1. Not all early marriages are forced and not all forced marriages are early.

2. The selection of an appropriate spouse for children is not just the responsibility of the parents but of the entire extended family (both in the U.S. and abroad), although the youth often has some input into selection.

3. Different communities have different processes for marriage. There may not be a word for engaged in some African languages, so marriage may be used to describe all kinds of domestic arrangements.

4. Some immigrant and refugee African families in the US may not realize that they are breaking the law by having their daughters marry too young and may not be aware of the legal procedures they are required to follow based on the girl's age.

5. Many African cultures have no system for adolescent dating.

6. Marriage is not automatic for every girl who comes from a family that marries young. The decision can involve a complex calculation that may take into account perceptions of the girls’ behavior, her educational opportunities, economic situations, and personal beliefs of family members.

7. Early marriage does not necessarily indicate that the family does not want the girl to be educated, it may mean that they want her to go to school from her husband’s home. A young woman that is not attached to a father or husband is not acceptable in the eyes of many communities.

8. A woman’s status in her community is based on her marital status and comes with certain privileges (freedom of movement, respect, sense of being accepted, input into family decisions, etc.). This is often a powerful incentive for girls to marry.

9. Often marriage is used by young women to escape stressful or abusive situations at home.

10. In many African countries the rationale behind an early marriage is to avoid situations that would jeopardize a girl's virginity which would be perceived as tarnishing the family's name.