

CHILD MARRIAGE
FREE WORLD



COMMUNITIES' PACK

CHILD MARRIAGE FREE WORLD: THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART!

Constitutions, many national laws, and the United Nations have all banned child marriage, but it will only be eliminated when enough people in your community recognise that a child marrying an adult is unacceptable, and when all girls and boys know their rights.

By taking part in the campaign, you will be joining communities all over the world in making a commitment to end child marriage. We've created this pack to support you to encourage your community to pledge to end child marriage. We've included lots of ideas for how you can do this, all of which can be adapted to suit your community and the time you have available.

We also have additional resources on our [website](#), including background information on child marriage which can be [downloaded as a leaflet](#).

Any type of community can take part! This can be the street, neighbourhood, village, or area you live in, or even a group you're a member of – like a social group, a community centre, or a sports club.

Every year millions of children, mostly girls, are forced to marry whilst they are still a child. It has devastating effects on the child's education, health, childhood, and future. By raising awareness in your community, you are supporting children's empowerment and ability to make informed choices about their futures.

If you require further information or support, please visit childmarriagefree.world or email us: campaign@childmarriagefree.world

Thank you again for taking part in the campaign.

The Child Marriage Free World Campaign Team



COMMUNITY PLEDGING EVENT

HOW WILL AN EVENT IN MY COMMUNITY HELP END CHILD MARRIAGE?

Changing attitudes can be difficult and a good place to start is to bring together everyone who wants to end child marriage to make a firm commitment.

A Community Pledging Event can be an important moment to demonstrate the scale of support for ending child marriage where you live. It can also be a transformational experience for the children and adults who take part – making a pledge in public means you are more likely to stick to it. Participants can also draw strength from the commitment of others. Rights are more likely to be realised when girls and boys are aware of the rights they hold.

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY CHILD MARRIAGE

Before, during, and after the community pledging event, you can raise awareness about child marriage and the harmful impact it has on children's lives.

You can do this by distributing materials within your community which explain why child marriage should end, to encourage more people to support the call to eliminate child marriage.

We have created a [sample flyer](#) you can use, but you are welcome to adapt this and use other materials you create yourself.

On our website, we have provided information [about child marriage](#), which you can download as a leaflet [here](#).

During your event, you could also use some of the information on the website or in the leaflet to give a short presentation or speech giving the reasons why the community should pledge to end child marriage.

Conversations with people can also be effective, as it is often the easiest way to express your commitment to your cause. Visiting decision-makers, such as community leaders or politicians, and families in your community to discuss the issues and invite them to take part can help achieve change. You can also do this after the event, using pictures and videos you took of the event to show people how important the issue is to the community.

CHILD MARRIAGE FREE COMMUNITY

If you have enough support from leaders within your community you can also invite them to be part of the event. If they agree that child marriage should be eliminated, you could try to encourage them to declare that the community will become 'child marriage free'.

A Child Marriage Free Community declaration is a statement of intent by senior community leaders, and it is realised if there have been no child marriages in the community a year after the declaration.

In India, thousands of communities have already pledged to become Child Marriage Free Communities, with the aim to declare entire districts – comprised of many local communities – free of child marriage.

It is possible to end child marriage, community by community, by commitments and actions taken by members of those communities. Laws and policies will only work if communities themselves work to eradicate child marriage.



WHAT KIND OF EVENT SHOULD I ORGANISE?

All around the world, communities use a variety of ways to demonstrate their solidarity with different types of causes.

Some types of events may work better in your community than others, and it's up to you to decide what will work best with the community you are hoping to engage.

Different types of event include:

- Presentation / Discussion event
- A short march or rally
- Candle lighting ceremony
- Handing in a petition

Whatever type of event you have, you must ensure you include enough time for the participants to take the Child Marriage Free World Pledge (which is included at the end of the pack).

Below we've provided examples of events which can work well in a variety of communities, but you can also be creative and adapt these ideas to organise your own type of event or activity.

PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION EVENT

A simple way to communicate your message and encourage people to pledge is to host an event in a public space, which can be inside or outside. The event does not have to be long – no more than one hour. You would use the time to:

- Explain why child marriage should be eradicated
- Hear a commitment of support to end child marriage from a community leader or decision-maker
- Have a discussion on the damage caused by child marriage and how to help stop it
- Ask participants to take the pledge.

You can make this event as formal or as informal as you think will work with your audience, or for your speakers. For example, if a well-known decision-maker is attending, you might want to invite the local media; if it is a more informal event, you could give people an opportunity to ask questions or talk about their experiences.

A MARCH

A march is an easy way to gather a group of people together to demonstrate support to end child marriage. A march does not have to be long – you can simply walk from one end of a street to another. You can also start or end the march at an important place in your community, such as a meeting hall for decision-makers or a market square.

The most important thing to make your march impactful is to make sure everybody knows what you are marching for! You can do this by making large signs or banners calling for an end to child marriage, and by singing or chanting your demands. You can also hand out leaflets with information to people who are watching the march.



A RALLY



This is an event where you ask people to gather in a popular public meeting space, like a market square, holding signs and banners, to listen and learn more about the cause to end child marriage. A rally can also be held at the start or at the end of a march.

Rallies work especially well when the speakers are passionate and can inspire people attending the rally to get involved in creating a Child Marriage Free Community. You might want to think about inviting a combination of different speakers, such as a local decision-maker, or someone whose life has been negatively impacted by child marriage who can talk about their own experiences.

CANDLELIGHT CEREMONIES

In India, many community events to end child marriage have started at dusk, so that participants can carry candles or torches. This makes a big visual impact. This activity can be combined with a short march or rally or just be a standalone activity people do together to reflect on those children whose childhoods and futures have been damaged by child marriage. For example you can have a minute of silence while people hold their candle or torch, to allow participants to think about the harmful impacts of child marriage.



DELIVERING A PETITION

Your event could be a formal handover of a community petition to end child marriage. In advance of the event – any time from now – you can gather as many signatures as you can on a petition and ask others to help gather more. The text of the pledge can be used as a petition so that everyone who signs it is also making the pledge.



The petition itself provides an easy way to count how many people have pledged to end to child marriage in your community.

You can then organise a handover event where you deliver the petition to your local decision-makers, and ask them to take the pledge themselves. You must invite the decision-makers to take part, or make an appointment with them letting them know what you would like to discuss.

The event can take place at the local meeting place for decision-makers, such as an office, village or town hall, or a community centre. If the event is in a large space, or if there is a space near the meeting place which is big enough, invite everyone who has signed the petition to come along – and take pictures!

DON'T FORGET!

Whatever type of event you choose to organise, it's important to **make sure everybody knows it is happening, and take photos and videos of the event** itself so that you can demonstrate the support you have to end child marriage afterwards. We've provided some ideas for this later in the pack.



TIPS FOR BEFORE THE EVENT

FINALISING THE LOCATION AND TIME

Please pick a day and time that you think will allow the most people to attend.

INVITING PEOPLE

It is useful to make clear this is an event for everyone in the community who is against child marriage. There can be other events organised to help persuade new people and to debate the issues, but the pledging events themselves are designed for those who are ready or think they may be ready to make a commitment against child marriage.

As well as inviting people in your community to take part in the event, you could also approach some local leaders to discuss the issue and to invite them to the event to see the scale of opposition to child marriage. This can include locally elected leaders but also faith leaders or other community figures such as headteachers or business leaders.

PROMOTING THE EVENT

Regardless of the size and nature of the community you are hoping will come to the event, they have to know about it in the first place!

By email: If you have email addresses of the people you would like to invite, then you can simply use these details to send the invitation and make sure you adapt your invitation based on who you are sending it to – you might need to be more formal if you are inviting decision-makers and community leaders, for example. We would recommend sending:

- An initial invitation, which has clear information explaining what the event is for, and the time, date, and location of the event. You can ask people to confirm if they will be coming.
- A follow-up email, which can be shorter and simply asks anyone who has not confirmed to let you know if they will be there.
- A reminder 2-3 days before the event to everyone who said they will be coming.

If you have time, you can design a flyer for the event and attach it as a PDF file.

Online: If you have any social media accounts, like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter/X, LinkedIn, or TikTok, you can post about your event on your profile. On Facebook, you could create a separate event page and invite all your contacts that way. Depending on how many people you are inviting, you could also create an Eventbrite entry, which will enable people to say whether or not they are coming.

On Twitter/X and LinkedIn, it would be great to include an image as part of your post – it can be the same as whatever you use on any of the other platforms. The invitation should include the purpose of the event, the time, date, and location.

Around the community: If you are inviting people from a particular location (like your village or street), you can make posters and ask for permission to put them up in popular public locations – such as the local community centre or the local shops. You can also make flyers to leave in the same places for people to take.

You can also ask local social groups if you can have five minutes at the start of their meetings to let people know about the event, or ask if they will hand out your flyers.

ADAPTING THE PLEDGE

If you feel that the pledge should be adapted to be more appropriate for your community, you can amend some of the non-bold text, providing it is still clearly against child marriage. For example, you may wish to add the name of your community into the pledge.

It is important you keep the first few words of the pledge that are in bold the same - as these words will be the same pledge that everyone around the world will be taking.

PREPARING MATERIALS

It is worth preparing some sheets with the pledge written on it beforehand. It is important everyone fully understands the pledge they are taking by ensuring you allocate enough time for them to read it or to listen to it, before the pledge moment.

PREPARING TO TAKE PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

It's really important to make a visual record of your day, as this will help demonstrate how important ending child marriage is to your community after the event. However, it is just as important to make sure you have the permission of everyone – especially any children - featured in the photos and videos, so that you are able to post them online.

If children will be at your event, you can ask their parents to sign a document which you prepare in advance and states that the people signed below give permission for their child's image to be used on social media and websites to promote the campaign. You only need one document, and everyone can sign it. If you cannot get signatures, you can specifically ask parents at the start of the event if they give permission verbally for their children to be in the photos and videos.

If anyone does not give permission, you must ensure they are not included.

If the event is for adults only, you can let everyone know at the start of the event that photos and videos will be taken which will be shared publicly. If anyone does not want to be in these photos or videos, they can let you know and you must ensure they are not included.

Once you know you have permission to share your photos and videos, you can share them with us at campaign@childmarriagefree.world as well as post on your social media profiles. You can also ask other participants to share them on their profiles too.

HOW DO I REGISTER OUR PLEDGES?

You need to let us know where and when the event is taking place and how many people are likely to take the pledge. You can do that through the website [here](#) or by emailing campaign@childmarriagefree.world

You can register before or after your event takes place.

We would really appreciate it if you can also share photos of people taking the pledge or the list of signatories for those signing their commitment with us. Make sure that everyone is happy for you to email these pledges and photos to us, as we would like to share them on our website and social media channels.

If you register in advance, we'll send you a link to upload your content.



WHAT DOES THE EVENT LOOK LIKE?

The event can last from 10 minutes to an hour depending on how long you make each section and who you would like to speak. We suggest the core areas for your event should include:

- **Explanation:** Welcoming everyone to the event and an explanation of what child marriage is and how damaging it can be for the children involved.
- **Leader support:** Any statements you have from leaders in your community about why they are opposed to child marriage (if you don't have leaders support yet you can skip this step).
- **Preparing the Pledge:** Share the pledges for children and for adults with those present. One good way to do this is to have it written on some large pieces of paper beforehand. Read it out loud for everyone beforehand and ask them to think for a couple of minutes if they are ready to take the pledge.
- **Taking the Pledge:** For those that want to take the pledge, either individually or in groups recite the pledge for children followed by the pledge for adults. Ask everyone to put their hand straight up in the air while they take the pledge!

If you would like, you can also ask those who have said the pledge to add their name to the pledge cards themselves – adding their name makes the commitment stronger and gives you a useful record of the meeting to show decisions makers in future meetings.

- **Event Close:** Closing remarks that thank everyone for pledging and share the vision that one day the community and the world will be child marriage free. If everyone gives their permission, you can take some photos or videos during the event.

If the event has gone well and you want to do more you can invite people to a follow up meeting to discuss the issue and consider other actions.



HOW CAN I FOLLOW UP ON THE COMMUNITY PLEDGING EVENT?

This depends on how much time you have available.

If you can, please build on your pledging event by setting up a group to continue the work to end child marriage in your community. If enough of us around the world take action, we can end child marriage.

Further events that explain why child marriage is wrong can really help build momentum and raise awareness, maybe working in other local areas or with other groups. You can use the other event ideas in this pack or contact us to discuss ideas at campaign@childmarriagefree.world

If you were able to secure leadership commitments to end child marriage, then please also consider further events or meetings with the leader(s) to discuss exactly what they plan to do about it and how they can be alerted to any future planned child marriages.

If the leaders made a declaration that the community would become a child marriage free community please arrange a follow up meeting to discuss implementation (further information and help will be available from the CMFW campaign for this: campaign@childmarriagefree.world).

THE PLEDGE: HANDS UP TO END CHILD MARRIAGE!

Remember, **the sections in bold must remain the same** so that everyone around the world is making the same pledge. The other parts can be adapted to suit your community.

THE PLEDGE FOR CHILDREN:

I will not stay silent. I pledge to do all I can to end child marriage in my country and the world.

I will:

- Complete school as I have the right to education
- Decide for myself as an adult who I marry
- Protect other children by safely reporting child marriages.

FOR ADULTS:

I will not stay silent. I pledge to do all I can to end child marriage in my country and the world.

I will:

- Report anyone who marries a child
- Protect all children from adults who want to marry them
- Make my community child marriage free.

