



Forced marriages are illegal in Burkina Faso; however, they remain common, and they often involve girls younger than 18.

According to the World Bank, 40% of people there live below the **poverty line**, and marrying daughters early lowers the number of people to feed.

Officials say that there were over 650 cases of forced marriage and 2,200 child marriages between 2019 and 2021; however, this may be an **undercount**, as many arrangements happen secretly.

Some girls have found refuge in a shelter ran by nuns in the city of Kaya, and where they can continue their education. Some arrive after family members beat them, and sometimes parents come to look for their daughters in the shelter.

In such cases, social workers try to convince the family to let the girls stay and **pursue** their education. One of the nuns said that these practices had to stop as they honored the country's customs, but they didn't honor human beings.

Difficult words: **poverty line** (the minimum amount of money that a person needs for their basic needs like a home and food), **undercount** (an amount that's lower than the actual number), **pursue** (to follow or continue).

Discussion Questions

Topic Talk

1. Define the following words: *poverty line*, *undercount* and *pursue*
2. Are forced marriages legal in Burkina Faso?
3. Who are often involved in forced marriages in Burkina Faso?
4. How many of the people in Burkina Faso live below the poverty line?
5. Why do parents force their daughter to marry early?
6. How many forced marriages and child marriages happened during 2019 to 2021?
7. Why do these young girls in Burkina Faso stay in a shelter run by nuns?
8. What role do social workers play in the lives of these young girls who find refuge in a shelter run by nuns?

Express Your Thoughts

1. Is forced marriage or child marriage legal in your country? Did they use to be?
2. If your parents arranged your marriage with someone who's very wealthy and your family owes a lot from, would you agree to marry that person?