



NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2023

The Regional Action Forum to End Child Marriage in Arab States/MENA (RAF) is delighted to share its November 2023 newsletter, which seeks to provide you with its latest achievements and updates for the period of June to November 2023.



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RAF ALL MEMBERS' MEETING

On 26 June 2023, RAF hosted a virtual all-members' meeting with more than 30 UN agencies, I/NGO's, and academic institutes working on child marriage prevention in the Middle East and North Africa region. Findings from two key studies were shared by RAF members during the meeting.



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IDENTIFYING GAPS IN EVIDENCE AND PRIORITIES FOR RESEARCH ON CHILD MARRIAGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (MENA)/ARAB STATES (AS) REGION.

research conducted by Women's Refugee Commission & King's College London – presented by Dr. Aisha Hutchinson, Lecturer in Social Sciences, School of Education, Communication and Society at King's college London

Findings: The three primary gaps that were identified related to (1) Evidence to support programme development, (2) Consequences of child marriage and (3) Contextual drivers of child marriage, these can also guide future research priorities for researchers and academic institutions. Key recommendations also included the need to provide sufficient funding to facilitate community-driven research agendas and build the capacity of staff to support this process.



© UNESCWA COST OF CHILD MARRIAGE STUDY COVER PHOTO

THE COST OF CHILD MARRIAGE OVER THE LIFE CYCLE OF GIRLS AND WOMEN EVIDENCE FROM EGYPT, IRAQ, JORDAN AND TUNISIA,

research conducted by UN ESCWA, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women – presented by Stephanie Chaban, Social Affairs Officer at UN ESCWA.

Findings: Women and girls who are married young in these four countries experience adverse outcomes throughout their lives, including impact on fertility, decision-making abilities, education, exposure to domestic violence, labor market participation, and child mortality rates.

In Phase II, the economic costs of child marriage in 13 Arab States will be further investigated, aiming to understand its broader impacts. The focus will be on how child marriage affects not only the individual girls but also their families and the country's economy, focusing specifically on income and GDP loss. By using various sources and a detailed approach, the economic costs from 2001 to 2050 is estimated. We found that in 2021, child marriage resulted in a 3.2% GDP loss in these countries, projected to be 3% by 2050.

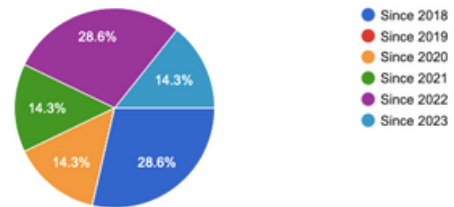
RAF MEMBERS' FEEDBACK SURVEY

A feedback survey was conducted in June 2023 with all RAF members. Survey findings showed that RAF maintains a diverse membership composed of academic and/or research institutions, UN agencies and INGOs, as well as NGOs/CSOs across the MENA region. Some members have been active with RAF since 2018 while others joined more recently in 2022 and 2023. Through the survey, RAF members expressed the need to conduct further research and advocacy initiatives, as well as capacity building trainings, to tackle child marriage in the region.

1. Since when have you been a RAF member?

مذ متى أنت عضو في مبادرة "RAF"؟

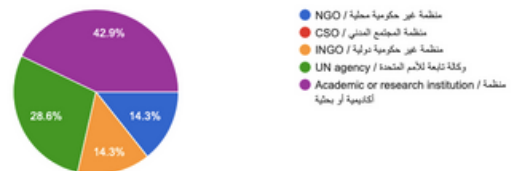
7 responses



2. How would you describe your organization?

كيف تصف منطقتك؟

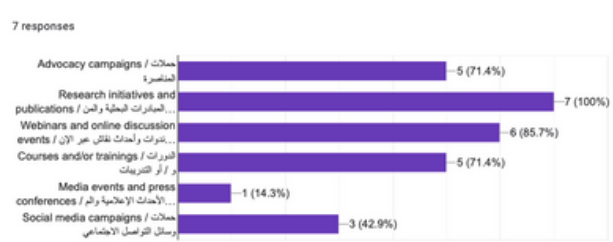
7 responses



4. What kind of initiatives would you wish for RAF to organize in the future? Please select your four preferred options from the list below:

ما نوع المبادرات التي تود أن ينظمها "راف" في المستقبل؟ الرجاء تحديد الخيارات الأربعة المفضلة لديك من القائمة أدناه:

7 responses



Regional Action Forum to End Child Marriage ... @RAF_ME... · Sep 18 ...
 RAF Webinar: "Cash conditional on school retention is a promising intervention to delay #childmarriage... Being in #school, irrespective of performance, can be a powerful deterrent." said Shatha El Nakib, Research Scientist and Full-time Faculty @JohnsHopkinsSPH

WEBINAR INVITATION
 How can cash transfers contribute to addressing child marriage in the MENA region?
 DATE: 18 SEPTEMBER 2023 TIME: 15:30 – 16:30 ARABIAN TIME – GMT+3

MODERATOR: Shatha El Nakib, Research Scientist and Full-time Faculty @JohnsHopkinsSPH

SPEAKERS: Shatha El Nakib, Research Scientist and Full-time Faculty @JohnsHopkinsSPH; Shatha El Nakib, Research Scientist and Full-time Faculty @JohnsHopkinsSPH; Shatha El Nakib, Research Scientist and Full-time Faculty @JohnsHopkinsSPH; Shatha El Nakib, Research Scientist and Full-time Faculty @JohnsHopkinsSPH; Shatha El Nakib, Research Scientist and Full-time Faculty @JohnsHopkinsSPH

REGISTER HERE

RAF WEBINAR

On September 18th, the RAF, hosted a webinar entitled “How can cash transfers contribute to addressing child marriage in the MENA region?”. The primary goal of the webinar was to foster a comprehensive understanding of how cash transfers can contribute to the reduction of child marriage in the region. By bringing together experts, practitioners, and researchers from UNICEF (MENARO, Lebanon and HQ), UNFPA, Girls Not Brides and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public health, we were able to facilitate an informed discussion, while sharing evidence-based insights for more targeted and effective interventions. More than 65 participants attended the webinar from various backgrounds including INGOs, NGOs, UN agencies and academic institutions. It was evident that there is an increased interest in the innovative use of cash assistance – coupled with incentives for education and other social protection measures – to effectively prevent and respond to marriage in a region that continues to experience compounded economic, social and humanitarian crises

Click [here](#) for the recording of the webinar.

Additional resources on cash assistance for the prevention of child marriage are available [here](#).

GIRLS NOT BRIDES The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage

GIRLS NOT BRIDES
 HOW CAN CASH TRANSFERS CONTRIBUTE TO ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE

SEPTEMBER 2023

Regional Action Forum to End Child Marriage ... @RAF_ME... · Sep 18 ...
 RAF Webinar: "Linking #cashassistance programs to economic opportunities such as #skillsbuilding or coaching could have greater impact on #childmarriage prevention" said Hashim Zaidi, Social Protection Specialist @UNICEFmena

Cash transfer programme

1. Improved household economic security
2. Investment in education
3. Changes in adolescent behaviour
4. Investment in marriage literacy

Outcomes:

- Higher risk of arranged marriage
- Higher risk of self-initiated marriage or union
- Lower risk of arranged marriage
- Lower risk of self-initiated marriage or union

6. Complementary interventions: Improving girls' knowledge and skills, providing girls with information on reproductive health, and providing girls with information on reproductive health.

5. Marriage interventions: Delayed sexual debut, reduced high-risk sex.

3. Improved knowledge, aspirations: Higher risk of self-initiated marriage or union.

4. Higher risk of arranged marriage: Higher risk of arranged marriage.

2. Lower risk of arranged marriage: Lower risk of arranged marriage.

1. Lower risk of self-initiated marriage or union: Lower risk of self-initiated marriage or union.

3. Higher risk of self-initiated marriage or union: Higher risk of self-initiated marriage or union.

4. Higher risk of arranged marriage: Higher risk of arranged marriage.

5. Lower risk of self-initiated marriage or union: Lower risk of self-initiated marriage or union.

6. Lower risk of arranged marriage: Lower risk of arranged marriage.

RAF IDGC SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

To mark the International Day of the Girl and celebrate girls' leadership in the MENA region, RAF launched a social media campaign on its Facebook and Twitter/X platforms where we continue to stories and key messages from RAF members who are working tirelessly to end child marriage in the MENA region.

Below are powerful stories collected by our partners at Women Alive in Tripoli, Lebanon:

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL 2023
INVEST IN GIRLS'
EDUCATION & HEALTH

شهادة رقم ستة
قمر Amar

انزوجت عن حب كان عمري 17 سنة
 تجربتي فاشلة كانت واتعرضت لكل
 أنواع العنف حتى حرمني من تعليمي
 بعد فترة طلقني وهلا أنا عم كمل
 تعليمي من اول ووجدت

I got married out of love when I was 17 years old.
 It was a failed experience, and I was subjected to all kinds of violence to the point where I was deprived of my education.
 After a while, he divorced me and now I am continuing my education from scratch.

شهادة رقم تسعة
كواكب Kawakeb

زوجوني أهلي غصب عني بعمر 12 سنة
 زوجي كان أكبر مني ب 25 سنة
 كان جسمي صغير وحيلت دعوي ما عرفت
 ربي الولد وكنت ابكي لأنني حس حالي أنا
 كمان ولد
 ما يقبل ولادي يتزوجوا هلا
 معقول وحدة تقديت ترجع تعذب ولادها؟

They forced me to get married at 12 .
 My husband was 25 years older than me.
 I got pregnant immediately. I didn't know how to take care of my baby, and I used to cry because I felt like I was also a child
 I won't accept my children getting married at this age now. Is it possible for someone who suffered so much to let her children suffer too?

And... inspiring quotes collected by our partners at [Plan International in Jordan](#).



CONCERNS OVER THE DETERIORATING HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN GAZA



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RAF is extremely concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza following the recent escalation of violence. In times of conflict, children pay the highest price, and girls become even more vulnerable to protection risks such as child marriage. We join our fellow UN agencies, NGO's, INGOS and development partners in calling for a cessation of hostilities, protection of civilians, women and children, and safe, unhindered access that would allow humanitarian actors to reach those most in need, including girls and boys impacted by the violence.



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