

Child Marriage Evidence Profiles

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Mozambique

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EVIDENCE OVERVIEW

The evidence on Mozambique tends to focus on diagnosing the issue of child marriage (prevalence and trends, drivers, and consequences) rather than responding to it (interventions to prevent and respond to the issue of child marriage). Overall, the research is more formative in nature, highlighting a need for greater attention to implementation studies and impact evaluations.

A strong focus of the evidence is on the closely connected issues of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage, with adolescent pregnancy identified as both a common driver and consequences of child marriage in Mozambique.

Less is known on what works to prevent child marriage and respond to the needs of married girls and boys in Mozambique. Of the intervention literature in Mozambique, most draws from the 'Yes, I do' programme conducted in rural Mozambique.

GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

There is a need for greater understanding of the needs of married girls and how to best respond to them. Interventions addressing the needs of married girls can provide rare insight into the marital relationship, including power dynamics which influence key health

BACKGROUND

Compared to other countries with high child marriage prevalence, evidence on child marriage in Mozambique is limited. Mozambique has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, yet a global review of child marriage evidence over the last 20 years covering English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese identified just 45 publications with a focus on Mozambique¹. In other countries such as Ethiopia 117 publications on child marriage were identified, highlighting the smaller pool of evidence in Mozambique.

THE ROLE OF STAR INITIATIVE:

Through the Strategic Technical Assistance for Research (STAR) Initiative to end harmful practices, UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti aims to strengthen research in countries supported by the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage and the Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation. The STAR Initiative focuses on evidence generation, synthesis and uptake.

This research series, prepared by the UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti, in collaboration with the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, presents an overview of the research on child marriage in select countries.



The Yes, I Do programme designed to keep girls in school



End-line evaluation: The study highlighted teenage pregnancy as a common driver of child marriage as well as a consequence of it among both in-school and out-of-school youth in Mozambique. The end-line found that, over time, community stakeholders became more active in preventing child marriage and teenage pregnancy, and sexual and reproductive health services and information were perceived to be improved and more accessible.



Kok et al 2021: This study explores how young people exercise agency in rural Mozambique in relation to sex, relationships and marriage.

Additional studies on adolescent pregnancy and child marriage in Mozambique



Pires et al 2017: Assessed the causes and consequences of early pregnancy and child marriage, and their prevalence in and around Nampula province.



Packer 2020: This study conducted in rural Mozambique explored how adolescent girls' future aspirations relate to marriage and childbearing.



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Nour 2006: This study explores the social and health consequences of child marriage in Africa, including Mozambique.



Godha 2015: The focus of this study is on the association between child marriage and maternal health care use. It draws from Mozambique data in addition to other countries.



Girls Not Brides 2015: This study looks at child marriage, adolescent pregnancy as well as girls' education and the prevailing social norms which constitute barriers to the fulfillment of girls' rights in Mozambique.

and social behaviours and outcomes such as use of family planning, mental health, safety, etc. Addressing violence experienced by married girls is another area of research and programmatic neglect.

There are critical gaps in our knowledge on economic livelihood and normative approaches to address child marriage in Mozambique. Poverty and inequitable gender norms are central drivers of child marriage, yet interventions addressing norms and/or the economic livelihoods of girls and their families are few in number.

We know from other contexts that cash and asset transfer programmes work to delay marriage (for example, the Berhane Hewan programme in Ethiopia). It is critical to focus on exploring economic interventions to delay marriage in Mozambique and to draw from existing evidence from other contexts. UNICEF is supporting the Acompanhamento Familiar (family support programme), which is being implemented in Nampula province. Rigorous documentation of the implementation and impact of programmes such as this will be essential for cross-country learning and adaptation.

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For a detailed description of the Global Programme in Mozambique and results, refer to the [Mozambique country profile](#).

1 Siddiqi M, Greene M.E. Mapping the field of child marriage: Evidence, gaps and future directions from a large-scale systematic scoping review, 2000-2019. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, supplement on child, early and forced marriage.