



IMPACT REPORT 2022



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FOREWORD FROM THE CEO



As *Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage* entered its 11th year of operations in 2022, the countdown towards the Sustainable Development Goals began in earnest. With only eight years left on the clock, no country is on track to achieve these Goals, including Target 5.3: “To eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations.”

Over the past decade, child marriage prevalence has declined by 15%, but progress has been uneven and is not happening fast enough.^a With governments, communities and individuals the world over facing the interconnected challenges of climate crisis, conflict, COVID-19 and rising costs, our work to address child marriage is more urgent than ever.

It is in this context that we began implementing our ambitious new [Secretariat Strategy 2022-25](#). Our approach seeks to deliver the long-term systems change needed to address the root causes of child marriage and gender inequality, to ensure girls and women – in all their diversity – can exercise their rights and fulfil their potential. Change at this scale requires a movement of diverse stakeholders with a shared vision and acting together across sectors and at every level to transform gender norms.

Our role as a secretariat is threefold. 1) We are a central support and coordination body for the largest global civil society partnership working to end child marriage; 2) we represent and advocate for civil society on work to end child marriage, bringing girls and adolescents into decision-making spaces, and mobilising and influencing governments, donors and stakeholders at different levels to take gender-transformative action; and 3) we are an expert and trusted source for evidence and shared learning on child marriage, committed to the belief that our collective work will only be effective and sustainable if it is based on accurate evidence and the lived experience of girls and adolescents.

There are many highlights from what has been a busy year for the global Partnership. In French-speaking West Africa, we supported civil society National Partnerships and coalitions in Burkina Faso and Niger to engage across sectors, share learnings and work collectively to address child marriage and girls’ education in an integrated way. We also supported young researchers to undertake individual investigations, positioning them as essential partners in generating evidence and understanding on child marriage.

In Uttar Pradesh, India, we worked with the state coalition to offer girls training in the design and implementation of social action projects to raise awareness, foster

positive community attitudes, and gather support for girls’ education and services. Through this project, 2,100 adolescent girls identified and took collective action, increased their advocacy work, and inspired others in their communities to support them in transforming the gendered beliefs and practices that drive child marriage and limit girls’ opportunities.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, where child marriage prevalence has remained stagnant over the past 25 years,^b we undertook research with adolescent girls and member organisations, focusing on the links between care work and child marriage. We supported young representatives to define and bring our collective findings and recommendations into regional advocacy spaces, leading to their inclusion in the intergovernmental [Buenos Aires Commitment](#).

At the global level, we provided technical input and collectively advocated for governments to support a new United Nations (UN) [Resolution](#) on Child, Early and Forced Marriage, which was adopted with broad consensus by 125 co-sponsors. Gains include a greater focus on the intersecting factors that put girls at risk, and progressive language on their sexual and reproductive rights, education and autonomy.

We also increased our outreach and engagement with researchers, practitioners, funders and policymakers through the Child Marriage Research to Action Network, holding our first ever online [global research convening](#). In this, we brought together participants from around the world to explore the latest evidence – including from member organisations leading innovations in the Global South – and contributed to a diversified global evidence base, and strengthened coordination and action to end child marriage.

We also continued to respond to the evolving needs of the Partnership, and particularly civil society collectives working at the national and sub-national level. We streamlined our processes for making financial investments in *Girls Not Brides* National Partnerships and coalitions, and deepened technical support for them to drive change in their countries and communities.

I look forward to continuing this journey with our friends and partners around the world in 2023. Through our collective global efforts, I am confident we will get closer to the vision of ending child marriage in our generation!

Dr Faith Mwangi-Powell
CEO, *Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage*

^a[UNICEF \(2021\) Towards ending child marriage: Global trends and profiles of progress.](#)

^b[Ibid.](#)

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD



As the Chair of the Board of Trustees of *Girls Not Brides*, I am delighted to introduce this comprehensive annual impact report, a document that does much to bring to life the important work that *Girls Not Brides* is doing and the changes that are happening across the world as a direct result of the global movement to end child marriage.

This report marks my first full year in office and I continue to be struck by the approach that informs how *Girls Not Brides* understands and responds to an issue as complex and multi-layered as child marriage. The *Girls Not Brides* approach places those most affected – and those supporting them – at the centre.

With over 1,600 members in more than 100 countries, it is an approach that values partnership as the principal tool for supporting individuals, engaging communities and building an advocacy coalition to push for the legal changes, policy and financial commitments, and practical support that will make a real difference. It is an approach that has helped to build an effective, dynamic global movement to end child marriage and that will sustain this movement for as long as it is needed.

Our partners are the core business of *Girls Not Brides* and, as this report confirms, much of our work is aimed at leveraging the collective power of everyone – member organisations, National and State Partnerships and coalitions – to accelerate the momentum towards a world without child marriage. Under our new strategy

we are moving even closer to *Girls Not Brides* member organisations: listening carefully and seeking to deliver the kind of support they need to effect real and lasting change.

At the same time, *Girls Not Brides* continues its advocacy and learning work: taking every opportunity to learn with, inform and galvanise the global movement to build a shared vision of a world without child marriage and to drive necessary change. Our approach to advocacy is firmly evidence-based and informed by the girls and women closest to the issue, including those who have been most marginalised.

Such work is fundamental to the mission of *Girls Not Brides* because it helps to create understanding around why ending child marriage and supporting married girls is so important; and why it is crucial to the health and wellbeing of millions of girls and their communities. In a world beset by competing demands for attention and resources, strong, evidence-based advocacy ensures that the issue of child marriage stays where it belongs: at the top of international, regional and national agendas.

This report has documented a solid record of impact. But the challenges are great and much remains to be done. Our broader operating environment continues to be unstable and ever-changing, demanding greater responsiveness and increased flexibility. Within *Girls Not Brides*, ongoing efforts to move closer to member

organisations have borne fruit but must be accelerated. Our work to unify the movement and embed a culture of listening and learning must continue as new allies in the global movement to end child marriage come on board.

In closing I express my gratitude to Dr Faith Mwangi-Powell, CEO of *Girls Not Brides*, and her hardworking team, as well as to my fellow trustees, for their support and guidance. The learning journey around an issue as multifaceted complex as child marriage is an ongoing one for all of us. We can and must learn from each other – and of course with and from the girls we seek to support and champion, so they can exercise their rights and reach their full potential.

Dr Anne T Gallagher AO
Chair of the Board of Trustees

DEFINITIONS

CHILD MARRIAGE

We use the term “child marriage” to refer to all forms of child, early and forced marriage and unions where at least one party is under the age of 18. In this, we include all girls and adolescents affected by the practice – whether in formal or informal unions – and acknowledge the culturally-specific understandings of childhood and development, and the complex relationship between age, consent and force.

THE GIRLS NOT BRIDES GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP (THE PARTNERSHIP)

At the end of 2022, the *Girls Not Brides* partnership comprised 1,604 member organisations from 110 countries committed to working together to end child marriage and support married girls. *Girls Not Brides* member organisations work across sectors – including health, education, human rights and humanitarian contexts – and range from small grassroots actors to large international organisations.

THE MOVEMENT TO END CHILD MARRIAGE

The informal global network of civil society and grassroots organisations, national and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), activists, academics, United Nations (UN) agencies, funders, governments, leaders and champions – all working towards a world without child marriage where girls can exercise their rights and reach their full potential.

THE GIRLS NOT BRIDES SECRETARIAT

The global Partnership is supported by the *Girls Not Brides* secretariat – a diverse team based in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. The secretariat plays three broad roles in civil society: a central support and coordination body for the largest global civil society partnership working to end child marriage; a representative of and advocate for civil society on work to end child marriage (including to influence decision-makers and funders at different levels); and an expert and trusted source and convenor of evidence and shared learning on what works to end child marriage.

NATIONAL AND STATE PARTNERSHIPS AND COALITIONS

Many *Girls Not Brides* member organisations have come together to accelerate progress to end child marriage in their countries by forming [National and State Partnerships and coalitions](#).

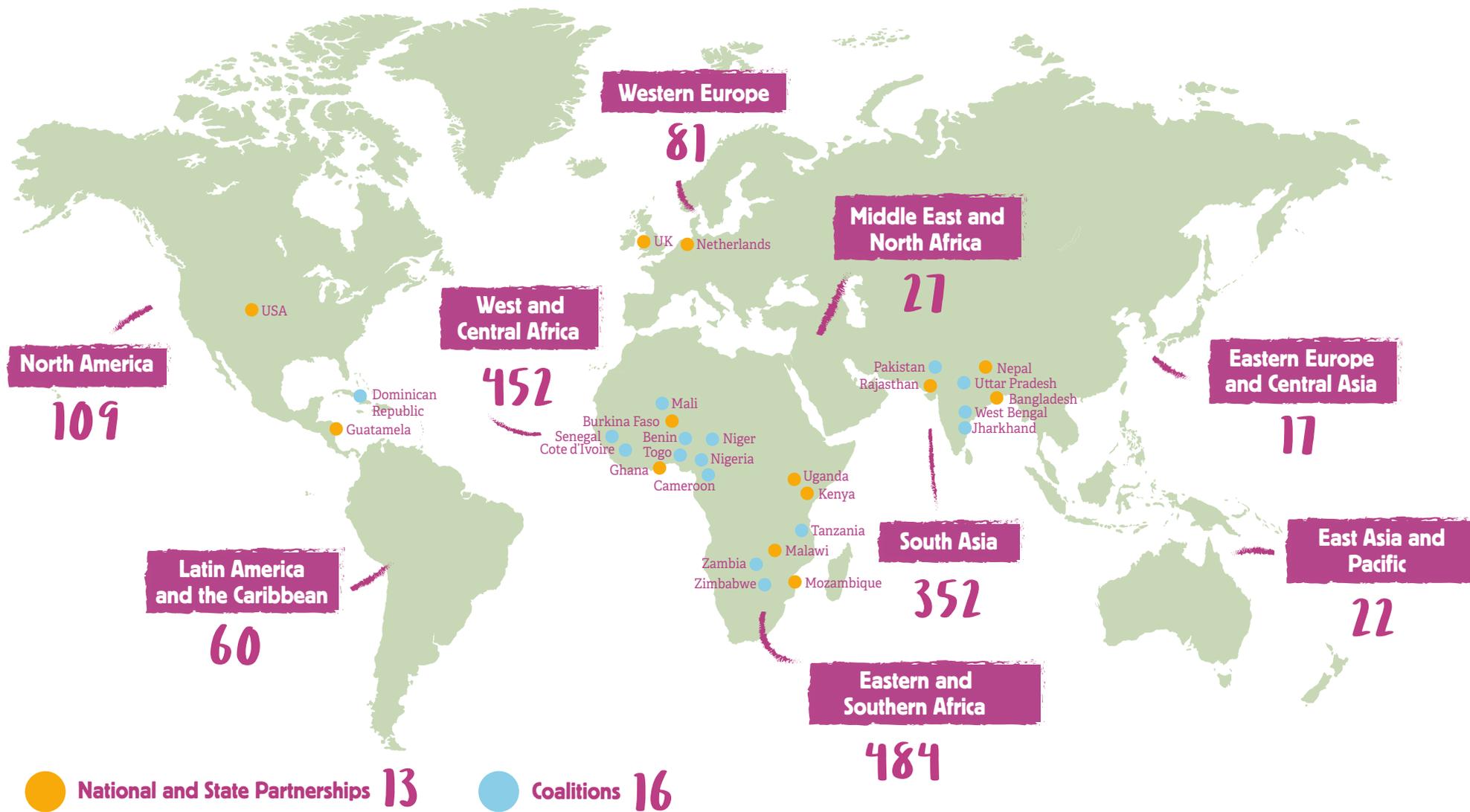
National and State Partnerships are networks of *Girls Not Brides* member organisations that believe in the power of collective action to end child marriage and ensure girls can reach their full potential. They have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the *Girls Not Brides* secretariat to align their work with the [Partnership Strategy](#).

Coalitions are networks of civil society organisations committed to addressing child marriage and working together at the national level to spearhead change. They are close allies to *Girls Not Brides* but have not signed an MoU.

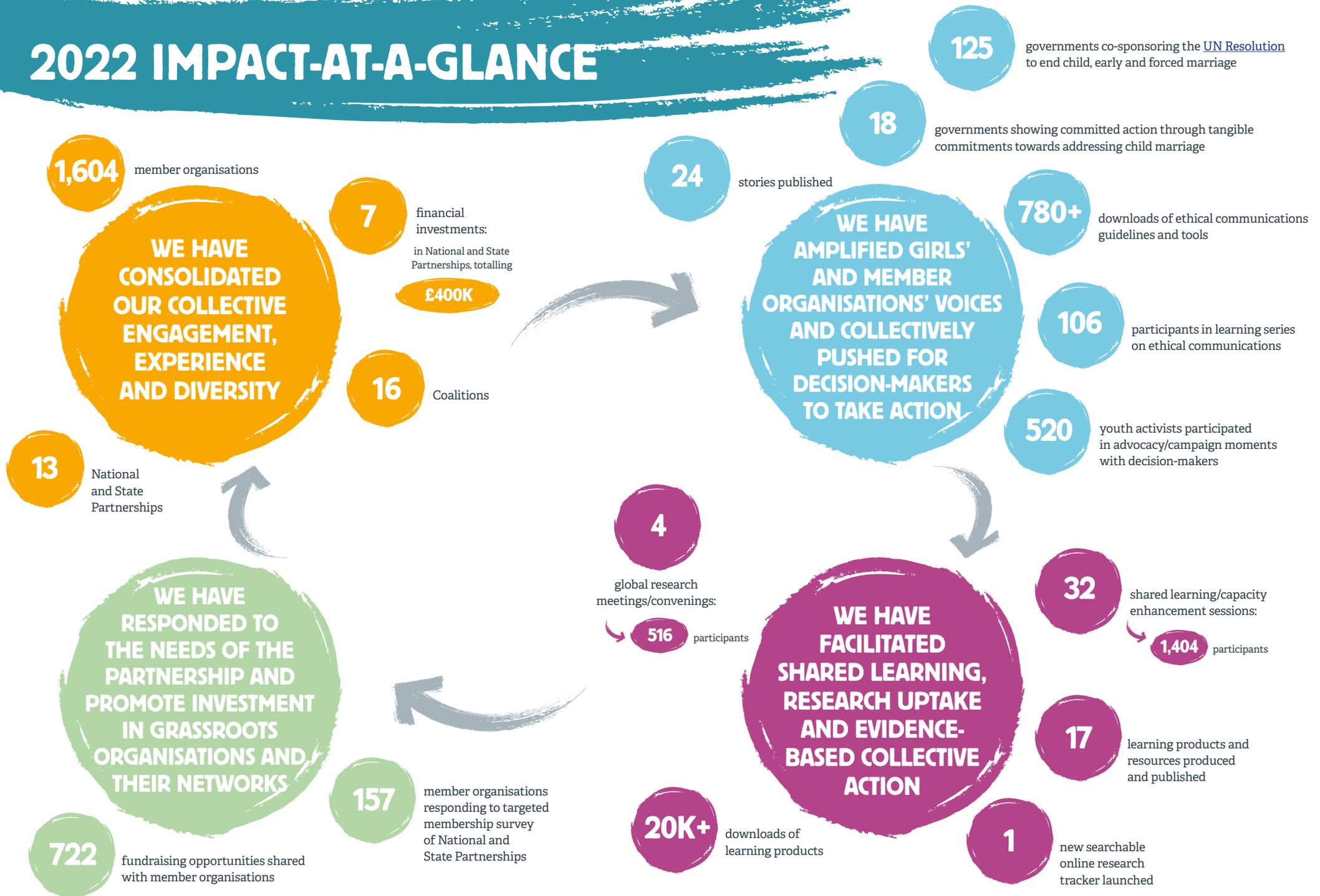
THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP TO END CHILD MARRIAGE

GIRLS NOT BRIDES MEMBERS BY REGION

Total member organisations **1,604** Total countries **110**



2022 IMPACT-AT-A-GLANCE



INTRODUCTION TO THE SECRETARIAT OBJECTIVES

IN 2022, *GIRLS NOT BRIDES* BEGAN IMPLEMENTING ITS NEW SECRETARIAT STRATEGY 2022-25 TO ACCELERATE CHANGE TO END CHILD MARRIAGE. OUR WORK WAS ORGANISED AROUND FOUR OBJECTIVES:

1

MOVEMENT-BUILDING: Leverage the collective power of the global Partnership of member organisations, National and State Partnerships and coalitions for accelerated action to end child marriage.

2

INFLUENCING: Galvanize the wider global end child marriage movement to drive change nationally, regionally and globally.

3

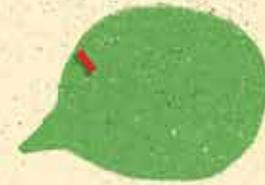
LEARNING: Leverage knowledge, learning and evidence to address child marriage across the movement.

4

SECRETARIAT AT THE SERVICE OF THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP: Continue to develop as a sustainable and values-based organisation at the service of the global Partnership.



JOIN THE
MOVEMENT!



OBJECTIVE 1: MOVEMENT-BUILDING

Girls Not Brides is the largest partnership working together to end child marriage around the globe. Over 2022, we consolidated our collective engagement, experience and diversity.

KEY EVIDENCE



*Number/percentage of member organisations in each category is based on how they self-identify in their membership application. Some identify as more than one category.

We intentionally focused on growing the movement in Latin America and the Caribbean – a region where progress on child marriage has been slowest – and have increased youth and women's participation and championed their leadership. We worked with member organisations to share learnings, enhance capacity, connect diverse stakeholders and catalyse collective action at all levels to ensure governments deliver on their commitments.

A NEW ROADMAP FOR OUR COLLECTIVE WORK

The collective work of *Girls Not Brides* member organisations is at the forefront of the movement to end child marriage around the world. Over the past decade the global prevalence of child marriage has decreased and millions of girls have enjoyed greater freedoms, opportunities and powers to decide and direct their own lives. However, progress has been uneven, with prevalence declining significantly in some areas and more slowly in others.^d

Over the past five years, individuals and communities the world over have been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict, climate crisis and rising costs. In this context, we launched our refreshed [Partnership Strategy 2022-25](#) in February 2022. This Strategy is the result of extensive consultation with *Girls Not Brides* member organisations and external stakeholders, and includes insights from over 300 individuals. It builds on the progress, lessons and shifts we have all experienced over the last five years to provide a roadmap for our collective work to 2025.

^dUNICEF (2021) [Towards ending child marriage: Global trends and profiles of progress](#).

PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY GOALS

The Partnership Strategy is organised around six shared goals, designed to focus our work and maximise our impact. They see:

- A. Communities as the drivers of change, with girls and women at the centre.
- B. Governments leading effective action and fostering civil society participation.
- C. The global community championing and supporting initiatives to end child marriage.
- D. More sustainable, long-term funding is available, particularly for communities.
- E. Evidence-based work to address child marriage.
- F. Collective engagement through a diverse global Partnership.

The Partnership Strategy goals – and the overarching themes of gender-transformative approaches, meaningful youth engagement and child marriage as a multi-sectoral issue – guided the development of our renewed Secretariat Strategy, also launched at the beginning of 2022.

While implementing these strategies, we are also committed to continuously listening, learning and adapting to the needs of the Partnership, and to the emerging evidence. We also offer a platform that foregrounds the experiences of the Partnership and promotes shared learning and evidence uptake with diverse stakeholders, to maximise impact. More on this under Strategic Objective 3 on p. 25.

GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES:

Gender inequality is the root cause of child marriage. It, and the social norms and practices that it informs, means that girls and women are treated as second-class citizens, denied their human rights, and valued less because of their sex. To be successful and sustainable, work to end child marriage must push for gender-transformative social change that ensures girls and women – in all their diversity – can exercise their rights and that achieves gender equality.

SUPPORTING GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE COLLECTIVE ACTION AT THE SUB-NATIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL

Girls Not Brides National and State Partnerships and coalitions – as networks of organisations bringing together contextually relevant expertise, evidence and connections, and speaking with one voice – are uniquely positioned to influence and advocate for local and national governments to take action. The *Girls Not Brides* secretariat offers tailored technical assistance to these networks, based on their priority work areas and needs as defined by them – and as included in the refreshed Partnership Strategy – and supports them to connect and learn from each other and broader learning in the movement.

Child marriage is rooted in gender inequality and can only be effectively addressed with long-term structural change to rebalance power and promote girls' rights and agency. *Girls Not Brides* is committed to working with member organisations – and particularly community-based organisations and youth activists – to take collective, gender-transformative actions and achieve change at scale.

Over 2022, *Girls Not Brides* and UNICEF worked with [Girls Not Brides Mozambique](#) and the Coalition of Civil Society to End Child Marriage in Nigeria ([Nigeria Coalition](#)) to advance their gender-transformative collective action and organisational practices. Through a series of workshops and using the *Girls Not Brides* self-assessment scorecard, network members critically reviewed their approaches to inclusiveness, youth and women's leadership, engagement with other collectives, human rights framing, and advocacy to address the structural drivers of child marriage. They then positioned themselves on the Gender Integration Continuum, building a shared understanding and mapping collective gender-transformative actions that respond to their context.

As a result, these networks have improved the participation and leadership of women- and youth-led organisations in their collective activities. They have begun implementing their collectively agreed gender-transformative actions, in some cases with funding through this project. The Nigeria Coalition is now a member of the national Technical Working Group on Ending Child Marriage, where they can push for girls' and civil society voices to be heard and reflected in national policy, including the next National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage.

Moving forwards, the secretariat will continue to support these networks on their gender-transformative journeys, facilitating peer mentoring, learning sessions and review meetings, sharing opportunities for further training and documenting models that address the root causes of child marriage at scale.

“We have built a shared understanding of the dynamics and structures of power that reinforce gender inequalities, with a strong focus on what norms and prescribed gender roles perpetuate these inequalities.”

Member of the Nigeria Coalition, after participating in a workshop on gender-transformative approaches

Also in Africa, we continued to build on our work with *Girls Not Brides Kenya* and the Tanzania Ending Child Marriage Network (TECMN) to address the linked issues of child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in the cross-border Kuria community. As in Mozambique and Nigeria, we employed gender-transformative approaches, youth engagement and collective action – this time community-based – as tools to achieve sustainable change.

This flagship project saw the creation of two youth working groups, with 133 youth activists trained to act as champions in their communities. Young people, together, built trust with different community stakeholders and worked with government structures to organise mentorship sessions in and beyond schools, and to create four child protection committees.

Girls Not Brides member organisations worked together to support ongoing discussions on the role of social norms in defining a community's priorities and practices. They engaged with community religious and cultural leaders to examine the root causes of practices like child marriage and FGM/C, and held dialogues with youth and women's groups to ensure change is inclusive of those who are most marginalised.

The project shows the power of youth and collective action to effect real change in communities, for example through using media to raise awareness of the impacts of child marriage and FGM/C.

Girls Not Brides continues to work with member organisations to support young people and raise the issue of child marriage and FGM/C with decision-makers and in the Kuria community. In 2023, we will support the Kuria Youth Movement to End Child Marriage to scale up their work addressing child marriage through intercultural and intergenerational dialogues, community activism and budget advocacy.

Gender-transformative collective action is also a priority for our work in South Asia, which is home to nearly half of all girls married before the age of 18. With support from Oxfam GB we launched a Gender Leadership Programme to build a network of self-aware gender leaders who can then lead gender-transformative actions with and between their organisations to better address child marriage across India.

The first five-day residential module convened 27 participants from nine states to explore leadership styles and skills, undertake power and gender analyses and conceptualise action projects through a gender lens. The diversity of participants – whose ages spanned 50 years and who came from three major religions – contributed to the richness of discussion and perspectives.

The project will continue into 2023, but already participants have expressed an increased understanding and self-awareness around gender dynamics, knowledge of practical tools and a commitment to implementing change in their own lives, communities, organisations and work to end child marriage. Building on this process, *Girls Not Brides* will make seed investments for projects that incorporate learnings and use innovative gender-transformative approaches to end child marriage over the coming year.

“We are focusing more on how to effectively and safely address the power dynamics in the communities where our members work. As one example, in the Coalition what do we know about the most effective ways to work with men and boys that goes beyond ad hoc ‘male champions’ speaking out against child marriage and really works with men and boys to examine their role within systems of privilege and power?”

Member of the Nigeria Coalition, after participating in a workshop on gender-transformative approaches

“Being involved in this project has helped us work collectively to amplify and lift the voices of girls, young women, communities, leaders who are working day and night to end child marriage amongst the Kuria community.”

Community leader, Migori, Kenya

“... We are finding that the community is more willing to speak about their challenges as more people are calling into our media house to openly talk about FGM/C and child marriages, which is something that hadn't happened before [...] There is an increase in number of parents calling in and saying their daughters will not undergo the cut.”

Radio Station Manager, Sachita FM, Tarime, Tanzania

“These learnings started the process of transformation for me, my negotiation has started and I was able to make a network. I want this for my entire lifetime.”

Gender Leadership Programme participant, India

“We will put this learning into the women's leadership structure at village level.”

Gender Leadership Programme participant, India

INCLUDING GIRLS, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH IN COLLECTIVE ACTION

While the Gender Leadership Programme mostly focused on adults from civil society organisations, engaging adolescent girls in transformative collective action is also essential to our work. In [Uttar Pradesh](#), India, we worked with the state coalition to offer girls training in the design and implementation of social action projects (SAPs) to raise awareness, foster positive community attitudes, and gather support for girls' education and services. Following this training, 2,100 adolescent girl leaders and their peers implemented 100 SAPs, reaching 13,224 community members and local decision-makers in 28 districts.

The SAPs provided a platform for adolescent girls to enhance their leadership, planning, negotiation and implementation skills. They identified and took collective action, increased their advocacy work – and inspired other adolescent girls and youth workers in their communities to learn and advocate for their rights too. In this, the project shows the power of girls – acting together, in public spaces – to express their needs and solutions, and transform gendered beliefs and practices.

Girls Not Brides will continue to support the coalition in Uttar Pradesh to deliver leadership trainings with and for girls, and link them and girls to government services. This work is more important than ever, as girls are pushed out of school as families and communities struggle to cope with the ongoing repercussions of COVID-19 and rising costs in the state.

Another way to engage young people in gender-transformative action is through sports – particularly pertinent in a country like India, which has a long and rich sporting history from which girls and women have often been excluded. This was the context for our collaboration with Pro Sport Development in 2022, through which 61 youth workers from 49 different organisations learned to use sports to initiate dialogues around gender in rural areas of Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

Through this initiative, young participants strengthened their understanding of diverse gender identities, roles and stereotypes, and their skills in using sports to facilitate impactful dialogues around gender. They have already reported using their new skills to support girls to build relationships and discuss their goals, beyond marriage.

STRENGTHENING THE MOVEMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Child marriage is also a persistent and complex issue in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this region it often takes the form of informal unions^e and for this reason it is not widely recognised or prioritised for action. In fact, prevalence has remained stagnant over the past 25 years.^f As elsewhere, though, the practice is rooted in gender inequality, and the best way to address it is through collective action to advance girls' rights and agency.

In July, we launched the first National Partnership to address child, early and forced marriage and unions in the region – in Guatemala, where 30% of girls and adolescents marry or enter a union before age 18. The National Partnership is made up of 21 civil society organisations and four individual girl and adolescent rights activists – all members of the Mesa a Favor de las Niñas y Adolescentes (La Mesa Niña). These organisations have worked together to advance girls' rights for 10 years. Formally becoming a National Partnership reinforces their commitment to addressing child, early and forced marriage and unions as part of their work to ensure all girls and adolescents in Guatemala are free to make choices about their lives and bodies.

“Initially, an uncle was not very appreciative and motivating about my efforts but later the success of SAP changed his mind.”

Adolescent girl leader, Uttar Pradesh, India

“When girls take part in outdoor games, it builds team spirit and relationships between young women. They can share their problems and talk about things like how their bodies are changing as they grow up. It helps them learn and share their issues openly.”

Sports workshop participant, Jharkhand, India

“Child, early and forced marriage and unions hinder girls' and adolescents' rights and lives, so addressing the practice is essential to achieving gender equality.”

Joseline Velasquez, Mesa de la Niña, Guatemala

^eWhen speaking about Latin America and the Caribbean, we refer to child, early and forced marriage and unions in full to make these forms visible, in a region where it is often overlooked.

^fUNICEF (2021) *Towards ending child marriage: Global trends and profiles of progress*.

The launch itself was one step on the movement-building journey in Guatemala. It provided an opportunity to raise the profile of the issue, with 26 media representatives attending the press conference and 47 key stakeholders joining the forum to hear directly from civil society organisations, adolescent girls and youth working to address child, early and forced marriage and unions in the country. It also provided a springboard for a meeting with the Embassy of Sweden and an opportunity to discuss funding for the partnership.

Girls Not Brides continues to work with La Mesa Niña to develop a collective workplan to raise awareness of the issue around the presidential elections in 2023. Implementation will also be supported by a financial investment from *Girls Not Brides*.

Movement-building is a long-term project requiring responsiveness and flexibility in approach, as well as time to build consensus and gain momentum. In the Dominican Republic, we continued to offer technical assistance to a group of organisations financed by the [Girls First Fund](#), exploring opportunities and challenges to forming a national coalition to address child, early and forced marriage and unions.

Through two workshops, they recognised the value of collective work, but also the need to define a common goal and approach, and the internal coordination mechanisms needed to deliver on these.

Moving forwards, *Girls Not Brides* will continue to offer broad support to member organisations in the country, and will work with them to monitor the effect of national policy on child, early and forced marriage and unions.

RECONNECTING WITH MEMBER ORGANISATIONS AFTER COVID-19 TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

The impacts of COVID-19 have been felt across the globe with travel restrictions preventing in-person gatherings for many months. In 2022, we began reconnecting with many member organisations, bringing collectives together again to discuss and plan their shared work.

In Nepal, we held a convening of *Girls Not Brides Nepal* to reconnect and re-energise their collective work, share the latest learning and evidence, and discuss strategies to address child marriage in the country. Together, the National Partnership developed an action plan to guide their work and establish a capacity enhancement strategy for its members, leaving the workshop with strengthened connections, a shared vision and a plan to achieve it.

People aged of 16-40 account for 41% of the total population of Nepal,⁸ but a lack of meaningful youth engagement in the past has limited their participation in vital discussions on topics like child marriage. So, *Girls Not Brides Nepal* – in partnership with Restless Development Nepal – held a National Youth Consultation on youth leadership to ensure they are recognised as active participants in the national movement end child marriage.

Building on a 2021 scoping study, the National Youth Consultation brought together 30 youth participants from seven provinces to share their lived experiences, analyse the drivers of child marriage in their contexts, discuss solutions and co-design a youth engagement strategy. As a result of this inter-provincial, intersectoral and intergenerational dialogue, the group developed a Charter to guide their advocacy. This Charter was supported by national-level guest representatives, and shared with the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, and other stakeholders.

“I want to thank *Girls Not Brides* because at the country level, I have never been in a space where a foreign organisation wants to invest in a national process. They have been very patient and steadfast in their intention to support us.”

Representative of civil society organisation,
Dominican Republic

⁸UNFPA (2022) *For young people, by young people*.

IMPACT IN PRACTICE: COLLECTIVE ACTION AND JOINT ADVOCACY ON CHILD MARRIAGE AND EDUCATION IN FRENCH-SPEAKING WEST AFRICA

Child marriage and a lack of educational opportunities for girls are both rooted in gender inequality. Lack of access to education – or early school leaving – pushes many girls into marriage, as they lack other opportunities. Equally, married girls often leave school due to practical barriers to access, including care responsibilities (see more on care in the Impact in Practice on p. 22).

Keeping girls in school is one of the best ways to prevent child marriage. Education is also a powerful path to gender equality, as it can strengthen girls' skills, knowledge and power to challenge discriminatory norms. This year, *Girls Not Brides* intensified its cross-sectoral work to ensure child marriage and girls' education are addressed in an integrated way – our work in French-speaking West Africa is one example of this.

CROSS-SECTORAL WORK TO ADDRESS CHILD MARRIAGE AND GIRLS' EDUCATION IN WEST AFRICA

Despite recent progress, gender inequality in education in West and Central Africa remains the highest in the world, with 28 million girls lacking access to education.^h The region also has the highest child marriage prevalence in the world – with 37% of girls married before the age of 18.ⁱ Successfully addressing these issues means working collectively across sectors with education coalitions and young people to promote a better understanding of child marriage and how young people can be effective agents of change.

Responding to requests from member organisations in French-speaking West Africa for more targeted support, we began working at scale in the region for the first time in 2022. With financial support from Education Out Loud, we worked with the [Burkina Faso National Partnership](#) (Coalition Nationale Contre le Mariage des Enfants au Burkina Faso) and the [Niger coalition](#) (Plateforme vers la fin du mariage des enfants au Niger) to address the links between child marriage and education in the region.

We supported the coalitions to share learning and strengthen their collective advocacy for the implementation of laws, policies and programmes which promote gender equality, improve girls' access and retention in quality education, and contribute to ending child marriage.

^hGender Equality and Inclusive Education Task Team, 2017, [Promoting girls' right to learn in West and Central Africa](#). Save the Children and the Regional Coordination Group on SDG4 in West and Central Africa; referenced in *Girls Not Brides* (2022) [Child marriage and girls' education in West and Central Africa: Literature review](#).

ⁱUNICEF (2022) [Child marriage in West and Central Africa: A statistical overview and reflections on ending the practice](#).

ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY COLLECTIVES

Working together, we created a platform for members of the education and end child marriage coalitions to come together to share their experiences, learn from one another, and form a better understanding of the overlapping ecosystems of change in their respective countries, and beyond.

Through face-to-face and online sessions and bespoke mentoring – on topics including safeguarding, financial management skills, resource mobilisation and budget advocacy – 169 participants received training to ensure they can work effectively as a collective and feel confident providing peer-support to other organisations.

By facilitating effective cross-sector engagement and capacity enhancement, we have contributed to these coalitions' strengthened collaboration, recognition of the benefits of working together and strategically across the region, and the co-creation and implementation of joint advocacy plans.

ENGAGING YOUTH AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Girls Not Brides is also committed to supporting young people's leadership in the movement to end child marriage in West and Central Africa. Building on the youth activism training carried out in 2021, we launched a youth-led research project this year, supporting young people from Burkina Faso and Niger to draw on their diverse experiences and intimate knowledge of their community contexts to design and carry out their own research.

Through this project, participants developed their research and analysis skills, built a better understanding of the complexities of addressing child marriage, and contributed meaningfully to the local, national, regional and global body of evidence on child marriage and education.

Alongside the partnership and coalition convenings, this project also contributed to young people being increasingly recognised as leading agents of change in the end child marriage movement in the region, as evidenced by them being nominated to share their experiences in external learning webinars.



OBJECTIVE 2: INFLUENCING

KEY EVIDENCE

24

stories of change published, including girl and member voices

780+

downloads of ethical communications guidelines and tools

106

participants in learning series on ethical communications

515

commitments made through national, regional and global campaigns

125

governments co-sponsored a new UN Resolution on Child, Early and Forced Marriage

With the intensifying impacts of climate crises, conflict, COVID-19 and rising costs of living being felt the world over, our work to raise awareness and push for accelerated action to end child marriage and advance girls' rights and agency is more urgent than ever.

The secretariat plays a key role in amplifying girls' and member organisations' voices, and in mobilising the global Partnership around a clear, unified and practical vision for change. Together, we have pushed for decision-makers to increase and implement their political and financial commitments, with a focus on multi-sectoral responses and gender-transformative structural change.

BRINGING GIRLS' AND ADOLESCENTS' VOICES INTO ADVOCACY SPACES

Years of collective advocacy have moved the dial towards intergenerational solidarity. *Girls Not Brides* has played a powerful part in opening spaces and offering technical and financial support for young people to represent themselves in national, regional and global arena – work we continued in 2022.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, *Girls Not Brides* worked with other youth and feminist organisations to organise a virtual Regional Youth Forum in preparation for the Regional Conference on Population and Development held in June. During the Forum, we supported youth activists to reflect on the issues that affect them most and to prepare a joint statement, which now acts as a tool for collective youth advocacy in the

region. The same team came together again in September to organise another youth forum ahead of the Regional Conference on Women (see more in the Impact in Practice on p. 22).

In July, *Girls Not Brides* partnered with UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office to support representatives from Children's Dignity Forum – including the coordinator of the Tanzania Ending Child Marriage Network – to join more than 350 other youth delegates at the 10th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights. While there, they shared, learned and networked with governments, activists, UN Agencies, donors, religious leaders and changemakers from across the continent. They came away even more [convinced](#) of the need for greater, more sustainable, flexible and participatory funding for youth movements – a theme which was also picked up by young activists speaking on at side events of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September.

As part of our engagement at UNGA in New York, we worked with the Ford Foundation to organise a side event to discuss transformative change in a fast-paced world. This provided a unique space for young women activists, practitioners and advocates to bring their priorities – including girls’ education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, funding for grassroots and youth-led organisations, and for partnerships – in front of diverse stakeholders, including funders and government officials. We tied their insights together with the other issues being discussed at UNGA – including through a blog with our [three key takeaways](#) for the movement to end child marriage – keeping youth and member voices at the core of our own ongoing, collective, cross-sectoral advocacy.

“I feel the importance of flexible funding that fits the current context, so that as change makers we won’t have to sleep on our ideas just because we don’t have the resources or the system is complex.”

Marietha Cedric, *Girls Not Brides* and Children’s Dignity Forum youth activist

“Invite us – young people – to speak on the issue. We need to tell you what we need, we need to be in the conversations, we need to be at the table making decisions with you, we need to be part of this movement.”

Fernanda Vázquez Rojas, Elige Red de Jóvenes por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos, Mexico, speaking at our UNGA side event

ADVOCATING WITH AND FOR THE GIRLS WHO HAVE BEEN MOST MARGINALISED

Around UNGA, we also offered technical inputs into the new [Resolution](#) on Child, Early and Forced Marriage, adopted by the UNGA Third Committee with broad support from 125 co-sponsors in November 2022. Key gains include the focus on the multiple and intersecting factors that put girls at risk – particularly adolescent girls and girls from other marginalised groups. The new resolution also uses more progressive language on girls’ sexual and reproductive rights, education and autonomy.

Civil society organisations – including *Girls Not Brides* member organisations – played a key role in calling on governments to support the resolution, and we will continue to work with them to maintain international pressure on Member States to implement their commitments, including through our [template letter](#).

Many factors can intersect to put girls and adolescents at greater risk of child marriage, including their gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexuality and class. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the continuing marginalisation and stigmatisation of Indigenous communities puts girls and adolescents at greater risk, masks the structural causes of child marriage and makes it difficult to propose solutions beyond prohibitive laws.

In response to this situation, we joined up with the Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas and the Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas to organise a side event at the 21st Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). This was a first-time partnership with Indigenous women and youth organisations, specifically intended to raise child marriage as an issue that Indigenous communities have solutions to.

Through the event, we supported Indigenous adolescents, youth and women to compile five [recommendations](#) for community-led, urgent action. The president of the UNPFII acknowledged the importance of addressing the issue and supported these recommendations being presented to Member States.

COLLECTIVE ADVOCACY HAS TANGIBLE IMPACTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The impact of many organisations advocating together around a clear, practical vision for change is more powerful than any can have alone. That is why we base our collective advocacy on the insights and priorities shared by member organisations, building consensus and gaining momentum in the process. In March 2022, the Government of Guatemala began a legal initiative that would have limited girls’, women’s and LGBTQIA+ people’s rights, including their access to sexual and reproductive health – including abortion – and comprehensive sexuality education.

In response, *Girls Not Brides* worked closely with La Mesa Niña to issue a [joint statement](#) calling for that law not to be passed. Through this initiative – the first time *Girls Not Brides* issued a statement on a national human rights issue in the region – we strengthened our solidarity with national and locally-led feminist and human rights organisations, demonstrated our standing on the issues related to child marriage and girls’ and women’s rights, and contributed to the international pressure which ultimately led to the law being vetoed by the President.

We will continue to work with La Mesa Niña to make sure this law is not revived during the 2023 presidential campaign, and to ensure girls’ and adolescents voices are heard. We will also work with La Mesa Niña on a girls and adolescents network, to support young people to bring key policy issues before presidential candidates, and to hold them to account.

An important learning and strategy coming out of partnership and coalition spaces in South Asia also centres on creating spaces for dialogue with and between young people, supporting them to identify shared priorities and present these directly to government. One example of this is our collective advocacy around the minimum age of marriage in India, which was set to increase from 18 to 21 years for girls. We supported 95 civil society organisations and 2,500 young people to share their perspectives, and compile and present their joint demands to government.

Young people did not want to focus on the age of marriage, which they saw as a way to criminalise consensual relationships and reduce girls' and adolescents' right to choose – particularly when they cross caste and religious lines. Instead, they were concerned with access to quality education, safe and decent employment, comprehensive sexuality education and the right to participate in the decisions that affect them. Sustained collective advocacy, and submissions to the Parliamentary Committee reviewing the law, has gained global media attention and – so far – kept the law from being changed.

LEADING THE WAY IN ETHICAL COMMUNICATIONS

Cutting across all our work to amplify girls' voices is our commitment to communicating responsibly around child marriage. This means following a storytelling process that centres contributor needs and preferences, so they find it to be a source of power. To facilitate this, we launched our newly designed [ethical communications guidelines](#) in September, alongside the 15 practical and printable tools needed to deliver on them. We then focused on embedding these tools in our own practices – with participatory training for the whole secretariat – and promoting shared learning and uptake across the Partnership, and beyond.

The dedicated [learning series](#) session on ethical communications was designed with contributions from *Girls Not Brides* member organisations and a survivor of child marriage to give an overview of the principles and tools included in the guidelines, and to illustrate the real-life impact the communications process can have for girls, adolescents and young women. The session also included a participatory element, where attendees worked through a scenario tailored to their context.

We also co-led a session at the [Bond Communications Working Group](#), where we shared experiences with communicators working across the international

development and humanitarian sectors, so contributing to broader change towards contributor-led, decolonised storytelling. The guidelines and tools have now been downloaded over 780 times in English, French and Spanish, indicating that they are being widely referenced and implemented.

AMPLIFYING GIRLS' AND MEMBER VOICES FOR A POSITIVE VISION OF CHANGE

This year, we used our digital channels to share the work being done to end child marriage, how it affects girls' lives and what challenges we still face as a movement. In sharing these stories, we have kept member organisations and partners engaged and motivated, and have ensured that decision-makers, governments and donors can see the impact of investing in civil society organisations and partnerships working with girls to build a better future for us all.

Over 2022, we published 24 stories – including girl- and member-led insights, expertise and personal stories – on our website. The website was viewed over 1.2 million times, and stories accounted for almost 16,000 of these. This year, stories focused on gender-transformative approaches, youth activism, intersectionality, humanitarian contexts and collective action and advocacy to end child marriage.

The most visited story was [I do not: How Nepalese girls are breaking free from child marriage](#), an in-depth story about Kavita,¹ a young woman from rural Nepal who built up her confidence through a children's club organised by the Janaki Women's Awareness Society, and persuaded her parents to turn down an offer of marriage while she was still at school. Other blogs included [Changing the pattern: How tailoring is helping young refugees say "no" to child marriage](#) and [How to support girls and adolescents' power in Latin America and the Caribbean](#).

We also shared information, stories, events and discussions on child marriage and the work being done to end it across our social media channels. Through this, we encouraged broad audiences and key stakeholders – including member organisations and donors – to join the conversation and to take action. Over 2022, our social media audience across established channels in English grew by 6.6% to a combined total of over 240,000.

Email remains a core part of our work to reach member organisations and supporters with tailor-made information and opportunities. Our broad offer to member organisations includes a monthly summary of fundraising opportunities, and ad hoc emails sharing new resources, advocacy alerts, and event invites and follow ups synthesising key takeaways. All our channels have engagement rates well above sector benchmarks, indicating that our communications are both well-targeted and engaging, and that the latest evidence is being taken up by our audiences.

We launched a newly-designed [monthly email](#) for supporters in December, which provides a curated snapshot of the latest girl- and member-led stories, evidence, news and opportunities for stakeholders including donors, policymakers, journalists and civil society. By engaging regularly with this group, we have encouraged the integration of child marriage into work beyond our Partnership, building a more holistic, multi-sectoral approach to girls' rights.

“It felt so good [...] I was not going to get married, I could be happy, go to school again and live confidently.”

Kavita, participant in a children's club organised by the Janaki Women's Awareness Society, Nepal

¹Kavita is a pseudonym

RESPONSIBLE REPORTING ON CHILD MARRIAGE

The media is very important for raising awareness and public pressure to end child marriage at the national, regional and global level. We work with member organisations to proactively pitch stories and respond to media requests that cover the issue in an ethical and solutions-focused way, where those affected can tell their stories safely and in their own words. This builds on our approach of promoting personal stories that illustrate the impact of, and solutions to, child marriage, and avoid sensationalist reporting of the issue.

In 2022 we brokered working relationships between journalists at the BBC World Service and BBC Africa and member organisations, shining a light on the work done by civil society organisations to address child marriage. Womba-Wuta Wanki from Generation Alive in Zambia joined Mabel van Oranje and Mary Robinson for a broadcast in the high-profile BBC World Service [How to Be a Former President](#) series. They shared insights on how to build a movement from the ground up, taking collective action, getting the issue on the international agenda, securing funding and engaging with diverse stakeholders at every level.

Girls Not Brides Head of Africa Engagement, Nerida Nthamburi, represented the Partnership in an interview with [BBC Africa](#), sharing insights on how to engage with young people and their communities to end child marriage. *Girls Not Brides* CEO, Dr Faith Mwangi Powell, also spoke on the TEDx podcast [Climate Curious](#), where she highlighted the links between child marriage and the deepening crises caused by climate change – an area of focus for our cross-sectoral work.

We also contributed to pieces with [Inside Philanthropy](#), focusing on funding for the movement to end child marriage, and the [Chandler Foundation](#) for a piece on systems change and why complex practices like child marriage cannot be solved by single-issue interventions.

This coverage raises the national and international profile of child marriage, putting pressure on governments to fulfil their commitments to end child marriage and guarantee girls' rights, even as they address the interconnecting crises of climate change, COVID-19, conflict and rising costs. It also presented *Girls Not Brides* member organisations, girls and young women as experts on the issue, adding weight to our advocacy for them to be included in decision-making spaces at every level, and for greater and more flexible funding to be made available to those working in partnership at the grassroots level.

IMPACT IN PRACTICE: EVIDENCE-BASED AND MEMBER-LED ADVOCACY TO INTEGRATE CARE AND CHILD MARRIAGE INTO THE REGIONAL AGENDA IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

When girls marry or enter a union, they often take on additional domestic responsibilities; this limits their freedom, opportunities and access to education. Understanding these experiences – including caregiving – is a significant factor in ensuring our work engages and responds to the needs of the girls who have been most marginalised, including those who are married or in a union.

This area has been largely overlooked in research and advocacy on child marriage, which is why we focused on this issue in Latin America and the Caribbean this year, undertaking original research with adolescent girls and member organisations, and bringing them into regional advocacy spaces to directly share their experiences and solutions with decision-makers.

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ON CARE AND CHILD MARRIAGE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

In Latin America and the Caribbean, 21% of girls marry or enter a union before they turn 18, and 4% before the age of 15.^k Despite prevalence above the global average, the issue is largely overlooked in the region, as are the gendered norms that drive the practice and impact on the lives of girls and adolescents after they are married or in a union, including the gendered distribution of care work.

In 2022, the *Girls Not Brides* secretariat worked with 60 member organisations in Latin America and the Caribbean to develop and implement a multidimensional strategy to advocate for the integration of care and child, early and forced marriage and unions into regional commitments. To support this, we worked with 20 member organisations and 24 adolescent girls and young women to develop a [brief](#) on the links between care and child, early and forced marriage and unions in the region.

This brief outlines the gender disparity in the distribution of care work in the general population, and highlights another clear pattern: girls and adolescents in marriages or unions take on even greater care responsibilities than their unmarried peers. This limits their access to quality education, while also impacting negatively on their economic independence, physical and mental health, and their ability to participate in social and political life.

In the brief, we outline recommendations for governments, UN agencies and civil society organisations

to guide their work in addressing this gendered inequality. To effectively support girls who are married or in a union, governments must recognise their role as caregivers and adopt public policies that respond to their needs. This includes access to comprehensive health care, particularly sexual and reproductive health services; quality education that covers comprehensive sexuality education and promotes the continued education of married girls and adolescent mothers; and recreational opportunities.

We supported uptake of this brief and its recommendations with evidence-based [advocacy messages](#), shared over social media, that highlight the voices and experiences of girls and member organisations.

^kUNICEF (2022) [Child marriage database](#).

COLLECTIVE ADVOCACY TO INTEGRATE CARE AND CHILD MARRIAGE INTO THE REGIONAL AGENDA

Engaging with adolescent girls and member organisations to produce the brief on care and child, early and forced marriage and unions put us in a strong position to undertake collective advocacy at the regional level, putting their experiences, needs and solutions at the centre of multistakeholder discussions and government commitments.

To this end, we organised an official [side event](#) at the XV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean – with an expert panel almost entirely comprised of young women – and sponsored eight member organisations to engage at the conference.

At the side event, we presented the brief, shared information and called for comprehensive responses to child marriage that build on the expertise of adolescent girls and young women. As a result, child, early and forced marriage and unions is now included in the conference's [youth declaration](#), [feminist declaration](#) and the intergovernmental [Buenos Aires Commitment](#), in which governments committed to implementing comprehensive multi-sectoral measures to address all forms of violence and discrimination against women, including child, early and forced marriage and unions.

This was the first time *Girl Not Brides* promoted an official side event made up almost exclusively of young women in a strategic advocacy space. Co-creating a strong, clear, evidence-based advocacy position with member organisations was key to integrating child, early and forced marriage and unions into the regional agenda. This success is even more notable given the historic lack of attention given to the link between care work and child, early and forced marriage and unions.

Moving forwards, we will build on these successes, taking collective action and supporting adolescent girls and young women to engage in regional advocacy spaces to push for action on this issue.

“It is a failure of the State and of society in general towards girls, adolescents and women to not give them opportunities other than to get married.”

24-year-old woman contributing to the care brief, Colombia

“For me it’s really important that as Indigenous women we can occupy these spaces, that we can put our voices and our needs at the centre and can join other allied sister organisations. These spaces are bridges, possibilities to strengthen as networks and to set an agenda with a more intercultural and antiracist approach.”

Guillermina L., representative of a member organisation from Mexico participating in the Regional Conference



OBJECTIVE 3: LEARNING

One of our key roles as a secretariat is to facilitate knowledge exchange amongst member organisations and with practitioners, researchers, policymakers and donors to ensure they can access and use the latest evidence and resources.



This year, we built global understanding of how child marriage links to other human rights issues and what works to end it, promoting evidence-based collective action. As a result, we are in a stronger position to collectively advocate for investment and support that will effectively prevent child marriage and support married girls.

WORKING WITH MEMBER ORGANISATIONS TO GENERATE AND SHARE EVIDENCE

This year, we facilitated and supported opportunities for members to exchange learning with each other and key stakeholders at the national and regional level.

India is home to the largest number of girls and women who married before age 18 in the world: 223 million, with over 1.5 million more girls and adolescents affected every year.¹ Despite their numbers, girls and young women who are already married, separated, divorced or widowed (ever-married girls) are largely neglected by child marriage research, policy and programming. Transforming opportunities for all girls means learning more about their lives after marriage, and making the issues they face more visible.

¹UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage (2020) [Country profile: India](#)

In 2022, we teamed up with American Jewish World Service (AJWS) and *Girls Not Brides* member [Vikalp Sansthan](#) to organise a first-of-its-kind national convening for 40 grassroots practitioners from seven states of India. The convening was a space for these practitioners to share information around the issues that affect ever-married adolescent girls, share strategies and learnings around what works to engage with them, and identify areas for further exploration.

It also resulted in grassroots organisations recognising the need to work with this demographic, a process which will continue through a newly-formed community of practice. A report of the convening findings will also act as an advocacy tool for those seeking greater attention and funding for work with ever-married girls.

Part of our role as the secretariat of a global Partnership is to bring these national-level findings to regional and global audiences – something we did with Vikalp Sansthan during the CRANK global convening (see Impact in Practice on p. 28).

Building on national-level work in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, we convened the East Africa Learning Summit on Ending Child Marriage to strengthen intra-regional learning and coordination among member organisations and partners working to end child marriage and FGM/C. The Summit provided an opportunity for *Girls Not Brides Kenya*, *Girls Not Brides Uganda* and the Tanzania Ending

Child Marriage Coalition to come together with experts, leaders and known civil society advocates in person for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through the Summit, these collectives tracked progress in advancing girls' rights across the region, identified challenges, and enhanced their joint advocacy and evidence-generation skills. They also explored ways to hold governments accountable for their commitments, by ensuring agreement over clear implementation plans for existing laws and policies. They developed collective country work plans, based on practical, evidence-driven actions, which they will take forwards over the coming years.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, we convened three webinars to address the links between child marriage and three issues prioritised by member organisations in the region: comprehensive sexuality education, girls' and adolescents' bodily autonomy, and transformative community leadership. Each session was co-created with a group of 10 member organisations who took the lead in sharing their programmes and recommendations.

Through this initiative, we worked closely with civil society organisations to contextualise global evidence and advocacy to the region, and in turn strengthen the global evidence base with regional and cross-regional insights – something we will continue into 2023.

“How can we dream now? We are married. Our education and our dreams are not in our hands now. Now we can only do what our marital family allows us to do. Hence, we do not have any dreams.”

18-year-old woman participating in the convening in India

“This webinar was very important. We come and go on the issue of comprehensive sexuality education, but I think the reality of girls and boys requires us to be more consistent in promoting integrated education in our schools.”

Webinar participant from the Dominican Republic

STRENGTHENING THE GLOBAL EVIDENCE BASE

We produced and shared 17 [learning resources](#) in multiple languages over 2022, including seven in collaboration with *Girls Not Brides* member organisations and partners. These briefs, case studies, literature reviews, guidelines, trainings and tools summarise the latest data, evidence and learning on specific topics, pairing it with actionable recommendations and practical tools in a format that is accessible and usable for broad audiences. They also reflect the expertise and experiences of member organisations, strengthening the global evidence base and making a case for increased funding for civil society organisations and research on what works to end child marriage.

Resources published this year include briefs on child marriage and [intersectionality, girls' education](#) (updated in September); [child marriage and care](#) and the [Guatemala national context](#); case studies and analysis of [gender and sexuality](#) from Latin America and the Caribbean; a [conceptual framework](#) and [donor brief](#) on girls' sexuality; a guide for civil society organisations [using the law](#) to end child marriage in India; newly designed [ethical communications](#) guidelines and tools; and a [youth](#)

[training module](#) and [storytelling toolkit](#). We registered over 20,000 downloads from our Resource Centre over 2022, a strong indication that evidence is reaching and being taken up by our audiences.

Taking this evidence off the page and into practice has been a priority for us over 2022, with an approach that combines targeted and broad communications across our digital channels, and online and in-person live learning with diverse stakeholders.

Responding to member organisations' request for live learning spaces, we launched a [learning series](#) on what works to end child marriage in June 2022. The series of five sessions covered topics prioritised by member organisations, including [cash transfers](#), the [latest trends and evidence](#), [supporting married girls](#), [ethical communications](#) and [gender-transformative collective action](#). By convening diverse stakeholders, the series promoted cross-sectoral learning and cross-regional comparison, contributed to a strengthened global evidence base which responds to context, and brought member organisations and their work to the attention of a global audience of donors, researchers, policymakers and other practitioners.

Through the Child Marriage Research to Action Network ([the CRANK](#)) – a joint initiative with the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage – we continued to provide a unique platform for a better coordinated and harmonised global research agenda on child marriage and to encourage research uptake by policymakers and practitioners. Find out more about the CRANK in the [Impact in Practice](#) story on p. 28.

IMPACT IN PRACTICE: COORDINATING AND PROMOTING UPTAKE OF GLOBAL CHILD MARRIAGE RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE

The CRANK is a core part of our objective to ensure a coordinated and equitable global research agenda, which in turn feeds into accelerated action to end child marriage. This means convening diverse stakeholders, sharing the latest child marriage priority topics and evidence, and facilitating research uptake through tailor-made communications materials.

In 2022, we increased our outreach and engagement with researchers, practitioners, funders and policymakers from around the world. Following targeted promotion, the CRANK membership grew by 66% to 469 individuals, who now receive regular communications sharing events and the latest evidence and learning products. Email engagement is well above sector benchmarks, suggesting that this information is being taken up and used by this diverse audience.

QUARTERLY RESEARCH MEETINGS SPOTLIGHTING LATEST EVIDENCE

We continued with our series of online quarterly research meetings this year, providing a space for researchers, practitioners, funders and policymakers to access and learn from the latest evidence on priority topics. These included [girls' sexuality, preventing child marriage at scale](#) and [supporting the most marginalised girls](#), and were supported by a Research Spotlight on successful [multisectoral and multilevel approaches to address child marriage](#). We have also produced a further Research

Spotlight on how to reach the most marginalised girls, due for publication in early 2023.

Over 270 people attended the quarterly research meetings, and 87% of those responding to the feedback survey said they would use the evidence presented in their work. The initiative has improved collaboration and coordination across the child marriage evidence, research uptake and funding field, contributing to more targeted policy interventions and improved child marriage programme outcomes.

Beyond the live event, we also ensured broader reach and uptake by distilling the latest evidence into accessible formats and sharing meeting resources – including key takeaways, notes, recordings, presentations and reports – across our communications channels.

“Our organisation is working on improving girls' access to education and so these findings will help us to scale our activities.”

Participant in a CRANK quarterly research meeting

STRENGTHENING COORDINATION OF THE GLOBAL RESEARCH AGENDA

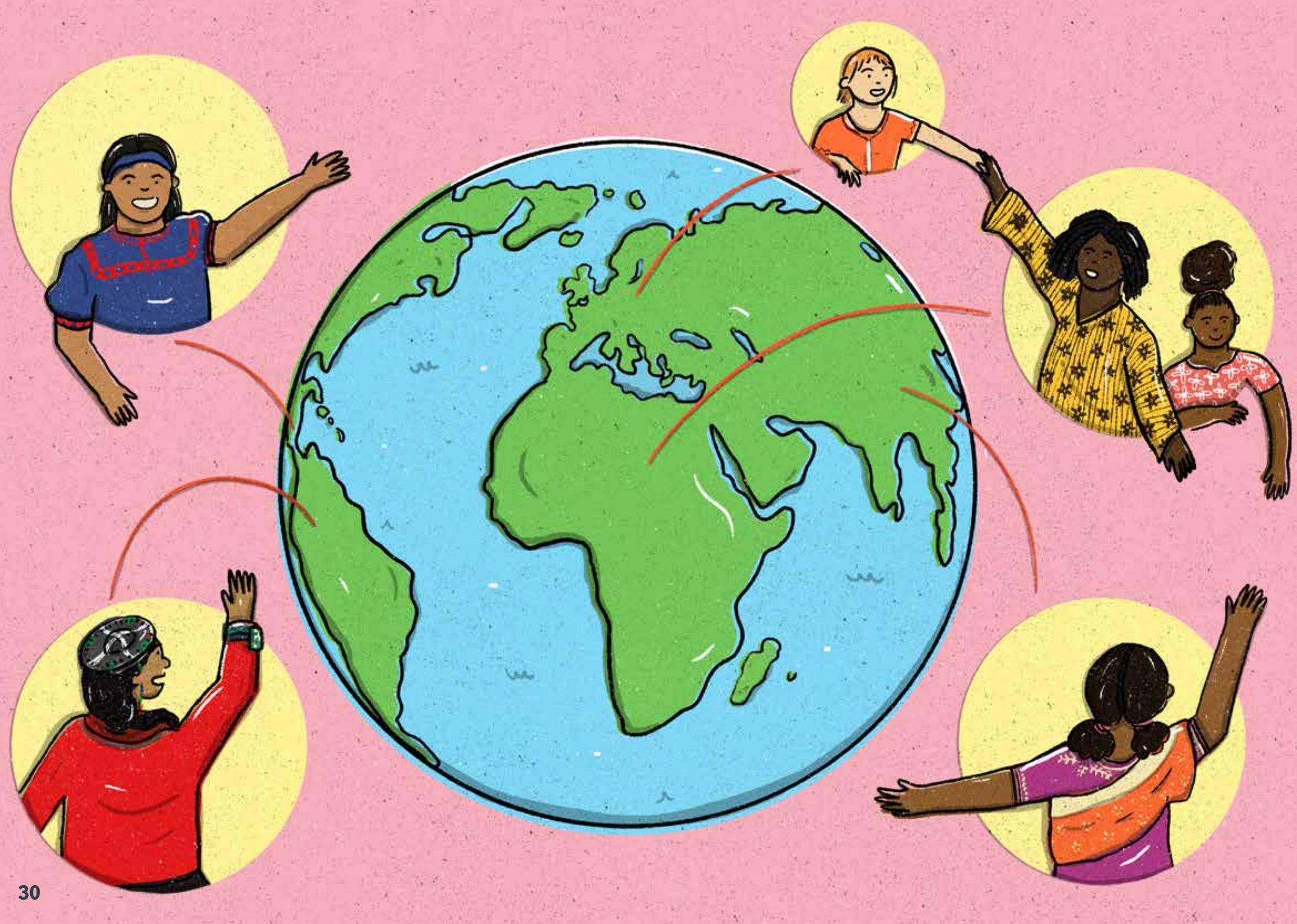
This year, we also organised our first online [global research convening](#), bringing together 246 participants from around the world over three days to strengthen coordination and action to end child marriage. The convening was organised around three key topics: [learning from the latest evidence](#), [effective partnership](#) and the [child marriage research funding landscape](#).

As part of our commitment to bringing researchers and practitioners from the Global South into discussions on child marriage research, evidence and funding, each day included space for speakers to share their key takeaways and learnings from their work, so facilitating the uptake of more diverse and contextualised evidence, including from locations and populations who have been largely overlooked in child marriage research to date.

During the global research convening, we launched the new CRANK [online research tracker](#), a central part of our work to support and advance research coordination. Through the tracker, users can search for the latest child marriage research across themes and geographies, with search pages in English, French and Spanish. Since launching the tracker, we have recorded over double the usual number of research submissions, demonstrating the usefulness of the tool. We will deepen this use over 2023, ensuring the tracker becomes the go-to place to share and access the latest child marriage research and evidence.

“I loved the presentation on research uptake. I thought it was just brilliant and moving us forward, and I will definitely talk to my team about principles of uptake.”

Participant at the CRANK global research convening



OBJECTIVE 4: SECRETARIAT AT THE SERVICE OF THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

As a resource and support to the global movement to end child marriage, the *Girls Not Brides* secretariat is as concerned with *how* we work, as much as with what we do. We are committed to ensuring the secretariat responds to the diversity of member organisations, is effective, and continually learns and evolves.

KEY EVIDENCE

16

member organisations access tailored safeguarding reviews and training

3

new countries now bases for *Girls Not Brides* team members

In 2022 – after two years of consultations with *Girls Not Brides* member organisations, National and State Partnerships partners and donors – we launched and began implementing our ambitious Secretariat Strategy 2022-25. Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3 (Movement-building, Influencing and Learning) represent the “what” of our ambitions for change. Strategic Objective 4 represents the “how” – outlining a roadmap for organisational redesign to support our work for future years

REBALANCING POWER AND RESOURCES

Our fundamental vision is to rebalance power and resources within our activities and organisational structure, ensuring we are reflective of – and well placed to serve – the global Partnership. This includes increasing the representation and leadership of our teams based in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, and diversifying our Board.

We increased the proportion of team members based outside of the United Kingdom (UK), recruiting eight team members in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. We will continue to rebalance our global presence in 2023 and beyond as positions become vacant and new roles are created. In addition to our key hubs, Nairobi, Mexico City and New Delhi, we now have team members located in Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda.

Key to our organisational redesign is providing deeper support for national and sub-national change through investing in *Girls Not Brides* National and State Partnerships. We believe supporting civil society coalitions to act and advocate together will accelerate action to end child marriage, and that we are uniquely placed to do this. In 2022, we revised our policies to streamline processes for making financial investments in *Girls Not Brides* National Partnerships and coalitions, and will roll out these investments in 2023.

UPHOLDING GOOD GOVERNANCE

In early 2022 we conducted a review of our Articles of Association and updated these to reflect our growth as an organisation and streamline Board functions. We launched two Board sub-committees – the Finance and Policy Committee and the Fundraising Donor Relations Committee – to ensure efficiency at the whole Board level, and to create strategic spaces for operational advice and support.

We have a diverse Board with representatives from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2022, the Board undertook training to improve their understanding of Trustee responsibilities under the UK Charity Commission. We conducted a governance review to ensure our alignment with the Charity Code of Governance and organisational effectiveness. Two Board members stepped down in 2022 and we have used the opportunity to conduct a skills audit to help identify priorities for new Board recruitment in 2023.

Aligned with our commitment to ensuring equity and fairness in what we do and in how we do it, we began a process of reviewing and streamlining our internal policies. We have adopted a new global pay policy which makes salary scales more equitable and transparent, with benchmarking against similar organisations. We will continue our work into 2023 to formalise and roll out this process across our global team.

PUTTING GIRLS AT THE CENTRE OF OUR SAFEGUARDING WORK

Girls Not Brides is committed to ensuring that the needs, interests and safety of girls are at the centre of our approach and any work we support. In 2022, we continued to offer safeguarding trainings and workshops for member organisations, National and State Partnerships, and team members. We have revised our recruitment and induction processes to ensure safeguarding questions are included in all interviews, and new team members complete a mandatory online safeguarding course and induction training.

We have developed our Safeguarding Standards for member organisations, and 16 member organisations accessed tailored project-based safeguarding reviews and training in 2022. As a result, our membership is better equipped to understand the safeguarding implications specific to initiatives that seek to end child marriage.

EMBEDDING OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND EQUITY

Diversity, inclusion and equity are central to our core principles and values. These are represented in creating a diverse workforce, leadership and Board. We aim to achieve this by advocating fairness, collaboration, respect and transparency in our organisational decision-making, and by establishing fair policies and procedures that are consistently applied. We respect and value people's differences and we proactively seek to create a culture where people feel comfortable to be themselves, and have a sense of belonging.

In 2021, *Girls Not Brides* formalised a Diversity, Inclusion, Voices and Equity committee (DIVEs), consisting of team members from across the organisation. Our DIVEs committee plays an important role in ensuring that the changes we need to make to achieve this are championed across the organisation, and provide a check and balance function to the secretariat, supporting accountability around issues relevant to anti-racism, diversity, inclusion and equity.

In 2022, DIVEs worked closely on recruitment to increase the number of roles based in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, improve our gender diversity, introduce targeted positions to attract more team members under the age of 24, and include more non-native English speakers in the team. DIVEs also conducted an analysis of our workplace diversity to identify key priorities and recommendations for 2023 and beyond.

Our Language Committee continued to examine the interconnected relationship between language and power, working to ensure our organisational language reflects our work, values and relationships, and the diversity of the end child marriage movement. The Language Committee draws on an intersectional approach to promote discussion, learning and awareness across our global team. We continued to share these experiences with organisations beyond the movement to end child marriage – including through the Bond network – to support their work to decolonise their relationships and communications.

REFLECTIONS AND LOOKING FORWARDS



AFRICA

Looking back at 2022, we saw renewed commitments from member organisations in Africa to accelerate efforts towards ending child marriage. Humanitarian crises, climate-driven crises and the impact of public health concerns including COVID-19 have increased challenges to implementation in some countries. The main drivers of child marriage following the pandemic include large numbers of learners leaving school early, decreased numbers of learners returning to school and economic challenges faced by already financially struggling families.

This context provided an opportunity for member organisations to collectively advocate as a countermeasure to some of these risks. Examples in 2022 included the formation of very active community-based, youth-led movements addressing child marriage in East Africa, successful national advocacy campaigns that led to the enactment of laws and policies addressing child marriage in Southern Africa and the continued integration of child marriage interventions with other sectors such as girls' education in West Africa.

I would like to quote what an 18-year-old youth advocate living along the Kenya-Tanzania border campaigning against child marriage in her community said:

“My generation can end child marriage. With unified voices, we can change our community’s acceptance of this practice and we should strive to ensure that no girl is forced to get married until she is ready. We need support to do this.”

Youth campaigner, East Africa

As we look ahead, it is clear the context calls for a transformation of our collective action strategies. In 2023, we will make increased financial investments in National Partnerships and coalitions to accelerate collective action and increase opportunities for evidence-based advocacy. We will continue to experiment with different online and offline tools and processes for strengthening communities of change. Member engagement, youth-led organising and social norms change will remain at the centre of our work.

The movement to end child marriage in Africa is diverse, strong and bold, and we invite you to join us!

Nerida Nthamburi,
Head of Africa Engagement



ASIA

The COVID-19 pandemic put girls from marginalised communities at further risk – out of school and into early marriages. In 2022, we remained committed to supporting *Girls Not Brides* State Partnerships and coalitions to highlight and amplify girls' voices and needs.

Our efforts included: ensuring girls and their families are aware of and supported to access schemes committed by governments for their welfare; creating platforms for young people to share their views on drivers and solutions to child marriage; and training young grassroots practitioners on using play-based tools to explore and change gendered norms and roles.

We also remained committed to strengthening our networks and member organisations with tailored programmes to enhance their capacities to integrate gender-transformative approaches in their organisations and programmes. We continued to develop and deepen perspectives on issues of girls' choice and agency by organising – in collaboration with key member organisations and allies – a convening on the status of married adolescent girls.

These interventions seek to address and ensure member organisations and grassroots practitioners have the tools they need to change norms – which stem from patriarchy and low value of girls – that dilute the efficacy of laws and policy intended to address child marriage.

We remain committed to youth engagement and will continue to promote gender-transformative approaches in the region.

Divya Mukand,
Head of Asia Engagement



LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

In Latin America and the Caribbean, it is essential to position child, early and forced marriage and unions (CEFMU) as a key topic from a holistic point of view. After not being able to come together in person during the pandemic, in 2022 we focused on reconnecting and creating new spaces to discuss CEFMU. We worked to show how CEFMU relates to different human rights issues, contributing to an understanding of this issue as a complex social matter rather than merely isolated cases.

With member organisations, we created spaces for reflection and provided input to key regional and international spaces. We collaborated with the Indigenous women's movement to address CEFMU within the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, sponsored youth participation within the Youth Forum for Population and Development, took over the regional Conference on Women to make young activists the centre of our approach, and presented a brief on CEFMU and care built collectively with young people and *Girls Not Brides* member organisations.

In Guatemala, we joined forces with La Mesa Niña to launch the first ever National Partnership in the region dedicated to addressing CEFMU. We are thrilled to work with a group of talented and committed organisations and people, who are willing to challenge adult-centric policymaking and focus on creating spaces for intergenerational exchange, so youth movements can effectively take centre stage.

It has been a privilege and an honour to be part of this amazing and challenging year, where we showed that the only way to address CEFMU is through collective action based on the knowledge, experiences and voices of the young people and organisations who are the heart of our work. We are aware that the regional context requires us to work together and think through strategies to address CEFMU and create safe spaces.

We look forwards to continuing this work in 2023, consolidating a regional movement that clearly shows how CEFMU is still a pending issue that requires sustainable approaches based on social change, and not only legal change.

Alma Burciaga-González,
Head of Latin America and the Caribbean Engagement

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- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
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Friends and partners of *Girls Not Brides*

who – even under challenging circumstances – have continued to collaborate with us on our mission to end child marriage and ensure all girls can reach their full potential.

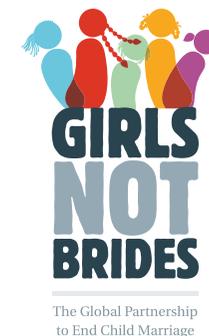
The 1,604 *Girls Not Brides* member organisations

working at the community, national, regional and global levels to bring child marriage to global attention, build an understanding of what it will take to end child marriage, and call for laws, policies and programmes that will make a difference to the lives of millions of girls.

THROUGH OUR COLLECTIVE GLOBAL EFFORTS, WE WILL GET CLOSER TO THE VISION OF ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE IN OUR GENERATION!

IMPACT REPORT 2022

***Girls Not Brides* is a global partnership of more than 1,600 civil society organisations from over 100 countries united by a commitment to work in partnership to end child marriage and ensure girls can fulfil their potential.**



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