# CHILD MARRIAGE IN TANZANIA

### Give them space to blossom





### 16 Facts about Child Marriage in Tanzania

This fact sheet explores the issue of child marriage in Tanzania, defined as living in a formal or informal union before the age of 18 years. It looks at the factors that contribute to the continuation of child marriage, as well as some of the impacts of child marriage on individuals and on the country as a whole. The data comes from a variety of sources, including research conducted by the World Bank and published in their January 2019 Tanzania Economic Update, data from the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2015-16, and data from Twaweza's Sauti za Wananchi mobile phone panel survey of citizens experiences and opinions. It also includes excerpts from significant global and regional declarations and conventions to which Tanzania has committed herself, and details of a landmark legal case on child marriage in Tanzania.

# Fact 1: Tanzania has made progress reducing child marriage, though neighbouring countries have improved more quickly

Three out of ten 18-22 year old women (32%) in Tanzania were married before the age of 18, down from four out of ten (41%) among women aged 41-49.

However, neighbouring countries have achieved faster reductions in child marriage, including Uganda, Zambia, Kenya and Rwanda.



#### Percentage of women first married before the age of 18 years

Source: compiled by the World Bank Tanzania Economic Update Jan 2019, using DHS data from 2015-2016



### Fact 2: One out of three women is married by the age of 18, one out twenty by the age of 15

One out of three women (31%) aged 20-24 in Tanzania is married by the age of 18, down from four out of ten (39-41%) twenty years ago. Over the same time, the number of women who marry by age 15 has remained largely steady, at around one out of twenty women (5-6%).



The median age of marriage has increased a little, from 18.7 years to 19.7.

# Fact 3: Child marriage is more common in rural areas, among the poor, and in western, southern and north-western Tanzania

Four out of ten (37%) women aged 15-49 in rural Tanzania married as children, compared to two out of ten (21%) in urban areas.

Child marriage is also more common in western (42%), southern (42%) and lake (39%) regions.

Women in poorer households (46%) are three times as likely as those in richer households (16%) to have first married as a child.



Percentage of women aged 15- 49 who married as a child, by location and wealth:



Source: DHS 2015-16, data analysed by the author

Fact 4: Among married girls aged 15-19, almost none are currently in school Almost all (99%) married girls aged 15-19 in Tanzania are not in school,

leaving 1% who do attend school. Among those of the same age who are not married, close to half (45%) attend school.





using DHS data from 2015-2016



## Fact 5: There is a strong link between age at marriage and educational attainment

One out of twenty women aged 15-49 who married as a child has been educated to secondary level, compared to a quarter (28%) of those who married at age 20 or above and half (50%) of those who have never married.

Similarly, marrying at a young age is linked to lower levels of basic education and literacy.



#### Education, by age of first marriage, women aged 15-49

Married as a child Married aged 18-19 Married 20 or older Never married



### Fact 6: Most citizens support girls returning to school after giving birth

Seven out of ten (71%) citizens are in favour of pregnant girls being allowed to continue with their education: 62% to return after giving birth, 7% to continue at school while pregnant and 2% would prefer them to change school.

### What should happen to a girl who gets pregnant while still in school?





Source: Sauti za Wananchi Mobile Phone Survey, Round 10 (August 2016); Twaweza



#### Fact 7: Child marriage is the main cause of early childbirth

Estimates by the World Bank suggest that two out of three children (65%) born to mothers under 18 years old were the result of child marriage, and that the same number (65%) of women giving birth before the age of 18 were the result of child marriage.



Source: World Bank Tanzania Economic Update Jan 2019

### Fact 8: Women who married as a child have more children and at a younger age than those who married when older

On average, women who married as a child have three children, and have their first at 17 years old, while those who married later have three, starting at the age of 22. 58% of those who married as a child gave birth before 18, compared to 10% of those who married at 20 or above.



Source: DHS 2015-16, data analysed by the author

#### Fact 9: Girls who stay in school for longer have healthier families

A mother's level of education is strongly linked to a range of health indicators for their family. Better educated mothers are more likely to give births at a

health facility, seek treatment for children's illness, and their children are less likely to get malaria.



### Children's health, by mother's level of education

Source: Source: DHS 2015-16

A World Bank analysis shows major impacts of child marriage, both for the girls themselves and their children, and for the country as a whole.

The World Bank found that there are strong links between child marriage and girls education. Reducing child marriage would enable girls to stay in school for longer, and staying in school longer would help to reduce child marriage.



Source: Adapted from World Bank Tanzania Economic Update Jan 2019

In turn, reducing child marriage and educating girls would have major impacts on the girls future lives, and those of their children and households. Girls who marry later are better educated, have better jobs, have fewer children, their children are healthier, and they have more influence on key decisions at household level. Further evidence to support these conclusion is in this factsheet.

Further, when girls marry later, this produces significant benefits for the country as a whole. People would be healthier and richer as a whole if child marriage were eliminated, and it would deliver growth in the economy as well as savings in the national budget. Some of these benefits are summarised below:

"Each year of early **1**6%

marriage raises the risk of not completing secondary school by 6 percentage points."

"Each year of secondary education reduces the risk of early childbearing by 9 percentage points."

17%

"Given the close correlation between educational attainment, child marriage, and early childbearing, the most effective interventions to reduce the prevalence of child marriage and early childbearing would seem to be incentives for girls to remain in or go back to school."

**†22%** 

**T.9%** 

"Universal secondary education could increase women's decision-making ability by 22%."

"Ending child marriage

could increase earnings

and productivity nation-

ally by up to 0.9%."

9%

\$637m

"Globally, child marriage reduces earnings in adulthood, on average, by 9%, mainly because girls who marry are less likely to continue with their education."

"Each year of secondary

risk of marrying as a child

education reduces the

by up to 17 percentage

points."

"In Tanzania, the total value of potential earnings lost due to early marriages in 2015 was US\$637 million."

"The economic benefit of ending child marriage (in Tanzania) in terms of welfare gains from lower population growth is large: by 2030 it could reach US\$5 billion in purchasing power parity."

Sources: World Bank Tanzania Economic Update Jan 2019 and Economic Impacts of Child Marriage: Global Synthesis Report, ICRW and the World Bank (2017)

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#### Fact 10: Women who married as a child are less likely to have a professional or skilled job, more likely to work in agriculture

Among women who married as a child, six out of ten (60%) work in agriculture, compared to four out of ten (39%) of those who married at the age of twenty or higher.

Conversely, women who married at an older age (14%) are more likely to work in a professional, clerical or skilled job than those who married as a child (3%).



Women's main occupation

Source: DHS 2015-16, data analysed by the author

#### Fact 11: Women who married as a child have less decision making power in their home

Women who married as a child have less autonomy to decide how to spend their earnings than those who married later.

Similarly, women who married as a child are less likely to have a say in how their husband or partner's earning are spent.

Women who married as a child are also less likely to have a say in decisions relating to their own health.





Source: DHS 2015-16, data analysed by the author

## Fact 12: Women who married as a child are more likely to say domestic violence is justified

Among women who married as a child, half (47%) say it is justified for a husband to beat his wife if she goes out without telling him, compared to 37% of those who married at an older age.

The link is stronger with education. Better-educated women are less likely to feel that domestic violence is justified.



Source: DHS 2015-16, data analysed by the author



### Fact 13: Women who married as a child are more likely to experience violence by their husband / partner

Similarly, women who married as a child are more likely to experience violence by their husband or partner, including severe and sexual violence.

In this case, the link with education can also be seen, though it is no stronger than the link with age of first marriage.

#### Percentage women who have experienced violence by husband/partner



Source: DHS 2015-16, data analysed by the author

### Fact 14: The most commonly-reported perpetrators of sexual violence against women are current and former partners

Among women who have experience sexual violence, four out of ten (42%) report that this was perpetrated by their current husband or partner, more than any other person.

A further three out of ten (34%) point to a former husband or partner, and one out of ten (11%) to a current or former boyfriend.

### Reported perpetrators of sexual violence against women



Source: DHS 2015-16

Fact 15: The High Court of Tanzania has declared laws that permit child marriage to be unconstitutional:

According to the Law of Marriage Act, the minimum age for marriage in Tanzania is 15 years for girls (with parental consent) and 18 years for boys.

> In January 2016, Rebeca Gyumi brought a case to court that challenged the constitutionality of these laws, on the basis that the law sets different minimum ages for marriage for boys and girls.

> > The state tried to justify the law on the basis that it was a compromise to accommodate customary, traditional and religious values. The court disagreed.

> > > The court after considering various laws which define who is a child, concluded that a child is any person below the age of 18 years.

> > > > As a result, the High Court declared as discriminatory and unconstitutional sections 13 and 17 of the Law of Marriage Act.

"Having found that a girl under 18 years is a child in all respects, we are in agreement that it is un-desirous to subject her to complex matrimonial and conjugal obligations."



commit the country to abolishing child marriage

#### The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

Women and men are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

### The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW; 1979)

This requires governments to takes steps to ensure that "the betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect

#### The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

This defines a child as anyone below 18 years of age, and states that in all actions concerning children the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. It also specifies that children have the right to education on the basis of equal opportunity, to protection from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, and to protection from all forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspect of the child's welfare.

#### The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs;

Goal 5.3 directs all member states to eliminate child marriage by year 2030.

The African Charter on Human and People's Rights' Protocol on the Rights of Women (2003)

This states that men and women should be equal partners in a marriage, and both parties must have given informed consent. Consent can only be provided by adults, over the age of 18 years.