](#).<sup>139</sup> Building resiliency can reduce CEFM. Enhancing youth’s internal and external assets will not only make them more resilient to political, economic, and natural shocks, but it will also better equip them to pursue alternatives to early marriage, such as education and livelihoods opportunities. Work-readiness and life-skills training for youth should integrate gender awareness into programming, as it is a great entry point for developing more gender-equitable views that can shape attitudes and behaviors later in life. These efforts should target the most vulnerable girls as they are the ones with the least access to such opportunities and resources. When girls have access to safe spaces to interact with peers and supportive adults, they increase their technical skills, self-awareness, self-confidence, and social skills. These



### USAID YOUTH POLICY OBJECTIVES

1. Strengthen youth programming, participation, and partnership in support of Agency Development Objectives
  - 1.1 Recognize that youth participation is vital for effective programs
  - 1.2 Invest in assets that build youth resilience
  - 1.3 Account for youth differences and commonalities
  - 1.4 Create second chance opportunities
  - 1.5 Involve and support mentors, families, and communities
  - 1.6 Pursue gender equality
  - 1.7 Embrace innovation and technology by and for youth
2. Mainstream and integrate youth issues and engage young people across Agency initiatives and operations
  - 2.1 Youth are better able to access economic and social opportunities; share in economic growth; live healthy lives; and contribute to household, community, and national wellbeing
  - 2.2 Youth are empowered to participate in building peaceful and democratic societies and are less involved in youth gangs, criminal networks, and insurgent organizations
  - 2.3 Youth have a stronger voice in, and are better served by, local and national institutions, with more robust and youth-friendly policies

USAID. (2012). *USAID Youth Policy: Youth in Development: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity*. Washington, DC: USAID.



### KEY CEFM STAKEHOLDERS FOR YOUTH EFFORTS:

- School administrators and teachers
- Community, traditional, and religious leaders
- Families, including parents, and in-laws
- Community members
- Girls
- Women
- Men and boys



opportunities empower girls by increasing their self-efficacy and aspirations, as they see new opportunities that are within their reach. These opportunities not only impact girls, but as girls gain an increased voice and participate in family and community decision-making processes, the way girls are valued and what roles are viewed as appropriate for them may shift.<sup>140</sup>

Programs and policies that allow for second-chance opportunities for education and income generation build girls’ resiliency to overcome hardships and provide them with alternatives to early marriage.<sup>141</sup> The relationship between resiliency and CEFM is bidirectional: in addition to resiliency contributing to reductions in CEFM, delaying age at marriage can help ensure that girls stay in school, continue to build social networks, and participate fully in their communities, thus building their capacity for agency, self-confidence, and resiliency.



### PROGRAM EXAMPLES WITH A LINKAGE TO CEFM

USAID’s youth programming has enormous potential for preventing and responding to CEFM. These programs incorporate gender-equity curricula for boys and girls, engage men and boys, and forge partnerships between community-based organizations and government ministries—all key principles in USAID’s *Vision for Action*. Some existing programs already address gender norms and sexual and reproductive health of girls and boys, which are fundamentally linked to preventing and responding to CEFM. While the following program examples may not explicitly aim to reduce CEFM, they address relevant drivers and therefore have the potential to reduce CEFM or mitigate its impacts. If such programs include an additional focus on CEFM and measure CEFM-related outcomes, learning and adjustments can occur—and greater impact may be possible.

USAID Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>The <b>Gender Roles, Equality and Transformation (GREAT)</b><sup>*</sup> program in Uganda promotes gender-equitable attitudes and behaviors among adolescents (ages 10 to 19) and their communities to reduce GBV and improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes.<sup>142</sup> The program components are geared toward adolescents as well as adults over 19. They also focus on married adolescents ages 15 to 19—a population often overlooked in youth-targeted or sexual and reproductive health programs. Intervention components include community dialogues with key leaders on gender attitudes, violence, and reproductive health; training of village health teams to strengthen adolescent sexual and reproductive health services; a serial radio drama addressing relationships, sexuality, violence, and parenting issues; and small-group radio-discussion guides and print media resources for boys, girls, and community groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEFM was integrated into GREAT’s <b>program design</b>, as certain components of the program target newly married and newly parenting adolescents.</li> <li>• CEFM is also integrated in <b>program implementation</b> as some content focuses on why girls should delay marriage. Also the units for married adolescents discuss family planning options as well as techniques for creating equitable and loving marriage relationships. By creating more gender-equitable attitudes and behaviors in adolescent girls and boys during these formative years, a foundation can be laid for forming healthy adult relationships and gender-equitable views on sexual and reproductive health. Mobilizing communities to change norms around gender—the same norms that perpetuate CEFM—is a key component of GREAT. Thus, it has a direct connection to prevent and respond to CEFM.<sup>143</sup></li> <li>• Measurements related to CEFM will be included in <b>program monitoring and evaluation</b>. Also, evaluation data will be divided by life stages to compare program impacts on very young adolescents, older adolescents, and newly married adolescents.</li> </ul>
<p><sup>*</sup>The Georgetown University Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH), Save the Children, and Pathfinder in Uganda are implementing the GREAT program.</p>	

USAID Program Example	Potential Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p><b>Minority Education for Growth and Advancement—Skills for Youth (MEGA SKY)</b>* created learning opportunities for marginalized children and youth, especially within the Muslim community, across four states in India. The program increased access to quality formal and non-formal education for students, and especially girls. The program also provided youth with vocational skills that aligned with employers' needs. One of the core components of MEGA SKY is that it used Youth Volunteers (YVs) to help implement the program and ensure that services provided were relevant and responsive to the needs of youth. MEGA SKY provided bridge courses that helped students who had dropped out of the school re-enter the system, provided after-school coaching sessions, and aimed to increase the acceptance of a secular curriculum in local madrassas. MEGA SKY also trained teachers in a student-centered pedagogy and used interactive audio instruction (IAI).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While MEGA SKY did not specifically target married girls or girls at risk of CEFM in <b>program design</b>, implementers did focus on marginalized youth, including girls and out-of-school youth, which likely overlaps with the population of those at risk for CEFM.</li> <li>• Through <b>program design and implementation</b>, MEGA SKY could have included training for teachers and YVs, and curriculum for students related to the harms of CEFM and how to build knowledge, skills, and resources needed to avoid CEFM. Due to their positions, the YVs were uniquely positioned to advocate for change in their communities.</li> <li>• Through <b>program monitoring</b> MEGA SKY could have collected data about the marital status of participants, in addition to the age and sex data it did gather. Through <b>program evaluation</b>, MEGA SKY could have collected data regarding to shifts in attitudes and behaviors related to gender norms.</li> </ul>
<p><i>*The Education Development Center (EDC) and the International Youth Foundation implemented the USAID-funded MEGA-SKY project from 2009 to 2011 in Bihar, Delhi, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.</i></p>	

USAID’s **Yes Youth Can!** project in Kenya—which uses a youth-led approach to empower youth by developing leadership skills, encouraging participation in decision-making and engagement with local government, and supporting youth to become a force for change—is highlighted in this guide’s *Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance* section.

Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>The <b>Towards Economic and Sexual Reproductive Health Outcomes for Adolescent Girls (TESFA)</b>* program improves the lives of adolescent girls who are or have been married, in addition to delaying age at marriage among adolescent girls.<sup>144</sup> The program provided ever-married girls with peer-driven education about sexual and reproductive health, and support for economic empowerment and financial management. In addition to working with girls, TESFA engaged community leaders, elders, and other stakeholders in their processes and programming, engaging in dialogue and education about factors that perpetuate CEFM. As a result of the program, communication between young wives and their husbands increased, GBV decreased, mental health improved among participating girls, increased investments were seen in economic assets and knowledge, use of sexual and reproductive health services and family planning improved, and girls’ social capital and support from the community increased.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the TESFA program was designed to provide married adolescents with needed information, skills, and resources, CEFM was incorporated into <b>all phases of the Program Cycle</b>.</li> <li>• Throughout <b>program design and implementation</b>, TESFA not only worked with married girls, but also engaged other community stakeholders to ensure there was broad support for program approaches and the resulting changes.</li> <li>• Extensive CEFM-related outcomes were measured through <b>program monitoring and evaluation</b> to track impacts on the lives of married girls, including changes to the dynamics of their marital relationships, as well as prevalence of child marriage in the community.</li> <li>• While many programs have difficulty reaching married adolescents, TESFA serves as a model of how to engage them, as well as community members, to change social norms and health outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p><i>*CARE implemented the TESFA project in Amhara, Ethiopia from 2010 to 2013.</i></p>	

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATING CEFM PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

*How can programs engage youth to ensure that programming meets their needs and provides them with the information, skills, and resources to set them on a positive development trajectory?*

- Programs should involve youth in the design, implementation, and evaluation phases so activities and approaches to prevent and respond to CEFM are best suited to meet their needs. Programs should focus on youth-led organizations and initiatives as these approaches will identify and focus on issues that are most important to youth, and build their leadership and voice.
- Youth programming should target the most vulnerable girls, such as those who are out of school, at risk of CEFM, or already married. As these girls often lack opportunities for building social networks and accessing resources, programs that build the assets of vulnerable girls have the potential to be transformative. See the Population Council's [\*Using Data to See and Select The Most Vulnerable Adolescent Girls\*](#) guide to identify and reach those girls who are most vulnerable.

*How can programs change gender norms among youth? And how can they alter norms related to what is appropriate for youth to create an enabling environment for reducing CEFM and creating more gender-equitable relationships?*

- Programming should promote gender equitable attitudes and norms starting at a young age through dialogue, gender-equity curricula, sports, schools, and community mobilization. Gender norms are often developed in adolescence or earlier. Therefore working with young adolescents to develop gender-equitable norms can build the foundation for more equitable attitudes throughout adulthood. Various innovative programmatic approaches, such as sports and dramas, can shift gender norms among youth.
  - Gender awareness should be integrated into work-readiness and life-skills training for youth, as these trainings are common and represent a great entry point for raising gender awareness and creating the foundation for more gender-equitable beliefs and relationships.
  - Such programs should work with boys and young men through gender-synchronized programming approaches to challenge gender norms related to both femininity and masculinity.
- Programs should seek to improve young couples' communication so they can better discuss their feelings and desires and negotiate sexual behaviors.
- As youth often have limited control over life decisions, programming geared to them should identify and engage stakeholders such as parents, in-laws, community leaders, and government officials in sensitization and mobilization around the harms of CEFM.

### STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION OF CEFM IN YOUTH PROGRAMMING

- Engaging youth in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs
- Targeting vulnerable youth
- Innovative approaches to promote gender-equitable norms among youth, such as:
  - Sports
  - Dramas
  - Social media campaigns
- Safe spaces
- Life skills and empowerment programming
- Initiatives to enhance livelihood skills and income-generation opportunities
- Initiatives that increase girls' access to and the quality of schooling
- Opportunities for developing social networks
- Community sensitization and mobilization
- Youth participation in advocacy efforts

*How can programs create supportive structures and environments to empower youth and provide them with resiliency skills and resources to reduce CEFM, mitigate its effects, and meet the needs of married youth?*

- Programs should build both external assets (such as, schools, transportation, health systems, and income-earning opportunities) and internal assets (for example, self-confidence, decision-making skills, and agency) for youth to enhance their resiliency to external shocks and to avoid CEFM.
- Input from youth and research on what works to impact the life conditions of young people should influence strategies and policies.
- Youth-friendly services—including health, legal, and educational services—that are convenient, affordable, and administered through trained staff and providers can increase access and uptake for youth.

## GLOBAL HEALTH

### CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND GLOBAL HEALTH

CEFM can affect a girl's physical and mental health in many ways. Girls who are married young often move from their natal home, which can isolate them from important information, resources, and social support. Child brides experience higher rates of malnutrition, adverse sexual and reproductive health outcomes, and increased maternal morbidity.<sup>145</sup> While less is known about the connections between CEFM and mental health, research suggests that early marriage can be associated with feelings of isolation, depression, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors.<sup>146</sup>

Child brides tend to experience adverse sexual and reproductive health outcomes—not only during their youth, but also throughout the course of their lives. Early marriage leads to early onset of sexual activity, often without consent. Because husbands are often significantly older, girls have less power and ability to exercise their rights through negotiating sexual activities within the relationship. And husbands often have had more sexual partners, which can put child brides at a higher risk for STIs, including HIV, compared to girls who were married after 18.<sup>147</sup> This age difference can also impact girls' ability to negotiate contraceptive use, in turn putting child brides at higher risk for early and unwanted sex and pregnancy than girls who marry after 18. Nine out of ten adolescents who give birth do so within marriage or a union in developing countries.<sup>148</sup> Child brides are less likely to receive proper medical care during pregnancy and delivery than those who give birth over the age of 18. The combination of girls being physically immature and lacking proper medical care during pregnancy and childbirth often puts adolescent mothers at higher risk for complications during gestation and delivery, including prolonged or obstructed labor, fistula, and death.<sup>149</sup> Girls 15 to 19 experience rates of maternal mortality that are 28 percent higher than those ages 20 to 24, with nearly 70,000 adolescent girls dying of complications from pregnancy and childbirth annually.<sup>150</sup> Additionally, girls who give birth when less than 18 years old are 35 to 55 percent more likely to deliver a preterm or low birth-weight baby than are those who give birth after 19.<sup>151</sup> Children of child brides also have higher rates of infant mortality and are more likely to experience poor physical health compared to children of mothers over 18.<sup>152</sup>

In some settings, CEFM is associated with female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C), which can have severe health consequences for girls. Each year 3.6 million girls experience FGM/C. In the 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East where the practice is most common, more than 130 million girls and women have experienced some form of FGM/C.<sup>153</sup> FGM/C is sometimes practiced as a coming-of-age ritual or to prepare girls for marriage, and it is common in countries with high prevalence of child marriage.<sup>154</sup> Like CEFM, FGM/C is a form of violence against women and girls and a manifestation of gender inequality. FGM/C causes pain, profuse bleeding, and infections. It can lead to increased risk of HIV, infertility, and complications during child birth.<sup>155</sup>

### REFERENCES TO GENDER ANALYSIS DOMAINS

Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices



Cultural norms and beliefs



Gender roles, responsibilities, and time used



Access to and control over assets and resources



Patterns of power and decision-making



## CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND GLOBAL HEALTH PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS

Preventing and responding to CEFM is directly connected to achieving USAID’s health sector goals. Delaying marriage can lead to delayed first birth; delaying age at first birth and increasing spacing between births through improving reproductive health information and services can reduce maternal mortality and morbidity and contribute to achieving USAID’s goal of “ending preventable maternal and child deaths.” USAID’s Office of Population and Reproductive Health recognizes these connections and focuses on addressing CEFM through activities to prevent child marriage and activities that address the family planning and reproductive health needs of young married girls and couples.<sup>156</sup>



Sexual and reproductive health programming should target the unique needs of adolescents to ensure they have the information and resources to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive behaviors. This information often includes basic facts about puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, and sex through fertility-awareness or body-literacy programs.<sup>157</sup> Programs should sensitize providers to the fact that just because a girl is married when she becomes pregnant, it does not change the risks she faces. Providers should be sensitized to respect the reproductive desires of married girls and not contribute to pressures on young brides to prove their fertility. Programs should assess how providers dispense information and contraception to ensure that they are knowledgeable about the various contraceptive methods that are appropriate for adolescents’ needs—and that they do not create additional barriers, such as requiring husband’s approval, to dispense contraception to married girls. In some settings, unintended pregnancies outside of marriage may drive CEFM. In such cases, the same information and services can help to educate young sexually active couples, preventing pregnancy and thus preventing CEFM. Both married and unmarried girls often face stigma when seeking reproductive health services, causing them to be less likely to return for follow-ups or continued care and treatment.<sup>158</sup> As this stigma may prevent service uptake, programs should educate providers on girls’ rights and sensitize them to the needs and behaviors of adolescent girls. Given that children of child brides have higher rates of infant mortality and often experience high rates of stunting, under-five child mortality and under-nutrition can be reduced by delaying childbirth until after age 18.<sup>159</sup> Again, as married adolescents often lack access to information, programs should target adolescent mothers with information about caring for infants and children and spacing births.



### USAID CORE GLOBAL HEALTH PRIORITIES:

- Ending preventable child and maternal deaths (EPCMD)
- Fostering an AIDS-free generation
- Fighting infectious disease
- Family planning and reproductive health
- Health systems strengthening

USAID. (2012). *USAID’s Global Health Strategic Framework: Better Health for Development*. Washington, DC: USAID.



Achieving an AIDS-free generation begins with adolescents. Often lacking the voice and agency necessary to make decisions about sexual activity and use of condoms and other

contraceptives within their marriage, child brides are at a higher risk for contracting HIV from their husbands.<sup>160</sup> Prevention of CEFM and empowerment of adolescent girls (both married and unmarried) to negotiate sex, condom and contraceptive use, and make family planning decisions is crucial to achieving an AIDS-free generation. Programs with this aim should work with men and boys to enhance couple communication and collaborative decision-making with regard to sexual and reproductive health behavior.



Additionally, programs that strengthen girls' rights to choose if, when, and whom to marry—as well as if, when, and with whom to engage in sexual behavior—will enhance their agency and health outcomes. Providing girls with opportunities to access needed information and resources can enhance their health knowledge and behaviors, as well as build resolve related to their health desires. Girls who have greater agency within their relationships can better negotiate sexual and reproductive health behaviors.<sup>161</sup> Studies have found that sexual and reproductive health education that addresses gender and power are five times more effective in reducing STIs and unintended pregnancies than those that do not.<sup>162</sup>



The health sector provides a viable platform for public-private partnerships. USAID has partnered with the private sector to strengthen health systems. Further targeting these systems and services to married adolescents may provide better targeted health services to girls at risk of CEFM or already married adolescents.

Connections between CEFM and nutrition are detailed in this guide's [\*Agriculture and Food Security\*](#) section.

### USAID PROGRAM EXAMPLES WITH A LINKAGE TO CEFM

Programs that aim to change health behaviors (particularly related to family planning, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS) often address social and cultural norms and expectations—many of which are also connected directly to CEFM. Health sector programs are in a position to address many health risks associated with child marriage identified earlier in this guide (such as HIV, STIs, and IPV), as well as incorporate education and norm change around CEFM with a variety of stakeholders and program participants. Several of USAID's health programs (such as AIDS, Population, and Health Integrated Assistance (APHIA) Program in Kenya and Reproductive Health for Married Adolescent Couples Project (RHMACP) in Nepal) aim to increase adolescents' access to health services and information. While some of these programs target married adolescents, there is room for greater differentiation of services and information based on beneficiaries' ages and marital status, as health needs will vary according to these demographic characteristics. While the following program examples may not explicitly aim to reduce CEFM, they address relevant drivers and therefore have the potential to reduce CEFM or mitigate its impacts. If such programs include an additional focus on CEFM and measure CEFM-related outcomes, learning and adjustments can occur—and greater impact may be possible.

#### KEY CEFM STAKEHOLDERS FOR GLOBAL HEALTH EFFORTS:

- Health care providers
- Community health workers
- Teachers
- Community, traditional, and religious leaders
- Families and parents
- Community members
- Girls
- Women
- Men and boys

USAID Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>With support from USAID, the government of India implements <b>Understanding, Delivering, and Addressing Adolescents Needs (UDAAN)</b>* in the state of Uttarakhand.<sup>162</sup> This program's main objectives are to make health care services more accessible and acceptable for adolescents, to build the capacity of healthcare providers, to improve delivery of adolescent-friendly services, and to establish a cadre of stakeholders who provide a comprehensive package of services to adolescents based on their needs. The program uses the following strategies: behavior change communication; peer-group educators as agents of change; adolescent-friendly clubs; and service delivery through clinics, school-based clinics, and capacity building of health care providers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child marriage was considered in the <b>program design</b> phase of this project as elements of the program curriculum focus on marriage and family planning, such as delaying first birth and spacing subsequent births.</li> <li>• Through <b>program implementation</b> there was a focus on meeting the needs of married adolescent girls through training accredited social health activists (ASHAs) and family planning providers to understand their needs and targeting health services to them.</li> <li>• While the program integrated CEFM into <b>program monitoring</b> by collecting data related to adolescents' awareness of the legal age of marriage, further CEFM-related outcomes could have been integrated into the program. Examples include beliefs around when boys and girls should get married and the prevalence of marriage among program participants.</li> </ul>
<p>*The government of India in Uttarakhand has implemented USAID-funded UDAAN since 2009 through the Innovations in Family Planning Services (IFPS) Technical Assistance Project (ITAP).</p>	

USAID Program Example	Potential Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p><b>Healthy Women in Georgia (HWG)</b>* improved the health and wellbeing of Georgian women and their families through a variety of community-level activities, including peer education, breast-cancer awareness campaigns, training providers, and improving providers' knowledge and clinical capacity for family planning and maternity care services.<sup>164</sup> The Healthy Lifestyles curriculum focused on youth, and it educated students about protecting themselves against the dangers of substance abuse and unprotected sex. The program also empowered students to make informed and healthy choices affecting all areas of their lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although HWG did not address CEFM (because of the target population and curriculum content), this program presented an opportunity to integrate CEFM, starting with the <b>program design</b>. Because of the nexus between CEFM, decision-making, and risks for unprotected sex, child-marriage prevention and education could have been integrated into the Healthy Lifestyles curriculum.</li> <li>• During <b>program implementation</b>, education and resources on reproductive health and family planning could have been provided to and differentiated for married and unmarried youth.</li> </ul>
<p>*JSI Research and Training Institute, Inc. implemented the USAID-funded HWG from 2003 to 2009. Partners included Save the Children USA, the Women's Wellness Alliance- HERA, the Women's Wellness Health Care Alliance, CARITAS XXI, Curatio International Foundation, and other Georgian NGOs.</p>	

Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p><b>Promoting Change in Reproductive Behavior (PRACHAR)</b>* was a program in India to change beliefs, attitudes, and practices around reproductive health among adolescents, young married couples, parents, and influential adult community leaders.<sup>165</sup> Strategies towards achieving this goal included creating supportive environments for adolescents and their families, providing adolescents and young couples with information on available reproductive health services, and improving access to those services. A wide variety of behavior-change communication strategies were carried out at the community and individual levels. A key component to this program was building supportive environments in Bihar communities for adolescents and young married couples. This goal was achieved through utilizing street theater performances and wall paintings, as well as training healthcare workers, parents, and community leaders on the unique reproductive health needs of adolescents and young married couples.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program integrated CEFM by aligning to <b>agency policies and strategies</b>, such as USAID's Vision for Action's goals of engaging stakeholders, building government partnerships, and paying particular attention to the needs of married adolescents.</li> <li>• In PRACHAR's <b>program design</b> phase, the program identified the long-term goal of changing traditional customs of early childbearing, resulting in improved health and welfare of young mothers and their children. While not associated exclusively with early marriage, PRACHAR recognizes the strong links between early marriage and early childbearing. Education about the legal age of marriage was also included in program curriculum.</li> <li>• During <b>program implementation</b>, government health workers implemented educational curriculum on reproductive health and family planning with young women in a variety of settings. Also, groups of newly married couples were counseled on reproductive health and contraception.</li> <li>• PRACHAR included CEFM-related outcomes in its <b>program evaluation</b> and found that PRACHAR participants reported higher rates of contraceptive use, increased median age at marriage, and increased age at first birth.</li> </ul>
<p>*Pathfinder International implemented PRACHAR from 2001 to 2012 in Bihar, India.</p>	

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATING CEFM PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

*How can programs be targeted to meet the unique health needs—particularly related to sexual and reproductive health and rights—of adolescents who are at risk of CEFM or already married?*

- Sexual and reproductive health programming should be differentiated by beneficiaries' ages and marital status.
  - Programs should target information and contraceptive services to vulnerable and unmarried adolescent girls and boys. As early pregnancy can trigger CEFM, educating unmarried youth about their bodies, menstruation, and pregnancy through fertility awareness and body literacy can help empower girls to decide whether, when, and with whom to have sex—and reduce CEFM.
  - Programs should focus on gender and power dynamics, as social norms often play a large role in hindering girls from accessing and using reproductive health services. Programs should educate adolescents about their reproductive rights, as well as enhance their communication and negotiation skills so that adolescents can achieve their reproductive desires.
  - Sexual and reproductive health programming and services should target the needs of married adolescent girls, making services accessible, affordable, comfortable, adolescent-friendly, and age-appropriate. Added considerations to target services to married adolescents is important as married adolescents often experience additional barriers to accessing and using sexual and reproductive health services, such as limited

mobility and social and cultural pressures to prove fertility. These programs should encourage delaying the first birth and birth spacing. These services should also respond to the high prevalence of IPV often experienced by married girls.

- Prenatal, antenatal, and post-abortion care should provide adolescent mothers with access to information about family planning, IPV, and STIs, as they may lack other opportunities to gain that knowledge. Because of their age and power gaps between spouses, child brides experience higher risks of STIs (including HIV/AIDS) than those who marry later in life. Because of this increased risk, HIV/AIDS programming should consider CEFM and target prevention and response services to the unique needs of high-risk married adolescents.
- As child brides experience high levels of social isolation and depression, programs should target mental health counseling and psychosocial services to married adolescents.

### ***How can communities be mobilized to create environments that enable adolescents who are at risk of CEFM and those who are already married to make and act on healthy behaviors?***

- Because of cultural taboos around sexual behaviors and communication about sexual and reproductive health, programming should include opportunities for youth to discuss challenges and share experiences regarding their sexual and reproductive health. Through these discussions, programs can encourage more open communication within couples and negotiation of safe sex practices. Programs should integrate communication platforms that are most common and familiar among youth in each context, such as the Internet or SMS.
- As adolescents rarely make marriage-related decisions on their own, programs should include components to educate stakeholders at various levels and mobilize and sensitize communities about the harmful health impacts of CEFM.
- In settings where CEFM is associated with FGM/C, community members should be mobilized and sensitized on the harms of FGM/C and encouraged to take collective action to stop the practice. Service providers should be trained in how to treat patients who experience FGM/C-related complications.

### ***How can health services and systems meet the range of health needs of adolescents***

#### **STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION OF CEFM IN GLOBAL HEALTH PROGRAMMING**

- Youth development programs to build adolescents' communication and negotiation skills to contribute to decision-making related to sexual and reproductive behavior
- Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education for married and unmarried adolescents (in settings where the majority of adolescents are in school and school systems are robust)
- Use of technology such as SMS or the Internet for mass distribution of information
- Mass media and behavior change communication (BCC) campaigns to influence and promote healthy sexual and reproductive health practices
- Education and mobilization of community members on the harmful health impacts of CEFM
- Sexual and reproductive health services tailored to:
  - Sexually active, unmarried adolescents
  - Married adolescents, including maternal and child health programming
- Psychosocial services
- Youth-friendly services
- Vouchers
- Training for providers in provision of youth-friendly services
- Public-private partnerships for scaling

### *at risk of CEFM or who are already married?*

- For family planning programs to meet adolescents' unique needs, providers must not only be trained in the appropriate technical skills, but also in understanding the nuances of young people's sex lives and how to deliver both counseling and appropriate methods to meet their reproductive desires. Additionally, providers should not assume that adolescents do not want long-acting, reversible contraception (LARC) as data has shown high demand for it among adolescents in settings where these methods are available.<sup>166</sup> Providers also need to be trained to remove barriers to adolescents' access to contraceptives, such as requiring a husband's approval.
- A comprehensive, consistent method mix should be available to meet the needs of sexually active married and unmarried adolescents. For example, some methods (such as sterilization) may be inappropriate for adolescents' long-term reproductive desires, while other methods that require consistent access or consumption (such as the hormonal contraceptive pill) may be logistically challenging.<sup>167</sup>
- Married adolescents face added barriers to accessing health services due to limited mobility, social isolation, and cultural pressures. Consequently, programs should provide health services to adolescents through a variety of channels, such as clinic-based services, mobile services, social franchises, social marketing, community-based distribution through community health workers, and pharmacies and drug shops.

## EDUCATION

### CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND EDUCATION

The relationship between CEFM and education is complex. While it is not always clear whether marriage or school dropout happens first, CEFM undermines investments in education by hindering girls from putting their knowledge and skills to use, and by devaluing the contributions they can make to society. In some cases, girls drop out of school due to poor schooling outcomes, poor grades, lack of proper sanitation facilities, poor quality of teaching, grade repetition, or unsafe school environments. Fear of violence while traveling to and from school, as well as the risk of violence in school perpetrated by fellow classmates or teachers can motivate families to keep their girls out of school too. Beyond school quality and infrastructure, sociocultural barriers, such as gendered expectations and roles, keep girls out of school. Excessive household chores and the need to care for family members can leave girls with little time and support for school.<sup>168</sup> Once girls stop attending school, they are more vulnerable to CEFM.<sup>169</sup> In other cases, early marriage or early pregnancy forces girls to drop out of school. Schooling and marriage/motherhood are almost always mutually exclusive in many countries because of legal and social factors. Girls with only a primary education are twice as likely to marry or enter into a union under age 18 as are those with secondary or higher education. And girls with no education are three times as likely to marry before age 18 as are those with secondary or higher education.<sup>170</sup> Girls who are married young are also less likely to be literate; a study found that in Africa, each additional year of delay in age of marriage increases the probability of literacy by 5.6 percent.<sup>171</sup>

As girls' education is truncated, they lose access to income-earning opportunities, social networks, key resources, and health information. Limited mobility, household responsibilities, and care duties restrict married adolescents' time, often causing them to be unable to take advantage of education and employment opportunities.<sup>172</sup> Studies have found that low education levels are not only associated with low employment and earning potential, but also with limited access to reproductive health knowledge, potentially making them more vulnerable to STIs, HIV, and other reproductive health morbidities.<sup>173</sup>

These low levels of education can have intergenerational impacts as well. Literate, educated mothers are more likely to be knowledgeable about their children's health needs and access health resources.<sup>174</sup> Children of educated mothers experience higher immunization and survival rates.<sup>175</sup> Specifically, educated mothers seem to have a better understanding of children's nutritional needs and are less likely to have children who experience stunting or wasting.<sup>176</sup> Additionally, children of educated mothers are more likely to be better educated and are less likely to experience early marriage than those whose mothers have no education—thus education contributes to curtailing the cycle that perpetuates CEFM.<sup>177</sup>

### CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND EDUCATION PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS

Because girls who drop out of school often become more vulnerable to CEFM, programs that enhance girls' school enrollment and attendance—specifically during the pivotal transition from primary to secondary school—have the power to help delay marriage. Such programs might include improving the quality of the education, such as teacher training,

## REFERENCES TO GENDER ANALYSIS DOMAINS

Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices



Cultural norms and beliefs



Gender roles, responsibilities, and time used



Access to and control over assets and resources



Patterns of power and decision-making



curriculum improvements, and building more and safer facilities.<sup>178</sup> Related to the first goal of USAID’s education strategy, studies have shown that early-grade reading competency is associated with continued retention and attainment in future grades.<sup>179</sup> Therefore, programs that specifically aim to improve reading skills for girls may enable them to be higher performers, stay enrolled in school longer, and delay marriage. For already married girls and women, alternative basic education programs for out-of-school women and girls can provide them with skills that open access to information and resources. While these women may have missed out on many of the other benefits of education, improved literacy can allow them to make better decisions related to the health and education of their children and possibly reduce the perpetuation of CEFM to future generations.

In addition to basic education, girls need to have access to viable alternatives to marriage for families to see the value in delaying marriage. Related to the second goal of USAID’s education strategy, programs that give girls relevant livelihoods skills that translate into workforce participation have the potential to both delay marriage and provide opportunities for married adolescents.<sup>180</sup> Further explanation of how CEFM prevention and response efforts can be incorporated into youth workforce development is included in this guide’s [Economic Growth and Workforce Development](#) section. Additionally, programs that increase girls’ educational and workforce opportunities may shift social norms as families start to see girls as capable of applying new knowledge and skills for income generation.



### EDUCATION STRATEGY GOALS

- **Goal 1:** Improved reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades by 2015
- **Goal 2:** Improved ability of tertiary and workforce development programs to produce a workforce with relevant skills to support country development goals by 2015
- **Goal 3:** Increased equitable access to education in crisis and conflict environments for 15 million learners by 2015

USAID. 2011. *USAID Education Strategy: Education: Opportunity through Learning*. Washington, DC: USAID.

In general, programs that address norms around the value of girls and the benefits of girls’ education have the potential to motivate families to keep their daughters in school.<sup>181</sup> Such programs can shift what families and communities think is possible for girls, and encourage them to support girls staying in school so that they can gain access to needed information, skills, and resources to succeed.



In addition to improving schools, making them more accessible for girls may increase enrollment and retention. Schools need to be both physically and financially accessible for girls. Ensuring that schools are physically accessible involves building them in rural areas and providing safe transportation to and from them, so long commutes do not expose girls to added risks or take away more time from their already high burden of labor. Additionally, schools need to provide adequate and separate sanitation facilities for pubescent-aged girls to enable proper hygiene and privacy during menstruation.<sup>182</sup> Programs that help girls overcome financial barriers to school (such as scholarships, stipends, CCTs, or payment for school uniforms or supplies) have increased girls’ enrollment and delayed the age of marriage.<sup>183</sup> Additionally, programs and policies that help girls who have temporarily dropped out of school due to marriage or pregnancy re-enter the formal school system have succeeded.<sup>184</sup>



Finally, related to the third goal of USAID’s education strategy, girls are at heightened risk of CEFM during times of conflict and crisis.<sup>185</sup> Therefore any programs that aim to increase access to education for students in these situations may have the dual benefit of protecting children from CEFM. We expand upon this idea with program examples in this guide’s [Crisis and Conflict](#) section.

## USAID PROGRAM EXAMPLES WITH A LINKAGE TO CEFM

As CEFM is so closely associated with education, any programs that increase girls’ school enrollment or learning attainment have the potential to reduce CEFM. Many of USAID’s education programs already target vulnerable girls and aim to increase their school enrollment, attendance, and learning outcomes. These programs often aim to overcome the physical and financial obstacles that families face in sending their daughters to school. Although most programs do not explicitly measure age of marriage and other marriage-related outcomes, these strategies have the potential to impact such outcomes. While the following program examples may not explicitly aim to reduce CEFM, they address relevant drivers and therefore have the potential to reduce CEFM or mitigate its impacts. If such programs include an additional focus on CEFM and measure CEFM-related outcomes, learning and adjustments can occur—and greater impact may be possible.

### KEY CEFM STAKEHOLDERS FOR EDUCATION EFFORTS

- School administrators
- Teachers
- Community, traditional, and religious leaders
- Families, including parents and in-laws
- Community members
- Girls
- Women
- Men and boys

USAID Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>USAID’s <b>Safe Schools</b>* program, implemented in various countries worldwide, works with teachers and girls and boys (10 to 14 years old) to develop healthier and safer classrooms.<sup>186</sup> The program also works with community members to provide a support system and services to help young people survive violent or abusive situations. The program uses a curriculum (the <b>Doorways Training Manuals</b>) for teachers, students, and community counselors. In its pilot in Malawi and Ghana, Safe Schools changed beliefs and attitudes related to GBV among parents, teachers, and male and female students. The program lays the foundation for a safe and positive learning environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the <b>program design</b> of the Safe Schools pilot in Malawi, the community identified early and forced marriage as forms of violence that were prevalent and that they wanted the program to address.</li> <li>• CEFM was also integrated into <b>program implementation</b> in Malawi. Implementers prompted discussions with students about early marriage and reinforced these messages through community mobilization around the importance of staying in school. Additionally, community counselors and Community Action Plan interventions helped child brides to re-enroll in school.</li> <li>• In <b>program evaluation</b>, Safe Schools collected data related to participants’ response to the question of whether it is okay for a teacher to impregnate a girl as long as he marries her: There was a 12 percent increase in girls who disagreed with this statement in Malawi and an 8 percent increase in Ghana.</li> </ul>
<p><i>*The USAID-funded Safe Schools was piloted in Malawi and Ghana from 2003 to 2008; the program has since expanded to the Dominican Republic, Senegal, Tajikistan, and Yemen. This program also served as the model for the C-Change program implemented by FHI360 in the DRC (and possibly other countries) and the PeaceCorps is also using the Doorways manual in their work.</i></p>	

USAID Program Example	Potential Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p><b>Let Girls Learn</b><sup>*</sup> is a new, \$250 million U.S. Government initiative that builds on USAID's initial Let Girls Learn education programming. The new round of investment will focus on evaluating existing programs, leveraging public-private partnerships, and challenging organizations and governments to expand their focus and invest in programs that more comprehensively meet the needs of adolescent girls.<sup>187</sup> USAID's portion of the initiative will focus on increasing access to quality education by providing safe access to schools for students and teachers, especially during crises or conflict; reducing barriers to education, including early pregnancy, malnutrition, GBV, and tuition and other costs of attending school; and empowering adolescent girls by advancing their rights, training them to be leaders, and providing them with financial and digital literacy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To best prevent child marriage and ensure that married girls are not lost from the education sector, specific child marriage goals, objectives, and personnel should be incorporated into <b>agency policies and strategies</b> related to Let Girls Learn.</li> <li>• When integrating Let Girls Learn into <b>CDCs</b>, countries with a high prevalence of child marriage (perhaps 25 percent prevalence or more) should include stipulations to prevent and respond to CEFM through education initiatives.</li> <li>• CEFM-related outcomes should be incorporated into Let Girls Learn's <b>program monitoring and evaluation</b> to better understand connections between education initiatives and reductions in CEFM.</li> </ul>
<p><i>*The Office of the First Lady launched Let Girls Learn. It aims to bring together the girls' empowerment initiatives of the U.S. State Department, USAID, the Peace Corps, and the Millennium Challenge Corp.</i></p>	

USAID's **Best Schools for Girls** project in Bangladesh, which educates students and communities about GBV and other harmful practices (such as child marriage) through school and community mobilization events, is highlighted in this guide's **Bangladesh** section.

Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>The <b>Ishraq</b><sup>*</sup> program implemented in Egypt targets girls who are out of school and are most vulnerable to CEFM.<sup>188</sup> Girls meet three to five times per week at a safe space, and the program provides them with the literacy and numeracy skills to test back into the formal school system. The program also covers group-based learning, life skills, English language skills, financial literacy, and sports. Through Ishraq (sunrise in Arabic), girls gain the technical and social skills to enroll and succeed in the formal school system. It also provides them with social networks and access to resources to provide support and encouragement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While reducing CEFM was not an objective of the program, by working with out-of-school girls to prepare them for re-entry into the formal school system, Ishraq's <b>program implementation</b> approaches have changed marriage-related attitudes.</li> <li>• Several <b>program evaluations</b> have found changes in CEFM-related attitudes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An assessment by ICRW found that girls' self-confidence had increased, as had their ability to share their opinions and participate in family decisions. Families also began to see their daughters as capable of learning and making valuable contributions to the family.</li> <li>○ A 2007 evaluation of the program found that 92 percent of program graduates passed the exam to re-enroll in the formal school system and 69 percent had entered or re-entered the formal school system after completing the program. Additionally, there was a decrease in the percentage of girls who reported a preference to be married under 18 with program exposure. The percentage of girls who said that family members should select a girl's husband also decreased with program exposure.<sup>189</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><i>*Ishraq has been implemented since 2001 by Save the Children, Population Council, the Ministry of Youth and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), Caritas, and the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA).</i></p>	

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATING CEFM PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

*What types of education programs are most effective in reducing CEFM, mitigating its effects, and meeting the needs of married girls?*

- Married girls are often socially isolated and lack access to key resources. Therefore, programs should provide alternative, flexible education opportunities for girls who are already married. Such education programs could involve informal group-based sessions at times when married girls are available where girls are taught numeracy and literacy skills, financial savings and loans skills, reproductive health knowledge, and life skills.
- Girls who are out of school, either from dropping out or never attending in the first place, are often the most at risk of CEFM. Providing non-formal or catch-up educational opportunities for these girls will allow them to gain literacy and numeracy skills and possibly re-enter the formal school system, which can protect them from future CEFM.
- In addition to participating in a formal school environment, girls also benefit from forming peer networks in safe spaces. Education programs can provide such opportunities through extracurricular programs that allow girls to exchange resources and build supportive networks.
- As economic instability often drives CEFM, programs should provide girls with livelihood and vocational skills that enable them to have viable alternatives to CEFM through participation in the workforce.

*How can programs engage families and communities to change social norms related to girls' education and encourage families to value education as a viable alternative to CEFM?*

When families do not value girls' education, the family may place an unbalanced domestic labor burden on girls, causing them to not be able to keep up with their school work. Programs, therefore, should sensitize families and communities on the importance of girls' education and gender equality to change social norms around the value of girls and their education. Doing so may shift the burden of housework and family care away from girls, allowing them more time to focus on their studies.

*How can education programs create an environment that enables girls at risk of CEFM or already married to enroll in school, stay in school, learn, and thrive?*

- As school attendance is highly correlated with reduced CEFM, programs should improve girls' physical and financial access to school.

### STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION OF CEFM IN EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

- Alternative, informal education for out-of-school girls
- Safe spaces
- Livelihoods and vocational training
- Economic support and incentives to help families overcome financial barriers to school attendance
- Community mobilization around girls' importance
- Initiatives to increase physical accessibility to school:
  - Build schools
  - Provide transportation
- Initiatives to increase quality of education:
  - Teacher training
  - Gender equitable, locally relevant curriculum development
- Initiatives to improve the safety of schools:
  - Train teachers on non-violent teaching methods
  - Monitor school campus
- Adequate, separate sanitation facilities for girls

- Building schools in rural areas and providing safe transportation options to and from schools will reduce risks of violence during girls’ commute to and from school. It will also enable school attendance to consume less time, and thus not further contribute to girls’ lack of free time.
- As economic costs of school attendance are often one of the largest barriers that families face, programs should provide economic support and incentives, such as scholarships or CCTs, to help families overcome financial barriers to girls’ education.
- Girls often drop out of school because of low academic performance and difficulties in the school environment. To combat these issues, programs should enhance the quality of education through teacher training, curriculum development, and community support. Doing so will ensure girls are gaining literacy, content knowledge, and other skills to help them learn and stay enrolled in school.
  - Programs should create and integrate teaching methods and learning materials that portray girls and boys in equitable ways (i.e. girls not portrayed as submissive wives, but rather as empowered equals) and teach students how to form healthy relationships between girls and boys. Relevant resources include the [Gender Equity Movement in Schools \(GEMS\)](#) curriculum, the [Doorways Training Manual for Safe Schools](#), and USAID’s [Guide for Promoting Gender Equality and Inclusiveness in Teaching and Learning Materials](#).
- So girls do not have to face added risk of violence when attending school, programs should enhance the safety of schools’ policies and practices and holistically shift norms and attitudes at schools to reduce school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV). These measures include teacher training to ensure they are not committing physical, sexual, and emotional violence, as well as monitoring and supervision to inhibit harassment and violence between students. This work also includes creating safe learning environments in which all students are equally valued and respected.
- Programs should provide satisfactory, separate water and sanitation facilities for girls to provide them with resources and privacy as they go through puberty. Provision of appropriate water and sanitation facilities can help provide a clean, supportive environment for schooling.
- Because of the heightened vulnerabilities experienced by out-of-school girls, programs should support policies that allow pregnant and parenting girls to stay in and return to school.
- Due to the strong cross-sectoral connections between CEFM, education, and reproductive health, programs should work to achieve and measure outcomes related to health behaviors, education attainment, and marriage. The education and health sectors can reduce CEFM through cross-sectoral monitoring and evaluation, community engagement for norm change, creating a supportive policy environment, building a supportive and high-quality school environment, economic support and incentives, and leveraging platforms for information and resource distribution.<sup>190</sup>

## ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Poverty is one of the factors most associated with child marriage. In developing countries, more than half of the girls from the poorest households are married before age 18. And girls from the poorest households are more than three times as likely to become child brides as those from the richest households.<sup>191</sup> This relationship is most extreme in South Asia where 72 percent of girls from the poorest households are married before age 18, compared to only 18 percent of those from the wealthiest households.<sup>192</sup> Poorer families have fewer resources to invest in their daughters and may see marriage as a method to relieve a financial burden.<sup>193</sup> In many cases, marriage involves a financial transaction: dowries and bride prices drive families to marry their daughters at younger ages to pay less or secure more, respectively.<sup>194</sup> In cases of extreme poverty, marrying a daughter may simply provide the financial relief of one less mouth to feed.

CEFM can also affect women's labor-force participation. CEFM is associated with lower levels of education, which in turn are associated with limited labor-force participation.<sup>195</sup> Girls with less education are more likely to participate in informal lower-paid care work than in the formal labor market.<sup>196</sup> Girls who marry at a young age and are no longer in school often lack the knowledge and marketable skills needed for formal work. As married girls are often further isolated, they lack opportunities to gain access to social networks, new knowledge and skills, and resources. Isolation and lack of mobility may hinder them from accessing markets and more formal work opportunities. Additionally, large family size and women's time poverty due to their roles as primary caregivers can negatively affect labor force participation decisions, particularly where there are no or limited childcare options.<sup>197</sup> Often when girls get married, their unpaid work increases, while their opportunities for paid work decrease. Or, in some cases, married girls are encouraged to work outside the home to earn money (such as in garment factories in Dhaka, Bangladesh), but they are also expected to complete a host of household duties, giving them a double labor burden.<sup>198</sup> Women who have many and frequent pregnancies are more likely to experience complications and maternal morbidity, making it difficult for them to participate in the formal labor market.<sup>199</sup>

Involving women in the formal labor market not only increases income for an individual woman, but it can also have a ripple effect on a country's economic development. Studies have found that when women have power over the decision-making of how household resources are spent, they invest more in their family compared to men.<sup>200</sup> As women are more likely to invest in the health, food security, and education of their children, putting money into the hands of women has the potential to create a more skilled and healthier workforce and spur economic development nationally.

### REFERENCES TO GENDER ANALYSIS DOMAINS

Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices



Cultural norms and beliefs



Gender roles, responsibilities, and time used



Access to and control over assets and resources



Patterns of power and decision-making



**Dowry:** The practice wherein a bride's family provides assets (e.g., property, money) to the groom's family as part of the marriage exchange

**Bride price:** The practice wherein a groom's family provides assets (e.g., property, money) to the bride's family as part of the marriage exchange

*In some settings, such as eastern and Southern Africa, the term dowry may be used to refer to the practice that is defined here as "bride price."*

## CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS

Trends show that child marriage declines as wealth increases.<sup>201</sup> Therefore, programs or initiatives that increase general levels of economic development have the potential to reduce CEFM. Programs that provide families with economic support through income-generation opportunities or financial incentives tied to particular behaviors have been successful in delaying the age of marriage.<sup>202</sup> Financial incentives can come in many forms, including CCTs that are conditional on the girl staying enrolled in a program, staying enrolled in school, or remaining unmarried until 18; financial support for schooling, such as scholarships or assistance paying for school fees, materials, or uniforms; subsidies tied to key resources; and loans.<sup>203</sup> These programs not only provide immediate financial relief for families, but also have the potential to shift the way families value their daughters and begin to change social norms. In some cases, families have begun to see the social and financial benefits of investing in their daughters and have shifted their thinking on what societal roles are possible for their daughter in the future.<sup>204</sup>



In alignment with the first economic growth and workforce development goal of developing a well-functioning market, individuals need to establish saving systems, access credit, and use their purchasing power. Programs that provide girls with financial literacy and savings and loans opportunities have the potential to enhance markets and also reduce CEFM.<sup>205</sup> These programs prepare girls for participating in the workforce (or as entrepreneurs) and teach them how to manage their money. These skills are not only an asset for the girls themselves, but they may also spur both families and girls to understand that girls do not immediately need a husband for economic security. Again, as women are more likely to invest in their families, teaching women how to save and manage their money can have larger, long-term economic benefits as well.



### ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

- Develop well-functioning markets
- Enhance access to productive opportunities
- Strengthen the international framework of policies, institutions, and public goods that support growth

USAID. (2008). *Securing the Future: A Strategy for Economic Growth*. Washington, DC: USAID.

Programs that aim to increase girls' life skills and livelihood skills have the potential to both reduce CEFM by providing viable alternatives to marriage and also increase the economic productivity of already married girls. Increasing the skills and alternatives for girls at risk of CEFM or who are already married aligns with the second economic growth and workforce development goal of enhancing access to productive opportunities. USAID recently increased its focus on workforce development for youth. These efforts aim to enhance employability skills and increase access to employment. A recent USAID-funded review of youth workforce development program literature found that programs that incorporate on-the-job training, classroom components, life-skills training, and counseling were the most effective in helping youth find employment.<sup>206</sup> This report also found that workforce development programs enhance employment and earnings among female, low-income, at-risk, and out-of-school or minimally schooled youth—the same population most at risk for CEFM. Providing these skills and knowledge can allow girls to re-enroll in formal schooling or gain access to meaningful employment or entrepreneurship opportunities. These skills and opportunities are particularly important for girls who are already married or at risk of CEFM.



In alignment with the third goal of the sector, to strengthen the international framework of policies, institutions, and public goods that support growth, as well as one of the key



principles of *The Vision* to cultivate partnerships broadly, workforce development programs are a unique opportunity for public-private partnerships. Corporations may be motivated to provide youth with relevant skills and knowledge to create a more skilled labor force. Companies can teach youth skills that are most relevant and needed for their industries. Not only does this training provide companies with a more skilled labor force to rely on, but it can also create customers with greater purchasing power. For such partnerships to emerge, however, an enabling policy framework must exist that allows for public-private partnerships, as well as partnerships between the government and civil society. For these economic policies to reflect the needs of married and at-risk youth, women need to be part of the decision-making process. USAID has the power to advocate for women's input when designing economic policy frameworks to ensure they reflect the needs of women broadly, as well as specific populations of women (such as married adolescents and girls at risk of CEFM). Such policies should protect youth from both formal and informal child labor.

Finally, workforce development programs can provide professional development opportunities for key stakeholders who have important roles in reducing and mitigating the effects of CEFM. For example, workforce development and continuing education programs can train police and judges how to handle cases related to CEFM. One way to incentivize such trainings and increase their uptake is to require personnel in key positions to participate in certain courses to keep their licenses or to gain a particular certification.

### **USAID PROGRAM EXAMPLES WITH A LINKAGE TO CEFM**

While any program that enhances economic development may reduce CEFM, specific approaches have the potential to provide families and girls with the economic support and training to relieve the economic factors influencing CEFM. USAID has invested in research and evaluations of CCT programs tied to marriage and education outcomes. USAID also invests in many youth workforce development and savings and loans programs that could address CEFM prevention and response, by targeting services to married and at-risk adolescents. While some of the following program examples may not explicitly aim to reduce CEFM, they address relevant drivers, and therefore have the potential to reduce CEFM or mitigate its impacts. If such programs include an additional focus on CEFM and measure CEFM-related outcomes, learning and adjustments can occur—and greater impact may be possible.

#### **KEY CEFM STAKEHOLDERS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS**

- Employers and business leaders
- Microfinance institutions
- Banks
- Savings and loans groups
- Teachers
- Policymakers
- Legal and police officers
- Judicial officers, including judges, magistrates, lawyers, and paralegals
- Community, traditional, and religious leaders
- Families, including parents and in-laws
- Community members
- Girls
- Women
- Men and boys

USAID Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>The <b>SPRING Initiative</b>* is a strategic partnership among DFID, the Nike Foundation, and USAID to address the needs of adolescent girls through market-based solutions.<sup>207</sup> SPRING operates as an accelerator for early and mid-stage ventures with the potential to provide products that will help girls learn, earn, and save safely. The initiative is based on the understanding that keeping girls in school increases their earning potential, delays marriage, and improves their chances for ending the cycle of poverty. SPRING works with entrepreneurs to create and deliver products to the underserved market of poor adolescent girls by providing entrepreneurs with funding, mentoring, technical assistance, and access to world-class entrepreneurs and venture capitalists. By absorbing the sunk costs of product development and market penetration, SPRING allows for development of affordable products, such as labor-saving devices, educational products, hygienic supplies, and income opportunities that girls and their families can afford.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While not specifically designed to address CEFM, SPRING will use <b>program monitoring</b> to track impacts on age of marriage among beneficiaries.</li> <li>• Through <b>program implementation</b>, SPRING will also create income-generation opportunities for married adolescent girls.</li> <li>• SPRING could use <b>program evaluation</b> to measure the different ways that married and non-married adolescents engage with and benefit from products, services, and income-generation opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><i>*The SPRING Initiative is a strategic partnership among DFID, the Nike Foundation, and USAID. The program is expected to bring social and economic benefits to at least 200,000 girls by 2020, and 50 million girls by 2030. The first cohort of entrepreneurs will launch in July 2015 in Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda. The program will roll out to Ethiopia, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan in 2016 and 2017.</i></p>	

USAID Program Example	Potential Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>The <b>Somalia Youth Livelihood Program</b> provided youth with greater access to training, internships, work, and self-employment opportunities.<sup>208</sup> The program partnered with local employers to understand their workforce needs and subsequently designed trainings with youth to meet market demands, as well as leveraged existing technical training programs. Shaqodoon (the implementing organization) produced interactive audio programs on financial literacy and entrepreneurship that benefitted youth in hard-to-reach locations or those who are illiterate. Shaqodoon used interactive phone and web-based communication to link youth to job opportunities and created platforms for web and SMS-based dialogues among youth to discuss job-related challenges and successes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although the program did not have a focus on CEFM, by specifically recruiting already married girls in its <b>program design</b>, Shaqodoon could have reached those who are most vulnerable to economic hardship and mitigated some of the harmful impacts of CEFM. Due to low education levels and social isolation, child brides can benefit from opportunities to interact and socialize with peers, enhance their skills and financial literacy, and gain access to income-generation opportunities.</li> <li>• Tracking marital status in <b>program monitoring</b> would have allowed the implementers to know whether they already were serving married adolescents and whether workforce development programming can decrease CEFM's prevalence.</li> </ul>
<p><i>*USAID's Educational Quality Improvement Program 3(EQUIP3) funded the Somalia Youth Livelihood Program. The Education Development Center (EDC) and a local Somali NGO, Shaqodoon (Somali for "job seekers"), implemented it from 2008 to 2011.</i></p>	

Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>The <b>Zomba Cash Transfer</b> program included a CCT as well as an unconditional cash transfer (UCT) in Malawi.<sup>209</sup> The study involved one arm that received a cash transfer conditional on school enrollment and the other arm received a cash transfer regardless. The CCT explored the relationship between school enrollment and marriage, and the UCT explored the relationship between financial stability and marriage.</p> <p>While the CCT had a larger impact on school enrollment and English reading comprehension, the UCT had a substantially larger impact on reducing teenage pregnancy and marriage. This difference is primarily due to the UCT's impact on the most vulnerable girls who had dropped out of school. These results show that for the most vulnerable girls who were not in school, the financial support through the UCT had a significant effect on reducing financial pressures for marriage and early pregnancy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the CCT was not conditional on marriage, researchers were aware that school enrollment and financial stability are often closely tied to marriage, so they also included measurements of marriage-related outcomes in <b>program monitoring and evaluation</b>.</li> <li>• Researchers compared the effect of the two arms on the outcomes of school enrollment, school performance, age of marriage, teenage pregnancy, and self-reported sexual activity.</li> <li>• While not included in the scope of this study, program implementers could <b>learn and adapt</b> from its findings to create cash-transfer programs that aim to reach those who are most vulnerable.</li> </ul>
<p><i>*The World Bank implemented the Zomba Cash Program in Malawi from 2007 to 2009.</i></p>	

Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>BRAC's <b>Social and Financial Empowerment for Adolescents (SoFEA)</b> project in Bangladesh provides social and economic development opportunities for girls through group-based, peer-led programming.<sup>210</sup> SoFEA was structured as clubs for local resident girls ages 11 to 21 to gather and learn life skills, financial literacy, and related skills largely through peer-education. The program also invited mothers for life-skills training and informal club activities. The main components of the program include provision of a safe space for girls to develop peer networks and support; life skills training on topics such as child marriage dowry, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and GBV; livelihood training in vocations such as poultry or dairy cow raising, hydroponics, and tailoring; education around savings, credit, and how to access loans; financial literacy training; and edutainment, such as dancing and singing, to emphasize some of the program messages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous iterations of the SoFEA project, such as the Adolescent Development Program (ADP) and the Employment and Livelihoods for Adolescents (ELA) program, both included CEFM-related outcomes in their <b>program monitoring and evaluation</b> plans. Beneficiaries of ADP were better able to identify the legal age of marriage and risks associated with early marriage, and they had improved attitudes on women's rights and gender equality. Beneficiaries of ELA married at a later age than controls.</li> <li>• SoFEA incorporated <b>learning and adapting</b> by applying findings from evaluations of the ADP and ELA programs related to helping girls understand the harms of early marriage and identifying which components best empowered girls. BRAC applied these findings in the <b>program design</b> of SoFEA. Similarly, findings from the SoFEA program have been applied to the ongoing ADP.</li> <li>• A qualitative assessment conducted also explored the <b>program evaluation</b> phase and found that in many cases, SoFEA improved girls' perceived and real financial self-sufficiency, leading both them and their families to believe that girls can delay their marriage through ongoing contributions to their families.</li> </ul>
<p><i>*BRAC implemented SoFEA in Bangladesh from 2009 to 2014.</i></p>	

USAID's **Impact on Marriage: Program Assessment of Conditional Cash Transfers (IMPACCT)** program in India, which is evaluating the impact of providing cash bonds for families if their daughters remain unmarried until age 18, is described in this guide's [India](#) section.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATING CEFM PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

*How can youth workforce development and economic growth programs provide adolescents who are at risk of CEFM or are already married with opportunities for accessing resources, knowledge, and skills so that they can earn, save, and invest for greater economic stability?*

- Youth workforce development programs should recruit and work with girls at risk of early marriage and already married adolescents as these populations often lack access to opportunities for economic advancement. When given such opportunities, unmarried girls can contribute financially to their families, relieving some of the economic pressure for marriage. Married girls are also able to financially contribute to their families, raising their household well-being.
  - These programs should stress girls’ abilities to become financially self-sustainable so they and their families don’t experience financial instability as a motivator for CEFM. This emphasis also has the potential to contribute to larger shifts in social norms as families’ perceptions of their daughters’ worth changes.
  - Workforce development programs that work with married and at-risk adolescent girls should consider the unique constraints this population faces, such as through providing flexible hours, part-time options, convenient location, provision of child care, and efforts to gain husbands’ support for their wives to work.
  - Programs that work with girls who are in school should be flexible and encourage girls to stay in school to gain skills and access to resources.
- Economic development programs not only should provide girls with abilities for employment and entrepreneurship, but also for saving and investing. As women and girls are more likely than men and boys to invest earnings in their families’ health, education, and food security and nutrition, programs that build women and girls’ savings and investment skills may contribute to greater household economic and social stability. This increased security can relieve financial pressures to marry daughters at a young age and can contribute to greater community development.

*How can economic development programs mobilize families and communities to understand the potential value of and support girls’ participation in economic activities?*

- To have more sustainable impacts, programs that provide economic incentives or CCTs not only should provide families with financial support, but also focus resources on shifting social norms around what roles are appropriate for girls and boys and how girls can contribute to household economic stability.

## STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION OF CEFM IN ECONOMIC GROWTH & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

- Workforce education and training (provision of technical and vocational skills)
- Initiatives to increase financial literacy, savings, and loans skills
- Connections with mentors, internships, and job placement
- Employment services, such as job placement and on-the-job training
- Entrepreneurship and enterprise-development training
- Community mobilization around the importance of investing in girls
- CCTs that are conditional on girls staying enrolled in a program, staying enrolled in school, or remaining unmarried until 18
- Financial support for school, such as scholarships, school fees, materials, and uniforms
- Subsidies or loans for access to resources
- Partnerships with private-sector actors

- More broadly, programs and policies should shift social norms around the value of women in the paid workforce. These programs should also sensitize and mobilize families around the importance of investing in girls and how girls can contribute to the financial stability of the family.

***How can programs remove institutional financial barriers to girls' participation in important capacity development opportunities as well as provide a labor market that creates opportunities for income generation for those at risk of CEFM and already married?***

- Income generation and economic support programs should include a focus on families whose daughters are at risk of early marriage.
  - School enrollment can protect girls from CEFM, however families often face economic barriers in sending their daughters to school. Therefore, programs should focus on removing financial barriers to school enrollment through CCTs, scholarships, loans, and support for school fees, uniforms, and materials.
- USAID should explore partnerships with private sector stakeholders for economic and workforce development programs. The private sector will benefit from market-driven training programs as they create a more skilled workforce. Programs can leverage private sector connections to offer internships and job placements.
- The needs of married adolescents and those who are at risk of CEFM are often left out of policy decisions. Programs should therefore advocate for including women in policy-making related to the creation of an enabling economic policy framework, for example related to employment, entrepreneurship, banking, access to credit, and trade.
- As there are key stakeholders whose job performance is related to the perpetration and mitigation of CEFM, workforce development programs should provide professional development opportunities for those in the law enforcement, judicial, education, health, and religious sectors.

## AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

### CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

Food insecurity and malnutrition can be both causes and consequences of CEFM. In many settings, CEFM is driven by poverty, with food insecurity being closely related to high levels of poverty. Fearing hunger or malnutrition, families may marry their daughters in an attempt to better allocate their own limited resources by having one less mouth to feed.<sup>211</sup> In some settings, families may pull their daughters out of school to help with farming, exposing them to higher risks of CEFM. This response can be especially applicable in fragile settings where infrastructure has broken down, government services are weak or non-existent, and individuals don't have ownership over fertile land.<sup>212</sup> Additionally, when families experience agricultural shocks because of droughts and floods, the increased food insecurity and financial pressures can motivate them to marry off their daughters to ease financial burdens. The phenomenon of "famine brides" was seen during droughts in Kenya in 2010. In that same year in Pakistan, staff reported increases in child marriage during the aftermath of a large flood.<sup>213</sup> In settings where polygyny is practiced, men may feel they need many wives to farm their land. In general, in many rural settings, large families are valued as they provide more hands to tend the farm and increase agricultural productivity. This belief can pressure young brides to have early and frequent pregnancies, increasing the risk for maternal complications.

While food insecurity can sometimes drive CEFM, CEFM can also perpetuate the cycle of food insecurity and malnutrition. Girls who are married young experience higher rates of malnutrition than those who marry later in life.<sup>214</sup> This may be due to the fact that married girls often live with their in-laws where social norms will prescribe them to be viewed as the least important person in the new household. Young girls also lack the social skills to negotiate for their needs, which can be exacerbated in communities where polygyny is practiced and young brides may be the second, third, or fourth wife. Unfortunately, effects of malnutrition can be carried through to the next generation. Children born to adolescent mothers are more likely to have low birth weight, suffer poor nutritional status when they are born, and experience higher rates of stunting throughout childhood.<sup>215</sup>

### REFERENCES TO GENDER ANALYSIS DOMAINS

Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices



Cultural norms and beliefs



Gender roles, responsibilities, and time used



Access to and control over assets and resources



Patterns of power and decision-making



### FEED THE FUTURE OBJECTIVES AND KEY RESULTS

- Inclusive agriculture sector growth
  - Improved agricultural productivity
  - Expanded markets and trade
  - Increased investment in agriculture and nutrition-related activities
  - Increased employment opportunities in targeted value chains
  - Increased resilience of vulnerable communities and households
- Improved nutritional status (women and children)
  - Improved access to diverse and quality foods
  - Improved nutrition-related behaviors
  - Improved use of maternal and child health and nutrition

Feed the Future. *Progress: Results Framework*. Retrieved June, 2015. Available at: <http://feedthefuture.gov/progress>

**Nutrition Strategy Objective:** Scale up effective, integrated nutrition-specific and -sensitive interventions, programs, and systems across humanitarian and development contexts

USAID. (2014). *Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy*. Washington, DC: USAID.

Furthermore, when child brides and their children experience malnutrition, they may be less productive throughout their lifetime, perpetuating the cycle of food insecurity. Malnutrition in child brides can lead to lower levels of education attainment, reduced productivity later in life, and lower lifetime earnings.<sup>216</sup> Additionally, married adolescents often lack access to agricultural training, information, and resources to learn how to improve their productivity. And for children of child brides, the effects of poor child nutrition can be seen throughout the life course, with negative impacts on educational attainment and health into adulthood.<sup>217</sup>

In many settings, women and girls access and inherit land through male relatives, as their names are not included on land titles. Not only does this tradition devalue girls and women and their contribution to the household, but it also motivates families to marry their daughters to provide them with access to land for income generation and food security.<sup>218</sup> Property and land rights are often further complicated because of inconsistency between national laws and local practices, as well as lack of knowledge of the legal frameworks that guide these practices. Furthermore, power dynamics between women and men often govern land and asset ownership as much as legal rights.<sup>219</sup> The power imbalances in relationships of those who have experienced CEFM are reinforced through inequitable land ownership and inheritance laws and practices.

## CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS

To achieve *Feed the Future's* key objectives of inclusive agricultural productivity and improved nutritional status, especially for women and children, CEFM prevention and response need to be incorporated into agriculture and food security programming.<sup>223</sup> To improve agricultural productivity, increase employment throughout agricultural value chains, and expand markets, programs should provide agricultural training for girls at risk of CEFM and their families, as well as for already married adolescents. Agricultural extension officers and farmer field schools should target these vulnerable populations with skills training and access to resources. As with any youth livelihoods development efforts, programs should encourage girls to enroll or stay enrolled in school and pursue agricultural activities in their free time. Providing agricultural training for girls who are at risk of early marriage (girls who are out-of-school, from poor families, and live in rural communities) can shift parents' views of their daughters as they begin to see them as productive assets rather than financial burdens. Additionally, if trainings do produce higher agricultural yields, families may experience less financial pressure. While agricultural training is important for all female youth, as they often

## CEFM AND ENERGY

Women and girls' lives are inextricably connected to energy and climate change. Women spend many of their waking hours collecting firewood and water for cooking, lighting, cleaning, and consumption—for example, a study in India found that women spent on average 11 to 14 hours on household tasks each day.<sup>220</sup> When girls get married, one of their primary responsibilities is often the cultivation, collection, and use of these energy-related resources. Changes in access to these needed resources can greatly affect women and girls' time poverty and well-being, in either the positive or negative direction. Initiatives that help increase women and girls' access to energy such as energy efficient cookstoves, solar lighting, and locally available water tanks and filters can reduce the amount of time that married girls spend on energy collection and thus free time to be spent on other productive tasks as well as for leisure.

Additionally, natural disasters that are connected to climate change have the potential to impact the prevalence of CEFM. Studies have found that families sometimes view marriage as a protective factor against the hardships created by natural disasters.<sup>221</sup> For example, where floods and resulting crop destruction devastate food security and economic production, families may see marrying their daughters as a method to relieve some of these burdens. In places such as Bangladesh where climate change has increased natural disasters, such as floods, families have begun to use CEFM as a proactive measure to mitigate the harmful effects of the inevitable flooding, by marrying their daughters off before the flooding even occurs.<sup>222</sup>



lack access to such information through both formal and informal channels, it can be particularly important for socially isolated married adolescents.<sup>224</sup>

As girls who marry young lack access to agricultural resources and experience higher rates of malnutrition than those who marry later in life—and they often pass this poor nutrition on to their children—programs that aim to increase girls’ nutritional status as child brides, pregnant girls, and young mothers can have lasting impacts on the health of girls’ and their families.<sup>225</sup> Approaches to enhance married girls’ nutrition can be both nutrition-specific (addressing the immediate determinants of malnutrition) and nutrition-sensitive (addressing the underlying and systemic causes of malnutrition).<sup>226</sup> Nutrition-specific interventions can educate girls and their families about nutrition and promote maternal nutrition, optimal breastfeeding, and appropriate complementary feeding, and what foods and nutrients are best for children under 5 years old. Education around nutrition for married girls should also include information on water and hygiene, such as safe drinking water, hand washing with soap, safe disposal of excreta, and food hygiene.<sup>227</sup> Nutrition-sensitive programming that pays attention to those at risk of CEFM or already married girls can utilize some of the following cross-sectoral interventions to improve nutrition outcomes: family planning, including healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy; early childhood care and development; girls’ and women’s education; and economic strengthening, livelihoods, and social protection.<sup>228</sup>



### KEY CEFM STAKEHOLDERS FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY EFFORTS

- Agricultural extension officers
- Producer groups
- Teachers
- Healthcare workers
- Legal officers
- Community, traditional, and religious leaders
- Families, including parents and in-laws
- Community members
- Girls
- Women
- Men and boys

As women and girls’ limited access to land can both motivate CEFM and exacerbate its effects, programs that advocate for improved land rights and educate on land access policies and laws can mitigate a key driver of CEFM. Such programs should educate community members on existing land policies, such as land inheritance laws, and also encourage judicial and enforcement officers to appropriately enforce such laws. Creation of an enabling legal framework can help ensure that women and girls have access to land and other productive resources.<sup>229</sup>



### USAID PROGRAM EXAMPLES WITH A LINKAGE TO CEFM

Programs that aim to reduce food insecurity have the potential to diminish a driver of CEFM. Such programs, however, will need to specifically target at-risk girls in opportunities throughout agricultural value chains, as well as ensure that they are receiving proper nutrition, to impact CEFM-related outcomes. Furthermore, nutrition programming always should include provisions for young mothers as they and their children are at high risk of malnutrition. Many of USAID’s Agriculture and Food Security programs provide nutrition information and services to women, but do not specifically target efforts to adolescent mothers or girls at risk of CEFM. Similarly, USAID has several programs that provide agricultural training for women and girls, but they do not tailor programming for married adolescents. While the following program examples may not explicitly aim to reduce CEFM, they address relevant drivers and therefore have the potential to reduce CEFM or mitigate its impacts. If such programs include an additional focus on CEFM and measure CEFM-related outcomes, learning and adjustments can occur—and greater impact may be possible.

USAID Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>The <a href="#"><u>Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities (SHOUHARDO) and SHOUHARDO II</u></a>* programs aim to reduce food insecurity and child malnutrition in Bangladesh's poorest communities.<sup>230</sup> Women's empowerment is at the core of the program; SHOUHARDO I and II utilize the empowerment knowledge and transformative action (EKATA) model to promote life-skills education, empowerment, and social change. Women and girls of varying ages form community-led EKATA groups. As a result of their participation in these groups, women have engaged in more agriculturally productive activities, are bringing more food into the household, and have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SHOUHARDO I and II integrate CEFM prevention and response in their <b>program implementation</b> as the EKATA groups discuss challenges and "the group provides a mechanism whereby adolescent girls can receive support in delaying their marriages and returning to school, while for adult women, the group often assists them in securing assets so they can establish their own sources of income, as well as improving food availability and nutrition outcomes for their children and families."<sup>231</sup></li> <li>• SHOUHARDO I and II <b>program monitoring and evaluation</b> measured CEFM-related outcomes and found that some of the girls have also been able to push back against their parents' desires for them to marry at a young age.</li> <li>• SHOUHARDO II is well positioned to <b>learn and adapt</b> using findings from SHOUHARDO I and continue to impact CEFM-related outcomes through changing economic opportunities and food security for women and girls, as well as deeper social norms around decision-making, agency, voice, and power dynamics.</li> </ul>
<p>*CARE has implemented the USAID-funded SHOUHARDO and SHOUHARDO II in Bangladesh since 2004.</p>	

USAID Program Example	Potential Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>The <a href="#"><u>Suaahara</u></a>* (Good Nutrition) project uses a community-based approach to target key nutritional points throughout the life course by improving the health and nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women and children under 2 years of age.<sup>232</sup> The project's main components include programming around training health and non-health providers such as Female Community Health Volunteers, mothers' groups, and household decision-makers on a package of integrated and evidence-based nutrition actions; improving the quality of maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) services; enhancing health workers' capacity to counsel on healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy as critical for good health and nutrition; promoting good water, sanitation, and hygiene practices at the household and community levels and supporting efforts to achieve open defecation-free status in key districts; and home-based gardening and poultry farming. Through social and behavior change communication, Suaahara also influences sociocultural norms that impact food consumption and food purchase patterns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During <b>program design</b>, it was decided that Suaahara would focus on reaching pregnant and lactating women and children. While Suaahara doesn't specifically focus on adolescent mothers, by doing so, it could reach the most vulnerable girls and those who are most at risk of malnutrition.</li> <li>• As part of <b>program implementation</b>, materials that target married adolescents should include norm change around power dynamics within relationships to give child brides more influence over decisions related to food allocation and nutritional intake.</li> <li>• Suaahara already may reach adolescent mothers, but without tracking data related to the age and marital status of participants through <b>program monitoring</b>, the program is unable to specifically target services to this group.</li> </ul>
<p>* USAID and the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), Save the Children, and local partners in Nepal have implemented Suaahara in Nepal since 2006.</p>	

Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>Landesa (an NGO) and the government of West Bengal, India have entered into an innovative public-private partnership to pilot the <b>Empowering Adolescent Girls through Land</b><sup>*</sup> project.<sup>233</sup> The project aims to reduce risks facing adolescent girls such as poverty, malnutrition, lack of education, and early marriage. The program uses girls groups, peer leaders, community engagement, a land rights and land-based livelihoods curriculum, and partnerships with government stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child marriage was identified as a barrier to land access in the <b>program design</b> of Empowering Adolescent Girls through Land. The program included reducing child marriage as an objective and included education on child marriage in its curriculum.</li> <li>• During <b>program implementation</b>, education on the consequences of CEFM was incorporated into discussions in girls groups, sensitization sessions with boys, and sensitization sessions with the community.</li> <li>• The Empowering Adolescent Girls through Land program included CEFM in <b>program monitoring and evaluation</b> by measuring the prevalence of early marriage as well as the awareness of the legal age of marriage. The pilot evaluation found that girls in the program married 1.5 years later than those who were not.</li> <li>• When designing the Empowering Adolescent Girls through Land, Landesa integrated <b>learning and adapting</b> from an assessment of a previous government girls' empowerment program. It was through this assessment, for example, that Landesa decided to create girls groups and focus on land rights.</li> </ul>
<p><i>*Empowering Adolescent Girls through Land builds off of the Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA) implemented by the Department of Women and Child Development (WCD) in West Bengal. The pilot with Landesa adds a few additional components to the SABLA program related to land rights and access.</i></p>	

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATING CEFM PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

### *How can nutrition and agricultural productivity programs reduce key drivers of CEFM, mitigate the effects of CEFM, and meet the needs of married adolescents?*

- Programming should provide agricultural training for families with daughters at risk of CEFM and already married adolescents, as these populations are vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition. As food insecurity can drive CEFM, increasing families' agricultural productivity has the potential to prevent CEFM. Alternatively, girls who have experienced CEFM often have higher levels of malnutrition and isolation from agricultural resources, so this training can be particularly beneficial in providing them with needed information and resources to improve crop production and nutrition.
  - Programs should provide girls with viable income-generating opportunities related to agricultural productivity and non-traditional roles throughout agricultural value chains. These efforts, however, should incorporate considerations to ensure that girls stay in school and only engage in agricultural activities in their free time.
  - Programs should not only focus on agricultural production, but also on shifting norms around food production, distribution, and consumption patterns so that males and females within the household receive equal amounts and quality of food.
- As young mothers and their babies are exceptionally susceptible to malnutrition, nutrition education and service provision should target married adolescents.

- These programs should focus on the pivotal stages of pregnancy, lactation, and early childhood.
- Such programs should engage men in learning about proper nutrition for pregnant girls, new mothers, and babies so that the onus does not fall solely on the girl.
- Nutrition programs should include information on water and sanitation to improve maternal and child health.

***How can programs support and train families and communities to increase their agricultural productivity and remove some of the pressures for CEFM?***

- Programs should provide agricultural assets for families to remove pressures related to financial instability and food insecurity. Similar to agricultural training, income-generating agricultural assets (such as livestock) can increase a family’s economic stability and thus reduce pressures for CEFM.
- Programs should train female extension workers who may be able to better relate and transfer knowledge to female farmers, particularly young girls. Additionally, husbands may be more accepting of female extension agents working with their wives.
  - Farmer field schools should reach families with vulnerable girls at risk of CEFM as well as households with already married girls to transfer knowledge and skills and build empowerment in program participants.

**STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION OF CEFM IN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMMING**

- Agricultural skills training, for both household consumption and income generation
- Life skills and empowerment training
- Nutrition education
- Targeting information and services to young mothers
- Provision of agricultural assets (such as livestock)
- Train and deploy female agricultural extension officers
- Property rights law reform

***How can programs ensure that women and girls have access to needed agricultural assets to reduce pressures for CEFM, mitigate the effects of CEFM, and meet the needs of married girls?***

- Programs should advocate for land policy reform through gender-equitable laws and policies related to land and property ownership and inheritance. Where those laws already exist, programs should raise awareness at the local level and promote proper enforcement. Providing women and girls with equal access to land will not only decrease reliance on men for access to land and assets, but it can also shift broader gender dynamics.
- To reduce malnutrition among girls and women, programs need to focus on other cross-sectoral drivers such as reproductive health and family planning, girls’ education, and economic livelihoods.

## DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE

### CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE

CEFM is inherently connected with the democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) sector. It is a violation of human and civil rights and also perpetuated by lack of adequate DRG systems, such as birth and marriage registration systems, inheritance, divorce, and other justice issues.

Numerous national and international, formal and informal laws and policies address CEFM. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 1948, states that “marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.”<sup>234</sup> CEDAW, ratified by 187 countries, states that “betrothal and marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.” CEDAW also stipulates that women should have the same right as men to “freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent.”<sup>235</sup> Furthermore, the CRC, ratified by 194 countries, defines children as those under the age of 18 and protects the following rights of children: the right to survive; the right to develop to their fullest; the right to protection from harmful practices, abuse, and exploitation; and the right to participate fully in family, cultural, and social life.<sup>236</sup>

In addition to international declarations, commitments, conventions, and agreements, many countries have minimum age of marriage laws. These laws, however, are insufficient without proper enforcement. In 2010, while 158 countries had laws stating that 18 was the minimum legal age for marriage, however, 146 of these countries reported that state, customary, or religious law allowed girls under 18 to marry with the consent of parents or authorities.<sup>237</sup> In many settings, parents are the ones who advocate for the early marriage; these statutes allow them to legally promote and carry out the marriage of children under age 18. Some countries set a lower minimum age of marriage for girls than boys; for example the legal age of marriage for girls and boys respectively is 17 and 20 in Burkina Faso, 14 and 16 in Bolivia, and 18 and 21 in both India and Bangladesh.<sup>238</sup>

Furthermore, simply having a minimum age of marriage law is not enough to change a country or region’s practice. These laws must be adhered to and enforced. A recent study found that when countries enacted a minimum age of marriage law, adolescent fertility significantly decreased. However, when these laws allowed for exceptions such as marriage at an earlier age with parental consent, there was no difference in adolescent fertility rates compared to countries with no minimum age of marriage law.<sup>239</sup> Several other aspects of the legal system can create an environment that perpetuates CEFM, such as laws that legalize practices of dowry or bride price; a lack of inheritance, divorce, or repudiation laws; policies around school enrollment and re-enrollment; laws that legalize sexual violence within the context of marriage; and laws addressing GBV more generally.<sup>240</sup> Additionally, for age of marriage laws to be effectively enforced, countries need to establish an enabling legal environment that requires both birth and marriage registration within the formal legal system. Birth registration is necessary so that a child’s legal age is documented and so it

### REFERENCES TO GENDER ANALYSIS DOMAINS

Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices



Cultural norms and beliefs



Gender roles, responsibilities, and time used



Access to and control over assets and resources



Patterns of power and decision-making



can be known whether individuals are older than 18 and thus able to get married. Marriage registration is necessary to ensure that both parties are over the age of 18 and are voluntarily consenting to the marriage. CEFM can also be associated with other illegal practices and violations of girls' rights such as child labor, trafficking, and prostitution.<sup>241</sup>

Additionally, CEFM can perpetuate gender-inequitable legal structures due to lack of women's voice and participation in policy-making. Child brides often have little voice and agency related to decisions about their lives. Married girls typically have little to no say in whether they continue or return to school, limiting their literacy, numeracy, and financial skills.<sup>242</sup> By virtue of their low levels of education, their husbands and in-laws often do not see them as capable of earning money, managing finances, or making decisions for the household.<sup>243</sup> This limited voice in the household often translates into a lack of participation in civil and political decision-making at the community level.<sup>244</sup> A growing body of research has documented that women's greater involvement in political decision-making processes increases the likelihood of greater investment in social services, such as infrastructure, education, and health.<sup>245</sup>

Where these laws and policies do exist, countries need proper legal and judicial enforcement mechanisms. In many settings, customary or religious laws take precedence and child marriages are conducted with impunity.<sup>246</sup> Police and judicial officers often do not know of national minimum age of marriage laws. Furthermore, they may be unaware of marriages occurring in settings where they are officiated by religious leaders and not officially documented with the state.

Beyond creation and enforcement of laws and policies related to CEFM, a general lack of recognition of the rights of children and women perpetuate practices of CEFM. Where the rights of women and children are invisible, harmful practices such as CEFM only further reinforce systems of gender inequality and violations of human rights.

## LAWS AND POLICIES RELATED TO CEFM

- **Dowry and bride price:** Laws and policies can condone or ban these practices wherein assets (e.g., financial or property) are exchanged at the time of the marriage. If such practices are banned, offenders need to be penalized. For more information, please see the [Economic Growth and Workforce Development](#) section.
- **Birth and marriage registration:** To ensure that minimum age of marriage laws are adhered to, governments need strong birth registration systems, to know the official age of individuals, as well as strong marriage registration policies to ensure that marriages are registered officially so that authorities can identify and stop cases of early marriage.
- **Divorce:** Women need the right to initiate and execute divorce on their own terms. In many places it is only the husband who can initiate a divorce. In cases of CEFM, women may need to file for divorce to exit a harmful relationship.
- **Child custody:** In cases of divorce or separation, women need equal rights to the children. These laws can be important for those who have experienced CEFM and have little control or power in the relationship.
- **Inheritance:** Gender-inequitable inheritance laws can perpetuate CEFM as women gain access to needed assets through marriage.
- **Land and property rights:** When women have rights to land and property, they can use the land for purposes that better meet their needs and the needs of their family. For more information, please see the [Agriculture and Food Security](#) section.
- **School enrollment/re-enrollment:** CRC requires that states provide free and compulsory primary education; school enrollment can serve as a protective force against CEFM. Additionally policies related to dropout and re-enrollment may hinder girls from re-entering the formal school system after dropping out due to marriage and/or pregnancy. For more information, please see the [Education](#) section.
- **GBV:** While CEFM is a form of violence, it is also associated with other forms of GBV. Women and girls who have experienced CEFM need to be protected from physical, sexual, and emotional violence. For more information, please see the [GBV](#) section. Also, in some settings, sexual violence, such as rape, is tolerated within marriages. Even when the couple is married, however, this behavior is still violence and a violation of women's rights. Sexual violence within marriage should be prosecuted with the same intensity as other forms of violence. Additionally, rape should not be used as a justification for CEFM.
- **Protection for polygynous wives:** Laws related to inheritance, divorce, custody, land and property rights, and GBV should have considerations for adolescents in polygynous marriages, as girls in these arrangements often face additional rights violations and limited access to resources.

## CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND DRG PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS

Programs that seek to prevent CEFM or meet the needs of married adolescents have the potential to meet several of the development objectives in the *USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance*.<sup>247</sup> Enhancing the legal framework around child marriage through stronger laws and enforcement related to minimum age of marriage, birth and marriage registration, divorce, inheritance, and GBV can prevent and mitigate the harmful effects of CEFM and related human rights violations. Laws should recognize cases of sexual violence within marriage (such as marital rape) as a violation of women and girls' rights and address such crimes appropriately. Additionally, rape should not be used as a tool to force a girl or woman to marry her perpetrator. Enhancing legal frameworks at the national level will enable countries to fully adhere to international agreements and protect and promote universally recognized human rights. In addition to contributing to achieving the DRG Development Objectives, preventing and responding to CEFM is in alignment with the priorities and principles of several other USAID guiding policies, notably [Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy](#), [United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally](#), [USAID Youth in Development Policy](#), [United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security](#), and [Counter-Trafficking in Persons Policy](#) (C-TIP policy).

Customary and religious laws often maintain and enforce girls' inferiority, even when the government's law clearly provides a minimum age of marriage or equality of status.<sup>248</sup> In these settings, programs should engage local cultural and religious leaders to increase their knowledge of the harms of CEFM and motivate them to adapt customary laws to discourage or not allow CEFM in their communities.<sup>249</sup> More broadly, programs should work with religious and cultural leaders, communities, and the media to create an environment that respects and upholds the rights of women and girls. Creating cultures and customary laws that promote gender equality can discourage families from seeing CEFM as a potential solution to their challenges. Rather, they will see that women and girls are equal citizens with rights that are worthy of being upheld and that creating gender-equitable communities is beneficial for all. Religious and cultural leaders are often the guides of what is socially acceptable in a society. They can use this power and influence to encourage gender-equitable practices and champion women and girls' rights. Creating such environments will enable countries to uphold their commitments to international agreements, such as the CRC.

Programs that empower girls and increase their voice and agency have the potential to ultimately increase their participation in civil and political decision-making processes.<sup>250</sup> As girls become more knowledgeable about their rights, and the harms associated with violations of those rights, they are able to advocate for change. At a young age, girls can form groups and use their collective agency to advocate for change. Additionally, leadership training can help girls to think critically about issues and motivate them to share their opinions.<sup>251</sup> As they grow older, empowered girls may have increased opportunities for political participation and to influence the way resources are allocated and laws are enforced. These efforts are in alignment with the U.S. Government's innovative multilateral Equal Futures Partnership initiative that encourages member countries to empower women economically and



### DRG DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

- Promote participatory, representative, and inclusive political processes and government institutions
- Foster greater accountability of institutions and leaders to citizens and to the law
- Protect and promote universally recognized human rights
- Improve development outcomes through the integration of DRG principles and practices across USAID's development portfolio

USAID. (2013). *USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance*. Washington, DC: USAID.



politically.<sup>252</sup> Through this initiative, member countries commit to taking actions—including legal, regulatory, and policy reforms—to ensure women participate fully in public life at the local, regional, and national levels. Women’s engagement in these legal processes is important for creating a legal framework that prevents CEFM and helps mitigate the harmful effects of CEFM for married adolescents through access to rights within the marriage relationship.



Enhancing a girl’s ability to make and act on decisions, however, also depends on changing the structures and institutions that often undervalue them and deny them opportunities.<sup>253</sup> Programs that foster greater accountability to the law among institutions and leaders can reduce CEFM. Legal officials and police officers should be educated about the existing laws, their role in enforcing them, and the harms of CEFM. Police stations should designate family support units with personnel who have undergone training on GBV and other family issues. Similarly, women and girls who have experienced CFEM need access to justice mechanisms through trained legal professionals to guide them through the legal system. Judicial officers (such as judges, magistrates, lawyers, and paralegals) should be trained and educated on the laws, their roles in enforcement, and the harms of CEFM. Programs should leverage partnerships with local police, judicial and government officials, and policymakers to create an enabling legal environment that values girls and enables them to go to school, access resources and skills, and remain unmarried at least until age 18.<sup>254</sup> Women who have experienced CEFM can make strong activists in voting and advocating for enforcement of laws and policies. In addition, laws should be translated into local languages, and community members should be educated about their rights via community mobilization and awareness-raising.



### USAID PROGRAM EXAMPLES WITH A LINKAGE TO CEFM

Programs that teach girls about their rights and empower them to advocate for those rights have the potential to reduce CEFM, among other human rights violations. Additionally, as girls grow into empowered women, they may be more likely to participate in democracy and governance and create more gender-equitable policies and laws. Where laws and policies do exist, greater enforcement and implementation within both informal and formal structures can reduce CEFM. More broadly, programs should create an environment where the rights of women and girls are respected and upheld, creating more gender-equitable communities and nations. USAID’s programs in this sector focus on educating civil society and community members on the rights of women and girls and mobilizing them to advocate for protection of these rights. While the following program examples may not explicitly aim to reduce CEFM, they address relevant drivers and therefore have the potential to reduce CEFM or mitigate its impacts. If such programs include an additional focus on CEFM and measure CEFM-related outcomes, learning and adjustments can occur—and greater impact may be possible.

#### KEY CEFM STAKEHOLDERS FOR DRG EFFORTS

- Policy makers, including parliamentarians
- Legal and police officers
- Judicial officers, including judges, magistrates, lawyers, and paralegals
- Community, traditional, and religious leaders
- The media
- Families, including parents and in-laws
- Community members
- Girls
- Women
- Men and boys

USAID Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>Tostan's <b>Community Empowerment Program</b>* uses informal community education and awareness raising to mobilize communities against harmful practices, such as FGM/C and early marriage.<sup>255</sup> The program seeks to increase knowledge of and support for the rights of women and girls. Tostan engages all members of the community, from the highest-ranking elders to local girls, to raise awareness of and sometimes make public declarations against these harmful practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tostan considers CEFM in its <b>program design</b> as it develops messaging and education around the harms of CEFM.</li> <li>• CEFM is integrated into <b>program implementation</b> as families and communities are encouraged to publicly declare that they will not marry their daughters until after they are 18. As CEFM is deeply rooted in cultural and traditional beliefs and norms, Tostan engages a range of important stakeholders to reject CEFM.</li> <li>• Tostan has included CEFM in its <b>program monitoring and evaluation</b> as the program tracks how many villages have made public declarations against CEFM. Additionally, an evaluation of Tostan's efforts in several villages found that the program improved people's knowledge of rights and responsibilities, particularly with respect to the place and role of women in the community.<sup>256</sup></li> </ul>
<p>*Tostan has been working in Senegal since 1991. USAID funded the program described here, which was implemented in the Kolda, Thies, and Fatick regions from 1996 to 2002. Tostan continues to implement similar approaches.</p>	

USAID Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>The <b>Yes Youth Can!</b> program in Kenya aims to empower people ages 18 to 35 to develop leadership skills and participate in local decision-making, engage with local government, and become a force for change.<sup>257</sup> The program has the following goals: 1) empower youth to expand their economic opportunities and contribute to their communities; 2) encourage youth leadership and youth voice in local and national policy dialogue; and 3) increase youth participation in local development and peace initiatives. Through the Yes Youth Can! program, youth form groups and organize themselves into village- and county-level <i>bunges</i> (parliaments). The <i>bunges</i> provide a forum for youth to hold leadership positions, express opinions, advocate for their rights, and participate in community decision-making processes. The <i>bunge</i> members have engaged in community service, established small businesses, and launched youth savings and credit associations known as SACCOs. One of the legal advocacy issues the <i>bunges</i> have taken on is participating in a national campaign to help youth obtain national identification cards so they can vote in the general elections.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In general, Yes Youth Can! does not include an explicit focus on CEFM. During <b>program implementation</b>, however, in certain settings (such as among Somali youth in Kenya) participants have introduced child marriage as an issue that they want to tackle. Implementers could encourage the <i>bunges</i> to advocate for CEFM-related rights in other program locations as well. Specifically, the <i>bunges</i> could champion stronger birth and marriage registration and stricter enforcement of age of marriage laws. The <i>bunges</i> could also educate community leaders and judicial officers on the harms of CEFM and the laws that exist to protect against it.</li> <li>• <b>Program monitoring</b> could also measure how the efforts of the <i>bunges</i> are affecting creation and enforcement of CEFM-related policies and laws.</li> </ul>
<p>*The Ministry of Industrialization and Enterprise in Kenya is implementing the USAID-funded Yes Youth Can! program from 2011 to 2015.</p>	

Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>The <a href="#">Asia Child Marriage Initiative (ACMI)</a> is a multicountry initiative that aims to prevent child marriage and mitigate its negative consequences.<sup>258</sup> In Bangladesh, ACMI aims to increase the mean age of marriage from 15 to 18, work with the government to strengthen online birth registration, and enforce the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929. In India, ACMI aims to improve knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to child marriage and track the prevalence of child marriage. In Nepal, ACMI seeks to build the capacity and commitment of children, their families, and communities to eliminate child marriage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the main purpose of this program is to prevent child marriage and mitigate its negative consequences, CEFM has been integrated into <b>all phases of the Program Cycle</b>.</li> <li>• Through <b>program evaluation</b>, it is evident that ACMI's efforts have increased children's knowledge of the harms of child marriage and how to negotiate for their rights with adults. Additionally, partnerships between the government and civil society organizations have spread information, changed norms around age of marriage, and linked CEFM with the violation of children's rights and enforcement of state laws.</li> </ul>
<p><i>*ACMI has been implemented by Plan in India, Bangladesh, and Nepal since 2010.</i></p>	

The **Protecting Human Rights** project in Bangladesh, which aims to reduce GBV and related human rights abuses, is highlighted in this guide's [Bangladesh](#) section.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATING CEFM PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

### *How can programs involve individuals in advocacy efforts and policy-making roles to influence CEFM-related legal and customary decision-making structures?*

- Programs should empower girls and women with the knowledge and skills to advocate for their rights on a personal, community, and national level.
  - Programs should specifically work on engaging girls and women in key decision-making roles in community and national decision-making structures in order to promote more gender-equitable laws and policies and to also encourage more efficient investment of resources.

### *How can programs engage community decision-making structures and key personnel to establish an enabling environment for preventing and responding to CEFM?*

- Programs should conduct a review of customary and religious laws to understand how they interact or overlap with the national law and design programs that target the appropriate community decision-making structures.
- As CEFM does not exist in isolation, but rather within the context of gender inequality, programs should establish and enforce more gender-equitable laws and policies, such as those related to land and property rights, inheritance, and GBV.
  - Programs should also sensitize and mobilize communities to value the rights of women and children and to create gender-equitable attitudes and behaviors. While laws and policies create an enabling framework, communities must understand the benefits of gender-equitable roles and relationships to want to uphold the rights of women and children.
  - The media can highlight the harmful effects of violations of women and children's rights and promote the benefits of gender-equitable relationships. The [Al Niqab \(The Mask\)](#)

television program provides an interesting example of the use of media to draw attention to violations of women's rights related to marriage in hopes of shifting social norms.

### ***How can programs create an enabling legal and policy framework to prevent and mitigate the effects of CEFM, as well as meet the needs of married adolescents?***

- All countries should have a law that establishes the minimum age of marriage at 18 or higher for girls and boys.
  - Where this law does not exist, programs should advocate with governments to pass such a law, relying on the extensive research of the social and economic consequences of CEFM.
  - Where this law does exist, programs should work to enforce the law through training police, judicial officers, and local leaders.
  - To properly enforce minimum age of marriage laws, programs should enforce birth and marriage registration within the formal legal system.
  - Enforcement of such laws should not criminalize families for what they think is a choice in the interest of their daughters, but rather should contain a strong community-led awareness initiative to educate families on girls' rights, the harms of CEFM, alternatives for girls, and why it is beneficial to families and communities to end the practice. Programs that educate community members of the minimum age of marriage laws will not only make people aware of their rights, but it will also motivate them to advocate for enforcement of those rights.
- A stronger legal framework should be established around issues related to CEFM, such as child labor, trafficking, and prostitution. These practices can often drive CEFM and can increase as a result of CEFM. Legal frameworks that promote gender equality and decrease impunity have the potential to create environments where women can make and act on key decisions regarding their lives.
- Programs should support the creation, implementation, and enforcement of laws and legal frameworks in alignment with other key USAID strategies and policies, specifically including the *GBV Strategy*.

## CRISIS AND CONFLICT

### CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND CRISIS AND CONFLICT

Conflict and crisis settings and CEFM are often closely associated. In fact, most of the 25 countries with the highest prevalence of child marriage are considered fragile states or at high risk of natural disaster.\*<sup>259</sup> That half of the world's poor live in fragile states means that understanding the connections between poverty, CEFM, and fragility is necessary to delay marriage globally and protect those who are most vulnerable.<sup>260</sup> Conservative cultures that value exerting power over another can perpetuate CEFM, conflict, and insecurity. Additionally, the prevalence and harms related to CEFM can be exacerbated in crisis and conflict settings. In times of political and social uncertainty, as well as humanitarian disasters, family, social, and legal networks tend to break down. Family and social structures can be particularly vulnerable during mass migration and resettlement. Without reliable income-generation opportunities, educational opportunities, access to land, or support systems, families may feel added financial pressures to marry their children to merge family assets and provide greater security for their children.<sup>261</sup> Also, due to the breakdown of family and social structures, the real and perceived risks of rape, unwanted premarital pregnancies, and damage to family honor may drive a family to marry their daughter at an early age. Furthermore, when legal institutions and the rule of law crumble and laws related to marriage, inheritance, and nationality give way to customary law, it can further limit the rights of girls and women.<sup>262</sup> In some settings, it is not simply the breakdown of an existing legal system, but also the takeover of legal institutions by armed actors who then implement new, potentially harmful, interpretations of the law.

In some extreme cases, girls may be forced to marry a combatant and essentially serve as a sex slave.<sup>263</sup> During Sierra Leone's civil war in the 1990s and the Lord's Resistance Army's reign in northern Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo throughout the 1990s and 2000s, girls were frequently abducted as "bush wives" by fighters.<sup>264</sup> In times of natural disasters, financial pressures and food insecurity may increase the prevalence of child marriage, such as during droughts in Kenya in 2010.<sup>265</sup> After the Indonesian tsunami in 2004, girls were forced to marry "tsunami widowers" in Indonesia, India, and Sri Lanka to access state subsidies for marrying and starting families.<sup>266</sup>

The dynamics of marriage formation and relationships often shift during times of conflict and crisis. For example, during times of peace and security, a young girl marrying a man who was slightly older and well known to the family may characterize CEFM. In conflict and crisis, however, this behavior may shift to very young girls marrying much older men who are unknown to the family.<sup>267</sup> Families wanting to find a man who can protect their daughters financially and from physical and sexual violence may motivate this change. This wide age gap and lack of familiarity with the groom and his family, however, can increase exposure to risk, hardship, and rights violations.

When CEFM occurs in crisis and conflict settings, usually fewer and lower quality services exist to assist child brides. Sexual and reproductive health services as well as services for women who have experienced violence may be sparse or non-existent.<sup>268</sup> Girls who were abducted as wives during conflicts are rarely included in demobilization programs, and thus

### REFERENCES TO GENDER ANALYSIS DOMAINS

Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices



Cultural norms and beliefs



Gender roles, responsibilities, and time used



Access to and control over assets and resources



Patterns of power and decision-making



\* Fragile states are those where a government cannot or will not act on its responsibility to protect and fulfill the rights of the majority of the population, particularly the most vulnerable. (WV, 2013)

they miss out on psychological support and income-generating opportunities offered to child soldiers who carried arms during the conflict.<sup>269</sup> These girls may face additional stigma and shame from their families and communities when the conflict ends.

## CONNECTION BETWEEN CEFM AND CRISIS AND CONFLICT PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS

One of the primary focuses of USAID’s conflict and crisis programming is to invest in the protection and empowerment of women and girls.<sup>270</sup> USAID has provided added structure to this focus through the *NAP*, released in 2011.<sup>271</sup> The key objectives outlined in the *NAP* (and listed in the text box on this page) provide direction on how programs can promote gender equality and female empowerment, which will ultimately contribute to peaceful, resilient communities that can cope with both conflict and natural disasters.<sup>272</sup> The *NAP* promotes the engagement of women and girls in both prevention activities (such as engaging women in peace processes and decision-making) and response efforts (such as ensuring women and girls have access to relief and recovery services, education, health services, and services for people who have experienced violence). While the *NAP* doesn’t explicitly include provisions related to CEFM, USAID could integrate CEFM into prevention, protection, peace-building, and reconstruction efforts. Additionally, USAID’s policy and program guidance, *Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis*, states that women’s empowerment is a key component for increasing adaptive capacity and improving the ability to address and reduce risk. And ample areas for consideration of CEFM exist within the mandate of the Agency’s work through the *United States Government Action Plan on Children in Adversity*.<sup>273</sup>



As girls are particularly vulnerable to CEFM during conflict and crisis, when the consequences of CEFM are often intensified, efforts to provide girls with social protection, alternative opportunities, and services for married adolescents are necessary to prevent and respond to CEFM and promote human security overall. The U.S. Department of State and USAID’s Safe from the Start initiative provides funding and guidance on how to prevent and respond to GBV in humanitarian emergencies.<sup>274</sup>



The initiative provides agencies with the resources to hire specialized staff, launch programs, and develop innovative methods to protect women and girls at the onset of emergencies worldwide. Such efforts should include protections from sexual violence, access to education, and (where possible) opportunities for income generation. Additionally, a disaster assistance response team (DART) can be deployed through the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA).

By including gender experts—specifically those with experience in CEFM prevention and response—in DART efforts, the United States can coordinate and manage humanitarian response efforts that better address the needs of women and girls, including provisions

### FOCUS OF CRISIS AND CONFLICT PROGRAMMING:

Invest in the protection and empowerment of women and girls in countries affected by crisis and conflict to improve prospects for peace and security

#### NAP Objectives:

- Institutionalize a gender-responsive approach to peace and security
- Promote women’s participation in peace processes and decision-making
- Protect women and girls from violence, exploitation, and abuse
- Engage women in conflict prevention
- Ensure safe and equitable access to relief and recovery

The White House. (2011). *United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security*. Washington, DC: The White House.

**Education sector goal:** Increased equitable access to education in crisis and conflict environments for 15 million learners by 2015

USAID. (2011). *USAID Education Strategy: Education: Opportunity through Learning*. Washington, DC: USAID.

that prevent and mitigate the effects of CEFM. Such efforts should hire female police and peacekeepers to work in and around internally displaced persons (IDP) camps to safeguard the rights of women and girls, and to give girls someone they can turn to in times of danger.



Efforts that strengthen legal structures and protect girls from violence and exploitation can reduce CEFM. In some conflict settings, girls are trafficked and forced into marriage; efforts such as USAID's *C-TIP policy* can establish a framework that recognizes and responds to such arrangements.<sup>275</sup> To reduce trafficking and CEFM, considerations for CEFM should be incorporated in the four Ps of the C-TIP policy:



- Prevention, through identifying whether girls are being trafficked into a marriage
- Protection, through providing alternative opportunities for those who are being trafficked into a marriage
- Prosecution of those who were attempting to traffic girls for marriage
- Partnership to coordinate with a range of stakeholders

Programs that educate people on the rights of women and girls also can deter CEFM. Providing girls with viable alternatives to marriage in times of conflict and disaster can dissuade families from feeling the desperate need to protect their daughters through marriage. Programs that provide girls with access to safe, quality education can both physically protect girls and make families feel more secure about their daughters' situation. Education initiatives should include second-chance opportunities for girls who may have dropped out of school due to conflict, natural disaster, early pregnancy, or other external factors.<sup>276</sup> Additionally, programs that provide girls with income-generation skills help to immediately relieve some of the financial pressures on a family and may enable families to see that their daughters do not need a husband to financially support them. Through these efforts, programs can mobilize communities to shift the norms that perpetuate CEFM.



While the aforementioned efforts focus on preventing CEFM, as the prevalence of CEFM in conflict and crisis is so high, efforts to meet the needs of married adolescents are also necessary. In particular, relief and response sexual and reproductive health programming should consider the unique needs of married adolescents. For example, adolescents are often more likely to experience obstetric fistula than older women. Therefore, humanitarian health response services should include properly equipped facilities and trained providers to screen, prevent, diagnose, and repair obstetric and traumatic fistula.<sup>277</sup> Psychosocial counseling is also an important service for girls who have experienced violence or exploitation related to CEFM during conflict or natural disasters.

### USAID PROGRAM EXAMPLES WITH A LINKAGE WITH CEFM

As there are clear connections between a gender-responsive approach to preventing and responding to conflict and crisis and preventing and responding to CEFM, many programmatic approaches have the potential to address both issues simultaneously. USAID's programming within the Crisis & Conflict sector primarily addresses CEFM through providing education for girls. USAID implements several programs that build schools, make school enrollment and attendance more accessible for girls, and improve the quality of schools in conflict, post-conflict, and disaster

#### KEY CEFM STAKEHOLDERS FOR CRISIS AND CONFLICT EFFORTS

- Peacekeepers
- Police
- Healthcare workers
- Teachers
- Employers and business leaders
- Community, traditional, and religious leaders
- Families, including parents and in-laws
- Community members
- Girls
- Women
- Men and boys

settings. While the following program examples may not explicitly aim to reduce CEFM, they address relevant drivers and therefore have the potential to reduce CEFM or mitigate its impacts. If such programs include an additional focus on CEFM and measure CEFM-related outcomes, learning and adjustments can occur—and greater impact may be possible.

USAID Program Example	Potential Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>The <a href="#"><b>Girls in Risk Reduction Leadership (GIRRL) Project</b></a><sup>*</sup> in Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe worked with adolescent girls, government officials, and NGO staff to reduce the vulnerability of adolescent girls during natural disasters.<sup>278</sup> The program engaged girls in a participatory process of identifying risks and vulnerabilities they experience in their everyday lives, as well as in the context of reoccurring natural disasters (such as droughts and floods). Through this process they identified physical and socioeconomic risks and then designed risk-mitigation and capacity building curricula to meet the specific needs of these adolescent girls. Some of the themes the girls identified included decision-making, team-building, sexual and reproductive health, mental well-being, first aid, fire safety, effective communication, and participation of youth in disaster-preparedness planning processes. The program also engaged community leaders and existing disaster risk-reduction planning structures to inform them of the added vulnerabilities girls face and encourage them to incorporate the themes the girls identified into their efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While <b>program design and implementation</b> focused on engaging girls through participatory methods, there wasn't an explicit focus on CEFM. To address CEFM, the program could work with girls most at-risk of CEFM or those who are already married.</li> <li>• Additionally, during <b>program implementation</b>, girls may introduce CEFM when identifying risks and vulnerabilities. GIRRL provides an excellent platform to encourage girls to discuss their thoughts and feelings related to marriage formation and to educate others in the community about the harms of CEFM.</li> <li>• Within <b>program monitoring and evaluation</b> GIRRL could have included measurement of prevalence of marriage among participants as well as shifting dynamics of marriage formation.</li> <li>• As GIRRL was a pilot, lessons regarding the vulnerabilities that girls face and the proper risk-reduction measurements that can be taken to protect them from CEFM can be used in <b>learning and adapting</b> for future program implementation.</li> </ul>
<p><sup>*</sup>CARE and the African Center for Disaster Studies (ACDS), with support from USAID and OFDA, piloted GIRRL from 2012 to 2013.</p>	

Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>The <a href="#"><b>Protecting and Empowering Displaced Adolescent Girls Initiative</b></a> works with girls 10 to 16 who have been displaced to refugee camps in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Uganda.<sup>279</sup> The program uses an assets-based approach to increase girls' access to school, provide them with safe spaces to meet peers and form relationships of trust, provide health information, and enhance financial literacy. In Ethiopia, girls receive in-kind support such as uniforms, school supplies, and sanitary supplies to remove barriers to school attendance. There, the program also creates safe spaces for homework clubs, financial literacy, health and safety information, and socializing. Parents and teachers participate in informational sessions. In Tanzania, the program targets girls who are most vulnerable, such as married adolescents and adolescent mothers, providing them with safe spaces to gain knowledge and skills about sexual and reproductive health, HIV, literacy, numeracy, livelihoods, and recreation opportunities. In Uganda the program targets out-of-school girls with training, mentoring, and livelihoods skills. Girls are provided with mentors and financial literacy to help grow agriculture or improve small-business productivity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the <b>program design</b>, certain components of the program were specifically designed to target married adolescents as well as the most vulnerable adolescents—which includes those who are most vulnerable to CEFM (such as girls who are out of school). The program also consulted groups of vulnerable girls, including married adolescents, during the program-design phase to understand their unique needs.</li> <li>• The program provides vulnerable girls in post-conflict settings access to needed social networks, knowledge, skills, and alternative opportunities. As these approaches are known to reduce CEFM, the program addresses CEFM through <b>program implementation</b>.</li> <li>• Through the baseline assesment already conducted and the endline to be conducted in 2015, the <b>program evaluation</b> will integrate CEFM through measuring decision-making capacities related to education, marriage, and sex.</li> </ul>
<p><sup>*</sup>The Women's Refugee Commission implements the <a href="#"><b>Protecting and Empowering Displaced Adolescent Girls Initiative</b></a> in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Uganda.</p>	

Several USAID programs that work with adolescents in conflict and crisis settings aim to increase access to and the quality of education. USAID recognizes that school can serve as both a protective force and an accelerator for development, and it has included equitable access to education in crisis and conflict environments as one of its goals in the [USAID Education Strategy 2011–2015](#). Therefore, USAID focuses on building schools, making them accessible for students, getting girls in school, and improving the quality of education. USAID is currently investing in such programs in many high-risk countries:

- In Nigeria, USAID partners with the national government to increase enrollment and improve early-grade reading.
- In Afghanistan, USAID is putting forward the largest investment in gender programming in history through the Promote program. It furthers young women’s leadership, livelihoods, and advocacy. Promote also establishes community-based education (CBE) classes to provide accessible primary education for girls and awards scholarships to women for undergraduate and graduate university programs.
- In Sudan, USAID and UNICEF provide emergency education to girls and boys who have fled their homes through leadership camps, safe learning spaces, gender-segregated sanitation facilities, and provision of information on self-protection and health.<sup>280</sup> All of these investments represent enormous potential to address child marriage.

Because of the conflict in Syria, Jordan has received a large influx of Syrian refugees over the past few years—on top of existing refugee populations from Iraq and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, some of whom have endured 40 years of displacement. The prevalence of child marriage among the Syrian refugee population in Jordan has more than doubled from 12 percent in 2011 (roughly the same as pre-war Syria) to 25 percent in 2013. It has likely continued to rise.<sup>281</sup> To manage the effects of the crisis, USAID has focused on increasing girls’ access to safe education. In partnership with the Jordanian Ministry of Education, several local NGOs, and private sector partners, USAID has built more than 28 new schools and helped renovate more than 100 schools between 2009 and 2014. While these education programs do not focus on reducing CEFM, by getting girls in school and providing them with a quality education, they have the potential to reduce girls’ vulnerabilities and provide them with pathways to access needed resources and information. If these programs more explicitly measure CEFM prevalence and engage in efforts to change attitudes related to the practice, they may be even more effective at reducing girls’ vulnerabilities, keeping them in school, and reducing and mitigating the effects of CEFM.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATING CEFM PREVENTION AND RESPONSE**

*How can programs provide adolescents with needed information, skills, and resources to protect them from CEFM in times of conflict and crisis?*

- The experience of GBV, such as rape, and risk of GBV can both be drivers of CEFM. As girls are particularly vulnerable to GBV during conflict and crisis, humanitarian response efforts should include provisions for protection of girls across various aspects of programming: water & sanitation, lighting, firewood gathering, and transportation among others.

- Programs should create safe spaces for girls to gather, form social networks, gain peer support, and access resources and information. Girls often lack such opportunities in all settings, but especially in times of crisis and conflict. During these times, having the ability to form supportive, social networks and as well as access to resources, can be transformative for girls and can protect against and mitigate the effects of CEFM.

### ***How can families and communities be engaged in response efforts during conflict and crisis to provide supportive structures that will protect against CEFM?***

- As the fracturing of the family unit is often one of CEFM's drivers, disaster response efforts—particularly in settings of mass migration and resettlement—should include efforts to keep family units and ethnic and tribal groups together. Programs should also work to rebuild family and community cohesion in resettlement camps and locations.
- Programs should understand how marriage formation and marital relationship dynamics have shifted due to the conflict or crisis, and adapt programmatic approaches to address those factors.
- As women and girls best understand their own unique vulnerabilities, they should be engaged in making decisions and designing disaster response efforts so that they reflect and respond to the needs of women and girls.

### ***How can humanitarian response efforts include provisions for preventing and responding to CEFM through service provision, protection mechanisms, and legal structures?***

- Disaster response efforts should include personnel and services to support and protect adolescents who are at risk of CEFM or are already married. For example, female peacekeepers and police officers should be hired to help provide girls with role models and allies.
- Viable alternatives to CEFM (such as education and income generation) need to be integrated into humanitarian response efforts. Often these structures deteriorate during conflict and crisis; they are critical, however, in providing girls with the skills and resources needed to avoid CEFM.
  - Efforts should specifically focus on increasing the quality of and access to secondary school. This is crucial as the transition from primary to secondary school falls during a pivotal time when girls go through puberty, often drop out of school, and face increased risks of CEFM. Support services (such as sexual and reproductive health services, including psychosocial care and support) and services for those who have experienced violence, need to be strengthened and targeted to married adolescents. Girls often face increased risks of CEFM or physical, emotional, and sexual violence within marriage or resulting in CEFM during conflict and crisis, so they need the appropriate support services to deal with these experiences.

#### **STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION OF CEFM IN CRISIS AND CONFLICT PROGRAMMING**

- Safety and protection mechanisms
- Safe spaces
- Involve women and girls in designing response efforts
- Safe, accessible, and quality schools
- Income-generation opportunities
- Sexual and reproductive health and psychosocial services and counseling
- Strengthen legal frameworks

- Efforts should strengthen legal structures, informing government officials and citizens about the rights of women and girls, and ensuring that these rights are protected. Legal frameworks are often weakened during conflict and crisis, leaving way for customary and religious laws and structures that are less equitable for women and girls. To uphold the rights of women and girls, particularly related to CEFM, legal officers, cultural and religious leaders, and citizens need to be aware of women and girls' rights and protect them.
- As girls face heightened vulnerabilities during conflict and crisis and families might attempt to protect their daughters by marrying them to foreign men, considerations should be included in anti-trafficking efforts to ensure that girls are not being trafficked for marriage.

## MULTI-SECTORAL PROGRAMMING

As evidenced by the variety of program examples in this guide that work across sectors, research has shown that the programs are often effective when they are multicomponent and address CEFM drivers through different channels.<sup>282</sup> As programs seek to impact the lives of girls, they need to look beyond siloed approaches and develop ways to enhance all aspects of their lives. Programs are most successful when they directly empower girls with knowledge, skills, and social support, and simultaneously sensitize and mobilize communities. Within approaches that work with girls or families, education and activities should address the factors associated with CEFM such as education, health, and economic development. For example, keeping girls in school not only enhances educational outcomes, but also has the potential to improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes and reduce and mitigate the detrimental effects of CEFM.<sup>283</sup> Therefore programmatic approaches to keep girls in school (such as CCTs) should measure their impact on health- and marriage-related attitudes and behaviors. All programming should focus on social norm and behavior change as well as promotion of gender equality. Without this emphasis, programs may be able to change the age of marriage, but they will not shift the underlying norm structures, causing marital relationships to remain imbalanced, unhealthy, and less productive.

USAID Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p>The <b>Go Girls! Initiative</b><sup>*</sup> aimed to reduce adolescent girls' susceptibility to HIV infection through developing and implementing gender and behavior change communication in Mozambique, Malawi, and Botswana.<sup>284</sup> Working with girls, boys, and adults in communities, Go Girls! addressed many barriers to girls' access to education and increased the resilience of out-of-school girls by building life-skills. In addition, the program strengthened adults' communication skills to improve their interactions with and support for girls, and provided a safe space for dialogue and community-level action. The programmatic approach was multi-level, working with schools, providing economic opportunities for vulnerable girls and their families, mobilizing communities around gender communication, and reinforcing all of these efforts through a reality radio program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go Girls! integrated CEFM prevention through <b>program design and implementation</b> by incorporating messages related to child marriage prevention and response in its curricula where girls discussed gender norms related to marriage formation. In some cases, such as in Malawi, community mobilization efforts recognized the detrimental effects of early marriage and advocated for delaying marriage as a strategy for achieving health outcomes.<sup>285</sup></li> <li>• Through <b>program monitoring and evaluation</b>, Go Girls! <b>learned and adapted</b> by identifying the need for greater engagement of families and thus developed the Go Families! adult-child communication program. An even greater focus could have been placed on CEFM during these phases to track its prevalence in target communities, as well as learn if efforts were changing marriage-related attitudes and behaviors.</li> </ul>
<p><sup>*</sup>The Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs and Macro International implemented the USAID-funded Go Girls! initiative in Mozambique, Malawi, and Botswana from 2007 to 2010.</p>	

Program Example	Linkages to CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p><b>Berhane Hewan</b> addressed the determinants of early marriage, including social norms, girls' lack of status and social capital, barriers to schooling, and economic factors.<sup>286</sup> The program's four components—community conversations to raise awareness and address cultural and social norms, support for girls to enroll and stay in school (such as by providing school supplies), conditional asset transfers (families who did not marry off girls during the two-year period received a goat), and girls' mentoring groups (including non-formal education)—were based on formative research and consultations with communities and local leadership. Through this approach, the program aimed to shift social norms and enhance girls' social, health, and economic assets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As Berhane Hewan was specifically designed to address child marriage, CEFM is integrated throughout <b>all phases of the Program Cycle</b>.</li> <li>• Through <b>program evaluation</b>, results demonstrated significant changes in the status of girls. Girls ages 10 to 14 in the project area were one tenth as likely to be married compared to those in the comparison site. And they were three times more likely to be in school. Not one girl aged 10 to 14 in the project site was married during the pilot phase. Among married girls, those residing in the Berhane Hewan project site were three times more likely to be using family planning compared to their counterparts in the control site.</li> </ul>
<p><i>*The Population Council, the Ethiopian Ministry of Youth and Sport, and the Amhara Regional Bureau of Youth and Sport implemented Berhane Hewan from 2004 to 2006 in Amhara, Ethiopia. USAID is currently supporting a six-year research project to test similar approaches in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Tanzania through the Increasing the Age of Marriage project. More information about this effort can be found in the respective country profiles in the <b>Program Considerations for Regional Variations and Key Country Profiles</b> section of this guide.</i></p>	

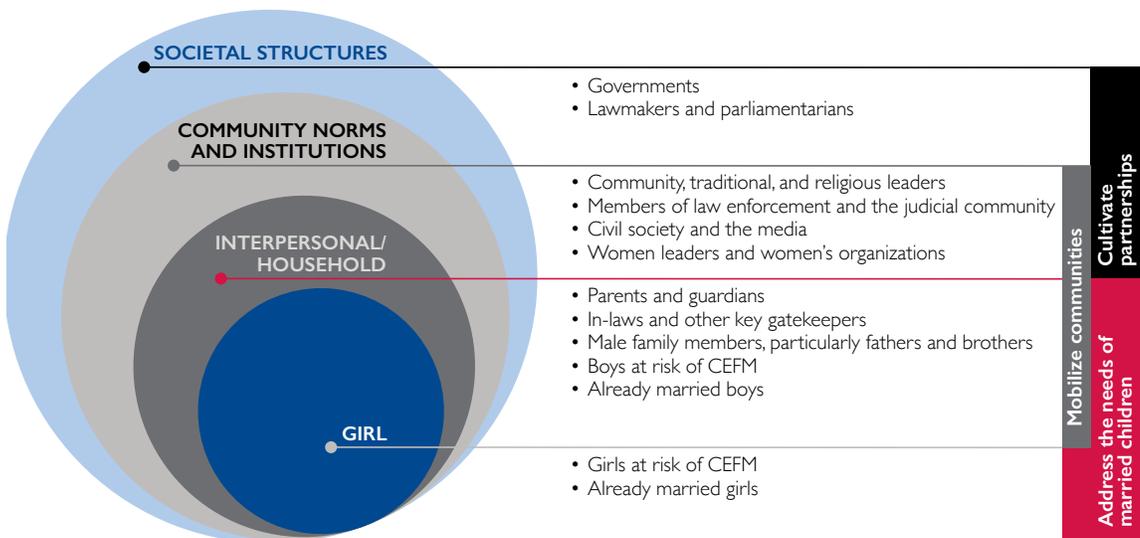
## 2.5 GUIDANCE ON WORKING WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

While strategies that work directly with girls are essential, in many cases girls are not in a position to decide if, when, and whom to marry on their own. A range of individuals and institutions perpetuate the practice of CEFM; therefore, prevention and response strategies must engage a variety of stakeholders. Depending on the programmatic approach and local context, different stakeholders may be more integral than others.

*Ending Child Marriage & Meeting the Needs of Married Children: The USAID Vision for Action* identifies the following key principles that guide USAID’s CEFM prevention and response efforts with a variety of stakeholders:

- **Cultivate partnerships broadly:** Engage a diverse network of local and international partners to bring unique perspectives, skills, and resources to child marriage-related issues. Partnerships should include private, government, and NGOs actors. These partnerships can enact, implement, and enforce laws and policies that discourage and mitigate the effects of CEFM.
- **Mobilize communities to shift norms that perpetuate child marriage:** Engage communities and individuals—including men and boys—to address complex economic issues and deep-rooted social and economic norms, attitudes, and practices. Local leaders and civil society can sensitize and mobilize communities on the harms of CEFM and what can be done to reduce and mitigate its effects. Additionally these efforts can create broader gender equality through promoting the value of girls and equal opportunities for boys and girls.
- **Address the unique needs of married children:** Ensure that already married girls have the opportunities to thrive through education and social networks. Married girls are often extremely vulnerable and marginalized due to isolation from family, social, and support networks. Efforts should reach both married girls and boys with access to educational opportunities, social networks, economic assets, negotiating skills, and health and other services.

FIGURE 8: STAKEHOLDERS OF CEFM: AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL



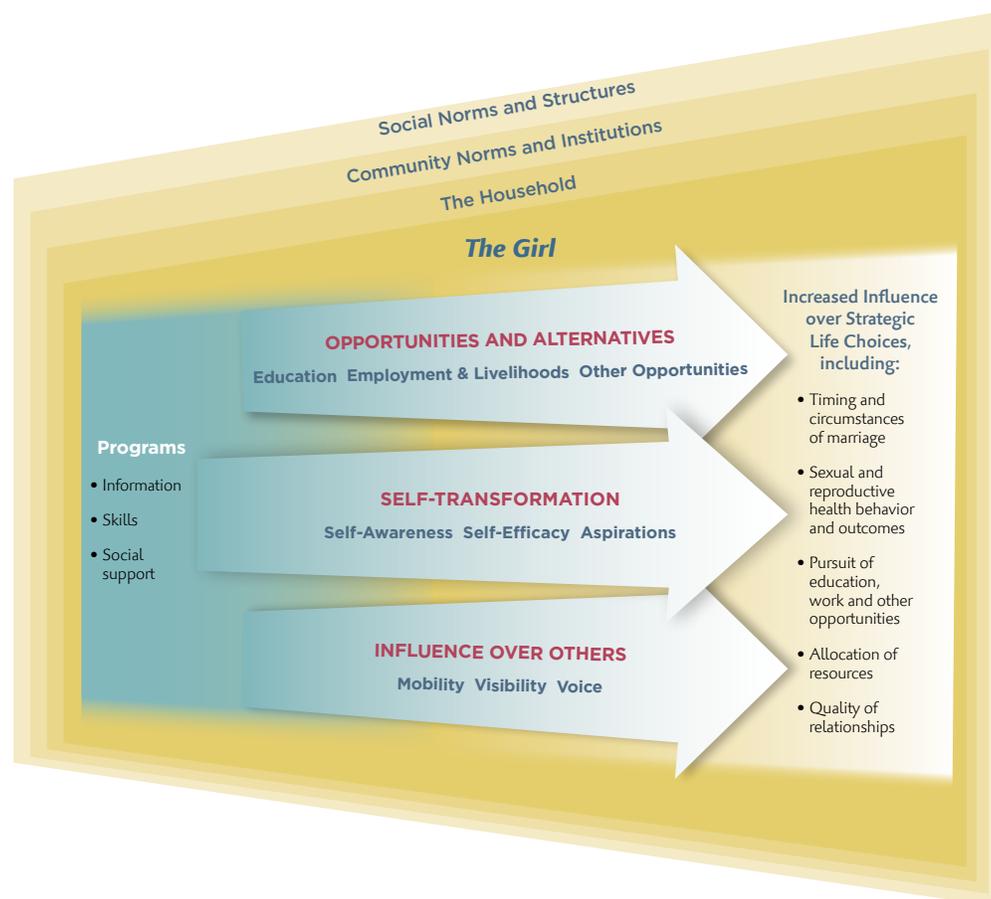
Through each of these key principles guiding USAID’s approach to CEFM prevention and response, a variety of stakeholders should be engaged. While these key principles align with the ecological model that differentiates individual, interpersonal and household, community, and societal structures, there is great overlap in both the approaches outlined in the key principles and which stakeholders should be engaged. For example, religious leaders should be engaged in partnerships as well as mobilization efforts. Engaging a combination of approaches and stakeholders will enable USAID to empower girls, provide viable alternatives to CEFM, and mobilize families and communities to reject CEFM.

In the majority of settings, a variety of stakeholders will be needed. Priority stakeholder groups are listed according to the progression of the ecological framework, starting with the individual girl and moving outward to national-level, institutional structures.

## GIRLS AT RISK OF CEFM OR ALREADY MARRIED GIRLS

Girls who are at risk of CEFM or who are already married are the key constituency to be considered when preventing and responding to CEFM. These girls are the ones who stand to lose the most when their childhoods are cut short by marriage. Alternatively, when programs and policies engage these girls and prevent and delay marriage, girls can live more fulfilling, empowered, and productive lives.

FIGURE 9: GIRLS’ PATHWAYS TO EMPOWERMENT



SOURCE: Warner, A., Stoebenau, K., & Glinski, A. (2014). *More Power To Her: How Empowering Girls Can Help End Child Marriage*. Washington, D.C.: ICRW.

Any programming that aims to influence CEFM-related outcomes should work with girls who are at risk of CEFM and already married girls. Research on what works to prevent child marriage has found that some of the most successful approaches work directly with girls and provide them with information, skills, and social support.<sup>287</sup> These same approaches also build assets among girls who are already married. Programs should provide girls with safe spaces to gather and interact with peers, supportive adults, and role models. Programs should provide girls with information related to sexual and reproductive health, human rights, financial literacy, life skills, and services and opportunities that are available to them.<sup>288</sup> Additionally, programs should build girls' skills to open access to additional opportunities for them; these skills could include literacy and numeracy, loans, communications, and negotiations.<sup>289</sup> In addition to the assets of skills, information, and social support, programs should build girls' agency through increasing their self-awareness, self-confidence, and self-efficacy. Enabling girls to see that they can have their own opinions and can make and act upon their own choices can be transformational. Often, as girls' agency is enhanced, their voice also is enhanced and they begin to participate more in family and community decision-making processes.

These programs and processes are important for girls at risk of early marriage as they enable them to make more informed decisions, build their ability to stand up for their desires and aspirations, and provide them with viable alternatives to marriage. They are also important for married girls as they enable them to make more informed decisions related to the health and financial stability of their households, enable them to negotiate sexual behavior and other decisions with their husbands, and provide girls with opportunities to contribute to their households. Several programs have used these approaches to impact CEFM rates:

- The [Ishraq](#) program (implemented by Caritas, CEDPA, NCCM, Population Council, and Save the Children) uses group-based safe spaces to provide out-of-school girls with literacy, numeracy, English language, life-skills, sports, and financial literacy skills to enable girls to re-enter the formal school system and make and act on their own decisions.
- BRAC's [Social and Financial Empowerment for Adolescents \(SoFEA\)](#) program used group-based safe spaces to provide girls with livelihoods, financial literacy, and savings and loans skills so that they could become financially self-sustainable.
- CARE's [Towards Economic and Sexual Reproductive Health Outcomes for Adolescent Girls \(TESFA\)](#) program provided reproductive health information as well as savings and loans training to already married girls to enable them to participate in informed decision-making and negotiation processes with their husbands.<sup>290</sup>

*Previously it was our parents' decision. Although we wanted to pursue education, they refused. Now, I do not want my younger sisters to pass through what I passed through. If my parents prefer to send her for marriage, I will bring her here and she can go to school and she can be educated.*

–Girl who Participated in  
TESFA

## BOYS (INCLUDING BOYS AT RISK OF CEFM OR ALREADY MARRIED)

While child marriage primarily affects girls, it also impacts boys. Throughout the developing world, 156 million men were married as boys.<sup>291</sup> However, marriage for boys often does not signify an end in investments in their human capital.<sup>292</sup> Boys who marry young may see marriage as a marker of manhood and feel pressure to prove their fertility soon after being married.<sup>293</sup> Men who marry as boys may perpetuate unequal power dynamics in their marriage, as this behavior is all they know, curtailing the social and economic productivity of their household. Men who were married after age 18, but marry girls under the age of 18, may face similar challenges as those married as boys. These young couples may struggle with low levels of education; pressure to engage in sexual activity and bear children before the young bride is physically ready; and low productivity, contributing to food and financial insecurity.

As men and boys comprise the key constituency of husbands and future husbands, programs that aim to shift gender norms and change power dynamics within relationships can be successful in working with boys at risk of CEFM or boys who are already married. To prevent CEFM, programs can work with boys starting at a young age to develop gender-equitable norms that respect and value the contributions of women. One such program is the [Gender Equity Movement in Schools \(GEMS\)](#) implemented by ICRW and local partners in India.<sup>294</sup> The program aims to shift gender attitudes and norms, such as those related to roles and responsibilities of men and women, through a school-based curriculum involving participatory activities such as role plays, games, debates, journaling, and discussions. The program has shifted attitudes around appropriate roles for women, men, girls, and boys, and it has also increased support for a higher age of marriage for girls, greater male involvement in household work, increased opposition to gender discrimination, and improved reactions to violence.<sup>295</sup> Through such programs, boys can become allies for the rights of women and girls. Programs should also support communication among newly married young couples. In order not to perpetuate gender inequalities, poor health outcomes, and decreased household productivity, boys need to learn how to work with their new brides and promote values and actions that enhance the entire household's well-being.

*I used to think that boys should only do outdoor chores. Now I think that they should help women and work with them [at home].*

—Boy from GEMS school

Additionally, programs that address some of the same drivers that perpetuate CEFM for girls (such as improved accessibility and quality of schools or income generation and saving and loans programs) but include boys and their families, may relieve some of the social and financial pressures that motivate parents to marry off their children at a young age.

Research on how CEFM affects boys and what types of interventions are successful in reducing CEFM among boys, however, is sparse. More focus and investment is needed.

## MALE FAMILY MEMBERS, PARTICULARLY FATHERS AND BROTHERS

In many cultures throughout the developing world, men often have the final say in marriage-related decision-making. Structures of patriarchy often make it difficult for others, specifically women and girls, to influence or push back against the opinions of key male family members. Domestic roles prescribed by gender norms, as well as the social constructions of sexuality, may further limit what is accessible and possible for women and girls.<sup>296</sup> In many settings there is little communication between men and other family members, leaving few opportunities for family members to express their desires to male

decision-makers. This behavior can result in little to no shared decision-making at the household and community levels.<sup>297</sup> Because of their central role in decisions that impact girls' lives—including, but not limited to timing and conditions of marriage—it is critical to engage male family members, particularly fathers and brothers, in CEFM prevention and response efforts. Fathers should be engaged in dialogues to learn about the harmful effects of CEFM, the harmful norms that suppress rather than foster their daughters' potential, and what alternatives are available for their daughters.<sup>298</sup>

*In order for this harmful practice to end, we need to enlist the support of all the men who know this is wrong, and work together to persuade all those who don't.*

—Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Recent research by Promundo suggests that engaging men in caretaking roles may also reduce CEFM by creating closer relationships between fathers and their daughters.<sup>299</sup> While there are few programs that specifically engage fathers for child marriage prevention, World Vision and Promundo recently conducted formative research and designed a program manual for this exact purpose: [A More Equal Future: A MenCare Manual to Engage Fathers to Prevent Child Marriage in India](#). This manual provides concrete program guidance on how implementers can facilitate fathers' groups to change men's understanding of how gender inequality supports the institution of child marriage and impacts relationships, promotes men's caring roles at home, promotes healthier coping mechanisms and positive masculinities, promotes non-violent caring relationships, and promotes shared decision-making of household budgeting.<sup>300</sup>

Brothers often hold a similarly important role in household and community decision-making. Because of their roles as respected figures in the family, as well as proximity to and shared experiences with their sisters, brothers of girls who are at risk of CEFM have a unique role to become an ally for women and girls' rights and to influence how their families and communities view the role of girls.<sup>301</sup> Additionally, as younger boys are still forming their own gender norms, their social constructs are not as entrenched, providing an opportunity for the development of more gender-equitable attitudes and beliefs. Save the Children's [Choices](#) curriculum engaged adolescent boys and girls through group-based discussions and participatory activities to develop positive, mutually respectful gender attitudes and behaviors.<sup>302</sup> The program had the specific objective of creating brothers who support and empower their sisters. A pilot study in Egypt found that boys who participated in the program had a lower tolerance of violence against women and girls; and exhibited greater support of girls to make decisions about marriage, participate in sports, and travel with their brothers outside the home or to school.<sup>303</sup> Through the program boys became powerful advocates for their sisters within the household.

## PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

For the most part, parents and guardians want what is best for their children. When parents marry off their daughters at a young age, cultural traditions, financial pressures, or lack of other opportunities for their daughters often drive it.<sup>304</sup> In some cases, particularly in situations of crisis and conflict, parents may view early marriage as a form of protection.<sup>305</sup> Because of cultural traditions, parents may practice dowry or bride price, and use the marriage as a transaction to maintain or achieve a particular social or socioeconomic status.<sup>306</sup>

To stop CEFM, programs must educate parents and guardians on its harmful effects and what alternatives they can pursue for their daughters. Programs should engage parents and community members in group dialogues about the harmful gender norms that drive CEFM as well as a host of other harmful practices (such as GBV and FGM/C). Programs should

encourage parents to talk with their children about these issues and consider their children's opinions. These activities will not only allow parents, guardians, and community members to reflect on the consequences of gender inequality and CEFM, but they can also motivate collective action. The [Tostan](#) program in Senegal has used community dialogues to motivate community members to take public pledges against FGM/C and early and forced marriage.<sup>307</sup> Tostan uses a rights-based approach to engage community members in discussions and reflections related to cultural practices, the consequences of such practices, and how they can be stopped. In this way, programs can use social group pressure to create positive change.

Programs that involve parents or guardians of girls who are at risk of CEFM in income-generation opportunities or with financial support and/or incentives, remove some of the financial pressures that motivate families to marry off their daughters. Additionally, programs that provide education or economic opportunities for girls can help parents to see that viable alternatives to CEFM are available for their daughters. Campaigns to fight the practices of dowry and bride price, such as [Breakthrough's campaign against dowry](#), can engage parents in shifting these cultural norms.<sup>308</sup>

## IN-LAWS AND OTHER KEY GATEKEEPERS

In-laws and other gatekeepers have particularly important roles in encouraging marriage formation and influencing the lives of newly married adolescents. In many cases, mothers-in-law can pressure girls to get pregnant, coerce them to drop out of school to take care of household tasks, and generally have power over decisions that affect young brides.<sup>309</sup> Programs should engage mothers-in-law, aunts, and other key gatekeepers and educate them about the harmful health effects associated with early and frequent pregnancy. These programs should incorporate discussions related to social norms and decision-making and encourage mothers-in-law to reflect on how allowing young brides to make their own decisions can improve the household's social, economic, and health outcomes. Pathfinder's [Promoting Change in Reproductive Behavior \(PRACHAR\)](#) project engaged mothers-in-law in reproductive health home visits to inform them of concerns for young couples and began to shift social norms.<sup>310</sup>

## TEACHERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Teachers and school administrators have an important role to play in helping to shape students' beliefs and norms around what is acceptable behavior and what roles are appropriate for boys/men and girls/women.<sup>311</sup> Teachers can serve as role models, demonstrating how to treat boys and girls equally, value everyone's contributions, and foster confidence among all students. Teachers can also provide support and foster self-confidence in students, giving them the ability to form their own opinions and stand up for their beliefs when negotiating marriage decisions and sexual behaviors. Teachers and school administrators can also have a critical influence over students' education and norm development by choosing and using curriculum that promotes gender-equitable norms and lessons. Curriculum that presents women as empowered equals, rather than submissive wives can build girls' self-efficacy to form and act on their own dreams for the future. USAID recently developed a [Guide for Promoting Gender Equality and Inclusiveness in Teaching and Learning Materials](#), which can be used to improve equitable learning.

*Women and girls are not machines,  
just meant to sew or bear children.  
They deserve an education, the  
chance to be more.*

—Moroccan teacher

## COMMUNITY, TRADITIONAL, AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS

There are many key players at the community level who are outside of the family structure, but still have a strong influence on CEFM. Marriage-related decisions are often tied to traditional or cultural practices. Cultural, traditional, and religious leaders are often involved in helping families form marriage unions and may even preside over the marriage ceremony.<sup>312</sup> Additionally, in many settings where CEFM is prevalent, community members defer to customary law and seek information and guidance from cultural and religious leaders rather than adhering to the government's laws.<sup>313</sup> Because of their important role as keepers of social behaviors, it is essential to engage cultural, traditional, and religious leaders in CEFM prevention and response efforts. These groups should be educated on the rights of women and girls, on the harmful outcomes associated with CEFM, and how CEFM impacts larger community development. Engaging these leaders in open dialogue provides them with the opportunity to express their viewpoints, challenge themselves and each other, and develop gender-equitable norms. In Nepal, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) created a [public service announcement that features Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim leaders](#) denouncing child marriage.<sup>314</sup> Another program example being adapted to address CEFM is World Vision's [Channels of Hope](#) program in East Africa. The program recruits and trains community members to mobilize faith leaders through a process of sensitization, strategizing, and empowering to spread awareness of HIV/AIDS and to develop and implement response action plans among their congregation and community.<sup>315</sup> Channels of Hope is adding messaging around the harms of CEFM and how faith communities can work together to prevent CEFM.

*As soon as one learns, in villages or in schools, of a case of child marriage, we are notified. I have my village chiefs, my customary chiefs who try to stop it. If they can't solve the problem, they come to me. That's when I summon the parents and all concerned to dissuade them. Our work is mainly dissuasion, raising awareness and explanation.*

—Local Sultan

## MEMBERS OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AND JUDICIAL COMMUNITY

In places where there is a minimum age of marriage law, members of the law enforcement, judicial, and police community have a key role to play in enforcing those and other related laws.<sup>316</sup> Law enforcement and judicial officers should be educated on CEFM-related laws, such as minimum age of marriage, birth and marriage registration, policies related to school re-entry, inheritance laws, and GBV, specifically rape. Programs should include these topics in formal trainings as well as provide ongoing refresher and continuing education trainings to enhance implementation and enforcement. Programs should also promote awareness-raising and public education to inform people of their rights so that they can hold the law enforcement, judicial, and police communities accountable.<sup>317</sup>

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE MEDIA

Depending on the program approach or context, several other key stakeholders should be engaged in CEFM prevention and response at the community level. Some of these people and groups include civil society; health workers, including doctors, nurses, administrative staff, and community health or outreach workers; teachers and school administrators; agricultural extension officers; child protection officers; peacekeepers and police in emergency settings; and the media. In some cases, programs should specifically train women to perform service provision, as vulnerable girls will be more comfortable and more trusting of female staff. Each of these stakeholders should be educated about the negative

impacts of CEFM on individuals and communities. Programs should also encourage these stakeholders to target services for girls who are at-risk of CEFM or are already married and educate the stakeholders on how to appropriately interact with women and girls who have experienced CEFM. Civil society and the media should be encouraged to sensitize and mobilize communities around the harms of CEFM, how families can avoid CEFM, and what alternatives are available for adolescent girls and boys. Because of their proximity to local communities, civil society and community-based organizations should use their expertise and insights to design context-specific initiatives that reduce CEFM, mitigate its effects, meet the needs of married adolescents, and use knowledge and insights to influence national-level initiatives and policies.<sup>318</sup> Civil society can also create and provide support services related to education, health, counseling, and income-generation opportunities for already married adolescents.

## WOMEN LEADERS AND WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

While male family members are often the main decision-makers within the household, women often have some input in these decisions as well. In many cases mothers, aunts, and grandmothers may support early marriage for the same reasons that fathers do: cultural traditions, economic pressures, and lack of alternative opportunities for their daughters. However, having experienced some of the harmful effects of CEFM themselves, women may be more likely to support CEFM prevention and response efforts. Recent research suggests that literacy training among mothers may contribute to delaying daughters' marriage because of changes in newly literate women's communication skills, ability to influence family decisions, and knowledge of the rights of women and girls.<sup>319</sup>

For women to become champions for reducing CEFM, programs should engage them in group dialogues to discuss their experiences with marriage, the harmful effects of CEFM, and alternatives that exist in their communities. While women can be strong advocates for girls' rights, these programs will be more sustainable if both males and females are involved. Programs should educate women about harmful health, educational, and economic outcomes of CEFM and how delaying marriage can help girls transition into a healthier and more productive adulthood.

As women can be strong advocates for the rights of girls and reducing CEFM, programs should specifically partner with women's groups. These groups should be educated on women and girls' rights, the harms of CEFM, and available alternatives for girls. Programs should support these women's groups to raise awareness, create alternative opportunities for girls (such as improved and more accessible schools or income-generating opportunities), or create support systems for already married girls.

## LAWMAKERS AND PARLIAMENTARIANS

As the creators of laws and policies, lawmakers and parliamentarians are an important group to engage in creating a legal framework that prevents and responds to CEFM. In cases where there are exceptions to minimum age of marriage laws, such as allowing girls to be married under age 18 with the consent of a parent, lawmakers should strengthen the laws to be more absolute. While minimum age of marriage laws are a necessary starting point, there are several other related laws and policies that can be developed, strengthened, and implemented to reduce CEFM, improve legal conditions for married adolescents, and contribute to gender equality.<sup>320</sup> Programs should work with civil society organizations to train activists

to advocate for laws and policies to safeguard the rights of women and girls. These programs should educate activists about relevant legal issues and create tools (including reports, briefs, messages, and talking points) that advocates can use when meeting with lawmakers and parliamentarians. Relevant laws and policies include, but are not limited to: inheritance, land ownership, birth and marriage registration, payment of dowry or a bride price, school re-entry, contraception use among those who are under 18 or unmarried, divorce, and violence. Advocates should push for reviews of and amendments to national family and marriage laws and policies that discriminate against women and girls, and the creation of stronger birth and marriage registration systems.

*When attitudes begin to shift from within communities this way, then people start to have hope. And politicians gain more courage to act. Without support from community leaders, parliamentarians fear passing laws will cost them votes and they will lose power to make any difference at all.*

*We need to convince politicians that they should pass laws to protect and empower girls, and that the people will support them if they do.*

–Child bride activist, Mereso Kilusu

## GOVERNMENTS

All governments have the responsibility to adhere to international conventions and agreements related to CEFM as well as to develop a legal framework that enables them to implement and enforce relevant laws and policies. Where CEFM is prevalent, governments should strengthen the capacity and training of key institutions and officials to implement and enforce national legislation and policies related to CEFM.<sup>321</sup> Just as USAID is integrating CEFM prevention and response throughout its program sectors, so too should host governments. As CEFM is a crosscutting issue and can both influence and be impacted by efforts within various sectors, governments should prioritize CEFM within country and sector strategies.

To create a concise strategy for reducing CEFM, countries should establish national action plans that outline comprehensive, coherent, and sustained activities that build on evidence and practices over time.<sup>322</sup> These plans can build off the [Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Asia](#) (developed by government representatives from the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation–SAARC) and the [Draft National Plan of Action to Prevent Child Marriages in India](#).<sup>323</sup> Experience can also be drawn from Nepal’s process of developing a [national strategy](#) to end child marriage. Programs and advocates should provide technical assistance to governments when developing national action plans; UN Women’s [Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence Against Women](#) can serve as a guide.<sup>324</sup> This handbook states that national action plans should acknowledge that violence against women and girls is a violation of human rights, define violence against women and girls according to international norms, and respond to State obligations under relevant human rights treaties. Programs and campaigns should also provide governments with opportunities to learn from each other’s experiences, leverage efforts, and develop regional strategies.

*Different government, non-government and social organisations have to make a joint initiative. Advocacy is a big issue, to make the people aware that with child marriage there is a possibility of risk and how it is beneficial if it is not done. All these issues have to be promoted; this is the big thing.*

–Officer-in-Charge, Bangladesh

USAID missions and other donor governments can work with host governments to understand the importance of integrating CEFM throughout their work and provide technical assistance for this integration. USAID should assist governments in creating the aforementioned national action plans to reduce CEFM. USAID and other donor governments can help host governments to access resources to integrate CEFM into policies and programs by providing funding, creating partnerships, and using relationships to leverage funding and resources from other entities. Programs should also assist governments to focus on establishing institutions and frameworks that promote gender equality and reduce CEFM (such as strong education and health systems) and available employment opportunities.

## **2.6 PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS FOR REGIONAL VARIATIONS AND KEY COUNTRY PROFILES**

To design programs and policies that effectively address CEFM, implementers should identify the unique drivers and solutions to CEFM at regional, national, and community levels. While the overarching causes and consequences of CEFM were outlined in Part 1 of this guide, there is vast diversity in the social, economic, and cultural factors associated with CEFM in each region of the world. Identifying causes of CEFM may require formative research to understand what pressures girls, boys, and their families face that motivate them to marry at an early age. Once these drivers have been identified, program designers can develop appropriate interventions. For example, if it is clear that the main cause of CEFM in a particular region is economic constraints on families, program designers may include a form of economic incentive to motivate families to delay their daughters' marriages. Alternatively, in another context, religious leaders may have a prominent role in promoting and performing early marriages. In this case, program designers may specifically work with religious and cultural leaders to educate them on the harms of CEFM and mobilize them to advocate for delaying marriage. While programming that prevents CEFM is essential, many adolescents throughout the world are already married. Married adolescents are often socially isolated, lack education, and experience limited autonomy. Consequently, programming that targets the needs of married adolescents is also crucial.

USAID's CEFM prevention and response efforts have focused on countries where there is a high prevalence of child marriage. The following profiles provide samples of content (statistics and narrative) that could be included in a CEFM-focused section of a gender analysis and used as model snapshots of specific country contexts. These examples outline some of the context-specific drivers of CEFM, highlight programmatic efforts that address CEFM, and providing examples of how to assess programs that may not be striving directly to impact CEFM, but have the potential to do so with minor adjustments.

These examples represent countries where USAID has at least one current, dedicated CEFM program.

## SOUTH ASIA

Throughout South Asia, approximately 1 in 2 girls is married off before the age of 18.<sup>325</sup> South Asia is home to some of the countries with the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world—Bangladesh has the highest prevalence of girls married before 18 in the region (65 percent), followed by India (47 percent), Nepal (41 percent), and Afghanistan (40 percent).<sup>326</sup> In addition, due to the fact that many countries in South Asia are highly populated, the highest absolute number of girls at risk is concentrated in South Asia with over 25 million girls at risk of early marriage—more than twice as many as in any other region.<sup>327</sup> While marriage under 18 is still very prevalent, over the past three decades the prevalence of girls married before 15 has dropped from 32 percent to 17 percent.<sup>328</sup>

Widespread poverty and deeply entrenched cultural traditions that promote patriarchy fuel the practice throughout the region.<sup>329</sup> CEFM is more prevalent in rural than urban areas, and the greatest disparity between those married before and after age 18 is wealth: the poorest girls are four times more likely to marry before 18 than the wealthiest ones.<sup>330</sup> Inequitable gender norms and expectations, such as the low value of girls and women, narrow roles as wife and mother, and protecting girls' chastity to preserve family honor, limit girls' voice and agency, access to education, and economic opportunity. Young brides usually have particularly low status in their married households. The practice of dowry is very common in South Asia and early marriages are typically arranged and/or forced. Dowry conflicts can place girls in the middle of a dispute and leave them vulnerable to poor treatment and violence from their husbands and in-laws.

## BANGLADESH

### CEFM in Bangladesh by the Numbers<sup>331</sup>

<b>LEGAL AGE AT MARRIAGE:</b>	18 for women, 21 for men (with religious exceptions to the law)
<b>GIRLS MARRIED BY 18:</b>	65%; an estimated 4.9 million girls
<b>GIRLS MARRIED BY 15:</b>	29%
<b>MEDIAN AGE AT MARRIAGE FOR GIRLS:</b>	16.6 (16.4 in rural areas and 17.4 in urban areas)
<b>MEDIAN AGE AT FIRST BIRTH:</b>	18.9
<b>ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY:</b>	30%
<b>NET ENROLLMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL:</b>	Female: 98%   Male: 94% <sup>332</sup>
<b>NET ENROLLMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOL:</b>	Female: 51%   Male: 44% <sup>333</sup>

The legal age of marriage in Bangladesh is largely ignored, mostly due to low awareness of the law, falsification of children's ages on marriage registrations (made possible by uneven birth registration and vital documentation, particularly in poor and rural areas), and poor legal enforcement.<sup>334</sup> In Bangladesh, CEFM is perpetuated by deeply-rooted and intertwined cultural and economic factors. Most marriages are arranged, with fathers typically driving the arrangement and negotiation process. A study by Plan International found that "traditional gender norms such as the social and cultural values placed on morality, female virginity, and family honor are also influential as child marriage is often perceived as a means of controlling female sexual behavior and untoward attention towards young females

### BANGLADESH CDCS OBJECTIVES

- Citizen's confidence in governance institutions increased
- Food security improved
- Health status improved
- Responsiveness to climate change

by men.”<sup>335</sup> Though the practice of dowry (the bride’s family provides assets to the groom’s family as part of the marriage exchange) is illegal, it is still common. And as girls age, the dowry escalates, incentivizing families to marry off their daughters at younger ages.<sup>336</sup> Once married, most girls are forced to leave school and move to the home of their husbands’ family, where they will serve as domestic labor, with little connection to social networks outside the home. Many married girls are expected to begin childbearing almost immediately. Following the wedding, conflict between the bride and groom’s families over payment of the dowry also puts girls at risk of retribution and violence.<sup>337</sup> Girls’ mental health is also at risk because of isolation, lack of social support, lack of voice and agency, and exposure to abuse.<sup>338</sup>

## USAID PROGRAMS TARGETING CEFM IN BANGLADESH

### Protecting Human Rights<sup>339</sup>

#### **Plan USA**

This USAID-funded program seeks to reduce CEFM and GBV by improving the legal and policy environment. The project spreads public awareness and engages civil participation to support improved legislation and enforcement of laws against child marriage and GBV. The program also builds the capacity of government officials, police, prosecutors, judges, community groups, and religious and community leaders to act, engage, and train others to protect human rights. This project aligns well with one of USAID’s key objectives in Bangladesh: to increase citizen confidence in governance institutions. This link is accomplished by increasing accountability and transparency in public institutions, improving access to justice, and fostering a more responsive elected local government.

### Evidence<sup>340</sup>

#### **Population Council**

With USAID support, the Improving Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) project is implemented under the Population Council’s global Evidence project. The project conducts research and knowledge synthesis and coordinates partners and stakeholders to improve ASRH outcomes in Bangladesh. In collaboration with the government of Bangladesh’s Directorate General of Family Planning, the project aims to contribute to improving ASRH and related outcomes by identifying research and programming gaps, and documenting high-impact programs with the potential to be scaled up. The project has an explicit focus on underserved and emerging vulnerable populations (such as, girls at risk of CEFM, married adolescents, and adolescents living in slums) that face vulnerabilities to early marriage, adolescent fertility, GBV, under-nutrition, and lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services.

### Best Schools for Girls<sup>341</sup>

#### **Independent Television Services (ITVS)**

This USAID-funded program, which is part of the Women and Girls Lead Global Partnership, consists of a campaign to promote girl-friendly educational environments in communities with high rates of child marriage. The campaign targets students, parents, educators and government officials and is driven largely by youth activists trained as film facilitators. The campaign promotes a competition among schools to receive the “Best Schools” certification and uses film screenings and rallies to sensitize and mobilize communities on the importance of girls’ education and to spark conversations on sensitive issues such as child marriage

The **SPRING** initiative provides economic empowerment opportunities to girls and is implemented in Bangladesh. It is further explained in this guide’s [\*Economic Growth and Workforce Development\*](#) section.

## INDIA

### CEFM in India by the Numbers<sup>342</sup>

LEGAL AGE AT MARRIAGE:	18 for women, 21 for men (though there are religious exceptions)
GIRLS MARRIED BY 18:	47%; an estimated 26.4 million girls <sup>343</sup>
GIRLS MARRIED BY 15:	29%
MEDIAN AGE AT MARRIAGE FOR GIRLS:	18.5 (17.8 in rural areas and over 19 in urban areas)
MEDIAN AGE AT FIRST BIRTH:	18.9
ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY:	16%*

\*Girls 15 to 19 currently pregnant or who have had a child

Although India ranks 12th globally in CEFM incidence, due to the sheer size of the population the country is home to one in three of the world's child brides.<sup>344</sup> Overall, CEFM is trending slightly downward. However, while the prevalence of girls married before age 15 has decreased, the rates for girls married before age 18 have actually increased.<sup>345</sup> India is a large country with an array of long-standing family-formation and marriage practices, but arranged marriage and dowry (the bride's family provides assets to the groom's family as part of the marriage exchange) are widespread. Conflicts over dowry leave girls vulnerable to retribution from their husbands and in-laws, and young brides are particularly disempowered in their married households. Inequitable gender norms and expectations (such as the low value of girls and women, the girls' prescribed roles as wife and mother, and protecting girls' chastity to preserve family honor) limit girls' voice and agency, access to education, and economic opportunity. Economic factors—including poverty, dowry, and wedding expenses—are also significant drivers of CEFM in India. Household wealth is an important factor among all wealth quintiles: three in four girls from the poorest quintile were married by age 18, compared with just 16 percent among the wealthiest households.<sup>346</sup> Also, education is strongly correlated with early marriage in India: among women ages 20 to 24, 77 percent of those with no education and 62 percent with only primary education were married by age 18, compared to 27 percent who had secondary education or higher.<sup>347</sup>

#### INDIA CDCS OBJECTIVES

- Health: Increase the capacity of India's health system to improve the health of vulnerable populations in India
- Climate change: Accelerate India's transition to a low-emissions economy
- Impact development innovation in India in a range of sectors
- Global diffusion of development innovations proven in India

#### USAID PROGRAM TARGETING CEFM IN INDIA

##### **Impact on Marriage: Program Assessment of Conditional Cash Transfers (IMPACCT)<sup>348</sup> Government of Haryana & ICRW**

Initiated in 1994, the government of the state of Haryana, India began implementing a conditional cash transfer (CCT) program—Apni Beti Apni Dhan (ABAD), which provided families with a small payment upon the birth of a girl, as well as a bond redeemable if the girl remained unmarried at the age of 18. USAID funded an evaluation, conducted by ICRW, to assess the effectiveness of the program in delaying marriage, keeping girls in school, and shifting social norms around the value of a girl. This is one of the first impact evaluations in this area to assess the effectiveness of the cash transfers specifically as an incentive to delay the age of marriage for girls until 18.

USAID Program in India with Potential for CEFM Integration	Potential linkages with CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p><b><u>Read-Engage-Achieve-Dream Alliance (READ Alliance)</u></b><sup>349</sup>  <b>Center for Knowledge Societies (CKS)</b></p> <p>The READ Alliance is a joint initiative between USAID and CKS that aims to address the challenge of early reading in India. Through the READ Alliance, USAID supports multiple projects that employ innovative approaches to strengthening reading skills of low-income, primary school-aged children. The READ Alliance uses an innovative approach to develop public and private sector partnerships to deliver early reading interventions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the READ Alliance and other early education initiatives, USAID has the opportunity to invest in <b>program design</b> that not only improves early grade reading, but that also aims to change gender norms that drive CEFM among young students. Gender norms begin forming at a very young age and school-based interventions are well-placed to model and reinforce more gender-equitable relationships and norms, ultimately contributing to a reduction in CEFM.</li> <li>• <b>Program implementation</b> should specifically work to educate parents about the importance of girls' education and the linkages between education and reduction in CEFM. Programs like the READ Alliance should ensure that girls are gaining the literacy skills they will need to continue to higher levels of education.</li> <li>• Long-term <b>program evaluation</b> could be used to explore how improvements in early grade reading influence marriage formation and marriage relationships later in life.</li> <li>• The READ Alliance and other similar programs could then use this information to <b>learn and adapt</b> programming to build skills and shift norms that will help to reduce CEFM for students later in life.</li> </ul>

## NEPAL

### CEFMs in Nepal by the Numbers<sup>350</sup>

LEGAL AGE AT MARRIAGE:	20 for women and men (18 with parental consent)
GIRLS MARRIED BY 18:	41%
GIRLS MARRIED BY 15:	10%
MEDIAN AGE AT MARRIAGE FOR GIRLS:	18.9
ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY:	17%*
NET ENROLLMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL:	Female: 97%   Male: 58% <sup>351</sup>
NET ENROLLMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOL:	Female: 60%   Male: 58% <sup>352</sup>

\*Girls 15 to 19 currently pregnant or who have had a child

Despite the diversity of ethnic groups across Nepal, some marriage traditions are common throughout the country. As is the cases of neighboring India and Bangladesh, the parents of the bride and groom arrange most marriages and dowry or a similar transaction is typical.<sup>353</sup>

CEFMs is more prevalent in rural than urban areas, and it is particularly high in the mountainous regions and foothills of Nepal.<sup>354</sup> Caste is also an important factor, placing increased pressure on girls of lower castes to be married at younger ages.<sup>355</sup> Upon marriage, girls are generally removed from school, relocated to the homes of their husbands or in-laws, and begin providing domestic labor there.<sup>356</sup> Unlike their counterparts in India and Bangladesh, girls in Nepal have high rates of primary and secondary enrollment, and their workforce participation is similarly positive, with nearly 60 percent of 20- to 24-year-old women earning

### USAID NEPAL CDCS OBJECTIVES

- More inclusive and effective governance
- Inclusive and sustainable economic growth to reduce extreme poverty
- Increased human capital

a wage outside the home in 2006.<sup>357</sup> Girls who were married early, however, have lower educational attainment than women who married later, and married girls and women are less likely to earn an income outside the home than those who are unmarried.<sup>358</sup>

## USAID PROGRAM TARGETING CEFM IN NEPAL

### Chunauti<sup>359</sup>

#### CARE

This USAID-funded program aimed to decrease the harmful practice of child marriage and strengthen the enabling environment at the national and district levels to combat child marriage and other forms of GBV. The program used behavior change communication (BCC) campaigns, peer educators, engagement of formal and non-formal leaders, child marriage eradication committees, anti-GBV forums, children’s clubs, and schools to transform community norms. The program used these platforms to educate about the harms of CEFM and also to motivate people to advocate for the establishment and enforcement of laws and policies that address CEFM and related forms of GBV.

The **SPRING** initiative provides economic empowerment opportunities to girls and is implemented in Nepal. It is further explained in this guide’s *Economic Growth and Workforce Development* section.

USAID Program in Nepal with Potential for CEFM Integration	Potential linkages with CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p><b>Safe Schools Nepal<sup>360</sup></b></p> <p>In Nepal, USAID aspires to reduce the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) toward children and adolescents in schools. The program plans to accomplish this through decreasing the acceptability of GBV among students, teachers, school administrators, and parents while implementing policies and tools that address and monitor GBV.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In educating about and advocating against violence against children, the Safe Schools curriculum could be <b>designed and implemented</b> to include education and sensitization about CEFM as a form of violence, as well as how CEFM can often lead to higher risk of other forms of violence.</li> <li>• <b>Program implementation</b> approaches should not only educate and sensitize about harmful forms of GBV, but also strive to broadly create more gender-equitable norms.</li> <li>• CEFM could be integrated into <b>program monitoring and evaluation</b> to understand whether the Safe Schools program has an impact on delaying CEFM and meeting the needs of married girls. Through monitoring data, the program should track age, sex, marital status, and experience of GBV. Through evaluation data, the program could seek to measure if there are changes in attitudes related to marriage formation, decision-making abilities, and gender equitable relationships among program participants compared to non-participants.</li> </ul>

## EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

In East and Southern Africa, over one in three girls is married before the age of 18.<sup>361</sup> While there have been slight declines in the prevalence of child marriage in East and Southern Africa in the last three decades, due to rapid population growth, if trends do not shift, the number of girls at risk of child marriage will increase over the next few decades.<sup>362</sup>

A host of cultural and economic causes that vary widely between and within countries drive CEFM in the region. In some contexts, girls are sexually active before marriage, and early marriage can be the result of an unplanned pregnancy to avoid dishonor or pregnancy out of wedlock. In other settings, marriage almost always precedes pregnancy. Though the relationship between education and CEFM is complex, girls with secondary or higher education are five times more likely to be unmarried at age 18 than those with no education.<sup>363</sup> In areas where HIV is prevalent, girls who are married before 18 are more likely to contract HIV than their unmarried counterparts. A study in Kenya and Zambia found that married girls ages 15 to 19 were 75 percent more likely to have contracted HIV than sexually active, unmarried girls.<sup>364</sup> In some countries throughout East and Southern Africa, bride price is practiced, wherein the groom's family pays the bride's family during the marriage transaction.

### ETHIOPIA

#### CEFM in Ethiopia by the Numbers<sup>365</sup>

<b>LEGAL AGE AT MARRIAGE:</b>	18 for women and men (no exceptions for parental/court consent)
<b>GIRLS MARRIED BY 18:</b>	41% (rural: 49%; urban: 22%)
<b>GIRLS MARRIED BY 15:</b>	16%
<b>MEDIAN AGE AT MARRIAGE FOR GIRLS:</b>	19 (as low as 15.1 in Amhara region)
<b>MEDIAN AGE AT FIRST BIRTH:</b>	19.5
<b>ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY:</b>	12%*

\*Girls 15 to 19 currently pregnant or who have had a child

CEFM is widespread throughout Ethiopia, but its prevalence has been on a downward trend in recent years, with a 16 percent decline between 2005 and 2011.<sup>366</sup> Though FGM/C is now illegal, it is estimated that as many as 74 percent of women have been circumcised.<sup>367</sup> Polygyny is less common, but one in 10 married women reporting living in a marriage with at least one other wife.<sup>368</sup> Ethiopia's approximately 80 ethnic groups practice a wide variety of family formation traditions, but most marriages are arranged. The families of the prospective bride and groom most commonly negotiate the marriage, and a bride price is frequently exchanged. Though not prevalent and mostly limited to Ethiopia's southern regions and the Oromia region, marriage by abduction is known to take place. In these cases, girls are kidnapped, raped, and subsequently forced to marry the perpetrator: "the young woman is then raped by her abductor or gang raped, after which she and her family feel they have no choice but to agree to a marriage because the victim's perceived marriageability is severely compromised."<sup>369</sup> CEFM is prevalent among all but the wealthiest households, and lack of education is strongly correlated with early marriage: 63 percent of girls with no education are married before age 18, compared to 38 percent for those with primary education and 10 percent for girls with secondary or higher.

#### ETHIOPIA CDCS OBJECTIVES

- Increased economic growth with resiliency in rural Ethiopia
- Increased utilization of quality health services
- Improved learning outcomes

## USAID PROGRAMS TARGETING CEFM IN ETHIOPIA

### Healthy Unions<sup>370</sup>

#### CARE Ethiopia

This USAID-supported program addressed the interlinked and harmful traditional practices of bride abduction, bride price, and child marriage by promoting community conversations and raising awareness about the harmful effects of these practices. The Healthy Unions project implemented interventions at schools in partnership with government education offices, parent-teacher associations, and school clubs. Self-help savings groups taught school-aged girls about basic finance management and provided a platform for empowered women and girls to speak out and take collective action against harmful traditional practices, such as child marriage. The project also provided paralegal training for 650 community volunteers to advocate for the human and legal rights of women and girls and to ensure their voices were heard.

### Increasing the Age of Marriage<sup>371</sup>

#### Population Council

This six-year USAID-supported project, based on the Population Council's Berhane Hewan program, is assessing the effectiveness of various approaches to preventing CEFM in three sub-Saharan African countries—Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Burkina Faso. In Ethiopia the project is focused on the Amhara Region, and includes engaging religious leaders, holding community conversations to increase community awareness and engagement, promoting girls' education by providing school supplies, and a conditional transfer of two chickens following each year of participation in the program. A rigorous evaluation with baseline and endline surveys will measure the effects in intervention and control groups, and cost data is being tracked to enable a cost-effectiveness study.

The **SPRING** initiative provides economic empowerment opportunities to girls and is implemented in Ethiopia but is further explained in this guide's [Economic Growth and Workforce Development](#) section.

USAID Program in Ethiopia with Potential for CEFM Integration	Potential linkages with CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p><b>Integrated Family Health Program (IFHP+)<sup>372</sup></b>  <b>Pathfinder International</b></p> <p>IFHP+ is a USAID-funded health program that works to strengthen integrated family planning, maternal, newborn and child health, and HIV/AIDS as well as reproductive health services at the community level. The program also supports government initiatives to strengthen systems and train health care workers. IFHP+ seeks to improve health practices at the household and community level; improve availability and quality of health services, products, and information; and strengthen key elements of the health system. To date, 14,220 early marriages have been canceled or deferred, more than 3,900 community and religious leaders have been sensitized on health and gender issues, and there have been nearly 2.8 million visits to youth-friendly sites. The project has also assisted more than 11 million new users of family planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During <b>program design</b>, family planning, maternal, newborn and child health, and HIV/AIDS services could be targeted to married adolescents, as this population is at a heightened risk for reproductive health morbidities and often lacks access to needed health information.</li> <li>• <b>Program implementation</b> could include training healthcare workers to educate community members of harms associated with CEFM, as well as how to respond to the unique needs of married adolescents.</li> <li>• Integrating CEFM in <b>program monitoring and evaluation</b> through measurement of CEFM-related outcomes, and at a minimum age, sex, and marital status of program participants, would allow implementers to understand whether program activities are impacting CEFM. This would allow for <b>learning and adapting</b> to better target program activities and approaches to the needs of participants.</li> </ul>

## TANZANIA

### CEFM in Tanzania by the Numbers<sup>373</sup>

LEGAL AGE AT MARRIAGE:	15 for girls, 18 for men
GIRLS MARRIED BY 18:	37%
GIRLS MARRIED BY 15:	7%
MEDIAN AGE AT MARRIAGE FOR GIRLS:	19.2 (18.5 in rural areas)
MEDIAN AGE AT FIRST BIRTH:	19.5
ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY:	23%*
NET ENROLLMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL:	Female: 98%   Male: 98% <sup>374</sup>
NET ENROLLMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOL:	Female: 26%   Male: 30% <sup>375</sup>

\*Girls 15 to 19 currently pregnant or who have had a child

Though slowly declining, CEFM is still prevalent throughout most of Tanzania, particularly in rural areas where as many as three in five girls are married before 18—twice as many as their urban counterparts.<sup>376</sup> While FGM/C is illegal in Tanzania, the World Health Organization estimates that 15 percent of women have undergone circumcision, which traditionally links to marriageability, is more common in rural than urban areas, and more prevalent among the poorest and least educated.<sup>377</sup> Bride price, or the transfer of money, livestock, or materials to the family of the bride, is also a common practice. Education and household wealth are associated with CEFM. Among women with no education, more than 60 percent were married before age 18. And nearly 40 percent of women with only a primary education were married early. Comparatively, only five percent of girls with a secondary education or higher are married young.<sup>378</sup> And for all wealth quintiles, household wealth is strongly correlated with girls' likelihood of being married before age 18; one in two women of the poorest group are married before age 18, compared to just under one in five among the wealthiest families.<sup>379</sup>

#### USAID TANZANIA CDCS OBJECTIVES

- Tanzanian women and youth empowered
- Inclusive broad-based economic growth sustained
- Effective democratic governance improved

### USAID PROGRAM TARGETING CEFM IN TANZANIA

#### Increasing the Age of Marriage<sup>380</sup>

##### Population Council

USAID is supporting this six-year program that builds upon the work of Berhane Hewan, a Population Council program in Ethiopia. The current program is being implemented in Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Burkina Faso to assess the effectiveness of various approaches, including community engagement and economic incentives, to prevent CEFM. In Tanzania the program is focused in the Tabora region, and includes awareness raising and community sensitization through trained leaders, vouchers for basic medical care and family planning, promotion of girls' education by providing school supplies or uniforms, 'smart girls' clubs for in-school girls and non-formal education for out-of-school girls, and a conditional transfer of a goat after two years of program participation. A rigorous evaluation will measure the program's effects in intervention and control groups. Cost data is being tracked to enable a cost-effectiveness component of the evaluation.

The SPRING initiative provides economic empowerment opportunities to girls and is implemented in Tanzania. It is further explained in this report's *Economic Growth and Workforce Development* section.

<b>USAID Program in Tanzania with Potential for CEFM Integration</b>	<b>Potential linkages with CEFM throughout the Program Cycle</b>
<p><b>NAFAKA</b><sup>381</sup>  <b>ACDI/VOCA, CRS, IFDC and FIPS</b></p> <p>The USAID-supported NAFAKA Tanzania Staples Value Chain program promotes the competitiveness of the maize and rice value chains, to improve productivity and earnings and benefit smallholder farmers, including men, women, and youth in rural households. Increased availability and access to food—along with nutritional education at the household level—aim to decrease food insecurity and malnutrition in rural areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEFM could be integrated in <b>program design</b> by targeting to families experiencing food insecurity who have adolescent daughters, as lack of financial and food resources can be a driver for CEFM. Additionally, programs should target already married adolescents and pregnant/lactating adolescents as this population often lacks access to agricultural information and livelihood opportunities, and are at risk of poor health outcomes due to malnutrition and early childbearing.</li> <li>• During the <b>program implementation</b> phase NAFAKA should train and deploy female trainers as young women may better relate to and feel more comfortable with them.</li> <li>• Through <b>program monitoring</b>, NAFAKA could collect data on age, sex, and marital status of smallholder farmers and their families to then <b>learn and adapt</b> programming to meet the needs of those at risk of CEFM and married girls. Monitoring data could also track nutritional status among various household members to see if there are differences between males and females, particularly among young brides.</li> <li>• Through <b>program evaluation</b>, NAFAKA could measure whether the added food security experienced by program participants serves as a protector from CEFM, as compared to those who do not participate in the program.</li> </ul>

## WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

Over 40 percent of girls in West and Central Africa marry before age 18.<sup>382</sup> While there have been some declines in the prevalence of girls married before 18 over the past three decades, the prevalence still remains stubbornly high.<sup>383</sup> Countries throughout West and Central Africa have some of the most extreme rates of child marriage- the prevalence of marriage before 18 is 76 percent in Niger and 68 percent in Chad and the Central African Republic.<sup>384</sup> Girls in this region are more likely to marry at very young ages (9 to 12) than those in other parts of the world.<sup>385</sup> They are more likely to be illiterate, to be younger when giving birth to their first child, and to have more children over their lifetime than those in other regions. Many girls throughout West and Central Africa marry into polygynous marriages, further limiting their power and agency in their relationship.<sup>386</sup> CEFM is often accompanied by the harmful traditional practice of FGM/C throughout the region.<sup>387</sup>

## BURKINA FASO

### CEFM in Burkina Faso by the Numbers<sup>388</sup>

LEGAL AGE AT MARRIAGE:	17 for girls, 20 for men (15 and 20 with approval from the court)
GIRLS MARRIED BY 18:	52%
GIRLS MARRIED BY 15:	10%
MEDIAN AGE AT MARRIAGE FOR GIRLS:	17.9
MEDIAN AGE AT FIRST BIRTH:	19.5
ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY:	24%*
NET ENROLLMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL:	Female: 65%   Male: 68% <sup>389</sup>
NET ENROLLMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOL:	Female: 18%   Male: 22% <sup>390</sup>

\*Girls 15 to 19 currently pregnant or who have had a child

In addition to a high prevalence of CEFM, Burkina Faso has high rates of FGM/C and polygyny. Though FGM/C is illegal in the country, UNICEF estimates that 76 percent of women there have been circumcised—one of the highest rates in the world.<sup>391</sup> More than 40 percent of married women reported living in a marriage with at least one other wife.<sup>392</sup> Polygyny is common in rural areas, where the prevalence is more than double that of urban areas (48 percent compared to 20.9 percent).<sup>393</sup> Arranged marriages are the norm in Burkina Faso, using a “gift system, whereby either one girl is exchanged for another, or a girl is given as a kind of reward” to another family rather than a specific husband.<sup>394</sup> Girls are usually “promised” in their early childhood, or even at or prior to birth, and are typically married to substantially older men (10 to 20 years older is not uncommon).<sup>395</sup> Once married, girls are pressured to begin childbearing as soon as possible, and polygyny and high spousal-age gap increase girls’ risk of HIV infection.<sup>396</sup> Prior to and after marriage, inequitable gender norms restrict girls’ time use and mobility, limiting their access to health information and services as well as opportunities for social interaction.<sup>397</sup> Low educational attainment is strongly associated with early marriage; girls with three or fewer years of education are nine times more likely to marry early than girls with at least eight years of education.<sup>398</sup> Despite these clear challenges, the government of Burkina Faso boasts progressive policies related to women and girls, and provides a conducive environment for meaningful change.

### FOCUS FOR EFFORTS TO BUILD THE RESILIENCE OF VULNERABLE RESIDENTS IN BURKINA FASO FOCUS ON:

- Strengthening the institutions and governmental bodies meant to serve them
- Improving productive opportunities
- Increasing the capacity and accessibility of social services while ensuring access to more nutritious foods

## USAID PROGRAMS TARGETING CEFM IN BURKINA FASO

### Evidence to Action (E2A)<sup>399</sup>

#### Pathfinder International

In West Africa, USAID funds the E2A project that aims to build the evidence base, strengthen, and facilitate the scaling of family planning and reproductive health service delivery. E2A's learning agenda supports the study of youth-focused emerging and promising practices, such as delaying early marriage and first births, reaching young married couples with healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy interventions, addressing gender and GBV among young people, and advancing the use of mobile health applications to increase uptake of family planning and reproductive health information and services. In Burkina Faso, E2A is conducting a literature review on best practices to reach youth and first-time parents for healthy timing and spacing of children. The review aims to advance a comprehensive model for access to reproductive health, family planning, and maternal and child health services by young women. It also intends to strengthen comprehensive adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health service delivery introduction, and sustainable scale-up in Francophone West Africa.

### Increasing Age of Marriage<sup>400</sup>

#### Population Council

This six-year USAID-supported project, based on the Population Council's Berhane Hewan program, is assessing the effectiveness of various approaches to preventing CEFM in three sub-Saharan African countries—Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Burkina Faso. In Burkina Faso the project is focused on the Cascades Region, and includes holding community conversations to raise community awareness and engagement, providing girls with health and body awareness education, promoting girls' education by providing school supplies to in-school girls and non-formal education to out-of-school girls; and a conditional transfer of a goat after two years of participation. A rigorous evaluation with baseline and endline surveys will measure the effects in intervention and control groups, and cost data is being tracked to enable a cost-effectiveness component of the evaluation.

### USAID Program in Burkina Faso with Potential for CEFM Integration

#### Peace for Development II (PDEV II)<sup>401</sup>

##### International Relief & Development

With support from USAID, IRD and its partners are implementing a holistic, community-led initiative to strengthen resilience to violent extremism by working directly with vulnerable young men and women to empower youth, promote moderate voices, and strengthen civil society and local government.

This program does not target CEFM, but there are pathways through which this program could help to improve gender norms, and girls' voice and agency within the community, thereby reducing an important driver and a serious consequence of CEFM.

### Potential linkages with CEFM throughout the Program Cycle

- PDEV II could integrate CEFM in **program design and implementation** by specifically engaging and building resilience among girls who are most at-risk of CEFM and who are already married.
  - Lack of voice and agency is a consequence of inequitable gendered norms in many communities, and girls at risk of CEFM are particularly marginalized and isolated. But evidence has shown that when girls and women have a seat at the table, they can be a powerful peace-making and community-building force, can model positive gender norms, and can advocate for healthy choices, like delaying marriage, in their own lives.
- PDEV II could also integrate CEFM into its **program monitoring and evaluation** efforts by measuring sex, age, and marital status of participants, as well as shifts in attitudes related to marriage formation and marriage relationships.

## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Nearly 1 in 3 girls is married before age 18 in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).<sup>402</sup> However, due to lack of data and research in many countries, the full scope of the problem in the region is not well understood. There are several countries in the region with high rates of child marriage- the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua (41 percent), Brazil (36 percent), Honduras (34 percent) and Guatemala (30 percent).<sup>403</sup> Over the past three decades there has been no significant change in the prevalence of child marriage in the region.<sup>404</sup>

Within many countries in the region, there are pockets of high prevalence among particular religious and ethnic groups. For example, in rural Guatemala, populated with indigenous Mayans, 53 percent of girls are married before age 18, compared to approximately 30 percent nationally.<sup>405</sup> In the LAC region, unions are often more informal and thus may not be categorized as “marriage” within the data. Because of this tendency, there is likely a great underestimation of the incidence and prevalence of CEFM.<sup>406</sup> Globally, LAC is the only region where the number of girls giving birth before the age of 15 is increasing.<sup>407</sup> Throughout the region, adolescent pregnancy accounts for at least half of unintended pregnancies, despite the fact that when surveyed, four out of five girls in union between age 15 and 19 desired to delay pregnancy by at least two years.<sup>408</sup> Many girls in the region are also engaged in unions with men who are significantly older than them: the spousal age gap averages between 5.8 and 7 years in Central America.<sup>409</sup>

## GUATEMALA

### CEFM in Guatemala by the Numbers<sup>410</sup>

<b>LEGAL AGE AT MARRIAGE:</b>	“Age of majority” for women and men (or 14 for girls and 16 for boys, with parental consent or if a girl is pregnant)
<b>GIRLS MARRIED BY 18:</b>	47%
<b>GIRLS MARRIED BY 15:</b>	29%
<b>MEDIAN AGE AT MARRIAGE FOR GIRLS:</b>	19.7 (18.6 in rural areas)
<b>ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY:</b>	21%*
<b>NET ENROLLMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL:</b>	Female: 95%   Male: 96% <sup>411</sup>
<b>NET ENROLLMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOL:</b>	Female: 45%   Male: 48% <sup>412</sup>

\*Girls 15 to 19 currently pregnant or who have had a child

Between 40 and 60 percent of Guatemala’s population is indigenous and more than half of the nation lives in poverty, earning less than \$2 per day.<sup>413</sup> Guatemala’s indigenous communities are impoverished and disenfranchised. Within these communities, low educational attainment is the norm (averaging 5.4 years in school among 15 to 24 year olds), and economic opportunities are sparse, leaving a large youth population with little opportunity or hope for socioeconomic advancement.<sup>414</sup> It is within these communities that the vast majority of CEFMs in Guatemala take place. Economic drivers lead some girls into relationships with older men who can provide for them, and early marriages or unofficial unions reduce the stigma of early pregnancies.<sup>415</sup> Until 2009, per a provision of the penal code, perpetrators of rape were not prosecuted as long as they married the victim.<sup>416</sup> Targeted through femicide, kidnapping, and sexual

### USAID GUATEMALA CDCS OBJECTIVES

- Greater security and justice for citizens
- Improved levels of economic growth and social development in the Western Highlands
- Improved management of natural resources to mitigate impacts of global climate change

violence, Guatemala’s indigenous women have long borne the brunt of the country’s decades of armed conflict, as well as its current scourge of gang violence and organized crime.<sup>417</sup> The history of violence with impunity has served to normalize violence, hinder reporting, and undermine the justice system.<sup>418</sup>

## PROGRAM TARGETING CEFM IN GUATEMALA

### Abriendo Oportunidades<sup>419</sup>

#### Population Council

The program works with indigenous Mayan girls ages 8 to 18 to help them navigate transitions to adulthood. The program aims to increase girls’ social support networks, connect them with role models and mentors, build their critical life skills and leadership skills, and provide hands-on professional training. Abriendo Oportunidades (“opening opportunities” in Spanish) engages community leaders and trains girls to run community girls’ clubs, safe spaces where they learn practical skills and assume leadership roles. These clubs give girls a chance for learning, recreation, and social interaction, while encouraging them to consider alternatives to early marriage and childbearing. After participating in the program, many girls reported that they wanted to delay their marriage. Among program leaders, 97 percent delayed marriage until after age 18.

USAID Program in Guatemala with Potential for CEFM Integration	Potential linkages with CEFM throughout the Program Cycle
<p><b>PROCOMIDA (MYAP)<sup>420</sup></b>  <b>Mercy Corps</b></p> <p>With USAID support, Mercy Corps is implementing an innovative mother and child nutrition program that uses a preventive approach targeted to pregnant/lactating women and children aged 6–24 months. PROCOMIDA provides beneficiaries with a nutritionally-balanced ration that enables mothers and other caregivers to adopt healthier practices, including health-seeking behaviors. The program also works with staff of government health facilities, as well as organized community structures, to improve the technical quality and cultural appropriateness of the services provided. Through these approaches, PROCOMIDA addresses both the demand-side and supply-side of health care provision in northern Guatemala. The program has been particularly successful at reaching the poorest households.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PROCOMIDA could specifically target pregnant and lactating adolescents for nutritional programming, through <b>program design and implementation</b>. Due to their small physical stature, limited mobility, lack of access to health information and services, and lack of power within relationships, young mothers and their children are often particularly at risk for poor maternal and child health outcomes without targeted outreach and services.</li> <li>• <b>Program design and implementation</b> should also focus on engaging young fathers in nutrition education and services so that the health of the young mother and her baby are not her responsibility alone.</li> <li>• Through <b>performance monitoring</b>, PROCOMIDA could track the age of their clients and <b>learn and adapt</b> to target services accordingly to young mothers.</li> <li>• Incorporating CEFM in <b>program evaluation</b> could also help PROCOMIDA to understand whether their programs are effectively reaching and meeting the needs of highly vulnerable populations who have experienced CEFM.</li> </ul>

# PART 3

## CEFM MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) INDICATORS\*

This section contains tables of suggested CEFM M&E indicators. In program design, measuring data related to these indicators will allow implementers to understand the different circumstances various groups of individuals face, enabling implementers to better design programs to meet participants' needs. Throughout program monitoring and evaluation, this data will allow implementers to see how the program affects various groups of participants in different ways. Collecting data related to these indicators can enable implementers to track their progress, adjust programming for greater impact, compare the effects of their program to that of other programs, communicate impact, and attract funding. These indicators will allow users to track overall changes in the status of women and girls in a particular country, as well as the impacts of a specific program. The following indicators represent a mix of intermediate and long-term outcomes, so that implementers can scan the list and select indicators that are most relevant to the work they do. These indicators contain a mix of data points that could be obtained from existing national-level surveys and data that would need to be collected through local surveys. At a minimum, all programs should collect sex and age disaggregated data (age disaggregated data can be grouped by the following age bands: 0–4, 5–9, 10–14, 15–19, 20–24, 25–29, etc.).

The first table below provides a list of essential prevalence indicators that capture the scale of CEFM in a particular country or region. The next table provides a list of general CEFM indicators along the levels of the ecological framework. These indicators are relevant for any sector or strategy and capture some of the most important aspects of CEFM prevention and response. Finally, there are tables of indicators that are specifically relevant for programming within the sectors and strategies presented through this guide. These sector/strategy-specific indicators will enable implementers to measure linkages between CEFM prevention and response efforts and sector/strategy-specific outcomes.

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\* The majority of indicators presented in this section have been adapted from the Aspen Planning and Evaluation Program (APEP). (2015). Updated List of Recommended Indicators for the Girls Not Brides (GNB) Partnership. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute. GNB and APEP developed the list of 156 indicators based on indicators from GNB's diverse member organizations, United Nations and government agencies, and other key partners and stakeholders, and multiple rounds of feedback from GNB members.

## ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK INDICATORS

INDIVIDUAL 

FAMILY/COMMUNITY 

SOCIETY/INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES 

## ESSENTIAL PREVALENCE INDICATORS

Indicator	Data Source
1 <b>Percentage of women/men aged 20–24 who were first married or in union by age 18</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available via UNICEF MICS, DHS, UNSD, and national censuses in many countries. These data are representative at the national level, though sometimes district/ regional level disaggregation is possible. More localized data could be collected via community- or program-level surveys.
2 <b>Percentage of women/men age 20–24 who were married or in union before age 15</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available via DHS and UNICEF MICS. These data are representative at the national level, though sometimes district/regional level disaggregation is possible. More localized data could be collected via community- or program-level surveys.
3 <b>Age at first marriage, female/male /Median age at marriage</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available via UNICEF MICS and UNSD. These data are representative at the national level, though sometimes district/regional level disaggregation is possible. More localized data could be collected via community- or program-level surveys.

## GENERAL CEFM INDICATORS

Indicator	Data Source
1 <b>Ideal age of marriage for girls/boys</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population (likely among individuals below age 18).
2 <b>Percentage of married girls/boys who say that they wanted to get married at the time that they were married</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
3 <b>Degree of girls'/boys' control in intimate relationships</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
<p>This indicator can be measured with the sexual relationship power scale (SRPS), specifically the subscale for relationship control. Respondents are asked to indicate their extent of agreement with each statement; greater disagreement indicates greater female control over the relationship. This indicator has been shown to be reliable and has been field-tested.<sup>1</sup> Implementers may want to combine the sexual relationship power scale with additional measurements related to individuals' reproductive control such as ability to limit fertility and/or use contraceptive (if desired).</p>	
4 <b>Extent to which girls have life goals that are beyond traditional roles of mother, wife, and home-maker</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population, complemented by qualitative methods (focus groups and in-depth interviews).

## GENERAL CEFM INDICATORS

Indicator	Data Source
<p><b>5 Percentage of unmarried girls/boys who are confident in their ability to pursue alternatives to child marriage</b></p>	<p>A survey of individuals in the target population.</p>
<p>This indicator is intended to capture self-efficacy. Respondents could be asked a set of questions about the extent to which they agree/disagree with a set of statements.</p>	
<p><b>6 Extent to which adolescent girls (married and unmarried)/women are satisfied with their allocation of time to productive and domestic tasks and with the available time for leisure activities</b></p>	<p>A survey of individuals in the target population. Methods pulled from IFPRI's WEAI can be found <a href="#">on its website</a>.</p>
<p>Disaggregate by age and marital status.</p>	
<p><b>7 Percentage of girls (married and unmarried) who report having a say in important decisions</b></p>	<p>A survey of girls in the target population.</p>
<p>This indicator could include decisions regarding the household, girls' schooling and vocational training, marriage, finances and income-generating activities, pregnancy, childbearing, and other aspects of sexual and reproductive health. The data can be disaggregated by marital status to assess the percentage of married girls who said they had a say in their marriage.</p>	
<p><b>8 Extent to which parents envision roles and trajectories for their daughters that are beyond traditional roles of mother, wife, and home-maker</b></p>	<p>A survey of individuals in the target population.</p>
<p>Disaggregate data by sex of parent.</p>	
<p><b>9 Percentage of parents and in-laws of married girls who say they support their daughters (or daughters-in-law) going back to school or participating in out-of-school life skills programs or income-generating activities</b></p>	<p>A survey of individuals in the target population.</p>
<p>Disaggregate data by sex of parent. This indicator could include separate questions about returning to school, participating in out-of-school programs, and participating in income-generating activities (IGAs).</p>	
<p><b>10 Percentage of parents who say that they will not marry their sons/daughters to a girl/boy younger than 18</b></p>	<p>A survey of individuals in the target population.</p>
<p>Disaggregate by sex of parent. A variation of this indicator could be the number of parents who sign pledges sign promising not to marry their sons/daughters before age 18.</p>	

## GENERAL CEFM INDICATORS

Indicator	Data Source
<b>11 Percentage of key stakeholders (parents, adolescents, young people, community and religious leaders, and members of local government) who know about the harms of child marriage, discrimination, and violence</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
Survey questions could include items to assess knowledge of the country's laws regarding child marriage and dowry, as well as the ability to define child marriage, describe the legal rights of adolescent girls, and identify the main health complications associated with child marriage.	
<b>12 Percentage of key stakeholders (parents, adolescents, young people, community and religious leaders, and members of local government) who believe that it is harmful to get married before age 18</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
<b>13 Percentage of community members who participated in public activities on child marriage, human rights of girls, girls' education, and violence prevention (e.g., campaigns, rallies, participatory discussions)</b>	Reports of implementing partners and monitoring mission reports. A survey of individuals in the target community could also be used.
It may be helpful to distinguish between activities organized by external stakeholders versus community-led activities.	
<b>14 Number of influential leaders and communicators (traditional, religious, cultural, political, and media) who have made public declarations against child marriage and in support of alternative roles for girls</b>	Statements, reports, press, and religious affairs directorate (or other entity) that keeps records of sermons.
<b>15 Percentage of male family members of unmarried adolescent girls who report intervening on behalf of girls' rights</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
Forms of intervention could include taking action to keep a daughter/sister in school, or preventing the (forced or under-age) marriage of a family member.	
<b>16 Number of news media stories that discuss ending child marriage, related gender norms, or alternative paths for girls</b>	Media scan/tracking using Google News alerts, LexisNexis, social-media search engines; media outlet records.
This indicator measures both the frequency of media coverage on the issue and the proportion of coverage that explicitly gives visibility to statements and/or events that promote ending child marriage. APEP adapted this indicator to refer directly to child marriage; the original version focused on FGM/C. Data may be disaggregated by medium (print, radio, television).	
<b>17 Number of edutainment programs, dramas, or films aired on television or radio that wholly or in part address child marriage and related gender norms</b>	Media outlet records.
Measured annually	

## GENERAL CEFM INDICATORS

Indicator	Data Source
<p><b>18 Percentage of people who report they heard or saw something in the media (news, drama/film, campaign ad, social media) on ending child marriage, related gender norms, or alternative paths for girls</b></p>	<p>A survey of individuals in the target population.</p>
<p>APEP adapted this indicator to refer directly to child marriage. Original versions of the indicator referred to violence against women and FGM/C. Disaggregate by type of media message (TV/radio drama/film; news report; broadcast or print campaign ad; and social media).</p>	
<p><b>19 Extent to which educational, economic, or social opportunities for girls at risk of child marriage or married girls are addressed in related sectoral policies (e.g., education policy, adolescent health policy)</b></p>	<p>Review legislation and legislative debates, where available. Review statements by cognizant ministers or other responsible officials.</p>
<p>This indicator is qualitative, capturing the quality of policies by analyzing the content of these documents/statements.</p>	
<p><b>20 Percentage of districts in a country with a District Action Plan on child marriage, with specific departmental actions facilitating collaboration and indicators of success</b></p>	<p>Review administrative records, possibly coupled with interviews of district officials.</p>
<p>This indicator could incorporate a qualitative dimension, assessing the quality of the plan. For example, assessment criteria could include whether specified individuals have been given the responsibility of monitoring programs for adolescent girls, whether adolescent girl programs are reviewed at regular intervals, and whether data on indicators of success are gathered.</p>	
<p><b>21 Existence of national strategy and plan of action to address child marriage and other harmful traditional practices</b></p>	<p>Review national legislation and legislative debates, where available. Review statements by cognizant ministers or other responsible national officials.</p>
<p>This indicator could be expanded to regional or global levels, referring to the number of countries with a national strategy and plan of action.</p>	
<p><b>22 Percentage of the budget allocated to support a jurisdiction's strategy and action plan to address child marriage</b></p>	<p>Monitor the budget within the targeted jurisdiction (national, regional, district, etc.).</p>
<p>Budget monitoring could examine the percentage of the budget allocated toward items such as vocational training opportunities; girls' education; monitoring, research, and data collection on child marriage; service provider trainings on child marriage and GBV; child marriage prohibition officers; national prevention programs integrated into school curricula; and national awareness campaign on all forms of violence against women (including child marriage and other harmful traditional practices). Budget monitoring can take different forms, including review of publicly available documents, investigative journalism, or attendance at public or private meetings with officials.</p>	

Additional laws and policies, including birth and marriage registration, are listed in the [Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance](#) section.

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR GBV PROGRAMMING

Indicator	Data Source
<b>1 Percentage of women aged 15–49 subjected to physical or sexual violence in the last 12 months/at some time in their lifetime by an intimate partner/persons other than an intimate partner</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available by UNICEF and DHS. Country-specific sources may provide relevant data for the 15-18 year old cohort. More localized data could be collected via community- or program-level surveys.
<b>2 Total and age-specific rate of women subjected to psychological violence in the past 12 months / at some time in their lifetime by an intimate partner</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available via DHS. Country-specific sources may provide data for the 15–18 year old cohort. More localized data could be collected via community- or program-level surveys.
<b>3 Percentage of women aged 15–49 who have undergone female genital mutilation</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available via the World Health Organization (WHO), Population Reference Bureau, DHS, and UNICEF MICS. It is also one of the indicators that is tracked for progress on the MDGs/SDGs. Country-specific sources may provide data for the 15-18 year old cohort. More localized data could be collected via community- or program-level surveys.
<b>4 Percentage of adolescent girls (married and unmarried) who feel confident in their ability to report and seek help with violence</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
<p>This indicator is intended to capture self-efficacy. Respondents could be asked a set of questions about the extent to which they agree/disagree with statements. Examples might include (depending on context): "I am confident in my ability to go to the police if someone has been physically violent towards me (for example, hit, kicked, or choked me)" or "I am confident in my ability to seek help if someone has been physically violent towards me." Respondents could be asked about different forms of violence (sexual, physical, psychological) separately.</p>	
<b>5 Percentage of women ages 15–49 who believe a husband/partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife/partner for any of the following five reasons: argues with him, refuses to have sex, burns the food, goes out without telling him, or when she neglects the children</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available via DHS and UNICEF MICS. This is one of 15 MICS indicators on child protection. Country-specific sources may provide relevant data. More localized data could be collected via community- or program-level surveys.
<b>6 Percentage of survivors of sexual and other violence who access medical (e.g., emergency care, treatment of injuries), psychosocial, and legal services</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
<p>Respondents would be asked if they had ever experienced violence; those answering affirmatively would then be asked whether they had used each of the three types of services (medical, psychosocial, and legal).</p>	
<b>7 Number of available places in shelters and refuges for domestic violence survivors per 1,000 population (urban and rural)</b>	A mapping exercise to identify shelters and refuges for domestic violence survivors (unless a good record exists of such organizations). Survey the organizations about the number of available places.

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR GBV PROGRAMMING

Indicator	Data Source
<b>8 Percentage of shelters and/or refuges for survivors of domestic violence that have services targeted to adolescent girls (both married and unmarried)</b>	A survey of shelters and refuges in a particular area to understand if they provide services for adolescents.
Unless a good record of these organizations exists, a mapping exercise would have to be conducted. The survey would reveal the types of services each organization provides.	
<b>9 Existence of violence against women laws</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available via the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law database. More localized data could be collected via surveys of local policies and legislation.
This indicator takes the average of three components: (1) existence of laws against sexual assault or rape; (2) existence of laws against domestic violence; (3) and existence of laws against sexual harassment (including in public spaces).	
<b>10 Number of child marriages that were investigated by the police/prosecuted by law/resulted in a conviction</b>	A confidential review of police and court records.
This indicator was adapted to refer directly to child marriage. The original version focused on VAW/G. It is arguably more useful to know the proportion of child marriages that were investigated by the police, prosecuted by law, or resulted in a conviction. However, that indicator would require that the total number of child marriages be known; this information may not be available in many contexts.	
<b>11 Percentage of law enforcement units following a nationally established protocol for VAW/G complaints</b>	A survey of law enforcement units.
There must be a national set of standards established for managing VAW/G complaints within the security sector for this indicator to be measured. Where possible, police and other law enforcement units would be selected randomly for inclusion in the survey. Alternatively, a purposive sample could cover one or more urban areas, regions, or the entire country.	
<b>12 Existence of a national strategy and plan of action to address GBV that includes provisions for prevention of child marriage and other harmful traditional practices</b>	Review national legislation and legislative debates, where available. Review statements by cognizant ministers or other responsible national officials.
This indicator could be expanded to regional or global levels, referring to the number of countries with a national strategy and plan of action.	

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Indicator	Data Source
<b>1 Number of peer groups and clubs for girls that provide peer support, life skills lessons, financial literacy training, savings and credit literacy, information on sexual and reproductive health rights, or similar training</b>	A list of peer groups and clubs open to girls in the target geographic area.
This list may be compiled using sources such as governmental offices, NGOs (including donor and technical representatives in-country, such as USAID and UN offices), and key informants such as religious and other community leaders.	

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Indicator	Data Source
<p><b>2 Percentage of adolescent girls who are members of groups for girls that address areas like life skills, protection, nutrition, health, sexual and reproductive health rights, and gender norms</b></p>	<p>A survey of individuals in the target population.</p>
<p>It may be useful to disaggregate by age and location of group member.</p>	
<p><b>3 Percentage of girls who participate in peer group or girl club advocacy activities (e.g., for girls' higher education, delay of marriage beyond 18 years)</b></p>	<p>A survey of individuals in the target population.</p>
<p><b>4 Percentage of girls who feel they can advocate for themselves</b></p>	<p>A survey of individuals in the target population.</p>
<p>This indicator could measure girls' perceptions that they can effectively advocate for themselves in their communities, and that they have opportunities to do so. A survey question could ask girls if they feel they have the skills and knowledge they need to carry out collective action.</p>	
<p><b>5 Percentage of unmarried men (or boys) who believe the proper age of marriage for a girl is 18 years or older</b></p>	<p>A survey of individuals in the target population.</p>
<p>A potential survey question could ask respondents, "In your opinion, what is the proper age of marriage for a girl?"</p>	
<p><b>6 Percentage of unmarried women (or girls) who believe the proper age of marriage for a boy is 18 years or older</b></p>	<p>A survey of individuals in the target population.</p>
<p>A potential survey question could ask respondents, "In your opinion, what is the proper age of marriage for a boy?"</p>	
<p><b>7 Number of male youth leaders/ adolescent peers engaged in activities to prevent child marriage, exploitation, and violence</b></p>	<p>A survey of individuals in the target population.</p>
<p><b>8 Number of programs implemented for men and boys that include examining gender and cultural norms related to child marriage, VAW/G, and/or girls' rights</b></p>	<p>A survey of organizations implementing programs aimed at men and boys. Governmental organizations (including USAID and UN offices) and NGOs would be asked if they implement or provide technical expertise or funding for programs aimed at reducing VAW/G by changing the behavior of men and boys.</p>
<p>This indicator was modestly adapted to include a direct reference to child marriage; the original version focused solely on VAW/G.</p>	

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR THE GLOBAL HEALTH SECTOR

Indicator	Data Source
<b>1 Percentage of adolescent girls (married and unmarried) who feel able to say no to unwanted sexual activity</b>	A survey of individuals in the target area.
Disaggregate by age and marital status	
<b>2 Percentage of adolescent girls (married and unmarried) who have correct knowledge of sexual and reproductive health</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
Disaggregate by age and marital status. Survey questions could include knowledge of menstruation, puberty, and timing and spacing of pregnancies.	
<b>3 Contraceptive prevalence among women who are married or in a union, aged 15–49</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available by UNDP, DHS, UNICEF MICS, World Data Bank, UNSD, and Reproductive Health Surveys (RHS). National data for girls aged 15-18 may also be available from country-specific sources. More localized data could be collected via community- or program-level surveys.
It may be useful to pay attention to the prevalence of reversible contraceptives, such as implants. Some datasets, such as DHS, disaggregate contraceptive use by method.	
<b>4 Rate of condom use at last high-risk sex, males and females ages 15–24</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available via UNICEF MICS and DHS. More localized data could be collected via community- or program-level surveys.
<b>5 Percentage of married women ages 15–49 with unmet needs for family planning</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available via DHS, WHO, UNICEF MICS, UNAIDS, and UNFPA. The WHO data also include unmet need for family planning among girls ages 15-19. More localized data could be collected via community- or program-level surveys.
<b>6 Percentage of pregnant adolescents who had access to emergency contraception or safe abortion</b>	The Guttmacher Institute and Marie Stopes International may have data to supplement DHS or government sources. More localized data could be collected via community- or program-level surveys.
<b>7 Adolescent birth rate</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available via UNDP, DHS, UNICEF MICS, and RHS. National vital registration systems may also provide data. More localized data could be collected via community- or program-level surveys.
<b>8 Percentage of adolescent girls (married and unmarried) who know where to access health services</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
<b>9 Percentage of girls (married and unmarried) who have accessed a health clinic in the last 12 months (e.g., sexual and reproductive health, HIV testing)</b>	A survey of individuals in the target communities.
Disaggregate by marital status	

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR THE GLOBAL HEALTH SECTOR

Indicator	Data Source
<b>10 Percentage of in-laws who think that other families wish to delay marriage for their daughters-in-law until age 18</b>	A survey of in-laws in the target population.
This indicator is for a social norm, measuring perceptions of what others think regarding age at marriage.	
<b>11 Percentage of in-laws who think that other families wish to delay their daughters-in-law's first birth</b>	A survey of in-laws in the target population.
This indicator is for a social norm, measuring perceptions of what others think regarding age at first birth.	
<b>12 Percentage of births attended by a skilled health professional</b>	UNICEF collects data and makes it publicly available.
Disaggregate by age.	
<b>13 Percentage of adolescent girls (married and unmarried) who report that they were offered health services (including contraception and counseling on STI prevention/treatment) without judgment by providers</b>	Exit interviews/surveys at health units.
<b>14 Number of health services for married and unmarried girls within a specified geographic area</b>	A survey of health clinics and service providers in a particular area to understand if they provide sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services for adolescents.
Unless a good record of these organizations exists, a mapping exercise would have to be conducted. The survey would reveal the types of services each organization provides.	
<b>15 Percentage of health centers that are youth friendly</b>	A survey of health service providers in the target geographic area.
This indicator is quantitative, but with a qualitative component. A set of criteria should be developed to code the extent to which health centers are youth friendly. Defining and measuring "youth friendly" can be challenging. As a starting point, APEP recommends using the survey questions in the 2007 Service Provision Assessment Survey in Uganda, which was part of the worldwide Monitoring and Evaluation to Assess and Use Results Demographic and Health Surveys (MEASURE DHS) project. <sup>2</sup> Pathfinder also provides guidance on how to define "youth-friendly services" by delineating 12 youth-friendly characteristics: location, facility hours, facility environment, staff preparedness, services provided, peer education/counseling program, educational activities, youth involvement, supportive policies, administrative procedures, publicity/recruitment, and fees. <sup>3</sup>	
<b>16 Percentage of health service providers who have received training on child marriage laws, risk factors for child marriage, and how to report law violations</b>	A survey of health service providers.

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR THE GLOBAL HEALTH SECTOR

Indicator	Data Source
<b>17 Percentage of health facilities with protocols and referral paths for cases of VAW/G (including forced and child marriage)</b>	A survey of health units/service providers.
A useful resource for developing Service Delivery/Access indicators is MEASURE Evaluation's Family Planning and Reproductive Health Indicators Database. <sup>4</sup>	
<b>18 Percentage of health care providers who report that they would provide family planning to a sexually active youth client, including married and unmarried girls</b>	A survey of health service providers.

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Indicator	Data Source
<b>1 Availability of educational opportunities within an accessible distance</b>	A list of educational opportunities for girls, including schools and informal education programs, in the target geographic area.
This list may be compiled using sources such as governmental offices (ministry of education or equivalent), NGOs, websites or telephone directories, and informants in the community. A survey of the targeted population could yield information about girls' perceptions of educational opportunities available to them.	
<b>2 Primary, secondary, and tertiary education completion rates, by sex, age, and marital status</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available by UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). More localized data could be collected via administrative or community-, school-, or program-level surveys.
<b>3 Dropout rate in primary and lower secondary general education, by sex, age, and marital status</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available by UIS. More localized data could be collected via administrative or community-, school-, or program-level surveys.
UIS offers a number of other potentially relevant primary and secondary education indicators, including survival rates, percentage of repeaters, and transition rates from primary to secondary education. For a limited number of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, UIS also offers data on indicators of enrollment in and graduation from adult education programs, by gender.	
<b>4 Percentage of married girls who report that their marriage was a major factor for dropping out of school</b>	A survey of married, out-of-school girls/women.
<b>5 Percentage of adolescent girls who have received training in vocational skills, income generation, or other life skills (e.g., critical thinking, communication, decision making, problem solving) in and out of school</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Indicator	Data Source
6 <b>Percentage of adolescent girls who say they want to complete their education</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
7 <b>Percentage of married girls who return to school</b>	A survey of married girls in the target community.
8 <b>Percentage of parents of unmarried adolescent girls who say they support their daughters completing their education or returning to school</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
9 <b>Percentage of teachers who have received training on child marriage laws, risk factors for child marriage, and how to report law violations</b>	A survey of teachers within specified schools.
10 <b>Percentage of community, traditional, and religious leaders who support girls completing their education</b>	A survey of leaders in the target population.
11 <b>Percentage of schools that have staff trainings and procedures on how to address and take action on VAW/G at school, including reported cases of sexual abuse</b>	A survey of schools, based on a probability sample of schools in a region or country. (if possible) <sup>5</sup>
12 <b>Percentage of schools that provide safe and girl-friendly environments (e.g., separate toilets for girls, an anonymous complaint box, transportation to/from school, extracurricular activities for girls)</b>	A survey of schools, based on a probability sample of schools in a region or country (if possible).
13 <b>Number of financial incentives available to promote continuation of (or re-entry into) education among girls (specifically those who have experienced CEFM and/or early pregnancy)</b>	A survey of organizations implementing programs on girls' education. Governmental agencies and NGOs would be asked if they implement or fund programs providing financial incentives to keep girls in school or help them return to school.
Financial incentives might include bursaries/scholarships to keep girls in schools, or subsidies or CCTs to families to help keep girls in schools (conditional on the girls not marrying).	
14 <b>Percentage of schools that have a designated office or person to whom children can report concerns about child marriage</b>	A survey of schools, based on a probability sample of schools in a region or country (if possible).

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Indicator	Data Source
<b>15 Percentage of schools whose curriculum discusses cultural institutions, norms, and practices that discriminate against girls</b>	A survey of schools, based on a probability sample of schools in a region or country (if possible).
<b>16 Existence of laws and/or policies that enable or promote girls' re-entrance into school after marriage and/or pregnancy</b>	Review national and local legislation and legislative debates where available. Review statements by cognizant ministers or other responsible national officials.

This indicator could be expanded to regional or global levels, referring to the number of countries with re-entry laws and policies for girls who have experienced early marriage or early pregnancy.

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR THE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

Indicator	Data Source
<b>1 Percentage of adolescent girls participating in programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income, or employment)</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
Examples could include microfinance or village savings and loan programs	
<b>2 Percentage of adolescent girls (married and unmarried) who participated in income-generating activities (IGAs) in the past year</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
This indicator could include activities such as petty trade, selling vegetables, raising poultry, breeding livestock, and agricultural work. It should capture activities through which girls earned income.	
<b>3 Percentage of adolescent girls (married and unmarried) with basic financial literacy</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
Provide input on what constitutes basic financial literacy. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has developed a set of survey questions designed to assess financial literacy. <sup>6</sup>	
<b>4 Percentage of parents who support girls' opportunities to work outside the home</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
This indicator could be measured with the "equity for girls" sub-scale of the Gender Norm Attitudes Scale (GNAS). <sup>7</sup>	
<b>5 Percentage of community, traditional, and religious leaders who support girls completing their education and engaging in income-generating activities (IGAs)</b>	A survey of leaders in the target population.

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR THE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

Indicator	Data Source
<b>6</b> Number of microfinance or entrepreneurship programs specifically for girls	A survey of organizations implementing microfinance or entrepreneurship programs. Governmental agencies and NGOs would be asked if they implement or fund programs specifically for girls.
<b>7</b> Number of loans disbursed to adolescent girls (married and unmarried)	A survey of organizations implementing microfinance loans for adolescent girls.
<b>8</b> Women's labor force participation rate (% of females ages 15 and older)	Data are collected and made publicly available via UNDP, ILO, and the World Bank. More localized data could be collected via community- or program-level surveys.
<b>9</b> Male/female estimated earned income	Data are collected and made publicly available via UNDP. More localized data could be collected via community- or program-level surveys.

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR THE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY SECTOR\*

Indicator	Data Source
<b>1</b> Percentage of adolescent girls (married and unmarried) who have accessed nutrition services in the last six months (e.g., anemia control)	A survey of individuals in the target population.
Disaggregate by age and marital status.	
<b>2</b> Extent to which adolescent girls (married and unmarried)/women have sole or joint decision-making over food and cash-crop farming, livestock, and fisheries, as well as autonomy in agricultural production	A survey of individuals in the target population. Methods pulled from IFPRI's Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) can be found <a href="#">on its website</a> .
Disaggregate by age and marital status.	
<b>3</b> Extent to which adolescent girls (married and unmarried)/women have ownership, access to, and decision-making power over productive resources (such as land, livestock, agricultural equipment, consumer durables, and credit)	A survey of individuals in the target population. Methods pulled from IFPRI's WEAI can be found <a href="#">on its website</a> .
Disaggregate by age and marital status.	

\* These indicators have been adapted from International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). (2012). *Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index*. Washington, DC: IFPRI.

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR THE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY SECTOR\*

Indicator	Data Source
<p><b>4 Extent to which adolescent girls (married and unmarried)/women have sole or joint control over income and expenditures produced through agriculture</b></p> <p>Disaggregate by age and marital status.</p>	<p>A survey of individuals in the target population. Methods pulled from IFPRI's WEAI can be found <a href="#">on its website</a>.</p>
<p><b>5 Extent to which adolescent girls (married and unmarried) and /women have membership in economic or social groups and are comfortable speaking in public, related to agricultural production</b></p> <p>Disaggregate by age and marital status.</p>	<p>A survey of individuals in the target population. Methods pulled from IFPRI's WEAI can be found <a href="#">on its website</a>.</p>
<p><b>6 Female and male surviving spouses have equal inheritance rights to property</b></p>	<p>Data are collected and made publicly available via the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law database.</p>
<p><b>7 Existence of laws giving married men and married women equal ownership rights to property.</b></p>	<p>Data are collected and made publicly available via the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law database.</p>

\* These indicators have been adapted from International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). (2012). *Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index*. Washington, DC: IFPRI.

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR THE DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE SECTOR

Indicator	Data Source
<p><b>1 Percentage of adolescent boys, girls, and women who know their rights and entitlements</b></p> <p>Asking questions about specific rights would likely assess knowledge. For example, survey questions could include items to assess knowledge of any of the legal rights of women and girls, marriage laws and rights, and sexual and reproductive health rights.</p>	<p>Survey of individuals in the target population.</p>
<p><b>2 Percentage of adolescent girls (married and unmarried) who know where to access legal services</b></p>	<p>Survey of individuals in the target population.</p>
<p><b>3 Percentage of married girls who have knowledge of their right to ask for annulment of marriage and ways to ask for an annulment</b></p> <p>Respondents could be asked a set of items designed to assess knowledge of their right to ask for an annulment, how to ask for an annulment, and where to seek assistance.</p>	<p>A survey of individuals in the target population.</p>

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR THE DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE SECTOR

Indicator	Data Source
<b>4 Percentage of married girls who are confident in their ability to ask for an annulment or seek a divorce</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
<p>This indicator is intended to capture self-efficacy. Respondents could be asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with statements such as, "I am confident in my ability to ask for an annulment of marriage."</p>	
<b>5 Percentage of children under age 5 whose births are reported registered</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available via DHS, UNICEF MICS, national vital registration systems, WHO, household surveys reports, and ministry of health reports.
<b>6 Percentage of married women who report that their marriage was registered</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
<b>7 Percentage of families who oppose the practices of dowry/ bride price</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
<b>8 Percentage of marriage transactions that involve exchange of money or other goods</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
<p>A variation of this indicator would be to assess the percentage of families in a given geographic area engaging in dowry/bride price.</p>	
<b>9 Number of community leaders who have implemented community bylaws that outlaw child marriage</b>	Public statements, news media reports, and organizational and agency records.
<b>10 Percentage of community leaders who report having taken action against child marriage or in support of girls' rights</b>	A survey of individuals in the target population.
<p>This indicator could include survey questions asking about multiple types of action, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discussing girls' rights with community members;</li> <li>• holding meetings for men regarding child marriage and related gender norms; and</li> <li>• intervening directly to prevent a child marriage.</li> </ul>	
<b>11 Legal age of marriage</b>	UNSD and data from country-specific sources. <sup>8</sup>
<b>12 Number of police stations that have established a system for reporting child marriages</b>	Review ministry of justice records. Survey police stations in the target geographic area.
<b>13 Number of legal aid service organizations for married and unmarried girls within a specified geographic area</b>	Survey organizations and agencies (all legal action based governmental and NGOs that may provide services to girls) in a particular area.
<p>Unless a good record of these organizations exists, a mapping exercise would have to be conducted. The survey would reveal the types of services each organization provides.</p>	

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR THE DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE SECTOR

Indicator	Data Source
<b>14 Existence of a constitutional guarantee of equality before the law and a non-discrimination clause in the constitution that explicitly mentions gender</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available via the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law database.
<b>15 Extent to which laws guarantee women the same right to be a legal guardian of a child during marriage and give women custody rights over a child after divorce</b>	Data from country-specific sources.
This indicator is qualitative, capturing the quality of the laws.	
<b>16 Extent to which laws give widows and daughters equal rights to their male counterparts as heirs</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available via the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law database.
This indicator is qualitative, capturing the quality of the laws. It has two components: inheritance rights of spouses and inheritance rights of daughters.	
<b>17 Existence of a constitutional provision that considers personal law invalid if it violates constitutional provisions on non-discrimination or equality (in contexts where personal law is recognized as a valid source of law under the constitution)</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available via the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law database.
<b>18 Existence of a constitutional provision that considers customary law invalid if it violates constitutional provisions on non-discrimination or equality (in contexts where customary law is recognized as a valid source of law under the constitution)</b>	Data are collected and made publicly available via the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law database. Data sources for that indicator may be country-specific (and may require accessing and analyzing constitutional texts).
<b>19 Percentage of districts (or other unit of administration) where birth registration with local government is mandatory</b>	Review law and policy documents within the target jurisdictions.
<b>20 Percentage of districts (or other unit of administration) where marriage registration with local government is mandatory</b>	Review law and policy documents within the target jurisdictions.

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR THE DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE SECTOR

Indicator	Data Source
21 <b>Extent to which the State has ratified relevant UN Conventions salient to child rights protection</b>	Review new policies, programs and laws (UN reports) and reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.
States are ranked on a scale based on the number of conventions ratified: A=all; B=70-99%; C=50-69%; D=Less than 49%. <sup>9</sup>	
22 <b>Extent to which international human rights treaties relevant to the elimination of discrimination against women, including all forms of violence against women, are ratified by the State without reservations</b>	The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights(OHCHR) produces this indicator based on data obtained from and regularly updated by the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. Data are available <a href="#">on its website</a> .

## CEFM-RELATED INDICATORS FOR THE CRISIS AND CONFLICT SECTOR\*

Indicator	Data Source
1 <b>Number and percentage share of women in governance bodies of national human rights and/or formal peace-making bodies</b>	Review sex ratio of national human rights bodies.
2 <b>Hours of training per capita of decision-making personnel in security and justice sector institutions to address sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) cases</b>	Review of training records or a survey of target individuals.
3 <b>Extent to which violations of women and girls' human rights are reported, referred, and investigated by human rights bodies</b>	Survey individuals in the target population.
4 <b>Extent to which measures to protect women and girls' human rights are included in peacekeeper heads of military components and heads of police components directives</b>	Review law and policy documents within the target jurisdictions.
5 <b>Extent to which measures to protect women and girls' human rights are included in national security policy frameworks</b>	Review national security policy frameworks.
6 <b>Percentage of benefits (monetary equivalent or estimate) from reparation and/or DDR programs received by women and girls</b>	Review benefits dispensed.

\* These indicators have been adopted from UN Women. (2011). *Women, Peace, and Security: Guidelines for National Implementation*. New York: UN Women.

# PART 4

## KEY RESOURCES

### 4.1 SEMINAL CEFM RESOURCES

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- 1 Girls Not Brides USA. (2014). [Memorandum: A whole of government approach to ending child, early, and forced marriage.](#) Washington, DC: Girls Not Brides USA.\*

This advocacy brief provides an argument on why a comprehensive government strategy is needed to address CEFM. The document provides guiding principles and a vision for success, recommendations for how the U.S. Government can leverage existing development assistance efforts in various sectors, recommendations on how to utilize U.S. diplomatic efforts in creating awareness and pressure, and suggestions on the activities necessary to institutionalize CEFM prevent and response throughout U.S. foreign policy.

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  - 2 Greene, M. E. (2014). [Ending Child Marriage in a Generation: What Research is Needed?](#) New York, NY: Ford Foundation.

This paper identifies gaps in the research on child marriage in which additional investment could catalyze change. It maps out what is known about child marriage and the programs designed to address it. The paper also highlights questions to which we do not yet know the answers, thus generating discussion and clarifying what we need to know to end to this harmful practice.

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  - 3 High-Impact Practices in Family Planning (HIPs). (2014). [Educating Girls: Creating a Foundation for Positive Sexual and Reproductive Health Behaviors.](#) Washington, DC: USAID.

This paper highlights supporting girls to stay in school through the secondary level as one of several “high-impact practices in family planning” (HIPs) identified by a technical advisory group of international experts. The paper makes the connections between school enrollment and reproductive health outcomes and presents strategies and program examples of what works to keep girls in school.

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  - 4 Jain, S. & Kurz, K. (2007). [New Insights on Preventing Child Marriage: A Global Analysis of Factors and Programs.](#) Washington, DC: ICRW.

This report focuses on factors that are associated with risk or protection against child marriage, and that could ultimately be the focus of prevention efforts and 2) current programmatic approaches to prevent child marriage in developing countries, with a specific exploration on which programs are effective. This report is for policy-makers and development practitioners working on or planning a program to prevent child marriage.

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  - 5 Malhotra, A., Warner, A., McGonagle, A., & Lee-Rife, S. (2011). [Solutions to End Child Marriage: What the Evidence Shows.](#) Washington, DC: ICRW.

This report summarizes a systematic review of programs that measured changes in marriage-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Based on this synthesis, the report offers an analysis of five main strategies used in child marriage prevention programs: girls’ empowerment, community mobilization, enhanced schooling, economic incentives, and policy change.

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  - 6 Mathur, S., Greene, M., Malhotra, A. (2003). [Too Young to Wed: The Lives, Rights, and Health of Young Married Girls.](#) Washington, DC: ICRW.

This paper provides an overview of child marriage. It presents patterns in global prevalence, causes, consequences, and programmatic and policy responses to early marriage. While not as recent as other resources in this table, this report provides a good overview of the issue of child marriage for someone who is learning about it for the first time.
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\*Available upon request from GNB USA via ICRW: [ltompson@icrw.org](mailto:ltompson@icrw.org)

7	Raj, A. (2010) <a href="#"><u>When the mother is a child: The impact of child marriage on the health and human rights of girls.</u></a> <i>Archives of Disease in Childhood</i> , 95(11), 931–5.	This article details the health and humans rights consequences that result from child marriage. It describes the physical and mental health consequences for girls who are married young, as well as the health consequences to children born to child brides. The article offers policy and programmatic recommendations on how to prevent and respond to CEFM.
8	UNFPA. (2013). <a href="#"><u>Marrying Too Young: End Child Marriage.</u></a> New York, NY: UNFPA.	This report provides a statistical and descriptive overview of child marriage. It presents information on how child marriage is a violation of human rights and a deterrent to development, clarification on the methodology used to measure child marriage, global and regional levels and trends, disparities and inequalities related to the prevalence of child marriage, what to expect if current trends continue, and an agenda for action for preventing child marriage and meeting the needs of married adolescents.
9	UNFPA & UNICEF. (2010). <a href="#"><u>Women’s &amp; Children’s Rights: Making the Connection.</u></a> New York, NY: UNFPA and UNICEF.	While the rights of women and children have often been promoted in isolation from one another, this advocacy booklet explores the human rights links between the rights of women and children, the practical implications of considering them together, and four areas for strategic action. There is a chapter specifically dedicated to rights related to eliminating child marriage.
10	UNICEF. (2014). <a href="#"><u>Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects.</u></a> New York, NY: UNICEF.	This brief provides a snapshot of updated child marriage statistics and trends. It presents regional patterns related to prevalence of marriage for people under 15 and 18, factors associated with risk of child marriage, the lifelong and intergenerational consequences of child marriage, progress to date, and prospects for the future if the prevalence remains the same or decreases.
11	UNICEF. (2005). <a href="#"><u>Early Marriage: A Harmful Traditional Practice.</u></a> New York, NY: UNICEF.	This report analyzes household survey data from the DHS to assess child marriage levels by country and provide further analysis on how child marriage correlates with additional indicators. The study uses empirical evidence to estimate the prevalence of child marriage and to identify and understand the factors associated with child marriage and cohabitation.
12	USAID. (2012). <a href="#"><u>Ending Child Marriage &amp; Meeting the Needs of Married Children: The USAID Vision for Action.</u></a> Washington, DC: USAID.	This document paves the way for U.S. Government efforts to end child marriage. <i>The Vision</i> provides a strategy that defends children’s rights and supports them with access to resources and opportunities for sustainable development. This strategy includes support not only for children who are at risk of CEFM, but also for boys and girls who are already married and lack access to resources.
13	USAID. (2013). <a href="#"><u>The USAID Office of Population and Reproductive Health’s Technical Approach to Child Marriage.</u></a> Washington, DC: USAID	This brief provides an explanation of USAID’s Office of Population and Reproductive Health’s (PRH) efforts to delay marriage and protect the rights of married women and girls. PRH presents a two-pronged approach to address child marriage: 1) activities to prevent child marriage, 2) activities that address the family planning and reproductive health needs of young married girls/couples. The brief provides an overview of these strategies as well as a few PRH program examples.
14	Vogelstein, R. (2013). <a href="#"><u>Ending Child Marriage: How Elevating the Status of Girls Advances U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives.</u></a> New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations.	This report provides an overview of how the issue of child marriage undermines U.S. investment, development, and foreign policy priorities. The report lays out the key causes and consequences of child marriage, the implications for U.S. foreign policy, and policy considerations, including what efforts have been enacted in the past and how policy-makers can prioritize child marriage in U.S. diplomacy in the future.

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- 15** Warner, A., Glinski, A., Thompson, L., Redner, J., and Kennedy, E. (2013). [\*\*Ending Child Marriage: What Will It Take?\*\*](#) Washington, DC: Girls Not Brides.
- This brief provides an overview of the causes and consequences of child marriage, potential strategies to delay the age of marriage and meet the needs of married children, and factors to consider when assessing where investment is needed and where change is most feasible. It also includes actionable guidance on how to prevent child marriage and meet the needs of married adolescents.
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- 16** Warner, A., Stoebenau, K., & Glinski, A. (2014). [\*\*More Power to Her: How Empowering Girls Can Help End Child Marriage.\*\*](#) Washington, DC: ICRW.
- This report presents findings from four case studies of promising programs that used girl-focused approaches to shift marriage-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. The report identifies critical components of empowerment needed to transform marriage-related attitudes and practices. While the report provides concrete evidence from the case studies, it also includes a theoretical framing of the pathways of girls' empowerment.
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## 4.2 OTHER IMPORTANT RESOURCES

### KEY POLICY DOCUMENTS

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### 4.3 TABLE OF KEY TOOLKITS

This section contains a list of existing toolkits and resources for sector-specific programming, organized alphabetically by the name of the tool. While very few of the toolkits listed here directly address CEFM programming by incorporating the suggestions from Part 2 of this Resource Guide, these tools can be used to design approaches that integrate CEFM prevention and response.

Toolkit	Description	Topic/Sector								
		GENDER	HEALTH	EDU	ECON	AG	DRG	C&C	GBV	YOUTH
<p><b>1</b> <a href="#"><u>Beyond Access: Toolkit for Integrating Gender Based Violence Prevention and Response into Education Projects</u></a> (USAID)</p>	<p>This USAID toolkit provides guidance and resources to increase understanding of GBV in the education context and strengthen integration of a gender-based violence (GBV) response into projects and activities. The Toolkit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides illustrative GBV prevention and response activities organized by USAID Education Strategy Goals</li> <li>• Offers guidance on how to integrate GBV prevention and response throughout the USAID Program Cycle to be able to monitor, evaluate, learn, and adapt education projects and activities</li> <li>• Includes illustrative indicators for measuring GBV prevention and response for each of the USAID Education Strategy goals</li> </ul>	x		x					x	x
<p><b>2</b> <a href="#"><u>Coaching Boys into Men: A Violence Prevention Guide for Football Coaches</u></a> (UNICEF)</p>	<p>Based on the observation that coaches serve as important role models and leaders for boys, this guide trains soccer/football coaches to use practice as a platform to encourage dialogue and reflection among boys and young men about gender inequality and violence.</p>	x							x	x
<p><b>3</b> <a href="#"><u>I DEAL curriculum and guides</u></a> (War Child Holland)</p>	<p>The I DEAL package is a life-skills program designed to build the resilience of children and young people in conflict-affected areas. The I DEAL curriculum includes six thematic modules and targets very young adolescents. Other DEAL curricula are designed specifically for young people (BIG DEAL), girls (SHE DEALS), parents (PARENTS DEAL), and teachers (TEACHERS DEAL) to address the challenges each group faces.</p>	x	x	x				x	x	x
<p><b>4</b> <a href="#"><u>Doorways Training Manual for Safe Schools</u></a> (USAID)</p>	<p>The Doorways program can be incorporated into national or local plans to reduce GBV and improve school safety. The set includes separate manuals designed for teachers, students, and volunteer community counselors to lead transformative, lasting change in the classroom and larger community.</p>			x					x	x

Toolkit	Description	Topic/Sector								
		GENDER	HEALTH	EDU	ECON	AG	DRG	C&C	GBV	YOUTH
<p><b>5</b> <a href="#">Ending Child Marriage: A Guide for Global Policy Action</a> (International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF))</p>	<p>One of the few resources in this list that addresses CEFM directly, this guide calls on policymakers to improve the quality of life of girls and young women forced into child marriages. In addition to outlining the special needs of child brides and the economic and social drivers that reinforce the practice, the guide provides solutions based on a child protection framework. It also advocates for the use of legal, policy, and multi-sector strategies to delay marriage and meet the needs of married girls.</p>		x	x	x		x		x	x
<p><b>6</b> <a href="#">Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equity and Health: A Toolkit for Action</a> (UNFPA)</p>	<p>A toolkit for a wide range of development professionals who work on issues related to gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and GBV prevention. The toolkit includes tools to conduct needs assessments and monitoring and evaluation, best practices, and program examples for engaging men and boys.</p>	x	x						x	x
<p><b>7</b> <a href="#">Gender Analysis, Assessment, and Audit Manual &amp; Toolkit</a> (ACDI/VOCA)</p>	<p>This toolkit provides instructions on how to conduct gender-analysis studies, assessments, and audits. It provides useful approaches and tools for gender-analysis studies, including guidance on operationalizing a study from start to finish. It also includes tools for baseline studies, agriculture and economic growth-oriented gender analyses, value-chain and market assessments, and others that can be incorporated into other studies.</p>	x			x	x				
<p><b>8</b> <a href="#">Gender Analysis of Health Problems and Services</a> (London School of Tropical Medicine)</p>	<p>Gender analysis is the essential first step towards designing and implementing health policy, health projects, and health research in a gender-sensitive way. Gender analysis aims to identify significant gender differences and inequities in who gets ill, when, why, and how women and men recognize and respond to illness.</p>	x	x				x			
<p><b>9</b> <a href="#">Gender Awareness and Development Manual: Resource Material for Gender Trainers</a> (UNDP)</p>	<p>This set of training tools and exercises was developed to train and equip staff at all levels of responsibility within an organization by providing the knowledge and tools to integrate gender issues throughout their work. The modules are designed to initiate discussion and provide a context for staff to develop future planning in the area of gender mainstreaming.</p>	x								

Toolkit	Description	Topic/Sector								
		GENDER	HEALTH	EDU	ECON	AG	DRG	C&C	GBV	YOUTH
<b>10 <a href="#">Gender Equality in and through Education: INEE Pocket Guide to Gender</a></b> (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies)	This guide outlines a gender-responsive approach to education programming and provides a strong case for gender-responsive education. It lays out concrete strategies for improving gender equality in the major domains of education in emergency situations. It also provides key gender terms and a selection of additional resources.	x		x				x		x
<b>11 <a href="#">Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS)</a></b> (ICRW, the committee of Resource Organization for Literacy (CORO) and Tata institute for Social Sciences-TISS)	GEMS curriculum and tools were used in schools to encourage equal relationships between girls and boys, examine the social norms that define men and women's roles, and address different forms of violence and how to intervene. The GEMS diary is a puberty workbook for very young adolescents. The GEMS facilitator guide is meant for adult group leaders.	x		x					x	x
<b>12 <a href="#">Girl-Centered Program Design: A Toolkit to Develop, Strengthen, and Expand Adolescent Girl Programs</a></b> (Population Council)	This toolkit is a comprehensive guide to programming for adolescent girls in urban Kenya. It includes sections on program design, program content, and monitoring and evaluation.									x
<b>13 <a href="#">GREAT Scalable Toolkit</a></b> (Georgetown University Institute of Reproductive Health-IRH)	The GREAT toolkit was designed to engage adolescents and adults to transform gender and reproductive health outcomes through improved knowledge about their bodies, reproductive health, GBV and gender roles, and actions to catalyze change in the home and community. The toolkit includes flipbooks, activity cards, a radio discussion guide, and a community game.	x	x				x		x	x
<b>14 <a href="#">A Guide for Promoting Gender Equality and Inclusiveness in Teaching and Learning Materials</a></b> (RTI International)	This guide offers strategies to evaluate teaching and learning materials for optimal inclusion of all subpopulations of children. A literature review informed the four themes of the guide, which includes: equal frequency of representation, gender-equitable and inclusive illustrations, and language, and gender-equitable and transformational roles. The guide can inform evaluations and help program designers create materials that are free of gender bias and that promote equality and inclusiveness to members of all marginalized, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups. The Guide is not yet finalized, but the presentation from the 2015 CIES conference is currently available.	x		x			x			x

Toolkit	Description	Topic/Sector									
		GENDER	HEALTH	EDU	ECON	AG	DRG	C&C	GBV	YOUTH	
<b>15 <a href="#">Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence Against Women</a></b> (UN Women)	The handbook presents the current knowledge on policies for preventing and responding to violence against women. It also describes how such policies have been implemented in various contexts and provides advice for policymakers and advocates for designing effective plans. Based on best practices and expert input from around the globe, the handbook was designed for broad application in a wide variety of settings and political environments. It describes the international and regional legal and policy frameworks addressing violence against women, and provides a model framework for national action plans on violence against women, including recommendations, explanatory commentaries, and examples of good practice.							x		x	
<b>16 <a href="#">Harvard Gender Analysis Framework</a></b> (International Labour Organization)	Developed by the Women in Development (WID) office at USAID, this resource makes an economic case for allocating resources to women as well as men and it helps planners to design more efficient projects. The framework presents a matrix for collecting and analyzing gender data with the following four components: 1) the activity profile (differentiating productive and reproductive activities); 2) the access and control profile 3) analysis of influencing factors; and 4) a project-cycle analysis.	x			x	x					
<b>17 <a href="#">Integrating Gender throughout a Project Life Cycle 2.0</a></b> (Land O'Lakes International Development)	To conduct effective, responsible development work, incorporating gender at all stages of a project's life cycle is critical. As such, this document provides guidance on how to use a gender lens in program design, implementation, and evaluation. It includes technical sections, best practices, and case studies that address capacity development and gender outcomes.	x			x	x					
<b>18 <a href="#">Intervention Guide for the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI): Practitioners' Guide to Selecting and Designing WEAI Interventions</a></b> (ACDI/VOCA)	The WEAI instructs donors and implementers of agricultural market development programs about how best to use the WEAI survey results to improve their programs. The guide helps practitioners to employ market-systems and gender-responsive approaches to selecting and designing evidence-based interventions tailored to the domains of empowerment prioritized in the WEAI. Implementers and managers of Feed the Future projects will find this guide particularly useful, but other local stakeholders, donors, and implementers working in livelihoods and gender may also benefit from this resource.	x		x	x	x					

Toolkit	Description	Topic/Sector								
		GENDER	HEALTH	EDU	ECON	AG	DRG	C&C	GBV	YOUTH
<b>19</b> <a href="#"><u>Ishaka Toolkit: A Guide to Girls' Economic and Social Empowerment through a Solidarity Group Savings and Loan Platform</u></a> (CARE)	The Ishaka Toolkit is a practical, hands-on guide intended for NGOs. It provides detailed instructions to develop a solidarity group savings and loan program for girls, and includes financial literacy and income-generating activity (IGA) components. This comprehensive curriculum also includes modules on sexual and reproductive health, life skills, human rights, improving access to clinical services, and engaging men and boys. The guide is ideal for program designers and implementers interested in replicating and adapting the model in various contexts.	x	x		x				x	x
<b>20</b> <a href="#"><u>It's All One Curriculum: Guideline and Activities for a Unified Approach to Sexuality, Gender, HIV, and Human Rights</u></a> (CREA, Girls Power Initiative, IPPF, IWHC, Mexfam, Population Council, International Sexuality and HIV Curriculum Working Group)	This resource kit can be used to deliver a comprehensive curriculum on sexuality, gender, HIV, and human rights. The curriculum is evidence-based, comprehensive, rights-based, and gender sensitive. The resources include activities and guidelines that can be incorporated into a variety of programs.	x	x	x			x		x	x
<b>21</b> <a href="#"><u>Private Sector Toolkit for Working with Youth</u></a> (United Nations)	This toolkit is one of a collection of technical papers designed to engage various levels of stakeholders, strengthen youth participation, and highlight the importance of youth as agents of development. Building on other papers in the series that provide guidance to development agencies, policymakers, or young people to facilitate their participation in key moments, this technical paper seeks to enhance partnerships between youth and the private sector.				x					x
<b>22</b> <a href="#"><u>Property Rights in Marriage and Family: A Training Toolkit</u></a> (ICRW)	This toolkit aims to increase awareness and understanding of property rights for women and men as equal citizens in Uganda. The toolkit explains the rights women have under the law, gives tips for communicating about those rights, and outlines the barriers women face to exercising their rights. The toolkit includes five modules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rights and gender in Uganda</li> <li>• land law and gender</li> <li>• property rights in marriage and family</li> <li>• inheritance law, wills and women</li> <li>• monitoring skills for the community rights worker</li> </ul>	x			x	x	x			

Toolkit	Description	Topic/Sector								
		GENDER	HEALTH	EDU	ECON	AG	DRG	C&C	GBV	YOUTH
23 <a href="#"><u>SASA! An Activist Kit to Prevent Violence Against Women and HIV</u></a> (Raising Voices)	SASA! is a comprehensive, user-friendly program tool for mobilizing communities to prevent violence against women and HIV infection. The kit includes practical resources, activities, and monitoring and assessment tools for local activism, media and advocacy, communication materials, and training. Organizations working on violence or HIV/AIDS can use it to incorporate these crosscutting issues into their work. SASA! was initially developed and implemented in Uganda and has since been replicated in other settings.		x							x
24 <a href="#"><u>Scaling Up Interventions to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence: An Analytical Report</u></a> (USAID)	This report on scaling up interventions to prevent and respond to GBV was commissioned by USAID to identify lessons learned from scaled-up GBV interventions. The information presented in this report may be used to assist in the identification of GBV interventions that are scalable, or in designing GBV interventions with sound plans to bring them to scale and to maximize impact. The three scale-up methodologies explored in this report are: expansion of scope, replication and expansion of geographic coverage. This report is of particular use to the following sectors: health, youth and education, democracy and governance, and economic growth.	x	x	x	x		x		x	x
25 <a href="#"><u>Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis Field Handbook</u></a> (FAO)	This handbook is written for a range of development professionals who work directly with local communities in developing countries. The guide supports community engagement through participatory development planning. The tools in this handbook will help development agents to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify key development patterns</li> <li>• understand various livelihood strategies</li> <li>• build consensus and community buy-in for development priorities and action plans</li> </ul>	x			x	x	x			
26 <a href="#"><u>Through Our Eyes</u></a> (American Refugee Committee)	To raise awareness about GBV, participants work together to create videos and audio-tapes to be used as teaching tools in their own communities and as advocacy tools around the world. There are 11 videos that address sexuality, gender, and violence in Northern Uganda. The tools include a summary of the videos produced and a participatory guide to accompany the videos.	x	x						x	x

Toolkit	Description	Topic/Sector								
		GENDER	HEALTH	EDU	ECON	AG	DRG	C&C	GBV	YOUTH
<p><b>27</b> <a href="#">Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Gender-Based Violence Interventions along the Relief to Development Continuum</a></p> <p>Development and Training Services (DTS)</p>	<p>This toolkit is based on an assessment of GBV interventions and includes monitoring and evaluation (M&amp;E) best practices. The toolkit describes why M&amp;E on GBV programming is unique, and it provides users with helpful resources to conduct M&amp;E of GBV programming throughout the relief-to-development continuum (RDC). It includes resources on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M&amp;E to measure change and determine program effectiveness; how to use and adapt tested practices and tools and;</li> <li>coordinated M&amp;E of GBV interventions among sectors and stakeholders</li> </ul>							x	x	
<p><b>28</b> <a href="#">Toolkit on Hygiene, Water, and Sanitation in Schools</a></p> <p>(World Bank)</p>	<p>This toolkit draws on lessons learned from the health, education, and water and sanitation fields to help task managers utilize sector-specific best practices and evidence-based approaches to improve multi-sectoral programming for sanitation and hygiene in schools.</p>		x	x						x
<p><b>29</b> <a href="#">Tools for Assessing Gender in Health Policies and Programs</a></p> <p>(Health Policy Project)</p>	<p>This compilation of gender assessment tools and frameworks is designed to support policymakers, advocates, and development practitioners working to integrate gender into the health policy process. Most resources in this collection support gender assessment, policy and program planning, or monitoring and evaluation in one or more of the following health areas: family planning, HIV, maternal and child health, and reproductive health. They include tools for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducting gender analyses and assessments in the health sector to inform new or assess existing policies and programs</li> <li>Assessing and implementing institutional gender mainstreaming and budgeting for gender-responsive policies and programs</li> <li>Identifying gender-sensitive indicators and analyzing health data from a gender perspective</li> <li>Planning and assessing technical approaches around gender-based violence, female empowerment, and male involvement</li> </ul>	x	x						x	
<p><b>30</b> <a href="#">Training Manual For The Providers of Youth Friendly Services</a></p> <p>(UNFPA/FHI)</p>	<p>This manual is designed to guide a training workshop to build the capacity of youth friendly service providers in providing reproductive health and family planning information and services to youth. The comprehensive training manual includes facilitator guidelines, training slides and a PowerPoint slide deck.</p>		x							x

Toolkit	Description	Topic/Sector								
		GENDER	HEALTH	EDU	ECON	AG	DRG	C&C	GBV	YOUTH
<b>31 <a href="#">Users' Guide to Measuring Gender-Sensitive Basic Service Delivery</a></b> (UNDP)	This guide was designed to contribute to the development and use of gender-sensitive indicators to improve service delivery to women. It targets a range of potential users, including staff working with national counterparts to use data and indicators to improve the delivery of services monitor and evaluate impact, and hold governments and service providers accountable; government departments, donors, and international agencies involved in developing, funding and implementing service-delivery programs; local governments; and end-users of the services, particularly women.	x	x				x			
<b>32 <a href="#">Using Data to See and Select the Most Vulnerable Adolescent Girls</a></b> (Population Council)	Aligning with the strategic priorities defined in the United Nations Joint Statement, <i>Accelerating Efforts to Advance the Rights of Adolescent Girls</i> , this report presents five thematic reviews to support governments and partners in advancing key policies and programs for the hardest-to-reach adolescent girls. It outlines next steps for girls' education, examines innovative approaches to improving girls' health, reframes the field's approach to violence against girls, describe the best ways to cultivate girl leaders, and discussed innovative ways to collect and use data on adolescent girls.		x						x	x
<b>33 <a href="#">Working with Men and Boys to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Approaches, Challenges, and Lessons</a></b> (USAID)	Effective strategies to end violence against women and girls (VAWG) must include engaging with men and boys. Much of the existing evidence for these strategies comes from the health sector, but coordinated work across many sectors is required to truly impact VAWG. This report identifies promising approaches and emerging lessons from work with men and boys on VAWG within other sectors, including Education; Economic Growth, Trade, and Agriculture; Governance, Law Enforcement and Justice Systems; Conflict and Post-Conflict Humanitarian Assistance; and Social Development. These approaches are grounded in an understanding of the links between social constructions of masculinity and men's use of violence. The concept of "positive masculinities" is emphasized in this report, and characterizes the values, norms and practices that gender-based work with men and boys seeks to promote.	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Toolkit	Description	Topic/Sector								
		GENDER	HEALTH	EDU	ECON	AG	DRG	C&C	GBV	YOUTH
<b>34 <a href="#">Youth Camps Manual: GLOW and Other Leadership Camps</a></b> (Peace Corps)	Camp Girls Leading Our World (GLOW) has become one of the most common and recognizable Peace Corps activities throughout the world. These camps explore many different themes: some focus on environmental topics or work readiness skills, depending on the priorities of the communities. Other camps may address life skills or HIV/AIDS prevention, business skills, English immersion, or technology for development (T4D). All camps can incorporate common themes of leadership, gender equality, life skills, or service. Part two of this manual provides several examples of camp themes Peace Corps Volunteers and their partners have used to accomplish their objectives. Part five includes a complete Camp GLOW model.	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
<b>35 <a href="#">Youth ICT Employment Training &amp; Placement Toolkit</a></b> (USAID)	This toolkit guides the design of youth employability programs to encourage and empower local partners to implement such initiatives. The toolkit profiles jobs in the information and communication technology (ICT), health, and agriculture sectors, which were identified as industries with potential for strong growth and high youth employment. Each profile provides a detailed guide for establishing programs to train and equip youth to gain formal employment or start their own businesses.		x		x	x				x

# CEFM RESOURCE GUIDE

## MEDIA KIT

### **KEY MESSAGES ON CHILD, EARLY, AND FORCED MARRIAGE**

- One in three girls is married before 18 in the developing world; one in nine is married before the age of 15.
- Over the next decade, there will be over 150 million child brides.
- Child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) is a human rights abuse and a practice that undermines efforts to alleviate poverty and promote sustainable economic development.
- Child marriage is not an isolated issue, but rather has interrelated drivers and consequences that are connected to all aspects of a girl's life and her social environment.
- CEFM is perpetuated by a range of social, economic, cultural, and contextual drivers.
- Reducing CEFM or mitigating its effects for married girls can enhance key outcomes related to health, education, economic development, civic participation, and violence.
- Reducing CEFM requires empowering girls with skills and resources, mobilizing families and communities for social norm change and ensuring that there is an enabling legal and policy environment to support girls to realize their potential.
- The most effective solutions to reduce and mitigate CEFM are cross-sectoral.
- Many of USAID's key programming sectors have the potential to reduce and/or mitigate the effects of CEFM by integrating CEFM considerations into existing programming.
- Integrating CEFM prevention and response into programming in other sectors may also enhance progress towards implementers' sector-specific goals.
- The CEFM Resource Guide will enable USAID staff to better understand how CEFM is connected to their current program efforts and objectives, and how integrating CEFM prevention and response strategies can help them to achieve sectoral goals.

## TALKING POINTS ON CEFM AND THE GUIDE

- USAID was the first U.S. Government agency to publish its commitment and a vision for ending child marriage—Administrator Shah participated in the London Girl Summit in 2014 and committed to work to ensure child marriage was integrated across the various relevant thematic areas of US foreign assistance. This Resource Guide will help to actualize that commitment.
- USAID’s [\*Vision for Action on Ending Child Marriage and Meeting the Needs of Married Children\*](#) identifies the following key principles that guide USAID’s CEFM prevention and response efforts with a variety of stakeholders: cultivate partnerships broadly; mobilize communities to shift norms that perpetuate child marriage; and address the unique needs of married children.
- Moving forward, the world has just adopted the next development framework, the Sustainable Development Goals, which will shape the trajectory of global aid flows for the next 15 years. The international community has firmly embraced ending child marriage as a global priority, and has set a target to eradicate child marriage and FGM/C, among other harmful traditional practices, by 2030.
- In response to this growing momentum, as well as recognition that child marriage is a complex issue that requires a multi-sectoral response, USAID has developed the Child, Early, and Forced marriage (CEFM) Resource Guide to provide guidance on how CEFM prevention and response can be integrated into key USAID programming sectors and strategies.
- The CEFM Resource Guide offers sector-specific modules with tailored guidance and resources for program designers and implementers. Each sector module includes a description of why CEFM is relevant to the sector and its priorities, examples of existing USAID and non-USAID programs with potential linkages to CEFM prevention and response, specific recommendations for integrating CEFM into other programs, and a list of key stakeholders that are influential in both the highlighted sector and addressing CEFM. The Resource Guide covers eight key sectors/strategies, as well as one module on multi-sectoral programming:
  - Gender-Based Violence
  - Youth
  - Global Health
  - Education
  - Economic Growth and Workforce Development
  - Agriculture and Food Security
  - Democracy, Human Rights and Governance
  - Crisis and Conflict
  - Multi-Sectoral Programming
- While each of the sector/strategy sections provides specific recommendations on how to integrate CEFM prevention and response and also support sector/strategy-specific goals and objectives, there are five overarching approaches that have been found to be successful:
  - Empower girls at risk of CEFM and already married girls with information, skills, and supportive networks
  - Ensure girls’ access to high-quality education, particularly secondary

- Educate and rally families and community members to change attitudes and behaviors that reinforce CEFM
- Integrate efforts within and across sectors
- Enact and enforce laws and policies that delay marriage and support married girls
- USAID has developed the Program Cycle to guide implementers through the key components that comprise effective development interventions and maximize impacts. The Guide provides useful guidance on integrating CEFM from the development of agency policies and strategies to Country Development Cooperation Strategies, from budgeting to program design and implementation, and from performance monitoring and evaluation to learning from and adapting programs.
- USAID’s [Automated Directives System \(ADS\) 205: Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID’s Program Cycle \(ADS 205\)](#) provides instructions on how to operationalize gender policies and strategies across the USAID Program Cycle. Collecting information on CEFM during gender analyses will produce useful findings and recommendations on how to design strategies, programs, projects, and activities that prevent and respond to CEFM. Using the five domains of gender analysis—Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices; Cultural Norms and Beliefs; Gender Roles, Responsibilities and Time Used; Access to and Control over Assets and Resources; Patterns of Power and Decision-making—the Guide outlines guiding questions, rationale, and the relevant stakeholders from whom to collect information.

## SOCIAL MEDIA KIT FOR THE CEFM GUIDE

### SUGGESTED HASHTAGS TO BE USED

#CEFMGuide #ChildMarriage #EndChildMarriage

### PARTNER TAGS

*Tag partners whenever possible to engage with more followers and maximize visibility.*

USAID: @USAID

Banyan Global: @Banyan\_Global

ICRW: @ICRW

### SAMPLE TWEETS

Have you seen @USAID's Vision for Ending #childmarriage and Meeting the Needs of Married Girls? Read more here [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PDACU300.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACU300.pdf)

The USA is committed to #endchildmarriage. #CEFMguide is a tool to help address across #GlobalDev <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1865/child-early-and-forced-marriage-resource-guide>

What does #economicgrowth, #education, #ruleoflaw and #globalhealth have to do with #childmarriage? Find out in our handy resource guide!

Happy #DayoftheGirl! Check out our #CEFMGuide on how we're working to #endchildmarriage and empower girls across our programs!

What is #childmarriage, who does it affect + how prevalent is it? See @USAID's groundbreaking #CEFMguide developed by @ICRW + @Banyan\_Global

Our new #CEFMGuide lays a clear path on how to effectively integrate evidence-based approaches to #endchildmarriage through development

#CEFMGuide provides evidence-based approaches to #endchildmarriage

<https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1865/child-early-and-forced-marriage-resource-guide>  
@Banyan\_Global @ICRW

#CEFMGuide points a path to how we can integrate cutting edge prevention + response approaches to #endchildmarriage

### SECTORS THAT CAN BE PLUGGED INTO SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS:

- Gender-Based Violence
- Youth
- Global Health
- Education
- Economic Growth and Workforce Development
- Agriculture and Food Security
- Democracy, Human Rights and Governance
- Crisis and Conflict
- Multi-Sectoral Programming

### STRATEGIC DAYS (2016)

- OCTOBER 11** International Day of the Girl Child
- AUGUST 12** International Youth Day
- NOVEMBER 25** International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
- NOVEMBER 25–DECEMBER 10** 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence
- DECEMBER 10** Human Rights Day
- MARCH 8** International Women's Day
- JUNE 20** World Refugee Day

#childmarriage is a complex issue, thus, requires a multi-sectoral approach to effectively prevent it + mitigate its effects #CEFMGuide

What works to prevent and respond to #childmarriage? See @USAID's #CEFMGuide <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1865/child-early-and-forced-marriage-resource-guide> @Banyan\_Global @ICRW

Addressing #childmarriage requires a multi-sectoral approach. #CEFMGuide shows us how we can #endchildmarriage through key sectors + strategies

Want to know more about #childmarriage and how to #endchildmarriage? Our #CEFMGuide provides a list of key resources <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1865/child-early-and-forced-marriage-resource-guide>

Our #CEFMGuide offers practical tools for integrating #childmarriage prevention + response. Learn more <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1865/child-early-and-forced-marriage-resource-guide>

Effective prevention + response to #endchildmarriage must engage a variety of stakeholders that perpetuate it: <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1865/child-early-and-forced-marriage-resource-guide>

### **SAMPLE FACEBOOK MESSAGES**

What works to prevent and respond to child, early and forced marriage (CEFM)? USAID's #CEFMGuide provides effective, evidence-based approaches to #endchildmarriage. <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1865/child-early-and-forced-marriage-resource-guide>

A range of individuals and institutions perpetuate the practice of #childmarriage. Our #CEFMGuide developed by ICRW and Banyan Global provides information on how we can engage key stakeholders to #endchildmarriage. <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1865/child-early-and-forced-marriage-resource-guide>

#CEFMGuide offers guidance for sectors—such as global health, education, economic growth—to help #endchildmarriage

#CEFMGuide offers concrete recommendations on how existing approaches to #endchildmarriage could be improved

Want to learn more about what can be done to #endchildmarriage? See USAID's #CEFMGuide for a list of resources <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1865/child-early-and-forced-marriage-resource-guide>

# How Does Child, Early, and Forced Marriage Impact Your Work?



## Today

$\frac{1}{3}$  of all girls in the developing world are **MARRIED** BEFORE THE AGE OF 18



## Tomorrow

IF CURRENT RATES CONTINUE



Because of the **INCREASING YOUTH POPULATION**



**150** girls will be married in the next decade  
**MILLION**

## THE FACTS RELATED TO CHILD, EARLY, AND FORCED MARRIAGE



### GLOBAL HEALTH

- ▶ **90% OF BIRTHS TO ADOLESCENTS** worldwide occur within marriage
- ▶ **MATERNAL MORTALITY** is the second leading cause of death among girls 15-19 globally



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Girls with no education are **3 X AS LIKELY TO MARRY BEFORE 18** as girls with higher education
- ▶ Girls who marry young are **MORE LIKELY TO DROP OUT** of school



### DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS & GOVERNANCE

- ▶ 158 countries have **MINIMUM AGE OF MARRIAGE LAWS**, but they often lack local **ENFORCEMENT**
- ▶ **CUSTOMARY LAWS** often contradict formal laws



## ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ The **POOREST GIRLS ARE 3 X** more likely to become child brides than the richest
- ▶ When girls marry young, they are **LESS LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE** in the labor force



## AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

- ▶ Child brides experience higher rates of **MALNUTRITION** than girls who marry later in life
- ▶ Food insecurity can increase **PRESSURE FOR EARLY MARRIAGE** within families



## CRISIS & CONFLICT

- ▶ **RISK OF CHILD MARRIAGE INCREASES** during social and political uncertainty and humanitarian crises
- ▶ Family, social, legal, and economic structures often crumble during crisis and conflict, leaving **LITTLE PROTECTION FROM CHILD MARRIAGE**



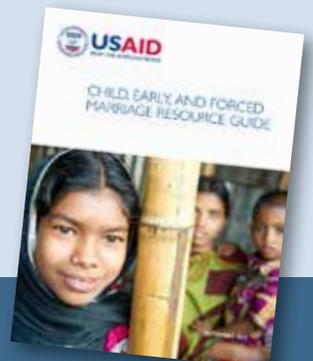
## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- ▶ Child, early, and forced marriage is a form of **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**
- ▶ Early marriage puts a girl at **HIGHER RISK** of gender-based violence throughout her lifetime

# WHAT CAN WE DO?



- ▶ **EMPOWER** girls at risk of Child, Early, and Forced Marriage and support already married girls
- ▶ Keep girls in **SCHOOL**
- ▶ **SHIFT ATTITUDES** via community mobilization and outreach
- ▶ **INTEGRATE** prevention and mitigation efforts within and across sectors
- ▶ **ENACT AND ENFORCE LAWS** and policies that delay marriage



To find out more about Child, Early, and Forced Marriage, including how **YOU** can address it in your work, visit:

[www.usaid.gov/documents/1865/child-early-and-forced-marriage-resource-guide](http://www.usaid.gov/documents/1865/child-early-and-forced-marriage-resource-guide)

[#ChildMarriage](#) · [#EndChildMarriage](#) · [#CEFMGuide](#) · [@USAID](#)

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## PART I

### I.1 Problem Statement

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