

Optimizing The Evidence: The Child Marriage Global Research Database

GreeneWorks' Child Marriage Global Research Database

GreeneWorks has produced a systematic scoping database of research on child, early and forced marriage across all geographies in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese for the period 2000-2021, with 2022 currently underway.¹ Our systematic search of seven databases and hand searches of 15 key institutions yielded over 1700 publications, an unexploited trove of actionable insights into what works to prevent child marriage and support married children as well as trends, strengths, and gaps in global research on child marriage.

It has already been of great use to the field.² This year, Girls Not Brides will publish and steward the full list of studies to allow easy filtering for researchers and practitioners, and UN Innocenti will co-create with us an interactive Evidence Portal which assesses the strength of child marriage research by both intervention strategy and by child outcome. Our database cross-sects child marriage publications by 29 dimensions, including:

- Total Child Marriage Intervention Publications in Africa 2000-2021
- Intervention approach (health, laws livelihoods, empowerment, norms, education, other)

Summary

To aid policymakers and advocates for the millions of girls and boys around the world who are married as children, GreeneWorks seeks funding to leverage our comprehensive global database of over 1700 child marriage studies spanning 2000-2022. In concise reports with gorgeous visuals, we seek to distil actionable policy insight tailored to clients' institutional priorities and to establish a new global agenda for child marriage research.

- Language (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese)
- Country affiliation of lead author
- Socio-ecological level of intervention (individual, family, community, institutional, policy)
- Country, region and sub-region

Proposed work

1. TARGETED ANALYSES: RESEARCH SYNTHESSES FOR ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

The possibilities for tailored insight into what drives child marriage, how it harms girls, and what works to combat it are endless. By **zooming** in, we can identify policy-relevant insight tailored to any organization's institutional priorities and packaged into concise briefs. Just a few potential analyses:

What works: What factors have enabled or impeded child marriage interventions?

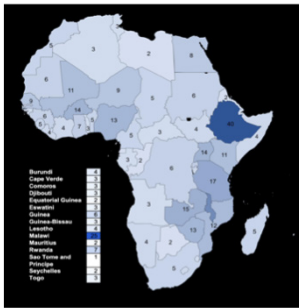
- Which design elements or implementation practices strengthen a child marriage program or policy?
- Do interventions with a socio-emotional component have longer lasting effects on economic outcomes? Why or why not?
- Do interventions that co-opt community leaders produce stronger outcomes? What drives community leaders to support an intervention?

¹ The database was established with support from the Kendeda Fund. We adhered to (PRISMA-ScR), protocol registered here: <https://osf.io/awh8v>

² We published our first analysis of the [global distribution of child marriage research](#), and our other analyses have been presented at many global and regional meetings. Three analyses are currently under review for publication: 1) scoping review of interventions in Africa; 2) systematic review of norms interventions to prevent child marriage; and 3) systematic review of programs for individuals married as children.

- What types of interventions or policies face community or government resistance? What strategies have mitigated or overcome this resistance?

Country and Regional Analyses



Total Child Marriage Intervention Publications in Africa 2000-2021

GreeneWorks has identified virtually every child marriage publication that has emerged from a given country since 2000. We propose country-level analyses that synthesize the published evidence base with each country's political economy around child marriage.

Sample inquiries include:

- In this setting, what are the cultural, political, and economic drivers of child marriage and the severity of its consequences?
- To what extent does policy action in this setting reflect the evidence?
- What insight from intervention studies in neighboring or culturally similar countries might be applied to this country?

Other analyses (examples)

- How have the economic consequences of child marriage (or educational, or socio-emotional) changed over time?
- In 2020-21, how did the isolation from COVID-19 affect the conditions and consequences of child marriage?
- Do laws against child marriage, even when unenforced, mitigate its prevalence and consequences?

2. VISUALIZE GAPS IN THE GLOBAL CHILD MARRIAGE EVIDENCE BASE

Conversely, GreeneWorks can also **zoom out** to expose *global* trends, strengths, and gaps in the child marriage evidence base. We can create cogent visuals to drive home these insights, such as:

- Regions and countries that are under-represented in

42% of all first authors of studies in our child marriage database are based in the US or UK

the literature given the prevalence and burden of child marriage

- Drivers of country representation in attention to child marriage, such as government-civil society collaboration and investment level
- Local ownership and linguistic accessibility of child marriage research

3. CURATE ONLINE RESEARCH DATABASE FOR SCHOLARS AROUND THE WORLD

GreeneWorks seeks to streamline, update, and curate the database as a public good for researchers and practitioners conducting research on child marriage. We wish to:

- Replicate our publications search and extraction for 2022-2023 in all four languages, and to extract new variables from *intervention* publications, e.g., sample size, implementation quality, and study quality;
- Fold in country and regional macro data such as prevalence and burden of child marriage, economic growth metrics, governance and conflict metrics, and national gender policies; and
- Standardize processes to strengthen representation of scholars from the Global South.

Conclusion

The combined power of the child marriage political economy analyses and publications database is their ability to offer extremely detailed strategic recommendations for any country or region in the world. These analyses can both zoom out and zoom in, and given all of the insights we might extract, we ask you in closing: what do you want to know?