



A2 ACTIVITIES TO REVEAL HIDDEN ISSUES

Community drama on child/early marriage



Why use this activity?

Early marriage destroys children's lives. It is very common in some places. It can be difficult for people to see that it is wrong, because it might be something that has happened for generations. Drama can be an excellent way of communicating a message. This drama helps communicate why child marriage is so harmful, and that it is something that can be challenged and stopped.



A brief description

A drama script with questions for discussion.



You will need

- A group of people to act out the drama
- Objects such as household items to use in the drama (these are not essential)



What to do

The script below is adapted from a street drama, written by LAMB, a Tearfund partner in Bangladesh. Please adapt it to suit your context. You can change the names of people and places to names that are common in your country, and change the currency (money) to whatever currency is used in your context. Use language that people will understand. You may be able to think of other ways to make it more appropriate for your community.

- Decide who will play the different roles.
- Rehearse the drama so that everyone knows what they need to say and do.
- Decide where and when you will perform the drama. Will you do street drama? Or organise a meeting in a community building where the drama will be performed? Or perform it as part of church service or community meeting that is already happening?



Explaining the words we use

Child – someone less than 18 years old

Child or early marriage: a marriage between a child and someone else.

Drama: a story that is acted out.

Street drama: a drama performed in a public place such as a market, a street or shopping centre.

Awareness raising

Children & youth

Climate & environment

Conflict & peace-building

Corruption & governance

Disaster risk management

Discrimination & inclusion

Food & livelihoods

Gender & sexual violence

Health & HIV

Influencing decision-makers

Migration & trafficking

Water, sanitation & hygiene



The script

Characters:

Jorina and Madhobi - 2 girls of about 13 years of age
 Marriage Mediator
 Headman
 Jorina's mother
 Tripty - a lady in the village
 Saeedi – member of local self-help group

[Two girls are playing together and having fun.]

Jorina: Good bye, my friend, I'll see you in school.

Madhobi: Good bye, Jorina.

[Madhobi exits. Marriage Mediator enters and sees Jorina walking along the road.]

Marriage Mediator: Oh! What a beautiful girl I see! The Headman/Chairman/Village Chief¹ told me to find a girl for his son. I'll tell him about this girl.

Dear sweet girl, please listen to me, what is your name?

Jorina: Why are you asking, uncle? Why do you want to know my name?

Marriage Mediator: Dear, please tell me your name and your father's name.

Jorina: My name is Jorina. And my father's name is Kuddus.

Marriage Mediator: Oh! You are Kuddus' daughter from VullarDanga. Go to school my child, I'll tell the Headman about you.

[Jorina departs. The Marriage Mediator goes to find the Headman]

Marriage Mediator: Greetings Mr Headman! Please come here.

Headman: My friend, how are you?

Marriage Mediator: Dear Headman, I have something very important to tell you. Do you know Kuddus of VullarDanga? I've chosen his daughter for your son. What do you think?

¹ Use whichever term is most relevant in your context – or choose a different term.

A2 COMMUNITY DRAMA ON CHILD/EARLY MARRIAGE

Headman: Yes, I've seen that girl also. We'll certainly make her our daughter-in-law. Please take forward discussions on this matter.

Marriage Mediator: Alright, I'll talk to them today.

[Headman departs. Jorina's mother enters and begins to act as if cooking and cleaning her home. Marriage Mediator walks towards her.]

Marriage Mediator: Hello! Kuddus' wife! Are you at home? Please come here.

Jorina's mother: Mr Mediator! Hello. Why have you come to my house?

Marriage Mediator: I've brought some good news for you. I've seen a bridegroom for your daughter. He is the son of the Headman.

Jorina's mother: Dear Mr Mediator. You know that Jorina's father is no longer with us. I am alone. Please do your best for us.

Marriage Mediator: I'll not do any harm to you. So, what about the dowry? If you give forty thousand taka, then your daughter will be married to the Headman's son.

Jorina's mother: I've only thirty thousand taka. I can give this amount.

Marriage Mediator: Alright, I'm going now. I'll tell you the date of the marriage later.

[Marriage Mediator and Jorina's mother depart. Marriage Mediator and Headman enter]

Marriage Mediator: Dear Mr Headman, where are you?

Headman: What happened now? Why have you come here again?

Marriage Mediator: Good news! I've confirmed the marriage! Her mother will give thirty thousand taka. Now, please tell me the date of the marriage.

Headman: How about Friday? The marriage will take place on Friday.

Marriage Mediator: Great! So the wedding day is fixed. I will go and tell them today.

[Marriage Mediator and Headman depart. Jorina enters and sits down, looking sad]

Jorina: What shall I do? I don't want to get married. I want to go to school. Maybe I just have to get married.

[Madhobi enters]

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A2 COMMUNITY DRAMA ON CHILD/EARLY MARRIAGE

Awareness raising	Madhobi:	Jorina, where are you?
Children & youth	Jorina:	Dear Madhobi, you've come! Please rescue me! They are giving me away to be married to the Headman's son.
Climate & environ- ment	Madhobi:	Do you want to be married?
Conflict & peace- building	Jorina:	No, they are forcing me to be married.
Corruption & governance	Madhobi:	All right, don't worry, let's go and talk to someone who can help us.
Disaster risk manage- ment		<i>[Madhobi and Jorina depart. Enter: Madhobi, Jorina and Tripty]</i>
Discrim- ination & inclusion	Madhobi:	Dear elder sister, Jorina's marriage has been fixed. Her mother wants to give her away in marriage.
Food & livelihoods	Tripty:	Let me go to her mother's house and talk to her. Let's see if Saeedi, a member of the women's self-help group, will come with me.
Gender & sexual violence		<i>[Marhobi and Tripty depart. Enter: Jorina's mother (at home), Saeedi and Tripty]</i>
Health & HIV	Saeedi:	<i>[Calling]</i> Jorina's mother, are you at home?
Influencing decision- makers	Jorina's Mother:	Hello. How do you do? Why have you come to my house?
Migration & trafficking	Saeedi:	Are you giving your daughter to be married to the Headman's son?
Water, sanitation & hygiene	Jorina's Mother:	No ... um, I mean, I don't want to give her away to be married but the Headman forced me to agree to it. I'm a poor woman, I've nobody to help me. That's why I agreed. Moreover, I don't know whether or not I'll be able to get a good bridegroom for Jorina in the future.
	Tripty:	Dear Aunt, don't you know that a girl can't be married if she is under 18 years of age? Girls less than 18 are not ready to be wives and mothers. Their health can be damaged by having children too young. What's more, it is illegal and a punishable offense.
	Jorina's Mother:	I really didn't know about this. And I thought if I disagreed with the Headman then something bad might happen.
	Saeedi:	Don't worry. We'll talk to the Headman. You stay here. Let me go and find my sisters from the self-help group, and let us all go to the Headman's house.
		<i>[Everybody departs. Enter: Saeedi, Tripty, other self-help group members and Headman.]</i>

A2 COMMUNITY DRAMA ON CHILD/EARLY MARRIAGE

- Headman: Please come in, have a seat. Why have you come here? I have lots of work to do. I'm arranging many things for my son's marriage. Please tell me quickly what you want to talk about.
- Saaedi: Please listen to us, Mr Headman. You've arranged your son's marriage. But is your son old enough to be married? Jorina is only 13 years old! Do you think it is OK to be married at this age? Do you know the physical complications that can happen because of early-marriage? Moreover, do you know that child-marriage is illegal?
- Tripty: Listen to me, Mr Headman. If you go ahead with this marriage, then all of us will go to the police station.
- Headman: I really didn't know about this. My eyes have been opened today! This marriage will not happen. And listen my friends, I'm with you. I will not allow any child-marriage from now on.

Announcement: *[spoken by all of the actors, or just one person]*

“Children are not physically, emotionally or mentally ready to be married. Early marriage means the end of education and the end of childhood. Girls’ bodies are not yet ready to carry children. They risk dangerous complications in pregnancy and childbirth. Early marriage is wrong. It must be stopped.”

Discussion questions

It may be appropriate to discuss these questions with small groups of people after performing the drama. Be aware that this might be a difficult subject for some people. It will need to be addressed with sensitivity and wisdom.

- How did Jorina feel about the marriage? Why did she feel that way?
- Why did Jorina's mother agree to the marriage?
- What would happen to the Marriage Mediator if early marriage stopped? What alternative employment might be available to him?
- Does early marriage happen in your community?
- Why does it happen?
- What harm does it cause?
- What can be done to stop it?

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Child or early marriage

1 in 3 girls in the developing world are married by their 18th birthday. While it happens to both girls and boys, it is mostly girls who are affected. It is illegal under international law.

Early marriage often means the end of education and the end of childhood. Girls are not physically or emotionally ready to become wives and mothers. They face high risk of dangerous complications in pregnancy and childbirth, becoming infected with HIV, and suffering from domestic abuse. Girls who get married typically have children themselves very young. Approximately 70,000 girls die in labour every year because their bodies aren't ready for childbirth.

Why does it happen? In many places child marriage is a traditional practice that has happened for generations. Girls are not valued as much as boys, and have a lower status in societies as a result of harmful traditions, attitudes and beliefs. Poverty is also a huge factor. Giving a child away means one less person to feed, clothe, educate and keep healthy. In communities where a dowry or 'bride price' is paid, it is often welcome income for poor families. In cultures where the bride's family pay the groom a dowry, they often have to pay less if the bride is young and uneducated. Many parents also wrongly believe that being married young will keep their child safe. **Source:** www.girlsnotbrides.org



Finding out more

- Resources on the *Girls Not Brides* campaign website: www.girlsnotbrides.org
- Resources on the *Keeping Children Safe* website: www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk

Related tools:

- A1 – Revealing the need to protect children: information for facilitators [A1: Children & youth-1]
- A2 – Using the media to talk about child protection [A2: Children & youth-1]
- A2 – Discussing standards for child protection [A2: Children & youth-3]
- B – Caring for children (Bible study) [B: Children & youth-2]
- B – God's view of children (Bible study) [B: Children & youth-2]