



## **FINAL REPORT**

# **PRELIMINARY RESEARCH INTO THE EXTENT, FACTORS AND EFFECTS OF CHILD MARRIAGE RESEARCH IN ZAMBIA, ZIMBABWE AND MALAWI**

### **Research Team:**

Principal Investigator: Dr Brian Pazvakavambwa, MBChB, MPH

Assistant Researcher: Ms Carole Wanjau, LL. M (Harvard Law)

### **Funding Agency**

VSO RHAISA, Celtis Plaza, South Wing, 1085 Francis Baard, Hatfield, Pretoria.

**FEBRUARY 2015**



**Norad**



## List of Acronyms

SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
WHO	World Health Organization
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
SW	Sex Workers
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
US\$	United States Dollar
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas
RHAISA	Regional HIV and AIDS Initiative for Southern Africa
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CBO	Community Based Organization
CRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination on All Forms of Discrimination against Women
YMG	Young Married Girls
RH	Reproductive health (RH)
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UNCRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNFPA	United Nations Populations Fund

## Definition/Glossary

- ***Child bride***: marriage of a person below the age of 18 years, the same as child marriage
- ***Child marriage***: marriage of a person below the age of 18 years.
- ***Early marriage***: the same as children marriage, being marriage of a person below the age of 18 years

## Table of Contents

### Contents

List of Acronyms .....	i
Definition/Glossary .....	ii
Table of Contents .....	iii
1. Introduction.....	2
1.1. Background and Rationale.....	2
2. Objectives of the study.....	3
3. Methods.....	3
4. Findings.....	4
4.1. The scale of child marriage.....	4
4.1.1. The Global state of the child marriage.....	4
4.1.2. National and sub-national distribution of child marriage in the 3 study countries ..	5
4.1.2.1. Child marriage in Zimbabwe .....	5
4.1.2.2. Child marriage in Malawi .....	6
4.1.2.3. Child marriage in Zambia .....	7
4.2. Drivers of child marriage .....	7
4.2.1. Child marriage drivers in general .....	7
4.2.1.1. Gender inequality .....	8
4.2.1.2. Poverty.....	8
4.2.1.3. Traditional and cultural practices .....	9
4.2.1.4. Laws and legal protection .....	9
4.2.2. Country-specific drivers of child marriage in the 3 study countries.....	9
4.2.2.1. Child marriage drivers in Zimbabwe .....	10
4.2.2.2. Drivers of child marriage in Malawi.....	11
4.2.2.3. Drivers of Child Marriage in Zambia .....	14
4.3. Consequences of child marriage .....	16
4.3.1. General consequences of child marriage .....	17
4.3.1.1. Violence, abuse and forced sexual relations .....	17
4.3.1.2. Illiteracy and lack of education .....	17
4.3.1.3. Sexual and reproductive health .....	18
4.3.1.4. Poverty.....	19
4.4. Responses to combat child marriage .....	19
4.4.1. Global and Regional responses to combat child marriage.....	19
4.4.2. Country responses to combat child marriage.....	21
4.4.2.1. Zimbabwe response to combat child marriage .....	21
4.4.2.2. Zambia response to combat child marriage .....	23

4.4.2.3. Malawi response to combat child marriage .....	24
5. Recommendations.....	25
5.1. General recommendations to countries in Southern Africa.....	25
5.1.1. Development and implementation of national action plans to end child marriage	25
5.1.2. Empower girls to mitigate against child marriage .....	25
5.1.3. Community mobilization against child marriage.....	25
5.1.4. Provision of services to mitigate against child marriage .....	26
5.1.5. Advocacy for countries to address the problem of child marriage .....	26
5.1.5. Enabling legal and policy environment .....	26
5.2. Country specific recommendations .....	26
5.2.1. Zimbabwe Recommendations.....	26
5.2.1.1. Capacity building of law enforcement officers .....	26
5.2.1.2. Awareness raising on child marriage .....	26
5.2.1.3. Protection of SRH rights.....	27
5.2.1.4. Promotion of gender equality and rights.....	27
5.2.1.5. Enactment of a law to criminalize child marriage, harmonization of laws and enforcement of existing laws.....	27
5.2.1.6. Provision of health and psychosocial services .....	27
5.2.2. Zambia Recommendations.....	27
5.2.2.1. Community mobilization through awareness-raising campaigns.....	27
5.2.2.2. Provision of economic opportunities.....	27
5.2.2.3. Addressing gender biases .....	28
5.2.2.4. Enforcement of the law .....	28
5.2.2.5. Promoting education for girls .....	28
5.2.2.6. Provide support for girls who are in early marriage .....	28
5.2.2.7. Further research should be carried out on impact of early marriage .....	28
5.2.2.8. Harmonize customary and common laws .....	28
5.2.3. Malawi Recommendations.....	28
5.2.3.1. Improve girl's economic standing .....	29
5.2.3.2. Fast track implementation of the new law raising minimum age of marriage.....	29
5.2.3.3. Promoting education for girls .....	29
5.2.3.4. Community mobilization on child marriage .....	29
5.2.3.5. Provision of health and psychosocial services .....	29
5.2.3.6. Further research on child marriage .....	29

## **FOREWORD**

The African Union Commission (AUC) formulated and adopted in 2005 the Continental Policy Framework for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and adopted in 2006 the Maputo Plan of Action (MPoA) 2007 - 2010 for its operationalization. The Maputo Plan of Action seeks to provide SRH services in Africa and some of the challenges that its implementation is facing is child marriage. This problem was also identified by UNESCO and other partners in East and Southern Africa. In December 2013, Ministers of Education and Ministers of Health from 20 East and Southern Africa (ESA) countries affirmed and endorsed their joint commitment to deliver Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Sexual Reproductive Health services for young people. The ESA commitments also stipulate that countries in Eastern and Southern Africa must commit to end child marriages and gender based violence. Countries committed to identify child marriage 'hot spots' and use the laws and existing policies to protect the rights of girls and young women.

VSO RHAISA, in her new strategy 2015-2020 has SRHR as one of her priorities and thus in 2014 through funding from SWEDEN and NORAD commissioned a research to investigate the extent and factors that cause child marriages in three countries southern Africa. The research seek to explore the impact of child marriage, the causes of child marriage, the legal framework age of marriage and the responses to reduce child marriage in Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

The research was widely disseminated at the Annual RHAISA conference in 2014 to more than 90 delegates from Malawi, Sierra Leon, South Africa, Ethiopia, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Zambia and Mozambique. The research is also useful to shape and influence the Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health flagship framework for Africa. It is also influencing the design of country specific interventions (Signature packages) by VSO.

It is my hope that this research will continue to be used as an advocacy tool to stop the problem of child marriages, in Africa and the world. There is great need to allow girls to be children and to complete their education to ultimately live healthy lives and contribute to the economic development of their countries. I wish to thank, SWEDEN and NORAD for the funding of this research as part of the Gender Project, the consultants (Dr Brian Pazvakavambwa and Ms Carole Wanjau) who did a sterling job to deliver this product and the VSO staff and directors of three countries where the research was conducted .Their support and commitments to this work is greatly appreciated. Finally, a big thank you to all that contributed to the knowledge and this paper through their insights and participation in the study.

**Bongai Mundeta**

VSO RHAISA Director

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background and Rationale

Every year, an estimated 15 million girls aged under 18 are married worldwide with little or no say in the matter. Child marriage, also known as early marriage, is defined as “Any marriage carried out below the age of 18 years, before the girl is physically, physiologically, and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and childbearing.” Marriage is a formalized, binding partnership between consenting adults, which sanctions sexual relations and gives legitimacy to any offspring. It is still a respected and valued social institution throughout the world, and may take different forms in different cultures.

Child marriage, on the other hand, involves either one or both spouses being children and may take place with or without formal registration, and under civil, religious or customary laws. However, when one spouse is female, this tends to have more negative impact, and therefore the emphasis on child marriages tends to focus on the girl child. In many societies in developing countries, child marriages are used to build or strengthen alliances between families. Sometimes this may even include the betrothals of young children or babies. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that marriage should be “entered only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.” But, in the majority of child marriages, there is often an element of coercion involved: parents, guardians or families pressurize, collude or force children into marriage. Today girls are still socialized into accepting child marriage as the norm, a ‘given’, and many give their consent as a duty and sign of respect. However, where one of the parties in a marriage is under 18 years, consent to marry in such cases cannot always be assumed to be of ‘free and full consent’ and may also not always be in the best interest of the child.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a child as “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.” The expert body that monitors the Convention on the Elimination on All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in its General Recommendation 21, which explicitly deals with equality in marriage and family relations, outlaws child marriage, and stipulates 18 years as the minimum age for marriage for males and females. This is the minimum age when young people attain “full maturity and capacity to act.” This acknowledges that, from a child rights and equity perspective, marriage should not be permissible before 18 years of age. Although an adolescent girl may attain sexual maturity early, she will often not be physically mature enough to conceive a child, nor will she be cognitively or psychologically mature enough for marriage and the related responsibilities of being a wife and a mother.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Ending Child Marriage, a guide for global policy action ,UNPA,IPPF, The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS,2007

Child marriage as a social construct, ruptures childhood and exposes YMG's to early sexuality, pregnancy and childbearing, and has severe health and social consequences generally denying girls their rights. Marriage and childbearing ends childhood abruptly, thus most initiatives have focused on preventing child marriage mainly by rescuing, education and other reproductive health (RH) programmes. Interventions have thus overlooked the reality that many more girls still escape the rescue net and get trapped into marriage. They ignore the reality that individuals interact in the wider society, and it is these interactions that shape behaviour. Additionally, failure to recognise that these aspects are historically patterned and internalized through socialization processes, these efforts have not been without constraints. They also fail to acknowledge that girls who marry remain girls and children, by the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) definition of below age 18, and that their unique situations require attention (Bruce, 2005; Erulka and Ayuka, 2007; De Boeck and Honwana, 2005; Giddens, 1979; Oudenhoven and Wazir, 2006).

This first part for this research work will seek to add to the body of knowledge regarding child marriage as it relates to health and legal protection outcomes and further understanding of the specific impacts of fragility on the practice of child marriage in the three countries.

The research will guide VSO RHAISA, SADC, the national governments, Child rights advocates in fighting and combating child marriage and teenage pregnancy in the three study countries (Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi) in particular, but also in the SADC region, the rest of sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

## **2. Objectives of the study**

The main objective of the research is to explore the extent of child marriage in the selected countries. The research will explore factors contributing to child marriage including legal issues, its health and social impact on the lives of child brides and their families as well as offer recommendations to address and reduce child marriages. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- Assess the drivers of child marriage including levels and trends in the selected countries.
- Assess the factors contributing to child marriage in the selected countries including cultural, religious and social factors.
- Explore the social, educational and health effects of child marriage on the lives of child brides and their families
- Assess the existing legal provisions and policies that facilitate and mitigate against child marriage.
- Define recommendations to mitigate against child marriage

## **3. Methods**



This first part of the study is mainly based on a review of the literature to identify existing knowledge and research gaps relating to child marriage. Secondary data from a review of available documents including government and NGO/CBO reports in health and education, legal documents, and other published and unpublished reports was also used. In-depth interviews were done with select key informants using semi-structured interview guides in each country.

The countries included in the study were selected based on the following criteria:

- High levels of child marriage
- Interest and capacity in VSO country offices to support research and follow up recommendations
- Priority for Swedish, DFID and SADC
- Where possible to be representative of a wider category of countries

The 3 countries that were initially selected based on the above criteria were: Zambia, Lesotho and Malawi. However, due to current political challenges in Lesotho at the planned time of the study, the country was replaced by Zimbabwe. The final countries for the study are therefore Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi.

The key informants interviewed in this first part of this study included Parliamentarians who attended the VSO RHAISA Parliamentary Round Table in Johannesburg in December 2014. Other key informants were purposively selected by the local VSO offices, and included Parliamentarians, Government representations from various Ministries and other Policy makers at national level and representatives of the UN, Internal Organizations, NGOs, CBOs and other organizations working on issues of child marriage.

There were not ethical issues because no data on specific individuals was collected.

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1. The scale of child marriage**

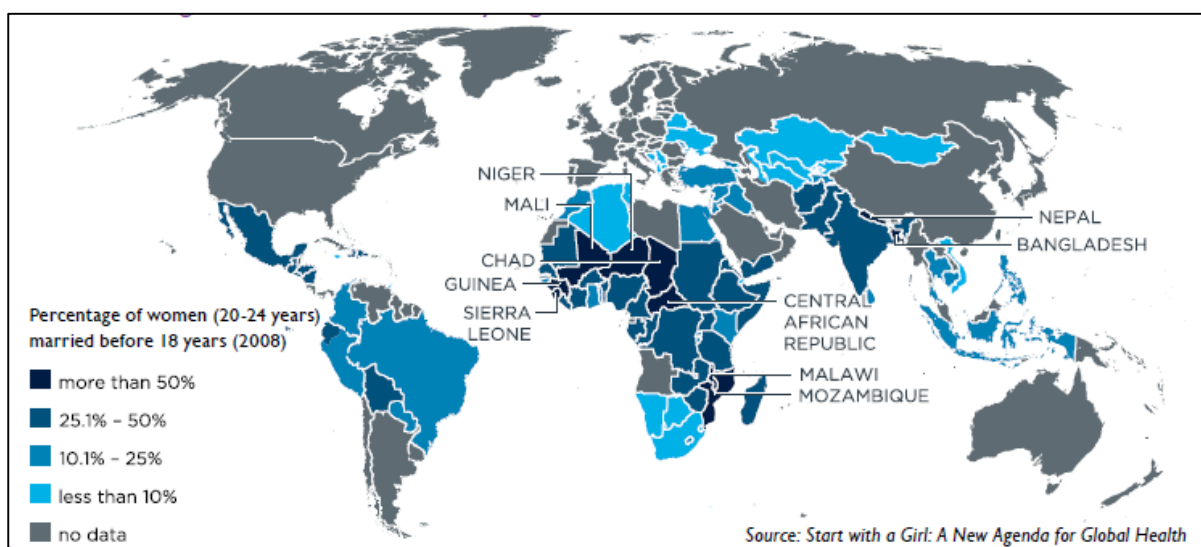
#### **4.1.1. The Global state of the child marriage**

Globally, approximately 15 million girls are married before they turn 18 years of age each year. Over 700 million women alive today were married as children. It is estimated that if

nothing is done, by the end of the decade as many as 142 million girls will be married as children.<sup>2</sup>

According to the UNICEF 2015 State of the World's Children, Sub-Saharan Africa has a very high level of child marriage, at 40% of women 20–24 years old who were first married or in union before they were 18 years old, only second to Asia with a level of 45%. Within Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa have a lower level at 37% than West and Central Africa at 42%.<sup>3</sup>

**Fig 1. Prevalence of early marriage around the world**<sup>4</sup>



Source: PMNCH Knowledge Summary 22 – Reaching child brides. The Partnership for Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health, 2012

Although Southern Africa's population of 112 million is only about 1.6% of the global population, 1 in 5 countries with the highest rate of child marriage are found in Southern Africa. These are, with ranking and child marriage rate in parenthesis: Malawi (9<sup>th</sup>, 50%), Mozambique (10<sup>th</sup>, 48%) and Zambia (15<sup>th</sup>, 42%) and Madagascar (18<sup>th</sup>, 41%). Zimbabwe ranks below this group with a child marriage rate of 31%.

#### **4.1.2. National and sub-national distribution of child marriage in the 3 study countries**

##### **4.1.2.1. Child marriage in Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe is one of the countries where child marriage prevalence has been declining over the last few years. The rate has declined from 34% in 2006 to 31% in 2011 (UNFPA Child Marriage Profile).

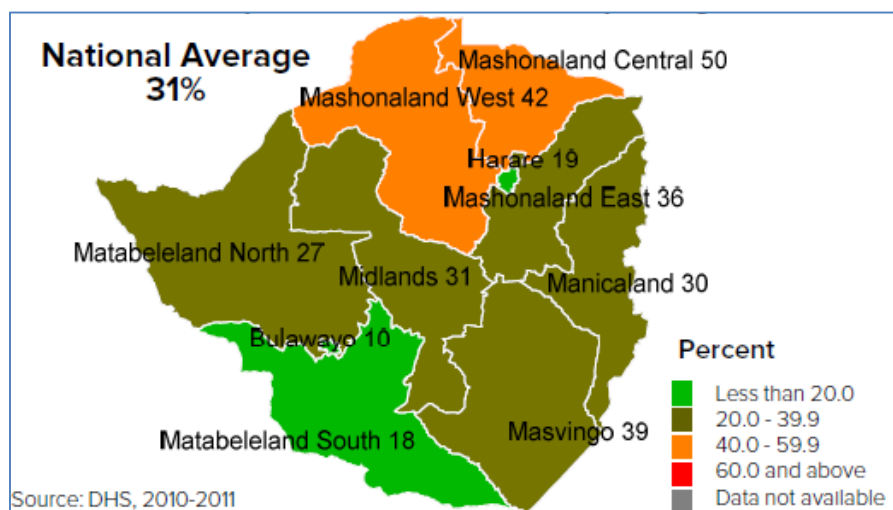
<sup>2</sup> <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/where-does-it-happen/>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.childinfo.org/files/PFC2012\\_A\\_report\\_card\\_on\\_adolescents.pdf](http://www.childinfo.org/files/PFC2012_A_report_card_on_adolescents.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> PMNCH Knowledge Summary 22 – Reaching child brides. The Partnership for Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health, 2012

The regional distribution of child marriage is variable across the country, ranging from the highest rate of 50% in Mashonaland Central, to the lowest rate of 10% in Bulawayo.<sup>5</sup>

**Fig 2. Percentage of 20-24 year old females married by the age of 18 in Malawi**



*Source: UNFPA Child Marriage Profile*

#### **4.1.2.2. Child marriage in Malawi**

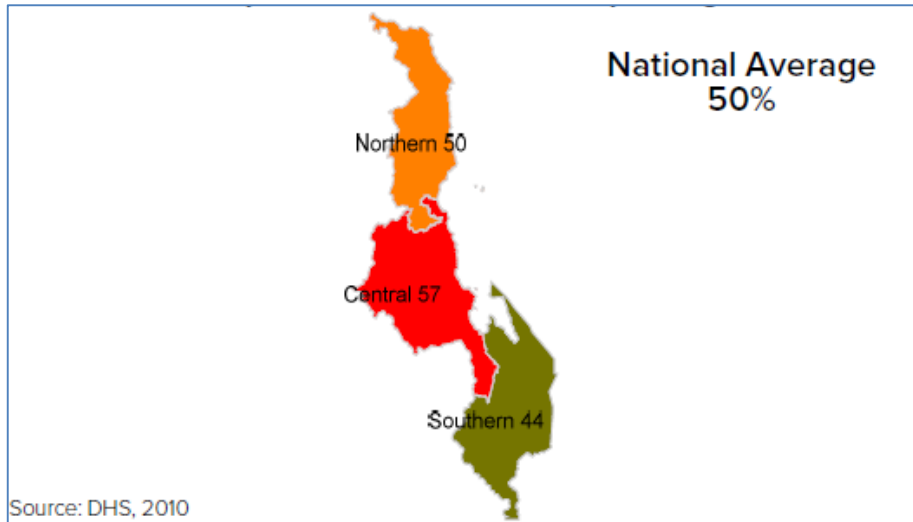
In 2010, Malawi had the highest rate of child marriage in Southern Africa. The rate ranges from a high of 57% in the Central Region, to a low of 44% in the Southern Region. The map below shows the distribution of child marriage by region.

The rate of child marriage is more than 7 times higher among girls compared to boys (50% girls vs 6.4% boys). Twelve percent of women are before they are 15 compared to only 1.2 percent of men<sup>i</sup>. There has been little change in child marriage prevalence since 2000 when it was estimated at 47 percent.<sup>ii</sup>.

**Fig 3. Percentage of 20-24 year old females married by the age of 18 in Malawi**

<sup>5</sup>

<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Zimbabwe/MDGR%202012final%20draft%208.pdf>

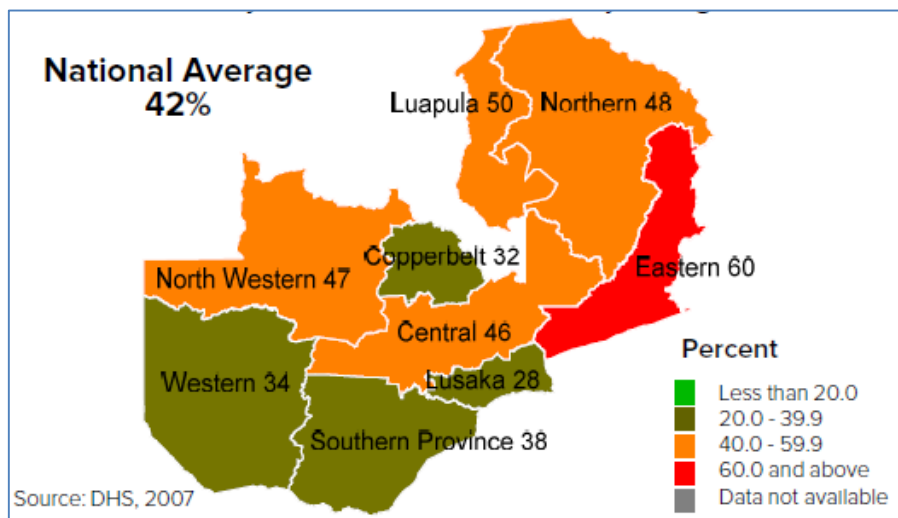


*Source: UNFPA Child Marriage Profile*

#### 4.1.2.3. Child marriage in Zambia

The Zambia child marriage rate is among one of the highest in the world, and it has not changed much since 2002. The rate ranges from a high of 60% in the Eastern Region to a low of 32% in the Copperbelt.

**Fig 4. Percentage of 20-24 year old females married by the age of 18 in Zambia**



*Source: UNFPA Child Marriage Profile*

## 4.2. Drivers of child marriage

### 4.2.1. Child marriage drivers in general

Causes of child marriage are complex, interrelated and dependent on the unique country contexts. The driving factors include gender inequality, poverty, harmful traditional and/or

religious practices, absence or weak enforcement of laws, and the pressure caused by conflict and natural disasters.<sup>6</sup>

#### **4.2.1.1. Gender inequality**

As a result of social and cultural traditions, attitudes and beliefs that deny women and girls their rights to have an equal role in homes and communities, women and girls continue to occupy a lower status than men in many societies. Though gender roles differ between different societies, cultures and generations, gender norms in sub-Saharan Africa have generally disadvantaged women of all ages. In many Africa societies, the home is seen as the place for young women, and this is compounded by the fact that they are also seen to have a low status within the household and community because they are young. Many communities do not see the value of educating girls since they are expected to leave once they are married, which is worsened by the perception in many societies that girls do not have the same skills or capabilities as their male peer. This contributes to the view in many societies that marriage is the best way to secure a girl's wellbeing. Furthermore many countries with high rates of early marriage also have unequal laws of consent for boys and girls. A global review carried out in 2010 comparing legal age of marriage between boys and girls found that 158 countries had 18 years as the minimum legal age for marriage for women without parental consent or approval by a pertinent authority, compared to 180 countries for males.<sup>7</sup> In 146 countries, state or customary law allows girls younger than 18 to marry with the consent of parents or other authorities, with the corresponding number for boys being 105. In 52 countries, girls under the age of 15 can marry with parental consent compared to almost half (23) for boys.<sup>8</sup> The lack of gender equality in the law's treatment of the issue of consent reinforces social norms that imply that it is somehow acceptable for girls to marry earlier than boys. Social norms and customs may further dictate that once a girl is married, she be regarded as a woman, regardless of her age. Finally, in many patriarchal customary laws and traditions, women and girls are given less negotiating power around issues of marriage, sexual and reproductive health and rights issues compared to men of the same age.

#### **4.2.1.2. Poverty**

Child marriage is most common in the world's poorest countries, and in those countries, tends to be highest among the poorest households<sup>9</sup>. It impacts on household decision-making and may result in girls being viewed as an economic burden. The perception of a low potential of girls to earn an income combined with the high cost of raising children results in girls being married off as a solution. For many families in chronic poverty, marriage often seems like the best way to safeguard girls' futures and lighten their economic burden. Many families also believe that this would give them the opportunity to take care of the other siblings, especially boys. Some studies have also found that some girls agree to early

---

<sup>6</sup> Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls' Education 2011

<sup>7</sup> Marrying too young:: End Child Marriage. UNFPA 2012

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Population Division, Department for Economic and Social Affairs, 2011, Population Facts No. 2011/1, UNPD-DESA, New York.

<sup>9</sup> ICRW, Child Marriage and Poverty: <http://icrw.org/files/images/Child-Marriage-Fact-Sheet-Poverty.pdf>

marriage because they believe it would help improve their own economic situation and that of their family, in addition to increasing their social status.<sup>10</sup>

#### **4.2.1.3. Traditional and cultural practices**

Negative social and religious norms also perpetuate and can help to justify child marriages. Child marriage can therefore be seen as a safeguard against premarital sex, and the duty to protect the girl from sexual harassment and violence is transferred from father to husband. This is becoming more common in Southern Africa with the high level of defilement and rape, and studies have found that parents may prefer to marry off their children early to ensure they are married as virgins. Girls may be married off early to older men in the belief that a husband would provide a safeguard against ‘immoral’ or ‘inappropriate’ behaviour.<sup>11</sup> In situations where girls become pregnant through consensual sex or rape, to avoid stigma, families may view the girls’ rights and wellbeing as secondary to the preservation of family ‘honour’. Early marriage can also be as a means of consolidating relations between families or appeasement or compensation for a wrong done to one family, tribe or clan, by another. Bride-price systems, common in Southern Africa, in which gifts or money change hands in exchange for a bride, can offer powerful financial incentives for families to push girls into early marriage.<sup>12</sup> Finally, some traditional societies believe that once girls reach menarche or puberty, they are sexually mature and ready for marriage.

#### **4.2.1.4. Laws and legal protection**

In many countries, young people still do not have legal protection from early marriage. Some countries even in Southern Africa have legal ages of marriage as low as 14 years old, and some countries still allow marriage of girls below the age of 18 years with parental consent. Furthermore, in many countries, girls who have been married will often find it difficult to dissolve their marriages as legal systems are not designed to meet their needs. Even in countries with the requisite laws to protect girls from marriage, failure to enforce legislation, especially in remote rural areas, means that girls do not get the protection they need. General awareness of the laws may also be very poor in some countries, and families may not even be aware that in marrying their daughters they are breaking the law or some may believe that that customary law overrides common law.<sup>13</sup> In some countries, child marriage is so common and prosecutions seldom brought, such that there is a general belief that such marriages are acceptable and penalties are unlikely.

#### **4.2.2. Country-specific drivers of child marriage in the 3 study countries**

Drivers of child marriage in the three countries are not expected to differ a lot from what has been described above. However, since child marriage drivers are very interrelated and very much depend on contexts, there will be peculiarities and specificities in the countries that were explored.

---

<sup>10</sup> Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls’ Education 2011

<sup>11</sup> Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls’ Education 2011

<sup>12</sup> Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls’ Education 2011

<sup>13</sup> Plan Egypt (2010), “Baseline Report of the Targeted Villages in the Early Marriage Grant-Funded Project”.

#### **4.2.2.1. Child marriage drivers in Zimbabwe**

In addition to the drivers of children marriage that are similar the world over, there are some context specific drivers in Zimbabwe and even the common ones have their own peculiarities as they are seen in the country.

##### *4.2.2.1.1. Poverty*

As a result of the high levels of unemployment, Zimbabwe has a high level of income and food insecurity, with many urban families depending on casual work, remittances and petty trading. Rural families rely on agriculture for survival, which has itself been affected by persistent droughts. An example is the case of Somerby settlement near Snake Part in Harare reported by the Zimbabwe Herald in 2011, where girls aged between 10 and 15 are reported to be forced into marriage by their parents owing to poverty.<sup>14</sup> In food insecure areas like Chiredzi, just as reported Somerby, many child marriages are said to be related to poverty, with parents needing the bride price of a daughter to feed, clothe, educate, and house the rest of the family, with families believing they are “securing her future”.<sup>15 16</sup> Therefore, though child marriage may be seen as a way to escape the cycle of poverty, child marriage in fact worsens the cycle of intergenerational poverty and lack of opportunity, but also reinforces the subordinated nature of communities that traditionally serve the powerful classes by giving a girl child in marriage to an older male.

##### *4.2.2.1.2. Laws*

Zimbabwe has ratified the majority of international human rights commitments, and has put in place laws that protect girls from child marriage. However, the major challenge is the implementation of those laws, largely because of the conflict of the laws in place. The Marriage Act (Act 22/2001) defines 16 years as the minimum age of marriage for girls while it gives 18 years for boys while the Children’s Act (Act 14/2002) defines a child as anyone under the age of 16. The Customary Marriages Act (Act 23/2004) on the other hand does not give a minimum age of marriage at all<sup>17</sup>. However, the watershed Domestic Violence Act (Act 14/2006) makes child marriage and child pledging illegal. By defining a child as anyone under the age of 18 years, the Zimbabwe Constitution (2013) is supposed to have cleared this confusion. As the Zimbabwe Constitution is the supreme law of the land, it should override all laws that are not in line with it, but unfortunately the other laws have not been reviewed and aligned to it, resulting in girls not being protected from child marriage and its negative effects.

##### *4.2.2.1.3. Gender and discriminatory practices*

In Zimbabwe, it is traditionally accepted that if a man has intercourse with a girl and/or impregnates her, he must marry her. It is also common for the girl who comes home late,

---

<sup>14</sup> (<http://www.herald.co.zw/early-marriages-not-a-solution-to-poverty/>)

<sup>15</sup> Responsive approaches to ending child marriage in Zimbabwe baseline study, 2014. Plan Zimbabwe

<sup>16</sup> Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) 2014. Let them Grow first: Early Marriage in Goromonzi, Zimbabwe

<sup>17</sup> Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA), <http://www.zwla.co.zw/index.php/component/k2/item/15-proin-luctus-luctus?Itemid=228>, accessed on 27 February 2015

especially when suspected to have been with a boy or man, to be sent back to the boy or man that she was with, in some cases regardless of whether she actually had sexual intercourse with him. For the sake of family harmony or its r “honour”, it is reported that some families force perpetrators of rape, statutory or otherwise, to marry the minor in order for him to escape prosecution<sup>18</sup>, thus facilitating child marriage.

#### *4.2.2.1.4. Education and Low Retention of Girls in Schools*

Related to the above is the problem of teenage pregnancy. Though Zimbabwe has made major progress towards gender parity, with girl indicators for school attendance being higher than boys (primary school attendance rate of 94% for girls vs 93% for boys, and secondary school attendance rate of 63% for girls vs 52% for boys), the secondary out of school rate is 21.9%.<sup>19</sup> There are therefore many adolescents not attending school, and many of them are likely to engage sex, for various reasons such as the economic benefit, experimenting or just plain promiscuity. Generally families in the country value marriage such that when a young girl falls pregnant she is married off if the father of the child accepts responsibility, and teenage pregnancies are therefore one of the drivers for early marriage.

#### *4.2.2.1.5. Religious practices*

With regards to religion in Zimbabwe, one of the largest growing religious groups are the “vapostori” sects, who members are estimated to number 1.2 million members.<sup>20</sup> These sects strongly believe in polygamy and discourage education especially of girls. Child marriage is reported to be very prevalent among the various sects of these “vapostori”, and it is very likely that the rise of these sects is an important driver of child marriage.

#### *4.2.2.1.6. Traditional practices*

There also some cultural practices that encourage child marriage. These include sexual play between a girl and her sister’s husband (*chiramu*), appeasement for murder by the giving of a virgin to the aggrieved family (*kuripa ngozi*), giving the young sister of a diseased woman as a wife replacement to the widower (*chimutsa maphihwa*). Though these practices are illegal in the country, they are still very prevalent in many areas and girls are largely powerless to challenge them<sup>21</sup>.

### **4.2.2.2. Drivers of child marriage in Malawi**

The most common reasons for the high child marriage prevalence in Malawi include poverty, teenage pregnancy, tradition and culture and lack of adequate education and employment opportunities. These factors are all interlinked and heightened by a lack of strong judicial and government policy framework to ensure that existing laws designed to prevent and address child marriage are enforced. However, recently in February 2015, the

---

<sup>18</sup> Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) 2014. Let them Grow first: Early Marriage in Goromonzi, Zimbabwe

<sup>19</sup> Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014, Key Findings. Harare, Zimbabwe, 2014. Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT)

<sup>20</sup> Responsive approaches to ending child marriage in Zimbabwe, 2014. Plan Zimbabwe

<sup>21</sup> Assessment of the situation of girls in Zimbabwe, 2011, Plan Zimbabwe



country's parliament unanimously passed the "Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Bill" that raises the minimum age of marriage to 18 years and criminalizes child marriage. It law imposes a 10-year prison sentence on those who defy the ban, and will bring Malawi in line with international standards on child marriage.

#### 4.2.2.2.1. Poverty

Many poor families in Malawi view young girls as a financial burden, prompting them to marry their daughters off as soon as they can. Girls themselves see marriage as a way out of poverty. Due to limited economic resources and opportunities, some families also see their daughters as a monetary asset. Countrywide, some poor families marry off daughters to get money to meet basic needs such as food, and sometimes to get dowry or continued support by their daughter's husband. In addition, because of poverty, many girls engage in transactional sex, a commonly accepted practice in Malawi. A practice known as *kupimbira* in Karonga or its equivalent *kapawila* in Chitipa is practiced largely in the northern part of Malawi and is a form of debt repayment in which a girl is given to wealthy old men for marriage as payment for their parents' debts.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4.2.2.2.2. Traditional and cultural practices

In addition to the traditional practices that related to poverty, there are other traditional and cultural practices in in the country which directly encourage early sex and child marriage. Some of the practices among the Yao in the southern part of the country include *kusasa fumbi* , a sexual ritual that young girls who have just gone through *chinamwali* , a puberty rite of passage, especially the *nsondo* rite of passage, the first puberty rite, may be subjected to. The young girls, often between 12 (or even 10) and 15 years, who have undergone the puberty rite, may be "encouraged" to have sexual debut with a male older than her, to "clear the dust" or to "dust off", after which she is a considered mature women<sup>23</sup>. A related practice in the same community is called *fisi* where a male adult has sexual intercourse with newly initiated girls<sup>24</sup>. In some cases, parents even pay these adult men, also known as "hyenas," to have sex with their daughters — who are discouraged from using condoms because of cultural beliefs<sup>25</sup>. A key informant from FAWEMA, an organization working to end Child Marriage in Malawi, also reported that especially along the lakeshore areas of Mangochi and Nkata Bay, where there is a lot of tourism activity girls as young as 12/13 years old engage in transactional sex after going through the rites of passage of *chinamwali*. When the girls get pregnant as result of the teenage sex, many commonly end up being forced into child marriage. Another practice is called *kutomera* where children get into pre-arranged marriages. Sometimes parents also force girls to have

---

<sup>22</sup> MHRC, "Cultural Practices and their Impact on the Enjoyment of Human Rights, Particularly the Rights of Women and Children in Malawi," p. 25

<sup>23</sup> MHRC, "Cultural Practices and their Impact on the Enjoyment of Human Rights, Particularly the Rights of Women and Children in Malawi," p. 25

<sup>24</sup> Multiple and Concurrent Sexual Partnerships in Malawi: A Formative Qualitative Study Multiple and Concurrent Sexual Partnerships in Malawi. Prepared for Research to Prevention (R2P) by The Summit Consulting Group, Wiseman Chijere Chirwa and Steven Chizimbi, 2009

<sup>25</sup> Ending Child Marriage, the Malawian way: Taming the Hyena. By Mary Uneje.

<https://lawyersalert.wordpress.com/2015/02/25/ending-child-marriage-the-malawian-way-taming-the-hyena/>  
Accessed 27 February 2015

sex with men to get money or food.<sup>26</sup> Because of poor knowledge of sexuality and contraception, as well as lack of power to negotiate safer sex with the men, many girls end up becoming pregnant and being forced into marriage. Another cultural practice is bride kidnapping called *Mpenjele Kuno*,<sup>27</sup> which happens when families cannot attract the wives and daughters-in-law they want, either because they lack sufficient social standing or are unable to afford the bride-price, they resort to abducting them. Once a girl has been kidnapped, even if returned to her family she will be less desirable to other potential husbands and will often have no choice but to marry the man who has kidnapped, abused and often raped her. Often, in areas where kidnapping is prevalent, families will marry off their daughters early because they fear that if they wait, their daughters are more likely to be kidnapped.

#### 4.2.2.2.3. Societal and peer pressure

Societal pressure or peer pressure is also an issue. Girls who are over 20 years and not going to school and not married are scorned or made fun of by their peers and the community in general, and they are called *mahure* (prostitutes) and are not respected<sup>28</sup>. Some key informants informed the research team that married people are held in high esteem and they have a high status in Malawi, and therefore many girls want to be respected in the communities and often end of being married young. Being called “Mrs.” is very significant in Malawi. Further the mothers of these child brides often pressure them to have children as grandmothers also have high respect in the community. A key informant at FAWEMA informed the research team that in one of the projects that they are implementing, they observed that when women go to the borehole to fetch water, women who are married and those who are pregnant or with babies are given priority to draw water.

#### 4.2.2.2.4. Educational factors

Disruption of education is a driver of child marriage in Malawi because girls are more likely to be withdrawn from school when families face financial constraints because of their low social status and the costs of educating them.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, the quality of education in Malawi is largely poor and few students move onto higher education or obtain employment when they complete their education.<sup>30</sup> As a result, many parents do not see the value of education, whereas children, mainly girls, are believed to contribute more meaningfully to the family’s income through petty trading, working in family farms, as well as through marriage when the family receive dowry and other benefits.<sup>31</sup> A representative from the Forum for Women Educationists in Malawi (FAWEMA) said: “Education is not attractive to girls. They see girls who finished school staying at home with no jobs and ask: Many girls therefore do not see a good reason for going to school. If they are not in school, they will

---

<sup>26</sup> See Stephenson R. et al., “Community Environments Shaping Transactional Sex among Sexually Active Men in Malawi, Nigeria, and Tanzania,” 2012, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23215551>.

<sup>27</sup> Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls’ Education 2011

<sup>28</sup> MHRC, “Cultural Practices and their Impact on the Enjoyment of Human Rights, Particularly the Rights of Women and Children in Malawi,” p. 25

<sup>29</sup> According to a government survey, in 2011 in primary and secondary schools, 15 percent of females (compared to 2.1 percent of males) dropped out of school because of marriage, and 7.7 percent of females (compared to 3.6 of males) left to help with house chores. NSO, “Integrated Household Survey 2010-2011,” p. 38.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> See Stephenson R et al., “Community environments shaping transactional sex among sexually active men in Malawi, Nigeria, and Tanzania,” 2012, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23215551>.

very likely get married". Studies have shown that girls who continue their education, especially until completing secondary school, are more likely to invest in their own children's education, enabling them to become economically independent and positive contributors to society.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, children of young and illiterate mothers tend to face the same cycle of childhood deprivation and abuse.<sup>33</sup> In Malawi, on average only 7 per cent of girls complete secondary school, compared with 15 per cent of boys. Girls face specific barriers to education. For example, many schools bathrooms lack privacy or adequate sanitation so girls tend to stay at home when they are menstruating — making them prone to falling behind and dropping out and thus resulting to early marriage. One of the causes of school dropout, especially at secondary school level is affordability. Secondary school education is not free, and many poor families prefer to send sons instead of daughters. The availability of secondary schools was therefore highlighted as one major issue, particularly in the rural areas, resulting in many children failing to proceed with their schooling, and many girls end up choosing marriage.

#### **4.2.2.3. Drivers of Child Marriage in Zambia**

Though the minimum age of marriage is 21 for boys and girls, the effectiveness of the law is hindered by inconsistencies with other laws and policies on children, and by the existence of a customary legal system that exists in parallel and allows girls to be married as soon as they have reached puberty. Other drivers of child marriage include poverty, traditional practices and lack of education.

##### **4.2.2.3.1. Poverty**

Poverty is one of the strong drivers of child marriage in Zambia. Many of these families, especially in the rural areas, do not have reasonable income that can act as a buffer for them rural families, a poor harvest, low market prices.<sup>34</sup> More than 75% of people live on less than \$2 a day. These difficulties press families to betroth their child, irrespective of her age. A bride price is the amount paid by the groom to the parents of a bride for them to consent to him marrying their daughter. The younger the bride, the higher the price she may fetch. This practice creates an economic incentive where girls are sought and married early by her family to the highest bidder.<sup>35</sup> Child marriages of girls are a way out of desperate economic conditions, or simply a source of income to the parents. Bride price is therefore a cause for child marriage. Even today in rural areas girls under 16 may be encouraged into marriage by their parents or grandparents or poor families struggling to feed themselves may marry off a girl shortly after she reaches puberty. Early marriage contracted under customary law, mainly a rural phenomenon, is linked to payment of a bride price, and as such is widely recognised as a coping strategy for the poor.<sup>36</sup> Young girls

---

<sup>32</sup> UNICEF, "The State of the World's Children," p. 64; UNICEF Innocenti Digest, "Early Marriage: Child Spouses," No. 7, March 2001, <http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/digest7e.pdf> p. 16.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Foundation for Better Health: Taking steps to stop child marriage. <http://www.fbhzambia.org/Campaign> Accessed 28 February 2015.

<sup>35</sup> Foundation for Better Health: Taking steps to stop child marriage. <http://www.fbhzambia.org/Campaign> Accessed 28 February 2015.

<sup>36</sup> Zambia Situation Analysis of Children and Women 2008. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2009

may also marry due to pressure from friends whilst others become pregnant but remain unmarried.<sup>37</sup>

#### 4.2.2.3.2. *Traditional and cultural factors*

There are areas in Zambia where initiation is still carried out as part of the rites of passage for pubertal girls. In some of these communities, girls are encouraged to indulge in sexual intercourse after initiation, which may result in teenage pregnancy and subsequently child marriage.<sup>38</sup> Marrying off young girls is also a tradition in some rural areas. In some of these communities, a girl child is perceived as a source of wealth, and would rather give the girl into marriage to raise funds for educating the boy child. Early marriage of girls is also closely linked to the payment of a bride price, called *malobolo*, and this is also known to expose the child brides to an increased risk of domestic violence including wife battering and marital rape.

Furthermore, there is continued administration of customary law by Local Courts throughout Zambia, which has wide-ranging implications on the status of women. Local courts are actually charged with the application of customary laws in relation to non-statutory marriages, divorce, reconciliation and payment of malobolo or lobola among other issues.<sup>39</sup> Customary law marriages are not valid unless a malobolo or lobola payment is made to the wife's family. If the payment of malobolo is not made within a certain time following the marriage, actions for elopement and for the payment of the outstanding malobolo can be begun at the local court. Customary law, as it is currently applied by local courts in Zambia, may lead to and perpetuate violence and other forms of discrimination against women. Early marriage is closely linked to the payment of bride price.<sup>40</sup>

One important impetus for marrying girls at an early age are beliefs in many rural communities that it helps prevent premarital sex.<sup>41</sup> Many societies prize virginity before marriage especially the Bemba culture and this can manifest in a number of practices designed to protect a girl from unsanctioned sexual activity.

#### 4.2.2.3.3. *Laws*

---

<sup>37</sup> Project Luangwa. Girl Issues in Rural Zambia. 2014.

<http://www.projectluangwa.org/sites/default/files/photos/Girls/girls%20and%20gender%20support2014%202.pdf> Accessed on 28 February 2015.

<sup>38</sup> Project Luangwa. Girl Issues in Rural Zambia. 2014.

<http://www.projectluangwa.org/sites/default/files/photos/Girls/girls%20and%20gender%20support2014%202.pdf> Accessed on 28 February 2015.

<sup>39</sup> Title: Child Marriage- a Fundamental violation of human rights: causes and health consequences. The Children In Need Network. <https://nataliecwright.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/chin-policy-brief-early-childhood-marriages.pdf> Accessed on 28 February 2015.

<sup>40</sup> Zambia Situation Analysis of Children and Women 2008. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2009

<sup>41</sup> Title: Child Marriage- a Fundamental violation of human rights: causes and health consequences. The Children In Need Network. <https://nataliecwright.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/chin-policy-brief-early-childhood-marriages.pdf> Accessed on 28 February 2015.

According to Zambian law, the minimum legal age for marriage is 18, but a person who is 16 or 17 years old can marry with parental consent.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the country is characterised by a dual legal system where written statutory law and unwritten customary law exist side by side. Whilst statutory law is based on English law, customary law is said to stem from traditions and customs that existed in Zambia before the country was colonized. Customary law is resorted to especially in the rural areas and varies from one ethnic group to another. It has a particular impact on issues relating to marriage, custody of children rights. It is this basis that child marriages have been common. Customary law contradicts national law and both Zambia's customary and national laws conflict with the UN CRC and the Children's Charter. To give an example, the Marriage Act states the legal age for marriage at 21 years of age, but allows for below this age with the consent of an adult. However according to the Act, a marriage between persons either of whom is under the age of sixteen years shall be void. In customary law, under which most early marriages take place, a child can be married when he/she reaches puberty.<sup>43</sup> The majority of people residing in rural areas give primacy to customary law in most parts of the country. This customary law is applied by Traditional Courts that are run by traditional leaders who are not acknowledged as part of the judicial system in the Zambian Constitution. Because of inaccessibility of the state system, many citizens are thus forced to turn to customary justice. And thus in many instances they rule in favour norms of the culture not what is internationally or nationally cherished as human rights issue, thus perpetuating child marriage.

#### 4.2.2.3.4. Educational factors

Child marriage is closely associated with no or low levels of schooling for girls. Poverty leads many families to withdraw their daughters from school and arrange marriage for them at a young age. These girls are denied the proven benefits of education, which include improved health, lower fertility, and increased economic productivity. Though there is paucity of data in the country for married children below 18 years of age, data available for married 15-19 year olds can be used as a proxy. A reanalysis of the data from the Zambia Demographic and Health Survey 2001–2002 (ZDHS 2001–02 ) found that more than two thirds of married girls aged 15-19 (68%) had not completed primary school, compared to 43 % among unmarried girls of the same age, and as much as six out of ten married girls aged 15–19 cannot read<sup>44</sup>. Early marriage of girls for financial gain is also common, especially in rural areas, and accounts for high levels of school drop outs. It is observed that although a number of girls are married off after getting pregnant and therefore having to leave school, some of them are forced into early marriages due to failure by their parents to pay for their education.<sup>45</sup>

### 4.3. Consequences of child marriage

---

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.violenceisnotourculture.org/content/zambia-early-marriage-tradition-violates-girls-rights#sthash.ZHJ0dL5z.dpuf> Accessed 29 February 2015

<sup>43</sup> Zambia Child rights gender profile, 2014. [http://say-zambia.org:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/253/1/ZGF\\_Child%20rights%20gender%20profile\\_2014.pdf](http://say-zambia.org:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/253/1/ZGF_Child%20rights%20gender%20profile_2014.pdf) Accessed on 28 February 2015.

<sup>44</sup> Zambia Demographic and Health Survey 2001–2002 (ZDHS 2001–02 )

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.lusakatimes.com/2012/06/13/poverty-leads-early-marriageslufwanyama-widow/> Accessed on 28 February 2015

Child marriage is one of the most prevalent forms of sexual exploitation of girls. Its consequences are much deeper than negatively affecting the child involved, but also has adverse effects on a country's economic, health and education sectors. The consequences are generally not country specific, though there are still some country peculiarities

Child marriage contributes to driving girls into a cycle of poverty, ill health, illiteracy and powerlessness. Girls married early are more likely to experience violence, abuse and forced sexual relations, reduced levels of sexual and reproductive health, and lower levels of education with corresponding high rates of illiteracy.

#### **4.3.1. General consequences of child marriage**

The persistence of child marriage has hindered Africa's efforts to achieve six of the eight Millennium Development Goals (to eliminate extreme poverty, to achieve universal primary education, to promote gender equality, to reduce child mortality, to improve maternal health, and to combat HIV/AIDS).

##### ***4.3.1.1. Violence, abuse and forced sexual relations***

Women who are married as children are more often married to older spouses, resulting in them having limited or no autonomy in addition to little decision making power. Lack of power in the relationship is often associated with high levels of violence in the marriage<sup>46</sup>. Child brides tend to experience higher levels of marital rape. They are likely than their peers married after 18 to be beaten or threatened, and often believe that their husband is justified to beating them.<sup>47</sup> The negative psychological impact on their lives is hard to quantify. They are often marginalised from society with few support systems, contributing to a lack of confidence and low self-esteem which in turn increases their powerlessness and vulnerability to poverty, resulting in them less likely to leave the abusive husbands.

Child marriage puts girls at risk of sexual, physical and psychological violence throughout their lives. Girls who marry as children are more likely to be beaten or threatened by their husbands than girls who marry later and are more likely to describe their first sexual experience as forced. As minors, child brides are rarely able to assert their wishes, such as whether to use family planning methods or practice safe sexual relations. Married girls can be particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

##### ***4.3.1.2. Illiteracy and lack of education***

Once a girl gets married, her new expected roles as wife and mother result in too many competing priorities for them to continue in school. Girls therefore tend to drop out of school because of the domestic and child rearing responsibilities. There is also evidence that school teachers and headmasters, as well as other parents in the community, are not willing to allow mothers back to school as there is a generally held belief that these mothers will be

---

<sup>46</sup> Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls' Education 2011

<sup>47</sup> Jenson, R. and R. Thornton (2003), 'Early Female Marriage in the Developing World', Gender and Development, Vol. 11, No. 2.

a bad influence on other girls in school.<sup>48</sup> The children of uneducated mothers who married young also tend not to attain high levels of education, thus perpetuating the vicious cycles of low literacy and limited livelihood opportunities. Low levels of literacy consequently result in reduced capacity to be gainfully employed or earn income. Child marriage therefore deprives society of the intellectual and economic contribution of girls and their offspring.

Child marriage denies girls their right to education. Millions of child brides drop out of school to devote their time to house chores and child rearing – if they were in school in the first place. Over 60% of child brides in developing countries have had no formal education<sup>2</sup>. In Malawi, nearly two thirds of women with no formal education were child brides compared to 5% of women who attended secondary school or higher levels of education<sup>3</sup>.

#### **4.3.1.3. Sexual and reproductive health**

Child marriage can have life-threatening health consequences for girls. Under pressure to become mothers soon after marriage, many child brides become pregnant before their bodies can safely carry or deliver children. Complications in pregnancy can put them at risk of injury, and even death, as girls who give birth under age 15 are five times more likely to die in childbirth than young women in their early 20s. Child brides are particularly vulnerable to injury in pregnancy or childbirth: 65% of all cases of obstetric fistula occur in girls under the age of 18.

Women who are married as children tend to have sexual and reproductive health that is significantly poorer than that of their unmarried counterparts. As they tend to have dropped out of school and thus have little or no schooling, they often have limited awareness of their rights and lack the knowledge and confidence to negotiate safer sex, including condom use. They also tend to be married to older men who have a higher chance of being HIV infected than younger men as they are more likely to be having unprotected sex with multiple and high risk partners, and this results in them being more likely to contract HIV than their unmarried counterparts.<sup>49</sup>(ICRW 2012). There is also tremendous pressure from their husbands and in-laws to produce, resulting in them getting pregnant when they are not physically, mentally and emotionally prepared for childbirth. Girls who marry early have their first children at a younger age, which contributes to pregnancy-related deaths and birth complications, which are the leading cause of mortality for girls aged between 15 and 19.<sup>50</sup> In comparison to girls 20-24 years old, girls aged between 15 and 19 are twice as likely to die of pregnancy and child birth complications while girls aged between 10 and 14 have a five times greater risk.<sup>51</sup> . Teenage mothers are twice more likely to have infant deaths as

---

<sup>48</sup> Building Skills for Life School Equality Scorecard feedback, 2013. Plan Zimbabwe

<sup>49</sup> Bruce, J. and S. Clark (2004), “The Implications of Early Marriage for HIV/AIDS Policy”, Brief based on background paper prepared for the WHO/UNFPA/Population Council Technical Consultation on Married Adolescents New York: Population Council.

<sup>50</sup> Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls’ Education 2011. Plan International

<sup>51</sup> Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls’ Education 2011. Plan International

older mothers.<sup>52</sup> The risk of obstructed labour resulting in obstetric fistula is much higher among girls.<sup>53</sup>

#### **4.3.1.4. Poverty**

It is paradoxical and very sad that families that push their daughters into child marriage believing they are helping them escape poverty and secure their economic future actually expose them to more of the same insecurity. Child marriage often marks the end of a girl's schooling and the beginning of a life at home. The girl will therefore have few opportunities to find work, and if she does, her lack of education means it will be poorly paid, making it almost impossible to break free from poverty. It also forces the child wives into a cycle of intergenerational poverty because they tend to have more children, be more dependent on a husband who may be more abusive, and thus have fewer independent income options. Divorce is also high among child wives, and they are usually left to fend for their families on their own, thus getting condemned to a life of financial and social insecurity which in turn perpetuates the feminization of poverty. Finally, the children of mothers with lower levels of education who live in poverty are more likely to be malnourished.

Child marriage has negative implications for Africa's economic prosperity and development. Because of child marriage, millions of girls miss the skills, knowledge and employment prospects that would enable them to lift their family out of poverty and contribute to their country's economic development and prosperity.

#### **4.4. Responses to combat child marriage**

##### **4.4.1. Global and Regional responses to combat child marriage**

In recent years, political leaders, civil society and the donor community have begun to recognise the importance of addressing child marriage in Africa. Civil society organisations across Africa are mobilising to prevent child marriage and support married girls. Civil society organisations across Africa address child marriage at the community, national and regional levels. Organisations across sectors such as health, education, poverty alleviation, and human rights, and humanitarian response are developing programmes to prevent child marriage and mitigate the effects of child marriage on child brides. Many of the most innovative programmes to address child marriage have been developed in Africa. Brought together by Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage, hundreds of NGOs across Africa and beyond share learnings on what works to end child marriage and work together on joint programmes and advocacy initiatives to address the practice.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> LeVine, R.A., S.E. LeVine, A. Richman, F. Uribe, C.Sunderland Correa, and P.M. Miller (1991), 'Women's Schooling and Child Care in the Demographic Transition: A Mexican Case Study', *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 17, No. 3.

<sup>53</sup> *Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls' Education 2011*. Plan International

<sup>54</sup> *Ending child marriage in Africa: A brief by Girls Not Brides. The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage.* <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/reports-and-publications/ending-child-marriage-africa-brief-girls-not-brides/> Accessed on 28 February 2015



The Africa Union has committed to addressing the problem of child marriage by launching the first-ever Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa.<sup>55</sup> The two-year campaign focuses on accelerating change across the continent by encouraging AU member states to develop strategies to raise awareness of and address the harmful impact of child marriage.<sup>56</sup> It has appointed a Special Rapporteur and a Goodwill Ambassador with a mandate exclusively focused on child marriage, a promising sign of African commitment. In April 2014, The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child adopted a declaration urging AU member states to set the minimum age for marriage at 18 years for both girls and boys without exception and to develop and implement holistic strategies to end child marriage.<sup>57</sup> The need to end child marriage and other harmful practices affecting women and girls is embedded in the Agenda 2063, the African Union's fifty-year vision for the development of the continent, which includes a commitment to mobilise a concerted drive towards immediately ending child marriages and other harmful cultural practises that discriminate against women and girls.

At the UN level, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 69/XX. Child, Early and Forced Marriage<sup>58</sup> on 21 November 2014 with the broad-based, cross-regional co-sponsorship of 116 countries, introduced and led by the Governments of Canada and Zambia. As UN resolutions are always important in setting global norms, this is a firm commitment from the international community to address child marriage. This is the first time that countries have agreed on the steps that they – and partners in international organizations and civil society – should be taking to address the problem, including, *inter alia*:

- Enact, enforce and uphold laws and policies to end the practice;
- Develop and implement holistic, comprehensive and coordinated responses and strategies in cooperation with stakeholders, including civil society; and
- Promote and protect the human rights of all women and girls, including their right to education and to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality.

The resolution also encourages continued UN action on the issue and specifically recognizes the need to include clear commitments to child, early and forced marriage in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

It is therefore heartening to note that global and regional momentum is building to the problem of child marriage.

---

<sup>55</sup> African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa. <http://pages.au.int/cecm> Accessed on 28 February 2015

<sup>56</sup> Ending child marriage in Africa: A brief by Girls Not Brides. The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage. <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/reports-and-publications/ending-child-marriage-africa-brief-girls-not-brides/> Accessed 28 February 2015

<sup>57</sup> [http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/sites/default/files/political\\_declarations/ACERWC-Declaration-on-Ending-Child-Marriage-in-Africa.pdf](http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/sites/default/files/political_declarations/ACERWC-Declaration-on-Ending-Child-Marriage-in-Africa.pdf) Accessed on 28 February 2015

<sup>58</sup> [girlsnotbrides.theideabureau.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/UNGA69-CEFM-Resolution\\_Draft-14-Nov2-Final.docx](http://girlsnotbrides.theideabureau.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/UNGA69-CEFM-Resolution_Draft-14-Nov2-Final.docx) Accessed 28 February 2015

The Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) and AWEPA co-hosted a Regional Parliamentary Dialogue on Child Marriage Laws, in cooperation with Plan and supported from the Dutch government, from 3 to 4 February 2015.<sup>59</sup>

The regional dialogue was part of the “No, I don’t” Programme, based on Plan’s 18+ Programme which has as an overall goal to contribute towards ending child marriage in the southern Africa region.

During the dialogue, a discussion on the issue of child marriage, the causes and driving forces behind it, its effects, consequences and overall impact took place. The aim was to sensitise the Members of SADC-PF about the issue of child marriage and its consequences and convince them to take action within their respective Parliament to condemn Child Marriage as a violation of the rights girls have regarding their health, education and childhood.

The Regional Parliamentary Dialogue on Child Marriage Laws brought together representatives from: the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF), SADC Secretariat; experts; parliamentarians from the following priority countries (Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe); and representatives from Plan and AWEPA.

#### **4.4.2. Country responses to combat child marriage**

In line with the UN and AU resolutions and commitment to action, a small yet growing number of governments are developing national strategies or other initiatives to end child marriage. Increased political will to curb child marriage is reflected in a growing number of government initiatives, with the government of Zambia’s action being one good practice in Southern Africa.

##### ***4.4.2.1. Zimbabwe response to combat child marriage***

The story of Makanaka Wakatama, a Zimbabwean child star who rose to stardom at the age of 9, and became a small television presenter for a kids programme, and later became the main anchor for the first Zimbabwean live television show for kids called Star Kids, and became very famous. In 2006, she made newspaper headlines after she was impregnated by a businessman and entered into an early marriage at 15 and gave birth to two children by the age of 17. Her story has resulted in intense debate in the country. Now at the age of 24, she

---

<sup>59</sup> SADC Regional Parliamentary Dialogue on Child Marriage Laws 3-4 February 2015. <http://www.awepa.org/news/sadc-regional-parliamentary-dialogue-child-marriage-laws/> Accessed on 1 March 2015

runs her own trust, the Makanaka Trust, aim at empowering girls in child marriages, and in particular those who have left their marriages. One of the main objectives of this Trust is to assist the girl child to return to formal education, acquire vocational skills, and where required, entrepreneurial training.<sup>60</sup> Her work as an activist to eliminate child marriage Zimbabwe is one of the country success stories.

Furthermore, there is a case before the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe, in which two teenage girls, who were married as children, are suing The Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, the Minister of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development and the Attorney General for the violation of their rights as they were married off as children.<sup>61</sup>

As a result of the work of activists like Makanaka, the work of a number partners, including Plan International, the Zimbabwe Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development is leading an initiative for the elimination of child marriage. It is working with The Zimbabwe National Chiefs' Council, which is now playing a pivotal role in protecting the rights of the girl child by preventing child marriage. The 40-member chiefs' body presented and signed a communiqué with Plan Zimbabwe and the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development as a sign of its commitment for the ongoing 18+ Ending Child Marriages project funded by Canada. The President of the Zimbabwe National Chiefs Council, Fortune Charumbira, said as advocates of cultural heritage, chiefs have noted with concern the increasing cases of child marriages in Zimbabwe's eight provinces. He was recently reported saying "As a council, we take a leading role in interventions aimed at ending early marriages".<sup>62</sup> . The Deputy Minister for Women's Affairs has been reported saying "My Ministry is looking forward to working closely with traditional leaders to enforce harsher community sanctions to perpetrators of child marriage,"

Plan Zimbabwe is implementing the 18+ Ending Child Marriages project in 3 Program Unit Areas, whose objectives are; to increase support from community members and leaders to discourage child marriage, to empower girls who to better equipped to resist socio-economic pressures that lead to child marriage and to ensure that community members have increased knowledge on the realities of child marriage.

In August, 2014, the Department of Child Sensitive Social Policies of the Women's University in Africa, with the support of UNICEF Zimbabwe and the Ministry of Health and Child Care ran a Capacity Building Workshop on Child Rights for Parliamentarians of Zimbabwe at Troutbeck Resort, Nyanga. The workshop was intended to build the capacity

---

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/columns-18417-Makanaka+Surviving+child+marriage+horror/columns.aspx>

<sup>61</sup> <http://m.learningenglish.voanews.com/a/zimbabwea-government-on-trial-over-child-marriage/2606314.html> Accessed on 1 March 2015.

<sup>62</sup> <https://plan-international.org/where-we-work/africa/zimbabwe/about-plan/news/zimbabwe-chiefs-take-lead-in-ending-child-marriage/> Accessed on 1 March 2015

of the Parliamentarians to perform their legislative and oversight functions in a child sensitive manner.

As a result of the high profile case by the two female teenagers before the Zimbabwe Constitutional Court, and the capacity building workshop for Parliamentarians carried out in 2014, during the second half of 2014, an MP introduced a motion on addressing the problem of child marriage in Zimbabwe. The motion was discussed in January 2015 by the Zimbabwe National Assembly, and is still under discussion for the criminalization of child marriage. The Parliamentarians' deliberation, which have been made public, clearly show that Zimbabwe Parliamentarians fully understand the gravity of the situation of child marriage in the country, including its causes and its negative impacts on the lives of the children and the country at large.<sup>63</sup> There is unanimous support for the motion and it is expected that it will be passed into law. In addition to this specific motion to criminalize child marriage, the Zimbabwe parliamentarians plan to harmonize marriage laws and laws relating to the legal age of consent.<sup>64</sup>

There is therefore good traction in the country of addressing child marriage with Parliament, various Government Department, civil society, International Organizations, local NGOs and CBOs, are working towards to elimination of child marriage in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.4.2.2. Zambia response to combat child marriage**

In 2013, the Government of Zambia launched a nation-wide campaign to end child marriage, spearheaded by the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, to draw attention to the harmful impact of child marriage and to encourage communities to delay marriage for their daughters. This is done in partnership with a number of civil society organizations that had earlier come together to form the Zambia Chapter of The Girls Not Brides, a global movement to end child marriages.<sup>65</sup> Members of movement include Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), Plan International, FAWEZA, Young Women in Action, Youth Alive Zambia, Children in Need, CAMFED and ZOCS.. The launch was officiated by Zambia's First Lady in Eastern Zambia, an area with the highest incidences of child, early and forced marriage. The launch took place in Paramount Chief Mpezeni's Chieftdom in a rural area. Since the launch was done most of the chiefs have banned child, early and forced marriages in their chieftdoms, for example Chief Kabamba of the Lala people in Serenje made a statement to the effect that he expects all parents and guardians to prioritize education of the girl child in his chieftdom. On September 2nd 2013 Senior Chief Chiwala of the Lamba people of Masaiti District engaged the Police Victim Support Unit (VSU) of the Zambia Police Service to sensitize his people in the chieftdom on early marriages, after saying that he was

---

<sup>63</sup> Parliament of Zimbabwe deliberations on Tuesday 3 February, 2015.

[http://www.ekowisa.org.zw/attachments/article/30/03\\_February\\_2015\\_41-11.pdf](http://www.ekowisa.org.zw/attachments/article/30/03_February_2015_41-11.pdf) Accessed on 1 March 2015.

<sup>64</sup> The IPU Resolution on Women's and Children's Health: An Initial Framework for Accountability Reporting. African Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). 2012. <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/mnch-account-e.pdf> Accessed on 1 March 2015.

<sup>65</sup> Zambia Child rights gender profile, 2014. [http://say-zambia.org:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/253/1/ZGF\\_Child%20rights%20gender%20profile\\_2014.pdf](http://say-zambia.org:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/253/1/ZGF_Child%20rights%20gender%20profile_2014.pdf) Accessed on 28 February 2015.

concerned about the increasing number of early marriages in his chiefdom. On 21st November 2013 the Post Newspaper reported that Chief Singani of the Tonga people in Choma District had retrieved young girls aged 12 and 13 from marriages and surrendered their parents to the police for encouraging early marriages.

The Government of Zambia is also taking steps to put child marriage at the forefront of the regional and international agenda. The country co-sponsored with Canada the UN General Assembly resolution on child, early and forced marriage. UNFPA, Zambia. <sup>66</sup>

The Government of Zambia has also recently enacted new legislation to ensure that all children with disabilities receive their human rights and other fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children, outlined Mr. Chibaula D. Silwamba, First Secretary for Press and Public Relations for the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zambia to the United Nations.

Introducing a number of interventions to ensure the elimination of early or forced marriages in the country Zambia's government has put in place the Re-entry Policy which seeks to give a second chance to girls that become pregnant so they can get back to school after they go through childbirth.

This program hopes to encourage girls to start and stay in school until they complete their secondary education, which according to development experts is vital in reducing high poverty levels. The Re-entry Policy was introduced through Zambia's Ministry of Education in 1997, but is now receiving a added push on all levels.

Improved re-entry rates back to school for girls who experienced early marriage and pregnancy did see a steady improvement from 2007 to 2010 from 17.6 percent in 2007 to 31.7 percent in 2010, according to the Zambian National Education Coalition. <sup>67</sup>

#### **4.4.2.3. Malawi response to combat child marriage**

Conflicting legislation makes the minimum age for marriage ambiguous in Malawi. The constitution sets 18 as the minimum age without consent, and persons between 15 and 18 may be married with parental consent. The constitution also maintains that the state is obliged to 'discourage' marriages where either party is under the age of 15.<sup>68</sup> This is in conflict with the common law Marriage Act, which states 21 as the minimum age for marriage.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> UNICEF, State of the World's Children, 2014

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.fes-zambia.org/media/publications/Education%20and%20Health.pdf> Accessed on 28 February 2015.

<sup>68</sup> United Nations Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Sixth periodic report of States parties, Malawi, CEDAW/C/MWI/6, Geneva, 2008, pg.10

<sup>69</sup> United Nations Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

The Ministry of Basic Education confirm during key informant interviews with the research team that the country has a readmission policy that allows girls who become pregnant while in school to return after giving birth, but it requires the pregnant girl to withdraw from school for one academic year before applying for readmission. However many girls do not return to school after having their babies. The Ministry of Basic Education has a National Girls Education Strategy which focuses in reducing child marriage and teen pregnancies in Malawi in collaboration with other NGOs working on similar issues. In line with this strategy, the country has put in place “Mother Groups”, formed by women community members from the school catchment area, who act as counsellors to girls and their parents on matters of sexuality, including child marriage. The Mother Groups are in all schools though their level of functionality is variable. Once the Group becomes aware of a girl who has dropped out of school due to marriage or pregnancy, they follow up with the family and chiefs to ensure that the girl returns to school. In the instance that she is pregnant they ensure that she is re-admitted once she has delivered. Working with the chiefs and traditional authorities is crucial as they are the custodians of culture and tradition in the communities. The implementation of this policy although very new has been hailed as very successful and the Ministry of Basic Education will be monitoring how the establishment of the mother groups will reduce child marriages in many communities in Malawi. The Ministry uses an EMIS statistics department that tracks a student throughout primary school using a number that they are allocated upon admission. This unique number is the students’ identification even when they transfer schools.

## **5. Recommendations**

### **5.1. General recommendations to countries in Southern Africa**

#### **5.1.1. Development and implementation of national action plans to end child marriage**

Governments, working with VSO RHAISA and SADC, with the support of civil society organisations, development partners and other actors, governments should develop and implement comprehensive and well-resourced action plans to end child marriage. VSO RHAISA

#### **5.1.2. Empower girls to mitigate against child marriage**

Government, civil society, international organizations, NGOs, CBO, civil society and other partners should empower girls to enable them to value themselves, to know and exercise their rights, to develop skills to support their own life plans and to have opportunities to connect with their peers and support one another. This can be done through programmes that equip girls with training, skills, information, as well as the provision of safe spaces and support networks. VSO RHAISA should work with SADC and other partners to scale up the national empowerment programs.

#### **5.1.3. Community mobilization against child marriage**

---

Discrimination against Women, Sixth periodic report of States parties, Malawi, CEDAW/C/MWI/6, Geneva, 2008, pg. 48.

Families and communities should be mobilized as agents of change by creating awareness of the harmful impact of child marriage, and of alternative roles for girls and women, so that families and communities prefer not to marry their daughters as children and so that they themselves take part in efforts to end child marriage.

#### **5.1.4. Provision of services to mitigate against child marriage**

Provide adequate health, education, justice and other services, to remove the structural barriers that push girls into child marriage and prevent them from accessing support within marriage. These services range from providing adolescent-friendly health services, to ensuring that schools are accessible and child friendly, and to providing safe spaces and other support services for married girls.

#### **5.1.5. Advocacy for countries to address the problem of child marriage**

VSO RHAISA to work with SADC, the AU and other regional bodies to advocate for countries to adequately address child marriage

#### **5.1.5. Enabling legal and policy environment**

Government, civil society, international organizations, NGOs, CBO, civil society and other partners should provide an enabling legal and policy framework, including legislation that sets 18 as the minimum age for marriage and remove legal loopholes related to parental consent or customary laws. This should include putting in place to protect women and girls' rights, including property rights, access to remedies, support for those wishing to leave a marriage, protection from violence, access to health services, etc. Systems for civil registration which record births and marriages should be strengthened. Government policy frameworks must define roles and dedicate resources across relevant ministries to expand opportunities for girls at risk and to support married girls.

### **5.2. Country specific recommendations**

#### **5.2.1. Zimbabwe Recommendations**

##### ***5.2.1.1. Capacity building of law enforcement officers***

Train key government officials, judiciary, law enforcement officers and policy makers, at all levels, on the law and related gender equity and human rights, with a particular emphasis on child marriage, to support the effective implementation and enforcement of the law and related policies.

##### ***5.2.1.2. Awareness raising on child marriage***

Support awareness raising and public education programmes about the negative effects of child marriage, and related human rights of girls and women, to help change attitudes, and strengthen duties of parents, guardians and the community to protect vulnerable girls.

### **5.2.1.3. Protection of SRH rights**

Promote and protect the sexual and reproductive health and rights of girls and young women, through legislation, availability of services and information and community outreach.

### **5.2.1.4. Promotion of gender equality and rights**

The government of Zimbabwe with partners to promote gender equality and the right of girls and young women to education and choice in marriage is important. The state must have an obligation under the Education Act to put in place mechanisms to ensure that all children are attending school. The Education Act recognises that all children have a fundamental right to education<sup>78</sup>. It should be an offence for parents or 'husbands' to keep children of school going age at home.

### **5.2.1.5. Enactment of a law to criminalize child marriage, harmonization of laws and enforcement of existing laws**

The Parliament of Zimbabwe to finalize the motion on criminalizing child marriage and put it into law. Parliament should also complete the harmonization of customary and common laws to be in line with the Constitution and the new law to ensure that girls are protected from child marriage. Government departments, law enforcement officers, community members and civil society should work towards the enforcement of existing laws and policies that prohibit early marriages. These could include capacity building of law enforcement agencies for them to more effectively discharge their duties.

### **5.2.1.6. Provision of health and psychosocial services**

The government, international organizations, NGOs and other partners should provide safe, comprehensive, age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health information and services. This would include services for young brides by providing adequate and accessible healthcare, psychosocial support, together with support for them to get out of marriage if possible.

## **5.2.2. Zambia Recommendations**

### **5.2.2.1. Community mobilization through awareness-raising campaigns**

Effectively mobilize the community to take up the issue of early marriage through involvement of influential people such as traditional, political and religious leaders. The use of Chiefs to lead the community mobilization and serving as role models should be expanded by providing support to Chiefs especially those in areas with high prevalence of child marriage. Peer groups of parents could be formed that would provide a forum for sharing experiences as well as promoting role models.

### **5.2.2.2. Provision of economic opportunities**



Address the economic factors that underlie early marriage, and provide jobs and other sources of income with a focus on adolescents and young women who are not in school in addition to married women. Daughters and parents are likely to become more interested in delaying marriage as they will have means to earn a living.

#### ***5.2.2.3. Addressing gender biases***

There is need to address societal norms that view girls as a burden if the practice is to be avoided. Traditions promoting early marriage need to be challenged.

#### ***5.2.2.4. Enforcement of the law***

Government departments, law enforcement officers, community members and civil society should work towards the enforcement of existing laws and policies that prohibit early marriages. These could include capacity building of law enforcement agencies for them to more effectively discharge their duties.

#### ***5.2.2.5. Promoting education for girls***

Initiatives and more emphasis should be place on the acceptance of education as a desirable activity for girls during their adolescent years in order to ensure increased school enrolment. The work of civil society organizations like CAMFED and FAWEZA to provide scholarships which can have an immediate effect in delaying marriage should be supported and encouraged. Government and communities should commit to getting girls to school on time and to keeping them in school through the secondary level as being in school during adolescence has important health and development benefits for girls.

#### ***5.2.2.6. Provide support for girls who are in early marriage***

Girls who are in child marriages should be supported through expanding their networks, providing information on reproductive health and HIV to them and their partners as well as promoting continued education. Those in early marriages who would like to get out of the relationships should be supported. This should include the development of social and economic programs for out-of-school girls, including non-formal education programs.

#### ***5.2.2.7. Further research should be carried out on impact of early marriage***

The country needs to conduct further research to explore the impact of early marriage. This should include exploring the dynamics such as the reasons why men prefer younger girls, in order to inform programming strategies.

#### ***5.2.2.8. Harmonize customary and common laws***

There is need to reconcile customary and common law. In cases of dispute between the two, the latter should prevail.

### **5.2.3. Malawi Recommendations**

#### **5.2.3.1. Improve girl's economic standing**

The government of Malawi, civil society, international organizations, NGOs, CBO, civil society and other partners should improve girls' economic standing, by increasing their economic opportunities, and by initiating incentive-based programmes to support girls to stay at school.

#### **5.2.3.2. Fast track implementation of the new law raising minimum age of marriage**

Government should work with partners to build the capacity of law enforcement agencies, mobilize communities on the new law and ensure the fast-tracked implementation of the new law raising minimum age of marriage to 18 years.

#### **5.2.3.3. Promoting education for girls**

More needs to be done to reduce drop out of girls from school and keeping them in school through the secondary level.

#### **5.2.3.4. Community mobilization on child marriage**

Parents, teachers and community leaders including the mothers groups should be involved in the dialogue about child marriage, in order to change attitudes and social norms. The government of Malawi working with international organizations, NGOs and partner must continue to raise awareness in communities about the dangers and restrictions to a girl's life incurred by child marriage.

#### **5.2.3.5. Provision of health and psychosocial services**

The government of Malawi, international organizations, NGOs and other partners should provide safe, comprehensive, age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health information and services should be accessible to all young girls in Malawi. Attention should also be paid to girls who are already married at a young age, by providing adequate and accessible healthcare, psychosocial support and, if necessary, a way out of the marriage.

#### **5.2.3.6. Further research on child marriage**

Further research is needed to improve disaggregated data collection, monitoring and evaluation of the drivers and consequences of child marriage by the government of Malawi in collaboration with international organizations, NGOs and other partners

---

<sup>i</sup> NSO and ICF Macro, "Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2010," p. 76.

<sup>ii</sup> UNFPA, "Profiles of 10 Countries with the Highest Rates of Child Marriage," undated, p. 8.