

Hira Khatun

I am in tenth grade at Pannapara School in the Charghat Upazila of Rajshahi. Even though I go to school and am not old enough to be considered an adult, my family had arranged a marriage for me.

I disagreed with their decision because I knew the consequences of child marriage from my training on sexual and reproductive health rights at our school, which was arranged and conducted by the Hunger Project. During our training, we watched many videos; one that deeply resonated with me was a short film called “Kusum’s Autobiography”. It illustrated how child marriage destroyed a girl, Kusum’s, life. I understood that if I had a child marriage, my life could become similar to hers. So, I asked for help from the Youth Ending Hunger team, and together, we explained the consequences of child marriage to my family. Once they realized the consequences, they called off my marriage.



Kolpana Akhtar

I live in the Khagdahar union of the district of Mymensingh.

I want to share a difficult period in my life that I had to overcome. When I was in ninth grade, my parents had arranged for me to be married. I knew the consequences of child marriage from the training and video exhibitions organized by the Her Choice program at our school and, so, I was opposed to the marriage.

I knew that if I got married at a young age, my education would have come to a halt. My life would have also been endangered because of the risks of reproduction at a young age and there was a possibility that I would give birth to malnourished children. Therefore I knew I had to stop my marriage at any cost. I went to my aunt Anwara, who helped me stop my marriage.

I want to become a chartered accountant, be successful and contribute to society. And when I decide to get married, I want to pick a husband by myself.



Laboni Khatun

I go to highschool at Charghat Womens' College.

When I was in the ninth grade, my family had arranged a wedding for me but I was able to call it off.

The Hunger Project and my school helped me prevent my marriage. At school, I had participated in a training on sexual and reproductive health rights organized by The Hunger Project. At this program I learned about the consequences of an early marriage. Thanks to this training, I was able to explain these consequences to my parents and share my dreams with them. They understood and called it off, and gave me their full support to fulfill my dream of becoming a nurse.



Meghla Haldar

I live in the Bakal Union of Barisal District, Bangladesh. I faced a very difficult situation at one point of my life.

When I was in the eighth grade, my family arranged my marriage, but I did not consent to that marriage. I knew the consequences of a child marriage from the Her Choice program at our school, which was organized by The Hunger Project. For example, the risks of a child marriage include an early pregnancy, malnutrition for any babies and even death.

I asked for help from my school teacher, who persuaded my parents to stop the marriage. I don't want to get married because, first, I want to become a nurse and serve others in society.

“I want to show my parents that a girl can stand on her own.”



Mistee Rani

I am in the tenth grade and I attend Battali High School in Bangladesh, where the journey to school is difficult. The road to my school crosses through a jungle and I have to cycle 3 kilometers to get there. The people in my village believe that women shouldn't cycle and don't value my education, so they pressured my parents to get me married. My family was stressed by this pressure and considered arranging a marriage for me, but I refused to be married.

Thanks to the sexual and reproductive health rights training I received from the Hunger Project, I knew the consequences of child marriages. If I had gotten married at that age, my life would have been at risk. Even though I could not make the villagers understand the risks of a child marriage, I was able to convince my parents. Not only have they stopped me from getting married, but they also have been helping me achieve my dreams. I want to thank the Hunger Project for giving me the information to prevent my marriage. I want to become a teacher so that I can share this information with girls in my village and shine a light on the next generation.



Mustarifa Khatun

I am in the tenth grade at Battali High School in and I cycle to school every day. One day I dream of becoming a doctor but the biggest obstacle in the way of my dreams is marriage. The people in my village don't like that I am going to school and that I cycle so they tease me. Since I don't have a brother, they tell me that I can't become a boy just because I cycle. They believe that because I am a girl, my job is to get married instead of study.

They even put pressure on my family to get me married. I did not want to get married however, because I knew that if I got married, I would never be able to continue with school. It took a lot of courage for me to fight against my marriage. I got this courage from The Hunger Project's sexual and reproductive health rights training. It taught me to think about life, and gave me the courage to fulfill my dreams. I was able to prevent my child marriage and, now, I want to become a doctor to show the people in my village that girls are no less than boys. That is my life's promise.



Pinky Akhtar

I live in Dehergati in Bangladesh. I want to share how I overcame the trouble I had faced earlier in my life.

When I was in the 10th grade at Rakutia Secondary School, my parents forced me to get married. My education and my dreams seemed to come to an end, but I was determined to be independent. So I cut off ties with my family and I shared my situation with my classmates and the Youth Ending Hunger team at my school. With their help and the help of my teacher, Mr Alamgir, I was able to continue studying again. The Hunger Project has helped bring me back to school. My dream is to be a police officer. I want to continue with my education and make my life my own.



Raihana Akhtar

I live in Boira Union of Mymensingh district. I want to share with you a difficult time in my life. When I was in the seventh grade, my father had arranged my marriage even though I did not consent to it.

I knew this marriage would have changed my life because I learned about the harmful consequences of child marriage at school. In our school The Hunger Project has conducted various activities through the Her Choice program. So I decided that I have to stop this marriage no matter what. I told the incident to the headmaster of my school, Ibrahim Sir. He talked to my parents about the risks of getting married at a young age. Once my parents knew about these risks, they stopped trying to get me married. Now I can study with pleasure and achieve my life goals. In the future, want to become a nurse and serve sick people.



Shahina

I'm from the Hemnagar Union of Tangail District, Bangladesh. I went through a difficult time in my youth, and I want to share that with you.

When I was in the seventh grade, my parents had arranged my marriage. But I refused to get married, because I knew that child marriage was a curse. Through the “Her Choice” program at my school, I learned how adolescents and their health are put at risk during a child marriage. I wanted to continue with my education and become an adult, so I asked my teacher Madam Moyna to help stop my marriage. She explained the consequences to my parents, and convinced them to cancel the marriage. Now I can study and dream of building my own life.

I want to be a teacher and an upstanding citizen of society.



Shahnaz Parveen Sheela

I am a student of Lal Dighi High School in the Chotra union of Rangpur District. One day when I was in the tenth grade, my family arranged for my marriage. The groom's family came to our house and liked me to be their daughter-in-law, and my parents agreed to it.

I know that child marriage would have been risky for me. My education would have ended, and I did not want that to happen. I want to make my own life, so I did not consent to be married off.

I reached out to the Youth Ending Hunger team at my school to help me. The team informed our head teacher, and they all went to my parents to talk to them about the consequences of child marriages. Eventually, my parents cancelled my marriage. Now they are helping me study and hoping for a bright future for me.

I, like many other teenagers, was made aware of the risks of child marriages by The Hunger Project. I want to be a doctor in the future, and I will study hard to achieve my dreams. Thank you so much, The Hunger Project, for this new life!



Mosammat Shantana Khatu

I am in the tenth grade at Lalchad High School in Bangladesh. My family had arranged for me to get married, but I stopped it. This is my story.

Generally, in our village, grandparents want their grandchildren to get married at an early age. As such, my grandmother had arranged my marriage in her house without me knowing.

I couldn't convince my father or my uncles to stop my marriage, but as a last resort, I sat down with my mother and aunts to explain to them what I learned about the harms and consequences of child marriages from the Hunger Project. As I am the eldest daughter of the house, my family really wanted me to get married as a matter of pride. I explained to them that marriage is not something to be taken lightly, it is a matter of life - and lives could be ruined if the wrong decision was made. Thanks to my persuasion and arguments, my parents stopped my marriage.

I am proud of myself because I stopped my marriage, continued my education, and am planning for my future. My training from the Hunger Project is where I learned about the consequences of child marriage. When my family had arranged my wedding, I remembered their programs and I promised to end my marriage to save myself.

If one sees life as something small, then it is small. But I can choose to see life as something huge, now I want to be a teacher.



Sumaiya Khatun

I have been living in my grandmother's house in the city of Charghat in Rajshahi since I was a young. Although I am only in the eighth grade, I have faced some difficult times in my life. Once I reached puberty, my family arranged my marriage.

Having to leave school and get married was terrifying to me and I did not want to get married, especially because I knew the risks and consequences of child marriage. Of course, I was not able to stop the marriage alone. Rita Apu, a volunteer of the Hunger Project helped me tell my mother and grandmother about the consequences of child marriage. She also highlighted the legal aspects of child marriage in Bangladesh. Knowing all of this, my family stopped my marriage.

I am grateful to Riya Apu and The Hunger Project, thanks to whom my life is my own. I want to continue my education and be a doctor when I grow up.



Sumaiya Akhtar Sathi

I am in the ninth grade in Bishahara High School in the district of Mohanpur, Bangladesh. I love to dance and it's my dream to become a dancer.

However, a lot of the people from my village were averse to the idea, and they convinced my parents to arrange my marriage. Additionally, my parents' financial situation was not good enough to pay for my education either, so they agreed that I should get married.

But I didn't want to get married. So I told Ratna Apa, the Youth Ending Hunger leader of my school, about my situation, and she informed the headmaster about the issue. The members of the Youth Ending Hunger team and the teachers came to our house to speak with my mother about the consequences of child marriage, and how it was a punishable offense.

Finally, my parents called off my marriage.

I am grateful to The Hunger Project, Youth Ending Hunger, and my teachers. It is because of their efforts that I can move forward on the path to realizing my dream.

