

COUNCIL *on* FOREIGN RELATIONS

58 East 68th Street, New York, New York 10065
tel 212.434.9400 fax 212.434.9800 www.cfr.org



Council on Foreign Relations *Child Marriage*

Teaching Notes

Discussion Questions

1. Why should curbing child marriage be a priority for the United States?
2. In what ways can the practice of forced marriage keep women and girls trapped in a cycle of poverty? What effects does this have at the local, national, and international level?
3. What are risks to physical and emotional well-being risks faced by child brides? What other kinds of risks do they face?
4. How do the consequences of child marriage undermine the UN Millennium Development Goals? How should child marriage fit into the post-2015 development agenda?
5. What are the multiplier effects of educating girls?
6. What types of programs have been effective in keeping girls in school and unwed until they are eighteen? Why have these been effective? What are the potential unintended consequences of these approaches?
7. What is the role of bilateral and multilateral organizations in ending the practice of child marriage? What is the role of individual countries? What is the role of community-based organizations?

8. What challenges exist in ensuring the effectiveness of international legal documents or state laws that prohibit child marriage?
9. What factors influence differences in how countries or internal populations define a child? How do these definitions vary by gender? How do differences in definitions affect regulation of child marriage?
10. What accounts for variability in child marriage rates within and across countries and regions?
11. How do conflict or crisis situations exacerbate the risk of early marriage for girls? How does poverty exacerbate this risk?

Essay Questions

1. Choose one of the countries highlighted in the “country profile” section of the InfoGuide and analyze the factors (cultural, economic, and other) that perpetuate the practice of child marriage. Given these factors, discuss:
 - What are the greatest challenges in eradicating child marriage in this context?
 - What would be the best way for local, regional, national, and international actors to eradicate child marriage given the context?
2. Consider the statement “Educate a girl, and you educate a community.” How does promoting access to education for girls help reduce child marriage? What influence does girls’ schooling have on communities? What factors should be taken into consideration when promoting girls education?
3. What is the correlation between a country’s poverty level and child marriage rates? How do they reinforce each other? Given this cyclical relationship, what do you think is the best approach when crafting policy to address child marriage?
4. Why is child marriage a development concern? Why is it a U.S. foreign policy concern? Why is it a humanitarian concern? How can U.S. policies, including development and relief initiatives, target the practice of child marriage?
5. Discuss the role that culture and religion play in perpetuating the practice of child marriage and in determining the best policies to address it.

Activities and Assignments

Request for Proposals

Divide students into small groups and ask them to respond to a request for proposals (RFP) from a donor looking to fund a project to reduce and prevent child marriage in one of the countries featured in the InfoGuide’s country profile section. Their proposal should include an overarching goal, specific objectives, and activities for implementation. It should describe the relevant partners who are involved in the project. The proposal should also include clear indicators of success and a plan to monitor and evaluate the project.

Optional: In addition to having students submit their proposals in written form, organize a role play in which students present their proposal and you, the instructor, act as the donor. Be sure to ask students plenty of questions. Conclude by selecting one project to receive the funding, and lead a full class debrief on why this particular project was chosen.

For example RFPs, see <http://www.npguides.org/>.

Common Core Standards: RH.9-10.1, RH.11-12.7, RH.11-12.9, RH.11-12.10

With optional activity: SL.9-10.1-6, RH.9-10.1, RH.11-12.7, RH.11-12.9, RH.11-12.10

Op-ed

Have students imagine they are a U.S. diplomat or development worker returning from time overseas in a country of their choosing where child marriage is prevalent. Ask them to conduct research and write an op-ed in which they describe the causes and consequences of child marriage in this particular country and argue that the United States should focus its efforts on curbing the practice there. The op-ed should clearly and persuasively make the case for why reducing and preventing child marriage should be a priority for the United States.

For more guidance on writing an op-ed, direct students to

http://www.theopedproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=68&Itemid=80.

Common Core Standards: RH.9-10.1, RH.11-12.7, RH.11-12.9, RH.11-12.10

Testimony

Instruct students to imagine that they are in a high level advocacy position at a children's rights organization, and have been invited to speak before Congress on why child marriage should be a focus of U.S. foreign policy. Have them write a testimony that clearly articulates the risks and negative consequences of child marriage for girls, communities, and countries; the factors that allow the practice to continue; and the positive benefits of reducing the practice. The testimony should include a clear rationale for why curbing the practice of child marriage links to U.S. foreign policy concerns and suggest specific actions for the United States to take. During one, or over the course of a few, class periods, have students deliver testimonies. Discuss as a class which testimonies were the most persuasive and why.

Common Core Standards: SL.9-10.1-6, RH.9-10.1, RH.11-12.7, RH.11-12.9, RH.11-12.10

Role-play

Divide students into small groups and assign each group one of the country profiles from the InfoGuide. Have them role play a community meeting in which they work to devise an approach to addressing child marriage in their context. Students should choose roles of different actors within their group; these may include NGO workers, parents, teachers, elders, religious leaders, and local government leaders. Remind them to consider the particular social, cultural, and economic factors present in their case study. Conclude by having a full-class debrief on the benefits of a community-based approach.

Common Core Standards: SL.9-10.1-6, RH.11-12.7, RH.9-10.9, RH.11-12.9, RH.11-12.10

Map activity

Using a smartboard, show your class the InfoGuide’s map. Ask students which factors appear to be common in places with the highest child marriage rates. In pairs or small groups, ask them to identify what might account for variability within countries. Ask for some pairs or groups to share their thoughts with the whole class. Facilitate a class discussion by posing the question: Given in-country variability, what types of program and policy approaches might work best for curbing child marriage?

Common Core Standards: SL.9-10.1-6, RH.11-12.1, RH.11-12.2

Video Carousel Activity

Prepare by writing one of the following quotes on five pieces of paper, and placing them at different locations around the classroom:

- “Child marriage is an abuse of human rights.” –Laura Laski, Chief of Sexual and Reproductive Health, United Nations Population Fund
 - Note: Along with this question, print a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- “Poverty is the main reason for early marriage.” - Hooria Mashhour , Yemen’s Minister of Human Rights
- “For the individual girl, [child marriage] can be a time when her life changes dramatically. But when you magnify that across a whole country, you can see the impact it has at a macro level.” –Isobel Coleman, Director, Civil Society, Markets, and Democracy Initiative, Council on Foreign Relations
- “Issues related to human security, issues like child marriage, are simply not soft issues... We as a global community not only have a moral interest in protecting young girls in particular, but we have our own security interests at heart.” –Donald Steinberg, CEO, World Learning
- “The issue of child marriage has been elevated in recent years, both in terms of U.S. foreign policy and also on the world stage.” –Rachel Vogelstein, Fellow for Women and Foreign Policy, Council on Foreign Relations

Start your class by asking students what they already know about child marriage. Elicit, or have students brainstorm, why this issue might be of concern to the United States. Tell students you will show a video that explains the issue and its importance.

Play the InfoGuide overview video. Afterwards, divide students into groups, and assign them to different locations around the classroom. At each location, place one of the pieces of paper (and support material as needed) with the quotes. Each group should have five minutes to discuss the quote; tell them to consider the “how” and “why” of each speaker’s assertion. When the time is up, each group will rotate to the next location, and discuss the quote found there. Repeat until each group has had time to discuss each quote.

End by facilitating a plenary discussion on why child marriage should be a foreign policy priority for the United States, and then assign students to explore the InfoGuide on their own for homework. During the next class period, write the quotes on the board or pass them out on a piece of paper, and ask students if the InfoGuide further clarified the issues raised and if they have additional thoughts on the meaning and significance of the quotes .

Class Presentation

Tell students that in the InfoGuide overview video and text, there are a number of approaches cited that international organizations have taken to address child marriage, such as legal reform, naming and shaming, economic development, education programs, and working with local actors. In the video, Donald Steinberg, CEO of World Learning, concludes that “What we have found all around the world is that empowering those individuals within their own societies has been by far the most effective approach.”

Divide students into small groups, and assign each group to research a program discussed in the “Country Profile” section of the InfoGuide or another one of their choosing. Give them one week to complete their research and to prepare a presentation for the class that addresses the following:

- What is the goal of the program?
- Who is involved at the local, regional, national, and international level?
- What are its greatest challenges?
- What is your assessment of the pros and cons of this program?
- Was empowerment of local individuals a focus of this program? How might this have influenced the program’s outcomes?

Conclude with a full class debrief on why empowerment at the local level is critical to programs’ success, and strategies to that programs meet this criteria.

Common Core Standards: SL.9-10.1-6, RH.11-12.1, RH.11-12.2, RH.11-12.10

Debate

Explain to students that the InfoGuide presents information about child marriage in a variety of countries. It also discusses a number of solutions that can be used to help combat the problem, such as informational campaigns, expanding education, economic incentives, and strengthening legal frameworks. Determining the best approach and the actors who are best suited to implement these approaches requires analyzing the context.

Arrange the class into an even number of groups of five. Pair groups against one another, assigning each pair a country, and designating one group the affirmative team and the other the negative.

Instruct the affirmative team to identify the solution(s) they believe the government should use to address the problem of child marriage in their country. Have the students research and prepare arguments in favor of the government adopting that approach.

Instruct the negative team to be prepared to refute the approach selected by the affirmative. They should argue for an alternative solution that would instead be implemented by an NGO or community-based organization.

Give students the details of the format/structure of the debate. Each member of the group will have a specific responsibility for one of the following roles:

- Lead Debater/Constructor: presents the main points/arguments for his or her team's stand on the topic of the debate.
- Questioner/Cross-Examiner: poses questions about the opposing team's arguments to its Question Responder.

- Question Responder: takes over the role of the Lead Debater/Constructor as he or she responds to questions posed by the opposing team's Questioner/Cross-Examiner.
- Rebutter: responds on behalf of his or her team to the questions raised in the cross-examination.
- Summarizer: closes the debate by summarizing the main points of his or her team's arguments, especially attempts by the opposition to shoot holes in their arguments.

Allow students to prepare for the debate either in or outside of class.

The debate itself will play out as follows:

- First Speech by the Affirmative: 6 minutes, by Lead Debater/Constructor
- Cross Examination by Negative: 3 minutes, Negative Questioner/Cross-Examiner asks Affirmative Question Responder
- First Speech by the Negative: 6 minutes, by Lead Debater/Constructor
- Cross Examination by Affirmative: 3 minutes, Affirmative Questioner/Cross-Examiner asks Negative Question Responder
- Affirmative Rebuttal: 3 minutes, by Rebutter
- Negative Rebuttal: 3 minutes, by Rebutter
- Affirmative Summary: 3 minutes, by Summarizer
- Negative Summary: 3 minutes, by Summarizer

Each side should also get 3 minutes total of preparation time to use between speeches, in order to give their team time to get ready for the following speech.

Note: The five-student team format enables you to divide a class of twenty students into four equal teams.

- If your class is smaller than twenty students, you might adapt the format described above by combining certain roles, such as Questioner and Rebutter and Question Responder and Summarizer, or Questioner and Question Responder,
- If your class is larger than twenty students, you might arrange students into more and/or smaller groups. If you create smaller groups, combine roles as suggested above.

When it comes time to debate, you can either have multiple pairs of teams debate simultaneously, while you circulate through the groups as they debate, or you can have one pair debate at a time, allowing you to moderate the proceedings and see the entirety of each debate.

Leave time at the end of each debate for the class to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each team's proposal, and which approach they ultimately think would be most effective.

Common Core Standards: SL.9-10.1-6, RH.9-10.1, RH.11-12.7, RH.9-10.8, RH.9-10.9, RH.11-12.10