

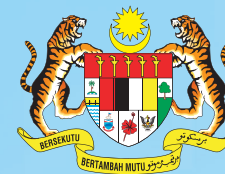


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MINISTRY OF WOMEN,
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NATIONAL STRATEGY PLAN IN HANDLING THE CAUSES OF CHILD MARRIAGE



This executive summary has been prepared in conjunction with the launching of the National Strategy Plan in Handling the Causes of Child Marriage. The event held on 16 January 2020 at Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Putrajaya was officiated by YAB. Dato' Seri Dr. Wan Azizah Dr. Wan Ismail, Right Honourable Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia cum Minister of Women, Family and Community Development.

16 January 2020



APPRECIATION

The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCDD) wishes to record our appreciation to the Ministries, Departments and relevant agencies for the cooperation and support given for the production of the National Strategy Plan in Handling the Causes of Child Marriage:

1. Implementation Coordination Unit, Prime Minister's Department (ICU, JPM)
2. Attorney General's Chamber (AGC)
3. Ministry of Finance (MOF)
4. Ministry of Economic Affairs (MEA)
5. Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA)
6. Ministry of Health (MOH)
7. Ministry of Education (MOE)
8. Ministry of Human Resources (MOHR)
9. Ministry of Rural Development (KPLB)
10. Ministry of Communications and Multimedia (KKMM)
11. Ministry of Youth and Sports (KBS)
12. Ministry of Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP)
13. Ministry of Welfare, Community Wellbeing, Women, Family and Childhood Development Sarawak (KWKPK)
14. Kementerian Undang-undang Hal Ehwal Anak Negeri Sabah
15. National Registration Department (NRD)
16. Department of Syariah Judiciary (JKSM)
17. Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM)
18. Department of Statistics (DOSM)
19. Department of Native Affairs (JAKOA)
20. Department of Communication (JPN)
21. Community Development Department (KEMAS)
22. Department of Unity and Social Integration (PERPADUAN)
23. Department of Social Welfare (DSW)
24. National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB)
25. Department of Women Development (JPW)
26. Institut Sosial Malaysia (ISM)
27. Council For Customs and Traditions (Majlis Adat Istiadat Sarawak)

MAJLIS AGAMA NEGERI-NEGERI

1. Majlis Agama Islam Selangor
2. Majlis Agama Islam Negeri Kedah
3. Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Resam Melayu Pahang
4. Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan
5. Majlis Agama Islam Melaka
6. Majlis Agama Islam Negeri Sembilan
7. Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Perlis
8. Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Melayu Perak
9. Majlis Agama Islam Negeri Pulau Pinang
10. Majlis Agama Islam Negeri Johor
11. Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Melayu Terengganu
12. Majlis Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan
13. Majlis Agama Islam Sabah
14. Majlis Agama Islam Sarawak

JABATAN AGAMA ISLAM NEGERI-NEGERI

1. Jabatan Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan
2. Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Negeri Kedah
3. Jabatan Agama Islam Pahang
4. Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Terengganu
5. Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama dan Adat Istiadat Islam Perlis
6. Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor
7. Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Negeri Sembilan
8. Jabatan Agama Islam Johor
9. Jabatan Agama Islam Perak Darul Ridzuan
10. Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Negeri Kelantan
11. Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Negeri Pulau Pinang
12. Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri Melaka
13. Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Sabah
14. Jabatan Agama Islam Sarawak

NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION

Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST)

INTERNATIONAL BODY

MWFCDD would like to record a special appreciation to UNICEF for the continuous strategic partnership and technical support accorded to MWFCDD in the production of the National Strategic Plan in Handling the Causes of Child Marriage.

INTRODUCTION

Children are the future of this country and the leaders of tomorrow. In them, we put forth our hopes, aspirations, dreams and promise of a better Malaysia. They must be given opportunities to enjoy childhood moments and experiences while navigating the passage through adulthood. Nevertheless, despite such admirable ideals, we continuously see episodes of heart wrenching stories concerning children deprived of their rights and denied chances to achieve their full potential. Child marriages illustrate such losses and it has captured the imagination of the society one too many times.

Moving forward, the Government has embarked on an arduous yet needed journey to address this issue of child marriage. To mark the solemn yet important stance that the Government is taking, the Government developed a comprehensive plan. The National Strategic Plan in Handling the Causes of Child Marriage or simply known as the Plan is the culmination of more than a year's journey involving many discussions and strategic partnerships and high level collaborations involving Ministries and Agencies at the Federal level, Agencies at the State level, Non-Governmental Organisations, International Bodies and the participation of children.

➤ 26 SEPTEMBER 2018

Presentation of Cabinet Paper on Initiative to Increase the Minimum Age of Marriage in Malaysia's Legislations;

➤ 16 OCTOBER 2018

Presentation of Government's proposal on Initiative to Increase the Minimum Age of Marriage in Malaysia's Legislation at the 250th Pre-Council for the Council of Rulers Meeting;

➤ 16 OCTOBER 2018

Presentation during the 132th Chief Ministers Meeting on Government's proposal regarding the Initiative to Increase the Minimum Age of Marriage in Malaysia's Legislations;

➤ 14 NOVEMBER 2018

Letter on Initiative to Increase the Minimum Age of Marriage in Malaysia's Legislations forwarded to the State Secretary;

➤ 30 NOVEMBER 2018

Letter on the Initiative to Increase Minimum Age of Marriage in Law in Malaysia forwarded to the Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers;

➤ 25 FEBRUARY 2019

1st Roundtable Discussion (RTD) on Child Marriage chaired by the Right Honourable Deputy Prime Minister cum Minister of Women, Family and Community Development. This RTD focused on understanding the causes of child marriage as highlighted in the Research on Child Marriage by UNICEF in 2018. UNICEF presented the Draft Strategy and Roadmap to End Child Marriage. The attendees included representative from Ministries / Agencies, several members of the National Council for Children, UNICEF, and Non-Governmental Organisations representing children, women and family.

➤ 9 JULY 2019

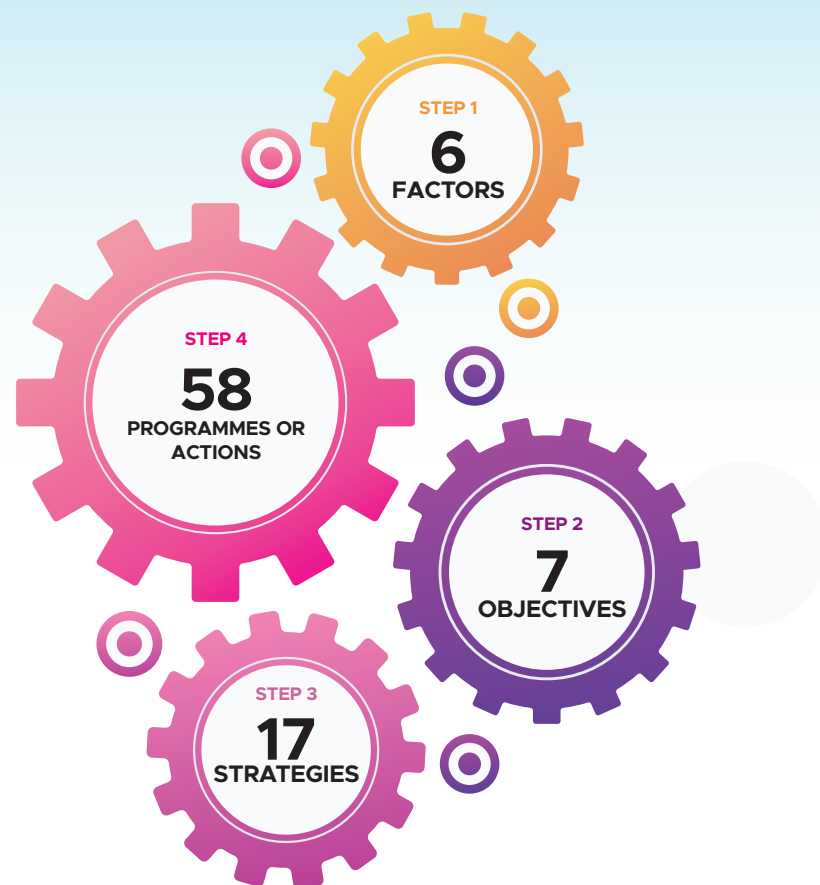
2nd Roundtable Discussion (RTD) on Child Marriage chaired by Dr. Hishamuddin bin Mohd Hashim, the Deputy Secretary General (Strategic), MWFC. Attended by representatives from Ministries, Agencies and State Islamic Councils (Majlis Agama Islam Negeri), it focused on planning a national plan to address the causes of child marriage based on the draft presented by UNICEF. The attendees included representative from Ministries / Agencies, several representatives from several Majlis Agama Islam Negeri and several representatives from several Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri (JAIN).

➤ 25 JULY 2019

3rd Roundtable Discussion (RTD) on Child Marriage chaired by the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister cum Minister of Women, Family and Community Development. This session continued the discussion on developing the national strategic plan. The attendees included representatives from Ministries/Agencies, child experts, UNICEF, representatives from several Majlis Agama Islam Negeri and representatives from several Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri (JAIN) and several members of the National Child Representative Council. By the end of the session, a draft on the National Strategic Plan on Addressing the Causes of Child Marriage produced.

The Plan is in line with the objectives of the National Child Policy, National Child Protection Policy, Child Act 2001 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It is crafted based on the notion guided by the core principles of CRC; survival, protection, development and participation. It contains programmes and actions to address six factors identified as the causes of child marriage. The Plan reflects cross-sectoral issues addressing issues such as law, parenting, family support, education, health and awareness. The programmes and actions expand through all levels of society implemented within the next five years. A National Strategy Plan in Handling the Causes of Child Marriage Steering Committee will be created to monitor the implementation of the Plan.

THE PLAN AT A GLANCE



61 Ministries, Agencies, State Agencies, Non-profit Organisations and International Bodies' involvement

2020 to 2025

Short Term, Simple Term and Long Term

FACTOR 1:

Low household income and poverty

OBJECTIVE:

Increase the effectiveness of social protection and assign support (household living aid) to the B40 households.

STRATEGY 1.1

Provide financial assistance according to child age groups.

ACTION

- 1.1.1 Provide Child Grant social protection scheme for B40 children under 5 years of age;
- 1.1.2 Provide educational access allowances for B40 children attending secondary school (Conditional Stipend).

STRATEGY 1.2

Increase access to parenting and early childhood education for the B40 group.

ACTION

- 1.2.1 Strengthen existing public childcare institutions through the Early Childhood Education Committee with MWFC and MOE.

STRATEGY 1.3

Strengthen coordination and focus on existing socio-economic and outreach support programmes.

ACTION

- 1.3.1 Execute rationalization review of existing socio-economic support schemes;
- 1.3.2 Strengthen the E-Kasih database under ICU, PMO;
- 1.3.3 Implement income increment or entrepreneurship programmes;
- 1.3.4 Implement training programmes and career skills or TVET;
- 1.3.5 Implement TVET training for B40 families;
- 1.3.6 Strengthen existing entrepreneurial skills and programmes training;
- 1.3.7 Allotment of grant / business capital facilities to start business / generate income; and
- 1.3.8 Strengthen the social work profession and case management system.

MINISTRY / AGENCY

ICU, JPM, MOF, KBS, MOHR, MWFC, KPLB, DSW, JPW, ISM, PERPADUAN, UNICEF, BAITUMAL, JTK NEGERI

FACTOR 2:**Lack of access to sexual reproductive health education and parenting skill****OBJECTIVE:**

Ensure boys and girls gain access to Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) education and health services and understand the importance of protecting themselves from activities that cause teenage pregnancy.

Ensure that parents / guardians have access to parenting education and skills and able to address family conflicts.

STRATEGY 2.1

Prepare platform to disseminate SRH information to parents / guardians and children.

ACTION

- 2.1.1** Strengthen multi-disciplinary committees involving children, NGOs, media and industry to coordinate dissemination of information and health services;
- 2.1.2** Review results and gaps in existing studies on SRH implemented in existing education curriculum;
- 2.1.3** Integrates syllabus on SRH in existing subjects (a cross-curriculum element) in teacher training and university;
- 2.1.4** Deliver education of SRH to school dropouts, migrants, and refugees' children;
- 2.1.5** Implement monitoring and evaluation to identify weaknesses and advantages in existing SRH education;
- 2.1.6** Create video / edutainment on SRH;
- 2.1.7** Provide digital media channels with suitable health educational materials for teenagers in the form of infographics; and
- 2.1.8** Expand SRH education to students through programmes in schools.

STRATEGY 2.2

Provide children and youth friendly (male and female) SRH service.

ACTION

- 2.2.1** Create child and young adult friendly service, especially for children / pregnant teens in hospitals, Nur Sejahtera clinics and clinics, and KafeTEEN Youth Centre;
- 2.2.2** Strengthen the operation of standard procedures (SOP) of child handling, especially teenagers for officers and staff in health services;
- 2.2.3** Training on SRH education for Institution Principals, Institution staff, Protectors, multidisciplinary members, Lay Counsellors, schoolteachers, school counsellors, teachers and caregivers of nurseries.

STRATEGY 2.3

Transmit parenting skills knowledge and guidance to parents / guardians.

ACTION

- 2.3.1** Organise parenting seminars and workshops in urban and rural areas including for Orang Asli, refugees and minorities;
- 2.3.2** Disseminate information on parenting/SRH to parents in hospital / rural clinics / health clinics / private clinics, Nur Sejahtera Clinics, Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and Community Rehabilitation Centres (PDK);
- 2.3.3** Implement parenting / SRH courses by government departments for officers and staff of the departments;
- 2.3.4** Encourage corporate bodies to organise parenting / SRH courses for employees; and
- 2.3.5** Encourage corporate bodies to organise SRH courses for communities as part of its CSR.

STRATEGY 2.4

Strengthen family institutions through dissemination of information, guidance and skills for parents / guardians.

ACTION

- 2.4.1** Implement Family and Community Empowerment Programme (FACE) focusing on strengthening the family institution and community;
- 2.4.2** Suggestion to include the SRH subject in post-marriage modules;
- 2.4.3** Implementation of post marital modules for parents in accordance to marriage duration;
- 2.4.4** Improve the Module of Social and Community Family Service with the elements of parenting skills and children's education; and
- 2.4.5** Expansion of the module in parenting training.

MINISTRY / AGENCY

MOH, MOE, KKM, KKMM, MOHR, MWFC, KEMAS, PERPADUAN, JAKIM, MAIN, JAIN DSW, JPW, NPFDB ISM, UNICEF, MCCBCHST

FACTOR 3:**Lack of access to education and poor school attendance****OBJECTIVE:**

Increase access to education and attendance to schools through policies, legislation, programmes and advocacy.

STRATEGY 3.1

Increase parental awareness on the importance of education for children.

ACTIONS

- 3.1.1** Conduct research to scenarios of children used by parents / guardians to help families generate / increase their household income;
- 3.1.2** Implement advocacy to parents not to use children for income generation.
- 3.1.3** Provide support to:
 - i. Children who are at the risk of dropping out (still schooling) from school; and
 - ii. Families of dropout children from schools.
- 3.1.4** Implement outreach programmes to the village heads / Imam / Village Committees:
 - i. To report cases of children not attending / not registered in schools by parents / guardians; and
 - ii. Deliver information on the importance of schooling for children to identified families.

STRATEGY 3.2

Ensure existing legal enforcement to ensure that parents / guardians register and maintain the child's presence in school.

ACTIONS

- 3.2.1** Enforcement of Education Act 1996 [Act 550] requiring mandatory education from age 6 years to 12 years; and
- 3.2.2** Enforcement of Child and Young Persons Act (Employment) 1966 [Act 350] in terms of age, type and conditions of employment.

STRATEGY 3.3

Improve policies and legislation regarding education and compulsory education.

ACTIONS

- 3.3.1** Establish policy and provision under Act 550 that requires children to be present in school to secondary education level;
- 3.3.2** Provide access to education for non-citizen children; and
- 3.3.3** Provide education for pregnant children placed at public or private rehabilitation centres.

STRATEGY 3.4

Provide support and facilities for children / youth who drop out from mainstream education to venture into areas that could ensure their survival.

ACTION

- 3.4.1** Offer TVET education and skills to children / youth who have dropped out from education.

MINISTRY / AGENCY

MOHR, MOE, KPLB, KBS, MAIN, DSW, NPFDB

FACTOR 4:**Stigma and social norms on child marriage chosen as the best solution in community to address problems****OBJECTIVE:**

Address stigma and social norms involving various parties on issues concerning child marriage.

STRATEGY 4.1

Provide mechanism and platform to discuss on social norms and stigmas for various parties concerning child marriage.

ACTION

- 4.4.1** Formation of committee to research and understand stigma in society leading to child marriage as an option

STRATEGY 4.2

Addressing child marriage issue through a strategic communication plan.

ACTION

- 4.2.1** Create strategic communication plan to address child marriage;
- 4.2.2** Disseminate information through mass media (printed and electronic) and social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp);
- 4.2.3** Disseminate information of child marriage, SRH and importance of education through slots such as Forum Perdana, Seminar Pendidikan Fatwa, Friday Sermon and appropriate religious slots at state level;
- 4.2.4** Conduct communication programmes through town hall sessions, workshops, Program Bakti Siswa etc;
- 4.2.5** Consultation with Orang Asli community (3 race groups and 18 nations) involving Tok Batin and assistants (tok-tok adat) and MPPKOA Chairman on awareness of child rights including child marriage; and
- 4.2.6** Conduct policy advocacy through written communication and consultation.

MINISTRY / AGENCY

MWFC, MOE, KKMM, JABATAN PENERANGAN, JKSM, MAJLIS ADAT ISTIADAT SARAWAK, KUHEAN, JAKIM, JAKOA, MAIN, NRD, MCCBCHST

FACTOR 5:**Loose laws that provide for marriage under the age of 18****OBJECTIVE:**

Ensure laws, rules and guidelines created on child marriage are in line with Government policies to ensure development, welfare and wellbeing of children are guarantee.

STRATEGY 5.1

Ensure the current laws are in line with the Government policies in preventing marriage under the age of 18.

ACTION

- 5.1.1** Effecting action towards increasing the minimum age of marriage for female under the Islamic Family Laws.
- 5.1.2** Consultation on standardizing the minimum age in marriage application to 18 years in Islamic Family Law through:
- consultation in 5 states;
 - consultation in states under YDPA;
 - consultation in identified states; and
 - presentation in *Munakashah*.
- 5.1.3** Establish 18 years old of age as minimum for marriage under the customary law:

Orang Asli

- Akta Orang Asli 1954

Sarawak

- Native Customs (Declaration) Ordinance 1996
- Majlis Adat Istiadat Ordinance 1997
- Native Courts Ordinance 1992
- Adat Iban 1993
- Adat Bidayuh 1994
- Adat Kayan-Kenyah 1994
- Adat Bisaya 2004
- Adat Lun Bawang 2004
- Adat Kelabit 2008
- Adat Penan 2011

Sabah

1. Native Courts Ordinance 1992 (Kaedah-Kaedah Mahkamah Anak Negeri (Undang-Undang Adat Anak Negeri) 1995.
2. Prepare a specific section in the Rules concerning Minimum Age of marriage under the Enactment.

- 5.1.4** Implement a study to see the probability of amending the provision on ' defense ' under Section 48 (4) of the Child Act 2001 for transfer with the intention of marriage and adoption *bona fide*.

STRATEGY 5.2

Ensure the authorities' bodies provide guidelines in making consideration of underage marriage applications.

ACTIONS

- 5.2.1** Establish guidelines on underage marriage application as a form of law (rules) under Act 164; and
- 5.2.2** Formulate under-age marriage procedures into a law under Act 303.

STRATEGY 5.3

Ensure the authorities body providing permission for underage marital application permission receive exposure on child rights

ACTION

- 5.3.1** Organise seminars and training for the Syariah Judges on the child rights including the child marriage; and
- 5.3.2** Organise advocacy to the Menteri Besar / Chief Ministers and officials empowered in overseeing child marriage on child rights including child marriage.

MINISTRY / AGENCY

MWFCD, AGC, JKSM, MAIN, JAKIM, JAKOA, DSW, NRD, MAJLIS ADAT ISTIADAT SARAWAK, KUHEAN

FACTOR 6:**Coordination of marital data and underage divorce****OBJECTIVE:**

Ensure data on marriages and divorces are comprehensive and meet current needs.

STRATEGY 6.1

Coordinate marriage and divorce statistics in Malaysia including that of under the age of 18.

ACTION

- 6.1.1** Coordinate statistics on marriage and divorce in Malaysia (Muslims and non-Muslims) including under the age of 18, according to gender, ethnicity, age and state.

MINISTRY / AGENCY

DOSM

NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN ON HANDLING CAUSES OF CHILD MARRIAGE



FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3		FACTOR 4	FACTOR 5	FACTOR 6
FACTOR						
Low household income and poverty.	Lack of access to sexual reproductive health education and parenting skill.	Lack of access to education and poor school attendance.		Stigma and social norms on child marriage chosen as the best solution in community to address problems.	Loose laws that provide for marriage under the age of 18.	Coordination of marital data and underage divorce.
OBJECTIVE						
Increase the effectiveness of social protection and assign support (household living aid) to the B40 household.	1. Ensure boys and girls gain access to Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) education and health services and understand the importance of protecting themselves from activities that cause teenage pregnancy. 2. Ensure parents / guardians have access to parenting education and skills and able to address family conflicts.	Increase access to education and attendance to schools through policies, legislation, programmes and advocacy.		Address stigma and social norms involving various parties on issues concerning child marriage.	Ensure laws, rules and guidelines created on child marriage are in line with Government policies to ensure development, welfare and wellbeing of children and guarantee.	Ensure data on marriages and divorces are comprehensive and meet current needs.
STRATEGY						
S1 Provide financial assistance according to child age groups. S2 Increase access to parenting and early childhood education for the B40 group. S3 Strengthen coordination and focus on existing socio-economic and outreach support programmes.	S1 Prepare platform to disseminate SRH information to parents / guardians and children. S2 Provide children and youth friendly (male and female) SRH service. S3 Transmit parenting skills knowledge and guidance to parents / guardians S4 Strengthen family institutions through dissemination of information, guidance and skills for parents / guardians.	S1 Increase parents awareness on the importance of education for children. S2 Ensure existing legal enforcement to ensure that parents / guardians register and maintain the child's presence in school. S3 Improve policies and legislation regarding education and compulsory education. S4 Provide support and facilities for children / youth who drop out from mainstream education to venture into areas that could ensure their survival.		S1 Provide mechanism and platform to discuss on social norms and stigmas for various parties concerning child marriage. S2 Addressing child marriage issue through a strategic communication plan.	S1 Ensure the current laws are in line with the Government policies in preventing marriage under the age of 18. S2 Ensure the authorities bodies provide guidelines on making consideration of underage marriage applications. S3 Ensure the authorities body providing underage marital application permission receive exposure on child rights.	S1 Coordinate marriage and divorce statistics that of under the age of 18.
PROGRAMME / ACTION						
11	21	10		7	8	1