



GIRLS NOT BRIDES

The Global Partnership
to End Child Marriage

NATIONAL COALITION TO END CHILD
MARRIAGE IN BURKINA
(CONAMEB)

PRESENTED BY NOELIE SINARE, NATIONAL
CONSULTANT FOR BURKINA FASO

1- Who we are?

- The Coalition to End Child Marriage (CONAMEB) is an umbrella of organizations and national and international NGOs who work to end child marriage in Burkina Faso.
- Created in 2013, it now includes almost 70 organizations.

Overall objective

- To promote children's rights and end child marriage in Burkina Faso.

Strategies

- To develop partnership with ministries in charge of health, justice and human rights ; the Ministry of Women's Affairs and National Solidarity, and the Ministry of Education.
- Also to develop partnership with community and religious leaders, media and other development partners which play a role in supporting the coalition for the implementation of its activities.

2-The context in Burkina Faso

- Burkina Faso is one of the ten African countries most affected by child marriage.
- Prevalence of customary, religious marriages or common-law marriages.
- Under the traditional system, marriage is a social act, a private family matter. The family decides who will be the spouse of the daughter in the name of tradition.
- According to UNICEF, 10% of women are married before the age of 15 and 52% of women before the age 18, i.e. one out of two girls in Burkina Faso.

3-Social norms, child marriage and girls' education in Burkina Faso

The underlying causes of child marriage and early school leavers in Burkina Faso are:

- Gender inequality at all levels (cf. SIGI Study, 2018);
- Poverty;
- The security context and the attacks against schools have led parents to become increasingly protective of their daughters because of security risks and they often decide to keep them at home;
- Harmful traditional practices:

Giving a daughter: to give a daughter to get married to a family in order to strengthen the links between two families or two communities;

The *litho* (exchange or marriage of daughters between two families) the *Pog lenga* (the new wife) brings a female member of her family who will become an additional wife of her spouse or of another member of his family) practised by certain ethnic groups;

The abduction: kidnapping forcefully a person, particularly a girl or a woman for the purpose of marriage or a union without her consent. Enrolled girls aged 14 to 16 are at risk of being abducted on the way to school. However, they are less at risk than out-of-school girls.

4 - Links between child marriage, girls' education and the impact of Covid-19 in Burkina Faso

- Burkina is experiencing a state of insecurity:
- Consequence: school closures; many internally displaced persons;
- The drop-out rate is therefore much higher in this area of insecurity;

According to UNICEF, 5 millions of children are affected by school closures and 13% of schools were closed before Covid-19 because of insecurity; and Covid-19 led to closing all schools during most of 2020 academic year.

This situation resulted in, and could still result in forced marriage, early pregnancy, child marriage, child labour and the worst forms, and other types of violence, abuse, exploitation and GBV.

5 - Recommendations and call for action

- To develop innovative approaches to strengthen existing initiatives in order to support parents and daughters in the situation of vulnerability (displaced persons);
- To create and promote security spaces for young and children's learning;
- To develop support mechanisms for parents and out of school young girls;
- To reinforce awareness raising actions and advocacy with decision makers and leaders (at national, under-regional and international levels) to end all harmful practices against women and girls and to promote girls' access and retention in schools;
- To develop joint advocacy between actors of FME coalitions and education coalitions.



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PLATFORM TO END CHILD MARRIAGE IN NIGER

PRESENTED BY LYDIA HOUNON HEDWIGE,
NATIONAL CONSULTANT FOR NIGER

1-Who we are?

- The **Platform to End Child Marriage** is an inter-partner strategic coalition.
- Its objective is to coordinate advocacy efforts to end child marriage in Niger.
- It includes international, United Nations System and civil society organizations – i.e. 60 members.

2-The context of Niger

- Niger has the world's highest prevalence rate of child marriage with 77% of girls being married before the age of 18.
- In Niger, the Civil Code sets the age of marriage at 15 for girls. This provision is not respected.
- Each day, 256 girls aged 15-14 and 28 girls aged 12-14 respectively give birth to a baby.
- The median age of early marriages is 15.6 for uneducated girls, 16.7 for girls with primary education and 21.1 for girls with secondary and higher education.

3-Social norms, child marriage and girls' education in Niger

- Underlying causes of child marriage and early school leavers in Niger:
 - Reject of non-compliance to the community.
 - Stigmatization around virginity and phobia of early pregnancy.
 - Single girls aged over 15 are stigmatized and are called “*santo*” which means literally “outdated” in one national language.
 - The marriage is celebrated according to a combination of customs and ambiguous interpretations of Islam.
 - Child marriage assumes the non-recognition of formal education for girls: demand for school enrolment is higher for girls than for boys given the high opportunity cost for girls.

4-Links between child marriage, girls' education and the impact of Covid-19 in Niger

- School drop-out after schools reopening.
- Absence of friends from the support networks.
- Poverty increase.
- The girls who are married are less likely to be educated (40.2%) compared with those who have never married (71.9%).
- Girls who are married are much more likely to be illiterate (77.9%) compared with those who have never married.

5-Recommendations and call for action

- When schools reopen, put in place effective legislation and policies, ensuring access to health and social services - especially sexual health services for adolescents and youth.
- Provide comprehensive social protection measures to families.
- Develop joint advocacy between the actors of GNB coalitions and education coalitions.



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THANK YOU!