AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي

UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

CAMPAIGN TO END CHILD MARRIAGE IN AFRICA

The Effects of Traditional and Religious Practices of Child Marriage on Africa's Socio-Economic Development

A REVIEW OF RESEARCH, REPORTS AND TOOLKITS FROM AFRICA

CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIT	African Independent Television
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CCC's	Community Care Coalitions
CDF	Children's Dignity Forum
CoH	Channels of Hope
CIFA	Center for Interfaith Action
CM	Child Marriage
EWLA	Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association
EMES	Early Marriage Evaluation Study
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation or Cutting
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HTPs	Harmful Traditional Practices
IAC	Inter-African Committee
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
SDA	Seventh Day Adventists
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WACSOF	West African Civil Society Forum

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This desk review surveys existing literature and research on the effects of traditional and religious practices surrounding child marriage on Africa's socio-economic development. The review is the first part of a study that will also include field visits by the AU Special Rapporteur on Ending Child Marriage.

Many promising programs outlined in this report show great hope for the future – from the Faith Effect program in Ethiopia and Nigeria that started years ago to the recent campaign in Zambia spearheaded by the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs.

Although religious and traditional leaders may in the past have been the primary instigators and defenders of harmful practices against children, the research covered here offers proof and encouragement for the view that with the appropriate interventions they now may become key instruments – and in fact leaders – of the movement to end such practices.

The term "child marriage" describes a legal or customary union between two people, one or both of whom is below age 18. The practice involves some 14 million girls worldwide every year, taking most out of school and risking damage to their health from HIV infection or pregnancy before their bodies have matured.

Of the 41 countries worldwide with a child marriage prevalence rate of 30 percent or more, 30 are in African Union countries. Most African countries with high rates of child marriage have civil laws that prohibit child marriage and set minimum marriage ages. But the situation persists in part because strong traditional and religious practices make it difficult to enforce the laws. In fact, research shows that tradition and religion are some of the strongest of all the major causes of child marriage, which include poverty, gender inequality, limited education and economic options, and insecurity in the face of conflict.

When a girl delays marriage, everyone benefits. Investing in girls, developing their social and economic assets, guaranteeing they have access to education and health services, and ensuring that they can postpone marriage until they are ready – all this means greater dignity for women, healthier families and higher levels of gender equality. This in turn makes for stronger societies and more vibrant economies.

Nearly all research reviewed in this report identifies religion and cultural tradition as one of the determining factors in both the persistence and elimination of child marriage in Africa. No single religion alone is associated with the practice; on the contrary, religious and moral justification for it is continent-wide and at every level of society.

Among studies and reports that make recommendations, most suggest working with traditional and religious leaders to create awareness of laws and policies at the community level. However, they warn that the simple presentation to such leaders of information on the harmful effects of child marriage is not likely to end any practice based on tradition and religion.

Eliminating these practices within a generation requires multi-stakeholder involvement and broader poverty reduction and social protection agendas as well as girls' economic, gender equality and social empowerment. Winning hearts and minds by involving girls, their parents, boyfriends, prospective husbands and community and religious leaders, as well as schools, youth and women's groups is likely to be most effective. The role of theologians, religious teachers and university-based religious scholars is critical in articulating a faith-based challenge to child marriage and other practices harmful to children.

Child marriage prevention programs in Africa have expanded in number and scope during the last decade, but much current understanding comes from structural efforts aimed at other goals, such as poverty reduction, girls' education and health care. Further research is needed to fully document the consequences of the practice in terms of lost economic opportunity, health care costs, lost education and earnings, lower growth potential and the perpetuation of poverty.

OVERVIEW

*Women and girls constitute more than 50 percent of the
African population and also give birth to the other 50
percent. As such, their interests must be protected to ensure
development of Africa as a continent.*

—H.E. Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma
Chairperson of the African Union Commission

By international conventions, 18 years has been established
as the legal age of consent to marriage.[1] The African Charter
on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Section 21:2, calls for
prohibiting "child marriage",[2] using the term to describe a legal
or customary union between two people, of whom one or both
spouses is below age 18.[3]

Child marriage robs girls of the chance to lead their own lives on
their own terms. It also has devastating lifelong consequences.
Girls who marry before age 18 are:

- less likely to complete primary and secondary school,

- more likely to experience unwanted pregnancies,

- more likely to experience violence,

- more likely remain poor,

- very likely to face serious and life-threatening health
  problems including obstetric fistula, HIV/AIDS and other
  sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and

- at greater risk of death or injury in childbirth with
  complications from pregnancy and childbirth a leading
  cause of death for girls age 15-19 in developing countries.[4]

Child marriage violates the basic human rights of girls to
health, education, safety and well-being. Yet 14 million girls are
married before age 18 every year[5], almost always forced into the
arrangement by their parents.

In developing countries, one in three girls is married by age 18 and one in nine by age 15. Although the largest numbers of child brides are in South Asian countries, those with the highest rates of child marriage are in Africa. Of the 41 countries worldwide with prevalence rates of 30 percent or more, 30 are in the African Union (AU) member countries.[6]

The prevalence rates of child marriage is closely linked to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the earlier Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and are part of core human development targets of the Post 2015 Development Agenda as well as the African Union's Agenda 2063. The AU specifically promotes policies related to young people's rights and is mandated by various instruments to promote common standards by supporting and implementing these policies at regional and national levels. Recent policies set by the African Union provide the momentum for the Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa.

The Campaign was launched as a follow-up to the AU's 50th anniversary Solemn Declaration that adopted Agenda 2063 to ensure positive socioeconomic transformation of the continent in the next 50 years. The 76-point roadmap to "unity, prosperity and peace" called in its 51st point for a continent in which "all harmful social practices, especially female genital mutilation and child marriages, will be ended and barriers to quality health and education for women and girls eliminated." Its Call to Action urged "a concerted drive towards immediately ending child marriages, female genital mutilation and other harmful cultural practises that discriminate against women and girls."

When a girl delays marriage, everyone benefits. Investing in girls, developing their social and economic assets, guaranteeing they have access to education and health services, and ensuring that they can postpone marriage until they are ready – all this means greater dignity for women. It also means healthier families and higher levels of gender equality. This in turn makes for stronger societies and more vibrant economies. Investment in later marriage for girls is investment in development for everyone.[7]

Throughout Africa, religious and traditional leaders can and do play a pivotal role in ending child marriages in their communities.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Nearly all research reviewed for this report identifies religion and cultural tradition as a determining factor in the persistence of child marriage in Africa. In addition, socio-economic circumstances such as poverty and gender discrimination are often cited as leading causes: it drives poor parents to regard children particularly girls as economic burdens, school fees as unaffordable and girls as a potential source of dowry income. Other key factors include limited education and insecurity in the face of conflict.

2. Religious justification for child marriage can be found in countries throughout Africa. No one religion alone is associated with the practice.[8]

3. Several studies confirm that ideas about modernity and interventions to counter harmful traditional practices have their greatest impact in urban areas, whether they emanate from the state or from international and national non-government organisations.[9]

4. Among studies and reports that make recommendations, most suggest working with traditional and religious leaders to create awareness of laws and policies at the community level. However, they warn that the simple presentation to such leaders of information on the harmful effects of child marriage is not likely to end any practice based on tradition and religion.[10]

5. Theologians, religious teachers and university-based religious scholars can play an important role in articulating and interpreting the beliefs, teachings and laws of religious communities, especially in the light of the Convention on Rights of the Child and other human rights instruments. Their role is vital in challenging faith-based justification for practices harmful

to children.[11] In addition, such scholarship could arm opponents of ISIS, the Islamic State, which is reported to be wrongly telling its recruits that Islam favors rape and sex slavery of young women and girls.[12]

6. Several key studies encourage those working to end child marriage to identify men's vested interests in gender inequality and explain to them how supporting women's rights benefits both men and women.[13,14] At the same time, girls and women must be involved in carrying out the change.[15]

7. A practical focus rather than an ideological position works best. A number of studies recommend avoiding radical or confrontational language.[16] Rather than decrying the practice just from a human rights perspective, advocates might seek to develop economic alternatives that allow a woman to help herself, her family and community, and alternative ceremonies to mark social milestones that can replace harmful practices.

8. Eliminating these practices within a generation requires multi-stakeholder involvement and broader poverty reduction and social protection agendas as well as girls' economic, gender equality and social empowerment. Winning hearts and minds by involving girls, their parents, boyfriends, prospective husbands and community and religious leaders, as well as schools, youth and women's groups is likely to be more effective than strict legal enforcement and punishment for offenders.[17]

9. While there is growing evidence documenting the social consequences of child marriage, there is a lack of data that sufficiently demonstrates its economic impact, including the lost growth opportunity, costs for health care systems, lost education and earnings, lower growth potential, and the perpetuation of poverty.[18]

OBJECTIVES AND THE FOCUS OF THIS REVIEW

A core objective of the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa is to strengthen the evidence base needed to design and implement effective policies and programmes for reducing child marriage.

This desk review examines the existing body of literature and research concerning the effects upon Africa's socio-economic development of traditional and religious practices on child marriage. It also summarizes various recommendations, case studies and toolkits for working with religious and traditional leaders and communities on eliminating child marriage, as documented by research studies, reports, meetings, conferences, policy statements and the media.[19]

The overall study is being undertaken in two phases: the first part - captured in this report - includes the collection and analysis of existing information through literature review; the second - and next phase - will benefit from data collected in field visits by the AU Special Rapporteur on ending child marriage, with additional interviews and research. The overall objective of both parts will be to promote evidence-informed policies and programs and propose clear recommendations to end child marriage in Africa.

This desk review is geographically limited to Africa, taking into account the various countries' contexts and politics and their differing administrative, financial and technical capacities. It focuses on countries with a high prevalence of child marriage but also captures scenarios from all regions of Africa in order to provide a range of cultural and traditional experiences and responses.

Specifically, this phase one report compiles and summarizes research and studies that:

I.   Contextualize various traditional and religious practices that continue to promote child marriage;

II. Assess the role of tradition and religion in enforcing existing laws that prohibit child marriage;

III. Evaluate the role of tradition and religion in the identification of gross violations, domestic and sexual violence, and dealing with unpleasant health conditions resulting from child marriage.

IV. Assess the extent to which engaging faith communities, traditional and religious leaders and families can help end child marriage.

The four objectives outlined above are the structure for this review as set forward in the AU concept note. A fifth section has been added entitled: socio-economic development of Africa in relationship to ending child marriage and recognizing the role of religion and tradition. This additional section outlines possible connections between ending child marriage and sustainable economic development in Africa.

I. The context in which various traditional and religious practices continue to promote child marriage

Most African countries with high rates of child marriage have civil laws that prohibit child marriage and set minimum marriage ages.[20] But the situation persists in part because strong traditional and religious practices make it difficult to enforce the laws. In fact, research shows that tradition and religion are one of the strongest of all the major causes of child marriage, which include poverty, gender inequality, limited education and economic options, and insecurity in the face of conflict.

In many societies, parents are under pressure to marry off a daughter as early as possible to prevent her from becoming sexually active before marriage and bringing dishonor to her family and community. Because marriage often determines a woman's status, parents also worry that if the girl is not married off according to social expectations, she will not be able to marry at all.

In many African societies, child marriage serves to cement family, clan and tribal connections. For example:

- *Telefa* is a traditional Ethiopian practice by which a man kidnaps, hides and rapes a girl and then, as the father of her unborn child, can claim marriage. One study found that the average age at first marriage of an abducted female was 13 years.[21] A new feature film, *Difret*, documents the 1996 high-court legal decision that ruled *telefa* illegal, but the practice continues, particularly in rural northeast Ethiopia.[22]

- In South Africa, *ukuthwala* is the practice of abducting young girls and forcing them into marriage, often with the consent of their parents. This occurs mainly in rural areas, especially the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. The girls are frequently under-age, some as young as eight.[23]

- *Trokosi* is a traditional practice in rural Ghana, Benin and Togo that involves sending a young virgin girl to a shrine as atonement for a crime committed by a family member, often a man. Since the early 1990s this practice has been under intense debate that reflects a clash of traditional and modern perspectives.[24]

- In Uganda and other African countries, parents, family and community leaders typically plan adolescents' marital relationships, leaving young people from traditional families without autonomy in this decision. Child marriage becomes a business transaction between families that regulates and commodifies girls' and women's sexuality and reproduction.[25]

- In Tharaka Nithi, Kenya, girls are subjected to FGM at a very early age. This is because the more girls are educated the lower the chances of accepting to undergo the cut of FGM. Thus, contrarian members of the community devise ways of subjecting girls to FGM before they are mature and able to make informed decisions. As a result, girls are dropping out of school and opting for marriage thinking they will be treated as adult women.

In these examples, the clash is often between the human rights and legal frameworks that protect the rights of the child against a form of gender-based violence versus the frame defending the practice as the cultural heritage, the legal norm of the community and a family prerogative.[26] These differences include:

Urban vs. Rural:

Ideas about modernity and interventions by international and national non-government organisations to counter harmful traditional practices have had a much greater impact in urban areas than rural ones. This has been a consistent theme across research findings and was again reported in a 2013 study on harmful traditional practices and child protection by the UK group Young Lives:

> *While such diversity is to be expected in the more mixed urban areas, even in relatively homogeneous rural areas differences by wealth, age and status can be significant...*
>
> *In many communities the practices of early or forced marriage and FGM have strong cultural roots and a clear cultural logic, which suggests that some communities may not necessarily be very amenable to reform. This logic embodies two key elements. First, the families and kin group have a strong vested interest in the productive and reproductive capacity of women, articulated through the regulation by older generations of their sexuality and sexual conduct. Second, child marriage and circumcision are seen to ensure girls' social integration and thereby their protection and their moral and social development. Thus, many respondents see both practices not as a threat to young females but as essential to their well-being, this rationale being in stark contrast to that employed by national and international policy stakeholders.*
>
> *The social power of this logic is such that there is resistance to reform even in areas where government and non-government advocates have been very active with campaigns and law enforcement[27]*

Differing Views of Scripture:

Religious and political institutions have often put forward interpretations of scriptures and religious law to justify early marriage. For example, in 2013, media around the world reported on a vigorous debate on child marriage in the Nigerian Senate. A leading senator who had married a 14-year old Egyptian girl asserted that under Islamic law, a girl is considered ripe for marriage if she is physically and mentally mature, no matter what her age, so that a "very big girl" could be ready for marriage at age 14.[28]

The *Lagos Vanguard* reported on this interview on African Independent Television (AIT):

> *[He said that] under Sharia law, [in]any country that practices Sharia, age is not a defining factor for marriage....he noted that such international conventions were inferior to the constitutional provisions of the affected country, adding that once a convention was in conflict with the constitution of any country, the constitution naturally must prevail..*

> *...Under Sharia law, you have to be physically and maturely developed....*

> *...So if she is not the age of 18, Islam does not accept child marriage as you define it. Child marriage is [with] a girl that is not matured, has not reached the age of puberty; she is a minor and it is not age. You can have a very big girl who is ready for marriage at age 14, 15, 16, just as is obtained in other countries. Maturity is defined by her physical appearance; by when a girl starts menstruation, for example – she is matured.*

> *These issues are all matters of faith. As I said, some people are talking out of ignorance or out of sheer mischief. I am a Muslim and Nigeria is a multi-religious society. That is why our constitution makes ample provision for Sharia law, common law and for customary law.[29]*

In response to the debate in Nigeria, advocates for ending child marriage argued the case this way:

> *It is stated that Mohammed the Prophet married a 9-year-old girl and gave out his own ten-year-old daughter in marriage. It is also well known that the Prophet also instructed that young girls should be educated, and that marriage should never be at the expense of education. In both cases – the-nine-year old and the ten-year-old – though married they were made to have full education, and the [Prophet's own] marriage was not consummated until his wife was eighteen years, and his daughter was nineteen years.[30]*

Cultural Defense Arguments:

Several researchers found that cultural defense arguments tend to be invoked under specific circumstances and in three distinct styles:[31]

1. **Values-based arguments** are used strategically to define or assert group identity. Early marriage can be part of a struggle over cultural traditions and the future meaning of those customs.

2. **Protective arguments** reflect the view that early marriage will protect girls and their families from shame and the stigma of unsanctioned sexual relations. In war-torn areas, early marriage can also be a form of safety for girls or provide their basic needs of food, water and housing when parents can no longer do so.

3. **Misplaced attribution of cultural practices to religion.** As Archbishop Desmond Tutu has noted, some customs described as religious are not part of religion at all:

> *Child marriage is not a religious practice—it is a tradition. There are many good traditions that bind communities together. But traditions are also not static— they evolve. Traditions that are harmful, that have outlived their purpose, must be challenged.[32]*

People may also assert the support of a *particular* religion for harmful traditional practices. Gamal Serour, director of the International Islamic Centre for Population Studies and

Research at Al Azhar University in Cairo, has worked to separate specific harmful practices from the assertion that they have their roots in Islam. Al Azhar, a leading center of Islamic teaching, has declared unconditionally that female genital mutilation, for example, has never been part of Islam.[33]

Economic Drivers:

Research also shows the links between economic incentives of parents and traditional practices. The 2011 Plan International report, *Breaking Vows*, points out:

> *A number of 'traditional' practices surrounding early and forced marriages are essentially a means of consolidating relations between families or a way of settling disputes or sealing deals over land and property....Dowry or bride-price systems, in which gifts or money change hands in exchange for a bride, can offer powerful financial incentives for families to consider early marriage. It is important to differentiate between situations in which 'tradition' or religion are the drivers of early marriage and those in which cultural justifications are attributed to decisions that are, at heart, economically driven. Family income and rural as opposed to urban location can cause significant variation in early marriage practice amongst families with the same cultural traditions and practising the same religions.[34]*

During economic downturns, girls tend to be the first to feel the rollbacks. In 2009, the then African Region World Bank Vice-President, Obiageli Ezekwesil, told a conference on the impact of the global economic crisis on women in Africa, "the face of poverty is female."

> *She is 18.5 years old. She lives in a rural area. She has dropped out of school. She is single, but about to be married or be given in marriage to a man approximately twice her age. She will be the mother of six or seven kids in another 20 years....*
>
> *...With the education of boys largely sheltered from shocks and parents often more likely to pull out a girl from school than a boy where tuition becomes hard to find.*

Ezekwesil also cited research findings on household income declines in Uganda and a fall in income from agriculture in Madagascar where girls are the first to be pulled out of school.[35]

The Children's Dignity Forum (CDF) of Tanzania expresses the sentiments of many African groups working to end child marriage: "Child marriage is not only a violation of a girl's rights; it also seriously compromises efforts to reduce gender-based violence, advance education, overcome poverty and improve health indicators for girls and young women."[36]

II. Research assessing the role of tradition and religion in enforcing existing laws that prohibit child marriage

African and international organisations have issued numerous research papers and reports over the past decade that refer to religion and tradition in relationship to child marriage and law enforcement. These were supported and released by United Nations agencies, foundations, humanitarian aid groups, religious institutions, think tanks, governmental and non-governmental organisations and universities.

Appendix A includes summaries of sixteen key studies from and about African Union countries between 2004 and 2015. These are among the most recent resources and research papers to asses the impact of religion and traditional practices as related to child marriage.

Among other important findings and recommendations, the authors conclude:

- Child marriage lies at the intersection of a broad set of problems facing girls, who are disproportionately affected by harmful cultural and religious beliefs and practices.[37]

- Recent evidence shows a significant decrease in both practices, (child marriage and FGM) enabling advocates to draw lessons from Ethiopia as a success case. Changes have come about through clear policies and commitment from government institutions alongside broader modernisation changes.[38]

- A Ford Foundation supported study scans the situation in 16 West African countries, which have the continent's highest rate of child marriage. The report spotlights challenges and offers recommendations at three levels: law and rights; policy and institutional frameworks; and programs and actions. Among these are two recommendations involving religious communities.[39]

- In mapping these processes of change related to child marriage, authors of one report emphasize a concern about the challenges for child-protection measures designed to bring about change to long-established customs.[40]

- A UNFPA report notes that international conventions declare that child marriage is a violation of human rights because it denies girls the right to decide when and with whom to marry. Recommendations are intended to help policymakers prevent this violation of girls' rights. It summarizes available data and evidence, while offering advice on the thicket of issues involved, and suggests prioritized actions to reduce and eventually eliminate child marriage.[41]

- An International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) brief summarizes a systematic review of child marriage prevention programs that have documented evaluations. On balance, the results from this composite of evaluations lean toward positive findings, indicating that a set of strategies focusing on girls' empowerment, community mobilization, enhanced schooling, economic incentives and policy changes have improved knowledge, attitudes, and behavior related to child marriage prevention.[42]

- A study in Uganda, one of the few that directly addresses the socio-economic impact of child marriage, provides the needed information on the problem of child marriage and its socio economic impact on the society. It directly shows that young children should instead be nurtured for development programmes and progress of society. Involving the child mothers and fathers at every stage of development calls for looking at the issue of child marriage with holistic lenses; especially ensuring that victims and

survivors get self esteem, and are provided with means to enhance their well being. It is therefore a loud reminder to policy makers, parents, cultural leaders, religious leaders and the whole community that they need to be part of the great strides.[43]

- A PLAN International report[44] explores the issues behind the millions of girls each year who experience child marriage. It documents findings that married young girls are frequently taken out of school and are at higher risk of HIV infection, early pregnancy and health conditions such as obstetric fistula.

  A total of 14.3 million girls are married in Africa, south of the Sahara before they reach age 18. The prevalence varies: West and Central Africa are at 43 percent and Eastern and Southern Africa at 36 percent. In countries where the rate of child marriage exceeds 70 percent (Niger, Chad and Mali), adolescent fertility and maternal mortality rates are also high.

  The report includes case studies about Plan International's work in Egypt, Malawi, Sudan and Zimbabwe, where local church leaders have been engaged following the re-emergence of organized and often abusive early marriages. Plan has released special reports on the situations in Niger (2003), Sudan (2009), Benin (2009) and Egypt (2010).

- A World Vision report draws on the experience and observations of its field staff working in a variety of countries and cultural contexts where girls are commonly married before they are fully physically or emotionally grown. The insights of these local and international humanitarian workers are combined with the stories of individuals affected by the practise of early marriage. In pairing these viewpoints with findings from existing research, the report provides insight into the complexities surrounding child marriage and the need for integrated approaches to address its causes and lay an economic, educational and cultural foundation that will allow communities to embrace other options for their girl children.[45]

- The qualitative results of one Pathfinder report reflect a significant decrease in the prevalence of early marriage in recent times, attributable to measures undertaken by legal bodies, religious and other community leaders, committees, teachers and students' clubs, the police, youth and women's associations, and the Office of Women's Affairs.

  Based on the findings of the study, the authors make a number of recommendations to reduce the practice of early marriage including: programs designed specifically to reduce early marriage; working with women's associations, the Office of Women's Affairs, community organizations, religious and community leaders, influential community members and schools; and working directly with young girls to teach them their rights; strengthening the collaboration between law enforcement, community leaders, women and youth associations, parents, and schools; and providing additional focused training for community-based reproductive health agents.[46]

III. Evaluation of the role of tradition and religion in the identification of gross violations, domestic and sexual violence and dealing with unpleasant health conditions resulting from child marriage

Below is an overview of the role of tradition and religion in both perpetuating and in working to identify and improve the negative effects of child marriage.

For example, a special report on West Africa by the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) describes several forms of marriages. It documents the negative impact on girls and the role of various religions. According to WACSOF, marriages in West Africa are consummated under three different scenarios applicable in both monogamous and polygamous marital unions. These are:

1. **Customary marriages**, recognized by law, in accordance with customary law and registered with local authorities. Sometimes

this fosters unity and cohesion amongst communities, who refer to each other as "my in-laws." On the negative side, the customary traditions and cultures of most West African communities do not favour women. They are considered inferior to men and treated as property, denied access to land and given no rights to inherit or gain custody of children in cases of divorce or death. Under this form of marriage, the age of marriage is not specified. In Sierra Leone, for example, a woman married under customary law has no legal protections if she is driven from the matrimonial home or if her spouse dies, regardless of the duration of the marriage or her contribution to the family.

2. **Religious marriages:** (Islamic and Christian) Marriage in Islam is considered a religious duty as well as a moral safeguard. It imposes certain duties and responsibilities on both husband and wife. A man is responsible for food and shelter for the woman and her general upkeep, while the woman's duty is to satisfy the husband's sexual needs and be obedient. There are debates as to whether Islam promotes child marriage because of various interpretations of certain sections of the Quran.

Marriage in Christianity is viewed as having a divine-human character since Jesus is reported to have attended a wedding ceremony in Cana. Marriages are conducted according to church rules that vary according to sect. In Nigeria, for example, churches may not conduct a marriage unless the couple has also fulfilled rites of customary law. Although the Bible does not specify an age of legitimate marriage, most churches align with local civil law. Male superiority is emphasized in marriage rather than equality.

3. **Statutory or court marriages** take place in a competent court of local jurisdiction between two people who have fulfilled legal requirements, including being of the right age and not in another marital union. The husband and wife take an oath and are issued a marriage certificate. Although court marriage offers better options for women in cases of divorce or death of a spouse, it is not as popular in Africa, south of the Sahara, and is often seen as something reserved for elites and city-dwellers.[47]

In 2008, the Christian humanitarian organization World Vision issued a report: *Before She's Ready: 15 Places Girls Marry by 15.* It features short case studies from Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Somalia, Tanzania, northern Uganda and Zambia.

Despite some progress in many African countries, the World Vision analysis and many other reports since 2008 document widespread gender-based discrimination and violence still in place due to child marriage. The introduction notes:

> *Early marriage, particularly when the girl is younger than 15, has myriad – and often damaging – effects on the lives of the girls involved and by extension their children and communities, according to humanitarian workers and child protection specialists working in areas where the practise is common.*

> *Picture the life of a child bride: She is removed from her family and taken to live with a man who is rarely of her own age or choosing. Her husband and in-laws demand prompt and repeated childbearing, a task for which her body and mind may be unprepared. She is likely to experience early and forced sexual intercourse without protection [and repeated domestic violence], exposing her to potential injury and infection. In childbearing, she is more likely than a woman who marries later to experience complications, give birth to an underweight or stillborn baby or die. She must drop out of school, stunting her intellectual growth and often isolating her from peers.*

> *Her future and the future of her children are compromised as cycles of poverty, illness and ignorance are perpetuated. The costs are borne at multiple levels: by families, communities, societies and nations.*[48]

Harmful aspects of child marriage include:

Poverty: As documented in nearly all reports on child marriage, poverty and gender inequality are its leading causes. Poverty drives unemployed parents to regard children as economic burdens, school fees as unaffordable and girls as potential sources of dowry income.[49] In many traditional African

communities, south of the Sahara, the bride's family receives a "bride price" in the form of cattle from the groom or his family. What once may have been a token of appreciation to the bride's family has now in many cases become a transaction. Some fathers view marriage for a daughter as an opportunity to increase household wealth and build alliances.

But as was described in the Zambia Daily Mail: "My father used poverty as an excuse to marry me off. He thought that by doing so he would be reducing on the burden of taking care of the family. Little did he know that he was subjecting me to a life of violence," laments 19-year-old Rebecca Mundia (not real name)."[50] Thus, there are many unintended consequences caused by desperate parents.

Where traditional and religious leaders are sensitive to the goal of alleviating poverty — and the resulting conditions such as gender-based violence — connecting child marriage to poverty and to other aspects of economic development can be a major entry point to securing their support against child marriage.

Child orphans: It is not always birth parents who instigate child marriages. Orphanhood is also a significant risk factor, according to World Vision field staff in areas with growing populations of children whose parents are dying of AIDS.

According to a 2013 UNICEF report, Africa, south of the Sahara, is home to an estimated 15.1 million children orphaned by AIDS. In Nigeria alone, more than 2 million children are AIDS orphans. Orphaned and otherwise vulnerable girl children may marry out of fear that no one else can look after them. Some see marriage as a way out of their situation – even though their husbands are often equally poor.[51] Religious groups and local congregations will often sponsor orphanages or work to place children who have lost parents and have no relatives, and work to have a positive impact on the future of these children.

The Religion for Peace Women of Faith Network, along with other religious leaders, reviewed educational policies and legislation and identified gaps and barriers to orphans and vulnerable children accessing education in Uganda. The policies reviewed included the policy on Universal Primary Education Policy and the Children's Act and Statute Barriers identified

included poverty, lack of school fees and gender-related barriers such as early marriage, teenage pregnancy, sexual harassment and heavy burden of household chores on the girl child.

Advocacy initiatives resulted in the enactment of bylaws and follow-up mechanisms for accountability and reporting, government banning of employment of children, and school visits by government officials and religious leaders to monitor implementation of universal education.[52]

Limited literacy and access to education: For many girls, their last day of school is their wedding day. Girls who become pregnant while still in school are typically expected to drop out and stay at home to raise their children. They rarely return to classes.

In its 2013 report, *A girl's right to say no to marriage: Working to end child marriage and keep girls in school,*[53] Plan International researchers note:

> *In developing countries, there is a clear correlation between levels of education and age at the time of marriage: the more education a girl has received, the less likely she is to have been married before the age of 18.*[54] *Of the 78 developing countries analysed by the UNFPA, girls with no education were more than three times as likely to marry or enter into union before the age of 18 as those with a secondary or higher education (63 percent compared with 20 percent). Girls with a primary education were more than twice as likely to marry or enter into union as those who had a secondary or higher education (45 percent compared with 20 percent).*

> *Of the 25 countries with the highest prevalence rates of child marriage, 22 have data on education levels for women who were married before they turn 18. On average, nearly half (49 percent) of girls were married by age 18. In those countries, an average of nearly 70 percent of girls with no education were married by 18, compared with 56 percent of girls who completed primary school, and 21 percent of girls who had a secondary education or higher. In Mozambique, for example, 67 percent of women aged 20 to 24 with no education and 57 percent*

with primary education were married or in union at the age of 18, compared to only 12 percent of women with secondary education or higher.[55]

While many factors cause girls to leave school, child marriage is particularly influential at the point of transition between primary and secondary school.[56] In research by Plan International, 33 percent of children surveyed in Senegal and 25 percent in Mali identified marriage as a key factor in girls leaving school. Parents, teachers and children reported that marriage leads to significant domestic, social and economic pressures that force girls to abandon their education.[57]

Qualitative research by Plan UK in nine countries found that child marriage and early pregnancy were cited as common reasons for girls dropping out of secondary school.[58] Researchers failed to find any girls who had returned to school once married. In focus group discussions in Mali, participants viewed marriage of girls age 14-16 as the main barrier to their education. According to one male teacher who participated:

> *Early marriage is the main reason for girls to drop out. At primary school until 5th grade you see a large number of girls. But from 6th grade on you see the number of girls go down significantly.*

Dropping out of school means girls often lack even basic literacy and numeracy skills. One study found that each year of marriage before adulthood reduces a girl's literacy by 5.6 percentage points.[59] In Malawi, nearly 65 percent of women with no formal education were child brides, compared to 5 percent of women who attended secondary school or higher grades.[60]

Child marriage may also have negative effects on the next generation and on the future economic development of the African continent. The children of young mothers with little or no education are less likely to survive infancy, to have a good start to their education, to do well in school, or to continue beyond minimum levels of education. Daughters of uneducated mothers are especially likely to drop out of school, marry young and repeat the cycle of poverty.[61]

Traditional rites of passage: Female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C), also known as female circumcision, and similar rites of passage are linked to early marriage in some traditional African contexts, such as the Maasai communities of Kenya and Tanzania. FGM refers to the cutting and partial removal of a girl's genitalia. It is compulsory for social inclusion in some ethnic groups. In Kenya, by tradition, a Maasai girl is considered mature only after FGM has been performed, usually between age 7 and 14, and is then quickly married off in order to fetch a dowry.

Kenyan legislatures partially outlawed female genital mutilation in 2001 and completely in 2011, reducing substantially the number of recent procedures.

According to a 2014 UNICEF report:

> *In Kenya, the reported prevalence of FGM/C shows a 28 percent decrease between 1998 and 2008-2009, dropping from 38 percent to 26 percent....*

> *....Twenty-six countries in Africa and the Middle East have prohibited FGM/C by law or constitutional decree. Two of them – South Africa and Zambia – are not among the 29 countries where the practice is concentrated. With the exception of Guinea and the Central African Republic, where bans on FGM/C were instituted in the mid-1960s, the process of enacting legislation or revising the criminal code to outlaw the practice began to take hold in Africa quite recently.[62]*

The most dramatic reduction in prevalence has taken place in the Central African Republic: from 43 percent in 1994-1995 to 24 percent in 2010. This follows a 44 percent decline from the late-1970s to the mid-1990s. Researchers attribute the success to interventions including awareness campaigns and alternative ceremonies.

On the other hand, the prevalence of FGM/C among girls and women has remained constant in countries including Egypt, Gambia, Senegal and Sudan.

From 100 million to 140 million girls and women worldwide have undergone some form of genital mutilation, often as a cultural precursor to marriage.[63] It is performed on girls from very young ages to the mid- or late teens. The procedure is often performed without sterile instruments, thereby risking the transmission of HIV, hepatitis and other infections. In the most severe version, all the external genitalia are cut off and the wound is tightly sewn together, increasing pain, infection rates and physical trauma during sexual activity and often causing complications and injury during labor. In nine African countries where World Vision is active, an average of 54 percent of women had experienced FGM/C and 33 percent had daughters who also experienced it.[64]

There are a number of examples, however, showing the role of religion in addressing FGM. In a positive development, for example, a 2008 evaluation report on work of the Children's Dignity Forum in Tarime District of the Mara Region in Tanzania, noted:

> *Religion plays a big part in Tarime district in the fight against the FGM practice as most churches advocate against the practise and refer to it as satanic. It was evident that the Seventh Day Adventists (SDAs) do not practice FGM, because FGM is ordered by traditional leaders. The Catholic Church is very strong against FGM and is even one of the first churches to advocate against it. Despite this, some members of the congregation still follow the practice.[65]*

But as noted by leaders of the African Women's Development and Communications Network, FEMNET, "unnecessary competition and lack of a joint platform for programmes targeting religious and cultural leaders creates a gap for scrupulous members of the community to capitalize on the differences and have in the past perpetuated FGM. This harmful cultural practice is a leading cause for child marriage. The differences between religious and cultural leaders often send mixed signals to the community causing confusion for those working to address the two pandemics."[66]

Permanent and life-threatening health risks: As the 2008 World Vision report points out: "The risks begin, but do not end, with reproductive health. Resisting sexual intercourse isn't an option in most early marriages, where consummation is considered traditionally the male's right. Unwillingness to cooperate is generally ignored. Forced sex causes skin and tissue damage that makes a female more susceptible to contracting sexually transmitted infections from her husband. She has little or no say in protecting herself against pregnancy or diseases, although her husband may be sexually active outside the marriage."[67]

The risks for sexually transmitted diseases include HIV, syphilis and chlamydia.[68] Research in Kisumu in Kenya and Ndola in Zambia indicates that some groups of married adolescent girls had higher rates of HIV infection compared with their unmarried but sexually active counterparts.[69]

Complications during childbearing and delivery are most common in girls under age 19, significantly raising the risk of death, premature delivery, infant mortality and low birth weight. In girls whose pelvis and birth canal are not fully developed, delivery can be obstructed. Pressure from the infant's skull during prolonged labour can damage the birth canal, tearing the internal tissue that separates the bladder or bowel from the vagina. This tear, or fistula, causes uncontrollable leakage of urine or feces until the injury is surgically corrected.

Fistula used to be prevalent in the United States and Europe, but was nearly eliminated in the latter part of the 19th century and early 20th century thanks to improved obstetric care in general and the use of C-sections in particular to relieve obstructed labor.[70] A recently published analysis from a team at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine estimates there are over one million women suffering with obstetric fistula. Because most fistula sufferers are young women—many still in their early twenties or even late teens — they are likely to live with their condition for upwards of 25 years.[71] These girls and women live in shame: perpetually soiled, wet and smelling of urine and feces. They are usually ostracized and unable to earn a living as a result, and many are abandoned or divorced by their husbands.

Pregnancy and childbirth are far more hazardous for pre-teens and young teenage mothers than for their older counterparts. As many studies have found, complications from pregnancy and childbirth are a leading cause of death for girls age 15 to 19 in many developing countries:[72] including hemorrhaging, obstructed labor, sepsis (an overwhelming immune response to infection), pre-eclampsia (hypertension) and eclampsia (convulsions).[73]

About 70,000 adolescents die annually of such causes. Girls who become pregnant before age 15 in low- and middle-income countries have double the risk of older women (including older adolescents) for maternal death, especially in Africa, south of the Sahara and South Asia. Girls age 15-19 are also at additional risk compared to women age 20-24.[74]

One study in Tanzania examined religious coping among women with obstetric fistula. Fifty-four women receiving fistula repair at a hospital completed a survey that assessed positive and negative religious coping strategies. Data confirmed reliance upon religion to deal with fistula-related distress, and suggested that negative forms of religious coping may be an expression of depressive symptoms. The authors concluded: "religious leaders should be engaged to recognise signs of depression and provide appropriate pastoral/ spiritual counselling and general psychosocial support for this population."[75]

Gender-based violence. Conflict and social instability can force young girls into marriage with men who wield power. In northern Uganda, for example, some families are reported to have married their young daughters to militia members in order to defend family honor or secure protection for themselves and the girl.[76]

The 2008 World Vision report notes that girls abducted as children by the Ugandan rebel group known as the Lord's Resistance Army are forced under threats of torture or death to serve as wives of commanders and bear their children at a very young age. While this is far from the norm for child marriages worldwide, it affects thousands of children in the region.

News reports in April 2014, for example, documented the kidnapping of female students from the Government Secondary School in the town of Chibok in Borno State in northern Nigeria. Boko Haram, an Islamic Jihadist organization, claimed responsibility for these and other regular kidnappings. Boko Haram reportedly wants to institute an Islamic caliphate and opposes modern education as luring people away from Islamic teachings. The kidnapped girls have been forced to convert to Islam and to marry Boko Haram members at a reputed "bride price" of N2000 ($12.50).[77]

In a video, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau claimed responsibility for the kidnappings: "Allah instructed me to sell them...I will carry out his instructions... and slavery is allowed in my religion, and I shall capture people and make them slaves." He said the girls should not have been in school and instead should be married, as girls as young as nine are suitable for marriage.[78]

The New York Times reports "the systematic rape of women and girls from the Yazidis religious minority has become deeply enmeshed in the organization and radical theology of the Islamic State since the group announced it was reviving slavery as an institution." The piece continues to explain, "... the Islamic State has developed a detailed bureaucracy of sex slavery, including sales contracts notarized by the ISIS-run Islamic court. A growing body of internal memos and theological discussions have established guidelines for slavery, including a lengthy how-to-manual issued by the Islamic State Research and Fatwa Department... Repeatedly, the ISIS leadership has emphasized a narrow and selective reading of the Quran and other religious rulings to not only justify violence, but also to elevate and celebrate each sexual assault as spiritually beneficial, even virtuous."[79]

Child marriages are also prevalent in refugee and IDP camps where rape is a major risk. In some cases a girl may be forced to marry her rapist, either by her parents to avoid the shame such violence wrongly brings to the family and the girl, or under pressure from the attacker himself. In other cases, families press the girl to marry in the belief it will bring access to services, or as the price of services or supplies for the family.

In the Dollo Ado camps in Ethiopia, Somali refugee girls as young as 11 are often married off to prevent dishonour for the girl and her family in the event that she is raped or sexually abused. Similarly, in the Dadaab camps in Kenya, marriage of girls as young as 13 is also widespread. Girl survivors of rape at the camp reported to Save the Children that they felt powerless to refuse to marry their attackers for lack of other options and fear of being rejected by their families, pushed out of the camps, sent back to Somalia or even killed.[80]

Child marriage can also be seen as a protection from alternatives that can include prostitution, particularly for traditional and religious leaders who are against sexual promiscuity outside of marriage. Ironically, some girls who escape child marriage then turn to prostitution for their survival.

During conflict, traditional institutions such as families, schools or religious bodies are often unable to provide their customary support to children, girls and boys, leaving them at greater risk of violence and abuse.[81]

Marital rape: Girls who refuse to accept or stay in forced marriages or who elope because they want to marry someone not chosen or approved by their families are often at risk of violence. In extreme cases, they may be killed by their families or husband's families. Although this aspect of gender-based violence is not well documented, local women's rights activists and media reports indicate that many cases of assault and murder go unreported, especially amongst pastoralist communities that pay dowry in cows.[82]

Local organisations told Human Rights Watch that society is generally tolerant of such violence because the girl is seen as having gone against her family's wishes and societal norms. As a result, perpetrators are rarely held to account, perpetuating a culture of violence against women.[83]

The majority of girls and women Human Rights Watch interviewed in South Sudan said their husbands abused them after marriage, often by beatings and marital rape, although the latter is not formally recognized in law as a crime.

Reuters News Service quoted a World Vision aid worker in May 2015: "Girls as young as eight in Mozambique and Zambia are forced to go to camps where they are shown how to please a man in bed in order to prepare them for married life... these sexual 'initiations' begin once menstruation starts and sometimes involve sticks being inserted inside girls."[84] World Vision is training church leaders, such as the Anglican Street Children's Program in Zambia, to tackle issues around early initiations and child marriage in these camps and in other program areas.

Suicide is now the number one cause of death among young girls around the world.[85] Girls who do not wish to marry or who want to escape forced marriage may also be at risk of suicide. One boy told Human Rights Watch that he knew of girls who killed themselves "because they are forced to marry someone that they don't love." He said, "I am from Lakes State, and I know of so many such cases. There are also many cases like this in Warrap and Jonglei." Very little is known about the correlation between child marriage and suicide, however.[86]

Leaders working to end child marriage:

Increasingly traditional and religious leaders throughout Africa are helping to end child marriage and the gross violations described above. Many are building on the work of others who have been piloting projects and evaluating results. Below are a few examples:

Religious and spiritual leaders who are members of the Elders and helped form the Girls Not Brides partnership in 2011 have been champions throughout Africa and around the world. Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa travels throughout Africa making speeches that regularly urge men and boys to help end child marriage:

> *Child marriage occurs because we men allow it. Fathers, village leaders, chiefs, religious leaders, decision-makers – most are male. 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.*

I meet religious leaders, both Orthodox and Muslim, who speak out publicly against child marriage and teach their flocks that neither Christianity nor Islam endorses child marriage.

I want to find more faith leaders like them, men who will say that child marriage is wrong and should end. I want to find political leaders – also mostly men – and persuade them to empower girls, invest in them, and see the positive transformation that will occur throughout their societies as a result.[87]

In 2014, **former U.S. President Jimmy Carter,** also a member of the Elders, authored a book, *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence and Power,* which includes a chapter on child marriage and dowry deaths. Carter describes an extensive debate when he presented concerns about the adverse impact of religious beliefs on women's rights that resulted in the group adopting the following statement:

The justification of discrimination against women and girls on grounds of religion or tradition, as if it were prescribed by a Higher Authority, is unacceptable....We are calling on all those with influence to challenge and change the harmful teachings and practices - in religious and secular life -- that justify discrimination again women and to acknowledge and emphasize the positive messages of equality and human dignity.[88]

Others among The Elders, Graca Machel, Marry Robinson and Gro Harlem Brundtland, have been major champions in efforts to end child marriage and effectives advocates among United Nations, universities, women's rights audiences and political communities.

In Zambia, the **Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs** is spearheading a three-year national campaign to end child marriage. The campaign aims to empower traditional leaders to become champions and agents of change in their chiefdoms and to amend relevant laws and policies to ensure that girls are legally protected from child marriage. The traditional chiefs in Southern Providence have engaged with the Government and

NGOs to become ambassadors in ending child marriages as well as other related gender-based violence (GBV) cases in their chiefdoms.[89]

In the **Strategic Plan for the African Council of Religious Leaders,** (2010-2014) one of the areas of focus is to facilitate religious leaders, women of faith and religious youth in addressing threats to human security and human rights in the continent (small arms, refugees, and gender based violence). In the future, this could incorporate the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage along with other county-wide and community efforts.[90]

Over the past few years, **Queen Mothers** have started networking with other queens and cultural leaders across Africa, creating a powerful movement of women leaders. In 2014, 40 Queen Mothers from 16 African countries met for an unprecedented conference in Uganda. Their meeting led to the creation of an association of African Queen Mothers and resolutions on eradicating FGM and child marriages. Similar gatherings are planned in Ghana and Uganda.

The **Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania** has managed to rescue more than 1,000 school-aged girls from child marriage. Former President Ali Hassan Mwinyi has called on clerics to help fight child marriage adding that these marriages limit girls access to education and exposes them to victimisation."[91]

In Ethiopia, **Action Aid Ethiopia** trains religious and traditional leaders to use their position of authority to take a stand against violence and protect the rights of girls. Community watch groups established in 35 villages report incidents of female genital mutilation or cutting or child marriage to community leaders, then assist in bringing cases to justice.[92]

The following section, along with more detailed listing in Appendix B, gives examples of promising programs that could be scaled up and adopted for use in other states and regions.

IV. Assess the extent to which engaging faith communities, traditional and religious leaders and families can help end child marriage.

In 2007, the Early Marriage Evaluation Study (EMES)[93] was conducted in Ethiopia by the Addis Continental Institute for Public Health, MEASURE Evaluation and USAID as the first large-scale household survey to provide population-based estimates on levels of exposure to early marriage prevention messages there and to assess their influence on knowledge, attitudes, and skills conducive to delaying marriage.

The primary purpose of the EMES was to provide policymakers and program managers with detailed information on the reach and effects of early marriage prevention activities in the region. The goal was to support efforts against the threats from child marriage to women's reproductive health and education and to national development.

EMES was a household survey of 3,677 female adolescents age 10-19, as well as 1,737 males age 15-24 and 4,670 caretakers, including parents and guardians, in the Amhara region of Ethiopia.

The most striking finding was that early marriage-prevention messages were largely received by adolescents through local religious leaders.

The data revealed that the messages stopped about one out of four planned marriages of underage girls younger than 18. In urban settings, the proportion of child marriages stopped was significantly higher in program areas than in non-program areas (34 percent versus 19 percent). Most importantly, the EMES concluded:

> *In program areas, religious leaders have been key agents of change, exerting considerable influence over public opinion, building trust within communities, and fostering the cultural acceptability of deferred marriages. Religious leaders may also hold the key to changing social norms around the expected age at marriage for girls."*

...Religious leaders were the most important source of information for young people, while community meetings were the most important source of information for caretakers."

The evaluation described the program:

Considering the critical role played by religious leaders and their level of acceptance and influence in the community, the Ethiopia Family Planning and Reproductive Health Project conducted advocacy sessions with religious leaders of the major faiths in Ethiopia (Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Muslim Faith, the Catholic Church and Protestant Churches) in order to obtain their support for early marriage prevention. One outcome of these sessions was the signing of statements condemning early marriage and other harmful traditional practices by religious leaders and their exhorting of religious bodies throughout Ethiopia to speak out against these practices in their communities.

The study explained: "Early marriage has a long history and is well entrenched in the Amhara region. Intensive efforts to promote messages against early marriage have shown that the population of the region can be reached effectively."

Here are three key areas (of nine) of successful intervention that related to religion and tradition as reported in the evaluation:

- Messages on early marriage prevention had considerable reach. Over 90 percent of respondents had been exposed to early marriage prevention messages from at least one source. Religious leaders had the greatest reach among young people, while community meetings had the greatest reach among caretakers, pointing to the importance of using community mobilization to reach the general population with messages about early marriage prevention.

- The mean number of sources of information about early marriage prevention to which respondents had been exposed was higher in program areas than in non-program areas among adolescent girls. Significantly more urban and rural female adolescents and more rural caretakers

reported receiving direct advice from religious leaders in program than in non-program areas.

- The lower the age of the bride, the lower the proportion of marriages that were blessed by religious leaders. In urban settings, significantly fewer of the marriages of underage brides were blessed by religious leaders in program areas as compared to non-program areas.[94]

Since the EMES study, several researchers and experts on human rights and culture have pointed out the need for cultivating programs with religious leaders though alternative values and faith-based beliefs. Rikki Holtmaat and Jonneke Naber note in their book, *Women's Human Rights and Culture: From Deadlock to Dialogue:*

> *Especially in religion, it is mostly men that have an exclusive say in interpreting religious text, in conducting religious services or giving spiritual or religious advice.*
>
> *While recognizing that traditional religious belief systems have contributed to the subordination of women, traditional religious leaders and community leaders nevertheless may be extremely important in the process of change. This is because they can easily reach and have influence where the State cannot – at grassroots levels, within the confines of the home... Seeking contact with such leaders and starting a dialogue with them, therefore, might be the most important strategic instrument in the process of the implementation of women's human rights.[95]*

Appendix B includes an overview of twelve tool kits, religious calls to action and other advocacy materials that have been developed by or with African groups. These can provide a roadmap for future efforts by the African Union to reach and build partnerships with religious groups and traditional leaders.

V. Review research on socio-economic development in Africa in relationship to ending child marriage and recognizing the role of religion and tradition

One gap in research on religion, cultural practices and child marriage relates to the limited evidence on the economic cost benefits to African countries especially as the continent moves toward sustainable growth and human development by 2063.

The correlation has been made on how investments in education, for example, play a critical role in the economic development of countries around the world by the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, (OECD) and others.

As outlined below, there are several challenges to linking the efforts around universal education and ending child marriage, even though for many girl brides in Africa, their last day of school is too often on their wedding day.

As a direct linkage between sustainable economic development and ending child marriage, the World Bank and the International Center for Research on Women have embarked on an ambitious multi-year initiative that includes several African countries, also described below.

Promoting secondary education and ending child marriage:

A 2013 report[96] by the Brookings Institution has as one of its authors Judith-Ann Walker, managing director of development Research and Project Centre in Nigeria, and includes a chapter entitled: The status of efforts to end child marriage and to promote girls' education in West Africa: Different actors, different movements and a clear policy disconnect. She points out:

> *The movement to end child marriage in West Africa has run along a parallel track with girls' education programs but without convergence. Two important aspects of this [end child marriage] movement have been linked to public health and child rights. The catalyst to linking*

efforts to end child marriage with public health can be traced to the meeting of the 1984 UN NGO Working Group on Traditional Practices in Dakar, where the African NGOs present formed the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC). The IAC focused on eliminating female genital mutilation and early marriage through public education campaigns targeting traditional and religious leaders and advocacy for the introduction of laws....

UNFPA also formed partnerships with Islamic opinion leaders across West Africa with a particular focus on Senegal, Mali and Nigeria, supporting them to change attitudes and practices through public pronouncements and declarations to end harmful traditional practices including child marriage. Faith-based initiatives by UNFPA, CEDPA and the USAID AWARE project culminated in the 2005 Abuja Declaration of the Network of African Islamic Faith-based Organisations.

Walker's research goes on to show how the girls' education movement can be traced back to the 1960s when government and civil society became concerned about the education of women and girls as part of a mass literacy movement.

In the 1990's, the World Bank released several books and publications naming the education of women and girls as critical to the socioeconomic development of developing countries, especially in Africa and Southeast Asia.

For example, Lawrence Summers, former president of Harvard University and an economic advisor to several U.S. presidents, edited a book for the World Bank, Investing in all the people: Educating women in developing countries. An abstract sums up his key points:

Here are sound reasons why targeting funds to educate girls and women can yield the best investment returns in the developing world and provide enormous economic benefits. The discussion explains how such funding can reduce environmental pollution, fertility rates and female mortality and help prevent the spread of AIDS. It describes an entrenched cultural tradition that denies

girls an education and keeps them from contributing economically to their families and their countries. A low-cost strategy to educate more women and girls worldwide is presented, along with examples of successful education programs in many developing nations.[97]

Fast-forward to the 21st century and the eight Millennium Development Goals with one on achieving universal primary education and another on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

For education, this UN adoption of the MDGs sparked a series of African seminars in Banjul, Gambia, and a World Education Forum in Dakar. These became a catalyst for the Second Decade of Education for Africa Plan (2006-15).

As Walker showed in her Brookings report, efforts to end child marriage that centered on keeping girls in school, and the reverse, became siloed into two different NGO movements, separate government ministries, two funding streams and for the most part, separate evidence-based research and evaluations. She concludes: "the global community has a role to play in creating incentives to help link girls' education and efforts to end child marriage."[98]

Such links relate in turn to development in Africa, as indicated in the African Union Agenda 2063. A 2011 policy research working paper by the World Bank, *Measuring the Economic Gains of Investing in Girls: The Girl Effect Dividend,* documents the correlations among rates of early school dropout, teenage pregnancy and joblessness, defined as the ratio of the number of girls age 15 to 24 who are not in school or in the labor force as a share of the total female population of that age.

"These issues have been extensively discussed by social development specialists, but there has been no evaluation to date of the economic costs imposed on societies by the extensive incidence of these negative factors," the authors note. The analysis includes nine African countries: Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda.

School dropout rates are higher for girls than for boys in these countries, as they are in most developing countries, the study says, partly due to reasons outside the girls' control, such as early marriage or cultural norms that prioritize investments in boys. Fewer than 20 percent of girls age 15 to 24 complete secondary education in Burundi, Ethiopia, Senegal, and Uganda, for example.

In Burundi, the lifetime cost to the country of female school dropouts in terms of lost productive capacity is nearly 70 percent of annual GDP, the study found. Some 27 percent of girls now drop out from primary school, and if they had completed primary grades alone before going to work, they would have generated lifetime income equivalent to nearly 25 percent of Burundi's annual GDP. And if the 88 percent of girls who were not able to complete secondary school had been able to do so, their additional lifetime productivity would have raised Burundi's GDP by more than two-thirds.

Other African countries in the sample also show significant opportunity cost from girls' leaving school. If girls in Kenya, Tanzania, Senegal and Uganda had completed primary school alone, their additional output over their lifetimes would be equivalent to 20 percent, 18 percent, 14 percent, and 13 percent of their countries' annual GDP respectively. And if their more educated sisters completed secondary school, they would contribute 48 percent, 32 percent, 24 percent, and 34 percent of GDP more to their respective economies over their lifetimes. This equals an annual rise in GDP of one-half to 1 percent annually for the next 45 years.

The study's overall conclusions included the following: 1) A social inclusion of adolescent girls that keeps them on a path to achieving their maximum human potential will result in significant economic growth; and 2) Marginal investments in girls' education can have a substantial impact on GDP growth and well-being.

The researchers' recommendations included mobilizing communities, families, men and boys to support adolescent girls; sponsoring programs or incentives to engage religious and community leaders and head teachers; and in general fostering

healthier, more supportive communities where girls can create and execute their own solutions.[99]

Many other studies support the finding that investment in girls' education advances a country's economic development. However, references to child marriage in the above report appear only in a longer list of related issues.

A more recent 2014 World Bank Group report, *Voice and Agency: Empowering women and girls for shared prosperity,* highlights the cross-cutting results of advancing gender equality:

> *Removing constraints and unleashing women's full productive potential can yield enormous dividends that help make whole societies more resilient and more prosperous. For example, delays in marriage are associated with greater educational achievement and lower fertility. And lower fertility can increase women's life expectancy and has benefits for children's health and education.[100]*

The World Bank report generally confines its references to child marriage to the chapter on sexual and reproductive health and rights and not to education.

Interest is evidently growing, however, in better understanding the socio-economic impact of child marriage. Quentin Wodon, a World Bank advisor to the education sector, last year asked: *What is the economic cost of child marriage?* His answer: *We don't really know.* He adds:

> *Unfortunately beyond [a handful of] studies, there is very little research on the overall impact of child marriage on countries and their economies, including in terms of lost wages, productivity and ultimately growth. If the economic cost of child marriage were better estimated, this might provide incentives for governments to invest more toward the elimination of the practice.[101]*

The economic consequences of child marriage:

In 2014, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation announced a $4.2 million study to establish the economic consequences of child marriage and the economic case for putting a stop to the practice. It is jointly led by the International Center for Research on Women and the World Bank Group. ICRW points out:

> *While there is a growing evidence base documenting the tragic consequences of child marriage, there is a lack of data that sufficiently demonstrates the economic impacts of this harmful practice, including the economic opportunity and financial costs, costs for health care systems, lost education and earnings, lower growth potential, and the perpetuation of poverty.*

The findings will be generated over the three-year research period (2015-2017) and presented via a website (www.costsofchildmarriage.org) and dissemination activities in various countries and globally. The findings from the first phase of work, which analyses existing datasets across a number of countries, will be released in the fall of 2015. Niger and Ethiopia are two of the countries that will be included in the second phase of the project, in which primary data will be collected from thousands of women and households to provide more detailed information about the costs of child marriage.[102]

The findings from Phase One will be released in the fall of 2015. Niger and Ethiopia are two of the countries that will be included in the project.

CONCLUSION

Religious communities and traditional leaders are uniquely positioned to prevent and respond to the call to end child marriage. Strong consensus exists across religious traditions about the dignity of every child and the need to protect children from different forms of violence, the spread of disease and the HIV pandemic, and the devastating effects of war, conflict and poverty. The inherent rights of the child are present in the teachings and traditions of the world's major religions.

The UNICEF report, *From Commitment to Action*, says it best:

> *With their extraordinary moral authority, religious leaders are able to influence thinking, foster dialogue and set priorities for members of their communities. They are frequently in positions to advocate for social and legal change. As those who are often the first to respond to problems, they have the trust and confidence of individuals, families and communities.*

With about 1 billion[103] people in Africa belonging to religious communities, their leaders' potential for action is substantial. From the smallest village to the largest city, through districts and provinces to national and international levels, religious communities offer large networks for taking action in the care and protection of children and the safeguarding of their rights.

The scale and extent of child marriage provides a compelling and urgent abuse that can be invoked to motivate religious communities to become actively involved in advocacy and policy-making. Increasingly, religious leaders are speaking out as advocates for children and drawing on the teachings of their respective faiths to promote respect for children and their rights.[104]

Many programs outlined in this desk review show promise for the future – from the Faith Effect project in Ethiopia and Nigeria that started years ago to the recent campaign in Zambia spearheaded by the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs.

Although religious and traditional leaders may in the past have been the primary instigators and defenders of harmful practices against children, the research covered here offers proof and encouragement for the view that with the appropriate interventions they now may become key instruments – and in fact leaders – of the movement to end such practices. Every possible effort should be made to enlist them in the struggle.

ENDNOTES

1. See: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979); The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years, and the African Youth Charter defines a minor as a person between ages 15-17.

2. Some international organisations prefer the term "early, forced and child marriage" to indicate that some youthful unions have the consent of all parties while some do not; others question whether children under 18 can give meaningful consent. See: Sexual Rights Initiative (SRI). *Analysis of the Language of Child, Early, and Forced Marriages. Sexual Rights Initiative.* 2013. Retrieved from: http://sexualrightsinitiative.com/2013/hrc/hrc-24-session/sri-analysis-of-the-language-of-child-early-and-forced-marriage/

3. Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes that a child is any human being under the age of 18 unless, under state law, majority is attained earlier.

4. World Health Organization. *Health of the World's Adolescents: A Second Chance in the Second Decade.* Geneva: WHO. 2014. Retrieved from: http://apps.who.int/adolescent/second-decade/

5. UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. *Marrying Too Young.* New York. 2012. Retrieved from: http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/MarryingTooYoung.pdf

6. The countries are: Zimbabwe 31%; Senegal 33%; Congo 33%; Gabon 33%; Sudan 34%; Sao Tome & Principe 34%; Benin 34%; Cote d'Ivoire 34%; Mauritania 35%; Gambia 36%; Cameroun 36%; Tanzania 37; Liberia 38%; Nigeria 39%; DRC 39%; Ethiopia 41%; Zambia 42%; Somalia 45%; Uganda 46%; Eritrea 47%; Burkina Faso 48%; Sierra Leone 48%; Madagascar 48%; Malawi 50%; Mozambique 52%; Mali 55%; Central African Republic 61%; Guinea 63%; Chad 72%; and Niger 75%. Source: UNFPA database using household surveys (DHS and MICS) completed during the period 2000-2011.

7. UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. 2012.

8. Jain, Saranga and Kurz, Kathleen. *New Insights on Preventing Child Marriage: A Global Analysis of Factors and Programs.* Washington, DC: International Center for Research on Women. 2007. Retrieved from: http://www.icrw.org/publications/new-insights-preventing-child-marriage

9. Pankhurst, Alula. *Child Marriage and Female Circumcision: Evidence from Ethiopia.* Young Lives and Save the Children. London: Young Lives Policy Brief 21. 2014. Retrieved at: http://www.younglives.org.

10. Greene, Margaret; Rao, Arati; and Perlson, Stephanie. (2015) *Human Rights and the Cultural and Religious Defense of Child Marriage: Finding Middle Ground.* GreeneWorks. Pre-publication draft available upon request via email: mgreene@greeneworks.org

11. International NGO Council on Violence Against Children. *Violating Children's Rights: Harmful practices based on tradition, culture, religion and superstition.* 2012. Retrieved from: https://www.crin.org/docs/InCo_Report_15Oct.pdf

12. Callimachi, Rukmini. "ISIS Enshrines a Theory of Rape: Claiming the Quran's support, the Islamic State codifies sex slavery in conquered regions of Iraq and Syria and uses the practice as a recruiting tool." *New York Times*. 13 August 2015.

13. van der Gaag, Nikki. *Men and Feminism.* London: Zed Press. 2014.

14. Greene, Rao and Perlson. 2015

15. Kabeer N. *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought.* London: Verso. 1994

16. Holtmaat, Rikki and Naber, Jonneke *Women's Human Rights and Culture: From Deadlock to Dialogue.* Cambridge: Intersentia. 2011.

17. Pankhurst, Elula, 2014

18. International Center for Research on Women. *Understanding the Economic Impacts of Child Marriage.* This is a three-year study (2014-2017) being conducted with the World Bank, see page 42 for details. Retrieved from: www.costsofchildmarriage.org

19. See African Union Concept Note *Desk Review on the Effect of Traditional and Religious Perspective of Child Marriage on Africa's Socio-Economic Development.* Addis Ababa: African Union Commission. 2015.

20. UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. 2012.

21. Getahum, H. "Marriage through abduction (Telefa) in rural north west Ethiopia." Ethiopa Mediacal Journal. 2001. Retrieved from: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11501287?report=abstract

22. See: *Difret*, the feature film website at http://www.difret.org

23. Uphondo. *What is Ukuthwala: The impacts and definition of a cultural practice in South Africa.* 2015. Retrieved from: http://www.uphondo.com/discussion/398/what-is-ukuthwala-the-impacts-and-definition-of-a-cultural-practice-in-south-africa/p1

24. Ohrt, Malacci. *Conflicting Discourses on the Trokosi Practice in Ghana: Exploring Tensions in the Global/Local Human Rights Translation.* A Research Paper for a Masters in Arts and Development, Graduate School of Development Studies, International Institute of Social Science. The Hague, Netherlands. 2011.

25. Parikh, S. "They arrested me for loving a schoolgirl. Ethnography, HIV, and a feminist assessment of the age of consent law as a gender-based structural intervention in Uganda." *Social Science & Medicine*. 74:1774-1782. Philadephia: Elsevier. 2012.

26. Greene, Rao and Perlson. 2015

27. Boyden, Jo; Pankhurst, Alula and Tafere, Yisak. *Harmful Traditional Practices and Child Protection: Contested Understandings and Practices of Female Early Marriage and Circumcision in Ethiopia. London: Young Lives*. 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.younglives.org.uk/publications/WP/harmful-traditional-practices-and-child-protection/yl-wp93_boyden-et-al

28. Umoru, Henry. *Islamic Law Sanctions Marriage Based On Maturity Not Age - Ahmad Sani*. Lagos Vanguard. 31 July 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/07/islamic-law-sanctions-marriage-based-on-maturity-not-age-ahmad-sani/

29. Umoru, Henry 2014.

30. Africa News. *Sex in Nigeria.* 4 February 2015.

31. Greene, Rao and Perlson. 2015

32. Crossette, Barbara. *The Elders take a stand against child marriage.* New York: The Nation. 12 February 2013. http://www.thenation.com/article/165868/elders-against-child-marriage

33. Greene, Rao and Perlson. 2015

34. Myers, Juliette and Harvey, Rowan. *Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls' Education.* London: Plan International. 2011. Retrieved from: http://www.plan-uk.org/resources/documents/Breaking-Vows-Early-and-Forced-Marriage-and-Girls-Education/

35. World Bank. *In Africa, Poverty Has a Female Face*. Washington, DC. 2009. Retrieved from: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/0,,contentMDK:22182932~menuPK:258657~pagePK:2865106~piPK:2865128~theSitePK:258644,00.html

36. Children's Dignity Forum of Tanzania. *Preventing and Eliminating of Child, Early and Forced Marriages in Tanzania.* Dar es Salaam. 2013.

37. Greene, Rao, Perlson. 2015.

38. Pankhurst, Alula, 2014.

39. Walker, Judith-Ann; Mukisa, Sarah; Hashim, Yahaya; and Ismail, Hadiza. *Mapping Early Marriage in West Africa: A Scan of Trends, Interventions, What Works, Best Practices and the Way Forward*. New York: Ford Foundation by the Development Research and Project Centre, Kano State, Nigeria. 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.girls-notbrides.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Ford-Foundation-CM-West-Africa-2013_09.pdf

40. Boyden Jo; Pankhurst, Alula and Tafere, Yisak. 2013.

41. UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. 2012.

42. International Center for Reseach on Women. *Solutions to End Child Marriage.* Washington, DC. 2011. Retrieved from: http://www.icrw.org/files/publications/Solutions-to-End-Child-Marriage.pdf

43. Oguttu, Juliet Were and Nassolo, Suzan Nkinzi. *Child marriage and its impact on development: The case of Kasese District, Uganda.* Kampala: Isis-ICCE, Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange ICCE Research Report. 2011.

44. Myers, Juliette and Harvey, Roland. 2011.

45. World Vision US. *Before She's Ready: 15 places Girls Marry by 15.* Federal Way, WA. 2008.

46. Pathfinder International/Etiopia. *Creating Partnerships to Prevent Early Marriage in the Amhara region in Ethiopia.* Addis Ababa. 2006

47. West Africa Civil Society Forum. A Regional Strategy on Curbing Early Marriage in West Africa (in English and French) and a four part series, Early Marriage in West Africa. Abuja: 2014.

48. West Africa Civil Society Forum. 2014.

49. Walker, Judith-Ann; Mukisa, Sarah; Hashim, Yahaya; and Ismail, Hadiza. 2013.

50. Zambia Daily Mail. *Ugly face of early marriage.* Young writers corner. Lusaka. May 2015.

51. UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. *Children and AIDS; Sixth Stocktaking Report, 2013.* New York: United Nations. 2013. Retreived from: http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_70986.html

52. Religions of Peace - National Women of Faiths Networks. website accessed May 20, 2015. Retrieved from: http://www.religionsforpeaceinternational.org/who-we-are/global-women-faith-network/national-women-faith-networks

53. Davis, Al, Postles, C. and Rosa, G. *A girl's right to say no to marriage: Working to end child marriage and keep girls in school.* London: Plan International. 2013. Retrieved from: http://plan-international.org/files/global/publications/campaigns/full-report-girls-right-to-say-no-marriage-english.pdf

54. UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. (2012)

55. UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. (2012)

56. Brown, Gordon. *Out of wedlock, into school: combating child marriage through education.* A review by Gordon Brown, London: The Office of Gordon and Sarah Brown. 2012.

57. Plan International. (2012) *Because I am a Girl, Africa Report, Progress and Obstacles to Girls' Education in Africa.*

58. Plan UK, DFID PPA-funded. (2012) *Building skills for life for adolescent girl programme: global baseline report*, prepared for Plan UK by the Royal Tropical Institute.

59. Nguyen, Mink Cong and Wodon, Quentin. *Child Marriage and Education: A Major Challenge.* UNGEI, United Nations Girls Education Initiative. New York; United Nations. 2012. Retrieved from: http://www.ungei.org/files/Child_Marriage_Edu_Note.pdf

60. UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. *Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects.* New York: United Nations. 2014. Retrieved from: http://www.unicef.org/media/files/Child_Marriage_Report_7_17_LR..pdf

61. UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. *Early Marriage: A Harmful Traditional Practice – A Statistical Exploration*. New York: United Nations. 2005. Retrieved from: http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Early_Marriage_12.lo.pdf

62. UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. 2014.

63. WHO, World Health Organziation. (2008) *Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation: An Interagency Statement.*

64. Pinheiro, Paulo Sergio. *World Report on Violence Against Children. UN Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children*. New York: United Nations. 2006. Retreived from: http://www.unicef.org/violencestudy/reports/SG_violencestudy_en.pdf

65. Children's Dignity Forum and the Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development (FORWARD UK). (2009) *Peer research report on child marriage in Tarime District, Mara Region in Tanzania*. Retrieved from: http://www.cdftz.org/files/Peer Research edited doc.pdf

66. FEMNET, The African Women's Development and Communications Network. *Handbook for Cultural and Religious Leaders to End Femal Genetial Mutilation*. Nairobi. 2014. Retrieved from: http://www.femnet.co/index.php/en/manuals/item/283-handbook-for-cultural--religious-leaders-to-end-fgm

67. World Vision (2008) *Before She's Ready: 15 places Girls Marry by 15*. Retrieved from: http://corestg.worldvision.org/sites/default/files/pdf/early-marriage.pdf?_ga=1.201309998.1838454716.1432329534

68. Pinheiro. 2006.

69. Clark, Shelly. "Early Marriage and HIV Risks in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Studies in Family Planning*, 35.3. New York: Population Council. 2004

70. Fistula Foundation. *Fast Facts and FAQ.* San Jose, CA. 2015. Retrieved from: https://www.fistulafoundation.org/what-is-fistula/fast-facts-faq/

71. Fistula Foundation. 2015.

72. Davis, Al, Postles, C. and Rosa, G. 2013.

73. World Vision. 2008.

74. UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. *State of World Population, Motherhood in Childhood: Facing the Challenge of Adolescent Pregnancy.* New York: United Nations. 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.unfpa.org/publications/state-world-population-2013

75. Watt, MH; Wilson, SM; Masenga, JM; MacFarlane JC; Oneko O; Sikkema KJ."Religious coping among women with obstetric fistula in Tanzania". *Global Public Health*. London: Taylor and Francis Group. 2014. Retrieved from: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24735435?report=abstract

76. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. (as cited in UNICEF 2001. and World Vision 2008.) Retrieved from: http://corestg.worldvision.org/sites/default/files/pdf/early-marriage.pdf?_ga=1.97482655.1838454716.1432329534

77. The Rainbow.com. "Boko Haram kidnapped the 230 school girls as wives for its insurgents" 29 April 2014. and Heaton, Laura *"Nigeria: kidnapped schoolgirls 'sold as wives to Islamist fighters'"* London: The Daily Telegraph. 30 April 2014. Retrieved from: http://therainbow.com.ng/boko-haram-kidnapped-the-230-school-girls-as-wives-for-its-insurgents/http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/nigeria/10797454/Nigeria-kidnapped-schoolgirls-sold-as-wives-to-Islamist-fighters.html

78. Levs, Josh. *'I will sell them,'* Boko Haram leader says of kidnapped Nigerian girls. CNN. 6 May 2014. Retrieved from: http://www.cnn.com/2014/05/05/world/africa/nigeria-abducted-girls/

79. Callimachi, Rukmini. 2015.

80. Aubert, Veronique. *Unspeakable Crimes Against Children*. London: Save the Children. 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/Unspeakable_Crimes_Against_Children.pdf

81. UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. 2001.

82. As noted by Human Rights Watch in *This Old Man Can Feed Us, You Will Marry Him: Chila and Forced Marriage in South Sudan*. 2013. in some media reports on such cases, see "South Sudan's Human Rights Commission Condemns Forced Marriages," Sudan Tribune, 8 March 2011, Manyang Mayom, "Lakes State: Girl Killed in Forced Marriage Dispute," Sudan Tribune, 11 February 2011, Paan Luel Wël, "International Women's Day: Promotion of our Women Rights vs. Preservation of Our Cultural Heritage," Sudan News Agency, 15 March 2011.

83. Human Rights Watch. *This Old Man Can Feed Us, You Will Marry Him: Child and Forced Marriage in South Sudan.* New York: 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/southSudan0313_forinsertWebVersion_0.pdf

84. Batha, Emma. *Forced sex camps prepare girls for marriage in Zambia and Mozambique*. New York: Reuters News Service. 22 May 2015.

85. World Health Organization. *Health of the World's Adolescents: A Second Chance in the Second Decade.* Geneva: WHO. 2014. Retrieved from: http://apps.who.int/adolescent/second-decade/

86. Gage, Anastasia. "Association of Child Marriage With Suicidal Thoughts and Attempts Among Adolescent Girls in Ethiopia." *Journal of Adolescent Health.* Volume 52, Issue 5. Philadelphia: Elsevier. 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.cpc.unc.edu/measure/publications/ja-13-158

87. Tutu, Archbiship Desmond. *A message to men and boys from Archbishop Desmond Tutu*. London: Girls Not Brides 20 September 2011. Retrieved from: http://www.girlsnotbrides.org

88. Carter, Jimmy. *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence and Power*. New York: Simon and Schuster. 2014.

89. Times of Zambia. *South Chiefs Fight Child Marriage.* 26 May 2015.

90. African Council of Religious Leaders. *Strategic Plan: Different Faiths, Common Actions.* Nairobi: Religions for Peace. 2010-2014.

91. Lusekelo, Philemon. *Former President Mwinyi Appeals to Clerics to Help Stop Child Marriage*. London: The Guardian. 26 January 2015.

92. UN Women. *Approaches to end child marriage.* New York: United Nations. 2012. http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2012/10/un-women-approaches-to-end-child-marriage - sthash.7CvpSlSD.dpuf

93. Gage, Anastasia, Ed. *Coverage and Effects of Child Marriage Prevention Activities in Amhara Region, Ethiopia Findings from a 2007 Study.* Chapel Hill, NC: MEASURE Evaluation, Addis Continental Institute of Public Health and USAID. 2009. Retrieved from: http://www.cpc.unc.edu/measure/publications/tr-09-70

94. Gage. 2009.

95. Holtmaat, Rikki and Naber, Jonneke. *Women's Human Rights and Culture: From Deadlock to Dialogue*. Cambridge: Intersentia. 2011.

96. Ekine, Adefunke; Samati, Madalo; and Walker, Judith-Ann. *Improving Learning Opportunities and Outcomes for Girls in Africa*. Washington, DC: Center for Universal Education, Brookings Institution. 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2013/12/improving-learning-outcomes-girls-africa

97. Summers, Lawrence. *Investing in all the people: Educating women in developing countries.* Washington, DC: World Bank. 1994. Retrieved from: http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/book/10.1596/0-8213-2323-7

98. Ekine, Samati and Walker. 2013.

99. Chaahan, Jad and Cunningham, Wendy. *Measuring the Economic Gain of Investing in Girls: The Girl Effect Dividend*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. 2011. http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/1813-9450-5753

100. World Bank Group. *Voice and Agency: Empowering women and girls for shared prosperity.* Washington, DC: 2014. Retrieved from: http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/Gender/Voice_and_agency_LOWRES.pdf

101. Wodon, Quentin. *Measuring the Economic Cost of Child Marriage.* Washington, DC: World Bank. July 2014. Retrieved from: http://blogs.worldbank.org/education/measuring-economic-cost-child-marriage

102. The World Bank Group. *Understanding the Economic Impacts of Child Marriage*. 2013. Retrieved from: www.costsofchildmarriage.org

103. According to the World Book Encyclopedia, Islam is the largest religion in Africa, followed by Christianity. According to Encyclopædia Britannica, 45% of the population are Christians, 40% are Muslims, and 10% follow traditional religions. A small number of Africans are Hindu, Buddhist, Confucianist, Baha'i, or have beliefs from the Judaic tradition. There is also a minority of Africans who are irreligious.

104. UNICEF and Religions for Peace. *From Commitment to Action: What Religious Communities Can Do to Eliminate Violence Against Children*. New York: United Nations. 2010. Retrieved from: http://www.unicef.org/eapro/UNICEF_Religions_for_Peace_Feb2010.pdf

The Effects of Traditional and Religious
Practices of Child Marriage on Africa's
Socio-Economic Development

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography is part of a desk review for the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa to collect and assess existing literature and research on the effects of traditional and religious practices surrounding child marriage on Africa's socio-economic development. For additional information, please visit: www.au.int

African Commission on Human and People's Rights *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*. Addis Ababa: African Union. 1990.

African Council of Religious Leaders. *Strategic Plan: Different Faiths, Common Actions.* Nairobi: Religions for Peace. 2010-2014.

Alemu, Bogalech. *Early marriage in Ethiopia: Causes and health consequences.* Addis Ababa: Pathfinder International/Ethiopia. 2006.

Amin, S. and Lynch A. *When girls' lives matter: ending forced and early marriage in Cameroon.* New York: Population Council. 2011.

Aubert, Veronique. *Unspeakable Crimes Against Children.* London: Save the Children. 2013.

Backlund, Helen and Blomquist. *Protecting the Girl Child or Upholding Patriarchy? A case study of child marriage in the cultural and legal context in Tanzania.* Lund Scania: Lund University, Master of Science in International Development and Management. 2014.

Batha, Emma. *Forced sex camps prepare girls for marriage in Zambia and Mozambique.* New York: Reuters News Service. 22 May 2015.

Bayisenge, Jeannette. *Early Marriage as a Barrier to Girl's Education: A Developmental Challenge in Africa.* Butare: National University of Rwanda. 2013.

Bicchieri, Cristina; Jiang, Ting and Lindemans, Jan Willem. A *Social Norms Perspective on Child Marriage: The General Framework.* Commissioned and to be published by UNICEF. Behavioral Ethics Lab, University of Pennsylvania. 2014.

Boyden, Jo; Pankhurst, Alula and Tafere, Yisak. *Harmful Traditional Practices and Child Protection: Contested Understandings and Practices of Female Early Marriage and Circumcision in Ethiopia.* London: Young Lives. 2013.

Brown, Gordon. *Out of wedlock, into school: combating child marriage through education.* London: The Office of Gordon and Sarah Brown. 2012.

Callimachi, Rukmini. "ISIS Enshrines a Theory of Rape: Claiming the Quran's support, the Islamic State codifies sex slavery in conquered regions of Iraq and Syria and uses the practice as a recruiting tool." *New York Times.* 13 August 2015.

Carter, Jimmy. *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence and Power.* New York: Simon and Schuster. 2014.

Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty *The Faith Effect: How We Change Tradition.* Washington, DC. 2013.

Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty. *Early Marriage and Female Genital Cutting - Ethiopian Orthodox Church Faith Leader Toolkit.* Washington, DC. 2013.

Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty. *Early Marriage and Female Genital Cutting - Muslim Faith Leader Toolkit.* Washington, DC. 2013.

Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty. *Early Marriage and Female Genital Cutting - A Facilitators Manual to Train Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Faith Leaders.* Washington, DC. 2013.

Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty. *Early Marriage and Female Genital Cutting: Muslim Faith Leader Training Manual.* Washington, DC. 2013.

Chaahan, Jad and Cunningham, Wendy. *Measuring the Economic Gain of Investing in Girls: The Girl Effect Dividend.* Washington, DC: World Bank. 2011.

Chandini, Peace Immaculate. *Child Marriage: Counting the Cost of a Hidden Crisis.* Lecturer: Mukono: Uganda Christian University. 2014.

Children's Dignity Forum. *Report on Child Marriage Survey Conducted in Dar es Salaam, Coastal, Mwanza and Mara Regions of Tanzania*. Dar es Salaam. 2008.

Children's Dignity Forum; Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development (FORWARD UK). *Peer research report on child marriage in Tarime District, Mara Region in Tanzania.* Dar es Salaam. 2009.

Children's Dignity Forum. *Preventing and Eliminating of Child, Early and Forced Marriages in Tanzania.* Dar es Salaam. 2013.

Clark, Shelly. "Early Marriage and HIV Risks in Sub-Saharan Africa*." Studies in Family Planning*, 35.3. New York: Population Council. 2004.

Clark, Shelley, Bruce, Judith and Dude, Annie. "Protecting young women from HIV/AIDS: The case against child and adolescent marriage." *International Family Planning Perspectives.* Volume 32, Number 2, New York: Guttmacher Institute. June 2006.

Crossette, Barbara. *The Elders take a stand against child marriage.* The New York: The Nation. 12 February 2013.

Cusack S and Pusey L. "Women's Human Rights and Culture: From Deadlock to Dialogue". *Human Rights Quarterly*, 34(2), p. 657-667: 660. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2012.

Davis, Al, Postles, C. and Rosa, G. *A girl's right to say no to marriage: Working to end child marriage and keep girls in school.* London: Plan International. 2013.

Doylo, Elom. "Religion in the Public Sphere: Challenges and Opportunities in Ghanaian Lawmaking, 1989-2004." *Bringham Young University Law Review*. Provo, Utah: Bringham Young University. 2005.

Edmeades, Jeffrey; Gaynair, Gillian; and Hayes, Robin. *Improving the Lives of Married Adolescent Girls in Amhara, Ethiopia. A Summary of the Evidence.* Washington, DC and Nairobi: CARE and International Center for Research on Women. 2011.

Ekine, Adefunke; Samati, Madalo; and Walker, Judith-Ann. *Improving Learing Opportunitieis and Outcomes for Girls in Africa.* Washington, DC: Center for Universal Education, Brookings Institution. 2013.

Erulkar, Annabel. "Early marriage, marital relations and intimate partner violence in Ethiopia." *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*. New York: Guttmacher Institute. 2013.

Erulkar, Annabel and Muthengi, E. "Evaluation of Berhane Hewan: A program to delay marriage in rural Ethiopia." *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*. New York: Guttmacher Institute. 2009.

Erulkar, Annabel and Muthengi-Karei. *Berhane Hewan: Increasing Opportunities to Delay Marriage and Promote Schooling.* New York: Population Council. 2012.

Equality Now. *Ending Sex Discrimination in the Law*. New York: 2015.

FEMNET, The African Women's Development and Communications Network. *Handbook for Cultural and Religious Leaders to End Female Genital Mutilation.* Nairobi. 2014.

Fistula Foundation. *Fast Facts and FAQ.* San Jose, CA. 2015.

Gage, Anastasia, Ed. *Coverage and Effects of Child Marriage Prevention Activities in Amhara Region, Ethiopia Findings from a 2007 Study*. Chapel Hill, NC: MEASURE Evaluation, Addis Continental Institute of Public Health and USAID. 2009.

Gage, Anastasia. "Association of Child Marriage With Suicidal Thoughts and Attempts Among Adolescent Girls in Ethiopia." *Journal of Adolescent Health*. Volume 52, Issue 5. Philadelphia: Elsevier. 2013.

Getahum, H. "Marriage through abduction (Telefa) in rural north west Ethiopia." *Ethiopian Medical Journal.* Addis Ababa. 2001.

Greene, Margaret. *Ending Child Marriage in A Generation: What Research Will It Take?* New York: Ford Foundation. 2014.

Greene, Margaret; Rao, Arati; and Perlson, Stephanie. *Human Rights and the Cultural and Religious Defense of Child Marriage: Finding Middle Ground*. GreeneWorks. Pre-publication draft available upon request via email: mgreene@greeneworks.org

Heaton, Laura. "Nigeria: kidnapped schoolgirls 'sold as wives to Islamist fighters'". London: *The Daily Telegraph*. 30 April 2014.

Hervish, Alexandra. *Despite Challenges, Ending Early Marriage in Ethiopia is Possible.* Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau. 2011.

Holtmaat, Rikki and Naber, Jonneke *Women's Human Rights and Culture: From Deadlock to Dialogue.* Cambridge: Intersentia. 2011.

Human Rights Watch. *This Old Man Can Feed Us, You Will Marry Him: Child and Forced Marriage in South Sudan.* New York. 2013.

International Center for Research on Women. *Solutions to End Child Marriage: What the Evidence Shows.* Washington, DC. 2011.

International Center for Research on Women. *Too Young to Wed: Education & Action Toward Ending Child Marriage:* Child Marriage and Domestic Violence Factsheet. Washington, DC. 2006.

International NGO Council on Violence Against Children. *Violating Children's Rights: Harmful practices based on tradition, culture, religion and superstition.* London. 2012.

International Planned Parenthood Federation and the Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls. *Ending child marriage - A guide for global policy action*. London. 2007.

Jain, Saronga and Karz, Kathleen. *New Insights on Preventing Child Marriage: A Global Analysis of Factors and Programs.* Washington, DC: International Center for Research on Women. 2007.

Kabeer N. *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*. London: Verso. 1994.

Lagos Vanguard. *Islamic Law Sanctions Marriage Based On Maturity Not Age - Ahmad Sani.* Lagos. 3 July 2013.

Lusekelo, Philemon. *Former President Mwinyi Appeals to Clerics to Help Stop Child Marriage.* London: The Guardian. 26 January 2015.

Muthengi-Karei, Eunice and Erulkar, *Increasing Opportunities to Delay Marriage and Promote Schooling: Results from a baseline survey in rural Tanzania.* Research Brief. New York: Population Council. 2012.

Myers, Juliette and Harvey, Roland. *Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls' Education.* London: Plan International. 2011.

Myers, Juliette and Doornbos, Hannah Stevenson. *Untying the knot: Exploring early marriage in fragile states.* London: World Vision. 2013.

Nayak, Bimal Kanta. "Child Marriage in Ethiopia: A Matter of Concern." *International Journal of Management and Social Science Research.* Dehli: International Journals of Multi-Dimensional Research. 2013.

Nguyen, Mink Cong and Wodon, Quentin. *Child Marriage and Education: A Major Challenge*. New York: UNGEI, United Nations Girls Education Initiative. 2012.

Nour, Nawal. "Health Consequences of Child Marriage in Africa." *Emerging Infectious Diseases* Vol. 12, No. 11. Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control. 2006.

Oduyoye, Amba Oduyoye and Kanyoro, Msimbi R.A. ed. *The Will To Arise: Women, Tradition, and the Church in Africa.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. 2001.

Oguttu, Juliet Were and Nassolo, Suzan Nkinzi. *Child marriage and its impact on development: The case of Kasese District, Uganda*. Kampala: Isis-ICCE, Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange ICCE Research Report. 2011.

Ohrt, Malacci. *Conflicting Discourses on the Trokosi Practice in Ghana: Exploring Tensions in the Global/Local*

Human Rights Translation. A Research Paper for a Masters in Arts and Development, Graduate School of Development Studies, International Institute of Social Science. The Hague, Netherlands. 2011.

Okonofua, Friday. "Prevention of child marriage and teenage pregnancy in Africa: need to more research and innovation." *African Journal of Reproductive Health*. December 2013.

Organization for the Development of Women and Children Ethiopia (ODWACE). *Surveys on harmful traditional practices in Ethiopia Addis Ababa Regional Report* (2012) in *Afar Regional State* (2009) *Amhara Region* (2011) *Dire Dawa City* (2012) *Gambella Region* (2011) *Harari Region* (2012) *Assessment of Best Practices on FGM and other harmful practices in Ethiopia* (2012) Addis Ababa. 2009-2013.

Pankhurst, Alula. *Child Marriage and Female Circumcision: Evidence from Ethiopia.* Young Lives and Save the Children. Oxford: Young Lives Policy Brief 21. 2014.

Parikh, S. "They arrested me for loving a schoolgirl:' Ethnography, HIV, and a feminist assessment of the age of consent law as a gender-based structural intervention in Uganda." *Social Science & Medicine.* 74:1774-1782. Philadelphia: Elsevier. 2011.

Pathfinder International/Etiopia. *Creating Partnerships to Prevent Early Marriage in the Amhara region in Ethiopia.* Addis Ababa. 2006.

Pinheiro, Paulo Sergio. *World Report on Violence Against Children. UN Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children.* New York: United Nations. 2006.

Plan Egypt. *Inspiring communities to break the chain of 'culture' in Egypt.* Cairo. 2012.

Plan International. *Because I am a Girl, Africa Report, Progress and Obstacles to Girls' Education in Africa*. Dakar. 2012.

Plan International *A Girl's Right to Say No to Marriage: Working to end child marriage and keep girls in school.* London. 2013.

Plan Kenya: *Ending FGM and child marriage in Kenya.* Nairobi. 2014.

Plan Malawi: *Traditional leaders outlaw child marriage in Malawi.* Lilongwe. 2014.

Plan Niger. *Putting an end to early marriage in Niger.* Plateau Niamey. 2012.

Plan UK, DFID PPA-funded. *Building skills for life for adolescent girl programme: global baseline report*, London: Plan UK by the Royal Tropical Institute. 2012.

Population Council. *Building Evidence on Effective Programs to Delay Marriage and Support Married Girls in Africa.* New York 2014.

Population Reference Bureau. *Ending Child Marriage.* Washington, DC. 2011.

Save the Children. *State of the World's Mothers 2004: Children Having Children*. Fairfield, CT. 2004.

Save the Children. *State of the World's Mothers 2014: Saving Mothers and Children in Humanitarian Crisis.* Fairfield, CT. 2014.

Sexual Rights Initiative (SRI).. *Analysis of the Language of Child, Early, and Forced Marriages. Sexual Rights Initiative*. 2013.

Summers, Lawrence. *Investing in all the people: Educating women in developing countries.* Washington, DC. World Bank. 1994.

Times of Zambia. *South Chiefs Fight Child Marriage.* Lusaka. 26 May 2015.

Turner, Catherine and Southward, Fiona. *Out of the Shadows: Child Marriage and Slavery*. London: Anti-Slavery International. 2013.

Tutu, Archbishop Desmond. *A message to men and boys from Archbishop Desmond Tutu.* London: Girls Not Brides. 20 September 2011.

Uphondo. *What is Ukuthwala : The impacts and definition of a cultural practice in South Africa.* 2015.

UN Women. *Approaches to end child marriage.* New York: United Nations. 2012.

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. *Factsheet: Young People and Times of Change.* New York: United Nations. 2009.

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. *Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health, Toolkit for Humanitarian Studies.* New York: United Nations. 2009

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. *From Childhood to Womanhood: meeting the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescent girls.* New York: United Nations. 2012.

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. *Marrying Too Young: End Child Marriage.* New York: United Nations. 2012.

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. *State of World Population, Motherhood in Childhood: Facing the Challenge of Adolescent Pregnancy.* New York: United Nations. 2013.

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund and UNAIDS. *A Call to Action: Faith for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights, Post-2015 Development Agenda.* New York: United Nations: 2015.

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. *Children and AIDS; Sixth Stocktaking Report, 2013.* New York: United Nations. 2013.

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. *Early Marriage, Child Spouses.* New York: United Nations. 2001.

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. *Early Marriage: A Harmful Traditional Practice: A Statistical Exploration.* New York.: United Nations. 2005.

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. *State of the World's Children: Maternal and Newborn Health.* New York: United Nations. 2009.

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund and Religions for Peace. *From Commitment to Action: What Religious*

Communities Can Do to Eliminate Violence Against Children. New York: United Nations. 2010.

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. *State of the World's Children: Realizing the Rights of Adolescents.* New York: United Nations. 2011.

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. UNICEF Data: Monitoring the situation of women and children: Child marriage is a violation of *human rights, but is all too common.* New York: United Nations. 2014.

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. *Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects.* New York. United Nations. 2014.

United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights.* New York: United Nations. 1948.

United Nations General Assembly. *Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages. G*eneral Assembly resolution 1763 A. New York: United Nations. 1964.

United Nations General Assembly resolution on *Child, Early and Forced Marriage.* New York: United Nations. December 18, 2014.

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Convention on the Rights of the Child.* New York: United Nations. 1989.

van der Gaag, Nikki. *Men and Feminism*. London: Zed Press. 2014.

Walker, Judith Anne. "Early Marriage in Africa – Trends, Harmful Effects and Interventions." *African Journal of Reproductive Health.* June 2012.

Walker, Judith-Ann; Mukisa, Sarah; Hashim, Yahaya; and Ismail, Hadiza. *Mapping Early Marriage in West Africa: A Scan of Trends, Interventions, What Works, Best Practices and the Way Forward*. New York: Ford Foundation by the Development Research and Project Centre, Kano State, Nigeria. 2013.

Watt, MH; Wilson, SM; Masenga, JM; MacFarlane JC; Oneko O; Sikkema KJ.

"Religious coping among women with obstetric fistula in Tanzania". *Global Public Health.* London: Taylor and Francis Group. 2014.

West Africa Civil Society Forum. *Curbing Early Marriage in West Africa: A Tool Kit for Civil Society*. Abuja. 2014.

West Africa Civil Society Forum. *A Regional Strategy on Curbing Early Marriage in West Africa* (in English and French) and a four part series, *Early Marriage in West Africa.* Abuja. 2014.

Wodon, Quentin. *Measuring the Economic Cost of Child Marriage.* Washington, DC: World Bank. 2014.

World Bank. *In Africa, Poverty Has a Female Face.* Press Release. Washington, DC. 2009.

World Bank Group. *Voice and Agency: Empowering women and girls for shared prosperity.* Washington, DC: World Bank. 2014.

World Health Organization. *Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation: An Interagency Statement.* Geneva: WHO. 2008.

World Health Organization. *Adolescent Pregnancy. Fact Sheet 364.* Geneva: WHO. 2012.

World Health Organization. *Early marriage, adolescent and young pregnancies.* Report by the Secretariat. Geneva: WHO. 2012.

World Health Organization. *Health of the World's Adolescents: A Second Chance in the Second Decade*. Geneva: WHO. 2014.

World Vision US. *Before She's Ready: 15 places Girls Marry by 15.* Federal Way, WA. 2008.

World Vision International. *Channels of Hope: Igniting a Movement to Transform Communities.* 2013.

Zambia Daily Mail, *Ugly face of early marriage.* Young writers corner. Lusaka. May 2015.

CAMPAIGN TO END CHILD MARRIAGE IN AFRICA

The Effects of Traditional and Religious Practices of Child Marriage on Africa's Socio-Economic Development

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH SUMMARIES 2006 TO 2015

Below are short descriptions of the key research papers related to the effects of traditional and religious practices on ending child marriage and Africa's socio-economic development. These are listed in date order starting with the most recent.

Erulkar, Annabel. (2015) *Building on Evidence Base to Delay Child Marriage*. Population Council. Retrieved from: http://www.popcouncil.org/research/building-an-evidence-base-to-delay-marriage-in-sub-saharan-africa

This multi-year project evaluated the effectiveness of four strategies to delay the age at marriage among girls 12-17 in parts of Ethiopia, Tanzania and Burkina Faso with a high prevalence of child marriage.

The four strategies tested are: community conversations (informing communities about the dangers of child marriage using community meetings and the engagement of religious leaders); supporting girls' education with cost-effective efforts, such as providing girls with school supplies or uniforms; providing conditional economic incentives to families for keeping girls unmarried, such as chickens or a goat; and combining all these approaches.

An August 2015 release of findings reported:

The Council's Berhane Hewan program in Ethiopia is one of the first rigorously evaluated projects with the explicit objective of increasing the age at marriage. It takes a multi-faceted approach—engaging girls, their families, and their communities—to building adolescent girls' social, health, and economic assets and reducing their vulnerability.

"Community conversations" are used to encourage communities to discuss the effects of child marriage. Families are offered school supplies to help overcome the economic barriers to sending girls to school. And families who keep girls unmarried during the two-year enrollment are awarded a sheep or a goat.

An early evaluation of the project found that girls aged 10–14 in the experimental site were 90% less likely to be married at the end of the two-year enrollment, compared to girls in the control

site, and three times more likely to be in school. Married girls in the project site were three times more likely to be using family planning methods compared to married girls in the control site.

The World Bank and the International Center for Research on Women (2015) -- In 2014, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation announced a $4.2 million study to establish the economic consequences of child marriage and the economic case for putting a stop to the practice. It is jointly led by the International Center for Research on Women and the World Bank Group. ICRW points out:

> *While there is a growing evidence base documenting the tragic consequences of child marriage, there is a lack of data that sufficiently demonstrates the economic impacts of this harmful practice, including the economic opportunity and financial costs, costs for health care systems, lost education and earnings, lower growth potential, and the perpetuation of poverty.*

Several African countries are included in the study. The findings will be generated over the three-year research period (2014-2017) through a website and a data-hub setup to support dissemination and cost-simulation. An update on the project will be released in Fall 2015. For more information, go to: www.costsofchildmarriage.org

Greene, Margaret; Rao, Arati; and Perlson, Stephanie. (2015) *Human Rights and the Cultural and Religious Defense of Child Marriage: Finding Middle Ground.* Pre-publication.

In this paper, the authors examine two frequently used rationales for child marriage: religion and culture. Both terms are energetically and strategically deployed by defenders of this practice. The authors do not posit notions of "good" religion or culture versus "bad" ones. Instead, the paper recognizes that these arguments have always emerged at particular historical moments out of interpretation and debate and therefore are open to change. The research discussed provides an analytic

framework that responds constructively to these defenses of child marriage and offers ways to move forward.

The authors argue that child marriage lies at the intersection of a broad set of problems facing girls, who are disproportionately affected by harmful cultural and religious beliefs and practices. The international community has come to appreciate the links between girls' human rights and development, as reflected in new thinking about the measures to be included in the post-2015 sustainable development goals, the framing of ICPD+20 and the UN conference on human rights, to name a few. There is an increased appreciation of the need to ensure that participation, empowerment and a rights-based approach to development will feature prominently in the post-2015 agenda. The international community recognizes that even though many advances were made over the past fifteen years on a number of key development goals, those that reflect gender inequalities have tended to languish.

Pankhurst, Alula. (2014) *Child Marriage and Female Circumcision: Evidence from Ethiopia.* Young Lives and Save the Children. Young Lives Policy Brief 21. Retrieved at: http://www.younglives.org.uk/publications/PP/child-marriage-and-FGM-in-ethiopia/pb21-child-marriage-and-fgm-in-ethiopia/view

This in-depth policy brief is based in part on Ethiopian demographic and health surveys and notes that child marriage and female circumcision are linked practices prevalent in Africa, south of the Sahara and common in Ethiopia. The African Union has pledged to end them and Ethiopia has taken a strong stand through legislation, campaigns and concerted action by government, international organisations and civil society. Recent evidence shows a significant decrease in both practices, enabling advocates to draw lessons from Ethiopia as a success case. Changes have come about through clear policies and commitment from government institutions alongside broader modernisation changes related to increased access to health care, education and employment opportunities for girls.

However, both practices remain common in parts of Ethiopia and resistance to abandoning them continues when and where people are not convinced of their harm or fear consequences.

...Relying on banning the practices may force them underground or have unintended negative consequences.

Ending these practices within a generation requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders, including government departments and services, civil society organisations, schools and the media. The key to success remains involving communities, starting with the girls themselves, their parents, brothers and future husbands, as well as customary and religious leaders.

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. (2014) UNICEF Data: Monitoring the situation of women and children: *Child marriage is a violation of human rights, but is all too common.* Retrieved from: http://data.unicef.org/child-protection/child-marriage.

This report and research tool includes a database by country that includes the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18.

UNICEF also released companion pieces including a brochure, *Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects;* and a video, *No Time to Lose: Child Marriage*. Retrieved from: http://www.unicef.org/search/search.php?q_en=Ending+Child+Marriage%3A+Progress+and+Prospects&go.x=13&go.y=10

Walker, Judith-Ann; Mukisa, Sarah; Hashim, Yahaya; and Ismail, Hadiza. (2013) *Mapping Early Marriage in West Africa: A Scan of Trends, Interventions, What Works, Best Practices and the Way Forward.* Ford Foundation by the Development Research and Project Centre, Kano State, Nigeria. Retrieved from: http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/mapping-child-marriage-in-west-africa-new-ford-foundation-study/

This study scans the situation in West Africa, which has the continent's highest rate of child marriage: 49 percent of girls under 19 are living in marital unions. The report spotlights remaining challenges and offers recommendations at three levels: law and rights; policy and institutional frameworks; and programs, projects and actions. Among these are two recommendations involving religious communities:

Work with traditional and religious leaders to create awareness of laws and policies at the community level. The Senegalese Director for the Protection of Children's Rights, for example, works to reduce harmful traditional practices in the country; and

Engage both Christian and Muslim faith leaders and faith-based organizations in community awareness programs that target conservative community/faith leaders as well as at partners and teachers. This intervention should offer education about the harmful effects of early marriage in the form of a leadership development project. Learning visits to other countries could allow study of alternative ways to mitigate the impact of this harmful traditional practice.

Boyden, Jo; Pankhurst, Alula and Tafere, Yisak. (2013) *Harmful Traditional Practices and Child Protection: Contested Understandings and Practices of Female Early Marriage and Circumcision in Ethiopia.* Young Lives. Retrieved from: http://www.ohchr.org/documents/issues/women/wrgs/forcedmarriage/ngo/younglives.pdf

This paper explores local practices on female child marriage and circumcision in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government has designated both as Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) and proscribes them by law, with designated punishments. Apart from the fact that both practices are labeled "harmful" and relate only to girls, the main reason for considering female child marriage and female circumcision together is that the latter tends to be seen as a necessary precursor to the former.

The paper explores the values that drive these practices and examines whether and in what ways they have been affected by efforts to eradicate them. It points to the complexity of beliefs and practices, highlighting differences associated with ethnicity, religion, generation and gender. It finds that eradication efforts of government and elite leaders are contributing to the diminution or transformation of female circumcision and female child marriage, although with marked regional variations and considerable resistance in some places. In mapping these

processes of change, the report emphasizes the challenges for child-protection measures designed to bring about change to long-established customs.

Walker, Judith Anne. (2012) *Early Marriage in Africa – Trends, Harmful Effects and Interventions.* African Journal of Reproductive Health. Retrieved from: http://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajrh/article/view/77850

This article reviews the pattern of early marriage in Africa. It focuses on the south of the Saharan region as an area with the world's highest rates of early marriage in terms of impact on young girls' health, education and economic well-being. The paper outlines a framework for analyzing global, regional and local initiatives to curb early marriage and examines the application of these interventions in south of the Saharan African countries. Regional patterns are then examined, comparing countries that have made progress to countries where the age of marriage amongst girls has remained low. The paper concludes that countries with the highest rates of early marriage are also the countries with the highest rates of poverty and population growth. It argues for sub-regional strategies to address the problem of early marriage in zones with the highest incidence.

Loaiza, Edilberto Sr. and Wong, Sylvia. (2012) *Marrying Too Young.* UNFPA. Retrieved from: http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/MarryingTooYoung.pdf

International conventions declare that child marriage is a violation of human rights because it denies girls the right to decide when and with whom to marry. This report is intended to help policymakers prevent this violation of girls' rights. It summarizes available data and evidence, while offering advice on the thicket of issues involved, and suggests prioritized actions to reduce and eventually eliminate child marriage.

The analysis includes profiles of the ten countries with the highest rates of child marriage; nine of these are in countries in the African Union and include: Burkino Faso, Chad, Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger and Sierra Leone.

International NGO Council on Violence Against Children (2012). *Violating Children's Rights: Harmful practices based on tradition, culture, religion and superstition.* Retrieved from: https://www.crin.org/docs/InCo_Report_15Oct.pdf

This report looks at the definition and scope of harmful traditional, cultural and religious practices violating children's rights. It outlines the human rights context for their prohibition and elimination. Sections list best practices that were identified through a call for evidence issued by the International NGO Council earlier in 2012 and additional desk research. It also provides some examples of legal and other measures already taken to challenge and eliminate the practices and makes recommendations for action to states, UN and UN-related agencies, INGOs, NGOs, national human rights institutions and others.

Edmeades, Jeffrey; Gaynair, Gillian; and Hayes, Robin. (2011) Improving the Lives of Married Adolescent Girls in Amhara, Ethiopia. A Summary of the Evidence. International Center for Research on Women and CARE. Retrieved from: http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/TESFA%20Final%20Evaluation.pdf

This report summarized the groundbreaking program designed and implemented by CARE Ethiopia and evaluated by the International Center for Research on Women, "Towards Economic and Sexual Reproductive Health Outcomes for Adolescent Girls," or TESFA. The program sought to mitigate the effects of child marriage in the Amhara region of Ethiopia, and was a global effort that focused on how best to support married girls as they transition to adulthood.

The results showed that TESFA's presence in communities yielded a few unexpected outcomes. Most notably, community members in the TESFA intervention area prevented more than 70 child marriages from taking place. This particular after effect provides promised evidence that TESFA's messages about the consequences of child marriage resonated with communities.

International Center for Research on Women. (2011) *Solutions to End Child Marriage: What the Evidence Shows.* Retrieved from: http://www.icrw.org/publications/solutions-end-child-marriage

In this brief, ICRW summarizes a systematic review of child marriage prevention programs that have documented evaluations. Based on this synthesis of evaluated programs, the paper offers an analysis of the broader implications for viable solutions to child marriage. The findings show that child marriage prevention programs have indeed expanded in number and scope during the last decade; almost two dozen have documented some type of an evaluation. The largest number of evaluated programs is in South Asia, especially in Bangladesh and India. Programs in a broader range of African and Middle Eastern countries, including Ethiopia and Egypt, are also adding to the evidence base.

On balance, the results from this composite of evaluations lean toward positive findings, indicating that a set of strategies focusing on girls' empowerment, community mobilization, enhanced schooling, economic incentives and policy changes have improved knowledge, attitudes, and behavior related to child marriage prevention. The strongest, most consistent results are shown in a subset of programs fostering information, skills, and networks for girls in combination with community mobilization. While many child marriage prevention programs are only beginning to explore possibilities of going to scale, there are encouraging signs that large-scale structural efforts aimed at other goals, such as education, health and poverty reduction, are beginning to make a connection with child marriage prevention.

Oguttu, Juliet Were and Nassolo, Suzan Nkinzi. (2011) *Child marriage and its impact on development: The case of Kasese District, Uganda*. Isis-WICCE Research Report. Retrieved from: http://www.isis-wicce.org/sites/default/files/resource-field_document/Kasese-report-Final2.pdf

The study is one of the few that directly addresses the socio-economic impact of child marriage. The research team reached out to 304 respondents (291 female and 13 male) who got married before 18 years and were still in those marriages or had moved out of the marriages at some point.

The study provides the needed information on the problem of child marriage and its socio economic impact on the society. It

directly shows that young children should instead be nurtured for development programmes and progress of society. Involving the child mothers and fathers at every stage of development calls for looking at the issue of child marriage with holistic lenses; especially ensuring that victims and survivors get self esteem, and are provided with means to enhance their well being. It is therefore a loud reminder to policy makers, parents, cultural leaders, religious leaders and the whole community to be part of the great strides Isis-WICCE is taking to end child marriage and restore self worth in the affected that have lost hope in the future. An abused generation cannot contribute to future progress.

Delaying marriage and child birth confer major benefits to girls and may lead to improved health of children and faster economic growth. Policy makers, government and decision makers concerned with socio-economic development should give greater priority to addressing child marriage in order to improve women's status and reduce poverty. This therefore entails that government structures at all levels, cultural and faith based institutions, parents and the community structures to rethink and adopt an appropriate approach that uphold the rights of young girls and boys.

Myers, Juliette and Harvey, Rowan. (2011) *Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls' Education.* Plan International. Retrieved from: http://www.plan-uk.org/resources/documents/Breaking-Vows-Early-and-Forced-Marriage-and-Girls-Education/

This report explores the issues behind the ten million girls a year who experience child marriage. It documents findings that married young girls are frequently taken out of school and are at higher risk of HIV infection, early pregnancy and health conditions such as obstetric fistula. If a child bride survives childbirth, her children are less likely to grow up healthy or to go to school, continuing the cycle of poverty for generations to come.

In accord with other research, this report notes that the causes of child marriage are complex, interrelated and dependent on individual circumstances and context. The practice is driven by factors that include poverty, gender inequality, negative

traditional or religious norms, weak law enforcement and pressures of conflict and natural disasters.

A total of 14.3 million girls are married in Africa, south of the Sahara before they reach age 18. The prevalence varies: West and Central Africa are at 43 percent and Eastern and Southern Africa at 36 percent. In countries where the rate of child marriage exceeds 70 percent (Niger, Chad and Mali), adolescent fertility and maternal mortality rates are also high.

The report includes case studies about Plan International's work in Egypt, Malawi, Sudan and Zimbabwe, where local church leaders have been engaged following the re-emergence of organized and often abusive early marriages. Plan has also released special reports on the situations in Niger (2003), Sudan (2008, 2009), Benin (2009) and Egypt (2010).

These reports are available on-line: Plan Egypt. *Inspiring communities to break the chain of 'culture' in Egypt.* Retrieved from: http://plan-international.org/where-we-work/africa/egypt/about-plan-in-egypt/news/inspiring-communities-to-break-the-chain-of-2018culture2019-in-egypt/?searchterm=child marriage

Plan Kenya: *Ending FGM and child marriage in Kenya.* Retrieved from: http://plan-international.org/about-plan/resources/blogs/turning-paper-to-action-ending-fgm-and-child-marriage/?searchterm=child marriage

Plan Malawi: *Traditional leaders outlaw child marriage in Malawi.* Retrieved from: https://plan-international.org/where-we-work/africa/malawi/what-we-do/our-successes/traditional-leaders-outlaw-child-marriage-in-malawi/

Plan Niger. *Putting an end to early marriage in Niger.* Retrieved from: http://plan-international.org/where-we-work/africa/niger/what-we-do/our-successes/putting-an-end-to-early-marriage-in-niger/?searchterm=child marriage

World Vision. (2008) *Before She's Ready: 15 places Girls Marry by 15.* Retrieved from: http://corestg.worldvision.org/sites/default/files/pdf/early-marriage.pdf?_ga=1.201309998.1838454716.1432329534

This report draws on the experience and observations of World Vision field staff working in a variety of countries and cultural contexts where girls are commonly married before they are fully physically or emotionally grown. The insights of these local and international humanitarian workers are combined with the stories of individuals affected by the practise of early marriage. In pairing these viewpoints with findings from existing research, the report provides insight into the complexities surrounding child marriage and the need for integrated approaches to address its causes and lay an economic, educational and cultural foundation that will allow communities to embrace other options for their girl children.

Bayisenge, Jeannette. (2008) *Early Marriage as a Barrier to Girl's Education: A Developmental Challenge in Africa.* National University of Rwanda. Retrieved from: http://www.academia.edu/7872766/EARLY_MARRIAGE_AS_A_BARRIER_TO_GIRLS_EDUCATION_A_Developmental_Challenge_in_Africa

This paper sheds light on reasons behind the perpetuation of child marriage in Africa, its harmful consequences for girls' education and human rights, and ways that it threatens countries' economic and social development. Its survey of available literature finds that causal factors include the search for economic survival, the desire to protect young girls, pressure from peer groups and families, control of female behavior and sexuality, danger from wars and civil conflicts and socio-cultural and religious values. The report notes that the practice conflicts with the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and notes that successful interventions include providing economic opportunities to young girls, promoting their education and using mass media to increase community awareness about the negative consequences of early marriage.

Jain, Saranga and Kurz, Kathleen. (2007) *New Insights on Preventing Child Marriage: A Global Analysis of Factors and Programs.* International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) on behalf of Pact Inc. Retrieved from: http://wpfpak.org/pdfs/GBV-RH/ProgramResources/2007-new-insights-preventing-child-marriage.pdf

Findings include a listing of "Major Associated Factors Across Countries":

Religion was significant in eight countries, both with logistic and linear regression, and it was significant in five countries using the tipping point regression. However, the analysis found that no one religious affiliation was associated with child marriage across countries. That is, a variety of religions were associated with high prevalence of child marriage, depending on the country. Table 3.7 shows how important religion was for each country in which it was significant by providing its ranking among all significant variables, as well as religious affiliations by country.

SIGNIFICANCE OF RELIGION ON CHILD MARRIAGE BY COUNTRY AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Country	Rank of Significance	Religious Affiliations
Chad	1	Muslim/Non-Muslim
Malawi	1	Catholic/Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian/Anglican/Seventh Day Advent-Baptist/Other Christian/Muslim/No religion/Other
Cameroon	2	Catholic/Protestant/Muslim/Animist/Other/No Religion/New Religions
Nigeria	2	Catholic/Protestant/Other Christian/Islam/Traditionalist/Other
Burkina Faso	3	Muslim/Non-Muslim
Ethiopia	3	Orthodox/Muslim/Protestant/Other
India	5	Hindu/Non-Hindu
Bangladesh	6	Muslim/Non-Muslim

These results indicate that targeting a particular religion across countries is not an effective way to address early marriage. In countries where religion was significant, further analyses are needed to better understand the relationship between religion and age at marriage.

Pathfinder International/Ethiopia. (2006) *Causes and Consequence of Early Marriage in the Amhara Region.* Retrieved from: http://www.pathfinder.org/publications-tools/pdfs/Causes-and-Consequesnces-of-Early-Marriage-in-the-Amhara-Region-of-Ethiopia.pdf

This study aimed to generate a cross-sectional community-based study of both quantitative and qualitative information on the practice of early marriage and to examine its causes and consequences in the Amhara region of Ethiopia. It estimated the prevalence of early marriage in the region and examined its health, physiological, psychological, socioeconomic, and demographic consequences. A total of 1,700 households were surveyed, and all eligible females aged 12-49 were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. The qualitative information was collected through focus group discussions, in-depth-interviews with key informants, literature reviews, and personal observations.

The qualitative results reflect a significant decrease in the prevalence of early marriage in recent times, attributable to measures undertaken by woreda and kebele administrations, legal bodies, religious and other community leaders, kebele-level committees, teachers and students' clubs, the police, youth and women's associations, and the Office of Women's Affairs. The increase in premarital sex is also considered a strong social influence that is changing many traditional patterns. Based on the findings of the study, the authors make a number of recommendations to reduce the practice of early marriage including: programs designed specifically to reduce early marriage; working with women's associations, the Office of Women's Affairs, community organizations, religious and community leaders, influential community members and schools; and working directly with young girls to teach them their rights; strengthening the collaboration between law enforcement, community leaders, women and youth associations, parents, and schools; and providing additional focused training for community-based reproductive health agents.

October 2015

The Effects of Traditional and Religious Practices of Child Marriage on Africa's Socio-Economic Development

APPENDIX B: TOOLKITS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Several UN agencies, NGOs, religious institutions, foundations, among others, have issued reports and convened conferences among religious and traditional leaders concerning child marriage with meaningful results. These include:

In 2014, the Ghana Department of Gender under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in collaboration with the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs and UNFPA, conducted workshops for Queen Mothers and other stakeholders to raise awareness on issue of child marriage and its harmful effects on the health of girls. The sessions brought together queen mothers from 10-regions across the country.

Although Queen Mothers have existed in Southern Ghana and other African countries since pre-colonial time, recently their role and power have expanded dramatically. In addition to promoting traditions that encourage social cohesion and peace in their communities, they have become strong advocates on issues such as girls' education, FGM, domestic violence and child marriages. And they are developing new communication skills to network with other Queen Mothers. Over the past few years, Queen Mothers have started networking with other queens and cultural leaders across Africa, creating a powerful movement of women leaders. In 2014, 40 Queen Mothers from 16 African countries met for an unprecedented conference in Uganda. Their meeting led to the creation of an association of African Queen Mothers and resolutions on eradicating FGM and child marriages. Similar gatherings are planned in Ghana and Uganda.

In 2014, UNFPA and UNAIDS coordinated *A Call to Action: Faith for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights, the Post-2015 Development Agenda.* It resulted in a statement by religious leaders with participants from the following AU members: Egypt, Ghana, Malawi, South Africa, Tunisia and Zimbabwe. (FN) Retrieved from: http://www.unfpa.org/news/religious-leaders-call-action-sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-reproductive-rights-un

A key excerpts from the statement:

> *Not in our name should any mother die while giving birth. Not in our name should any girl, boy, woman or man be abused, violated, or killed. Not in our name should a*

girl child be deprived of her education, be married, be harmed or abused. Not in our name should anyone be denied access to basic health care, nor should a child or an adolescent be denied knowledge of and care for her/his body. Not in our name should any person be denied their human rights.

In 2014, The West Africa Civil Society Forum published *Curbing Early Marriage in West Africa: A Tool Kit for Civil Society* developed under a grant from the Ford Foundation in English and French. It describes itself this way:

> *This toolkit was developed to contribute substantially to the advocacy efforts of various stakeholders, including the main religions practiced in the region: Christianity, Islam and traditional worship. It includes chapters on key topics, including sections on religion and tradition, with background information, facts, inspirational quotes, useful tips and exercises for groups of various sizes.*

In 2014, WACSOF also released A Regional Strategy on Curbing Early Marriage in West Africa (in English and French) and a four-part series, Early Marriage in West Africa. The regional strategy includes a section, "Key Action Area 2: Changing mindsets, norms and attitudes," which states:

> *The practice of early marriage is deeply rooted in cultures and traditions of the people. The ability of women and girls to attain their life potential is often shaped by various cultural beliefs and interpretations. Early marriage is a harmful traditional practice; however, those who practice it may see it as a way of preserving their cultures and family norms. Therefore, understanding gender roles and stereotypes prevalent in the areas of intervention is essential to changing people's mindset and attitudes. Working with strategic groups [including religious and traditional leaders] in communities, civil society can promote change in mindsets, attitudes and social norms to protect the rights of girls and discourage the practice of early marriage.*

The four-part series includes fact sheets, notes from policy dialogues, charts and special reports on rural Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Zambia.

In 2014, The African Women's Development and Communications Network - FEMNET in partnership with the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU, *Riksforbundet For Sexuell Upplysning*) undertook a research related to establishing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls in Tharaka Nithi, Kenya. Retrieved from: http://www.share-netinternational.org/publication/ handbook-religious-and-cultural-leaders-engaging-communities-end-female-genital

One of the key outcomes was *A Handbook for Religious and Cultural Leaders Engaging Communities to End Female Genital Mutilation.* This publication is part of a behaviour change communications tool intended to expand the engagement of men in religious and cultural institutions to reach out to their communities to eradicate FGM in Meru and Tharaka. The handbook clarifies some of the common myths and misconceptions that perpetuation FGM. It opens space for dialogue between religious groups, traditional leaders and members of the community and promotes alternative rite of passage as strategies to ending child marriage.

In 2013, Channels of Hope: Igniting a Movement to Transform Communities released a program of World Vision. Retreived from: http://www.wvi.org/health/publication/channels-hope

As outlined in their outreach materials:

Recent research recognises the unique, critical role of the church and other faith-based groups in development work. Accordingly, there is growing interest amongst governments and secular groups to work with faith communities. Organisations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the European Union, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the United Kingdom Department for International Development all openly work with faith-based groups on development issues.

Faith leaders are uniquely placed to protect the rights and meet the needs of the most vulnerable in their communities. They have profoundly deep, trusted relationships and links with their communities and often dictate which behaviours are prescribed or prohibited. With their widespread influence they can motivate changes in thinking, foster dialogue, set priorities for their communities, ensure increasing competency in their congregations to meet community needs and mobilise their congregations to do so. Especially in fragile contexts, they have a further reach than non-governmental organisations and even governments.

Channels of Hope (CoH) is the way World Vision mobilises community leaders—especially faith leaders-- to respond to core issues affecting their communities—such as HIV and AIDS, maternal and child health, gender equity and gender-based violence, and child protection. Channels of Hope is more than just training or education. It is life transformation. Training is designed to move the heart, inform the mind and motivate a sustained and effective response to significant issues. Faith leaders trained by CoH become active participants in their communities and are committed to identify and support the most vulnerable in their communities. They mobilise their own congregations and seek to strengthen existing community structures. If community support structures do not exist, these leaders often mobilise and launch community coalitions, also known as Community Care Coalitions or Community Child-focused Coalitions (CCCs), which are groups of community volunteers committed to identify and support the most vulnerable children and adults in their communities.

In 2013, the Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty published *The Faith Effect: Equipping Faith Leaders to Empower Girls in Ethiopia and Nigeria:*

Over an 18-month period, the Center for Interfaith Action (CIFA) engaged religious leaders in Ethiopia and Nigeria to change attitudes and behaviors surrounding the issues of early marriage (EM) and female genital cutting (FGC). Through interfaith models and toolkits, created from CIFA's in-depth formative research in these two countries, religious leaders have been empowered as advocates for stopping these harmful

practices. The percentage of faith leaders involved in this project who opposed early marriage and FGC more than doubled as a result of the intervention.

Early in the project, baseline surveys in favor of eliminating EM and FGC were at 32 percent and 40 percent respectively, and most of the faith leaders represented in the samples were doing nothing to prevent their communities from engaging in these harmful practices. By the end of the project, 80 to 100 percent of the faith leaders involved in both countries were willing to use the tools, and 93-100 percent of the faith leaders in Ethiopia who had been trained, equipped and deployed were actively engaging their congregations to halt these practices a month later.

Shift in attitudes: On child marriage, faith leaders in Ethiopia moved from a 40 percent baseline to 93-100 percent favorable (Muslim-Christian) to delaying marriage until the age of 18. Nigeria's baseline was 25 percent on early marriage; follow-up in focus group discussions indicated that 80 percent of faith leaders would be willing to use the tools developed.

This project developed a video, two toolkits and facilitators' guides as described below. The Nike Foundation funded the project.

In 2013, the Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty issued *The Faith Effect: How We Change Tradition.* This is a 6-minute video explaining the research and findings from Nigeria and Ethiopia. These are a part of the Restoring Dignity Campaign, a global initiative dedicated to engaging faith-based organizations, religious leaders, communities and individuals of faith for common action to end violence against women. Retrieved from: http://www.religionsforpeaceinternational.org/who-we-are/cifa-rfp

Additional toolkits include:

Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty *Early Marriage and Female Genital Cutting - Ethiopian Orthodox Church Faith Leader Toolkit.*

Retrieved from: http://www.religionsforpeace.org/publications/early-marriage-and-female-genital-cutting-ethiopian-orthodox-church-faith-leader

Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty. *Early Marriage and Female Genital Cutting - Muslim Faith Leader Toolkit.* http://www.religionsforpeace.org/publications/early-marriage-and-female-genital-cutting-muslim-faith-leader-toolkit

The following are companion guides for the above:

Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty *Early Marriage and Female Genital Cutting - A Facilitators Manual to Train Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Faith Leaders.* Retrieved from: http://www.religionsforpeaceinternational.org/sites/default/files/pubications/Ethiopia - EOTC Faith Leader Training Manual.pdf

Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty, *Early Marriage and Female Genital Cutting: Muslim Faith Leader Training Manual* - Retrieved from: http://www.religionsforpeaceinternational.org/publications/early-marriage-and-fgc-muslim-faith-leader-training-manual

In 2011, the Population Council published *From Research, to Program Design, to Implementation Programming for Rural Girls in Ethiopia: A Toolkit for Practitioners* - Retrieved from: http://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2011PGY_EthiopiaGirlsProgramToolkit.pdf

The toolkit is meant for those seeking to build or improve programs for rural adolescent girls in Ethiopia. It describes a process of program development that is grounded firmly in an evidence base. Therefore, chapters in the tool kit begin at a starting point of *research* to identify and describe girls, followed by *program development* emanating from data, to *implementation* guided by ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The toolkit is organized in three chapters: 1: RESEARCH: Identify & describe. 2: PROGRAM DESIGN: Shaping the approach and 3: IMPLEMENTATION: Keep your ear to the ground and take a bird's eye view. The final chapter suggests methods for monitoring implementation of programs that include both closer monitoring of beneficiary and stakeholder perceptions using qualitative techniques, as well as broader examination of patterns and trends in utilization.

Throughout this toolkit, the authors attempt to keep recommendations simple, practical and do-able. Rather than present long lists of exhaustive information, we prefer to distil the most important recommendations or features needed to promote evidence-based program design for girls in Ethiopia. As such, the recommendations are not exhaustive, but represent basic, good program design and practice in our setting.

In 2010, UNICEF and Religions for Peace issued a guide, *From Commitment to Action: What Religious Communities Can Do to Eliminate Violence Against Children.* Retrieved from: http://www.unicef.org/eapro/UNICEF_Religions_for_Peace_Feb2010.pdf

With input from religious leaders and child protection specialists, UNICEF and Religions for Peace developed this guide as a tool to support religious communities' work to promote child rights and to prevent and respond to rights violations, in particular violence against children. The guide points out that harmful traditional practices include female genital mutilation/cutting, branding and tattooing, child marriage and female infanticide.

The guide is intended to:

- Provide a general overview of the nature and scope of violence against children that can be used for informational and educational purposes;

- Highlight the positive roles that religious communities can and do play in advocating for and contributing to the protection of children from violence;

- Stress the benefits of inter-religious coordination and collaboration in promoting children's rights; and

- Guide discussion, planning and action around child protection issues within religious communities and in larger social settings.

The guide is divided into eight sections. Following the introduction, section two provides topical background. Sections three and four provide brief overviews of violence against children and children's rights. Section five discusses children, religion and spirituality. Section six addresses the role of religious communities in addressing violence against children, and section seven discusses the importance of engagement with key stakeholders. Section eight is the conclusion.

With input from religious leaders and child protection specialists, UNICEF and Religions for Peace developed this guide as a tool to support religious communities' work to promote child rights and to prevent and respond to rights violations, in particular violence against children. The guide points out that harmful traditional practices include female genital mutilation/cutting, branding and tattooing, child marriage and female infanticide.

In 2006, Pathfinder International, EGLDAM and the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) formed partnerships to raise awareness on early marriage and other harmful traditional practices as violations of girls and women's rights. Advocacy workshops were held to train judicial bodies and law enforcement agencies, as well as religious leaders from Orthodox Christian, Muslim, Catholic and Protestant faiths. Over an 18-month period, the partners succeeded in preventing or annulling over 14,000 early marriages in Amhara and Tigray. Church leaders developed and signed statements of action condemning early marriage and other harmful traditional practices. Retrieved from: http://www.pathfinder.org/publications-tools/pdfs/Creating-Partnerships-to-Prevent-Early-Marriage-in-the-Amhara-Region.pdf

October 2015