




# CHILD MARRIAGE IN TANZANIA

# CHILD MARRIAGE

is a civil, traditional, religious or informal union where either the bride or groom is under the age of 18, often a young girl and an older man.






“I did not go to school as my father saw it as no use to take a girl to school, so after FGM I was married off. My father had taken dowry and thus forcing me to get married at the age of 12 years. My mother agreed with me that I was small, but she could not go against my father for fear of being beaten...”



“...I got married at 14 years with my own consent because of the hardship at home.”



“Parents decide their daughters should get married, since they are faced by a number of challenges like shortage of money to fulfill the daily basic needs of their family... Sometimes girls decide to get marriage due to the poor life that they are living and the belief that marriages rescue them from the difficulties of life.”

# THE STUDY

This study was conducted in 10 regions in Tanzania:

**SHINYANGA, TABORA, MARA, DODOMA, LINDI, MTWARA, MANYARA,  
COAST REGION, DAR ES SALAAM AND IRINGA**

Regions were selected based on how many child marriages had taken place in these regions in previous studies; five regions with many child marriages, three with an average rate of child marriages and two regions with few child marriages were selected for this study in order to make further comparisons.

## THE DATA COMPRISES A HOUSEHOLD SURVEY WITH



**3,299**

participants



**199**

interviews



**190**

group discussion  
participants

# THE PROBLEMS

1

Child marriage often involves a young girl and an older man. The girl is denied the right to select her own partner, she has limited power in the household and she is often **ABUSED**.

2

Child marriage leads girls to **DROP OUT OF SCHOOL** and, with no education, girls have little opportunity to earn money.

3

Children raised by young, uneducated mothers are likely to be poor themselves and therefore child marriage can **EXTEND THE CYCLE OF POVERTY**.

4

**LACK OF EDUCATION** and being unable to read means that many girls cannot find or understand information about sexual and reproductive health, such as family planning.

5

When girls start to have their babies early they have **LESS TIME TO LEARN AND DEVELOP** which may mean they are less able to support their children or contribute to their community.

6

Girls who are married young often get pregnant early and face a higher risk of **COMPLICATIONS DURING PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH**. For example, mothers aged 15–19 years are twice as likely to die during childbirth compared to mothers who are between 20 and 24.

7

The consequences of child marriage lead to **LOST OPPORTUNITIES** for the individual, the community and the country.

# THE RISKS

## FAMILY & COMMUNITY



**INCREASED POPULATION**



**LOSS OF 50% OF HUMAN RESOURCES (FEMALE) - WASTED OPPORTUNITIES**



**NO IMPROVEMENTS IN COMMUNITIES AND THE COUNTRY**



**MORE HEALTH COMPLICATIONS LEADING TO MORE COSTS**



**VICIOUS CYCLE OF POVERTY**

## GIRLS



**POVERTY**



**NO EDUCATION**



**NO SKILLS**



**NO JOB**



**POOR HEALTH**

**Child marriage is not only an issue for the individual girl — the entire country loses an opportunity for development!**

# WHERE DOES IT HAPPEN?

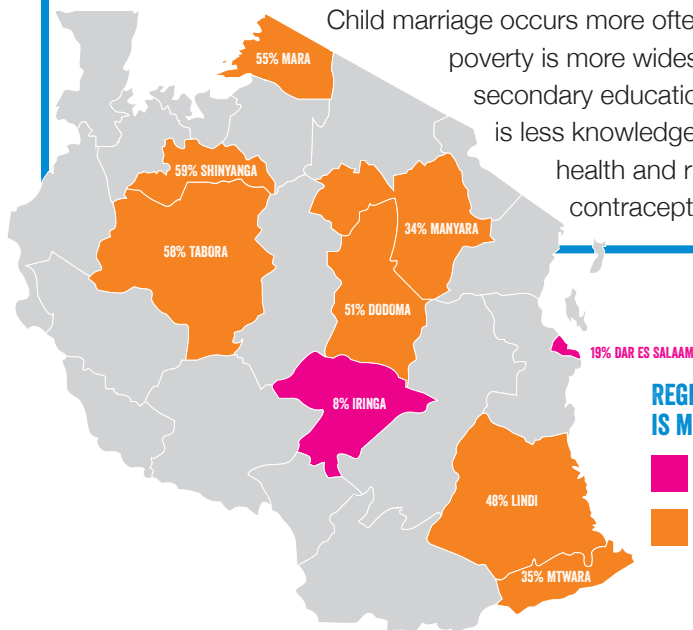


One girl out of 3 is married before the age of 18 and it is a problem all over Tanzania.

Child marriages are most common in the **SHINYANGA, TABORA, DODOMA** and **MARA** regions. For example, **MORE THAN HALF OF ALL GIRLS IN THESE REGIONS WERE MARRIED** before the age of 18.

In **IRINGA**, one in ten girls is married before the age of 18 and one in five is married before 18 in **DAR ES SALAAM**; these are the regions where child marriage is least common.

Child marriage occurs more often in **RURAL AREAS** where poverty is more widespread, access to secondary education is limited, and there is less knowledge of sexual reproductive health and rights, such as access to contraception, than in urban areas.



## REGIONS WHERE CHILD MARRIAGE IS MOST AND LEAST COMMON

- LOWEST AMOUNT OF CHILD MARRIAGE
- HIGHEST AMOUNT OF CHILD MARRIAGE

# WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?



The Law of Marriage Act is different for boys and girls: **IT ALLOWS GIRLS TO BE MARRIED AT 14 YEARS OLD** whereas boys have to be 18. Is this fair?



Girls are often raised to get married and have children, and **EDUCATION IS NOT VALUED AS IMPORTANT FOR THEM**, unlike boys who are expected to provide for the family.



**LACK OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES** and inaccessible schools cause parents to marry off their girls as children.



**POVERTY!** Parents marry their daughter to get a bride price from her husband's family. It also means that the girl's family will have one less mouth to feed.



Some **CULTURAL PRACTICES** such as initiation rites, traditional dances and female genital mutilation prepare girls for marriage as soon as they start puberty and once girls have gone through these rituals they are expected to get married.



**LACK OF AWARENESS** of sexual and reproductive health among girls and boys means that many teenage **GIRLS GET PREGNANT**. As a result they may be forced to marry the father of their child, even if they don't want to.

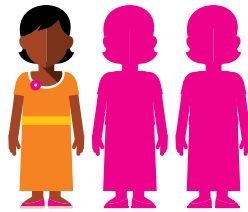


Some parents fear that girls will get pregnant before marriage and bring **"SHAME"** to the family, so they marry off their girls to **PROTECT THE FAMILY REPUTATION**.



# COULD IT HAPPEN TO SOMEONE I KNOW?

Yes, it could! 1/3 of girls in Tanzania is married before the age of 18!



Girls are more at risk than boys.

Girls from pastoralist families that value livestock highly are more at risk because cows are valued more than girls.

Girls in rural communities are more at risk than girls from urban areas.

Lack of school opportunities increases the risk of child marriage.

Girls from ethnic groups where initiation rites, female genital mutilation and traditional dances are widespread are more at risk because these practices often encourage child marriage.

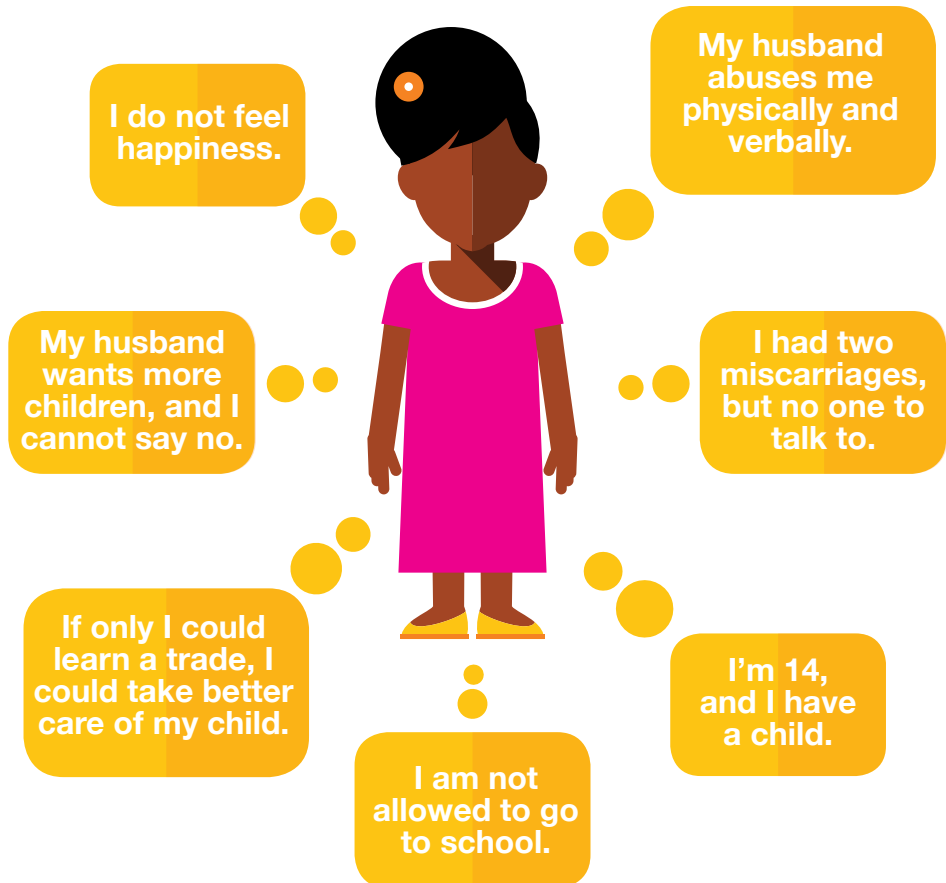
Teenage pregnancies increase the risk of child marriage and of health complications.

Girls are allowed to get married at the age of 15 whereas boys have to wait until they are 18. This is discriminatory and girls below 18 are not fully protected by the law.

Girls from poorer families are twice as likely to become child brides than girls from wealthier families.

# WHAT COULD HAPPEN TO HER?

The consequences of child marriage.



# WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY?

National and international agreements signed by Tanzania are against child marriage. A child is anyone below 18 years old!

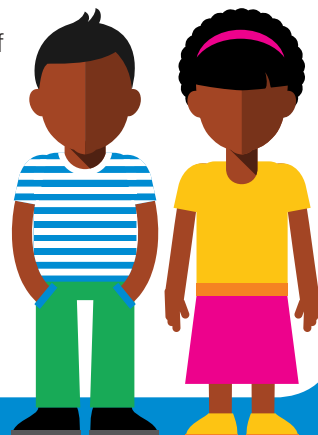
The UN convention on the Elimination of ALL Forms of Discrimination Against Women: **“ALL COUNTRIES SHOULD ESTABLISH A MINIMUM AGE FOR MARRIAGE AND MAKE CHILD MARRIAGE UNLAWFUL.”**

The convention on Consent to Marriage: “Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages oblige nations to institute a minimum age for marriage and **REGISTER ALL MARRIAGES.**”

Universal Declaration on Human Rights: **“A PERSON MUST BE OF FULL AGE WHEN ENTERING INTO MARRIAGE AND IT SHOULD BE ENTERED FREELY AND WITH FULL CONSENT.”**

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children prohibit child marriage and states that **EVERY CHILD SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO AN EDUCATION.**

The Tanzania Law of **THE CHILD ACT OF 2009** includes laws protecting children from child marriage including Sexual Offenses Special Provisions Act which defines **A CHILD AS SOMEONE UNDER 18.**



# HOW CAN CHILD MARRIAGE BE PREVENTED?



**SPEAK OUT! CHILD MARRIAGE HAS BAD CONSEQUENCES FOR GIRLS AND THE COMMUNITY.**



**EDUCATE AND EMPOWER GIRLS TO REFUSE CHILD MARRIAGE.**



**SUPPORT GIRLS TO GET AN EDUCATION! THEY CAN HELP SUPPORT THE FAMILY.**



**HIGHLIGHT THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF GIRLS TO EDUCATION AND TO CHOOSE THEIR PARTNER.**



**TEACH COMMUNITY MEMBERS, INCLUDING GIRLS AND BOYS, ABOUT SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING.**



**PROVIDE SAFE SPACES FOR GIRLS FLEEING CHILD MARRIAGE.**



**AMEND THE MARRIAGE LAW TO PROHIBIT ALL MARRIAGES OF CHILDREN, BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS, UNDER THE AGE OF 18.**



**PROSECUTE PEOPLE WHO PRACTICE CHILD MARRIAGE.**



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