

# “No happily ever after”

What children really think about child marriage in humanitarian crises  
*Includes their calls to the UK Government*



*It takes a world* is World Vision UK's campaign to make ending violence against children a priority for the UK's humanitarian policies, programmes and aid. A quarter of the world's children live in countries affected by conflict and disaster. They are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation, child marriage, hazardous labour and recruitment by armed forces and groups. All children deserve to be safe. **The UK can make a difference. Join our campaign at [worldvision.org.uk](http://worldvision.org.uk)**

This publication was prepared by Dr. Carine Le Borgne (Senior Policy Adviser, Ending violence against children, World Vision UK).

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#### COVER PHOTOS

**MAIN:** Rahila (14) from Afghanistan. Her marriage was stopped following support from World Vision. © 2019 Narges Ghafary / World Vision  
**BOTTOM LEFT:** "I was 'married' for two years. He had two other wives as well. We lived in the forest. There was no house, no structure. We just slept on the ground, with the mosquitos and wild animals. Life was very difficult." (Maria\*, from the DRC) © 2017 Mark Nonkes / World Vision  
**BOTTOM MIDDLE:** Young people from the UK. © 2019 Miguel Pilgrim / World Vision  
**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Young people from Niger. © 2019 Tabita Ali Soumaila / World Vision

\*Name changed to protect identity.

## Foreword

**Tim Pilkington, Chief Executive, World Vision UK**



This report: *No happily ever after* aims to raise up the voices and views of the children we work with who are affected by the issue of child marriage in countries facing humanitarian crisis. And to include the voices of children in the UK and

around the world who stand with their peers who have experienced child marriage.

Worldwide, more than 250 million women alive today were married before their 15th birthday, many against their will. A staggering 12 million girls are forced to marry each year before the age of 18 – that's 23 girls every minute.<sup>1</sup> Some of the highest rates of child marriage are in countries impacted by conflict, climate disaster and other humanitarian crises.

In two of the countries featured in this report – Afghanistan and Bangladesh – child marriage is illegal. Yet all too often moving from legislation to implementation remains a challenge, particularly in countries impacted by humanitarian crises, including where children have been displaced.

While both girls and boys can be subjected to child marriage, girls are disproportionately affected due to cultural traditions which reinforce gender discrimination.

Take Rahila's for example, whose family have been forced to move within Afghanistan to avoid conflict. They've found themselves living in poverty, motivating Rahila's father to arrange her marriage, jeopardising her hopes of studying medicine.

Equally, Parvina, a Rohingya girl who has migrated to Bangladesh, has worked as a maid since the age of nine, always at the mercy of the households she works in. So, before she reaches the age of 16, it seems to Parvina that her best option is to marry and to have a child.

These stories underline the fact that child marriage is rooted in gender inequalities, poverty, insecurity and lower levels of education. It is reinforced by social norms and by stereotypes that value girls in different – often lesser – ways than boys and perpetuate marital practices that are prejudicial to girls. This is often in the belief that marriage will provide security to the girls.

This research reinforces our understanding that it is not enough to change and implement laws. We also need to change behaviour and attitudes to under-18s getting married. As a Christian organisation, World Vision is only too aware that religious beliefs affect behaviour and therefore also need to be addressed. In Rahila's case, for example, World Vision worked with local religious elders and others to prevent her marriage and to access another source of family income. Children who participated in this research gave specific recommendation for priests or Imams to become part of the solution, to check the ages of the children before marrying them and stop the marriage if they are under 18.

World Vision believes that every child should experience life in all of its fullness and therefore we're committed to working with the most vulnerable children, in places where all too often their voices are not heard. We seek to create movements with and for children, and to enable children we serve to influence policy here in the UK. We also engage with children in the UK who want to stand with their peers from around the world.

More than 80 children – girls and boys – who were part of this research are together calling on the UK Government and countries hit by humanitarian crisis to work together to end child marriage. As the UK is one of the world's leading voices and largest donors in international development, we urge our government to take a firm lead; raising its voice and increasing its own investment in protecting children during humanitarian crisis.

It is time to act. In the time you have taken to read this at least 23 girls have been married. It shouldn't be this way. It Takes... all of us to End Violence Against Children.

<sup>1</sup>[girlsnotbrides.org/about-child-marriage](http://girlsnotbrides.org/about-child-marriage)

## Foreword

**Dr. Nicola Jones, Director of the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) programme; Principal Research Fellow ODI**



As we enter the five-year mark of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform of Action towards gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment, 2020 marks an opportune

time to listen to the voices of young people around the world about priority actions needed to tackle one of the major threats facing adolescent girls' wellbeing now and in the future, i.e. child marriage. SDG target 5.3 commits to eliminating child marriage by 2030. However, unless there is an urgent action, UNICEF estimates that only three countries will be able to achieve this commitment.

In this context, this report by World Vision marks an important contribution to global advocacy efforts around child marriage by sharing the perspectives of young people who have experienced child marriage and its harmful impacts. The case studies from Bangladesh and Afghanistan at the heart of the report underscore a number of critical themes that deserve greater attention by national and international policy and programming actors alike.

Rahila's story from Afghanistan highlights not just the foregone educational and economic opportunities that child marriages curtail, but also the acute mental health risks and social isolation that many adolescent girls face when pressured into marriage at a young age. However, her story also identifies entry-points for change, and in particular the powerful role that community and religious leaders can play in shifting parental attitudes towards child marriage.

Parvina's story from a Rohingya refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, raises an important theme that programming needs to better reflect; that child marriages may in some contexts be initiated by adolescents (rather than forced by parents), but very often in the context of extremely constrained choices. Parvina had faced dysfunctional family dynamics and later exploitative domestic work conditions and, against this backdrop, marriage at 15 years appeared to be a positive coping strategy. What her story also highlights is that while child marriages may be entered into to escape poverty, social protection programme targeting often overlooks the vulnerabilities of married adolescents, and in Parvina's case she is denied a food ration card as she lacks formal marriage papers on account of her age.

Zarghona's story from Afghanistan illustrates the complex drivers of child marriage: while conservative social norms play a key role in framing marriage as a desirable—or at least socially legitimate—option for adolescent girls, economic poverty can also be a critical factor, especially in crisis-affected contexts. Without adequate social protection support and labour market opportunities, many households in fragile states have highly constrained opportunities such that awareness-raising and legal sanctions alone are likely to have limited efficacy in curtailing child marriage.

To galvanise much-needed action, the report also draws on the voices of young people who have not experienced child marriage but who are aware of the far-reaching negative consequences it can have. Adolescent boys and girls from Africa, Asia and the UK call for urgent, bold and collective action across the globe in developed and developing, stable and fragile contexts to tackle this harmful practice. As 16-year-old Afrina from Bangladesh emphasises: "If children are aware, united and determined, we can easily protect our society from child marriage by involving adults, communities and by implementing law."

## Methodology

Wherever World Vision works, we build children's capacity to speak out and advocate for themselves using their Article 12 rights under the UN Convention Rights of the Child to contribute to decisions and take action on issues that affect their lives. The aim of this research is to create a space for both children from World Vision's international programmes and in the UK children to discuss the violence that children can face in humanitarian contexts, such as child marriage. It's an opportunity for children in our overseas programmes who have been affected by child marriage to discuss solutions. It is also an opportunity for children from our programmes who are not directly affected by child marriage to have a space to express themselves and stand, with their peers, for the rights of the most disadvantaged children.

For the research, *child marriage* refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 and an adult, or another child.<sup>2</sup> *Forced marriage* includes any marriage where one or both people do not consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. Pressure can include threats, physical or sexual violence, and financial pressure.

The first step, in August 2019, was to speak to girls from fragile countries directly impacted by child marriage and collect their stories. This was achieved through our national offices in Afghanistan and Bangladesh Refugee Crisis Response.

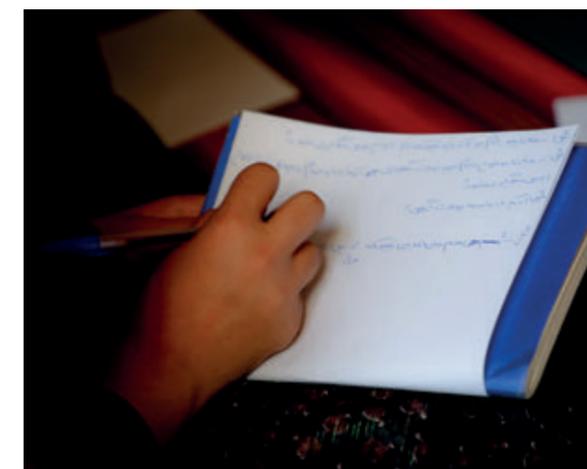
The second step was to organise focus group discussions on these three case studies in September and October 2019. They involved 79 children between the ages of 13 and 18 years from World Vision programmes in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Niger, and a Rohingya refugee camp (Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh). They also included children between the ages of 13 and 17 years from the Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet in the UK.

All the focus group facilitators received guidelines to help conduct the sessions and to help collect the views of the children. We wanted to understand how the children felt about the stories and what they hoped for the girls. We collected their recommendations and messages to the UK Government as a donor country. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, gendered group discussions were organised to discuss child marriage in all countries, except in the UK.

Following the focus group discussion, thematic analysis was used as a method for identifying themes for the children's calls to action. The aim was to write a report using the participants' voices as directly as possible; and to create a new way to facilitate their advocacy. The result is this report, encapsulating the three stories of child marriage, the comments of the focus group participants about the stories, their messages to the UK Government and their three calls to action for the UK Government as an aid donor country.

Ethics were considered throughout the entire project. Considering the subject matter and the ages of participants, this included: analysing harm and benefits to all the participating children; securing informed consent; and ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. For instance, the names of participants in the case studies have been anonymised, and children were involved in the project voluntarily and could withdraw at any time. We also provided information so they understood the project, as well as how the data collected would be used and the next steps. The entire project applied the World Vision UK Safeguarding Policy.

All groups who participated in the project will receive this report and feedback from the discussions with decision-makers and influencers on the recommendations.



**ABOVE:** Children in Afghanistan take note of their recommendations for the UK Government. © 2019 Narges Ghafary / World Vision

<sup>2</sup>[worldvision.org/child-protection-newsstories/child-marriage-facts](https://worldvision.org/child-protection-newsstories/child-marriage-facts)

# Participants

**“Today I am able to share my story with you because of World Vision’s Community Change Sessions. If the facilitator didn’t help me, I am not sure what would happen to me. I am doing my best to be once again a top student in my class. I am more determined to finish high school and study medicine.”**  
**(Rahila, girl, 14, Afghanistan, formerly at risk of child marriage)**

## United Kingdom

Anna (12), Amelia (14), Intisar (13), Dylan (12), Oscar (13), Catherine (12), Leila (12), Leon (13), Tamsin (13), Emily (13), Kyla (15), Lola (14), Harvey (15), Pietro (13), Tom (13), Disha (16), Ben (17), Alessandro (16), Toby (16), Alexia (16), Rosie (17), Sharla (16)

## Niger

Kadida (15), Salamatou (15), Hanatou (14), Anna (15), Oubeida (15), Rafiha (13), Hassana (15), Aichatou (13), Zeinabou (13), Tikoi (16), Patrice (15), Amiye (18), Gueleli (16), Abdoulrachid (13), Abdoulrazak (14), Boubacar (17), Habibou (13), Loukmane (14), Mohamed (13)

## Bangladesh

Rohingya refugee camp, Cox’s Bazar

Zokia (14), Nur A (14), Dil (14), Zobaira (14), Nur B (14), Umme (15), Yeasmine (15), Hamid (14), Musa (17), Oares (17), Talha (17), Jahed (17), Akram (15)

## Bangladesh

Afrina (16), Prittey (16), Nusrat (14), Mohin (15), Sojib (17), Rabbi (16), Anika (14), Redoy (14), Anisa (12), Nizam (15), Tumpa (15), Arman (16), Rifat (16)

## Bangladesh

Rohingya refugee camp, Cox’s Bazar



**Parvina (17)**

## Afghanistan



**Rahila (14)**



**Zarghona (16)**

## Afghanistan

Sajad (14), Tala (16), Dawood (13), Dadullah (15), Muhammad (14), Hussain (15), Fatima (14), Malaka (15), Sepida (14), Kamela (15), Tahira (14), Roqaya (16)

Key:

Case study countries

Commenting countries





## Rahila's story (Afghanistan)

"My name is Rahila. I am 14. I had to move to another village three years ago because of drought and insecurity. There was fighting between the government and Taliban most of the time.

My father has a small stall selling snacks to children. My mother is a maid. Neither can read or write. I am studying with the hope of becoming a doctor. One afternoon, three women came to our home who were from the same village as us. I overheard one of the women tell my mother that they have a son and would like me to marry him.

The boy's family promised my father to give him US\$6,400 and a piece of land as a bride price. My father was happy. With the money, he could start a new business and pay the rent of our house.

My dream of becoming a doctor was over. I wanted to kill myself. One night I told my father how I felt, and he got angry and slapped me.

I was the loneliest person in the world. I was looking for a solution: either to change my father's decision or kill myself.

My mother used to participate in World Vision's community change sessions. I asked my mother to talk with the facilitator to see if she could do anything for us.

The facilitator and a few other community elders (a faith leader and the head of the women's council) came to

talk to my father. After three days, my father changed his mind. He asked my mother to tell the boy's family that our answer is 'No.'

The facilitator and elders had told my father about the negative consequences of child marriage and what Islam has mentioned about child marriage. My father explained that he is struggling with his business and needs money.

The facilitator talked with our house owner to see if he could help us. He agreed to allow my father to build a small shop in our yard so my father could use it without paying for the rent of the stall and save more money to provide for us.

I think most families either don't know about the negative impacts of child marriage or they have to marry off their girls because they need money.

I would like the UK Government to not to forget girls in Afghanistan and support them to be empowered, to get an education, and to have enough money to be independent.

Today I am able to share my story with you because of World Vision's community change sessions. If the facilitator didn't help me, I am not sure what would happen to me. I am doing my best to be once again a top student in my class. I am more determined to finish high school and study medicine."

## What children think about this story

Rahila's experience was discussed by 40 children from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and the UK. Here are some of their comments:

"I felt sad because Rahila is a similar age to me and she wanted to die because of getting married at an early age. I think child marriage is immoral and even though it is illegal in some places there isn't a harsh enough punishment to stop it."  
(Emily, girl, 13, UK)

"The support of the house owner was very important. If he did not help, her father might not have changed his mind."  
(Tahira, girl, 14, Afghanistan)

"At first, my feeling was very bad, but when I heard that the mother informed World Vision and the marriage was stopped then I was happy. It's good to have the support of World Vision to stop child marriage in the community."  
(Nizam, boy, 15, Bangladesh)



## Messages to the UK Government

"UK Government needs to involve religious leaders and sensitise them on the bad impact of child marriage."  
(Rabbi, boy, 16, Bangladesh)

"We need more projects such as World Vision awareness sessions. People in our community still think that a man is the owner of a woman because women are weak and can't decide. We need to extend support to girls in remote areas for them to know about their rights and access to education."  
(Tahira, girl, 14, Afghanistan)

"Would you allow your own daughter to live through a lifetime of trauma, when you have the ability to prevent it?"  
(Ben, boy, 17, UK)



LEFT: Rahila (14) © 2019 Narges Ghafary / World Vision

ABOVE: Young people from the UK commenting on Rahila's story. © 2019 Miguel Pilgrim / World Vision



## Parvina's story (Bangladesh)

### Rohingya refugee camp, Cox's Bazar

"My name is Parvina. I am 17 years old. I am a Rohingya Muslim and I used to live in Myanmar.

My father died when I was young. After my mother remarried, living with my stepfather was tough. I came to Bangladesh with my uncle when I was nine years old.

I worked for a family for four years as domestic worker. They did not pay me. They told me they would raise me and find a husband for me.

The next family I worked for paid me 2,000 taka [about £20] a month. But I had to work the whole day and night. I could not take the hardship.

When many Rohingya came to Bangladesh [in August 2017], I thought it would be good to move to the refugee camp. I would be with my people.

There I met a boy from Myanmar who is four years older than me. I shared my struggles with him. He told me, "I will live my life with you."

I thought, if I get married, I will have peace then and I will have shelter.

I got married when I was 15-and-a-half years old and now we have a baby. When I was pregnant, I was still a child. I did not have self-confidence.

Tamanna, a World Vision worker, heard about my difficulties. She supported me a lot. I went to the hospital for regular check-ups with her. She brought me nutritious food.

I gave birth in my shelter. When I gave birth, my mother-in-law, a midwife and my husband were there to support me and take care of me.

I can't get a household food ration card because I don't have a document to prove I am married. I married illegally under age 18.

I was not mature enough to get married. If I hadn't got married, I could have enjoyed my life.

My wish is for other girls to get married after they are 18 years old when they are mature. I wish a better life for them.

If you want to stop early marriage, you can do one thing: You can organise meetings and invite girls along with their parents and speak with them.

If you speak about the effects of early marriage – the good and the bad impacts – and how child brides suffer, maybe they will understand and think about it before they get married."

## What children think about this story

Parvina's experience was discussed by 17 children from Rohingya refugee camp, Bangladesh and the UK. Here are some of their comments:

"It would have been better if Parvina received education or any technical work, she could be self-dependent now." **(Nur A, girl, 14, Rohingya refugee camp, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh)**

"After hearing the story, I feel very sad and I think the girl got hurt because she got married under 18 years." **(Zokia, girl, 14, Rohingya refugee camp, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh)**

"You cannot single-handedly end such a big issue but there are so many ways to try and make our world better for them and their future." **(Charlotte, girl, 16, UK)**



## Messages to the UK Government

"Adults can prevent child marriage by raising awareness about the negative consequences." **(Hamid, boy, 14, Rohingya refugee camp, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh)**

"Child marriage is a vicious cycle – one that needs to be broken and fast." **(Toby, boy, 16, UK)**

"Change, it's what we need. We should create change in every way possible. Just because it doesn't directly affect us, it doesn't mean we should ignore the rights of the child." **(Intisar, girl, 13, UK)**



LEFT: Parvina (17) © 2019 Md Shabir Hussain / World Vision

ABOVE: Young people from Rohingya refugee camp, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, commenting on Parvina's story. © 2019 Md Shabir Hussain / World Vision



## Zarghona's story (Afghanistan)

"I am 16 years. I live in Afghanistan. I have five sisters and I am the fourth one in my family. I lost my father around six years ago. My father was addicted to drugs for many years. The last time he got sick, his body couldn't tolerate it and passed away.

After a few months, my uncle who had a wife and five children wanted to remarry and proposed to my mother, but my mother didn't accept his proposal since she didn't have a good life with my father and was afraid that our future would be worse if she remarried.

Since then, the relationship between our family and my uncle broke down emotionally and financially. He didn't even give us my father's land, saying that he had sold it to him few years ago. He was angry with my mother because she didn't want to marry him.

My mother is a housekeeper in my neighbourhood. My mother had to marry off my older sisters when they were still under 16 to gain the bride price so that she could provide basic necessities.

My sisters didn't openly disagree with being married even though they wanted to continue their education, because they wanted to help our mother. They knew if they were married, my mother would have money to pay the rent and one mouth less to feed.

I got married a year and a half ago. A family proposed their son to marry me. I was 14 years old. He was 23 years old and wanted to give us US\$ 3,200 as bride price. I accepted it because our economic situation was very bad and otherwise we had to sleep in the street.

I was also thinking I would have a better future in my husband's house. They had more money than us. I thought I wouldn't have to worry anymore about food and rent if I got married.

I was in grade nine when he told me that I should not go to school anymore. We had a small wedding event. They

didn't even bring me a ring. They even didn't give the bride price to my mother saying that they would give it later.

Six months after we were married, my husband left Afghanistan for Iran with his family to work. He is a day labourer there. He tells me he is working and collecting money and then he will take me there. Now I am living with my mother. I feel bad. I wanted to remove a burden from her shoulder, but I couldn't. I have to be strong for my mother. She didn't remarry again because of us.

I want to be like a person from World Vision who organises meetings with women and talks with them about different issues such as child marriage and children's rights. I wanted to join World Vision but my husband doesn't allow me to go out of the house.

I wanted to continue my education. I wanted to be a lawyer to protect the rights of people who were like us. I don't have much hope for the future. Now, I am at home washing, cleaning, cooking and thinking about a vague future. I lost my hope the day I was not allowed to go to school; the day that my husband didn't keep his word and didn't give money to my mother.

When I help my young sister with her school homework, I feel good. I want her to continue her education.

If I had a magic wand, I would go to the past and would say "no" to this marriage. I was thinking I was helping my mother, but with my decision, I put my family in trouble.

I think if families have a good economic situation, they would not marry their daughters early. If families have support like a good father, a good older brother or a good uncle they would support their girls.

I will ask world leaders to be our supporters. They should not allow families marry off their young ones for money."

## What children think about this story

Zarghona's experience was discussed by 26 children from Niger and the UK. Here are some of their comments:

"Child marriage is happening right now. It is wrong and the children who go through are scarred. They will constantly have the image of marrying an older man they have never met and it will change them as a person forever." **(Anna, girl, 12, UK)**

"In accepting the wedding, Zarghona wanted to help her mother, but when a daughter finishes her study, she can financially help her mother." **(Zeinabou, girl, 13, Niger)**

"There is no choice in Zarghona's story, the mother said already no to the father's brother, so Zarghona did it for her family and her mother." **(Amelia, girl, 14, UK)**



### Messages to the UK Government

"We need more dissuasive measures from the State to ban child marriage and ensure that measures are taken against the parents who do that." **(Hassana, girl, 15, Niger)**

"Money, knowledge, and action! The three main aspects to stop child marriage. Money to be given, to give the girls a choice, knowledge: do you know that 250 million girls are married before 15 years; and action, it needs to be done now, before it's too late!" **(Dylan, boy, 12, UK)**

"We need help to guarantee that the State and local authority ban child marriage before the legal age of the country." **(Mohammed, boy, 13, Niger)**



LEFT: Zarghona (16) © 2019 Narges Ghafary / World Vision

ABOVE: Young people from Niger commenting on Zarghona's story. © 2019 Tabita Ali Soumaila / World Vision

# Children call for action

In total 82 children from six countries, aged 13 to 18 years, provided a set of recommendations, for the UK Government as an aid donor country, to use their political influence. The group includes the three girls from the case studies from Afghanistan and Rohingya refugee camp in

Bangladesh, and 79 children involved in group discussions from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Rohingya refugee camp, (Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh), Niger, and the UK.

Here's what they have to say:

**Call 1: We call on the UK Government, as an aid donor, to use their political influence and diplomacy to stop child marriage in countries suffering humanitarian crises.**

**“Child marriage is such a devastating and grave issue. It has impacts not only on the child, but also holds entire countries back. It is imperative that the UK Government does everything in its power to end this cruel practice.”**  
(Disha, girl, 16, UK)

## a) Raise awareness of the negative consequences of child marriage

- Share stories and videos of child marriage with parents, adults and children in communities and in schools.
- Give information on child marriage legislation and how to report cases of child marriage in the community.
- Involve religious leaders in the prevention of child marriage (e.g. Priests or Imams need to check the age of both parties before marrying them and stop the marriage, if necessary) as well as government officials in refugee camps.

“More initiatives need to be taken to raise awareness among parents of the consequences of child marriage.” (Prittey, girl, 16, Bangladesh)

“Adults can stop child marriage with the help of the camp-in-charge [government official].” (Nur B, girl, 14, Rohingya refugee camp, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh)

## b) Change societal attitudes and cultural norms

- Stop the dowry system and the bride price.
- Persuade parents to delay their daughters' marriages.
- Challenge communities' attitudes towards girls and change harmful customs and traditions.

“We need to change people's personal views, people are becoming blind to child marriage and see it as a norm.” (Toby, boy, 16, UK)

## c) Empower girls and women

- Empower girls to express their opinion to their family and say NO to child marriage.
- Treat women and girls equally to boys and men.

“Girls should learn to express their opinion within their family about child marriage.” (Sajad, boy, 14, Afghanistan)

“Girls have to be aware of child marriage. They need to discuss it with their mother.” (Nur B, girl, 14, Rohingya refugee camp, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh)



## d) Ensure access to education and technical training for children, especially girls

- Ensure that girls finish the curriculum at school before getting married.
- Ensure free education for every child.
- Provide access to technical training for girls.

“We need to ensure that all parents who have a girl at school, promise that she will finish the curriculum.” (Salamatou, girl, 15, Niger)

## e) Implement better legislation on child marriage

- Marriage should be banned before the age of 18.
- Imposing stronger dissuasive sentences for the practice of child marriage against parents and potential husbands.
- Make the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) part of statutory law across the world.

“Girls should marry after they reach 18 years. They will be wiser and have more experience about life.” (Tahira, girl, 14, Afghanistan)

“Parents need to wait until their daughters are 18 years old to arrange their marriage.” (Yeasmine, girl, 15, Rohingya refugee camp, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh)

ABOVE: Young people in Niger © 2019 Tabita Ali Soumaila / World Vision



**Call 2: We call on the UK Government, as an aid donor, to provide more funding for projects that reduce children's vulnerability to child marriage in countries suffering humanitarian crises.**

**"It's truly sickening and shocking that children's wellbeing isn't taken into consideration more. It is not fair that our future generation has to endure this." (Alexia, girl, 16, UK)**

**a) Allocate more funding for child protection, health, mental health and psychological support**

- Create local child protection committees so adults and children know where to report cases of child marriage.
- Support girls with health issues, especially after giving birth.
- Assist girls with mental health and psychological support (e.g. for girls experiencing domestic violence, early pregnancy and being a young mother).

"Child marriage causes mental and physical health problems. It causes lots of physical problems for girls." **(Sepida, girl, 14, Afghanistan)**

**b) Allocate more funding for humanitarian aid**

- Allocate more funds to poor countries after wars or natural disasters.
- Provide income generation activity for parents.
- Provide more projects in remote areas to prevent and stop child marriage.

"I believe that as country we have a responsibility to help those who are less fortunate than us." **(Lola, girl, 14, UK)**

**Call 3: We call on the UK Government, as an aid donor, to provide more platforms for British and overseas children to raise awareness and discuss solutions, to prevent and stop child marriage.**

**"If children are aware, united and determined, we can easily protect our society from child marriage by involving adults, communities and by implementing law." (Afrina, girl, 16, Bangladesh)**

- Create more children's fora in communities so children can learn to advocate against and help prevent and stop child marriage.
- Involve British children in raising awareness within the UK public through the media and other platforms.

"I believe, we should always have awareness about child marriage, and do campaigns. I would do posters, online chats, websites, talks, group discussions." **(Amelia, girl, 14, UK)**

**ABOVE LEFT:** Young people in Afghanistan © 2019 Nadia Amini / World Vision  
**ABOVE RIGHT:** Young people in the UK © 2019 Miguel Pilgrim / World Vision

## Acknowledgements

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- Parvina<sup>4</sup> from Rohingya refugee camp, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh and Karen Homer, Public Engagement Director, Md.Shabir Hussain, Senior Communications Specialist and James Kamira, Child Protection and Education Specialist, World Vision Bangladesh Refugee Crisis Response who collected the story.
- 57 children (aged 13-18) from our programmes in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Niger and in a Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh for participating in the focus group discussions.
- 22 children (aged 12-17) from the Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet in the UK who took part in the focus group discussions.
- Staff from World Vision's National Offices in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Niger and Myanmar-Bangladesh Refugee Crisis Response who facilitated the focus group discussions. And the World Vision media teams for photography and videos.
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<sup>3</sup>Names of participants in the case studies have been anonymised

<sup>4</sup>Ibid



# #ItTakesAWorld

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World Vision believes that by working together with children, their communities, and our supporters and partners, the lives of the world's most vulnerable children can be transformed. As a Christian organisation, we aspire to reflect God's unconditional love in all we do.

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