

ESWATINI NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL

Eswatini's National Position on Eradicating Child Marriage in the SADC Region –*YOUTH PERSPECTIVE*

EMPOWERING THE YOUTH

PROTECTING CHILDHOOD

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- Child protection is a human rights and national development priority.
- Child marriage affects education, health, gender equality and economic opportunity.
- Every child deserves protection, regardless of gender, location, disability or income.

ENYC's position: Every child should grow, learn and participate free from practices that compromise childhood.

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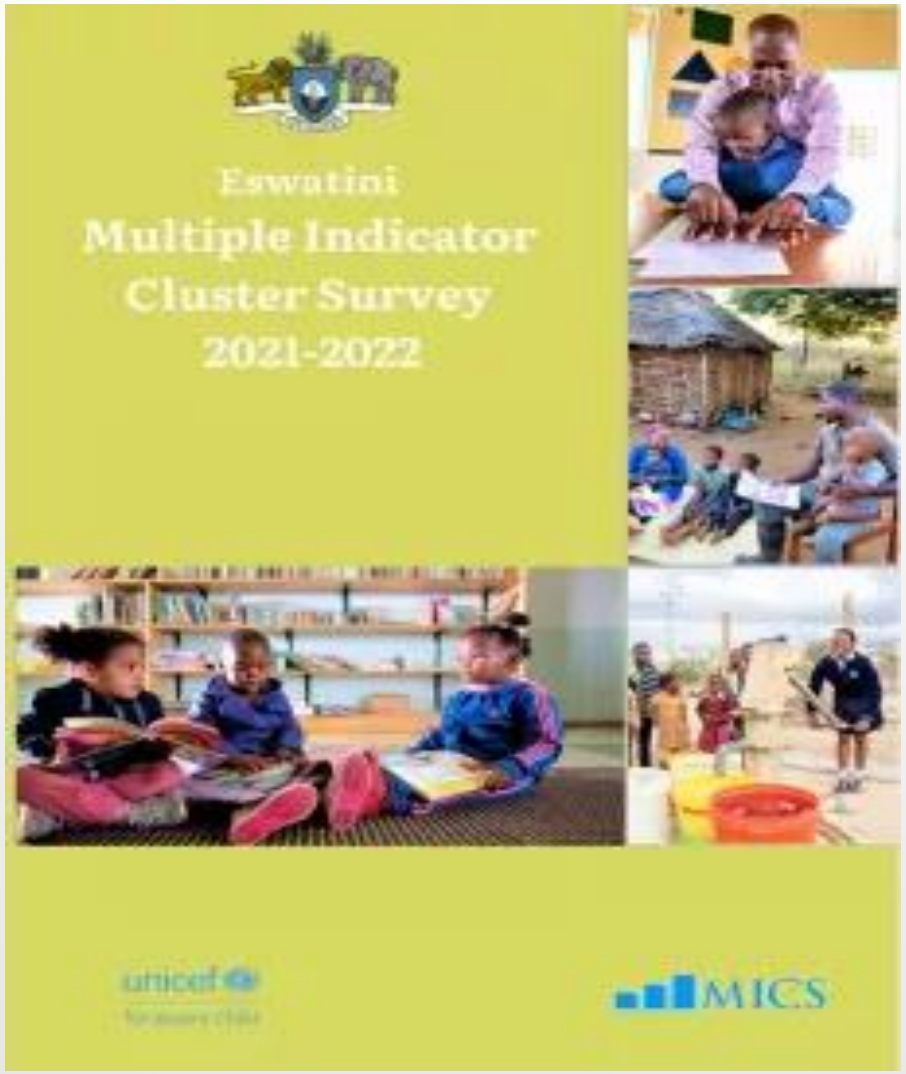
Sources cited: Eswatini MICS 2021–2022; UNICEF Child Marriage Data Portal; UNFPA Eswatini.

- Reports that, a share of women aged 20–24 married or are in a union before 18: 10.9% in 2010 and 1.9% in 2021–22, an approximate 82.6% relative reduction.
- Reported marriage or union before age 15 - approximately 0.1%.
- **Reported regional estimates:** Hhohho 3.0%; Shiselweni 2.4%; Lubombo 1.2%; Manzini 1.0%.



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Together the below instruments support rights, prevention, protection, coordination and participation.

- ✓ National Youth Policy – 2020/2025.
- ✓ Eswatini Constitution - 2005.
- ✓ Children's Protection and Welfare Act - 2012.
- ✓ Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act - 2018.
- ✓ National Gender Policy – 2023/2033.
- ✓ National Strategy to End Violence – 2023/2027.
- ✓ National Plan of Action for Children – 2023/2027

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Political Leadership and Accountability

- Accelerate legislative harmonization and strengthen implementation.
- Include child protection, education retention and prevention in relevant budgets.
- Strengthen parliamentary oversight and coordination across responsible institutions.
- Proposed annual reporting: reforms, allocations and expenditure, referrals, and support provided.
- Judge commitment by resources, implementation and protection outcomes – not declarations alone.



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Communities as Protectors

- Mainstream Mindset Change and life skills training towards chiefs, elders, faith leaders, parents, women and young people as child protection champions.
- Tinkhundla Youth Committees, community and youth led structures to support dialogue.
- Champions can raise awareness, identify risks and connect children to protection services.
- Promote cultural values that uphold children's dignity, safety, education and development.



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MOSCYA AND ENYC RESPONSE PROGRAMS

- Mindset change and life skills Education
- *High Impact Livelihood Programmes including*
  a) Business Incubation Programmes
  b) Digital Skills learning
  c) Business Accelerator Programme
  d) Micro Agriculture Programme
  a) TVET Pathway Programme.



The Way Forward

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Our ambition: zero child marriage.

1. Harmonize laws, without exceptions.
2. Invest in girls' education, health, training and livelihoods.
3. Mobilize traditional leaders, communities, parents and young people.
4. Institutionalize evidence based national and regional accountability.
5. Strengthen parliamentary oversight and regional cooperation, including shared learning and coordinated action.



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THANK YOU


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