

ENHANCING

Preventing Early and Exchange Marriage in Yemen

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A quarter of the female population of Yemen gets married between the ages of 10 and 14 years old, with the average age of marriage for females 15.9. Women in rural areas in particular are victims of early and exchange marriage, often from poor households and let go by their families to ease the financial burden. Lack of education is also a leading cause of persistent gender-based violence – without education, women and girls remain worst placed than men and vulnerable to threats in their society.

The Charitable Society for Social Welfare (CSSW), a leading NGO in Yemen is fighting to stop early marriage and the practice of exchanging wives by increasing educational enrolment for girls and reducing poverty in rural areas practising early marriage and exchange marriage.

An EU project is supporting the CSSW's initiative "Stop early marriage and exchange marriage" that increases the practice of law and Islamic values to protect women's rights.

As well as enrolling girls in schools, the project is giving women from poor households the opportunity to start income-generating businesses by giving them micro-credit loans, along with business training and a business monitoring service from loan officers. Using their skills and business techniques, they are more likely to secure a source of income, making them less vulnerable and more independent.

This project also targets professionals such as lawyers, judges, imams, public speakers, journalists and teachers – male as well as female – by involving them in awareness raising activities of the rights of woman and children, including the negative consequences of early and exchange marriage.