



Case study: ABAAD's Marriage Is Not a Game uses an animated video to alert girls in Lebanon to the risks of early marriage

The Marriage is Not a Game initiative

Marriage Is Not a Game is an awareness-raising initiative that communicates the risks associated with child marriage to girls and their communities in crisis-affected regions of Lebanon. It was developed by the non-governmental organisation ABAAD – Resource Center for Gender Equality, in collaboration with UNICEF. They developed key messages together, and UNICEF conducted testing and focus group discussions with community members to feed into the process.

ABAAD integrates the protection and best interests of girls into all its interventions, ensuring they are **gender-transformative and rights-based**.

The risk of child marriage in Lebanon is growing due to **ongoing crises** – including a crippling economic crisis – with devastating impact on the provision of public services, including education.



Pictured: The Marriage is Not a Game initiative

How Marriage Is Not a Game works

Marriage Is Not a Game, originally launched in 2014, uses an **animated video** – together with a complementary brochure – to show the immediate and longer-term **impacts of child marriage**. The video highlights how child marriage deprives girls of their education, limits their options for keeping themselves and their children safe – including during pregnancy – and prevents them from accessing decent work in adulthood. It contrasts this with better outcomes for those who marry after age 18, and their children

This initiative is part of ABAAD's broader GBV prevention and response strategy, which includes **community-based activities** and direct service provision for members of host and refugee communities. Through these services, they **meet girls and women's immediate needs, link with protection and support services, and create space for them to build connections and resilience**.

Results and implications

Marriage Is Not a Game has made a lasting impact by raising awareness of the risks of early marriage and promoting the rights of girls in communities that experience intersecting vulnerabilities. Its messages contribute to the ongoing dialogue around child marriage in Lebanon and the region.

- ABAAD's broader GBV prevention and response strategy reached over **28,500** rights holders – that is, individuals with entitlements in relation to duty-bearers, including those at risk of GBV, child protection issues and gender inequalities – through direct services in 2023. Of these, **16%** were under age 18.
- Prevention sessions covering issues like GBV and child marriage have reached over **12,400** people.
- Case management services supported **2,321** girls and women in 2023. **Child marriage accounted for 16% of the reported GBV cases.**

Key elements of success to consider include:

1 The need for long-term, contextually-tailored and holistic approaches that:

- Address the **immediate and root causes of GBV**, combining awareness-raising with direct support services.
- Intentionally supporting the populations who have been **most marginalised**, especially in conflict- and crisis-affected settings.
- Ensure communities are **aware of the risks** of child marriage and are committed to protecting girls' rights.

2 The integration of community feedback and partnerships to ensure initiatives are culturally sensitive and effective, including:

- The widespread use of these tools in regions with **acute needs**, like Syria and Yemen.
- Intentionally **reaching out to parents** – especially mothers – as key figures in prevention efforts
- Combining the programme with other interventions, like working with **religious leaders** and integrating the **fatherhood programme** to create broader impact in prevention and disclosure.