



# **ENGAGE**

## **Enabling Girls to Advance Gender Equity**

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# Overview of ENGAGE

- **Project goal:** To empower girls and civil society organizations (CSOs) to shift norms and attitudes around child marriage and increase gender equality, with ultimate goal of reducing child marriage and other harmful practices.
- Two main interventions:



**Empower girls:**  
train girls to form  
and lead clubs



**Empower CSOs:**  
Build CSO capacity  
to engage with  
stakeholders

ICRW is conducting the four-arm, quasi-experimentation mixed-methods evaluation

<sup>\*</sup>  
TA Chiwalo



1

**PHALOMBE  
DISTRICT**

TA Nazombe

4

TA Mchiramwera

2



**THYOLO  
DISTRICT**

TA Changata



3



**SOUTHERN MALAWI**

<sup>\*</sup>TA=Traditional Authority

# Focus of baseline survey

- Baseline data collection completed August 2017
- Quantitative survey with 1492 decision-makers of girls ages 10-17
- Questions focused on:
  - Demographic data
  - Child marriage (norms, attitudes, knowledge of laws)
  - Gender norms
  - Attitudes toward adolescent SRH
  - Girls' education
  - Harmful traditional practices
  - Decision-making for girls 10-17

# Source of norms measures

## CARE's Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP) Framework

COMPONENTS OF A NORM	DEFINITION
Empirical Expectations (EE)	What I think others do
Normative Expectations (NE)	What I think others expect me to do (what I should do according to others)
Sanctions	Anticipated opinion or reaction of others (to the behavior) – specifically others whose opinions matter to me

# Our results: Is child marriage a social norm?



**Empirical expectations** - Almost nine in ten adult decision-makers (89%) agreed that most girls in their community marry before the age of 18.



**Normative expectations** - Adult decision-makers were nearly evenly split on whether they agreed that “Most people in this community expect girls to marry before the age of 18.”



**Sanctions** – Just one in three adult decision-makers (36%) agreed with the statement “If I don’t ensure my daughters and/or nieces are married early, my family will not be respected in the community.”

# How do we interpret this finding?

Alternative explanations for child marriage in these communities (**prudential reasons**):

- 87% say may happen because of pregnancy
- 77% say mostly happens because of lack of education and job opportunities
- 57% say sometimes happens for financial reasons
- 44% say may happen to resolve family disputes



# How do we interpret this finding?

Attitudes that may indirectly result in child marriage:

- 93% agree that unmarried girls who get pregnant are “naughty”
- 80% agree that giving unmarried girls access to contraceptives makes them promiscuous
- 38% agree that unmarried adolescent girls should have access to contraception

# Implications

## For programming

- Acknowledge and build upon the existing sensitization and opposition to child marriage
- Increase knowledge of laws as leverage
- Increase emphasis on the portions of the girls' curriculum that address attitudes towards adolescent sexuality and access to contraception
- Focus the CSO capacity-building interventions on addressing prudential reasons for child marriage

# Implications

## For measurement and research

- Supplement quantitative research with qualitative vignettes to increase explanatory power
- Always include measures of prudential reasons
- Consider more advanced quantitative techniques for reducing social desirability bias

GRADUATION

(ENGAGE)

ENABLING GIRLS ADVANCE GENDER EQUITY



Building the Capacity  
of Girl Leaders

Making Malawi a  
Better Place for  
Children

