



Girls not Brides: Ending Child Marriage

Child Marriage happens across the world and is fueled by gender inequality, poverty, traditions and insecurity. Child brides face huge challenges because they are married as children.

1 in 5 girls is said to be married before the age of 18.

Child marriage is a truly global problem that cuts across countries, cultures, religions and ethnicities. More than 190 countries around the world have adopted the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and are committed to ending child marriage by 2030.

As a result of a decade of hard work campaigning to end child marriage, South Asia has witnessed the largest decline in child marriage in the last decade. A girl's risk of marrying before 18 has dropped from nearly 50% to 30% in the last ten years. Worldwide, there has been a 15% decrease in girls getting married since 2008.

These statistics are promising but 12 million girls still get married as children every year.

Since the criminalisation of forced marriage in Australia in 2013, there have been no successful prosecutions. There have been cases where other charges have been laid, but there are a number of barriers to prosecution for forced marriage, including:

- It is difficult to obtain evidence from other countries
- Victims are often reluctant to give evidence against family members
- Unlike other countries, such as the UK, Australia has no civil protection scheme available similar to an AVO or a watch-list order

What we can do at Club, Area and District level to help end child marriage:

- Expand the definition of domestic and family violence nationally to include forced marriage
- Advocate to introduce Forced Marriage Protection Orders
- Work together to de-link victim engagement and participation with law enforcement
- Research, discuss, and plan ongoing actions at club level

Similarly to the **Zonta Says NO to Violence Against Women** campaign, ending child marriage will require:

- Long term sustained effort
- Change to take place in communities
- Support by collective efforts at local, national and international levels

To find out more refer:

- Zonta International, <https://foundation.zonta.org/EndingChildMarriage>
- Zonta International, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-d0jcexfPU&feature=youtu.be>
- The Good Shepherd, <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/australia/>
- My Blue Sky, <https://www.mybluesky.org.au>
- Girls Not Brides, Theory of Change on Child Marriage

Something powerful happens when women connect.
Together we're stronger, clearer, and more inspired, able to expand what's possible.
District 23 Service and Advocacy 2019