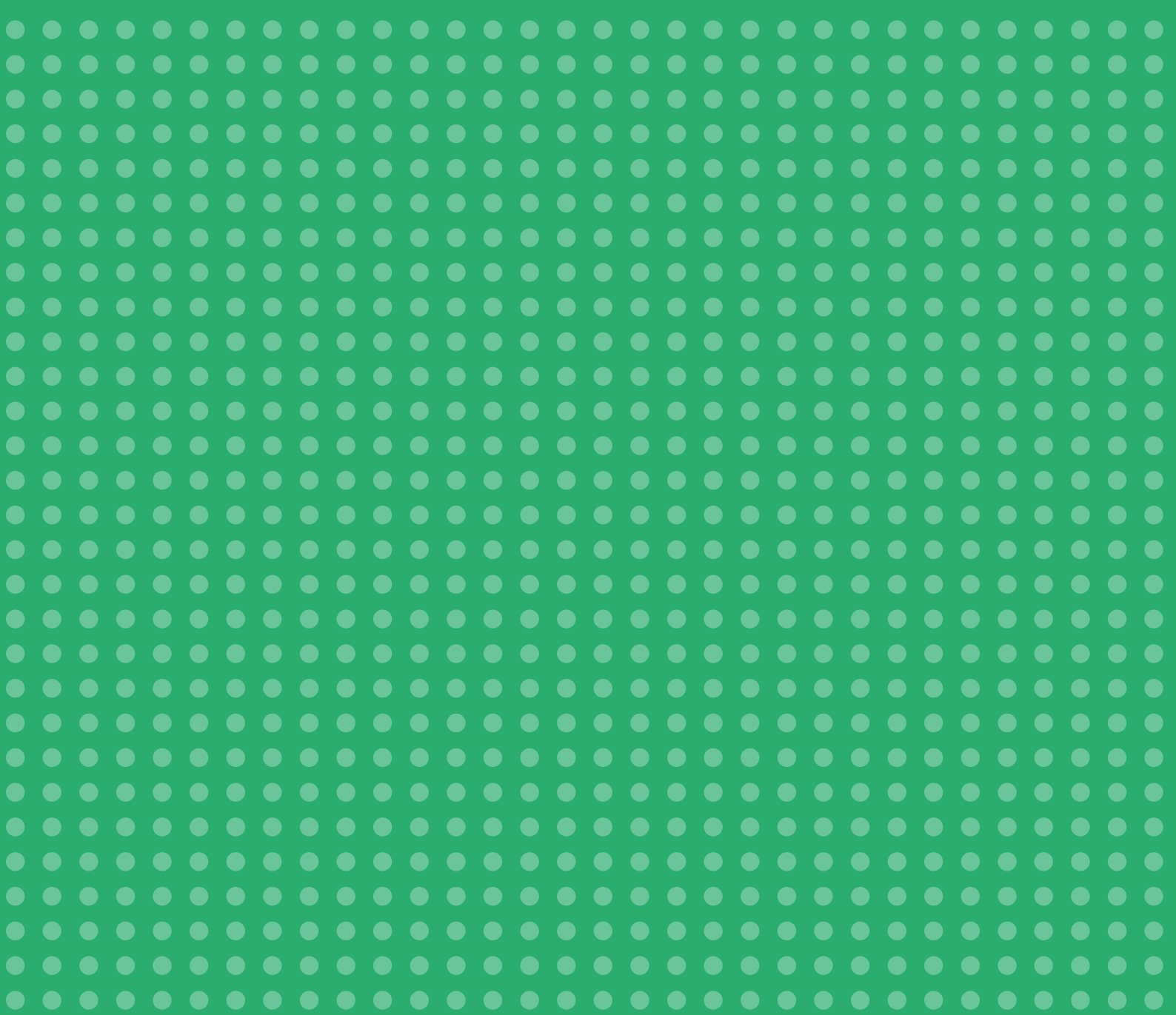




Each year, 12 million girls are married before the age of 18.



TRANSFORMATIVE RESULT: ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND ALL HARMFUL PRACTICES

CHAPTER 4 COST OF ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE

SUMMARY

Nearly 650 million women alive today became brides before they turned 18 years old – some even before age 10 – and an additional 12 million girls are expected to be married each year. Child marriage is a human rights violation that deprives girls of their education, health and security. Child brides often drop out of school and have diminished economic opportunities. They are at elevated risk for domestic violence and adolescent pregnancy, increasing the risk of maternal and newborn death and injury. Child marriage also has intergenerational impacts. Interventions are emerging that hold great promise to reduce the incidence of child marriage.

This study has developed a methodology for estimating the cost of ending child marriage in 68 countries that are host to about 90 per cent of the current global burden of child marriage. For the purposes of this study, ending child marriage is defined as lowering the rate of child marriage below 5 per cent in the 68 target countries.

THE PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

- **The total cost of ending child marriage for the 68 countries modelled over the period 2020 to 2030 is \$35 billion.**
- **The amount in development assistance that will be spent in 68 priority countries is \$10.9 billion. Ending child marriage by 2030 in 68 priority countries requires investments totalling \$24.1 billion.⁷**
- **Only \$600 are required to avert one case of child marriage.**

⁷ This estimate of donor funding that addresses child and early marriage 2020–2030 was developed by the IHME.

4.1 OVERVIEW

Globally, 650 million women and girls alive today were brides before they reached the age of 18. The impact of child marriage on these women and girls, the estimated 12 million additional girls who are married each year and the societies in which they live is significant. Child marriage is a human rights violation that deprives girls of their education, health and security. Child brides often drop out of school and have diminished economic opportunities. They are at elevated risk for domestic violence and adolescent pregnancy, increasing the risk of maternal and newborn death and injury and child marriage has intergenerational impacts.

Ending child marriage is an objective of Sustainable Development Goal 5.3.

Child marriage is caused by a variety of social, cultural, religious and economic factors. The most significant among them are: prevailing gendered social and cultural norms; poverty; financial transactions around marriage such as dowry or bride price, and a lack of positive alternatives for girls and families such as quality education and opportunities for decent work. The girls at greatest risk of early marriage are often from poor families, marginalized groups or rural areas and may be the hardest to reach.

Interventions are emerging that hold great promise to reduce the incidence of child marriage. A set of programmes focus on directly impacting early marriage include life skills (generally including information on sexual and reproductive health and rights), conditional economic incentives and community mobilization. A complementary cadre of programmes support girls' education by focusing on transfer payments to girls to stay in school, school infrastructure, the special needs of rural schools, pedagogical changes and teacher training. These programmes seek to lower dropout rates and increase the number of years girls stay in school.

4.2 OPERATIONALISING ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE

The objective of the model is to identify the interventions necessary to achieve the practical elimination of child marriage, that is, a marriage rate below 5 per cent, at least intervention cost.

4.3 SCOPE

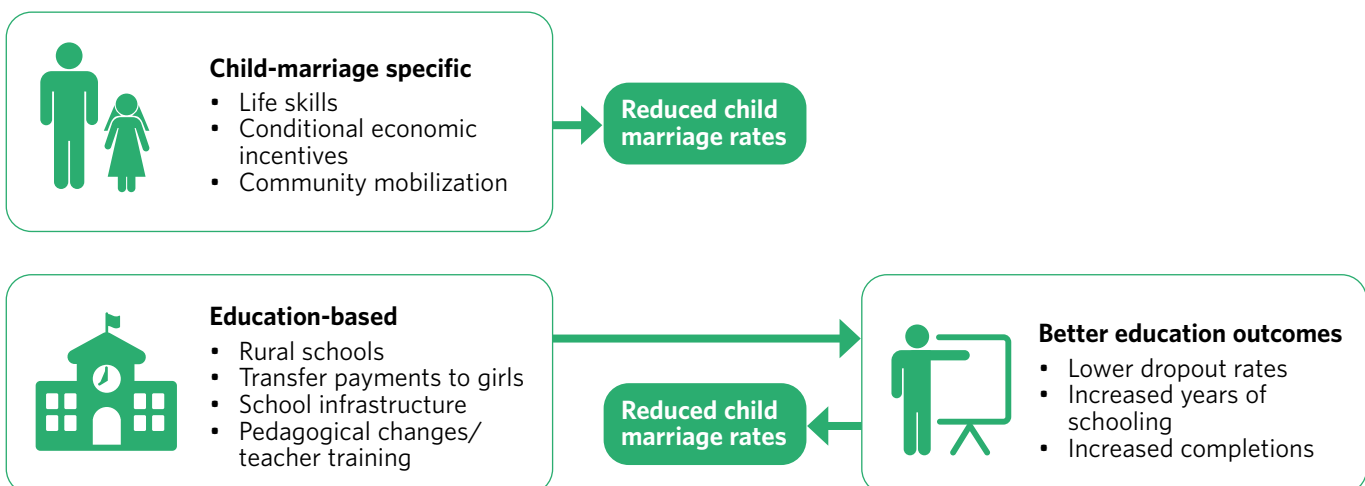
The study focuses on 68 countries with about 90 per cent of the global child marriage burden. Educational interventions as well as interventions related to changing social norms are assumed to reduce the incidence of child marriage in these target countries.

4.4 METHODOLOGY

The Child Marriage Optimal Interventions (CMOI) Model was utilized in this study to identify the interventions necessary to achieve the operational elimination of child marriage in 68 target countries at the lowest intervention cost by 2030.

In many countries and regions, child marriage rates are declining rapidly as a result of existing child marriage programmes and changing community attitudes. These trends are incorporated into the model as the “base” against which an intervention scenario is compared. The intervention scenario applies a set of education and specific child marriage interventions to further reduce the underlying base trend to the target level. Child marriages averted are the difference between the base and the intervention scenario.

Figure 11. Interventions to reduce child marriage



The function of the CMOI Model is to determine the optimal mix of interventions for each country that can reduce child marriage to at least 5 per cent by 2030 at the least cost. The CMOI Model covers 68 countries that account for 87 per cent of all child marriages across the globe. Given that child marriage rates vary substantially between urban and rural areas, the optimal mix of interventions was modelled for both urban and rural settings. In addition, as India represents approximately 28 per cent of the total estimated child marriages, the CMOI Model analysed India in greater detail. Each of 13 Indian states with the largest number of child marriages were separately modelled. Unfortunately, this level of granularity was not available for other countries with large child, early and forced (CEF) marriage burdens, such as Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia and Nigeria.

The sources of data needed to construct the CMOI Model include the following: current rate and trend of child marriage, population forecasts, intervention costs and urban/rural splits.

4.5 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Donors are presently projected to provide \$10.9 billion between 2020 and 2030 to reduce child marriage with a substantial amount of this contribution related specifically to investments in secondary education. The total cost of ending child marriage for the 68 countries modelled over the period 2020 to 2030 is estimated to require an additional \$35 billion.

If this investment is realized, approximately 58 million child marriages will be averted over this period at an average, non-discounted cost of \$600 each.

The benefits of ending child marriage extend well beyond those directly addressing immediate human rights, health and other direct effects of child marriage. The increased educational outcomes generated by ending child marriage provide girls with the opportunity to get jobs in the formal economy or make a more productive contribution to the household enterprise if they continue to work in the informal sector.

Ending child marriage by 2030 in 68 priority countries requires investments totalling \$24.1 billion.