



ENGAGE: Reducing Child Marriage in Southern Malawi

Overview:

In the Southern remote rural regions of Malawi, the rates of child marriage average 44%, with girls being married off as early as 10 years old. The ENGAGE initiative (Enabling Girls to Advance Gender Equity) aims to reduce the prevalence of child marriage in Southern Malawi by increasing girls' empowerment and the advocacy impacts of civil society leaders and organizations in the Phalombe and Thyolo Districts, beginning in 2017. ENGAGE's overall goal is to improve outcomes for girls and young women in the areas of gender equity, education, sexual and reproductive health and family planning.

Principle Strategies:

ENGAGE will employ a multi-pronged approach to empower vulnerable adolescent girls to increase their autonomy and decision-making agency, advance more gender equitable social norms, and build CSO capacity to hold duty-bearers accountable for ending child marriage. This approach includes the following core strategies in the Phalombe and Thyolo Districts:

- ***Girl Empowerment Intervention:*** ENGAGE will competitively select 800 adolescent girls to raise their voices and increase their agency in making decisions pertaining to their education, health and development. These girls will then engage 8,000 marginalized girls ages 10-18, through girl clubs to inform them about child marriage and mobilize them to speak out for their rights.
- ***Civil Society Engagement Intervention:*** To create an enabling environment for gender equity, ENGAGE will enable 36 competitively selected civil society leaders and their organizations to reduce the prevalence of child marriage through girl-centered advocacy.
- ***SMS and Radio Interventions:*** ENGAGE will employ an innovative SMS and radio campaign strategy to build community support to end child marriage and enhance gender equity by engaging key target groups, including men and boys, traditional and religious authorities, government officials, and girls themselves.
- ***Independent Evaluation:*** ENGAGE will also test the actual and relative effectiveness of these interventions through a rigorous mixed-method evaluation. This evaluation will build an evidence base concerning effective strategies to reduce child marriage and advance gender equity, and disseminate findings to local, regional and global stakeholders, including relevant government Ministries in Malawi at the local, district and national levels.

About the Partnership:

Rise Up, the Girls' Empowerment Network (GENET) of Malawi and the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) are partnering to design, scale, and evaluate the ENGAGE initiative. This groundbreaking multi-pronged intervention will empower adolescent girls and civil society organizations to reduce the incidence of child marriage. Rise Up, GENET, and ICRW will also work with Youth Tech Health (YTH) and YONECO as advisory partners for the SMS and Radio strategies.

For more information about ENGAGE, please contact Patricia Chimzinga Nyirenda, Malawi Program Consultant, ENGAGE Coordinator at malawi@riseuptogether.org or by phone at +265 (0)999369328 and Chantal Hildebrand, Rise Up Program Coordinator at childebrand@riseuptogether.org, and visit www.riseuptogether.org.

About Rise Up:

Rise Up enables girls, youth, and women to transform their own lives, communities, and countries. Rise Up leaders have advocated for over 100 laws and policies impacting 115 million girls, youth and women across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the United States. We invest in visionary leaders, local organizations, and innovative solutions to achieve large scale change through leadership development, advocacy, grantmaking, and storytelling.