

Background:

The Ending Child Marriage (ECM) project is a 2 - year pilot program in Sierra Leone, proving an approach to ending child marriage that can be expanded and replicated. The project is geared towards creating a significant shift in beliefs, behaviors, societal norms and policies to End Child Marriage in Sierra Leone. It is being implemented in Kailahun district.

Project Focus:

The main aim of the ECM project is to better understand local context and drivers for the high rates of teenage pregnancy and deeply entrenched cultural beliefs among men and women to inform multifaceted solutions for more robust results in ending child marriage. Using the following approaches:

- Address critical gaps in programming involving men, boys and male leaders as allies; making them part of the change.
- Compliment SCI programmes in girl's empowerment (CEFM project)
- Reinforce community-based work leveraged with action at policy level

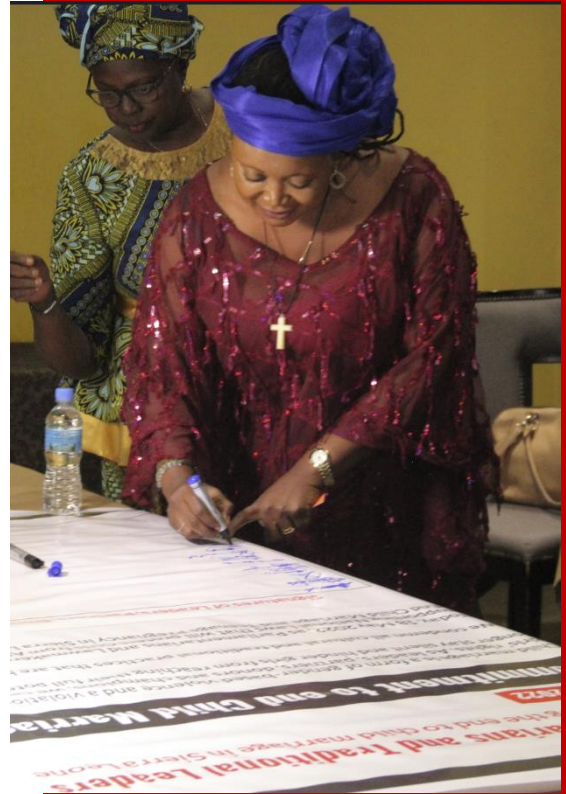
For policy advocacy, the project is working with decision makers, influencers, local leaders and communities to make child marriage the new taboo in Sierra Leone.

Critical actions for critical shift in child marriage

To ensure a critical shift in norms and behaviors driving child marriage the project goals include:

1. *Passing legislation* that will deter child marriage, and influence implementation of laws, policies and practices.
2. *Engaging community leaders and men and boys* to challenge negative norms and practices around sexual reproductive health, gender and child marriage they will join women and girl champions in saying no to child marriage *because they believe it's wrong.*

3.



Documenting evidence of best practice for learnings and potential scale-up across Sierra Leone and in neighboring countries.

Project Location

The project is being implemented in **15 communities from four (4) chiefdoms in Kailahun** district.

Budget and Donor

Project budget is **1.4 million United States Dollars** (USD), funded by 100 Strong women philanthropists in the United States.

Key Successes

- Completion of SBC research for the design of project SBC strategy
- Design and roll out of SBC strategy
- Established paramount chief and parliamentary champions to end child marriage
- Support and advocacy for the reviewed Child Rights Act
- Conducted Budget and Political Economy Analyses to strengthen evidence for child led policy advocacy