

Reading Passage 1: Child Marriage in Nepal

Nepal has made important progress over the past few years to promote equality, but the country still has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world. 41% of Nepalese girls are married before the age of 18.

Poverty is both a cause and consequence of child marriage in Nepal. Girls from the wealthiest families marry 2 years later than those from the poorest, who are seen as an economic burden, and who drop out of school and earn little money.

Food insecurity plays an important role too. Nepalese families that do not have enough food to eat are more likely to marry their daughters at a young age to decrease the financial burden. One study shows that 91% of people who had secure access to food married over the age of 19.

Dowry is also common practice in many communities. Parents marry their daughters as soon as possible because the money they have to pay to the groom's family is higher if their daughter is older.

Since 2010, the legal age of marriage is 20 for both men and women, or 18 with parental consent, according to the Nepalese Country Code.

The law states that punishment for child marriage is imprisonment for up to three years and a fine of up to 10,000 rupees (£102). But reports suggest that this law is rarely applied.

There has been quite a lot of progress in Nepal over the past 3 years with a clear government commitment to ending child marriage and civil society cooperation.

The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare is currently developing Nepal's first national strategy on child marriage in collaboration with UNICEF Nepal and Girls Not Brides Nepal.

However, the post-earthquake and post-fuel crisis environment has meant progress is slow and the national strategy has been delayed.

Child Marriage in Nepal

Reading Comprehension Quiz — B1 Level

- 1. What percentage of Nepalese girls are married before the age of 18?**
 - A) 18%
 - B) 41%
 - C) 91%
 - D) 20%

- 2. According to the text, how many years later do girls from the wealthiest families marry compared to girls from the poorest families?**
 - A) 1 year
 - B) 2 years
 - C) 3 years
 - D) 5 years

- 3. Why are girls from poor families sometimes seen as an economic burden?**
 - A) They earn little money and drop out of school
 - B) They refuse to work
 - C) They cost more to feed than boys
 - D) They must pay for their own wedding

- 4. According to the study mentioned in the text, what percentage of people with secure access to food married after age 19?**
 - A) 41%
 - B) 70%
 - C) 91%
 - D) 100%

- 5. Why do some families marry their daughters at a young age because of dowry?**
 - A) Because the dowry is lower for older daughters
 - B) Because the dowry is higher for older daughters
 - C) Because dowry is only paid for young daughters
 - D) Because dowry is illegal for adults

- 6. Since 2010, what is the legal age of marriage in Nepal without parental consent?**
 - A) 16
 - B) 18
 - C) 20
 - D) 21

- 7. What is the maximum punishment for child marriage under Nepalese law?**
 - A) 1 year imprisonment and a fine of 5,000 rupees
 - B) 3 years imprisonment and a fine of 10,000 rupees
 - C) 5 years imprisonment and no fine
 - D) A fine only, no imprisonment

8. How often is the child marriage law actually applied, according to the text?

- A) Very often
- B) Rarely
- C) Always
- D) Only in the capital city

9. Who is helping the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare develop Nepal's first national strategy on child marriage?

- A) The United Nations Security Council
- B) UNICEF Nepal and Girls Not Brides Nepal
- C) The World Health Organization
- D) Local police departments

10. According to the text, why has progress on the national strategy been slow?

- A) Lack of government interest
- B) The post-earthquake and post-fuel crisis environment
- C) Disagreement between UNICEF and the government
- D) Lack of civil society cooperation

Reading Passage 2: Welcome to the Home of the Future

The 2009 British Homes Awards challenged the industry to design a house that can adapt to different life stages.

The participants were asked to rethink the construction and design of individual homes, so that they were easily adaptable to less mobile inhabitants, and also to create communities in which ageing occupants could continue to enjoy shared amenities.

The top design also had to be attractive to its potential buyers, because the competition was put to the public vote.

The winner, gaining 12,000 votes from Mail on Sunday readers, was the strikingly modern SunnySideUp, designed by Kosi Architects. Here are its three main features:

1. Upside Down House

The architects took as a starting point the accepted norm for a house – rows of houses facing onto streets crammed with cars, with living rooms on the ground floor and bedrooms above. Then they scrapped it.

They ended up with the living room, dining room and kitchen on the top floor where they can benefit from the light and views, and maximise energy efficiency. And they put the bedrooms on the ground floor where the garden aspect gives inhabitants increased privacy, and a cool temperature is maintained throughout the day. The two floors are linked by wide, gentle gradient stairs, which are designed to allow for a stair lift to be fitted if necessary as owners age.

2. Concealed Parking Spaces

But the feature that, according to Warren Rosing, one of the Kosi architects responsible for the design, was particularly popular with the public, is actually the parking.

In a SunnySideUp development no one has to look out onto a street full of cars, or worry about their kids being run over, because the terrace zone at the first floor level link all the homes and is a car-free zone.

Vehicles are tucked away on the lower floor, leaving safe and pleasant spaces outside the houses for people to meet, and kids to play.

A lift takes people directly from garage to living area, so that all residents, including the elderly and those with heavy shopping, can move comfortably between the floors. The natural feel of the front area is enhanced by the planters that are placed outside the kitchens at the front to encourage residents to grow vegetables and flowers where they can be seen.

The idea is that not only would they look pretty, but they would be a talking point, encouraging interaction between residents on the terrace area outside.

3. Flexible Spaces

But it's the fact that the space is designed to adapt to the changing needs, including the fluctuating income of its owners, that makes it a thought-provoking, as well as a winning, design.

The lower-floor bedrooms have separate outdoor access so they can be easily let. The idea is that owners can get some extra money to pay for their mortgages during the first years. And later in the future, those bedrooms can be used as a granny flat, or an office, and can easily be converted into a separate one-bed flat if your kids won't leave home.

And if more space is required, as well as the usual loft that can be converted, there is potential for a gallery floor to be inserted in the living room.

4. Where can you get one?

At the moment the SunnySideUp house is still just a set of drawings. But Warren Rosing says, "We are hoping to have it built."

The organisers are in talks with builders, but due to the economic climate it may take longer than we would like. "We're sure it will be worth the wait," they say.

Home of the Future: SunnySideUp House

Reading Comprehension Quiz — B1 Level

1. What was the challenge set by the 2009 British Homes Awards?

- A) To design the cheapest possible house
- B) To design a house that can adapt to different life stages
- C) To design a house using only recycled materials
- D) To design a house without a garden

2. How was the winning design chosen?

- A) A panel of architects judged it
- B) The government selected it
- C) The public voted for it
- D) A random draw decided it

3. How many votes did the winning design, SunnySideUp, receive?

- A) 1,200
- B) 12,000
- C) 120,000
- D) 2,000

4. Which company designed the SunnySideUp house?

- A) Warren Rosing Ltd
- B) Mail on Sunday Design Group
- C) Kosi Architects
- D) British Homes Awards Committee

5. In the "Upside Down House" concept, where are the living room, dining room and kitchen located?

- A) Bedrooms on the top floor, living areas on the ground floor
- B) Living areas on the top floor, bedrooms on the ground floor
- C) Everything on one single floor
- D) Kitchen underground, bedrooms on top

6. Why are the stairs linking the two floors designed with a wide, gentle gradient?

- A) So a stair lift can be fitted as owners get older
- B) So furniture can be moved more easily
- C) So children can play safely on them
- D) So they take up less space

7. According to Warren Rosing, which feature was particularly popular with the public?

- A) The upside-down layout of the rooms
- B) The rooftop garden
- C) The concealed parking, which frees up space for people
- D) The low price of the houses

8. How do residents move between the garage and the living area?

- A) A ramp
- B) A lift
- C) An escalator
- D) A separate outdoor path

9. What can the lower-floor bedrooms be used for over time, according to the text?

- A) They can only ever be used as storage
- B) They must remain bedrooms permanently
- C) They can be let out, or later turned into a granny flat, office, or separate flat
- D) They can be converted into a garage

10. What is the current status of the SunnySideUp house, according to the final section of the text?

- A) It has already been built and sold
- B) It is still just a set of drawings, with talks underway with builders
- C) It was cancelled due to lack of interest
- D) It is only available outside the UK