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TITLE: CHILD MARRIAGES: AN AFRICAN FAMILY PANDEMIC IN THE MIDST OF THE GLOBAL COVID 19 PANDEMIC

The University of Venda department of Mercantile Law and Private Law from the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law cordially invites you to a free webinar/seminar which is scheduled as follows:

Date: 09 September 2021

Venue: Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

Time: 14:00-16:00

About the Webinar

The Covid 19 pandemic has plunged families into poverty, due to the attendant collapse of businesses, loss of jobs and death of bread winners in various families. The total and partial lockdown measures instituted by governments in different countries set the scene for the debate between the preference for life over livelihood. The unintended but inevitable consequence of the strive to preserve life as against livelihood was the stifling of access to the means of livelihood and various levels of social and educational interactions which witnessed a massive dropout of children from schools in South Africa and other parts of Africa. Parents who could no longer sustain their children in school prefer to give them out in marriages, and some who were not voluntarily given out, were entangled in social relationships resulting in unwanted child pregnancies which are antithesis to the child's educational development.

The future of the girl child is at the risk of educational extinction. An international

NGO, Save the Children International, had sounded an alarm that unless the imminent catastrophe is urgently addressed, there is a real risk that by 2025 an estimated 2.5 million children will be at the risk of early marriage. The United Nations projection put the figure at 13 million girl children as potential victims of early, unplanned and unprepared child marriages. The adverse consequences of such marriages are enormous, not just to the girl child but to the African family values and the society at large. This seminar is therefore aimed at identifying the courses of child marriages as aggravated by the incidences of the Covid 19 pandemic, the impact on the family and the society, and exploring the necessary solutions to this societal malady.

Facilitators: Dr Chiedza Simbo and Adv G Joubert

Speakers:

1. Mr Dewa Mavhinga, Director at Human Rights Watch
2. Ms Mundia Situmbeko, NGO Girls Not Brides based in London with African office in Nairobi
3. Dr Admark Moyo, heads the Children and Law programme at the African Child Forum in Addis Ababa



Speaker Profiles

Mr Dewa Mavhing

Mr Dewa Mavhing is the Southern Africa Director at Human Rights Watch with more than 20 years human rights research and advocacy across Southern Africa. He is a co-founder of human rights organizations and a recipient of the British Chevening and Canon Collins Trust scholarship. Very widely travelled and made presentations at different fora on issues of human rights and child's right

Topic: Religious, cultural practices & poverty as drivers of Child Marriages across Southern Africa

Presentation Time: 14h30 - 15h00

On photo: Mr Dewa Mavhing



On photo: Dr Admark Moyo



Dr Admark Moyo

Dr Admark Moyo heads the Children and Law programme at the African Child Forum in Addis Ababa, an organization that works with regional bodies, governments, and non-state actors to foster the rights of the child. He has extensive experience in the field and has researched and published high quality papers and policy documents that have positively impacted on judicial and government decisions on issues relating to the protection of the rights of the child. Dr Moyo consults for governments and the UN agencies on matters of child marriages, child abuse and gender based violence.

Topic: Child Marriages across the African Region: Measuring Progress, Plugging Gaps

Presentation Time: 15h00 - 15h30



Speaker Profiles

Ms Mundia Situmbeko

Mundia is from an NGO Girls Not Brides based in London with African office in Nairobi. Prior to joining the NGO, she worked in Manchester on local and national strategies to tackle gender based violence, specifically FGM and child marriage as well as working on more comprehensive refugee resettlement programmes. She has also conducted extensive research with other organisations to bring social issues pertaining to women/girls and the youth to national attention. Mundia has been involved in the development of complex social/gender indices with the UN and AU, and used these to assist African governments to shape their national policies to balance gender inequalities in the economic, social and political spheres. Mundia holds an MSC in Development Economics (with Gender Studies) from SOAS and is fluent in English and French.

Topic: Is the Covid 19 Pandemic reversing our gains: Child marriages and the Covid 19 pandemic

Presentation Time: 14h50 - 15h10

On photo: Ms Mundia Situmbeko



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