

Produced by NOW on PBS with support from

Nike Foundation

UNITED NATIONS  
FOUNDATION



The Shana Alexander  
Foundation

# Child Brides

Stolen Lives

Action Kit for Teens and Young Adults

*"An inspiring story of the struggles and hopes of young girls  
around the world who are forced into early marriage."*

with Maria Hinojosa, Senior Correspondent, NOW on PBS



[pbs.org/childbrides](http://pbs.org/childbrides)

**thirteen**  
WNET NEW YORK  
[thirteen.org](http://thirteen.org)

# Action Kit for Young Adults For “Child Brides: Stolen Lives” NOW on PBS

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Background on Child Marriage .....	4
3. Fact Sheet.....	8
4. Glossary of Terms.....	10
5. Action Kit: Educate Ourselves.....	11
6. Action Kit: Advocacy in Our Community.....	13
7. Action Kit: Highlight Child Marriage as a Priority.....	15
a. Writing Letters.....	15
b. Making Art About Child Marriage.....	16
c. Join Campaigns to Address Child Marriage.....	16
d. Join Education Campaigns.....	16
e. Start a Girls Learn International Chapter.....	17
f. Talk About Child Marriage in Girl Scouts Troop.....	18
8. For more Information.....	19

### *Acknowledgements*

*The Action Kit and Facilitator’s Guide to accompany “Child Brides: Stolen Lives” were written by outreach consultant Alexandra C. Budabin. NOW on PBS is grateful to the experts from the Population Council who reviewed portions of each.*

# INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTION KIT

## Objectives:

- Give context to PBS/NOW Special Broadcast.
- Acquire additional information about the issue of child marriage.
- Explore issues of gender discrimination.
- Learn about community-based solutions.
- Understand the role of education.
- Gain confidence to share information and building leadership.
- Devise ways of making a difference.

After watching the film, you may wonder: What can be done about Child Marriage? How can I assist girls in vulnerable situations? This Action Kit was developed to help you take concrete steps towards addressing Child Marriage and make a difference in the lives of children around the world. Consider devoting part of the next few months to engaging in advocacy work to raise awareness and support efforts to stop Child Marriage.

**Advocacy** is the act of supporting an issue through active engagement. By becoming an advocate, you will serve as a spokesperson for millions of children unable to assert their human rights and direct your community in outreach, fundraising and other activities.

## ACTION KIT: EDUCATE OURSELVES

The first step in advocacy work is to become informed about the circumstances and consequences of Child Marriage in order to educate and mobilize others. As a spokesperson, understanding and evaluating the variety of solutions will be key. Review the Background on Child Marriage and Fact Sheets. To gather additional data on Child Marriage, visit the websites listed in the “For More Information” section.

## ACTION KIT: ADVOCACY IN OUR COMMUNITY

Now that you’ve become more knowledgeable on the subject Child Marriage, it is time to reach out into your school and build a larger community of support. Raise awareness about the prevalence and consequences of Child Marriage; disseminate facts and figures. Organize screenings and discussions of the documentary at school or in small settings. Plan an event for your fellow classmates and community members to raise funds to support the schools and programs featured in the documentary.

## ACTION KIT: HIGHLIGHT CHILD MARRIAGE AS A PRIORITY

Advocacy is essential to ensure that the issue of Child Marriage is given attention and support in government circles and international arenas. Write letters to encourage national and world leaders to highlight the issue of child marriage.

# Background on Child Marriage

## WHAT IS CHILD MARRIAGE?

- A marriage or union between two people where one or both of the partners is under the age of 18. (**The Convention on the Rights of the Child** defines children as people under the age of 18.)

## HOW MANY WOMEN ARE MARRIED AS CHILDREN?

- The Population Council estimates that 1/3 of girls in the **developing world** (excluding China) were married before the age of 18.
- The Population Council research indicates that 1 in 7 girls in the **developing world** (excluding China) will marry before they turn 15.
- If current patterns continue, up to 100 million girls will marry as children in the coming decade.

## WHAT ARE THE MOTIVATIONS FOR CHILD MARRIAGE?

- The reasons are mainly economic. Marriage in many communities brings money to the family in the form of **dowries** or **bridewealth**.
- Overwhelmingly, child marriage practices occur among the poor where educational and employment opportunities for girls are limited or non-existent.
- Families often believe marrying their daughters will protect her from premarital sex that may result in unintended pregnancies and **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)** and **HIV**.
- Parents may believe that other families may be better able to provide for their daughters.
- Socially, families may seek alliances through marriage.

## WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF EARLY MARRIAGE FOR A YOUNG BRIDE?

- Child marriage impinges on girls’ reproductive rights, right to work, and right to choose.
- Girls are often separated from their families, drop out of school, become socially isolated and receive limited support.
- New brides come under intense pressure to become pregnant and often face risky pregnancies. Early childbearing is linked to maternal mortality and a debilitating condition known as **obstetric fistula**.
- Girls who marry young often have husbands who are much older, with whom girls may have little in common and who are more likely to have **HIV** and other **STIs** from extra-marital relationships.
- Young married girls often *lack power* in their new household and are therefore susceptible to HIV and sexual violence. Girls face difficulty abstaining from intercourse, demanding condom use, and keeping husbands monogamous.

## *NOW “Child Brides: Stolen Lives” Action Kit for Teens and Young Adults*

### WHERE IS EARLY MARRIAGE PREVALENT?

- One in seven girls living in the developing world, excluding China, is married before she turns 18.
- While the practice has decreased globally over the last 30 years, it remains common in rural areas and among the poorest of the poor.
- In Southern Asia, 48% of girls, nearly 10 million, are married before the age of 18.
- In Africa, 42% of girls were married before turning 18.
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, 29% of girls are married by age 18.
- Some states in the United States permit marriage for teens as young as 14 who have parental consent.

### WHY IS CHILD MARRIAGE A CRITICAL HEALTH ISSUE?

- **Premature Pregnancy:** Child brides almost always bear children before they are physically – or emotionally – ready.
- **Maternal Mortality:** Girls younger than 15 are five times more likely to die during child birth or pregnancy than older women. Pregnancy-related deaths are the leading cause of mortality for girls aged 15 to 19 worldwide.
- **Infant Mortality:** Mortality rates for babies born to mothers under age 20 are almost 75% higher than for children born to older mothers. The children that survive are more likely to be premature, have a low birth weight, and are more at risk for contracting HIV/AIDS.
- **Health Problems:** Premature childbirth can lead to a variety of health problems for mothers, including fistula, a debilitating condition that causes chronic incontinence. Girls with fistula are often abandoned by their husbands and ostracized by society. There are approximately 2 million girls living with fistula, and 100,000 new cases every year.
- **HIV/AIDS:** Married girls may be more likely to contract sexually transmitted disease, including HIV/AIDS, than unmarried girls. Young girls are more physically susceptible to STDs, have less access to reproductive education and health services and are often powerless to demand the use of contraception.
- **Illiteracy:** Child brides are often pulled out of school and denied further education. Their children are also more likely to be illiterate.
- **Poverty:** Child brides – already poor – are isolated and denied education and employment opportunities, making it difficult for them break out of the cycle of poverty.
- **Abuse and Violence:** Child brides are more likely to experience domestic abuse, and violence than their peers who marry later.
- **Mental Health:** Violence and abuse can lead to post-traumatic stress and depression.
- **Isolation and Abandonment:** Child brides are often isolated from their peers and abandoned if they develop health problems like fistula.

### WHY IS CHILD MARRIAGE A DEVELOPMENT ISSUE?

- Girls may be poorly prepared to raise a family because they lack information about proper health care and nutrition.
- Teenage mothers are more likely to bear babies prematurely or with low birth weight.

## *NOW “Child Brides: Stolen Lives” Action Kit for Teens and Young Adults*

- Countries where child marriage is practiced suffer from:
  - higher poverty, birth and death rates.
  - lower levels of development in the areas of education, employment, and health care.
  - generational cycle of girls’ lack of schooling, subsequent poverty, and children’s lack of education.

### WHY IS CHILD MARRIAGE DETRIMENTAL TO A GIRLS’ EDUCATION?

- Girls married at a young age are often pulled out of school.
- Domestic duties and childbearing may prevent a girl from re-enrolling.
- As mothers, girls without education are less likely to send their children to school.

### HOW IS EDUCATION A SOLUTION TO CHILD MARRIAGE?

- Experts describe educating girls as having “cascading benefits” because an educated girl positively affects her children, family, and her community.
- Girls with a secondary education are up to six times less likely to marry young compared to girls with little or no education.
- Girls’ education leads to smaller and healthier families, greater investment in children’s health and education, and greater opportunities for employment.
- Girls who stay in school longer marry later and are greater contributors to a community’s political, social, and economic development.

### WHY IS PREVENTION DIFFICULT?

- Traditions and attitudes may be firmly entrenched in a community. Even parents who do not wish to marry their children at a young age feel compelled to do so.
- In many countries that have passed legislation against Child Marriage, laws are not enforced and policies are under-funded.
- Government solutions must include engagement with communities through outreach, discussion, and public forums.
- Girls are often “invisible” to policymakers since these violations occur in the home and within communities.
- In many countries, laws and policies addressing child marriage are inadequate or not enforced.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SOLUTIONS?

- Providing economic incentives for families to keep girls in school.
- Build self-esteem and skills in girls to help them resist pressure to get married and give them access to other opportunities.
- Work with families to discuss benefits of keeping their daughters in school and delaying marriage. Help families give girls more of a say in the marriage process, including when and who they marry.
- Offer reproductive health education and services to married girls.
- Create educational and employment opportunities for women in a community.

# INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL LEGISLATION AGAINST CHILD MARRIAGE

At the international level, a child’s right to marry as an adult is outlined and protected in a number of human rights instruments:

- The 1948 **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** recognizes the **right to free and full consent to a marriage**. Consent is not considered ‘free and full’ when one of the partners is underage. ([www.udhr.org/index.htm](http://www.udhr.org/index.htm))
- The 1979 **Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women** states that the marriage of a child is illegal and encourages countries to pass legislation ratifying a minimum age of marriage. ([www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/))
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child** links the eradication of child marriage to children’s’ rights to express views freely, be protected from abuse and harmful practices. ([www.unicef.org/crc/](http://www.unicef.org/crc/))
- In 2000, the international community of the United Nations committed to 8 **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowering women; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing a global partnership for development. ([www.un.org/millenniumgoals/](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/))

**However, enforcement of these protections falls on the government of individual countries. International agreements and legislation are often unable to ensure adequate enforcement and suitable funding of programs.**

**In the United States, legislation addressing child marriage was introduced in both the House and Senate in 2007 (check ICRW’s website – [www.icrw.org](http://www.icrw.org) -- for updates on legislation):**

- On July 25, 2007, Representative Betty McCollum (D-Minn) introduced the International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act (HR 3175). Bill is waiting on two more co-sponsors before heading to the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The bill currently has 41 co-sponsors.
- According to Senator McCollum’s website, the bill, “H.R. 3175 supports the demonstrated strategy for preventing and reducing child marriage: investing in schooling, safe community spaces, skills development and other means of empowering girls that improve their status and give them the freedom to delay marriage and choose their partners.”
- On August 3, 2007, Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Chuck Hagel (R-NE) introduced the International Child Marriage Prevention Act (S 1998). The bill has been referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

# FACTS AND FIGURES

## CHILD MARRIAGE

- One in seven girls in the developing world (excluding China) will marry before 15.
- More than 100 million girls in the developing world will be married during the next 10 years.
- Although the definition of child marriage includes boys, most children married under the age of 18 years are girls.
- While the practice has decreased globally over the last 30 years, it remains common in rural areas and among the poorest of the poor.

*Proportion of Women aged 15-24 married before the age of 18 (UNICEF)*

South Asia	48%
Sub-Saharan Africa	42%
Latin America and Caribbean	29%

## HEALTH RISKS

- The leading causes of death for girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are pregnancy related.
- Girls aged 10-14 are five times more likely to die of pregnancy and childbirth related problems than women who are aged 20-24.
- Women who marry younger are more likely to experience violence.

## EDUCATION

- UNICEF declares that “Education is often seen as the key to preventing child marriage.”
- Girls aged 15-19 who attend primary school are less likely to marry than their counterparts.
- The more education a girl receives, the less likely she is to marry before the age of 18.
- Better-educated women exert more control over their reproductive lives and marriage choices.
- Increasing education and economic opportunities can delay marriage.
- Women who are educated in HIV prevention are less likely to marry as children.
- Progress in girls’ education helps fight HIV/AIDS, protect children from abuse, promote immunization, and ensure greater chances for survival.

## SOURCES

**NOW “Child Brides: Stolen Lives” Action Kit for Teens and Young Adults**

**Centers for Disease Control:** “Health Consequences of Child Marriage in Africa,”  
[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol12no11/06-0510.htm#1](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol12no11/06-0510.htm#1)

**ICRW:**

“Child Marriage and Education,”

[http://www.icrw.org/docs/2006\\_cmtoolkit/cm\\_factsheets\\_edu.pdf](http://www.icrw.org/docs/2006_cmtoolkit/cm_factsheets_edu.pdf)

“New Insights on Preventing Child Marriage,” <http://www.icrw.org/docs/2007-new-insights-preventing-child-marriage.pdf>

**IWHC:** “Child Marriage Fact Sheet,” <http://www.iwhc.org/resources/childmarriagefacts.cfm>

**Population Council:** “The Implications of Early Marriage for HIV/AIDS Policy,”  
<http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/EMBfinalENG.pdf>

**UNFPA:** “Child Marriage Fact Sheet,”

[http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2005/presskit/factsheets/facts\\_child\\_marriage.htm](http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2005/presskit/factsheets/facts_child_marriage.htm)

**UNICEF:**

“Child Marriage,” <http://www.childinfo.org/areas/childmarriage/>

“Early Marriage: A Harmful Traditional Practice,”

[http://www.childinfo.org/areas/childmarriage/docs/Early\\_Marriage%20Final.pdf](http://www.childinfo.org/areas/childmarriage/docs/Early_Marriage%20Final.pdf)

# GLOSSARY

**Bride price or bride wealth:** money or other valuables given to the bride’s family by the groom’s family.

**Childhood:** The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that childhood extends until the age of 18.

**Consent:** affirmation given to an action based on the understanding of the facts and implications (i.e. agreeing to marry someone)

**Developing World:** set of countries characterized by poverty and low standards of living. The United Nations established a Human Development Index (HDI) to assess a country’s development by measuring literacy, life expectancy, income levels, and GDP.

**Development:** context for understanding ways to improve the quality of life of people (economic, social, education, etc.)

**Dowry:** gift of money or other valuables given the groom’s family by the bride’s family on the occasion of the couple’s marriage.

**HIV/AIDS:** Infection with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) occurs through the transfer of blood, semen, or breast milk. HIV can lead to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), a life-threatening condition where the body’s immune system fails.

**Obstetric fistula:** severe childbirth injury caused by lack of proper medical attention (See [www.endfistula.org](http://www.endfistula.org) to learn more)

**Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs):** Illnesses caused by transmission of infection during sexual contact. These can include Chlamydia, gonorrhea, genital herpes, and HIV.

# Action Kit: Educate Ourselves

*The first step in advocacy work is to become informed about the circumstances and consequences of Child Marriage in order to educate and mobilize others. As a spokesperson, understanding and evaluating the variety of solutions will be key. Review the Background on Child Marriage and Fact Sheets. To gather additional data on Child Marriage, visit the websites listed in the “For More Information” section. Here are some suggested exercises for deepening your knowledge of child marriage and strategies for prevention:*

## A. First, Second, Third Order Effects of Child Marriage and the Impact of Education

1. Understand the societal and generational impact of child marriage.
2. Draw three concentric circles and label them from inner to outer: child bride, family, and community.
3. List the consequences of child marriage for the girl (early and risky pregnancy, social isolation, lack of education, few life skills, risk of HIV/AIDS, etc.).
4. List the consequences of child marriage for the family (malnourishment, infant mortality, less likely that children will attend school, etc.).
5. List the consequences of child marriage for a community (loss of a vocal active member when young mother is isolated at home, civic engagement, fewer female role models, women as peace-makers, etc.).
6. Draw another set of circles and list the consequences for a girl who marries later and stays in school (smaller, healthier, and better educated families, better protection, increased wages, break the cycle of poverty and sickness, etc.).
7. Compare the two circles and review the role of consequences to future generations of educating or not educating a girl.
8. Discuss what is meant when development experts speak of “cascading effects” of girls’ education.

## B. Assessing Community-Based Strategies

1. Review the solutions and the role of activists presented in the film:  
Niger: changing attitudes of leadership and the sensitization brigade  
India: intervening local administrators and boarding schools  
Guatemala: mentoring program for Mayan girls
2. What is the rationale behind each strategy? How do these strategies address community and family inclinations towards child marriage? How is each strategy suited for the particular community?
3. List the advantages and disadvantages of the strategy (cost, risks, family separation, abuse of authority, etc.).
4. Do you expect long-term success with these strategies? Which do you favor?
5. What personal traits do the activists share? How do they exhibit leadership?

## C. Understanding Global Partnerships as Solutions

1. List the various individuals and organizations working to prevent child marriage (family, teachers, community leaders, local and national government, international organizations, UNICEF, UN, etc.).

**NOW “Child Brides: Stolen Lives” Action Kit for Teens and Young Adults**

2. What partnerships are needed for the strategy to function (community, family, government, international organizations, etc.)?
3. What is the role of international legislation? What role do countries play in prevention? How do community strategies reflect particular traditions? Can these strategies be replicated worldwide?
4. What would an ideal campaign address child marriage look like? How would these individual and organizations interact?

# Action Kit: Advocacy in Our Community

*Now that you’ve become more knowledgeable on the subject Child Marriage, it is time to reach out into your school and build a larger community of support. Raise awareness about the prevalence and consequences of Child Marriage and about strategies to raise the age of marriage; disseminate facts and figures. Organize screenings and discussions of the documentary at school or in small settings. Plan an event for your fellow classmates and community members to raise funds to support the schools and programs featured in the documentary.*

## A. Develop a display around the issue of child marriage that includes:

- Facts about child marriage (See Fact Sheet).
- World map showing where child marriage is practiced.
- Photos of child brides.
- Country reports focusing on Niger, India, and Guatemala.
- Information about community-based solutions.
- Information about national and international legislation.
- Opportunities for school and community members to get involved.

## B. School-wide Poster Campaign:

- Design posters to adorn school hallways or other exhibition space.
- Possible poster illustrations could be:
  - the detrimental effects of child marriage.
  - the benefits of education.
  - images of adult brides and child brides.
- Include facts about early marriage (See Fact Sheet).
- Highlight countries where child marriage is prevalent and report development statistics concerning education, poverty, and child marriage.

## C. Develop skits that deal with the prevention of child marriage

- Role-play some of the various individuals shown in the film (local administrator, tribal chief, principal) and imagine trying to convince a family to keep their daughter in school and delay marriage.
- Polish these skits and present them in a classroom or school assembly.

## D. Organize screenings and discussions

- Contact NOW or visit the website <http://www.pbs.org/now/childbrides> to order/download the film.
- Organize a school assembly and have students break into groups to discuss the film.
- View the film during class or organize an after-school viewing party.
- Develop discussion questions to accompany viewing the film or use the Facilitator’s Guide.

**NOW “Child Brides: Stolen Lives” Action Kit for Teens and Young Adults**

- Find out how your school plans to commemorate annual Human Rights Day, December 10, at your school by watching the documentary and organizing small discussion groups.

**E. Plan a fundraiser to support programs highlighted in the documentary**

- Host a bake sale or other fundraiser at your school.
- Collect school supplies to send (stationery, pens, pencils, etc.).
- Create visual displays with facts and figures about Child Marriage.
- List relevant expenses of helping girls staying school and avoiding Child Marriage.

# Action Kit: Highlight Child Marriage as a Priority

*Advocacy is essential to ensure that the issue of Child Marriage is given attention and support in government circles and international arenas. Reducing the practice of Child Marriage requires political leadership to ensure that legislation is passed and child protection policies are enforced. It also requires culturally-appropriate techniques to foster an environment that is supportive of later marriage and of already married girls. Write letters to encourage national and world leaders to highlight the issue of child marriage and push for political action.*

## **Write to national and international leaders urge them to highlight the issue of Child Marriage**

- Choosing whom to approach:
  - Politicians in the United States can sponsor legislation to make Child Marriage a priority issue through the allocation of funding for research, development, and international programs.
  - President George W. Bush can make Child Marriage a priority issue in the international arena.
  - World Leaders can focus on Child Marriage by passing and enforcing international standards for child protection and safety.
  
- Preparing the Letter in Three Paragraphs: Be clear and persuasive
  - Openings: State your objectives
    - Define Child Marriage (The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines children as individuals under the age of 18).
    - State your goal.
    - Outline the action you wish the leader or politician to take.
  - Presentation: Facts and figures for Child Marriage
    - Population Council estimates that 1/3 of girls living in the developing world (excluding China) were married before they turned 18.
    - The practice of child marriage jeopardizes the health of young women and their children; adolescents who give birth are twice as likely to die as their older counterparts.
    - The practice of Child Marriage poses negative impacts on girls, families, and communities: girls who marry young face critical health issues, higher rates of maternal mortality, social isolation and are denied access to education.
    - Describe some viable solutions.
  - Conclusion: Explain why political leadership is urgent and critical
    - Prediction: If present patterns continue, 100 million girls will be married as child brides in the coming decade.
    - Restate the action you wish the leader of politician to take.

**NOW “Child Brides: Stolen Lives” Action Kit for Teens and Young Adults**

**Things to remember:**

- Use the correct title for the politician and world leader
- Check spelling and grammar
- At the end of the letter, thank the leader for their attention
- Collect additional signatures for your letter from classmates and community members

- Finding Addresses:
  - For your Representatives: <http://www.house.gov>
  - For your Senators: <http://www.senate.gov>
  - President George W. Bush, The White House, Washington, DC 20500
  - United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, The Honorable Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Headquarters, First Avenue at 46<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10017
  - UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman, UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017
  - UNICEF United States Fund President Caryl M. Stern, National Headquarters, 333 East 38<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10016

**B. Submit an art piece to UNICEF’s Voices of Youth’s 18 @18 Convention on the Rights of the Child Online Art Exhibit**

To celebrate the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, Voices of Youth is inviting artistic interpretations of the declarations on behalf of children under 18. Submissions are due November 20, 2007. For more information, go to [http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction\\_3866.html](http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction_3866.html)

To read the Convention on the Rights of the Child, see [www.unicef.org/crc/](http://www.unicef.org/crc/)

**C. Join Campaigns to Address Child Marriage**

International Center for Research on Women: Child Marriage Advocacy Campaign: <http://www.icrw.org/html/getinvolved/action.htm#childmarriage>

**D. Join Efforts to Increase Education for All Girls**

World Education: Using education as a strategy for transforming the lives of girls and women, World Education works in 40 countries in Africa, Asia and the United States. <http://www.worlded.org/WEIInternet/gwe/index.cfm>

Basic Education Coalition: Advocates for quality basic education around the world. <http://www.basiced.org/>

United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative: Works to ensure that boys and girls will have equal access to all levels of education by 2015. <http://www.ungei.org/>

**D. Advocate Education as a Solution to Child Marriage by starting a Girls Learn International Chapter at your school**

Girls Learn International (GLI) is a nonprofit service-learning initiative involving thousands of American students in the international effort for universal girls’ education.

**1. Start a Chapter:**

- GLI is a national organization with local Chapters in middle and high schools.
- Form a group at your school to engage more deeply with issues affecting girls.
- Each Chapter is led by a facilitator who may be a teacher, college student or community member.
- Girls Learn International will provide facilitator training and will furnish the Chapter with the necessary materials to implement the GLI program.

**2. Become an advocate for universal girls’ education:**

- Learn more about human rights issues facing girls and the role of education.
- Raise awareness in your schools and communities.
- Foster global communication and cross-cultural understanding.

**3. Pair with a “Partner Classroom,” a school providing quality education to girls in a community where girls have traditionally been denied access to education:**

- GLI Chapters are matched with a Partner Classrooms in communities in over a dozen countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, Afghanistan, and Latin America.
- Chapters engage in a Cultural Exchange Project with their Partner Classroom.
- Chapters directly support their Partner Classroom through fundraising (100% of funds raised are transferred to Partner Classrooms).
- To date, Girls Learn has raised over \$45,000 to support their Partner Classrooms and universal girls’ education.

**4. Engage in educational and advocacy outreach projects on behalf of universal girls’ education**

- GLI Chapters publish articles, send letters, appear on radio and television, and meet with national and international leaders to lobby on behalf of universal girls’ education.
- GLI Chapters participate in letter-writing and petition campaigns on behalf of human rights issues facing girls.
- GLI Chapters attend workshops film screenings, international meetings, and a yearly Chapter Summit.
- Through the LeadHer Education Series, GLI Chapters will have the unique opportunity to connect with prominent leaders in the human rights field, as well as professionals in a variety of careers working to advance girls’ education.
- GLI Chapter Leaders serve on the Junior Board to coordinate activities, fundraisers, and joint events for the Chapter network.

**5. To learn more about starting a Chapter at your school, please contact Emily Bent, GLI Program Director, at [Emily@girlslearn.org](mailto:Emily@girlslearn.org) or visit [www.girlslearn.org](http://www.girlslearn.org)**

**E. Talk about child marriage in your Girl Scout troop.**

*A Message From Girl Scouts of the USA:*

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place. By understanding and responding to girls' changing realities, Girl Scouting remains relevant, fun and inspiring for girls, while encouraging them to take action in the wider world. Our philosophy of age-appropriate experiential learning is grounded in outcomes-based research. Local councils work with girls and their families to determine what program content to offer, and the national organization creates diverse program content with detailed steps and guidelines for delivering it.

Due to the sensitive issue of this program, Girl Scouts of the USA urges troop leaders to obtain parental consent prior to the screening and to encourage families to join them in the viewing and discussion of this program with their daughter(s).

If you are a Girl Scout Leader:

1. Be sure to tell your troop/group to go to the Global Action Page on Studio 2B to learn more about this and other global issues.
2. Have your troop/group complete the Our Rights and Responsibilities patch from World Association Girl Guides and Girl Scouts and learn about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Find it at: [http://waggs.org/en/projects/our\\_rights\\_our\\_responsibilities](http://waggs.org/en/projects/our_rights_our_responsibilities)
3. Remind your girls to consider focusing their Silver/Gold Award projects on the issue of child marriage or other related global issues such as:
  - Education for All - [www.campaignforeducationusa.org](http://www.campaignforeducationusa.org)
  - Gender Empowerment - [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org) (UNIFEM), [www.zonta.org](http://www.zonta.org) (Zonta International)
  - Global Health - [www.globalhealth.org](http://www.globalhealth.org) (Global Health Council)
4. Check out the Millennium campaign's youth website at <http://cyberschoolbus.un.org/mdgs/> to learn about all of these issues and the Millennium Development Goals. Through this documentary, "Child Brides: Stolen Lives," NOW on PBS is offering Girl Scouts an opportunity to develop and expand their knowledge on key issues affecting girls around the world such as health, education and gender inequality.

## For More Information:

### NOW on PBS Website for “Child Brides: Stolen Lives;”

<http://www.pbs.org/now/childbrides>

### Fact Sheets on Child Marriage:

Center for Disease Control:

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol12no11/06\\_0510.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol12no11/06_0510.htm)

International Center for Research on Women:

[http://www.icrw.org/docs/2006\\_cmtoolkit/cm\\_all.pdf](http://www.icrw.org/docs/2006_cmtoolkit/cm_all.pdf)

United States Agency for International Development:

[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/global\\_health/pop/news/issue\\_briefs/prev\\_child\\_marriage.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/pop/news/issue_briefs/prev_child_marriage.pdf)

United Nations Population Fund:

[http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2005/presskit/factsheets/facts\\_child\\_marriage.htm](http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2005/presskit/factsheets/facts_child_marriage.htm)

### Learn more about issues facing girls:

Child Rights Information Network: [www.crin.org](http://www.crin.org)

International Center for Research on Women (ICRW): [www.icrw.org](http://www.icrw.org)

International Women’s Health Coalition (IWHC): [www.iwhc.org](http://www.iwhc.org)

Population Council: [www.popcouncil.org/ChildBride](http://www.popcouncil.org/ChildBride)

UNFPA: [www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)

UNICEF: [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

UNICEF Statistics: [www.childinfo.org](http://www.childinfo.org)

Working Group on Girls (WGG): [www.girlsrights.org](http://www.girlsrights.org)

### Join Campaigns advocating education for girls:

Basic Education Coalition: Advocates for quality basic education around the world.

[www.basiced.org](http://www.basiced.org)

Education for All (UNESCO): [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)

Fast-Track Initiative (FTI) (World Bank): [www.fasttrackinitiative.org](http://www.fasttrackinitiative.org)

United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNICEF): [www.ungei.org](http://www.ungei.org)

World Education: Using education as a strategy for transforming the lives of girls and women,

World Education works in 40 countries in Africa, Asia and the United States. [www.worlded.org](http://www.worlded.org)