



"Girls across the globe deserve the opportunity to be children, to go to school, to finish their educations and decide for themselves if and when they will marry."

Susanne von Bassewitz, Zonta International President

Dear friends,

On 23 May, I met with members of the Zonta International UN Committee and a few very engaged Zontians in Vienna, Austria at the 28th session of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. Our goal was to address child marriage: the violation of human rights that we put a special focus on in the year of Zonta's centennial anniversary.

During our side event, **Child and Forced Marriage in Humanitarian Settings: An Increasing Trafficking Issue?**, experts from diverse fields joined us to shed light on factors that work against the efforts to end this crime. The panel was an excellent example of how we collaborate with representatives of governments and organizations like the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences and Soroptimist International.

Below are key points the panelists shared that illustrate not only the complexity of this practice, but why it must end.

Our next newsletter will provide you with details from a seminar on ending child marriage

that took place on the day after the side event.

Together, we are making a difference for girls who are at risk of becoming victims of this crime.

Cordially,

Dr. Susanne von Bassewitz, President

Myths about child marriage

MYTH

Child marriage is rare and only happens in certain countries



FACT

Child marriage is common and takes place across the globe



About **1 in 3** girls in the developing world are married before age 18.

Child marriage takes place all over the world, **across continents, cultures and religions**, including developed countries.

#ZontaSaysNO | #EndChildMarriage | #16Days
www.ZontaSaysNO.com



Data from UNFPA

Child Marriage and Human Trafficking

Forced and early marriage means that at least one of the partners has not given consent or is too young to give consent.

Any minor who has been persuaded to perform a commercial sexual act is a human trafficking victim, even if there has been no force, fraud, or coercion - because the minor is not old enough to provide knowing consent.

Dr. Philip Reichel, Emeritus Professor of Sociology and Criminology at the University of Northern Colorado and member of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. (Philip is happy to share his slides and notes. Please email pr@zonta.org for more information.)



How child marriage impacts education

Education can be one of the most powerful tools to enable girls to avoid child marriage and fulfill their potential.



Girls with little to no education are **three times** as likely to marry by 18 as those with a secondary or higher education.



More than **60%** of women (ages 20-24) with little to no education were married before 18.

Data from Girls Not Brides

#ZontaSaysNO | #EndChildMarriage | #16Days
www.ZontaSaysNO.com



Child Marriage, Cultural Norms and Education

In Afghanistan every third girl is still being married before the age of 18.

Child marriages are sometimes used to strengthen ties between rival families, to settle dispute or reduce the amount of debt.

Setting the age of marriage to 18 intends to enable girls to continue their education.

Her Excellency **Khojesta Fana Ebrahimkhel**, Ambassador of Afghanistan to Austria

Child marriage in humanitarian settings

9 out of the **10**
countries with the highest child
marriage rates are fragile states.



Girls can be more vulnerable to child marriage during and after:



Conflict



Displacement



Natural Disasters

As a result, families may see child marriage as a form
of protection from violence or a way to cope with poverty.

Data from Girls Not Brides

#ZontaSaysNO | #EndChildMarriage | #16Days
www.ZontaSaysNO.com



Child Marriage and Humanitarian Crisis Settings

It is well documented that displacement leads to a considerable increase in human trafficking. The UN Environmental Programme has indicated that trafficking may increase 20-30% during disasters. Interpol has warned that disasters or conflict increase the exposure of women to trafficking as families are disrupted and livelihoods are lost.

Dr. Linda Witong, Soroptimist
International, Advocacy and Research
Consultant.

Special thanks to Ingeborg Geyer and the Zonta International UN Committee.

If you would like to support Zonta-sponsored initiatives like the
Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage,
please click the button below to donate.

[Donate](#)

Keep your network informed on how Zonta International is putting
our mission to work by sharing this newsletter to your social feeds.



www.zonta.org

STAY CONNECTED

