

Child Marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa

A statistical overview and
reflections on ending the practice



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The report was edited by Lois Jensen and Tina Johnson and designed by Elwa Design Studio and Era Porth (independent consultants).

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Foreword

Child marriage robs girls of their childhood. It forces them to take on adult roles and responsibilities, curtails their educational opportunities and increases their health risks. Children should spend their childhood developing the skills and identities needed to transition into adulthood. Unfortunately, those who marry in childhood are not afforded the time, space or support to make this transition effectively.

Eastern and Southern Africa is among the regions with the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world. Currently, nearly one third (32 per cent) of the region's young women were married before age 18.

Working towards the Sustainable Development Goal target of ending harmful practices is a priority for UNICEF at the global level and in Eastern and Southern Africa. The region is supported in these efforts through the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage and the Spotlight Initiative. These interventions complement UNICEF's work alongside national governments and local authorities to strengthen child protection systems and build a sustainable support system for responding to harmful practices. Ending child marriage requires collaborative effort on the part of many actors – from the community to the national, regional and global levels.

The findings in this report should become a key reference to guide advocacy efforts, inform policies and strengthen programming. Though the situation depicted in the region is dramatic in its scale and extent, there are signs of change. The commitment of governments and the many partners who make girls' rights a priority offers grounds for optimism. The cost of inaction – for every girl in the region and for future generations – is simply too great to be tolerated.

Mohamed M. Malick Fall
UNICEF Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa

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Child marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa and in the global development agenda

Child marriage is a violation of human rights. Every child has the right to be protected from this harmful practice, which has devastating consequences for individuals and for society.

Child marriage is now firmly on the global development agenda, most prominently through its inclusion in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 5.3, which calls for the elimination of the practice by 2030.

An estimated 650 million girls and women alive today were married before their 18th birthdays. Over 50 million of them reside in Eastern and Southern Africa.

This publication provides a statistical overview of child marriage in the region. It highlights levels and trends overall and presents country profiles that allow a closer look into how the practice varies throughout the region. It also offers insights into the characteristics of early unions and the lives of child brides and identifies what is needed to eliminate child marriage by 2030.

SDG 5

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



TARGET 5.3

Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

INDICATOR 5.3.1

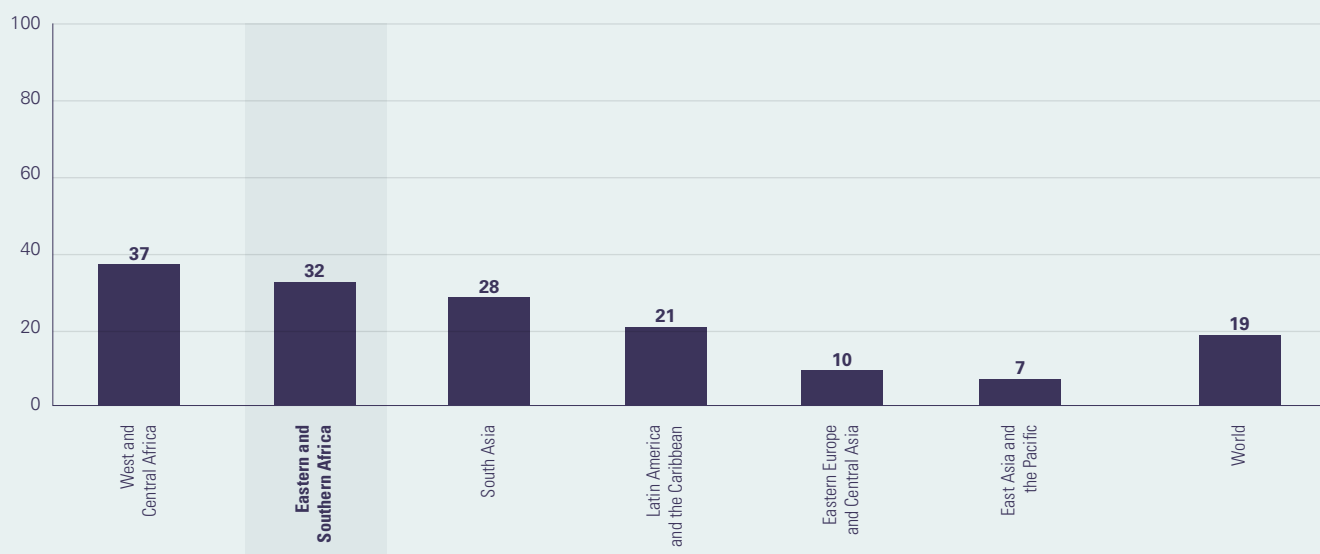
Proportion of women aged 20 to 24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18.



Regional overview

Eastern and Southern Africa is among the regions with the highest prevalence of child marriage

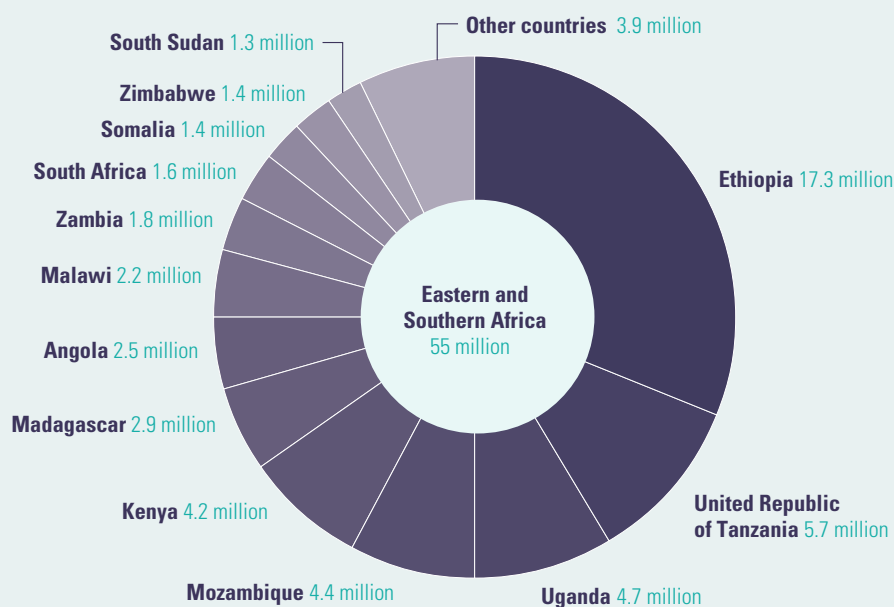
Figure 1. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



NOTES: In this publication, data for the region of Eastern and Southern Africa reflect the set of countries outlined by the mandate of UNICEF's Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, thus aggregate values may differ from those included in other UNICEF publications that are based on a geographical classification of countries. Data coverage was insufficient to calculate regional estimates for the Middle East and North Africa, North America and Western Europe.

The region is home to over 50 million child brides, with the largest share in Ethiopia

Figure 2. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before age 18



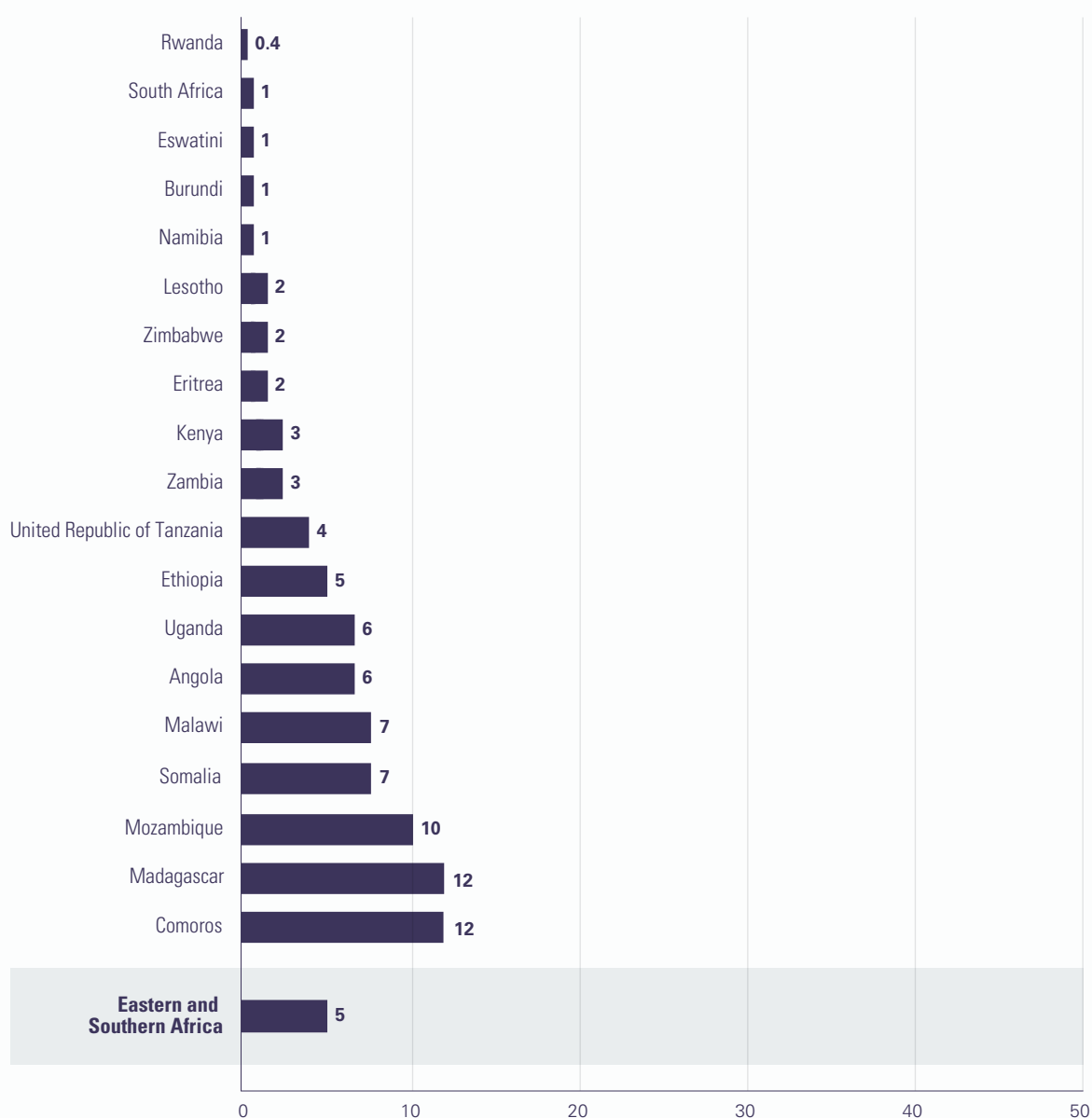
NOTE: Figures do not add up to total due to rounding.

Child marriage among boys

Although SDG indicator 5.3.1 measures child marriage among girls, the practice occurs among boys as well. Eastern and Southern Africa is also home to 2 of the 10 countries with the highest levels in the world for the practice among boys.

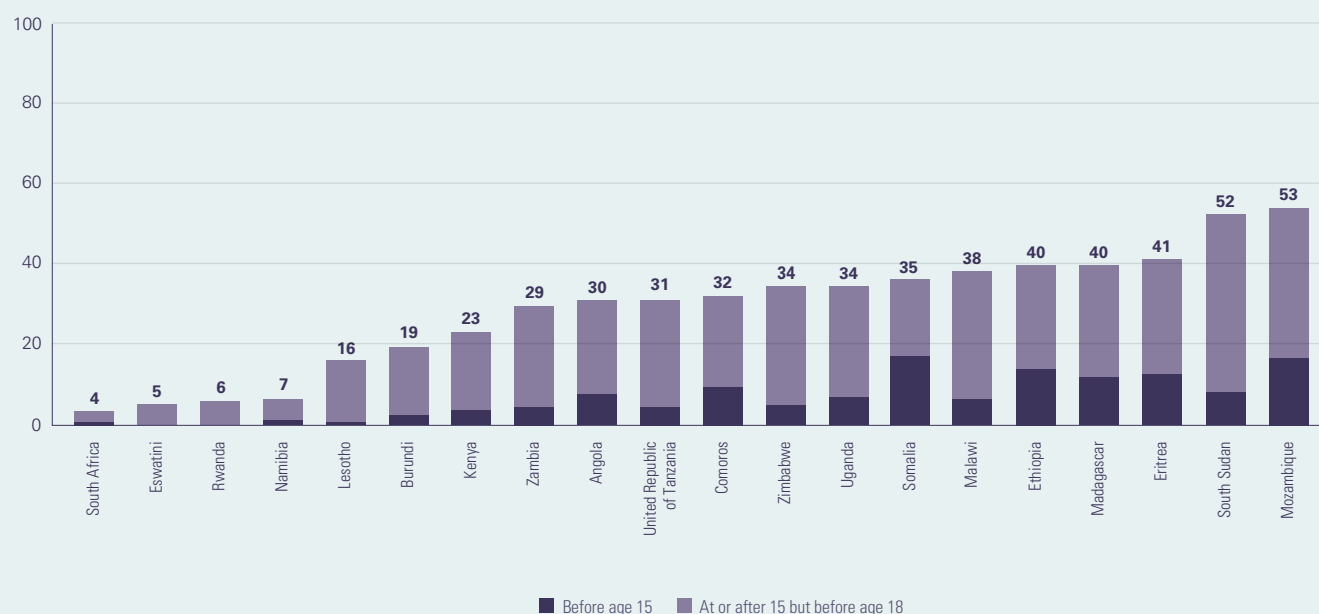
In 3 countries in the region, at least 1 in 10 young men were first married in childhood

Figure 3. Percentage of men aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



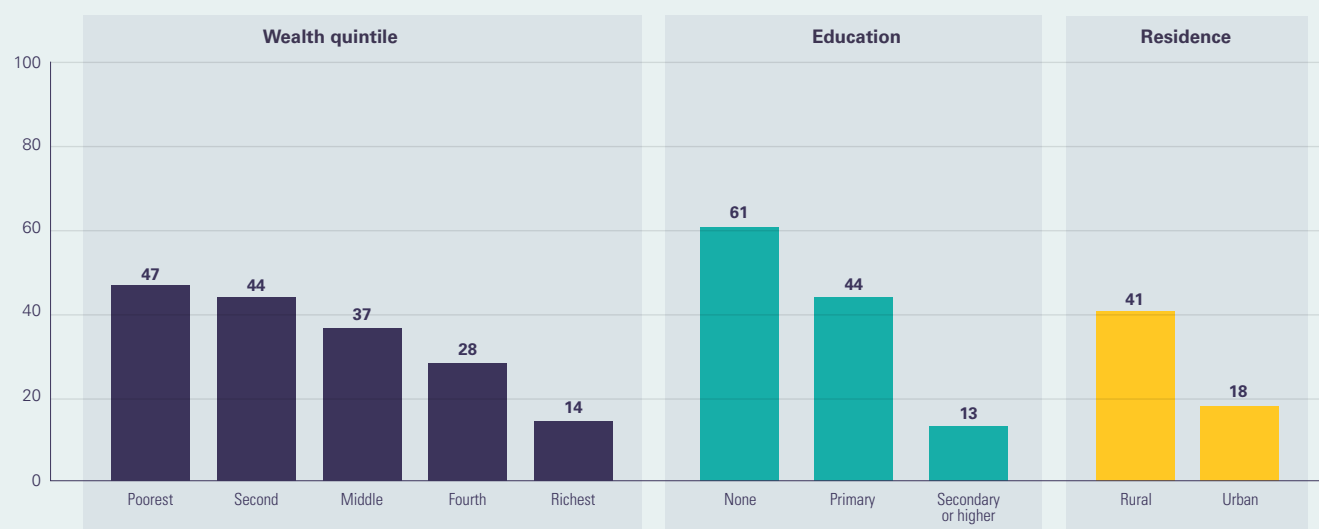
While levels of child marriage vary widely in the region, 2 of the 10 countries with the highest levels in the world are found here

Figure 4. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



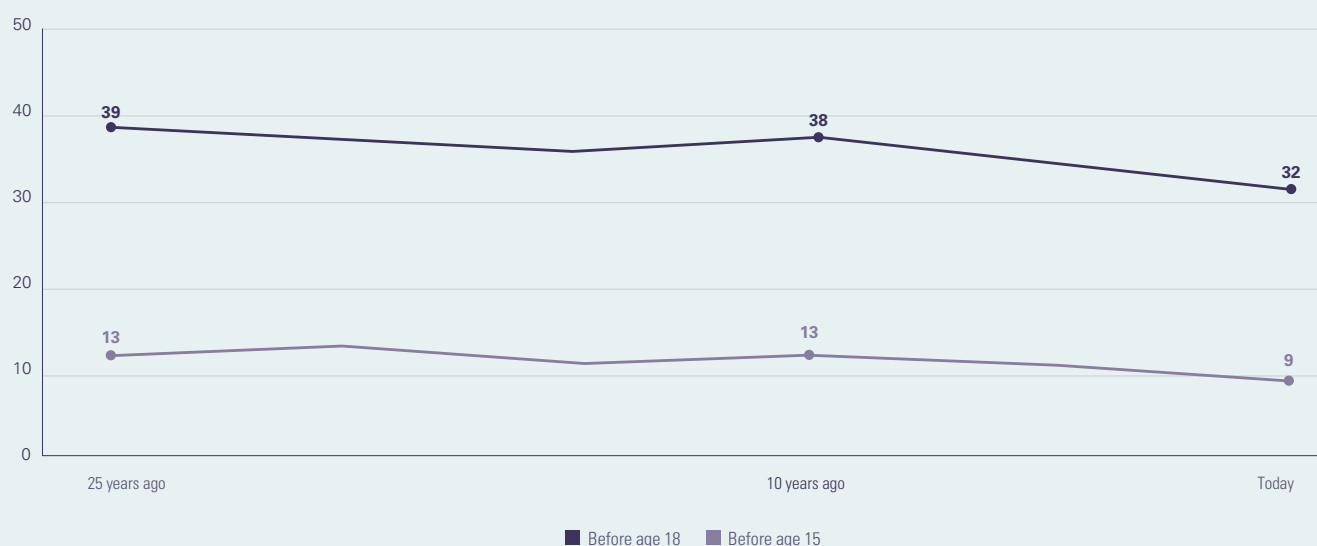
Child marriage is most prevalent in the poorest households, among those with little or no education and in rural areas

Figure 5. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



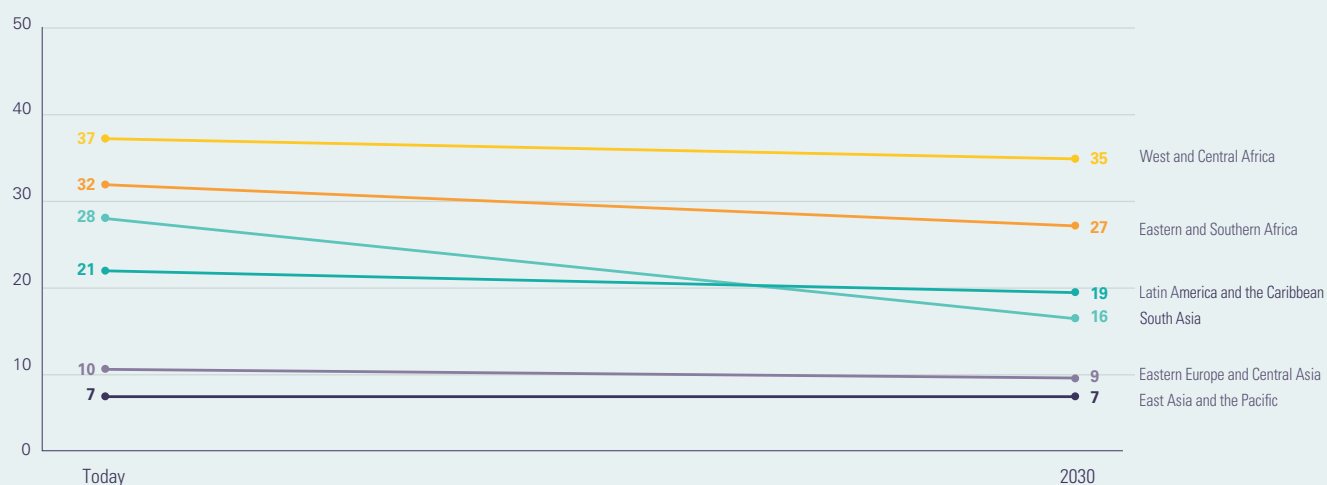
The pace of progress has been slow overall and varies across countries

Figure 6. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



The region remains off track for reaching the SDG target of eliminating child marriage by 2030; at the current rate, 20 million more girls in the region will marry in childhood in the next decade

Figure 7. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years first married or in union before age 18, projected



NOTES: Projected values build on existing trends and show expected values if progress over the past 10 years were to continue. Calculations are based on the average annual rate of change and project a continuation at the same rate, including for regions in which changes are slight and may not be statistically significant. Projections do not take into account the potential impact of events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, whose broad and likely long-lasting effects on the population are not yet fully understood. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that through economic uncertainty, interruption to schooling, disruption of services and other avenues, the pandemic has the potential to threaten progress made thus far against child marriage.



Country profiles



How to read the profiles

The profiles on the following pages present an overview of child marriage – defined as a marriage or union that occurs before the age of 18 – in each country in Eastern and Southern Africa. The profiles detail how common the practice is across the population, describe the characteristics of unions, provide insights into the lives of child brides across key domains of well-being and illustrate trends in the practice and whether the country is on track to reach the 2030 SDG target.

This guide provides a description of the data featured throughout the profiles and notes on how to interpret the findings shown in each section. The notes are organized to correspond with the sequential sections of the profiles and refer to the name of each chart (marked in bold font).

Current levels of child marriage

The **burden of child marriage** captures the total number of girls and women in the country who married in childhood, including girls under 18 who are already married and women of all ages who were child brides. This can be interpreted alongside the **prevalence of child marriage**, or the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18 (SDG indicator 5.3.1), to give a sense of how common the practice is. The burden gives an absolute number, while the prevalence captures the proportion.

The prevalence is measured among this specific age group because, if unmarried, these women have recently passed the risk period for child marriage. Thus the prevalence is both complete – since women in this age group can no longer become child brides – and timely – since, compared to older women, they turned 18 more recently.

This section contains **regional and global comparisons**, again using the standard SDG indicator for measuring child marriage prevalence, to show where the country falls in relation to others in the region and the world. It also identifies **vulnerable populations**, showing the sub-populations in which child marriage is more common across household wealth, level of education and place of residence.

Characteristics of unions

This section illustrates the nature of child marriages, including the difference in age between child brides and their partners and the types of unions child brides are part of.

In some contexts, child brides marry men who are substantially older, while in others they marry peers. The **spousal age gap** shows the age difference between women and their partners for both child brides and those who married in adulthood.

The chart showing **types of unions** compares the share of formal marriages with the share of informal unions, in which girls live with a partner as if married. This chart also shows the share previously married who are now separated, divorced or widowed. Unlike most other charts in the profile, due to data availability, this chart refers to girls aged 15 to 17 years who have ever been married – since they are under 18, they are all considered child brides.

Lives of child brides

This section shows a selection of well-being indicators, comparing the outcomes for child brides to those of their peers who married later or who have not married.

The **autonomy, empowerment and violence** chart illustrates whether child brides are more or less likely than their peers to have a bank account (a measure of financial autonomy), to be employed, to have a say in decision-making, to believe wife-beating is justified and to have experienced intimate partner violence.

In the area of **education**, the profile compares the current school participation of girls aged 15 to 17 years depending on their marital status, often showing that married adolescent girls are more likely to be out of school than their unmarried peers.

Child marriage is closely tied to **early childbearing**, and the first chart in this section shows how commonly child brides give birth before ages 18 and 20 compared to their peers who married later or never married. The second chart shows the timing of pregnancy and marriage, illustrating whether pregnancy preceded (or closely followed) marriage among those who married at different ages.

Lastly, the **reproductive health** chart shows whether child brides have less access to reproductive health services such as family planning and antenatal and delivery care than their peers.

It is worth keeping in mind throughout this section that this is a descriptive analysis, and age at marriage may not be the only factor contributing to differences across groups of women, especially since child brides are likely to be disadvantaged in other dimensions as well.

Generational trends

This section gives a long-term view of how common child marriage has been at the national level over the preceding 25 years. In many countries, the practice has become less common, while in others there has been little change.

Looking ahead to ending child marriage

In light of the SDG target of ending child marriage by 2030, this section illustrates whether the progress observed to date has set the country on a path to meet the goal or whether acceleration is required.

The chart on **observed and required rates of progress** shows the average annual rates of reduction, often contrasting modest annual improvements in the past decades with the much faster rates required to meet the 2030 target.



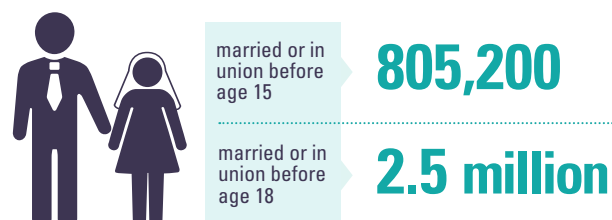
Angola

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 18 | with exceptions: 15

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

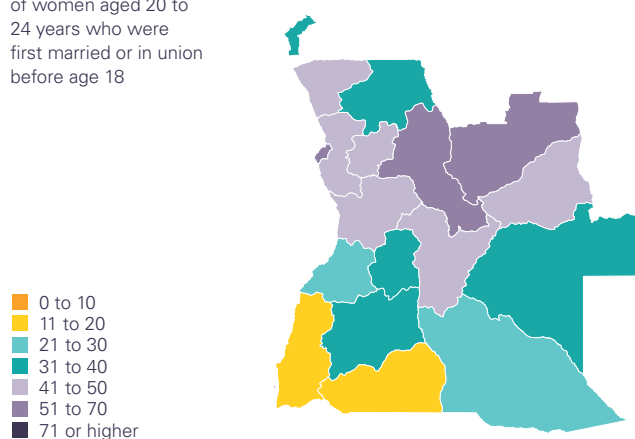
Figure 8. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Angola is home to over 2 million child brides; 3 in 10 young women were married or in union in childhood

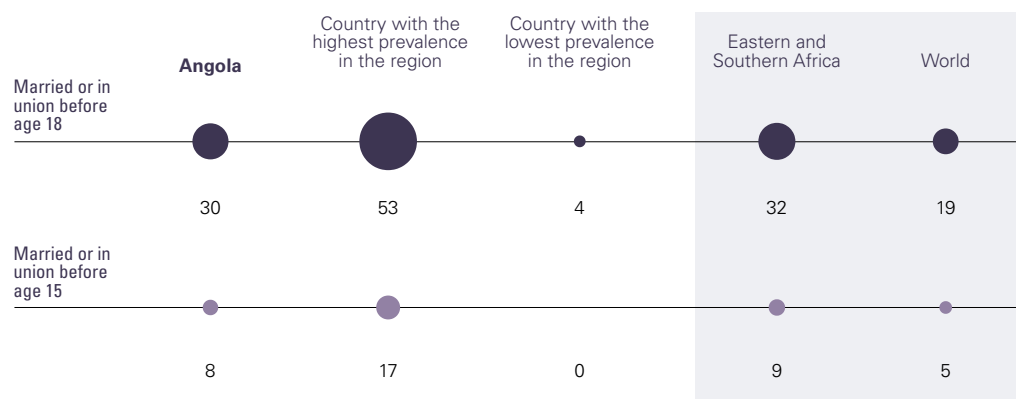
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 9. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



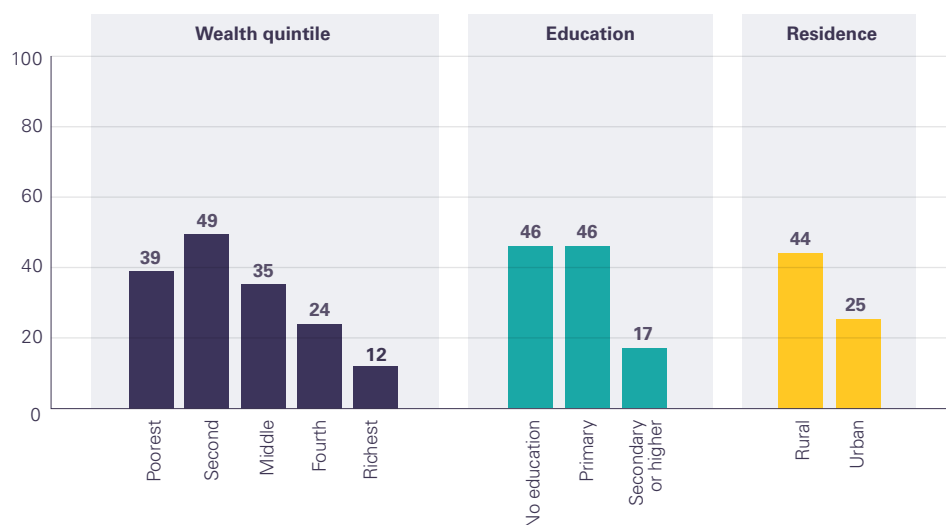
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 10. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

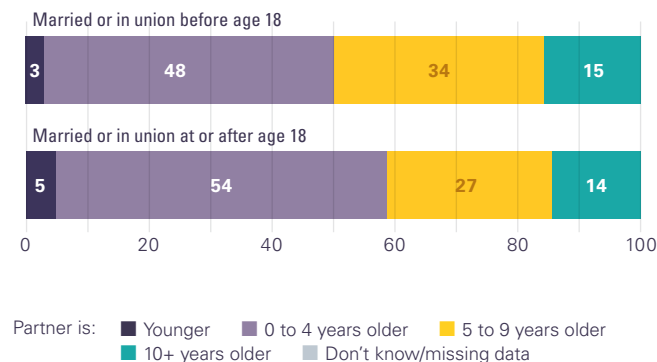
Figure 11. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

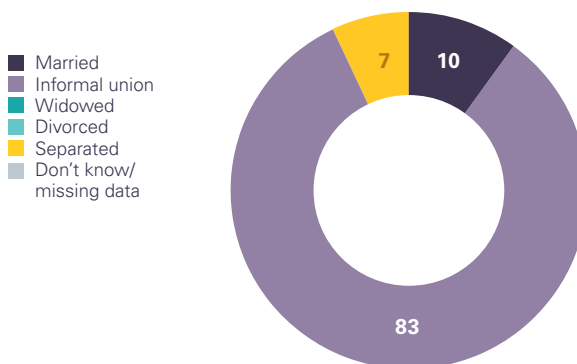
Spousal age gap

Figure 12. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Types of unions

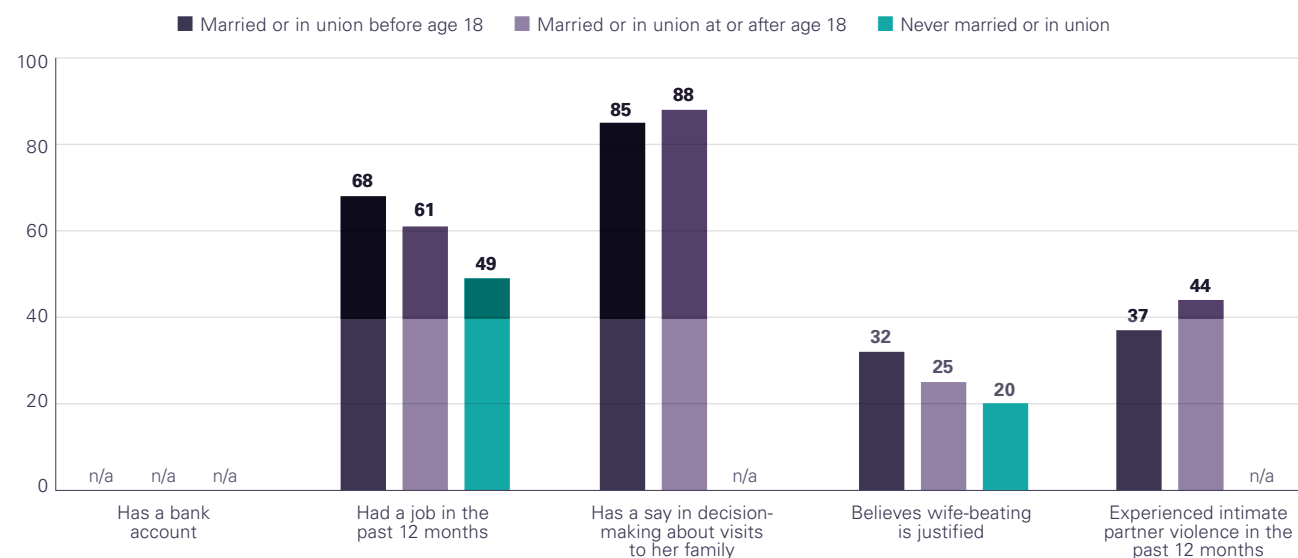
Figure 13. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status



Lives of child brides

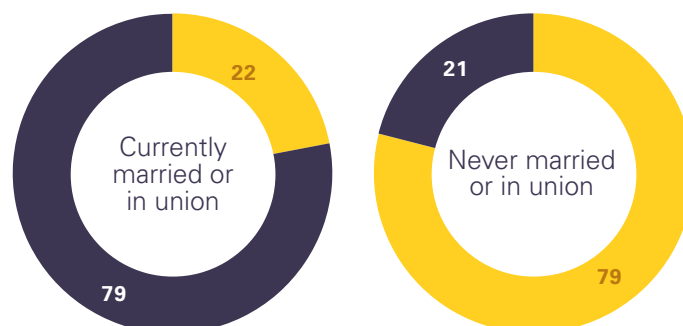
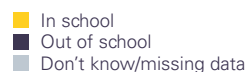
Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 14. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Education

Figure 15. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status



Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 16. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

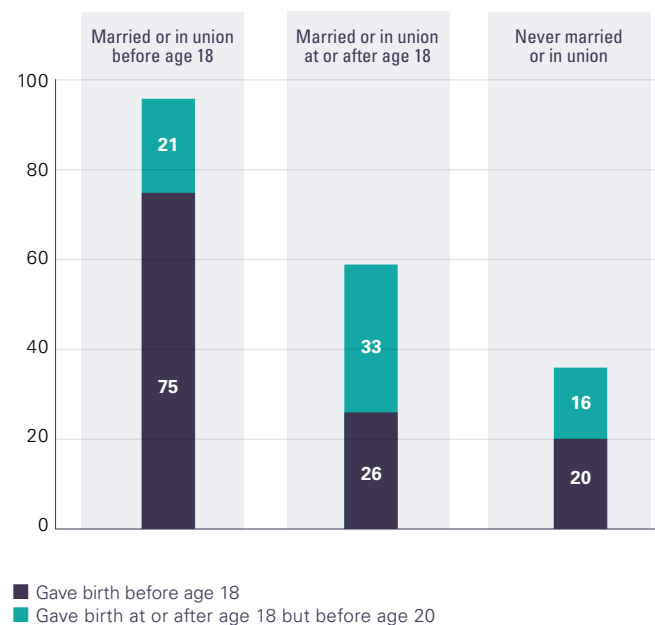
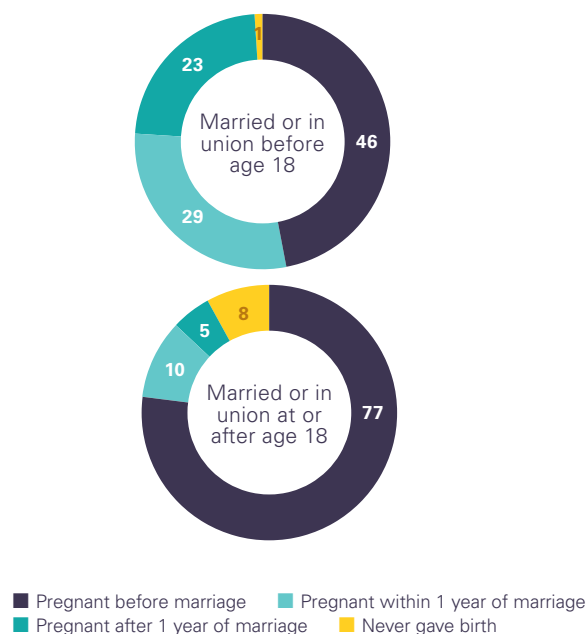
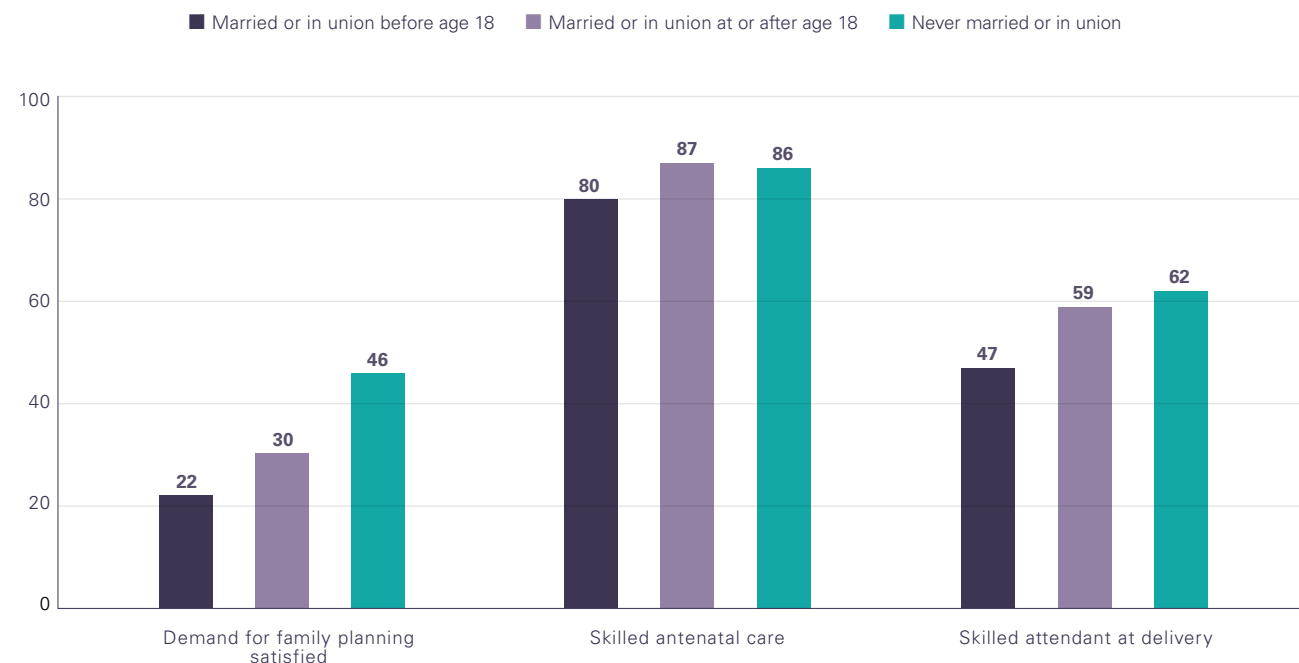


Figure 17. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



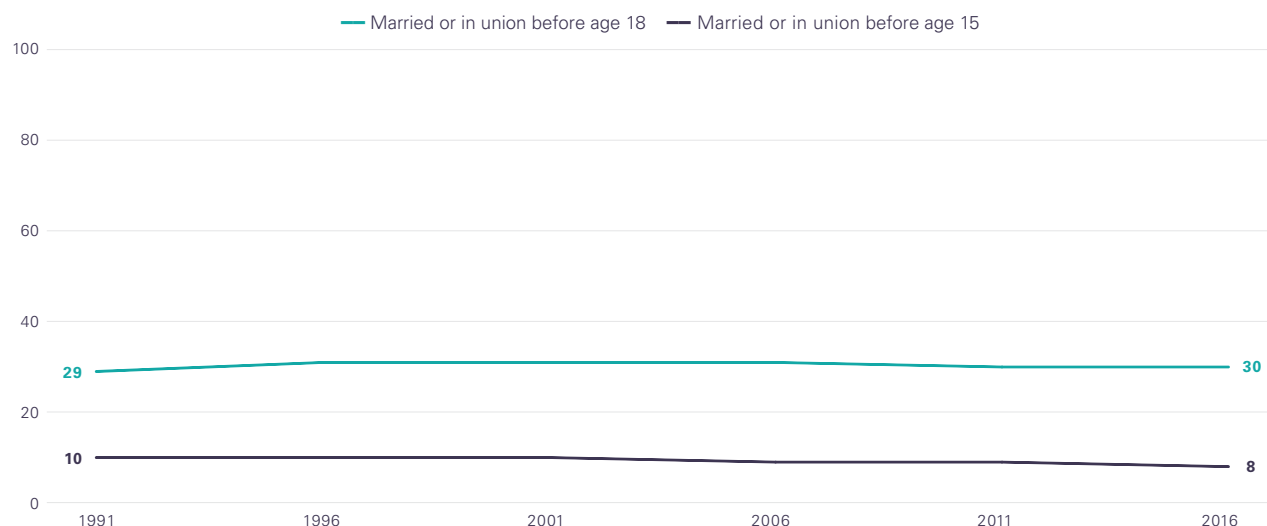
Reproductive health

Figure 18. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

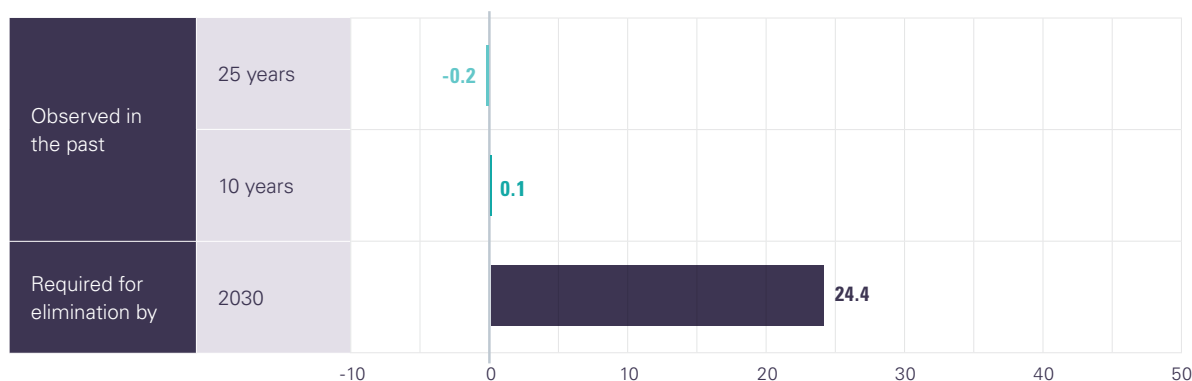
Figure 19. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 20. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Demographic and Health Survey 2015–2016 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to ‘marriage’ or ‘child brides’ include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, ‘elimination’ is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as ‘n/a’ indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

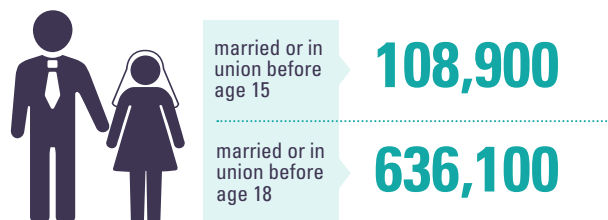
Burundi

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 21 | with exceptions: 18

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

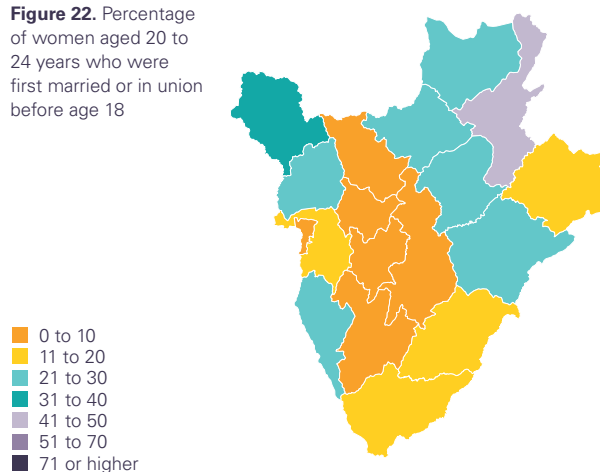
Figure 21. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Burundi is home to over 636,000 child brides; 1 in 5 young women were married or in union in childhood

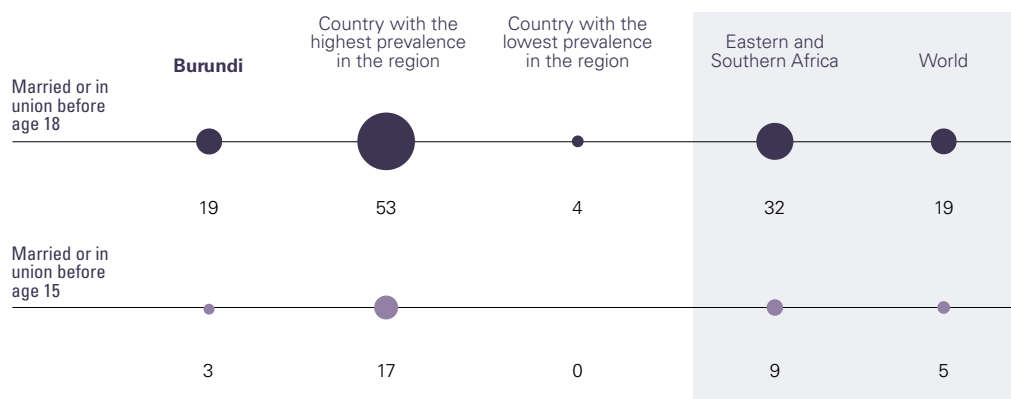
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 22. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



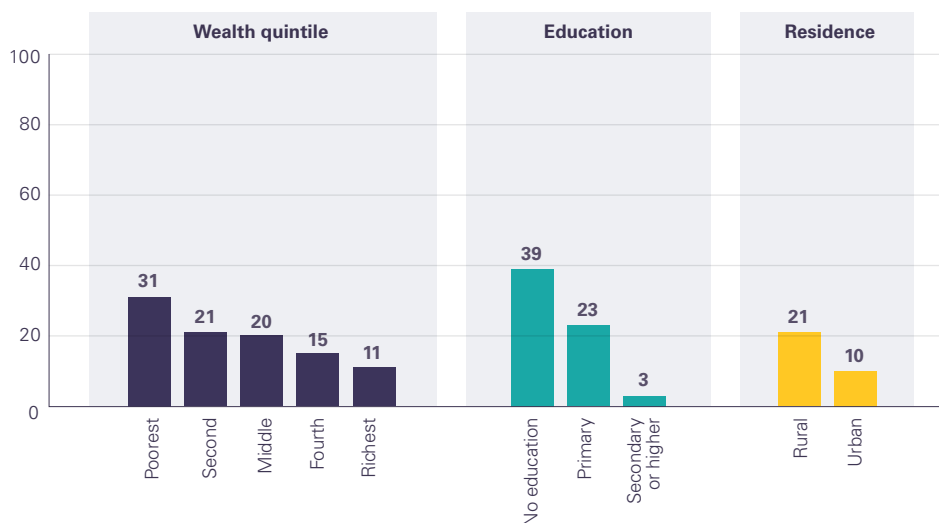
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 23. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

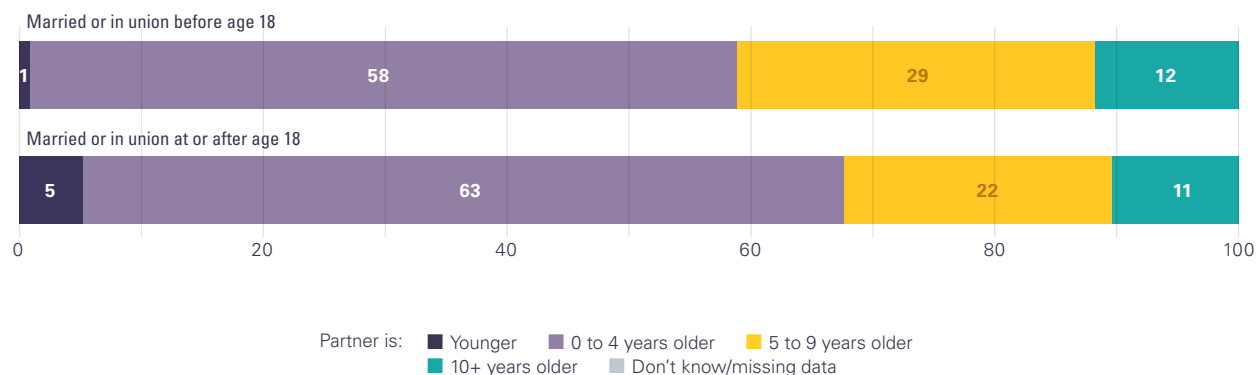
Figure 24. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

Spousal age gap

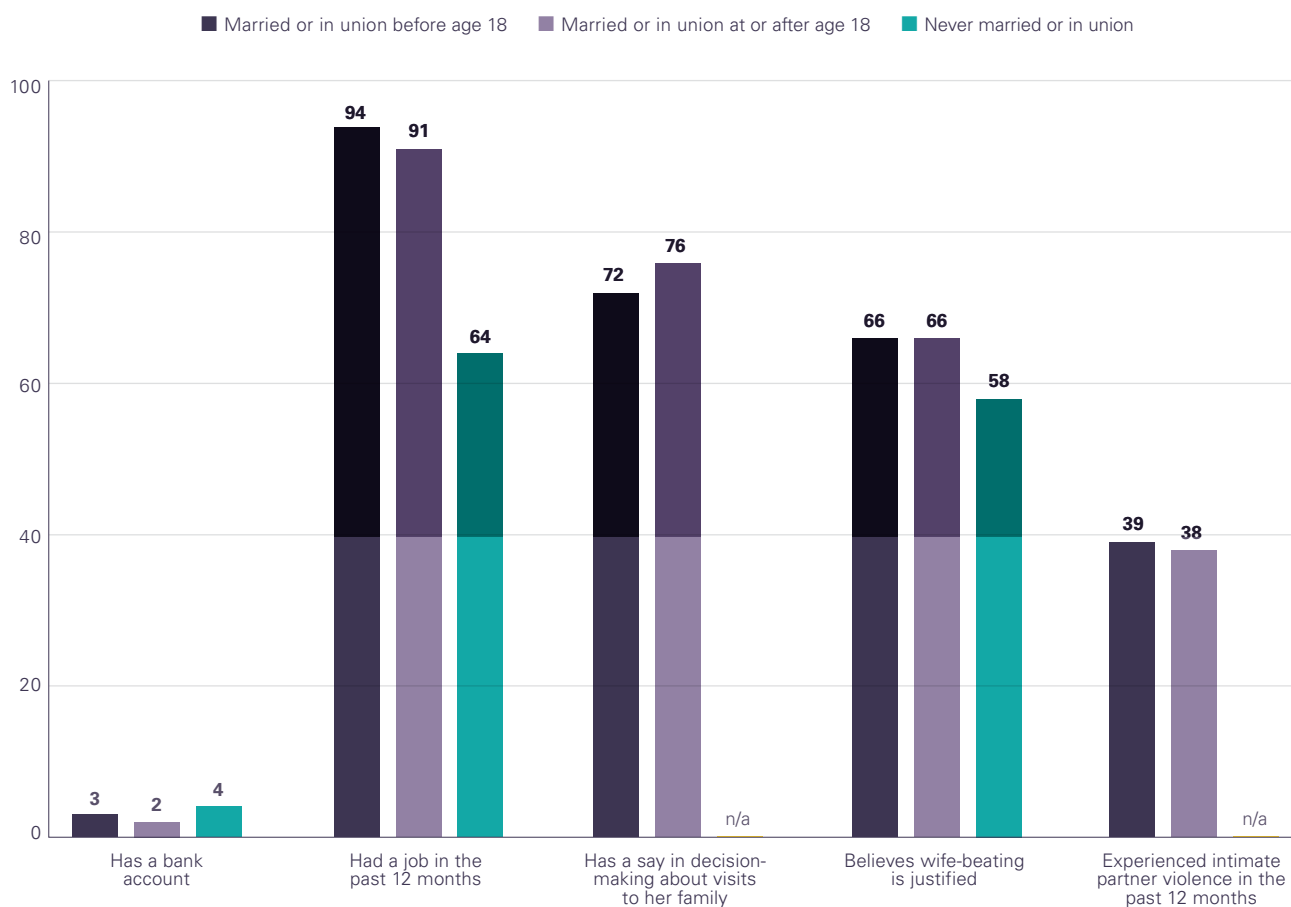
Figure 25. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 26. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 27. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

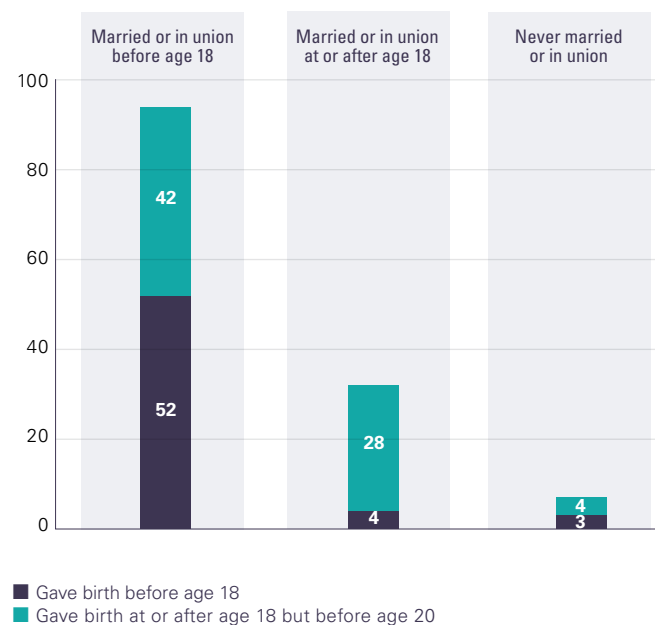
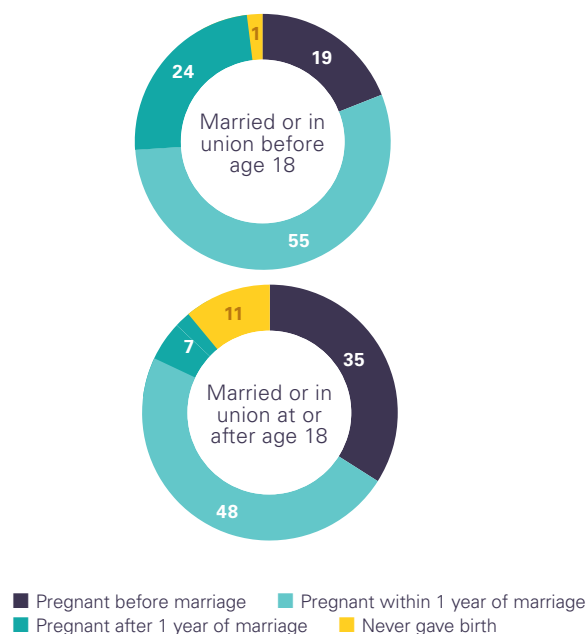
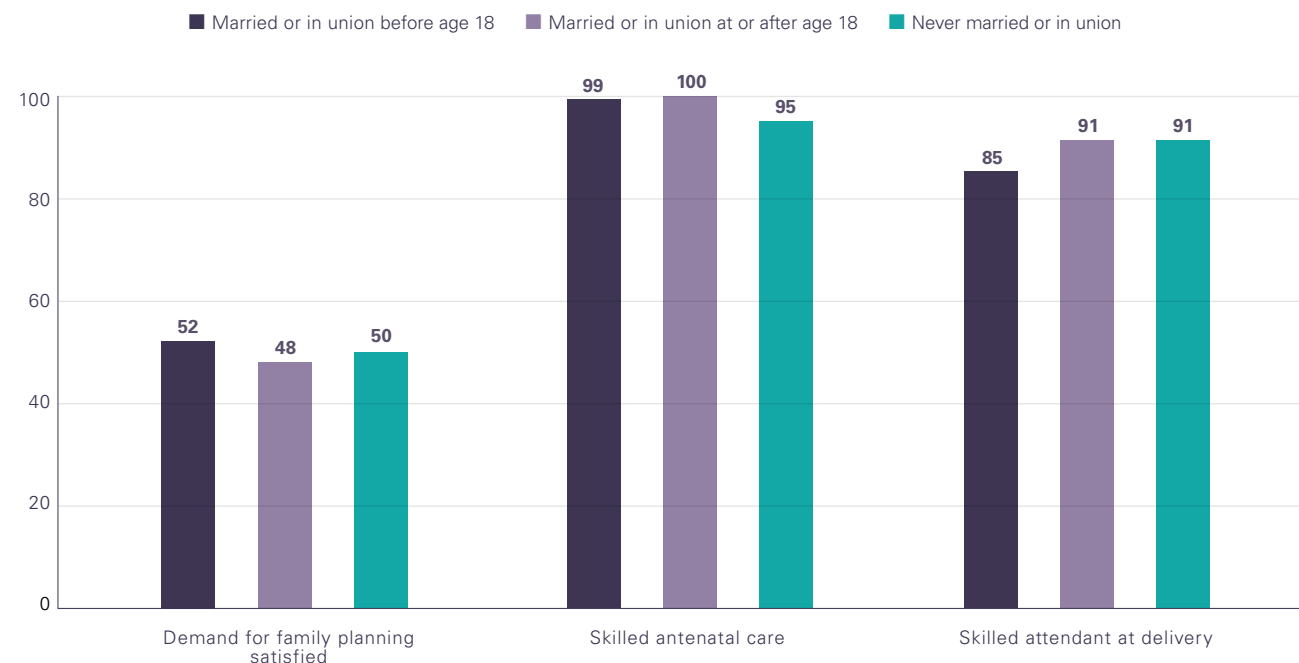


Figure 28. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



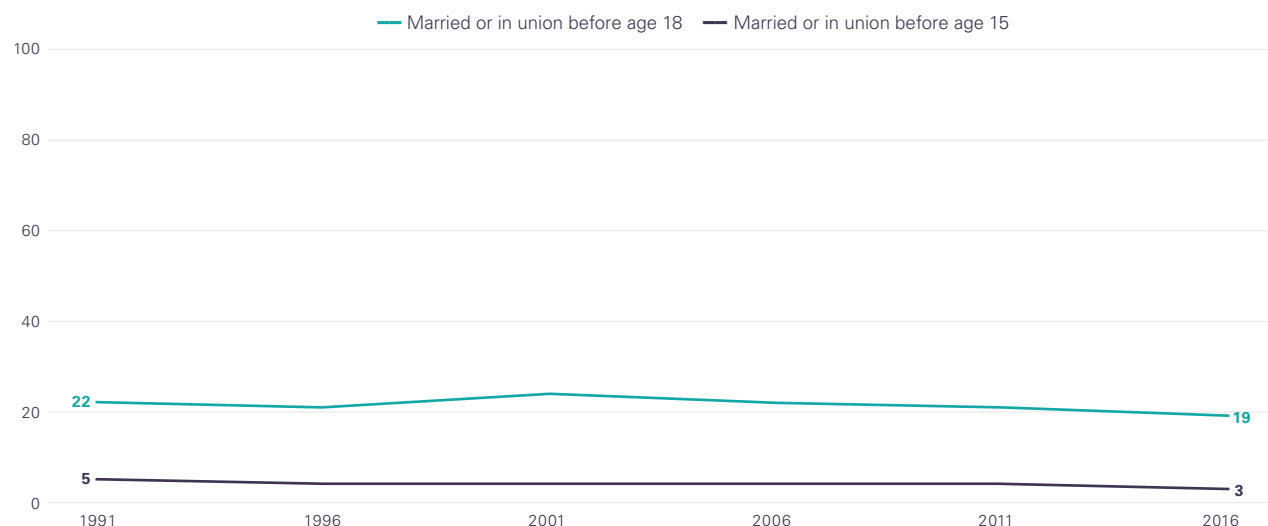
Reproductive health

Figure 29. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

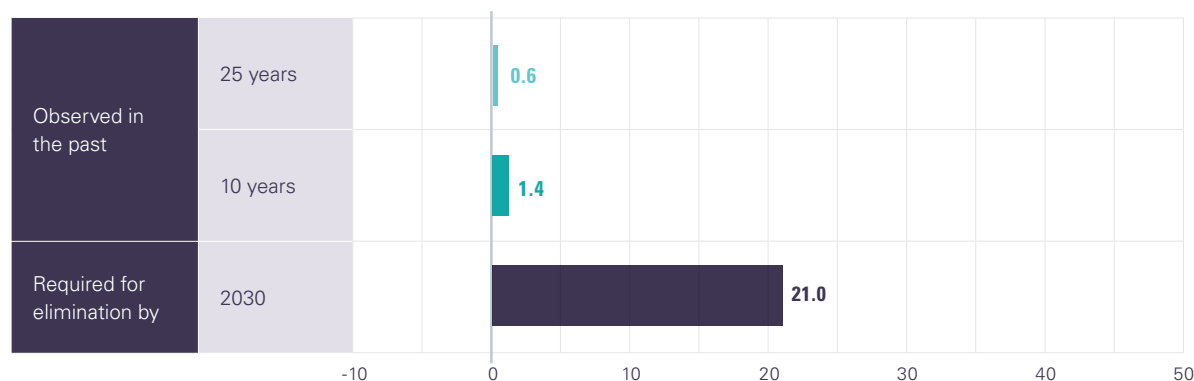
Figure 30. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 31. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Demographic and Health Survey 2016–2017 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to ‘marriage’ or ‘child brides’ include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, ‘elimination’ is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as ‘n/a’ indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

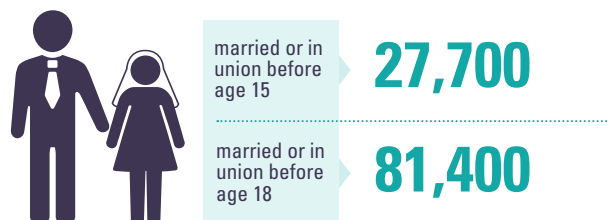
Comoros

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: - | with exceptions: 0

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

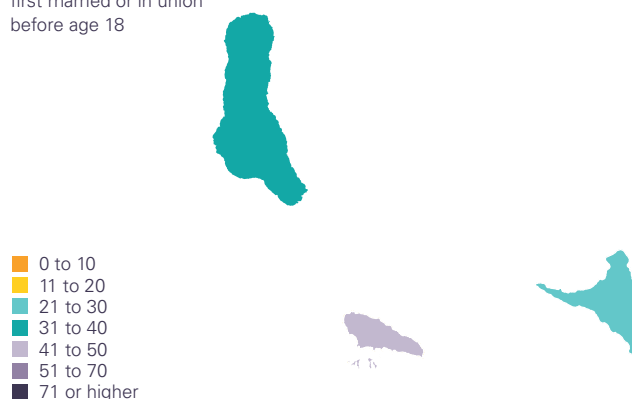
Figure 32. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



The Comoros is home to over 81,000 child brides; 1 in 3 young women were married or in union in childhood

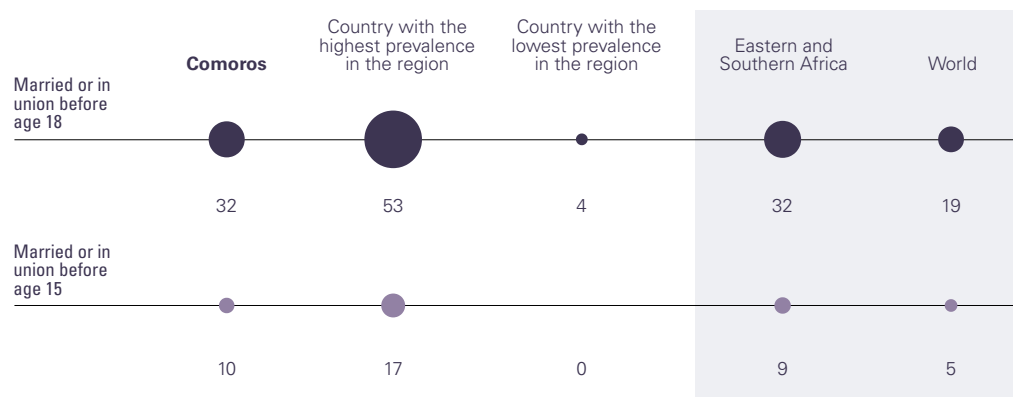
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 33. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



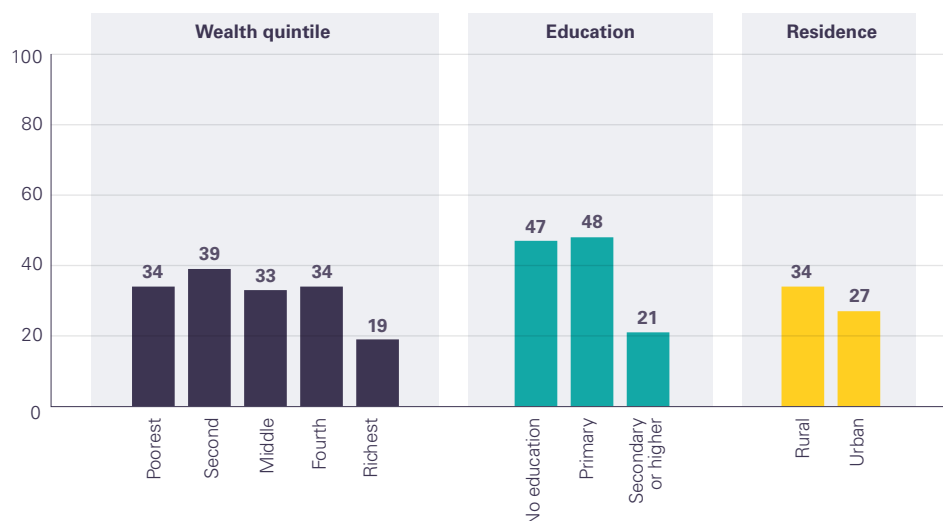
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 34. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

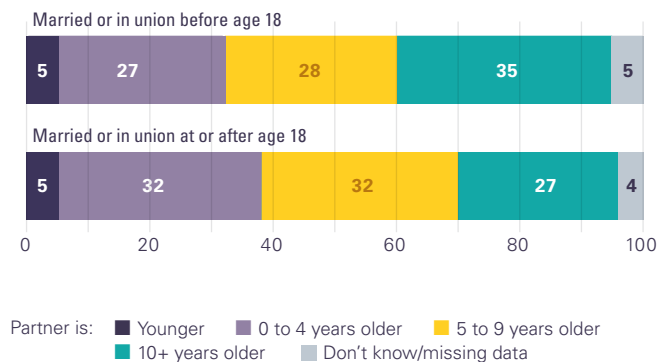
Figure 35. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

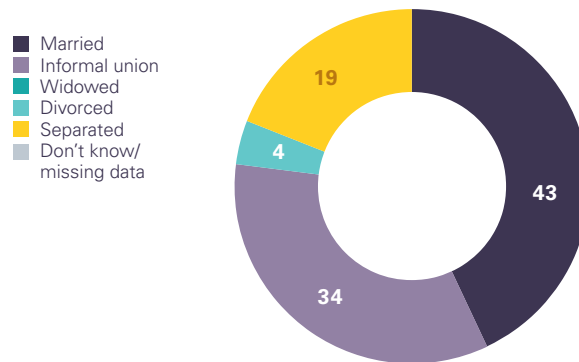
Spousal age gap

Figure 36. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Types of unions

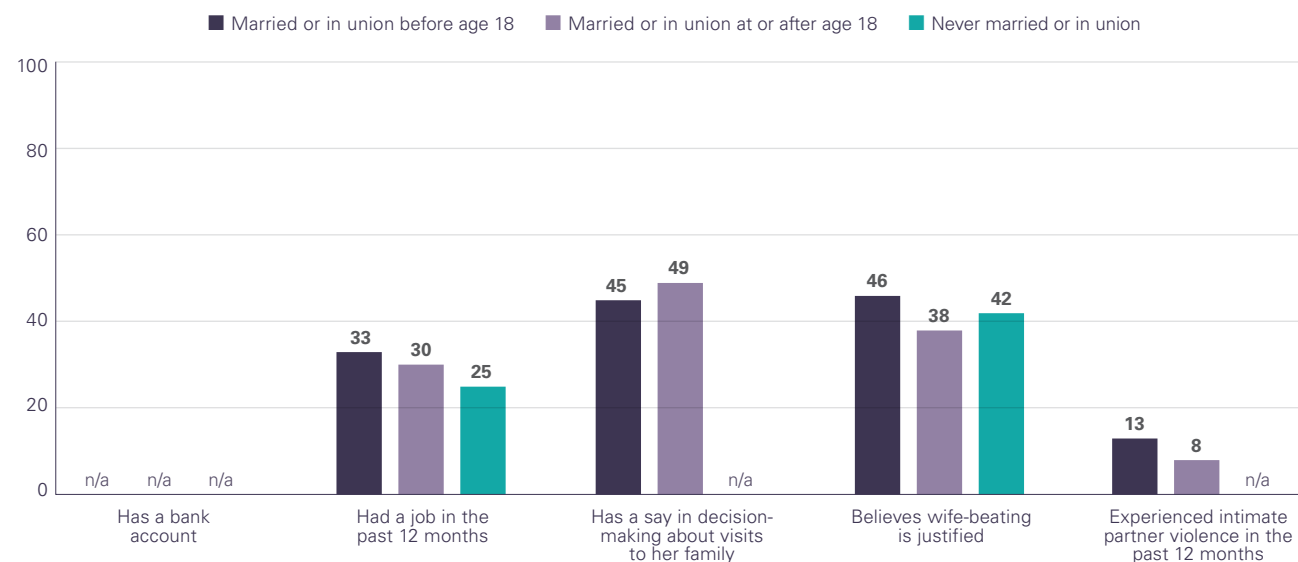
Figure 37. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

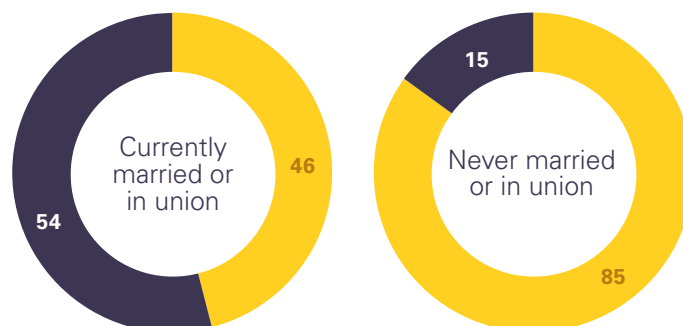
Figure 38. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Education

Figure 39. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

■ In school
■ Out of school
■ Don't know/missing data



Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 40. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

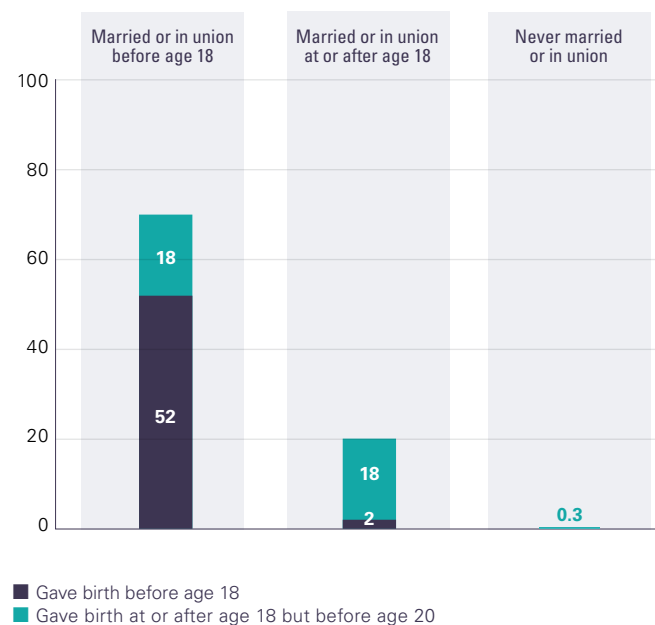
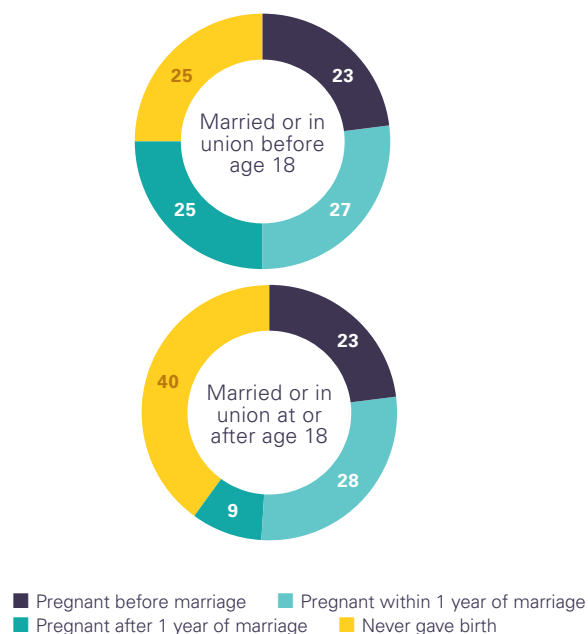
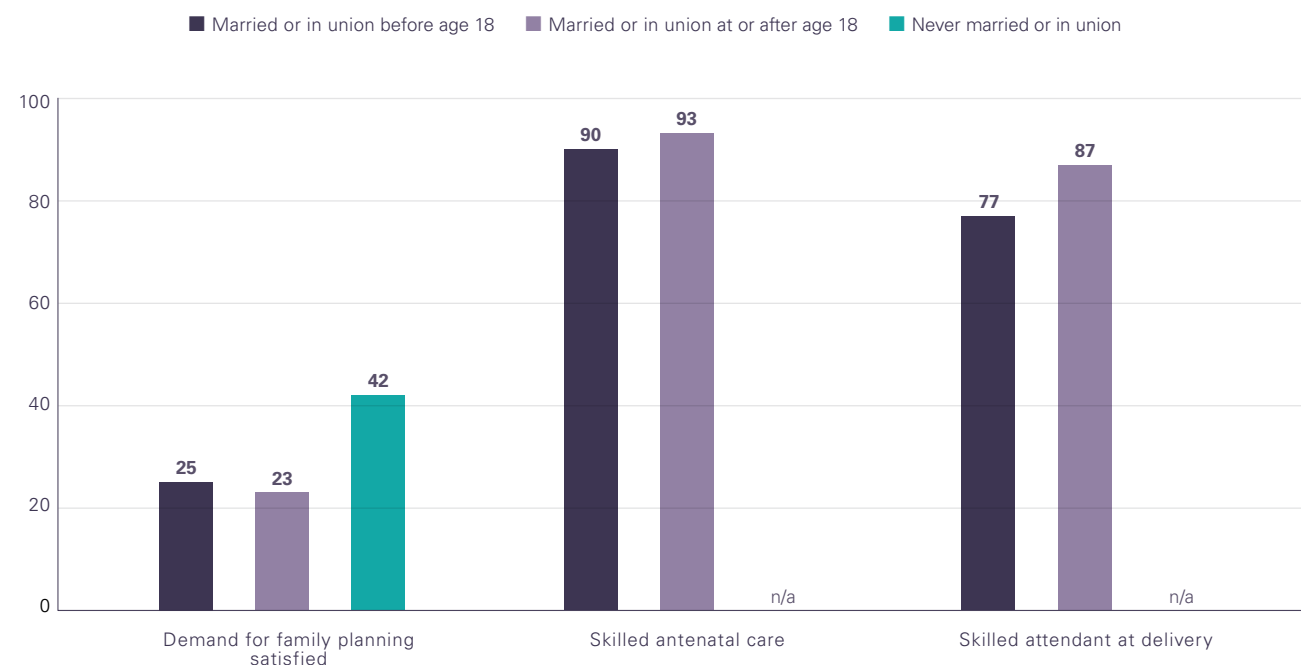


Figure 41. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



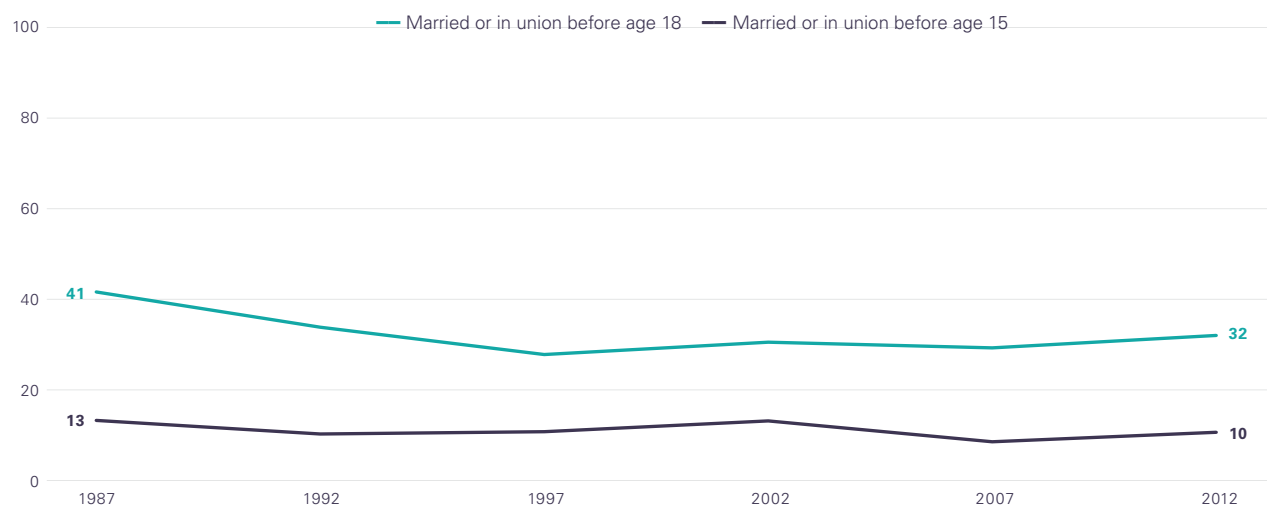
Reproductive health

Figure 42. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

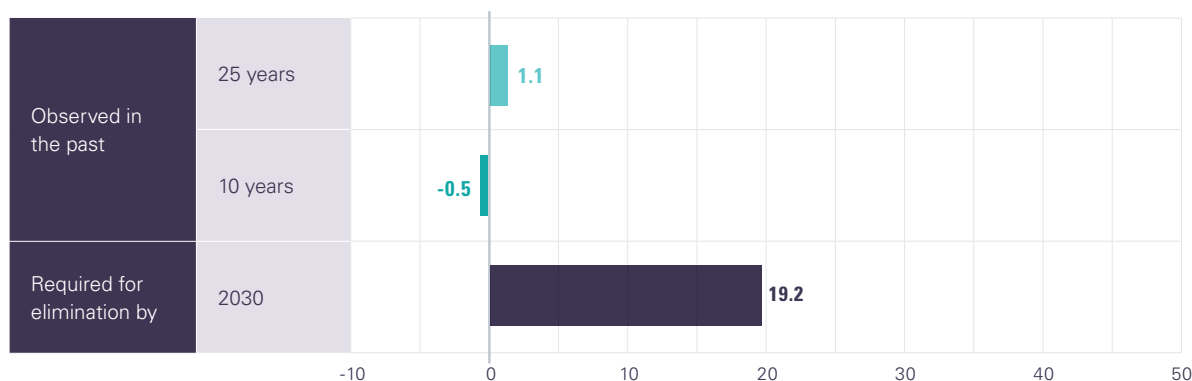
Figure 43. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 44. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Demographic and Health Survey 2012 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as 'n/a' indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

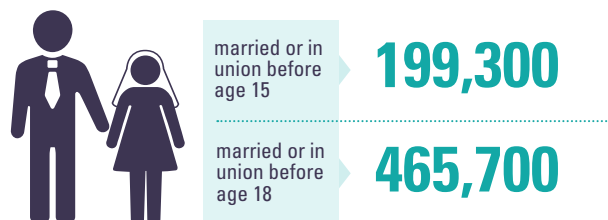
Eritrea

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 18 | with exceptions: n/a

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

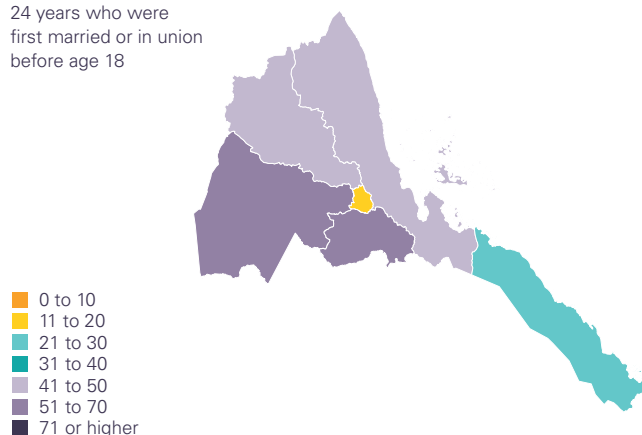
Figure 45. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Eritrea is home to nearly 466,000 child brides; 4 in 10 young women were married or in union in childhood

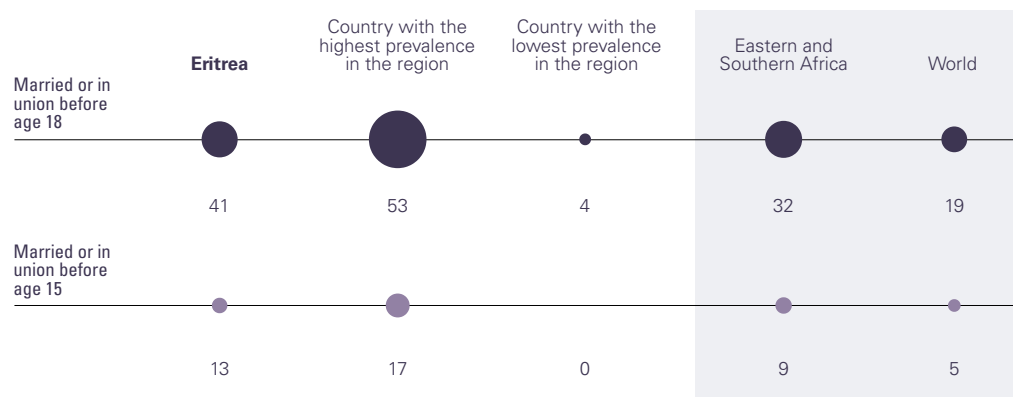
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 46. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



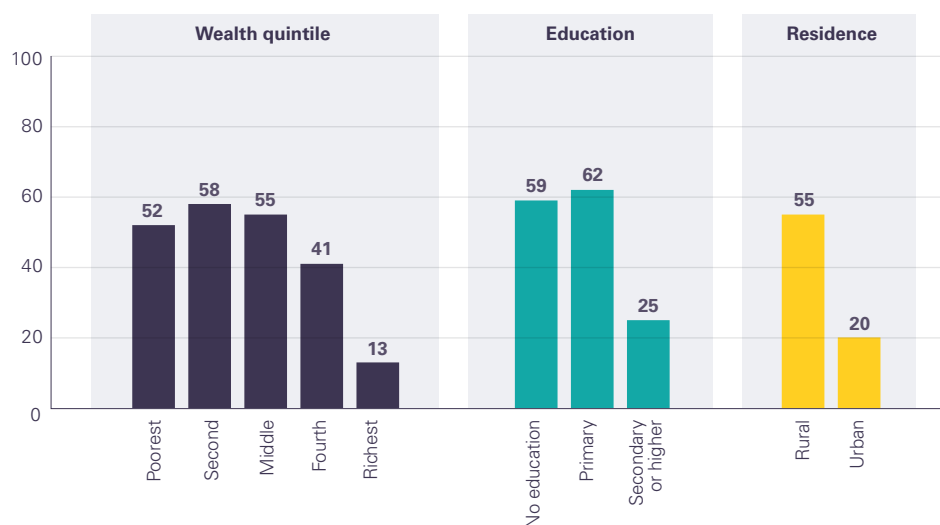
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 47. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

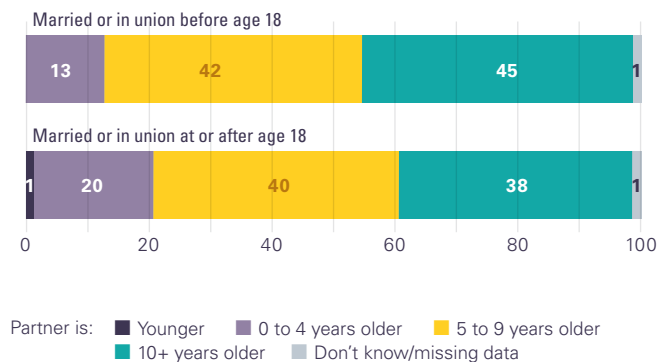
Figure 48. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

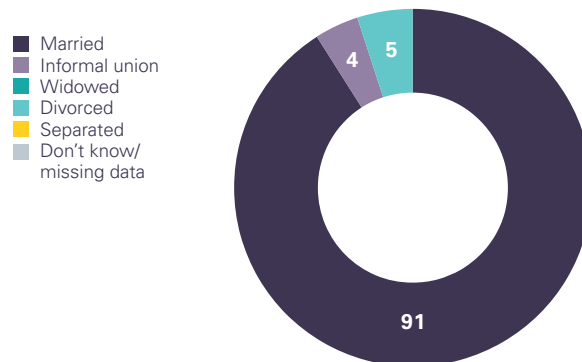
Spousal age gap

Figure 49. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Types of unions

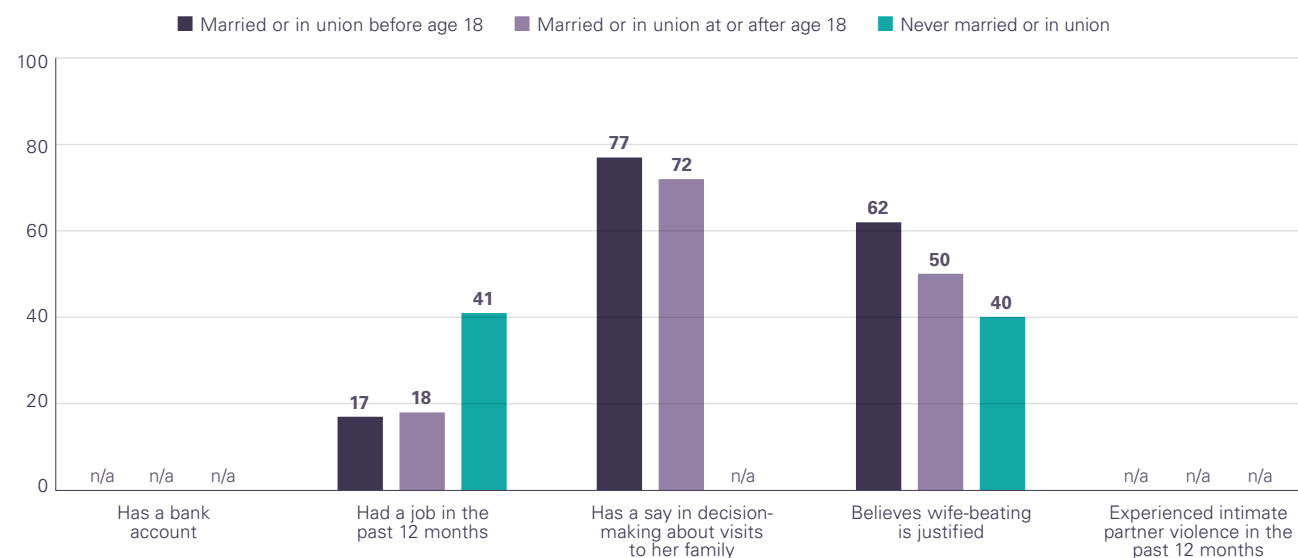
Figure 50. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

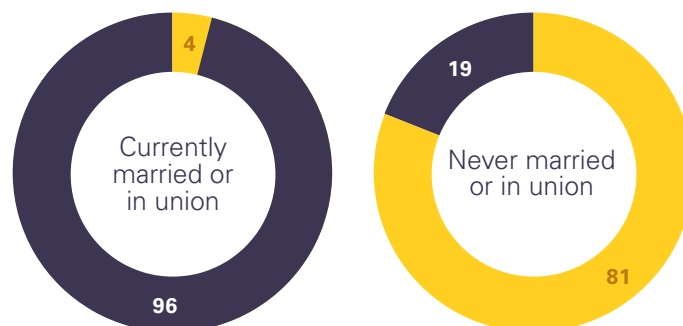
Figure 51. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Education

Figure 52. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

■ In school
■ Out of school
■ Don't know/missing data



Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 53. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

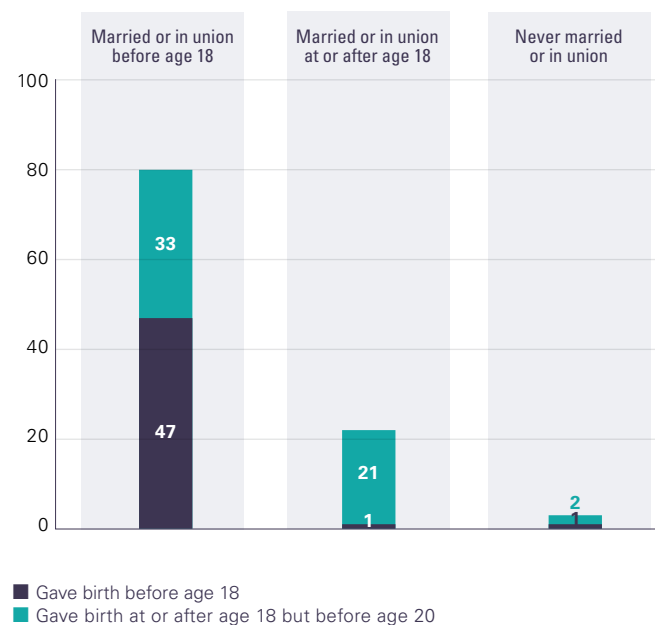
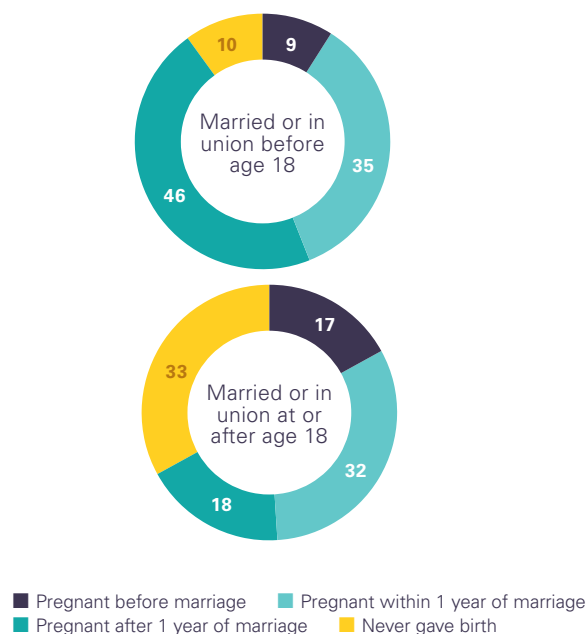
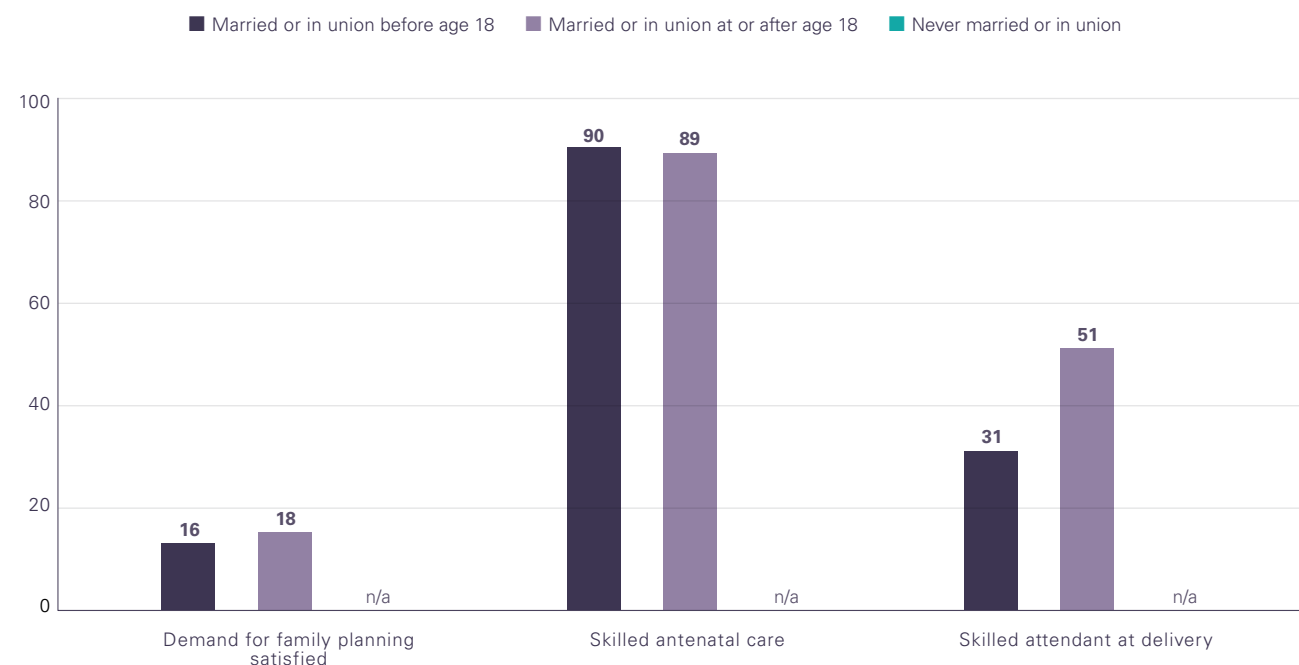


Figure 54. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



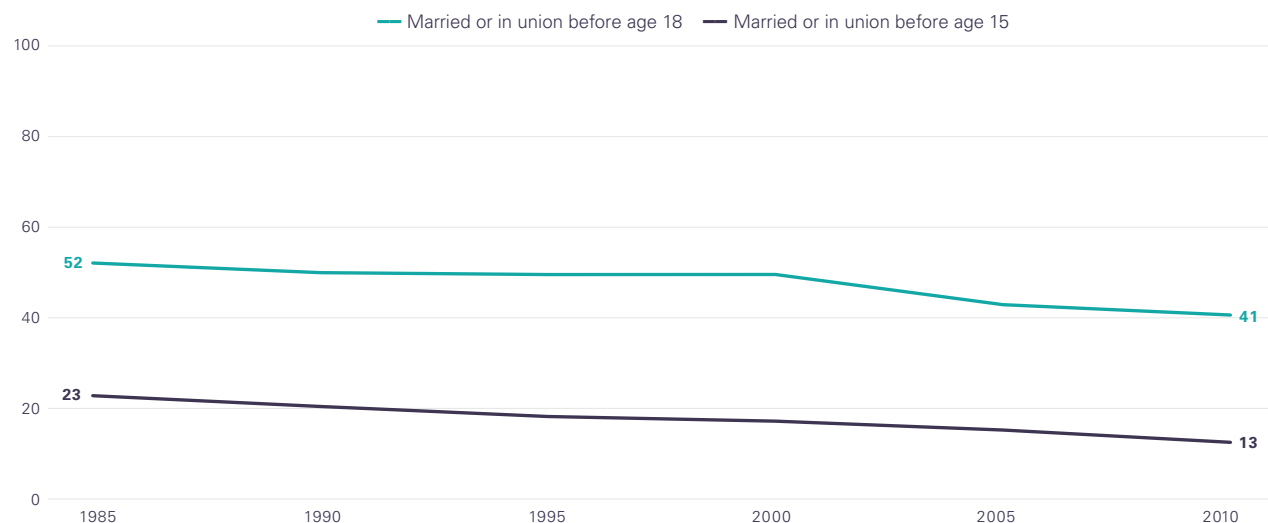
Reproductive health

Figure 55. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

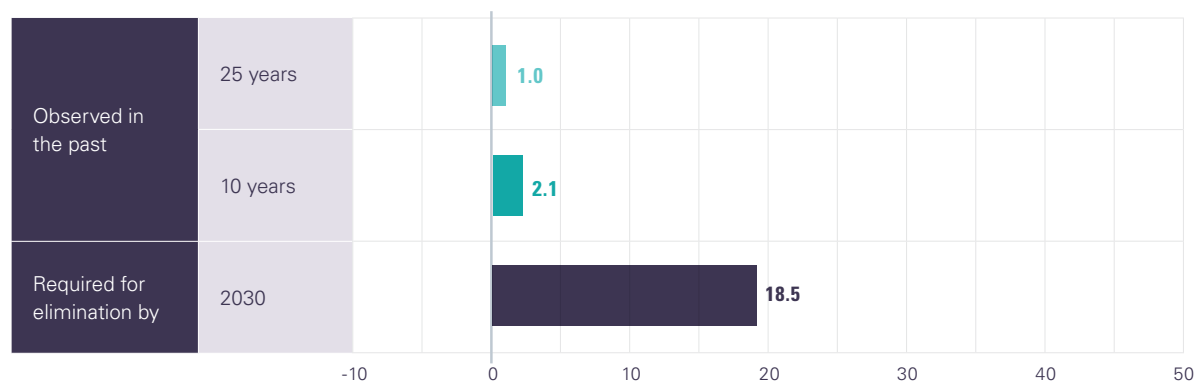
Figure 56. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 57. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Population and Health Survey 2010 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as 'n/a' indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

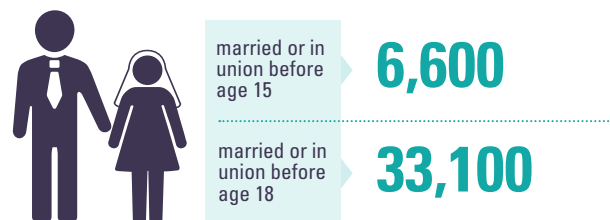
Eswatini

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 21 | with exceptions: 16

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

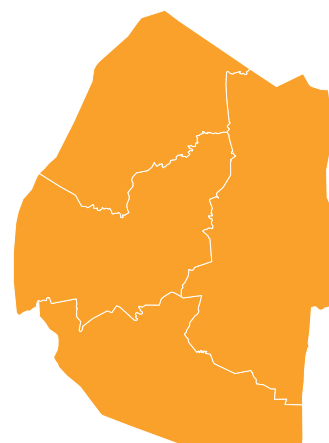
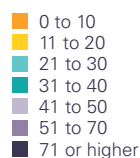
Figure 58. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Eswatini is home to over 33,000 child brides; 1 in 20 young women were married or in union in childhood

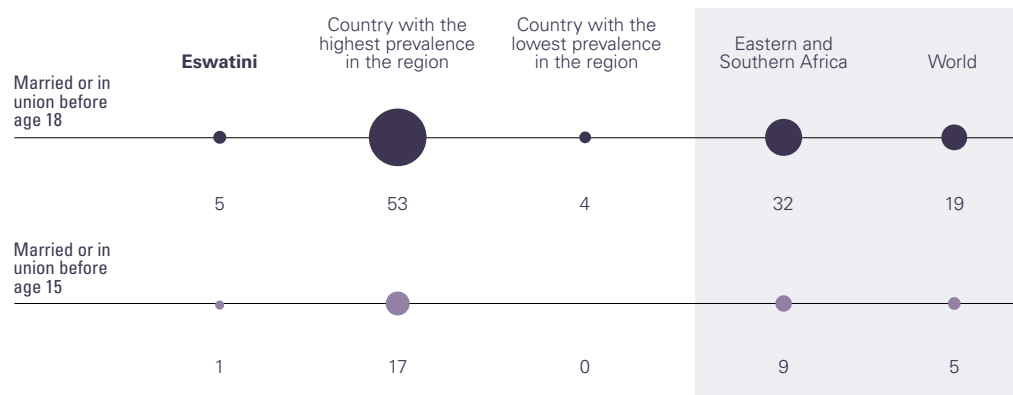
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 59. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



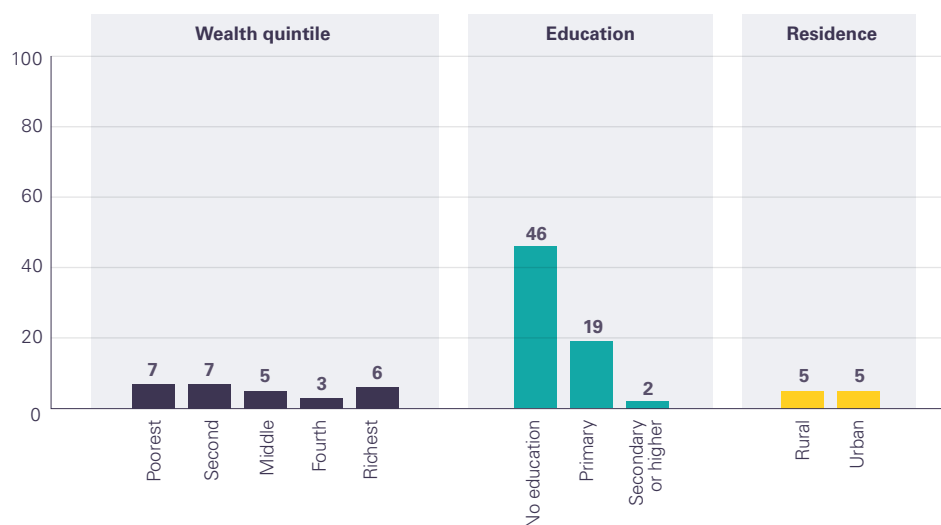
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 60. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

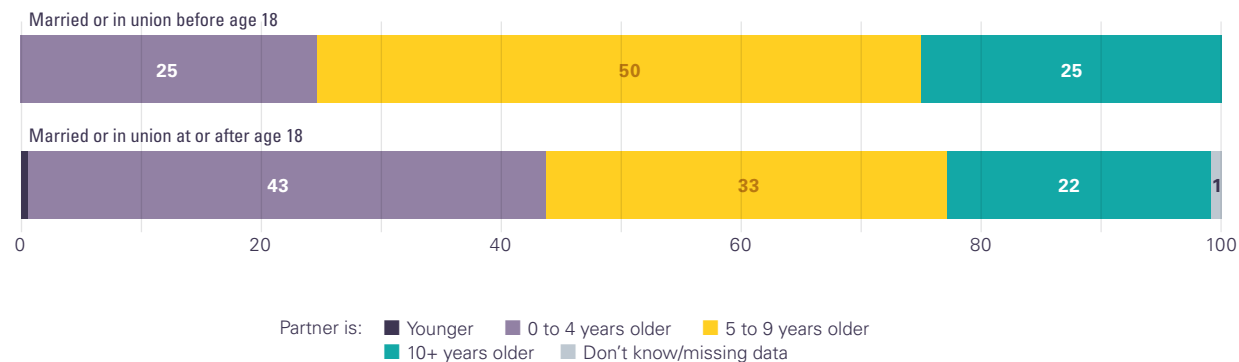
Figure 61. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

Spousal age gap

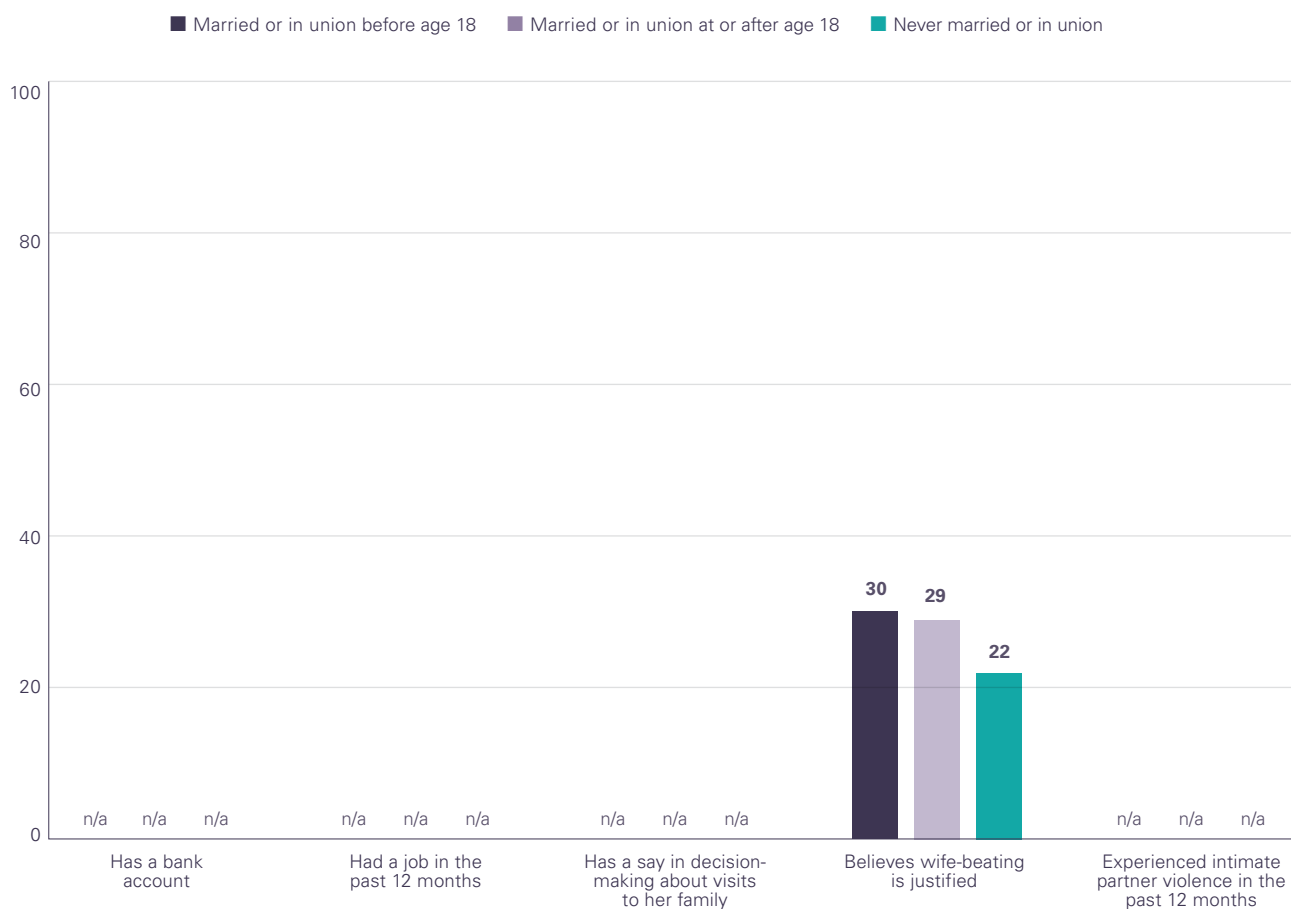
Figure 62. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 63. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Lives of child brides *(continued)*

Early childbearing

Figure 64. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

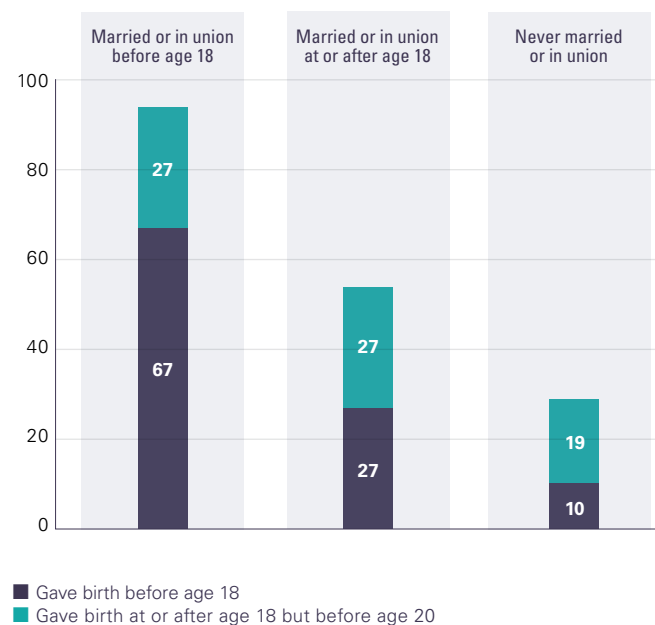
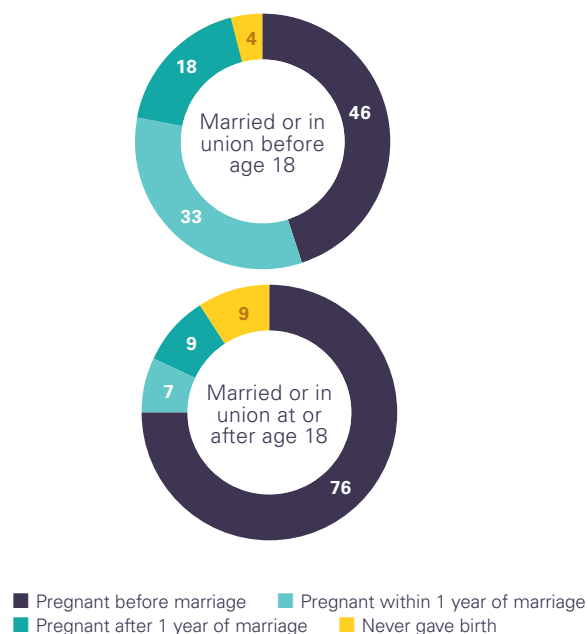
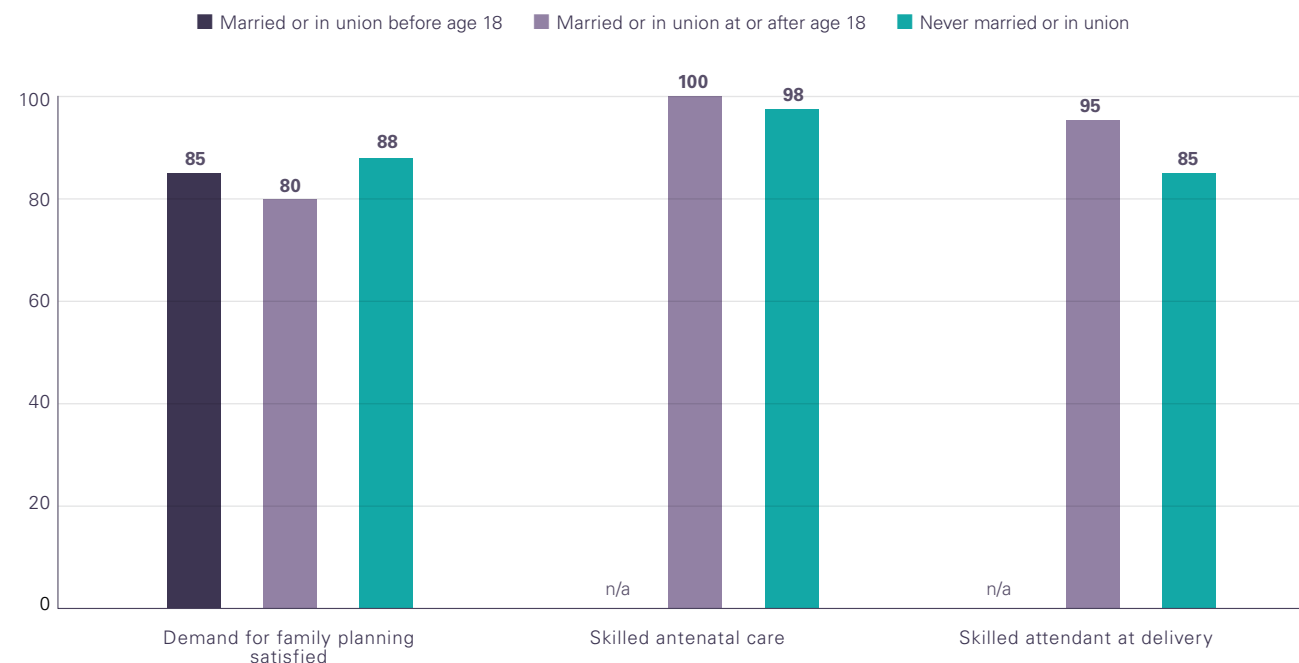


Figure 65. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



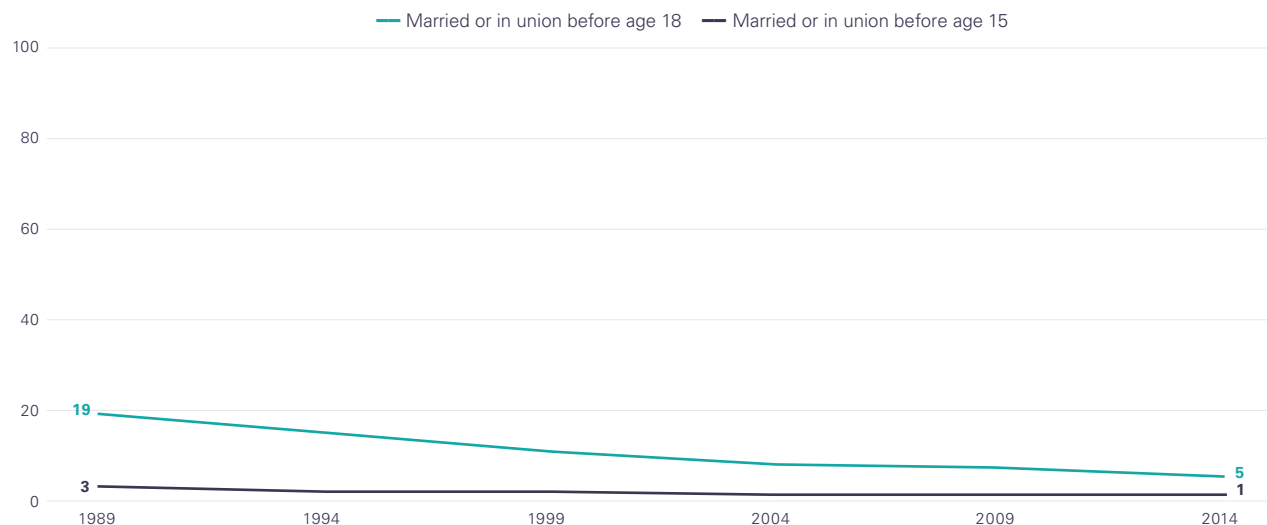
Reproductive health

Figure 66. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

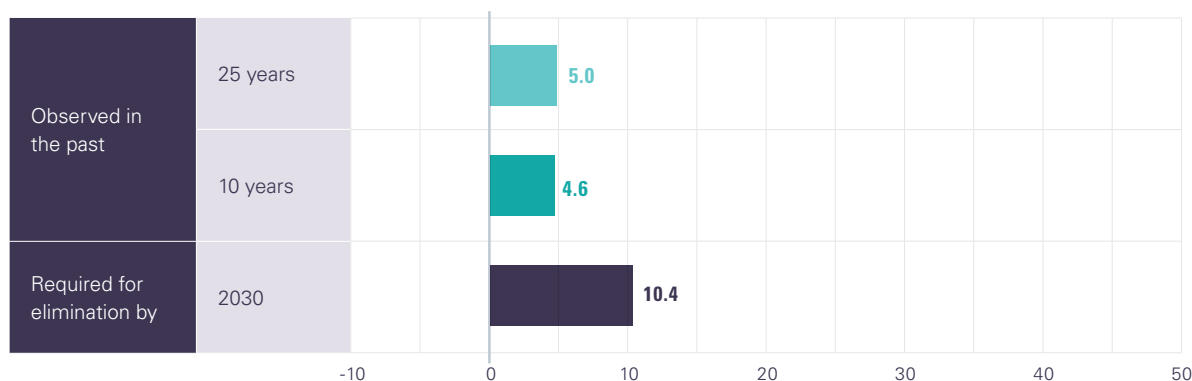
Figure 67. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 68. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as 'n/a' indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

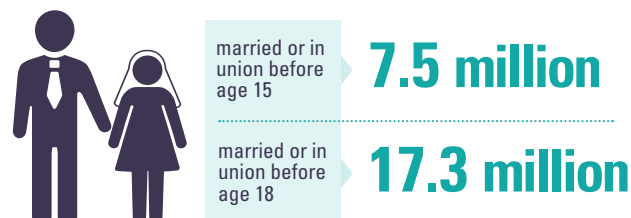
Ethiopia

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 18 | with exceptions: n/a

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

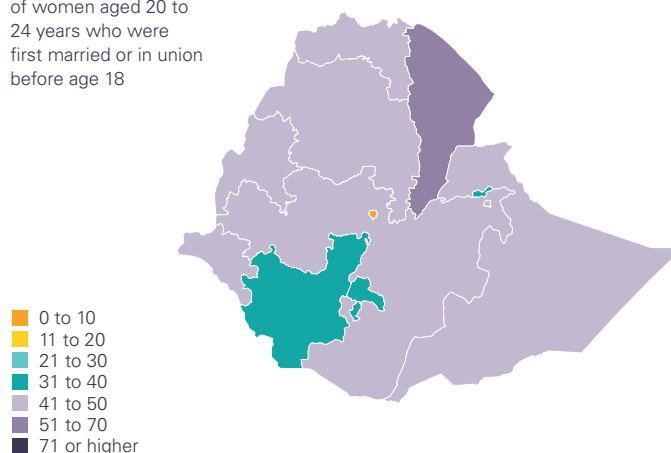
Figure 69. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Ethiopia is home to over 17 million child brides; 4 in 10 young women were married or in union in childhood

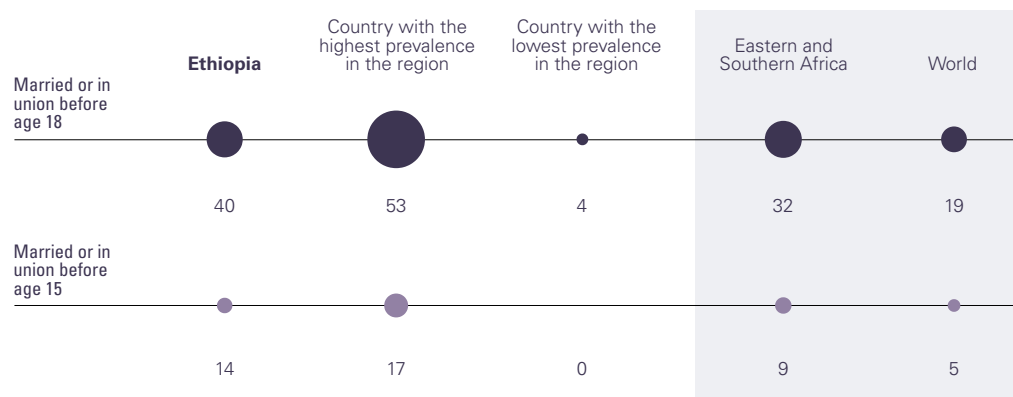
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 70. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



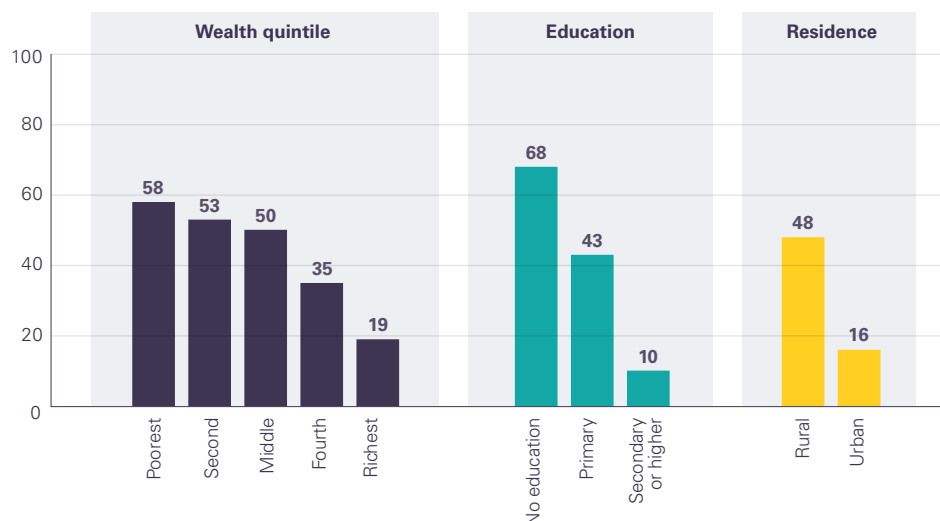
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 71. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

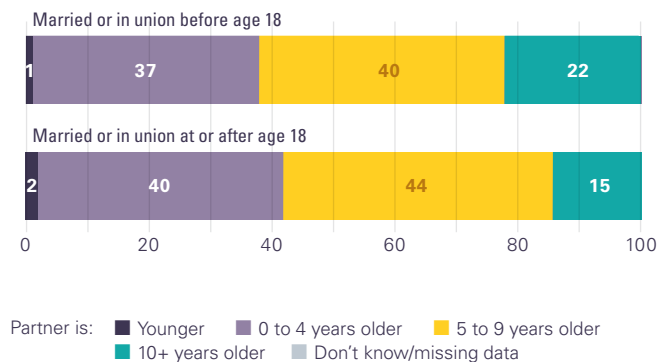
Figure 72. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

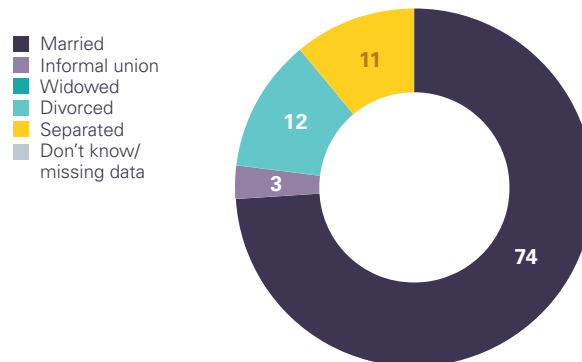
Spousal age gap

Figure 73. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Types of unions

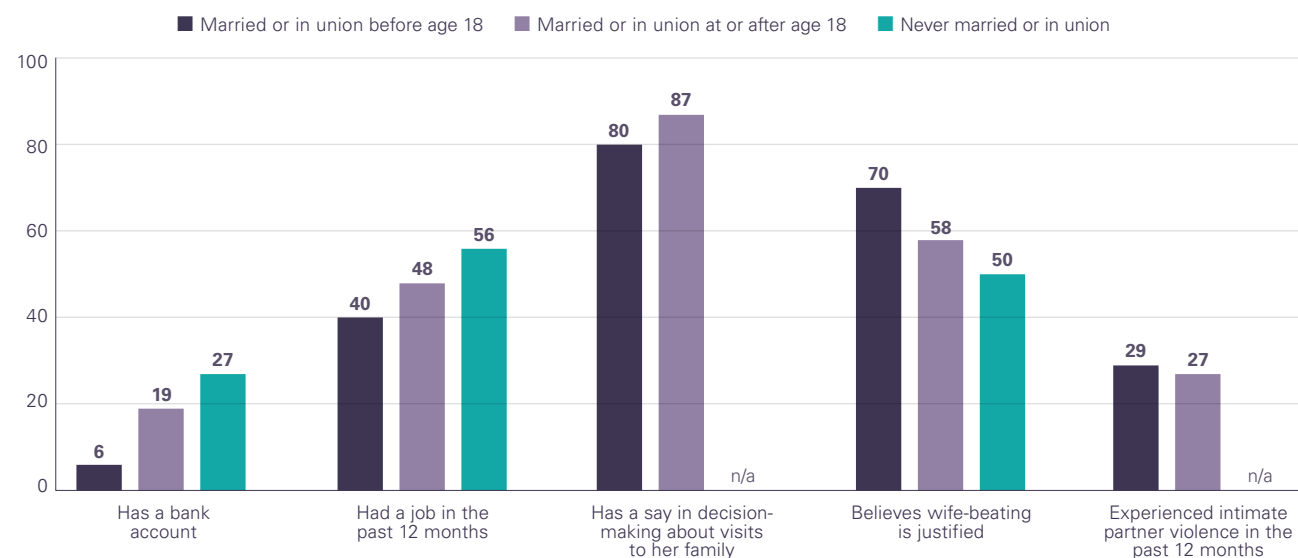
Figure 74. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

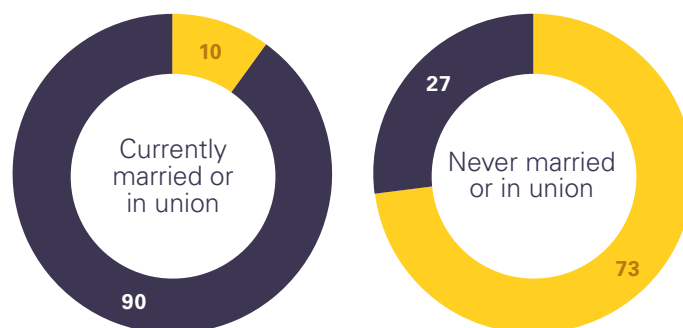
Figure 75. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Education

Figure 76. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

■ In school
■ Out of school
■ Don't know/missing data



Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 77. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

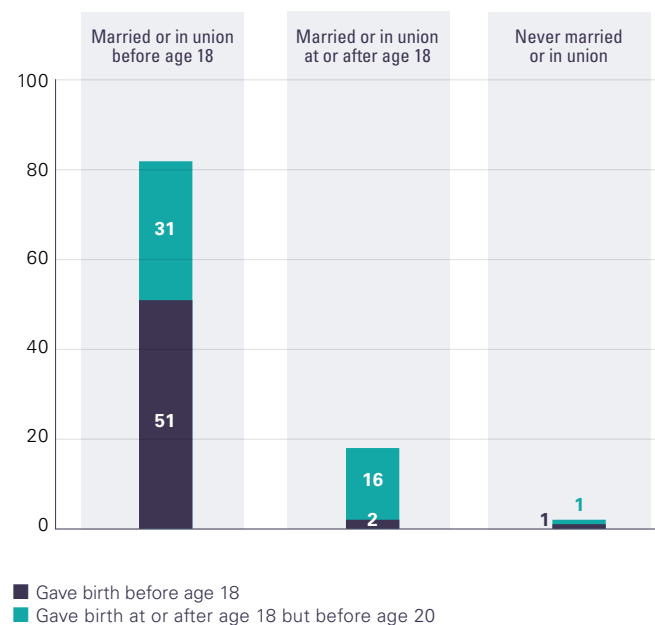
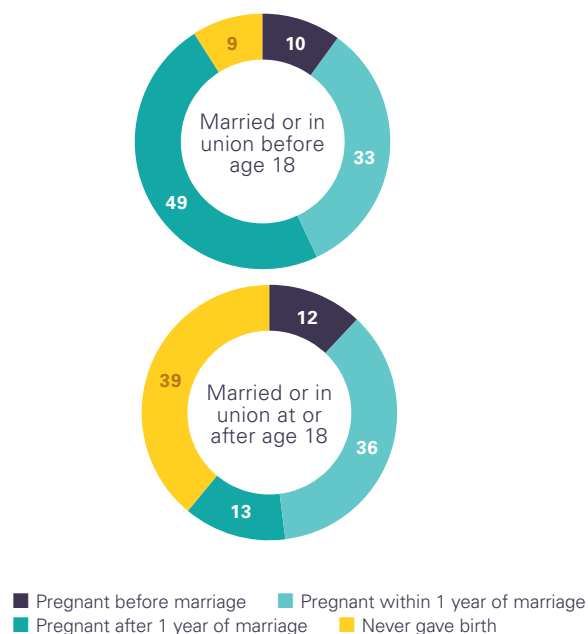
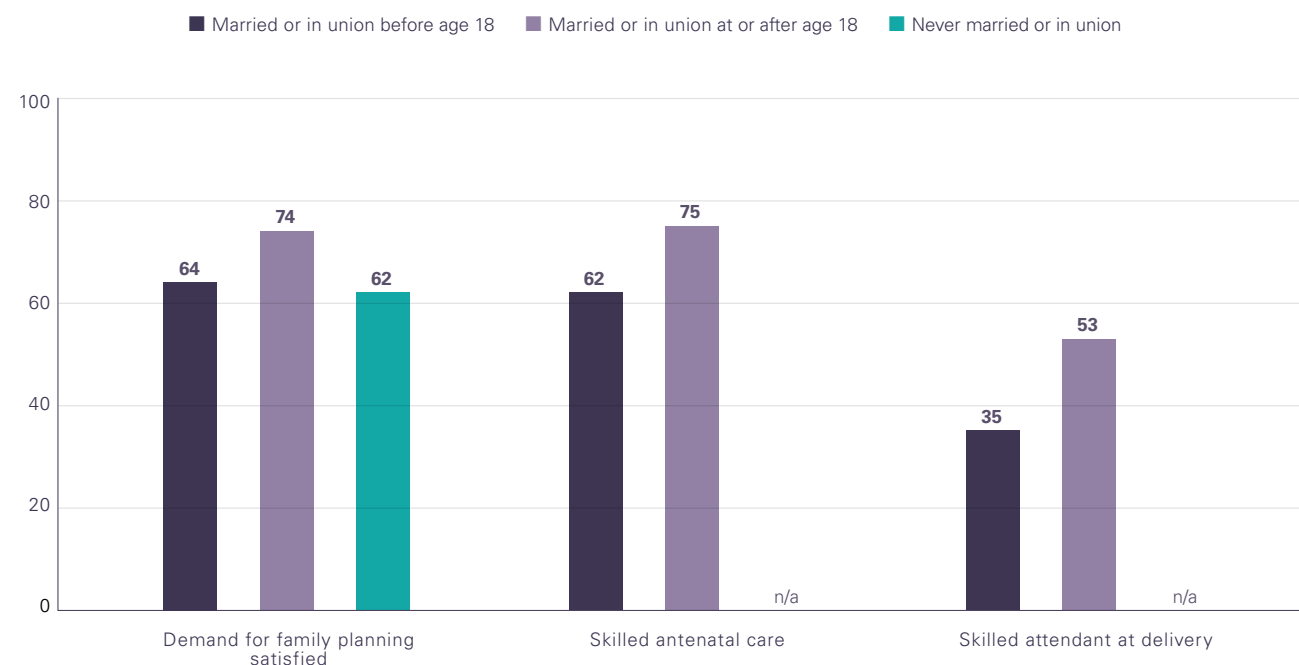


Figure 78. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



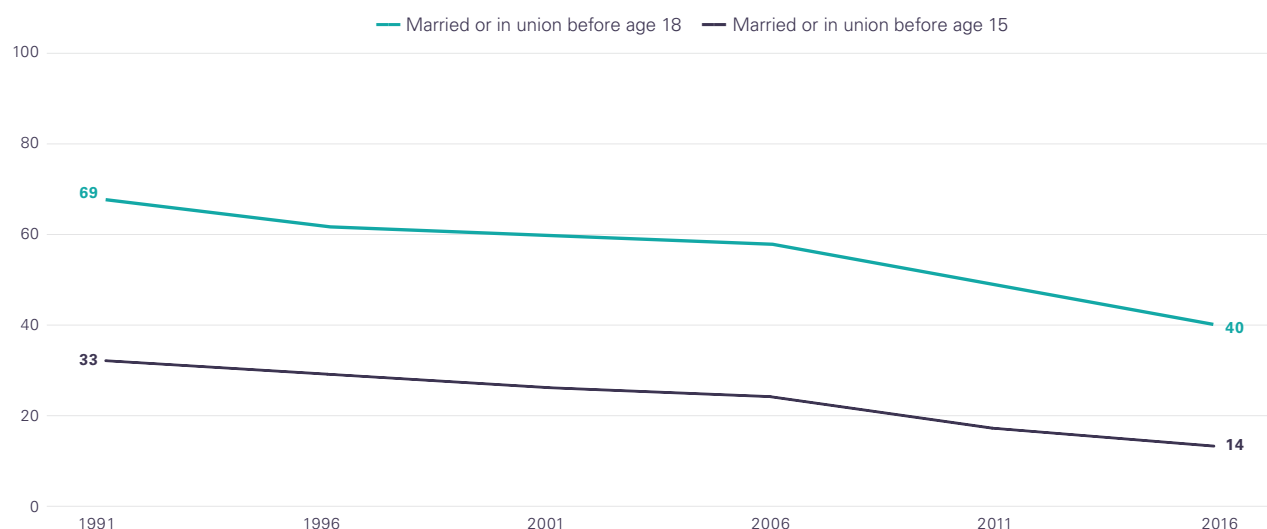
Reproductive health

Figure 79. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

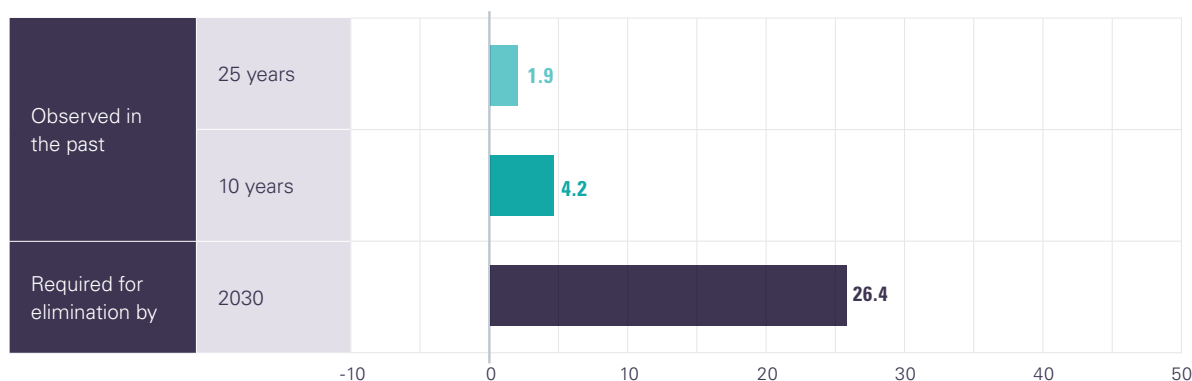
Figure 80. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 81. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Demographic and Health Survey 2016 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as 'n/a' indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

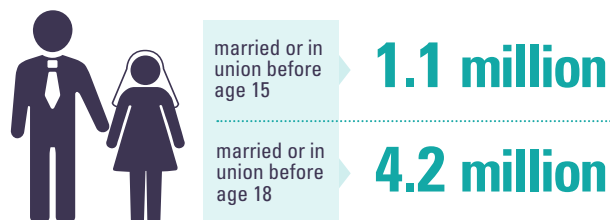
Kenya

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 18 | with exceptions: n/a

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

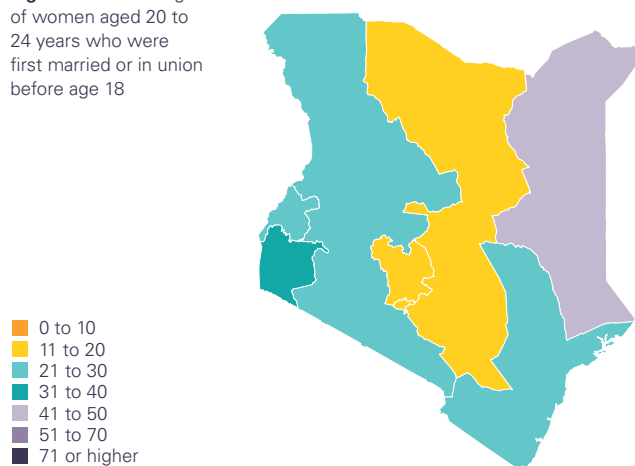
Figure 82. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Kenya is home to over 4 million child brides; 1 in 4 young women were married or in union in childhood

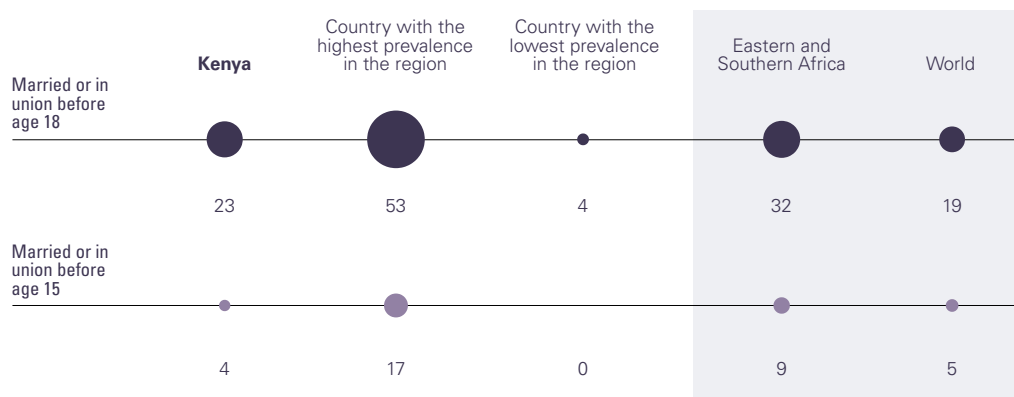
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 83. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



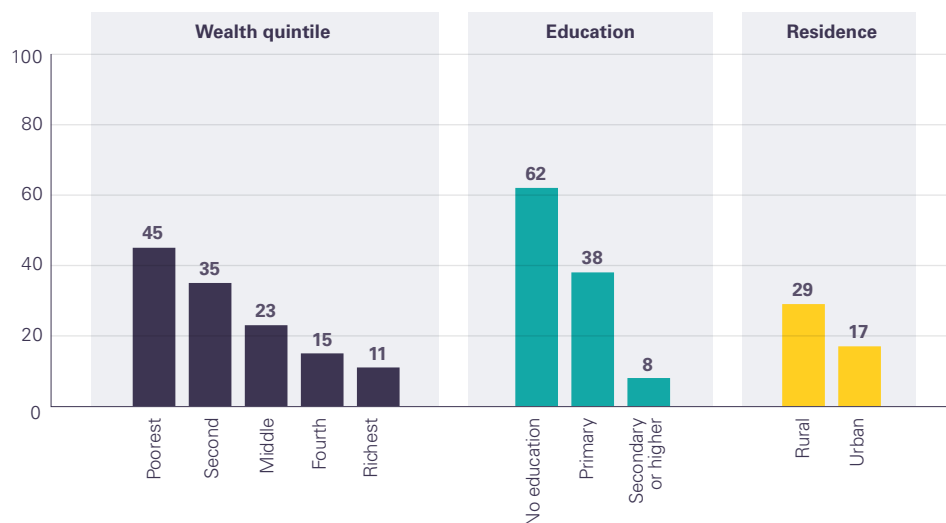
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 84. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

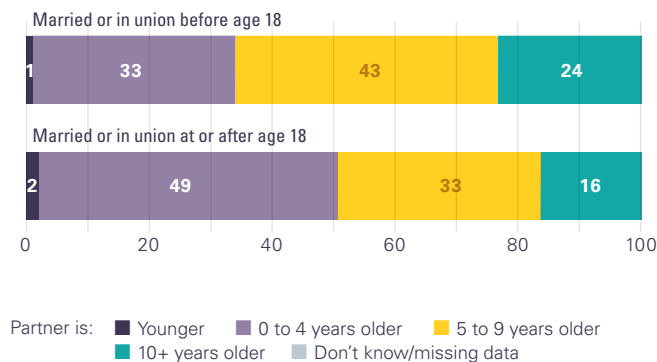
Figure 85. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

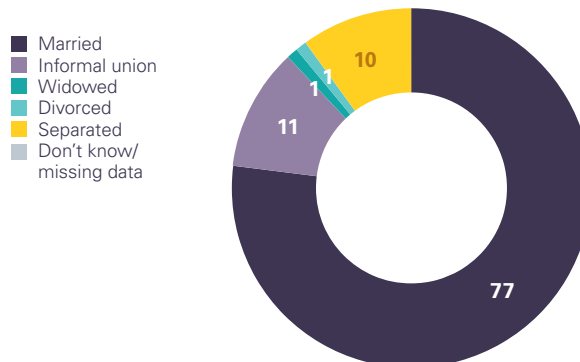
Spousal age gap

Figure 86. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Types of unions

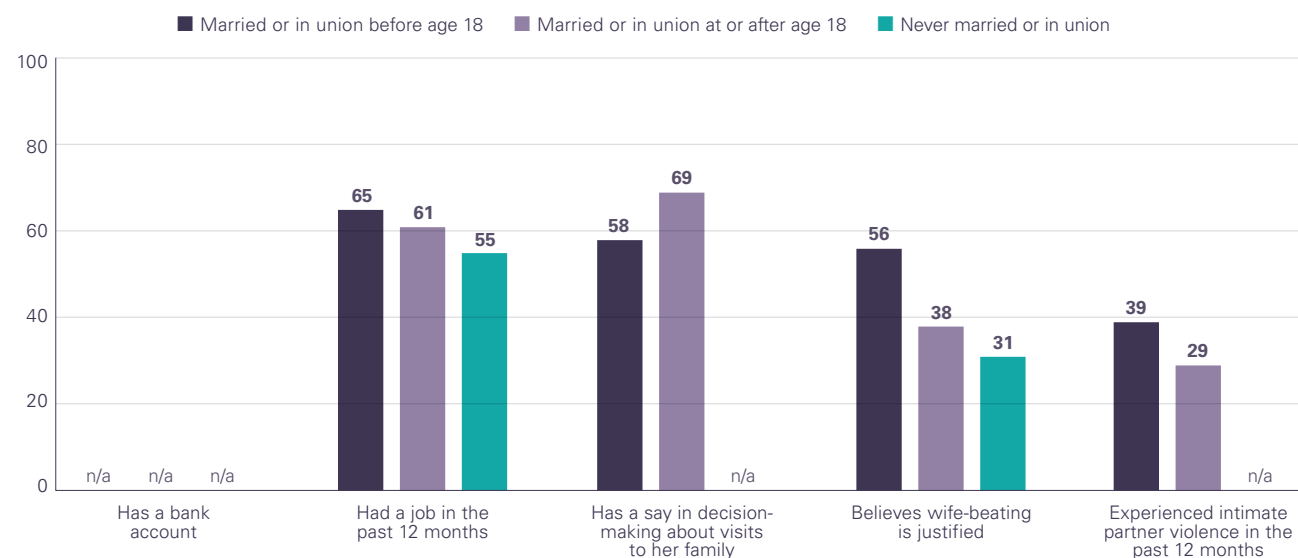
Figure 87. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

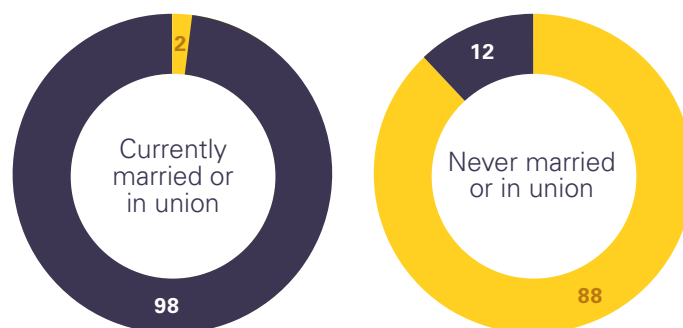
Figure 88. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Education

Figure 89. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

■ In school
■ Out of school
■ Don't know/missing data



Lives of child brides *(continued)*

Early childbearing

Figure 90. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

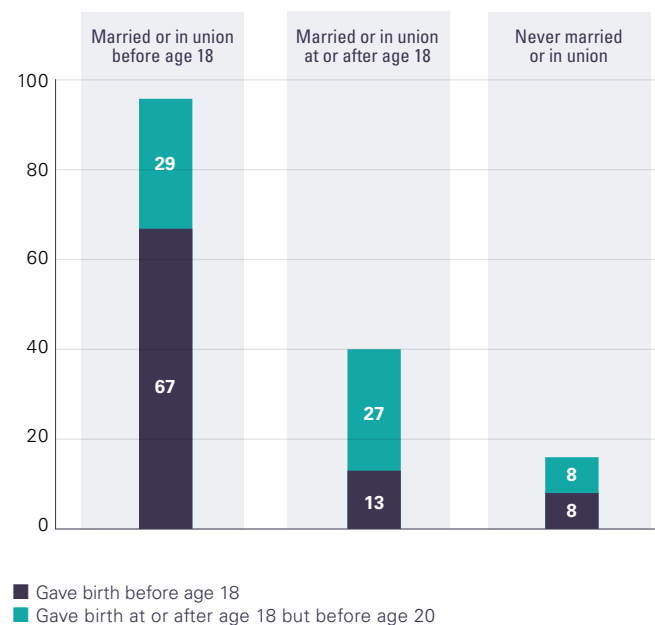
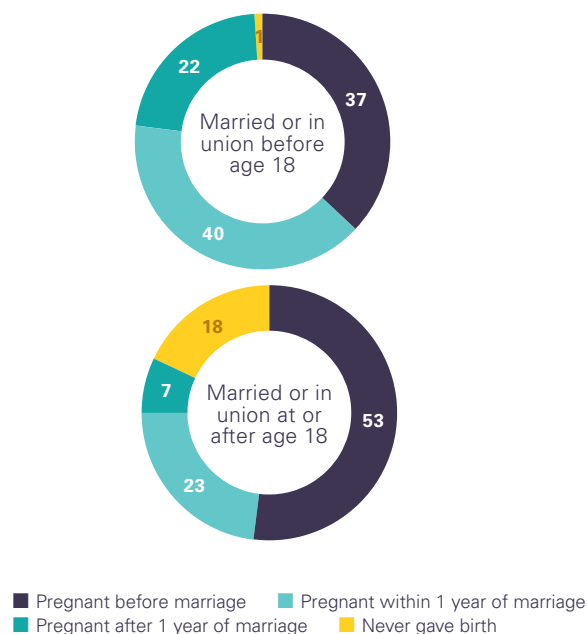
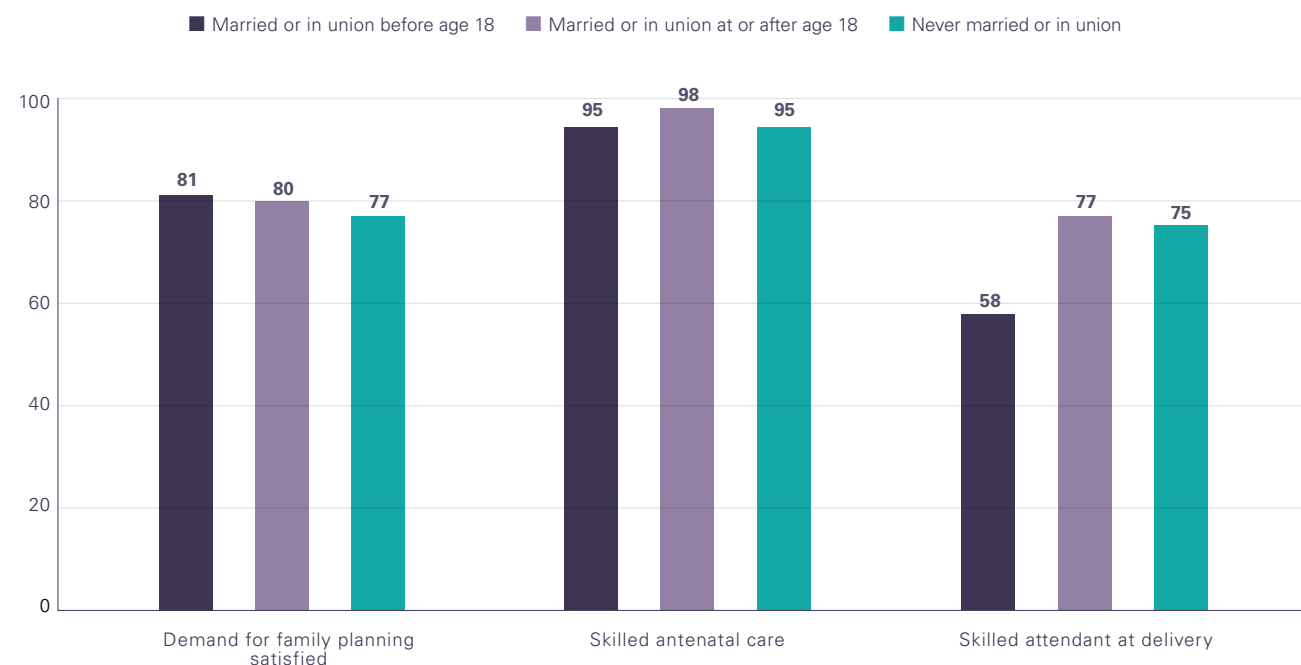


Figure 91. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



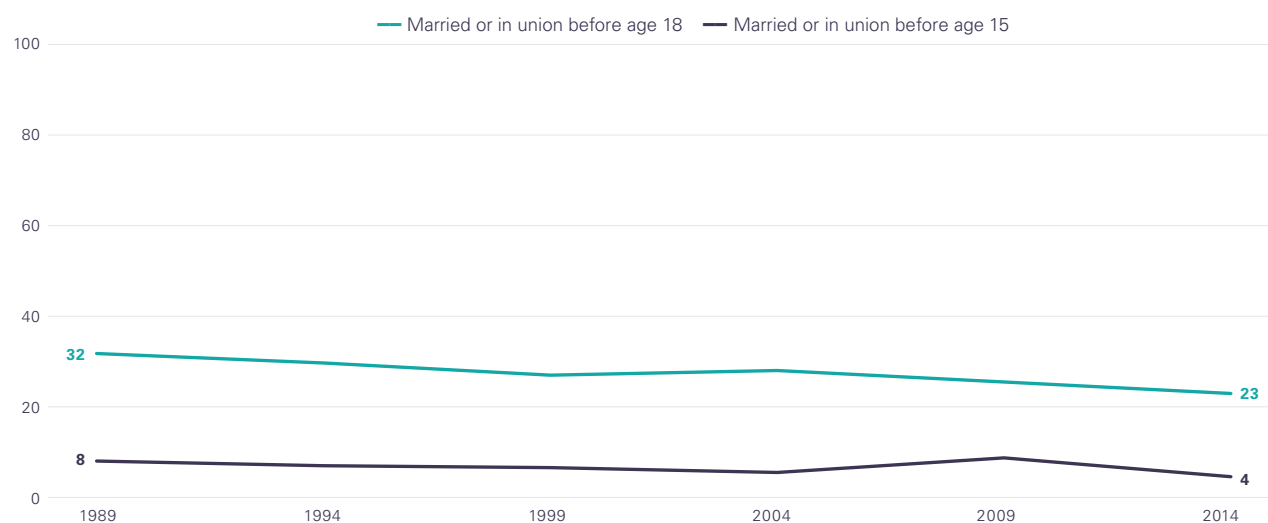
Reproductive health

Figure 92. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

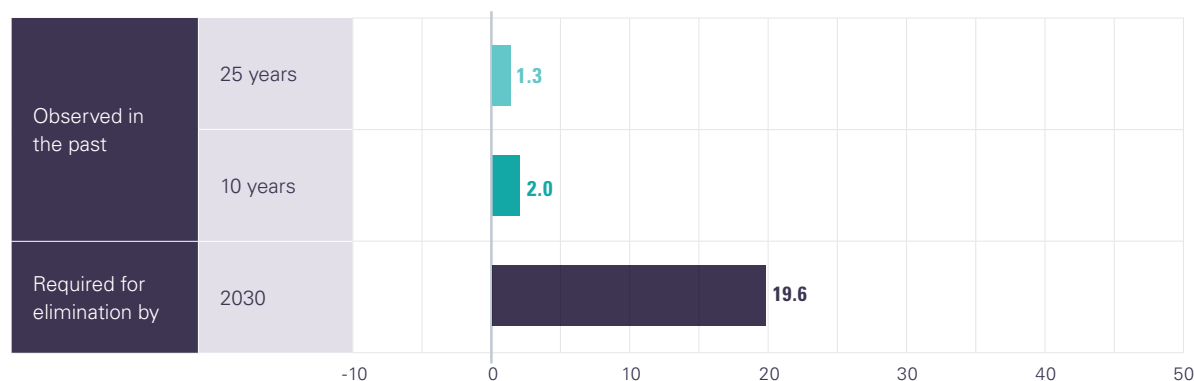
Figure 93. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 94. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Demographic and Health Survey 2014 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as 'n/a' indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

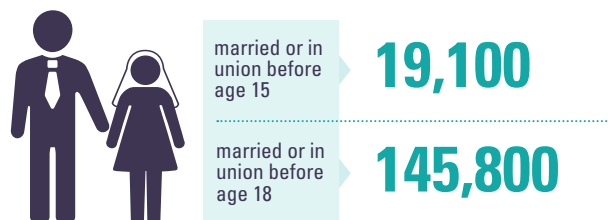
Lesotho

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 18 | with exceptions: 0

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

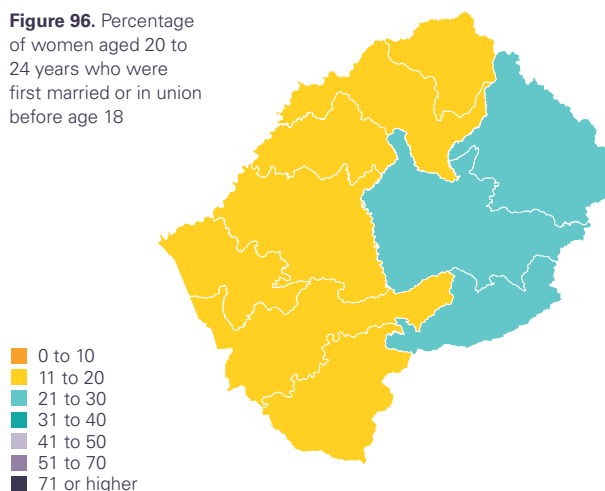
Figure 95. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Lesotho is home to nearly 146,000 child brides; 1 in 6 young women were married or in union in childhood

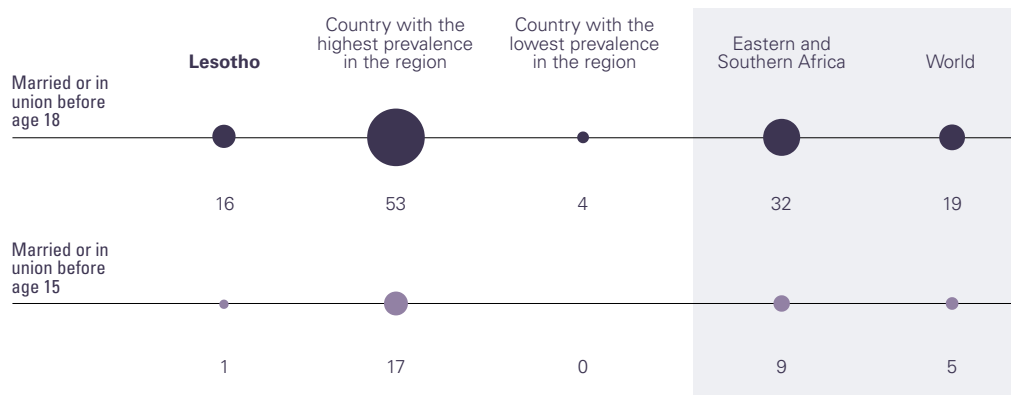
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 96. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



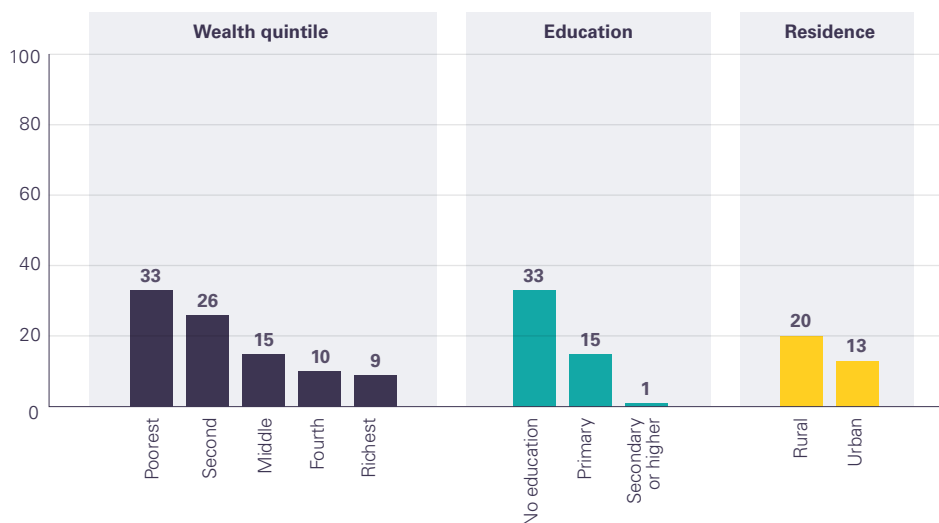
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 97. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

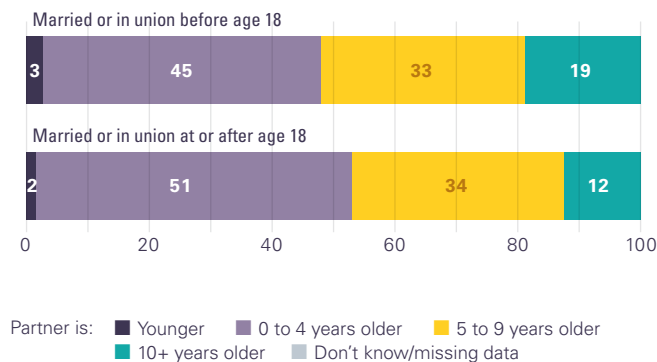
Figure 98. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

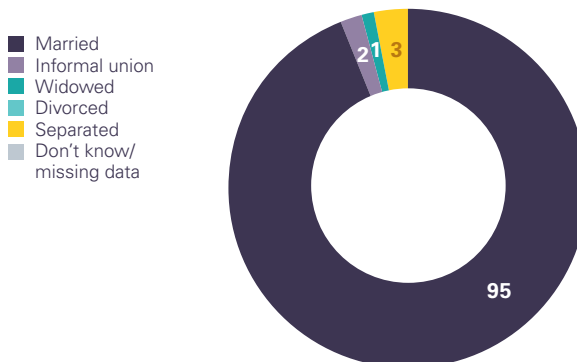
Spousal age gap

Figure 99. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Types of unions

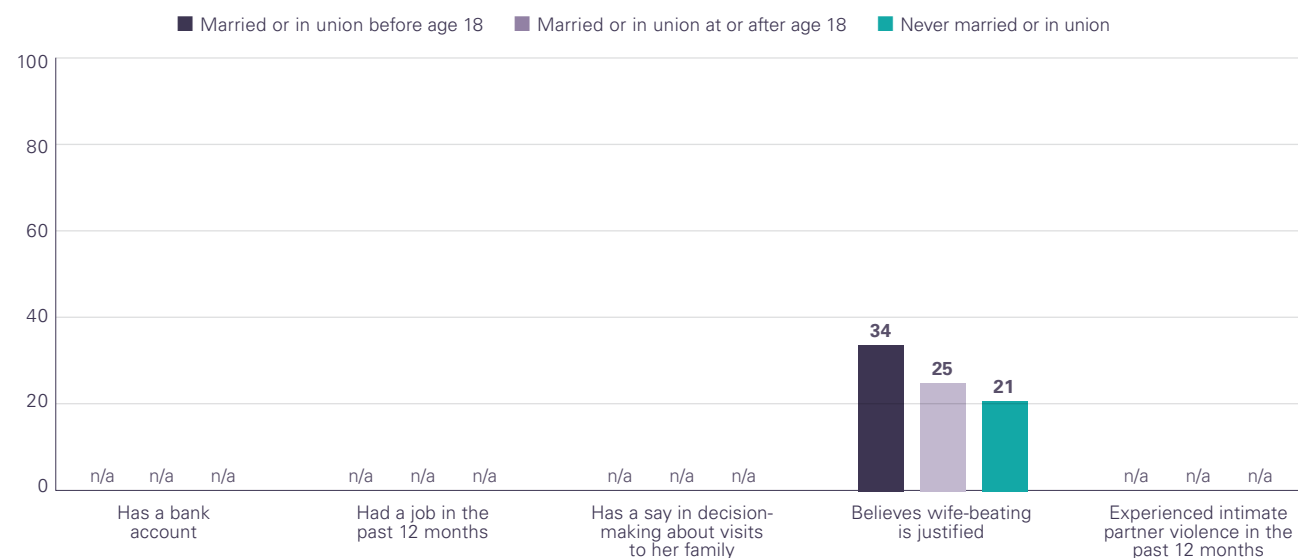
Figure 100. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

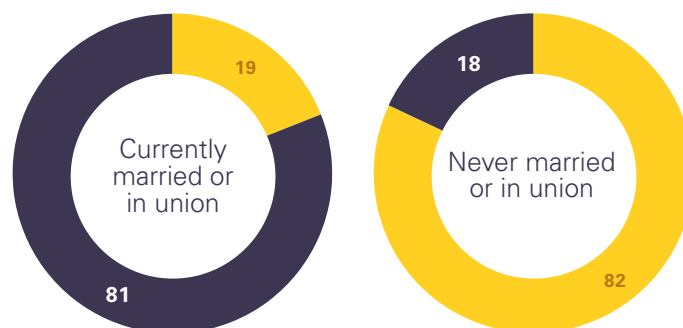
Figure 101. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Education

Figure 102. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

■ In school
■ Out of school
■ Don't know/missing data



Lives of child brides *(continued)*

Early childbearing

Figure 103. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

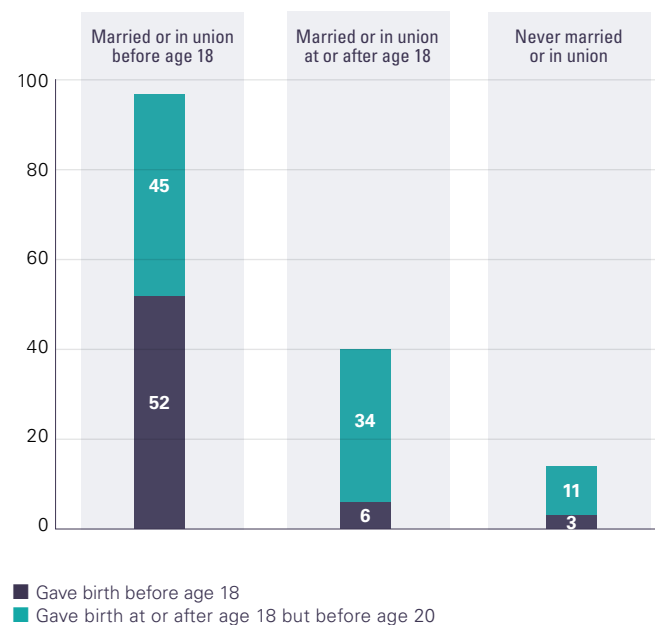
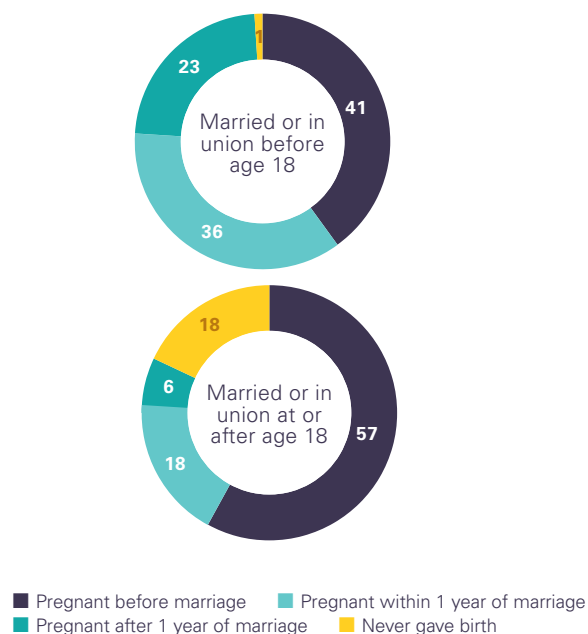
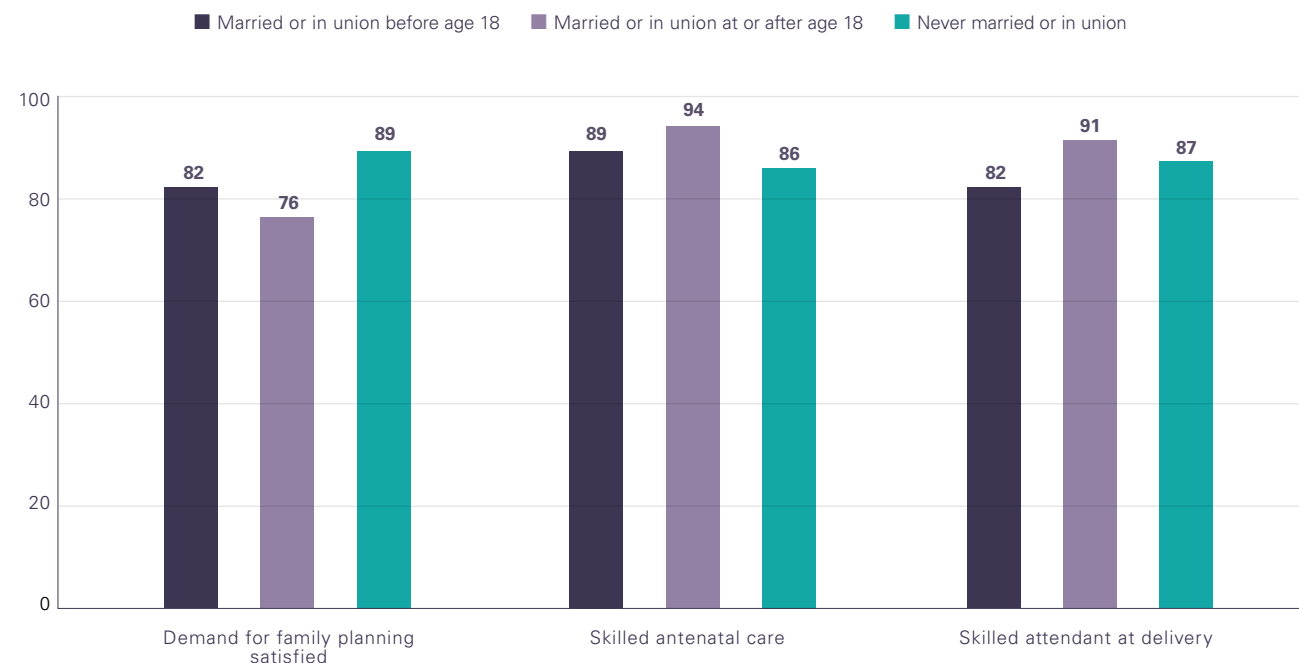


Figure 104. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



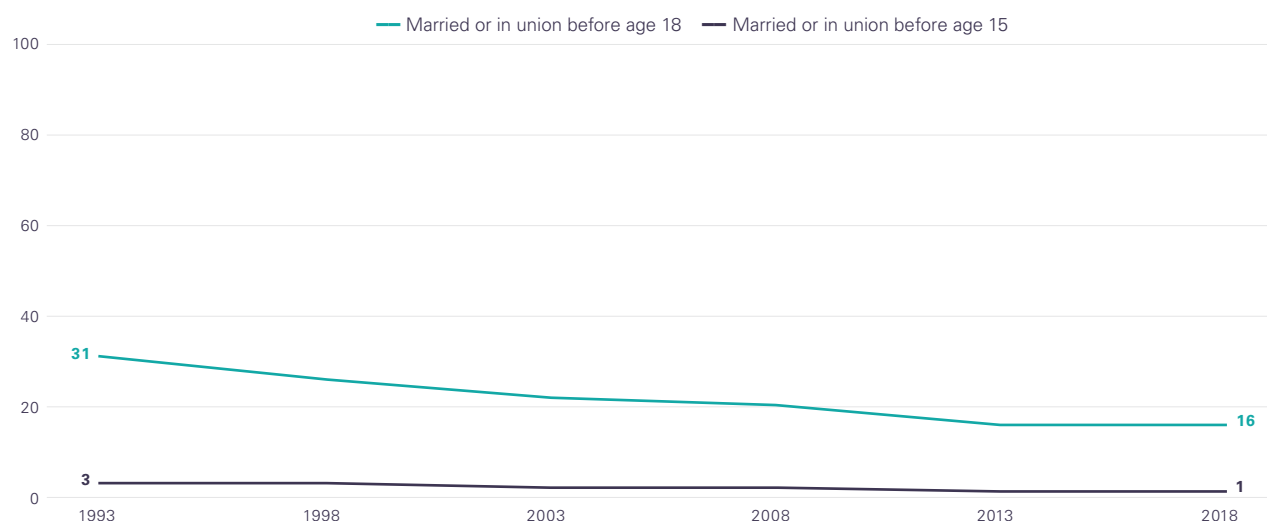
Reproductive health

Figure 105. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

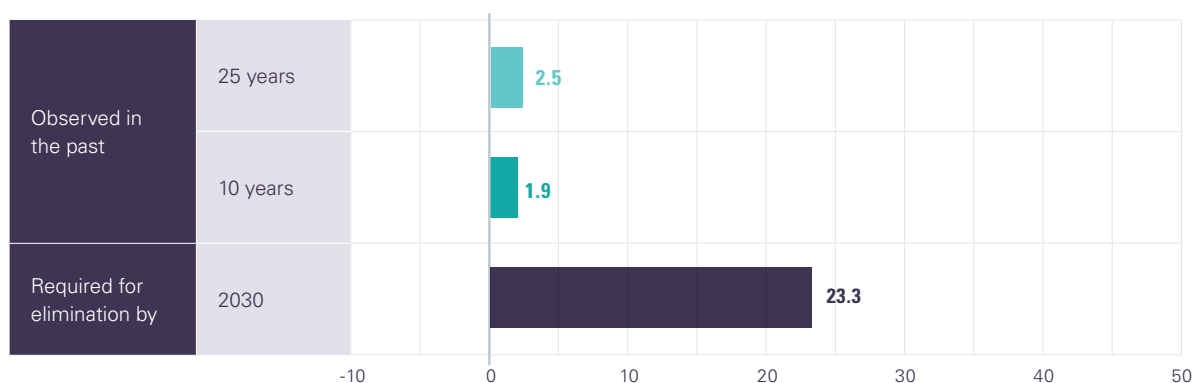
Figure 106. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 107. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as 'n/a' indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

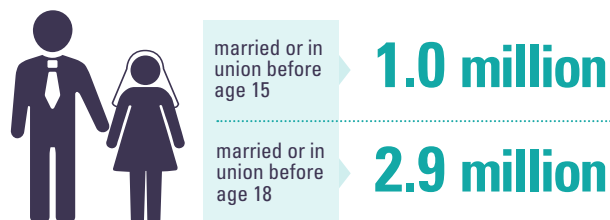
Madagascar

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 18 | with exceptions: 0

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

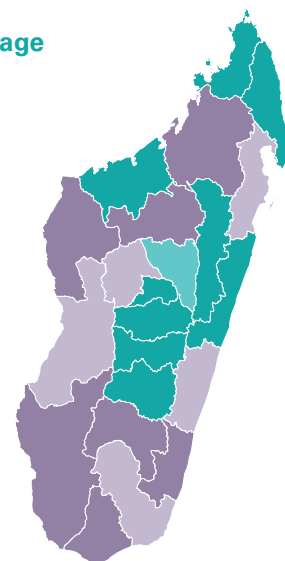
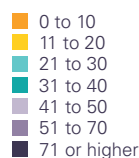
Figure 108. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Madagascar is home to nearly 3 million child brides; 4 in 10 young women were married or in union in childhood

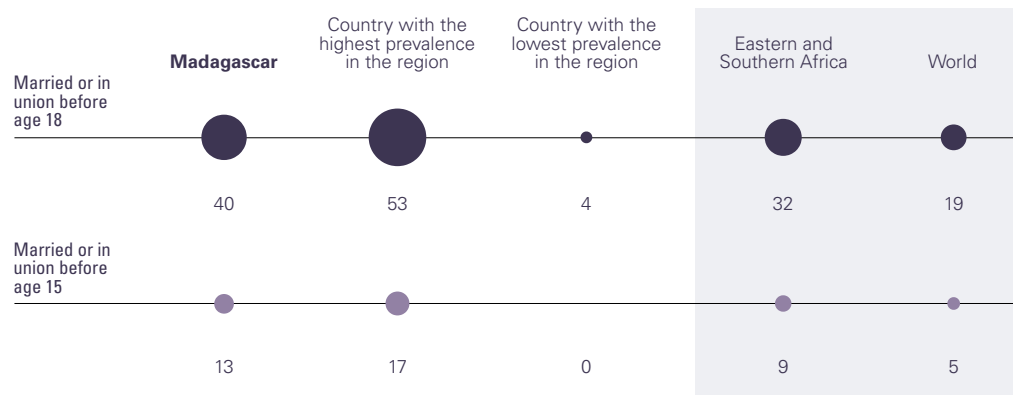
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 109. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



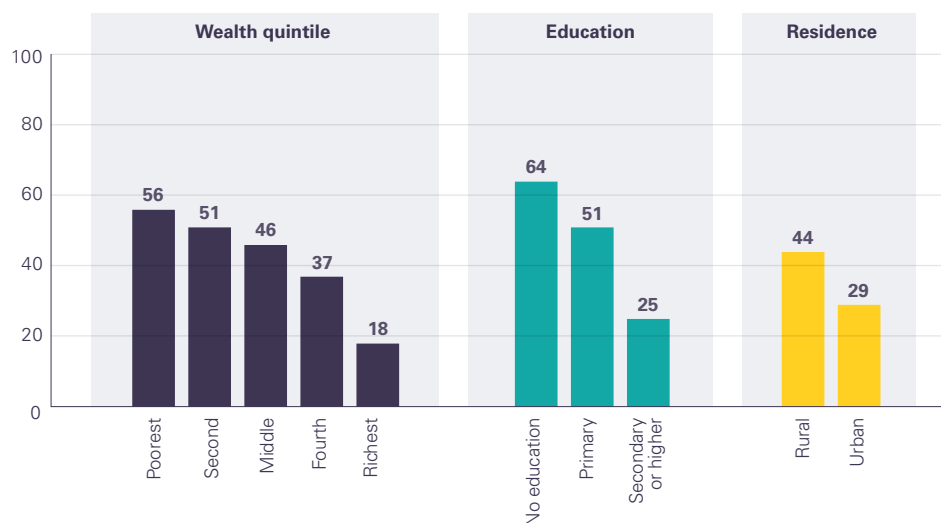
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 110. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

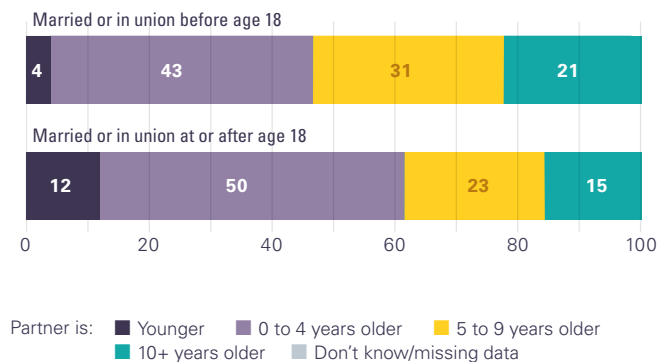
Figure 111. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

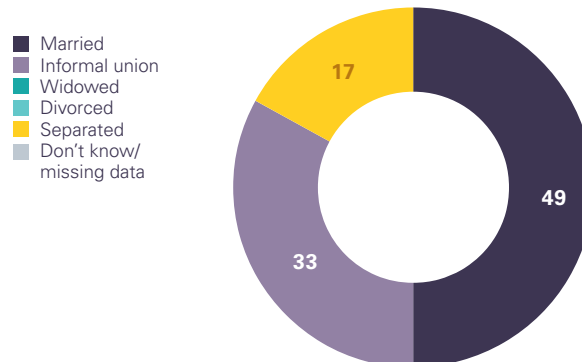
Spousal age gap

Figure 112. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Types of unions

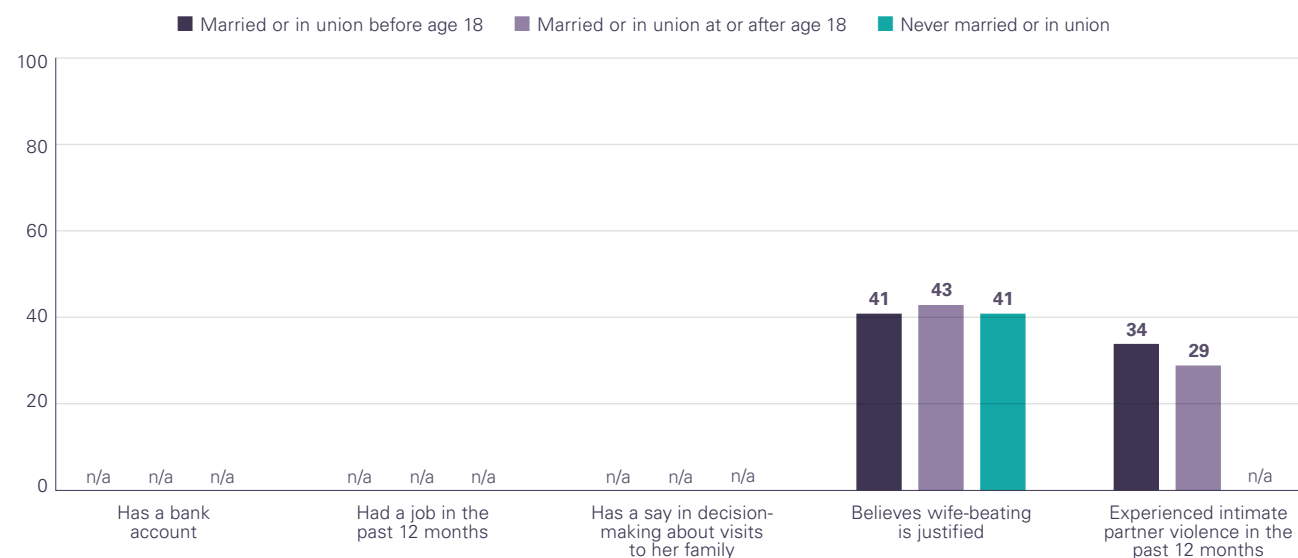
Figure 113. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

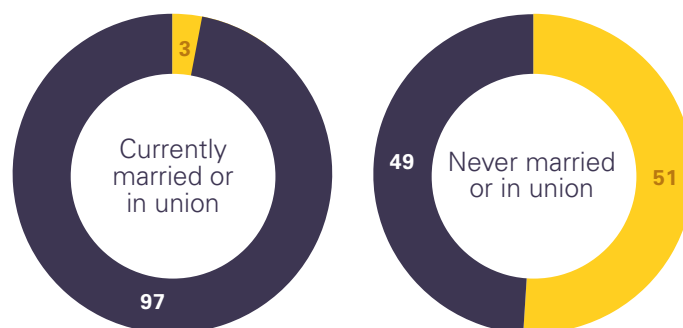
Figure 114. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Education

Figure 115. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

■ In school
■ Out of school
■ Don't know/missing data



Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 116. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

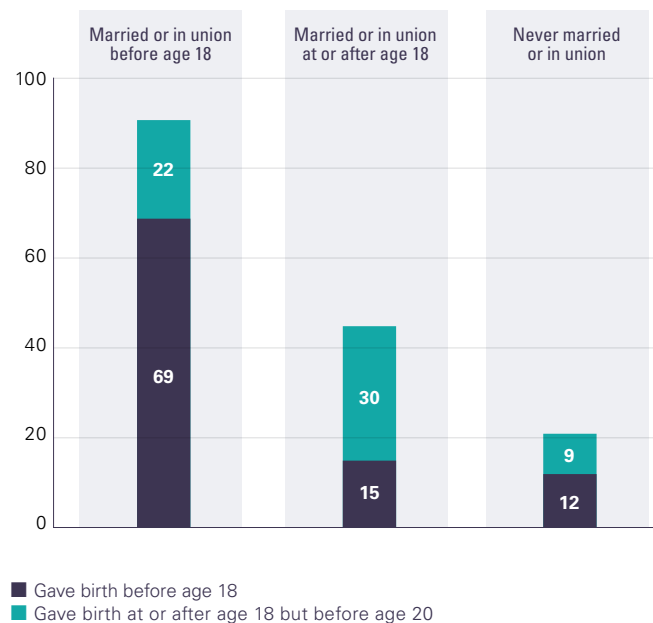
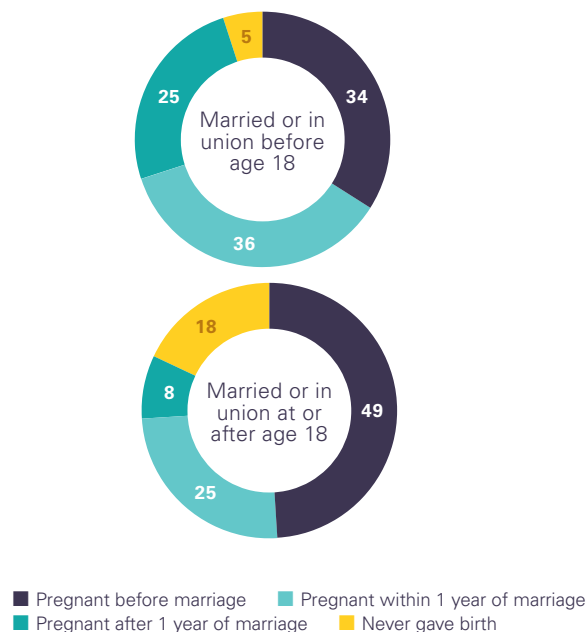
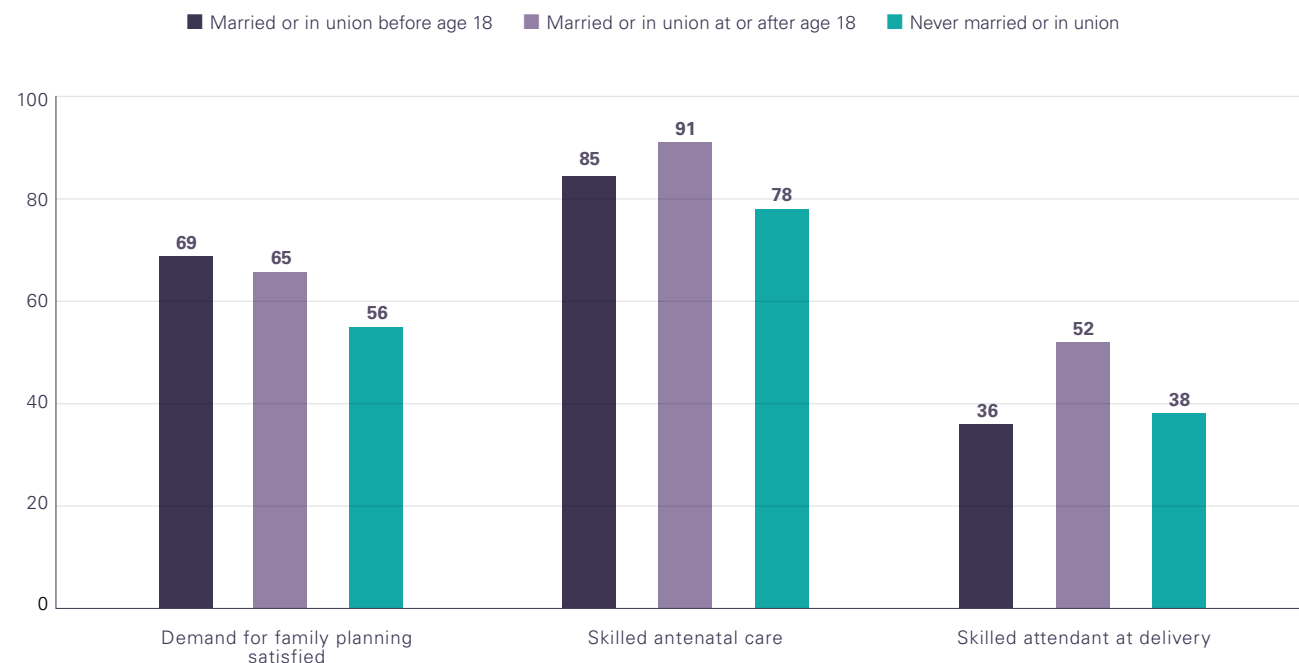


Figure 117. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



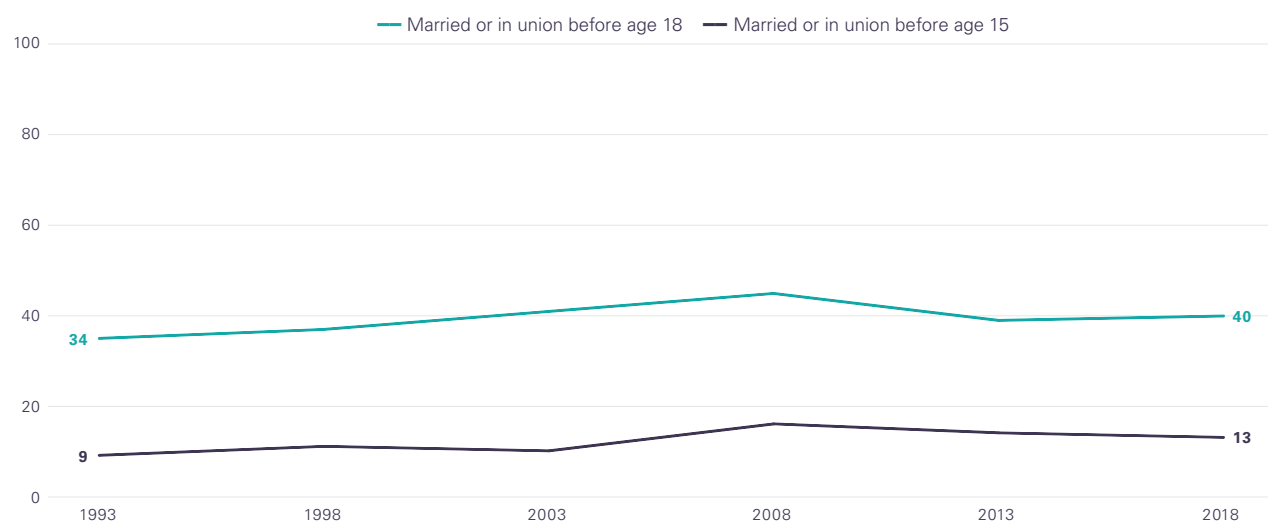
Reproductive health

Figure 118. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

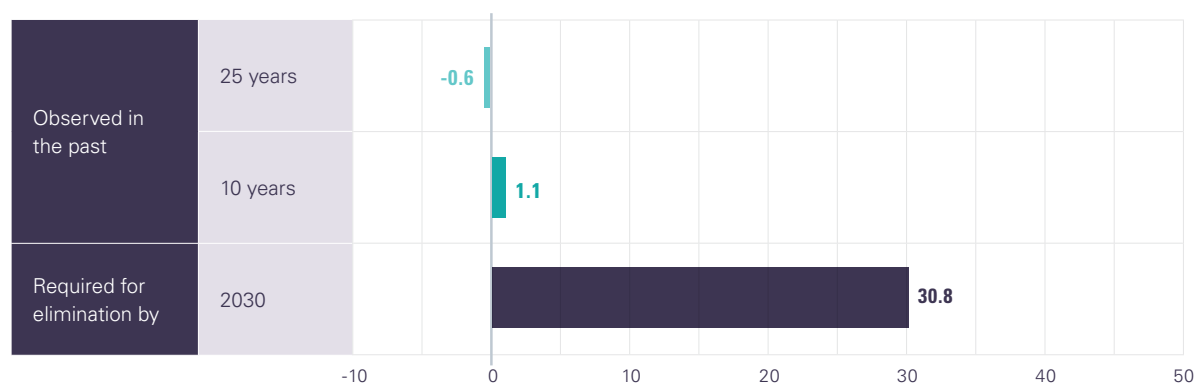
Figure 119. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 120. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as 'n/a' indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

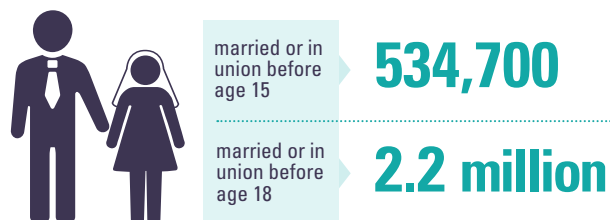
Malawi

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 18 | with exceptions: n/a

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

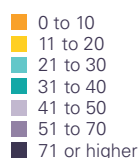
Figure 121. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Malawi is home to over 2 million child brides; 4 in 10 young women were married or in union in childhood

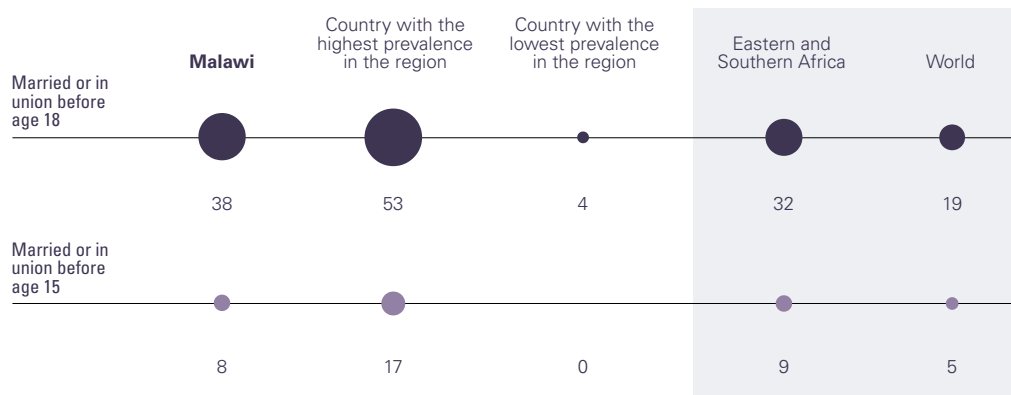
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 122. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



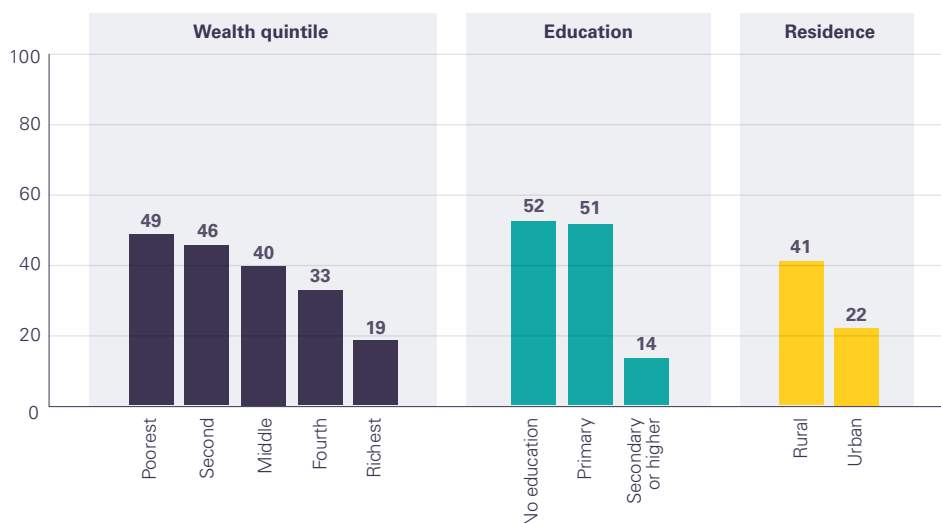
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 123. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

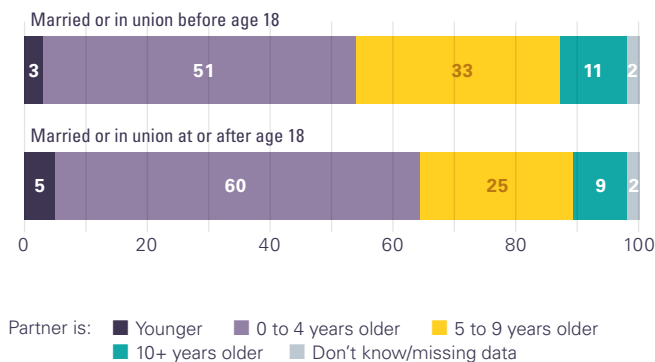
Figure 124. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

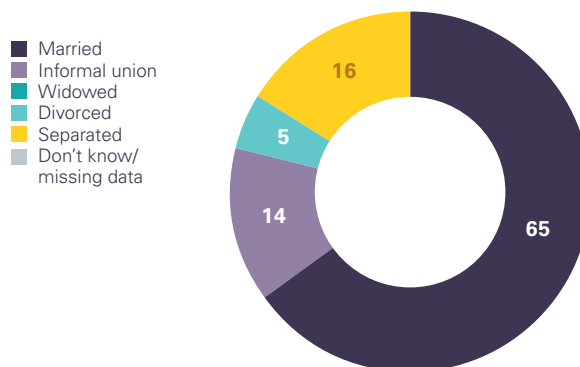
Spousal age gap

Figure 125. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Types of unions

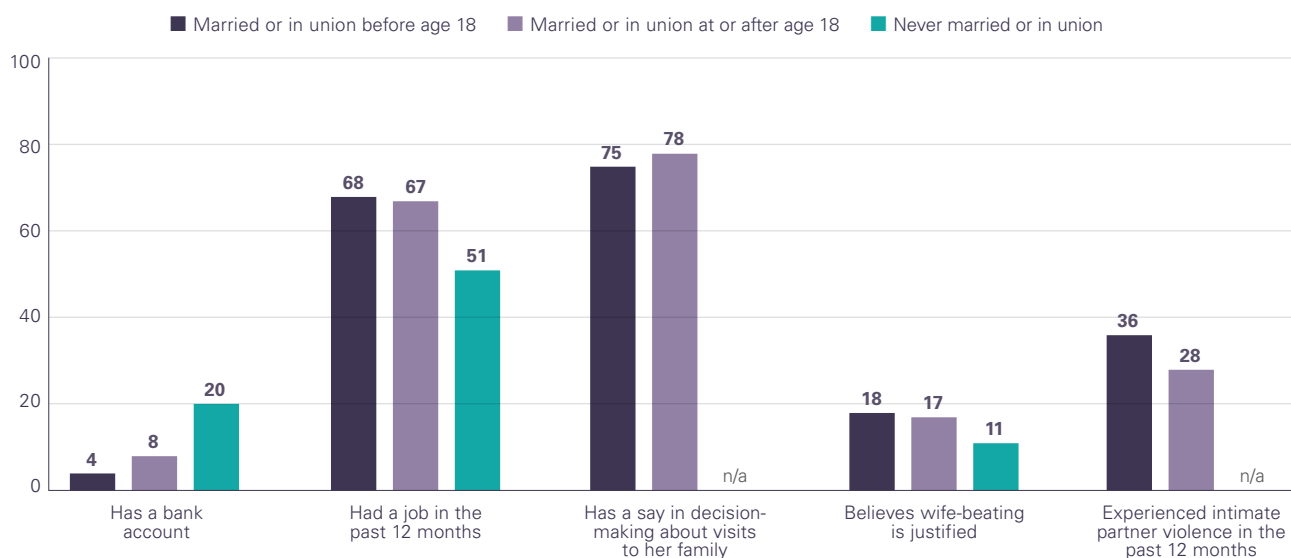
Figure 126. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 127. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Education

Figure 128. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

■ In school
■ Out of school
■ Don't know/missing data



Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 129. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

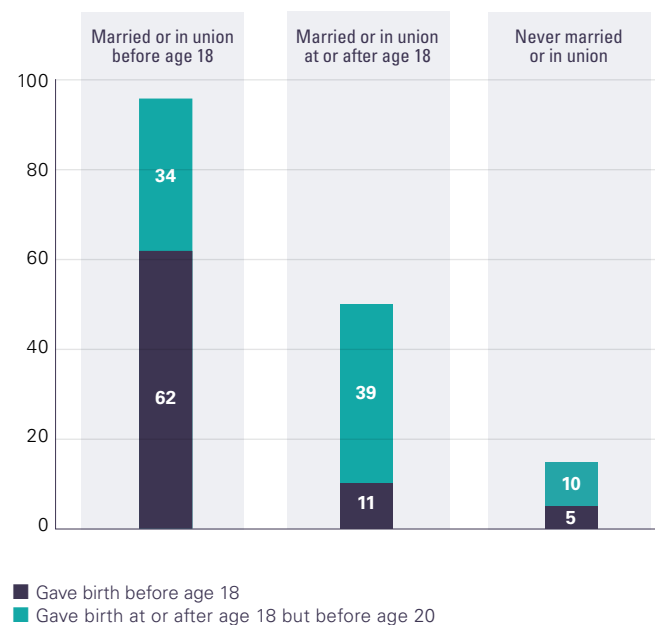
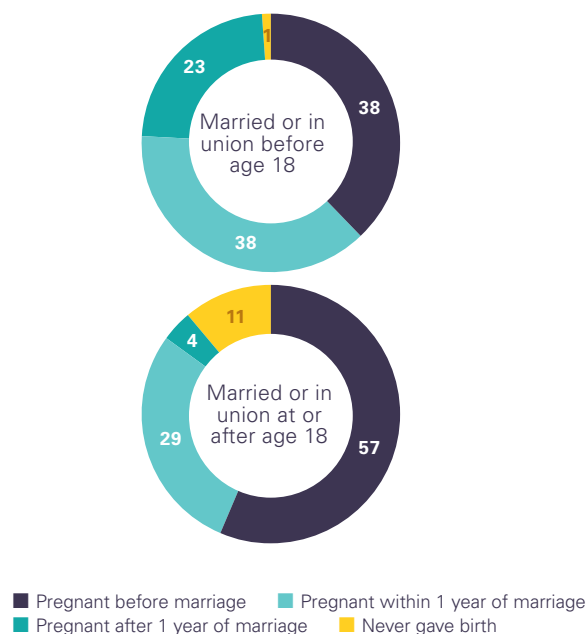
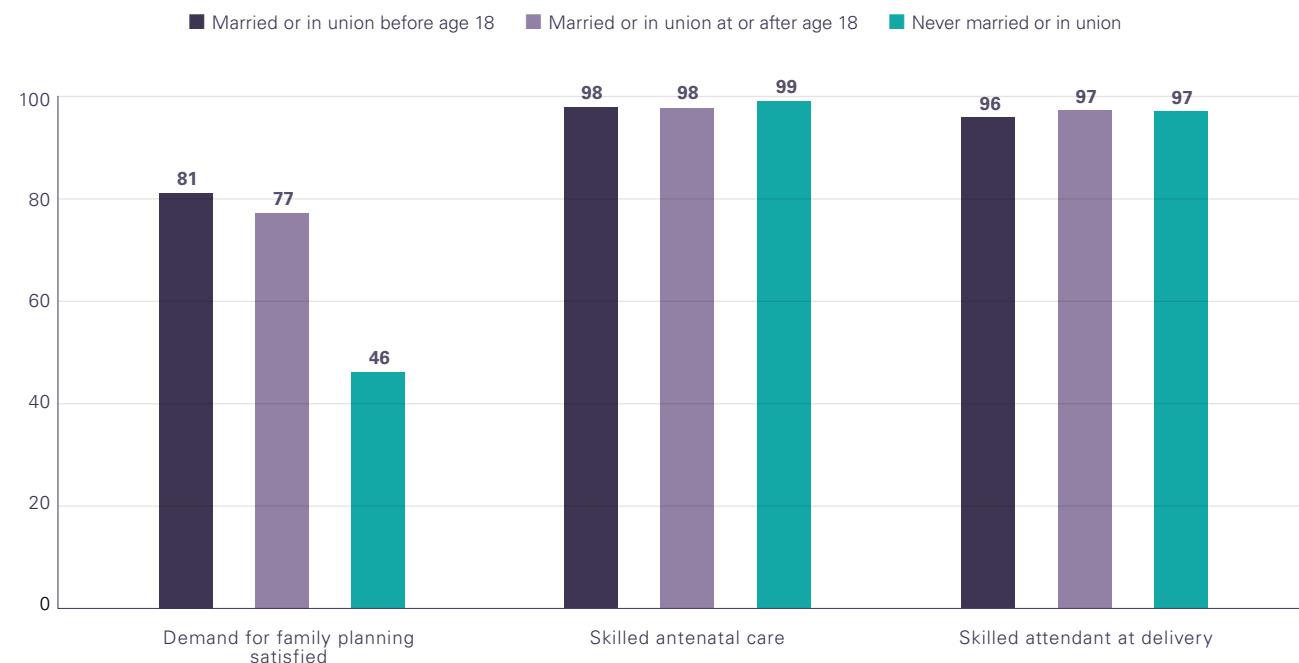


Figure 130. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



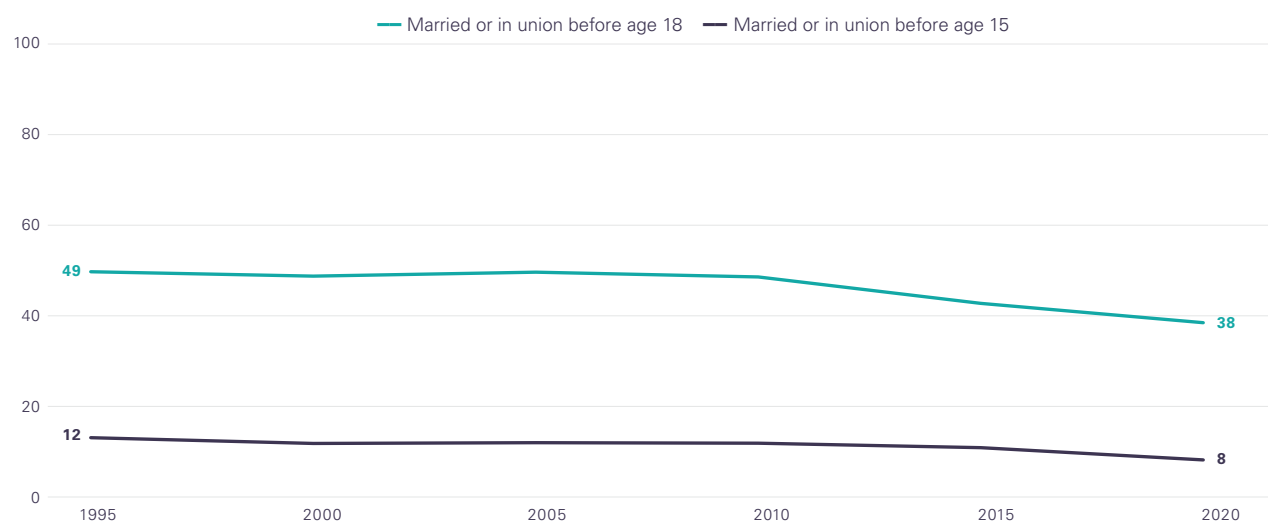
Reproductive health

Figure 131. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

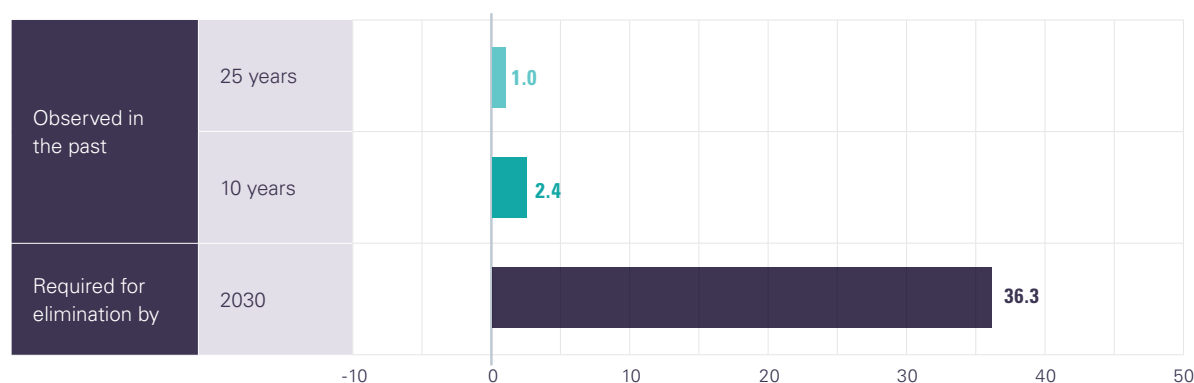
Figure 132. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 133. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019–2020 unless otherwise noted. Data in the Autonomy, Empowerment and Violence graph are sourced from the Demographic and Health Survey 2015–2016. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to ‘marriage’ or ‘child brides’ include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, ‘elimination’ is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as ‘n/a’ indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

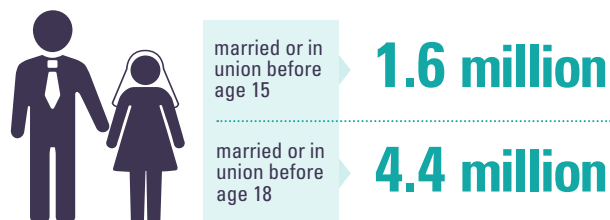
Mozambique

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 18 | with exceptions: 16

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

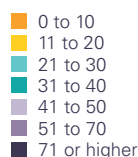
Figure 134. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Mozambique is home to over 4 million child brides; 1 in 2 young women were married or in union in childhood

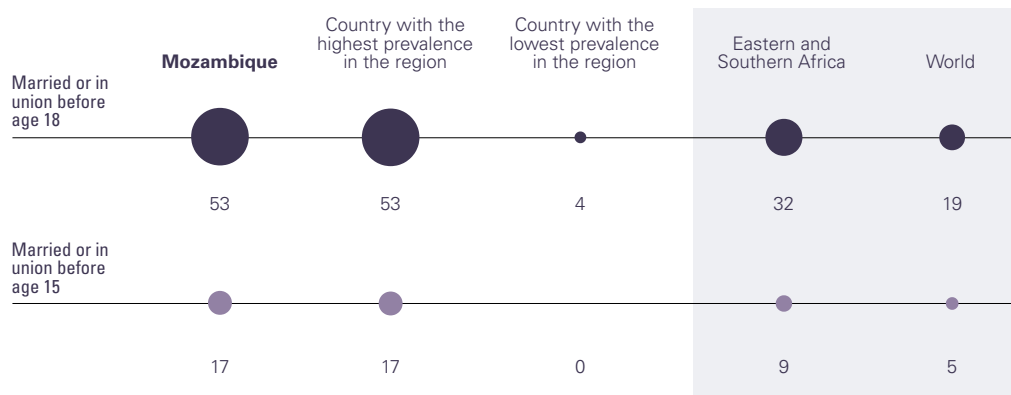
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 135. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



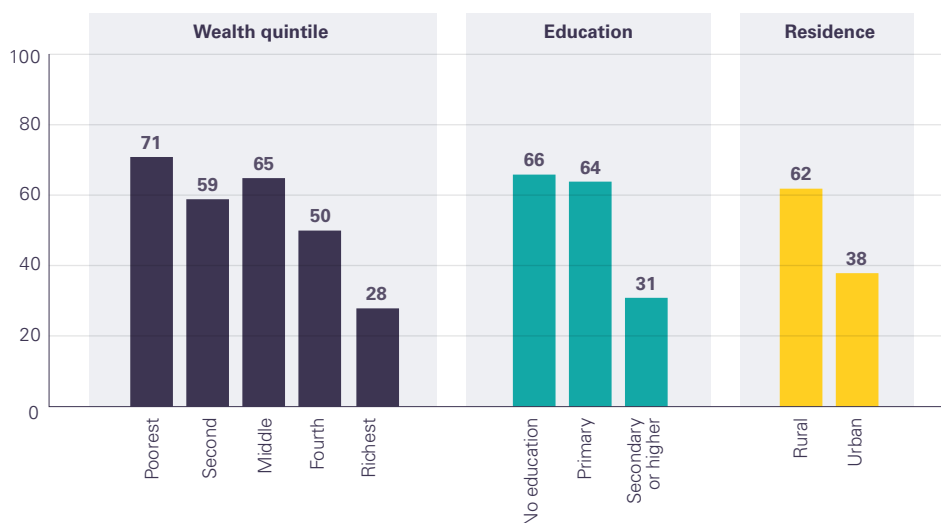
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 136. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

Figure 137. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence

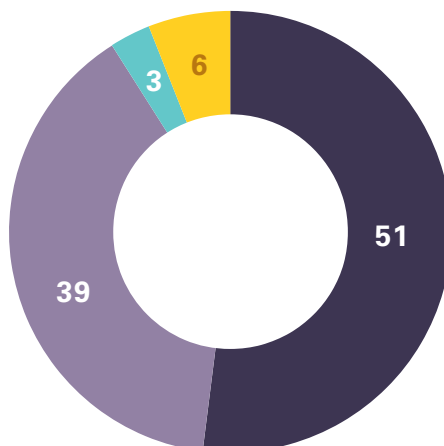


Characteristics of unions

Types of unions

Figure 138. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status

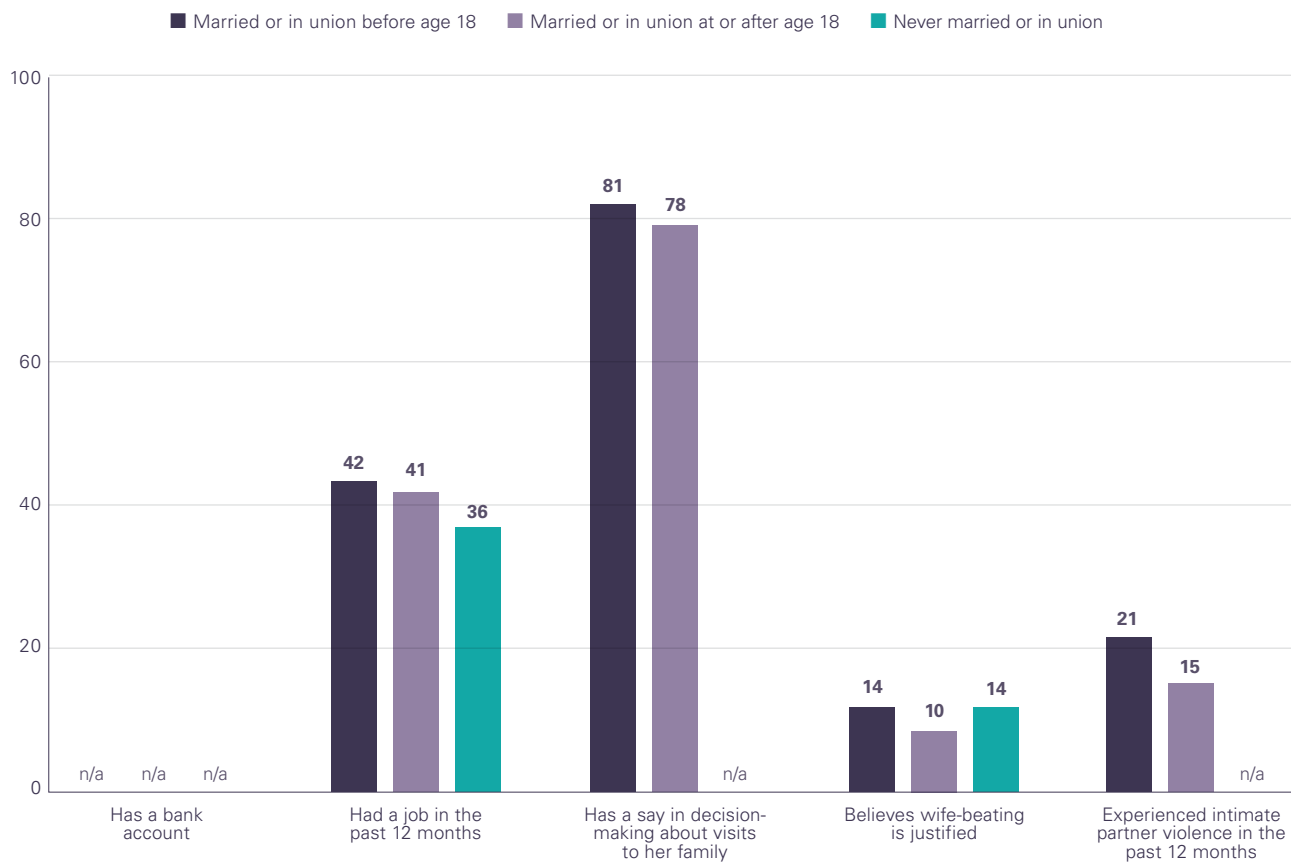
- Married
- Informal union
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- Don't know/missing data



Lives of child brides

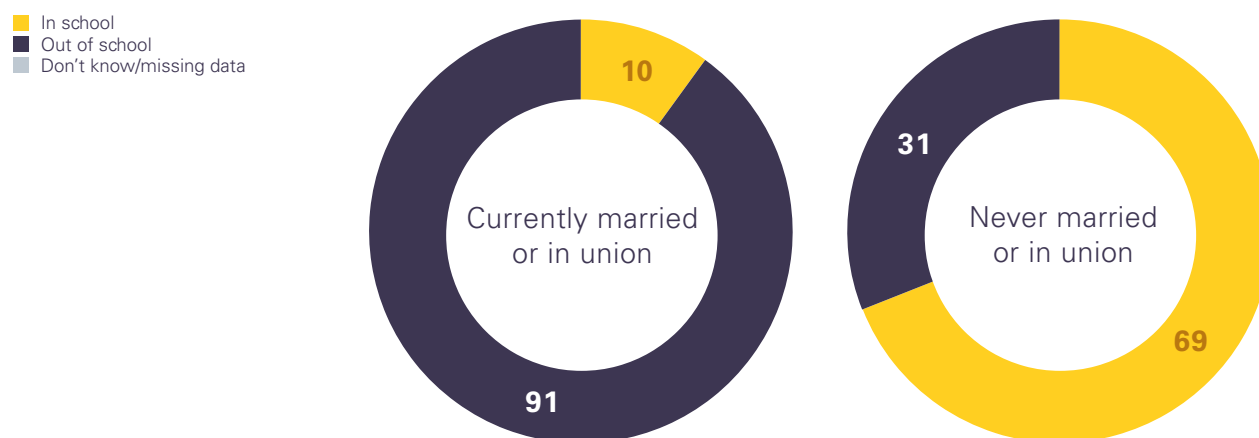
Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 139. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



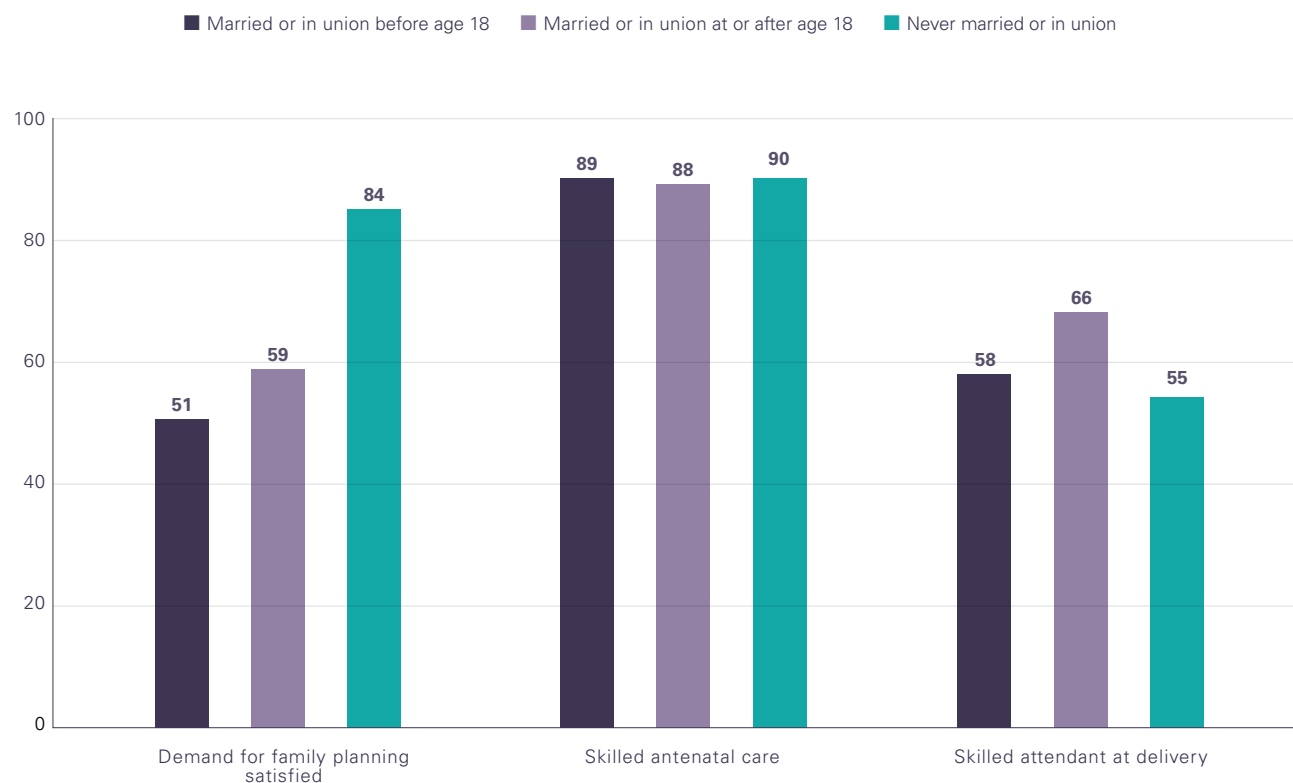
Education

Figure 140. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status



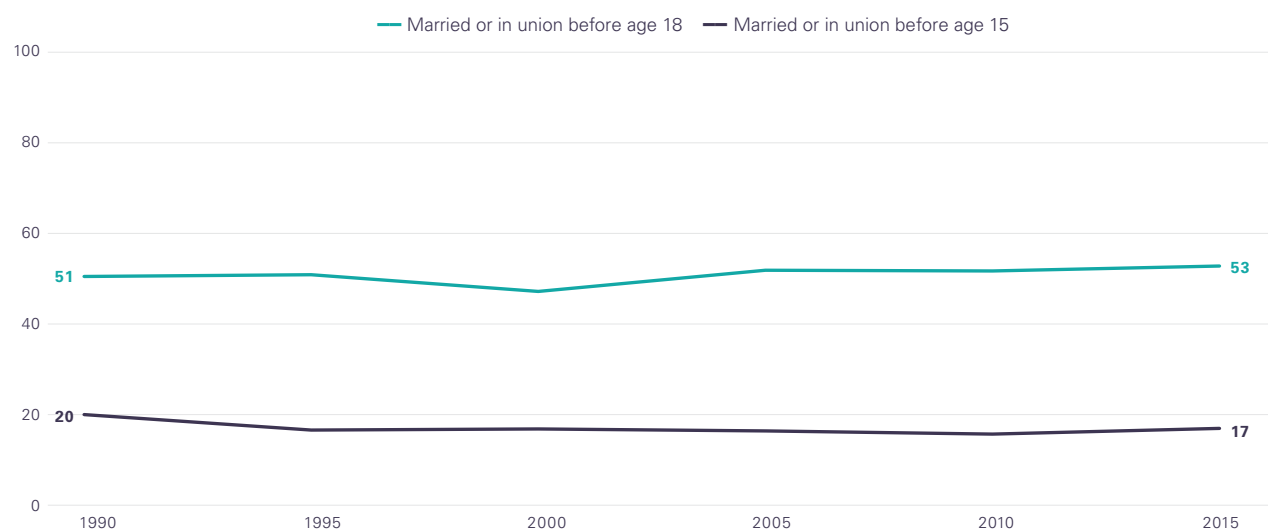
Reproductive health

Figure 141. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

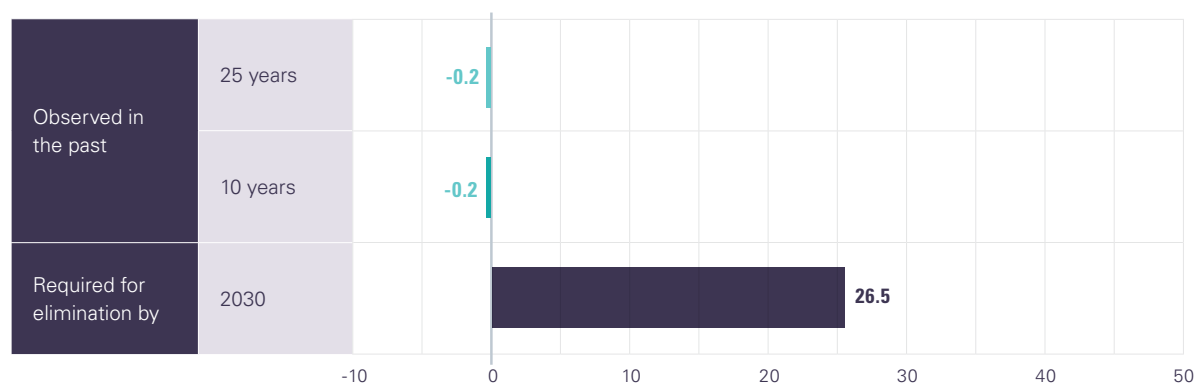
Figure 142. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 143. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the AIDS Indicator Survey 2015 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as 'n/a' indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

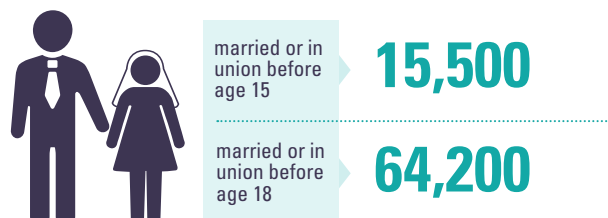
Namibia

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 21 | with exceptions: 0

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

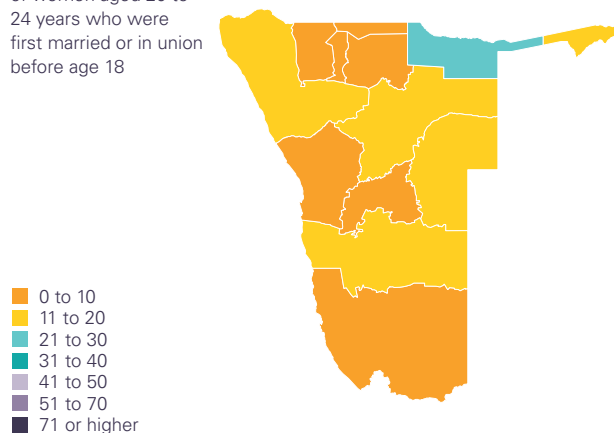
Figure 144. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Namibia is home to over 64,000 child brides; 1 in 14 young women were married or in union in childhood

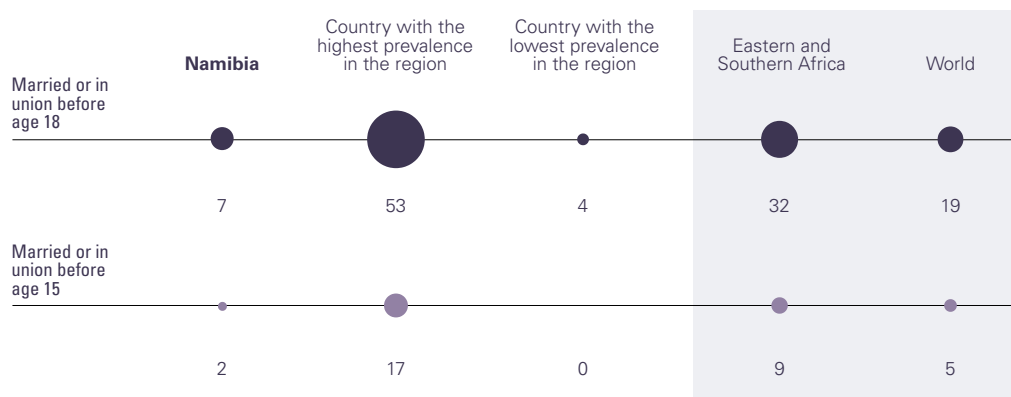
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 145. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



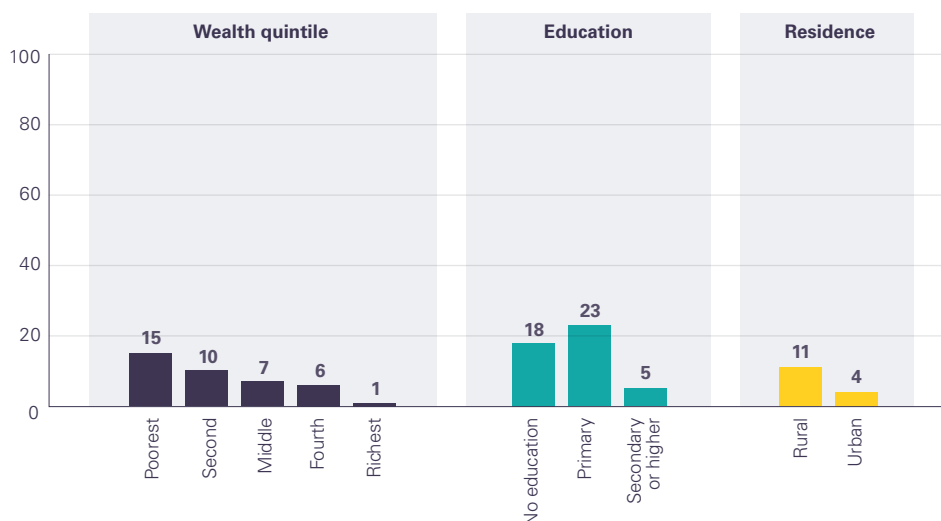
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 146. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

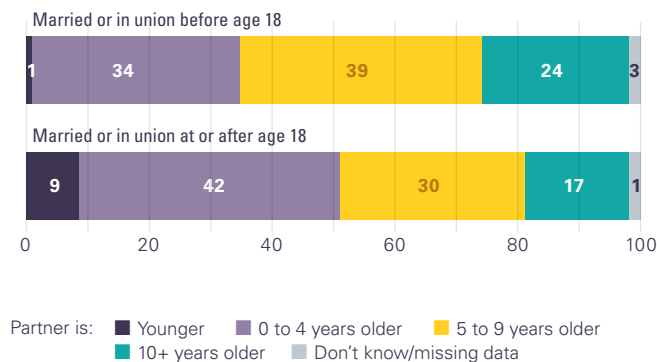
Figure 147. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

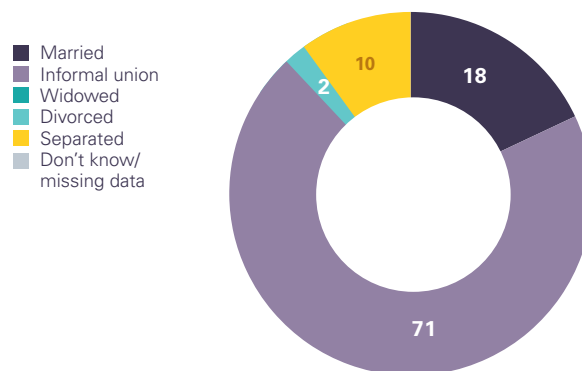
Spousal age gap

Figure 148. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Types of unions

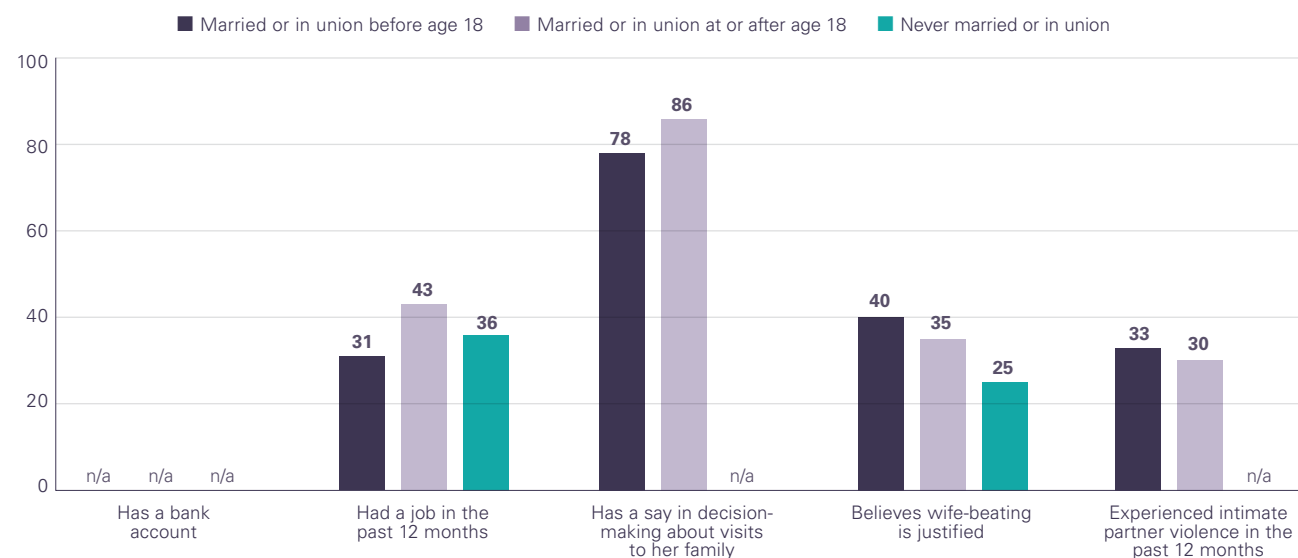
Figure 149. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

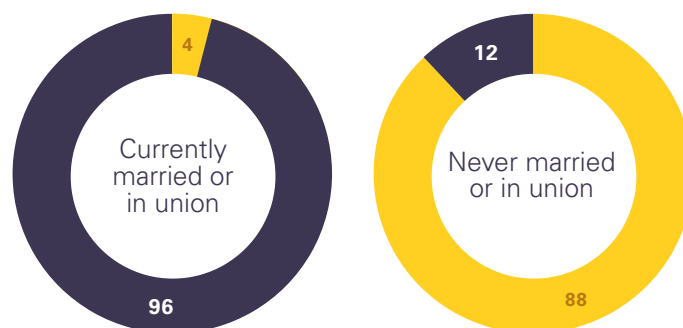
Figure 150. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Education

Figure 151. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

In school
 Out of school
 Don't know/missing data



Lives of child brides *(continued)*

Early childbearing

Figure 152. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

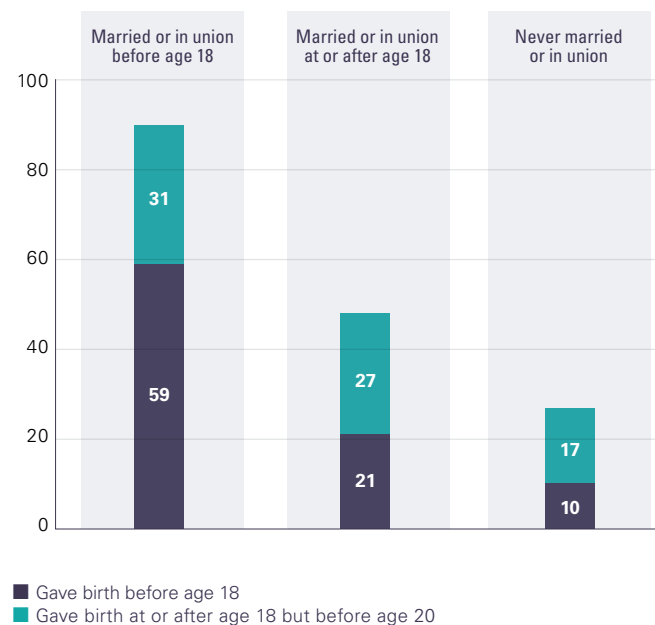
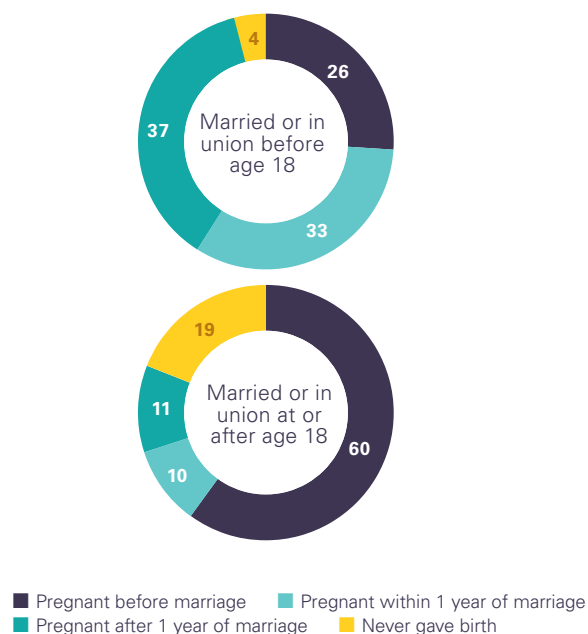
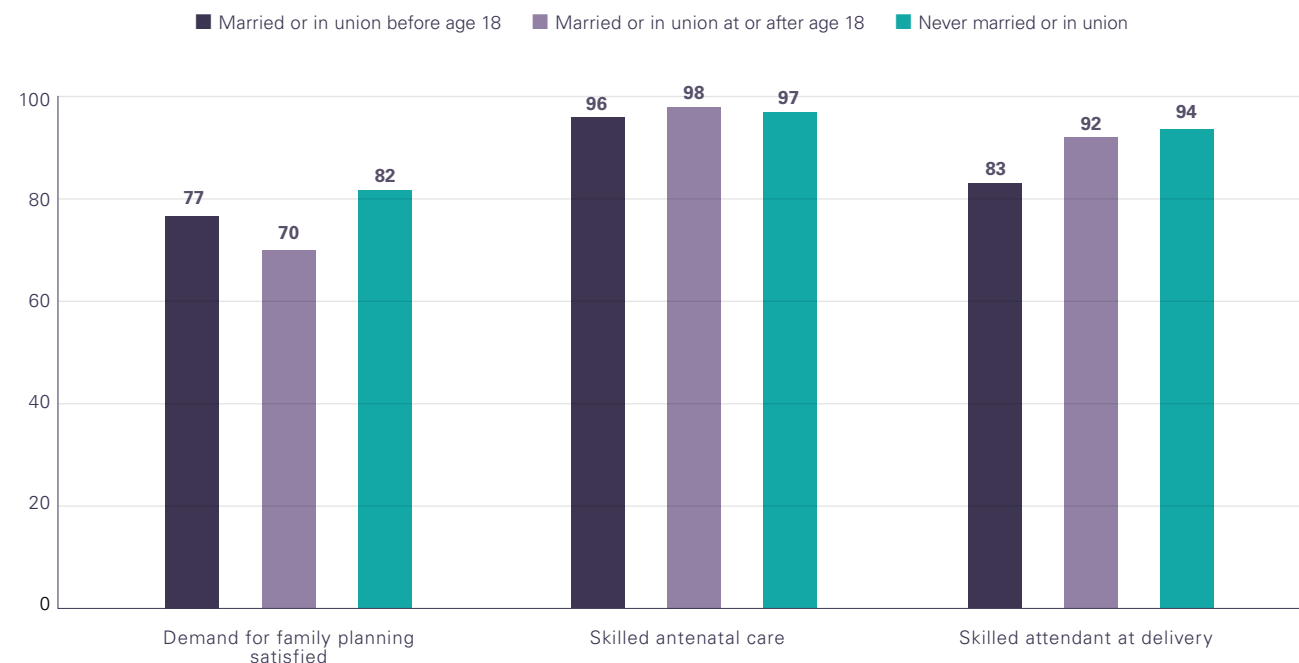


Figure 153. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



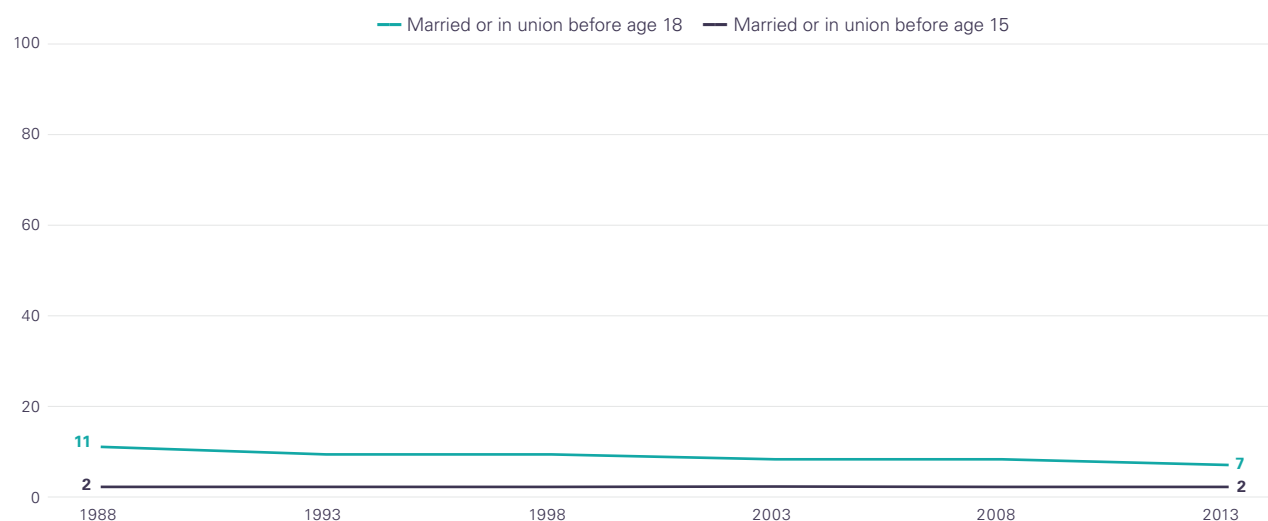
Reproductive health

Figure 154. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

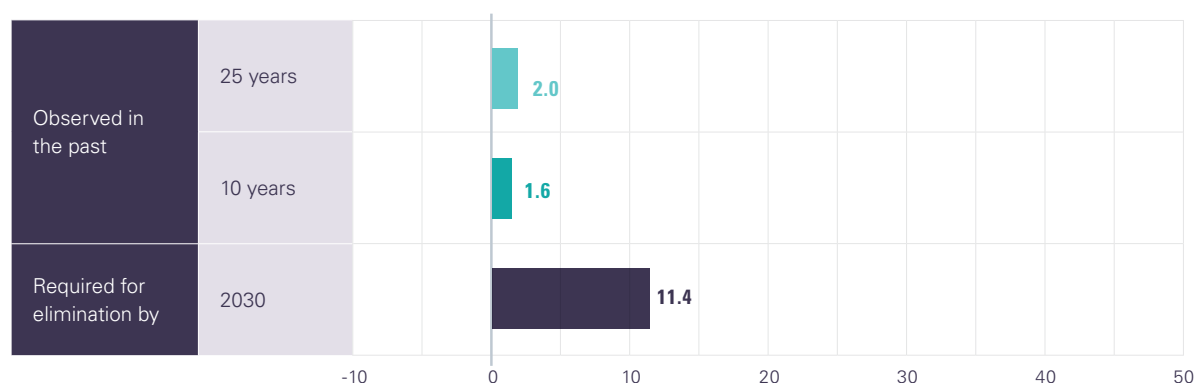
Figure 155. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 156. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Demographic and Health Survey 2013 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as 'n/a' indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

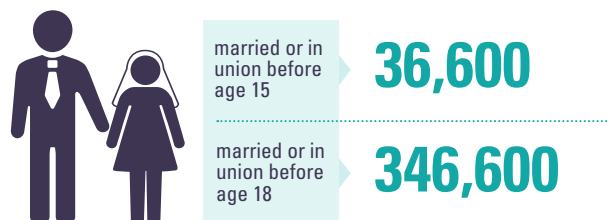
Rwanda

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 21 | with exceptions: n/a

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

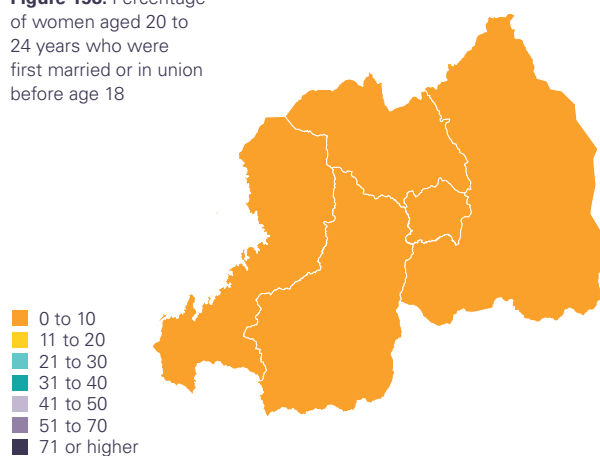
Figure 157. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Rwanda is home to over 346,000 child brides; 1 in 20 young women were married or in union in childhood

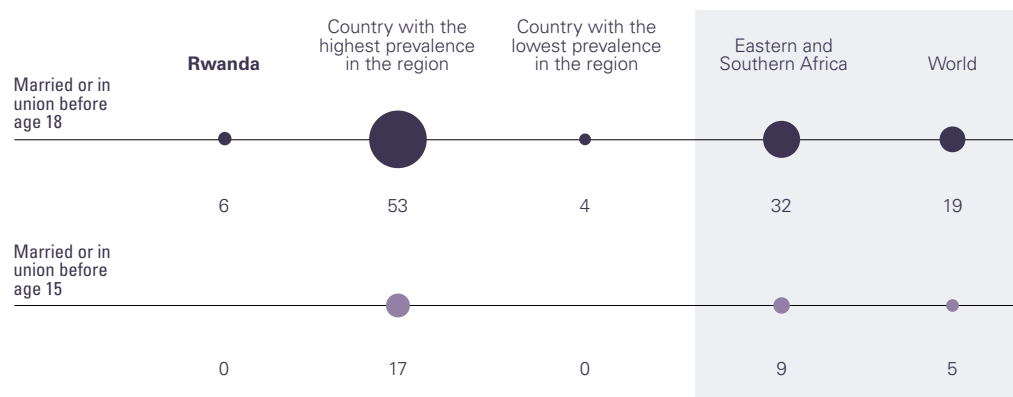
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 158. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



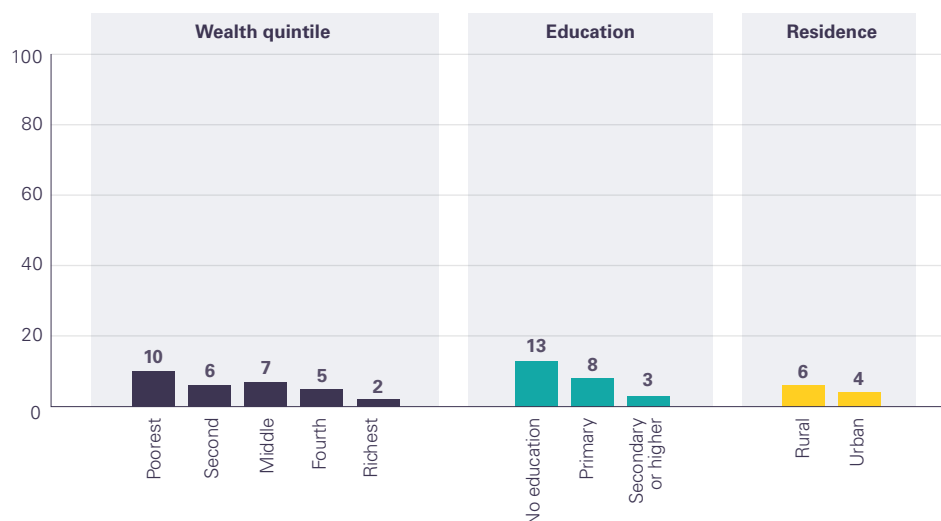
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 159. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

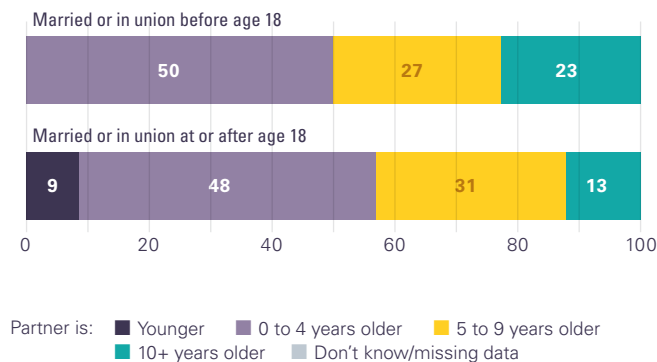
Figure 160. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

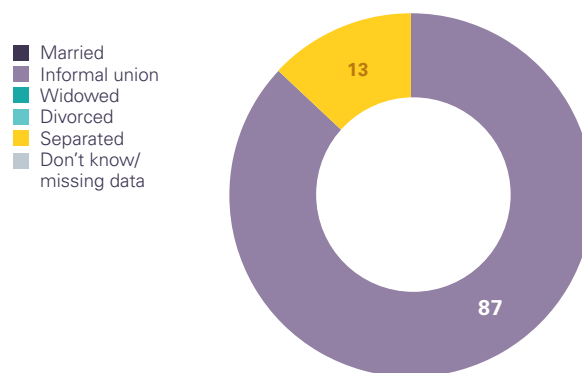
Spousal age gap

Figure 161. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Types of unions

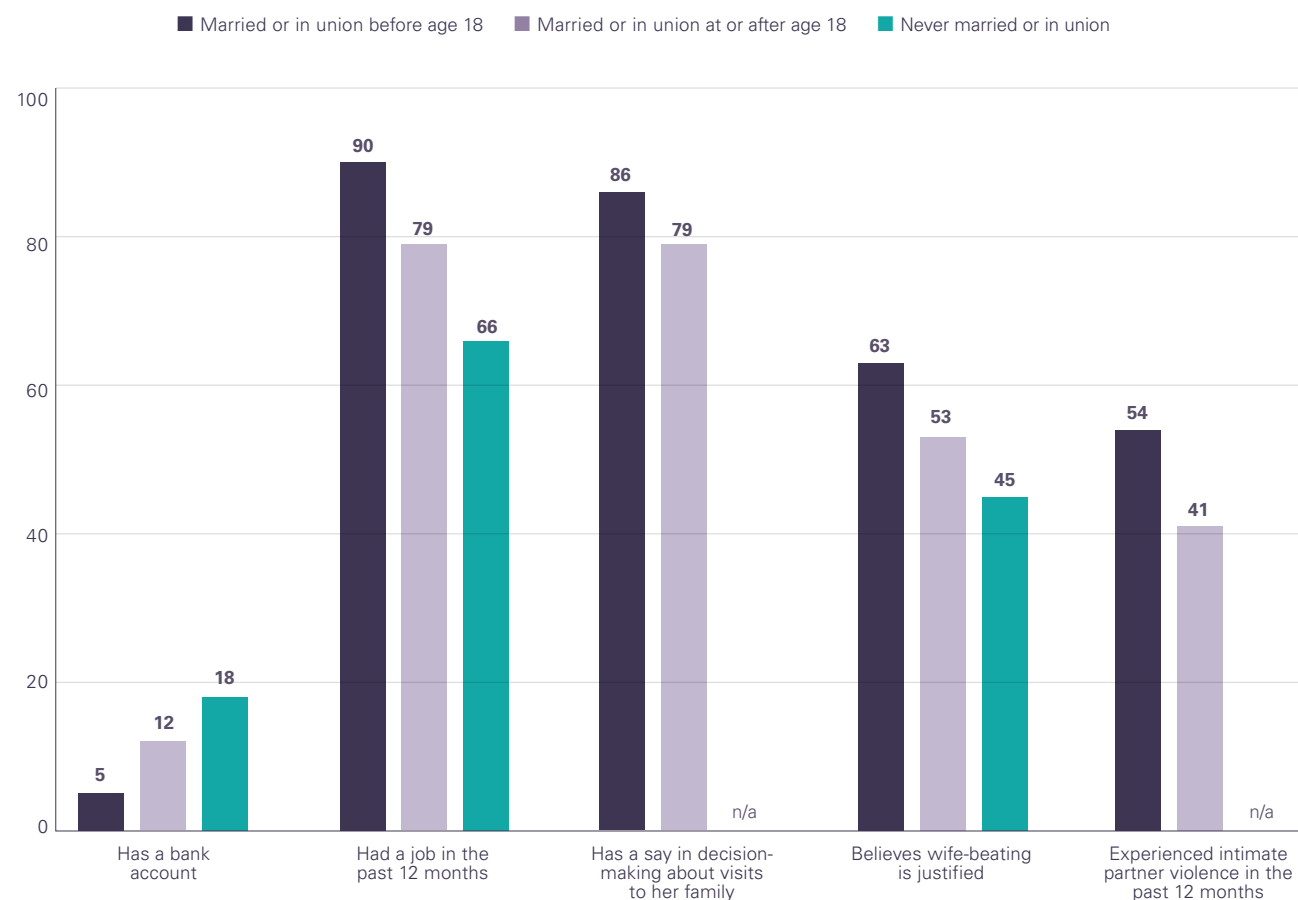
Figure 162. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 163. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 164. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

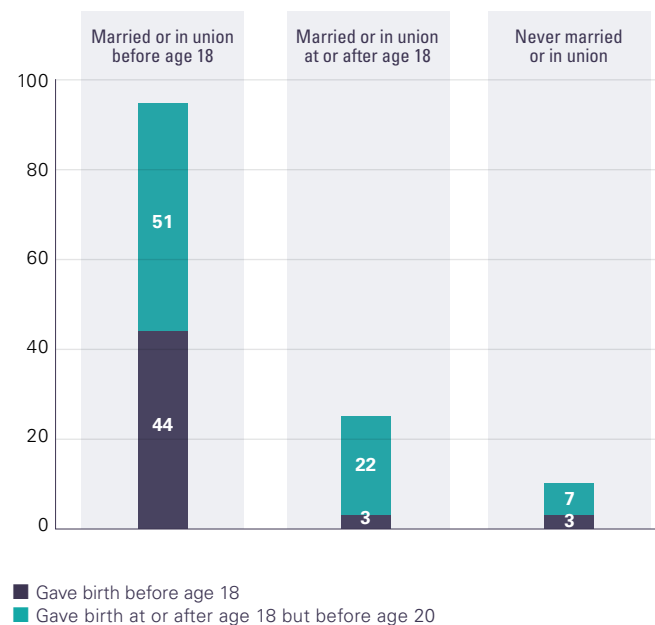
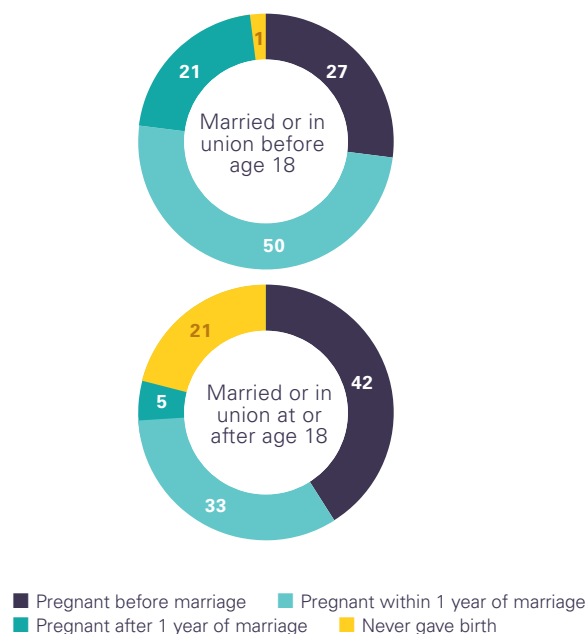
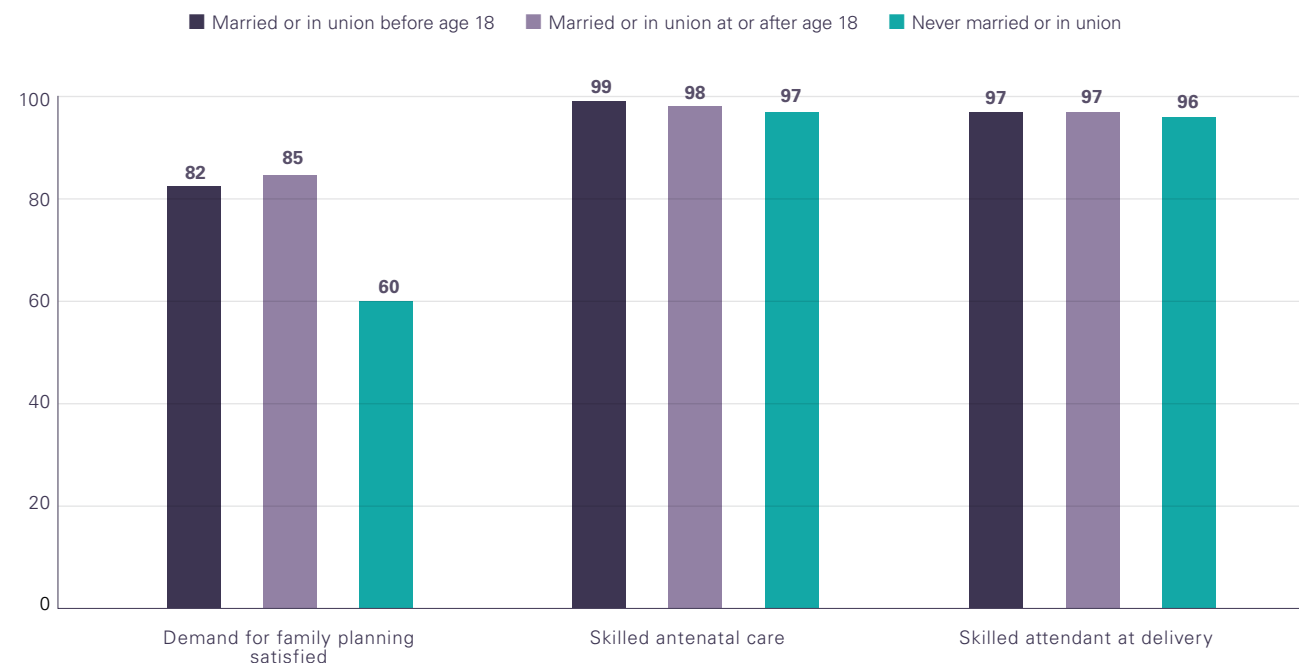


Figure 165. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



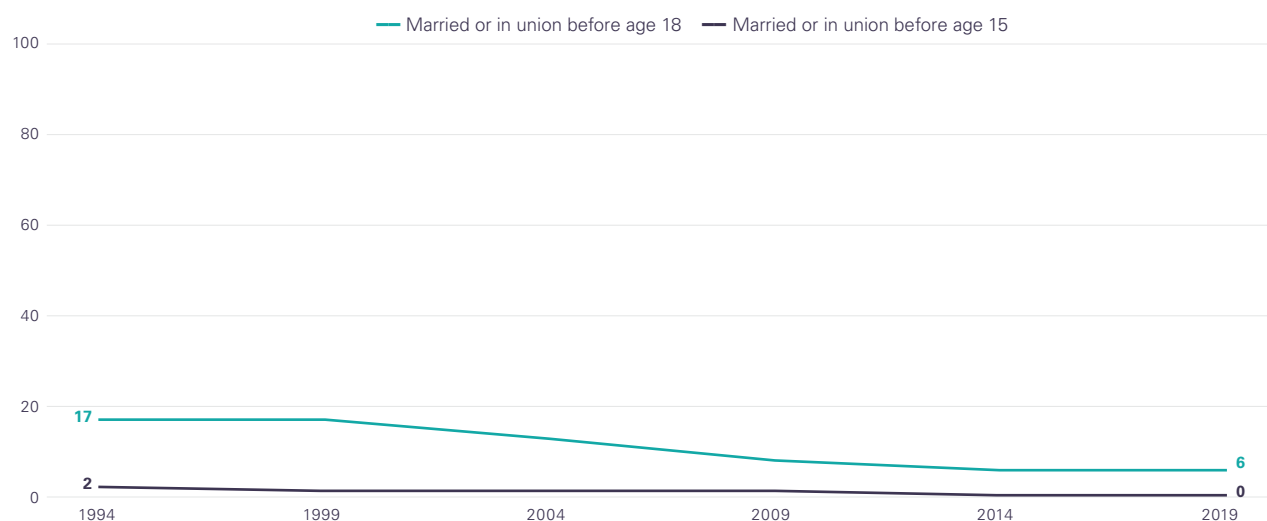
Reproductive health

Figure 166. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

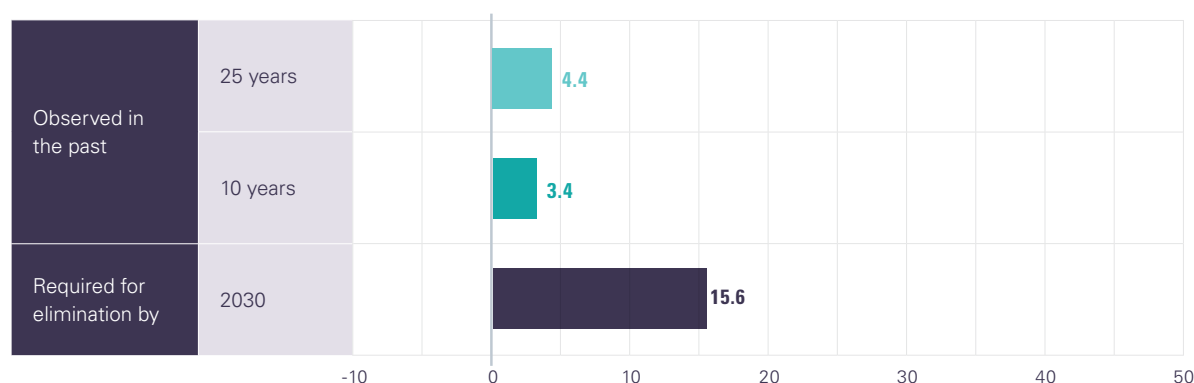
Figure 167. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 168. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Demographic and Health Survey 2019–2020 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, Online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to ‘marriage’ or ‘child brides’ include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, ‘elimination’ is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as ‘n/a’ indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

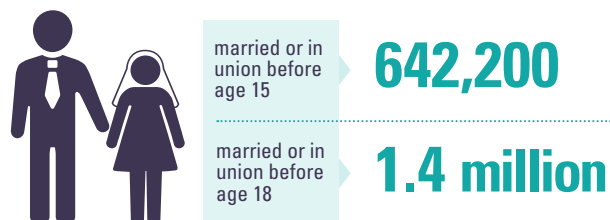
Somalia

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: n/a | with exceptions: n/a

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

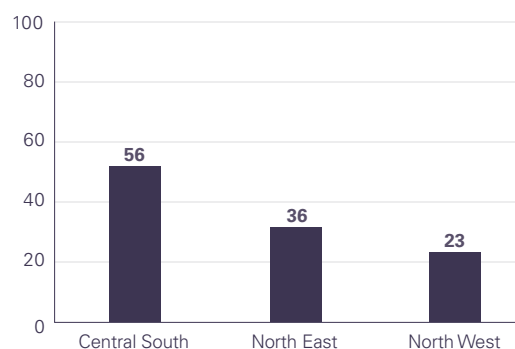
Figure 169. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Somalia is home to over 1 million child brides; 4 in 10 young women were married or in union in childhood

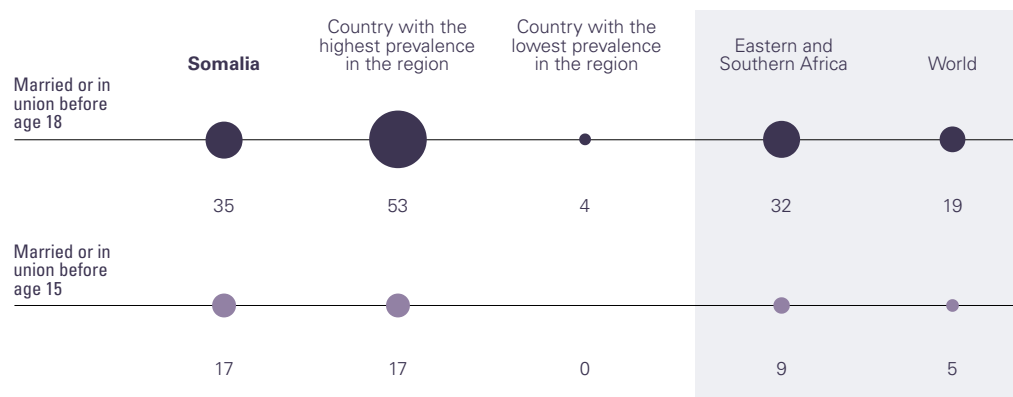
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 170. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



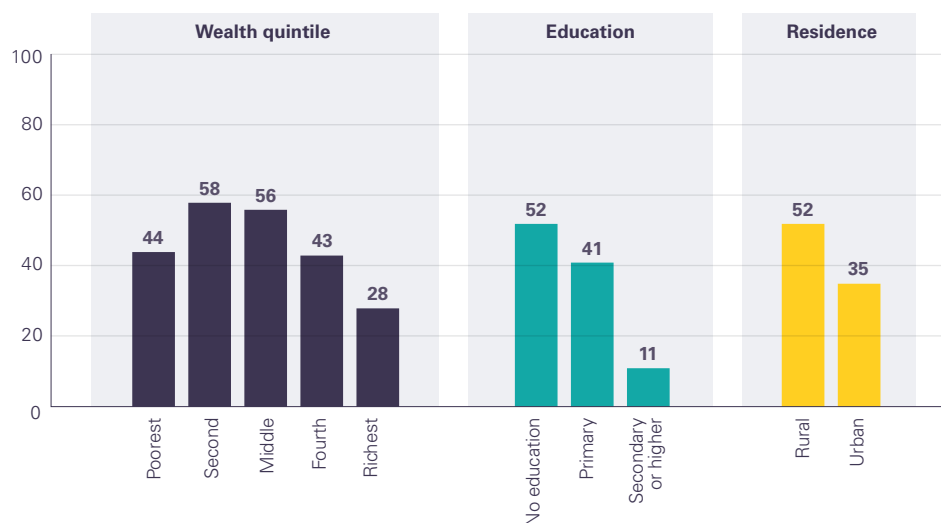
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 171. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

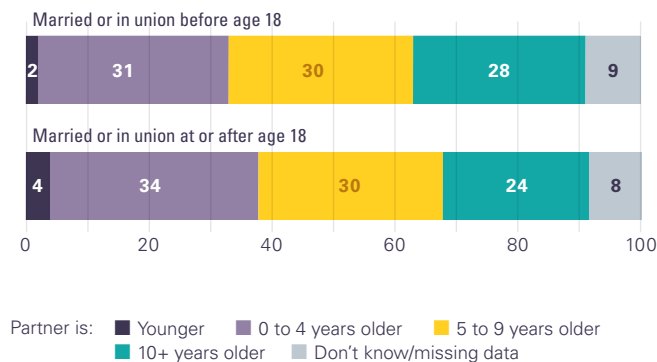
Figure 172. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

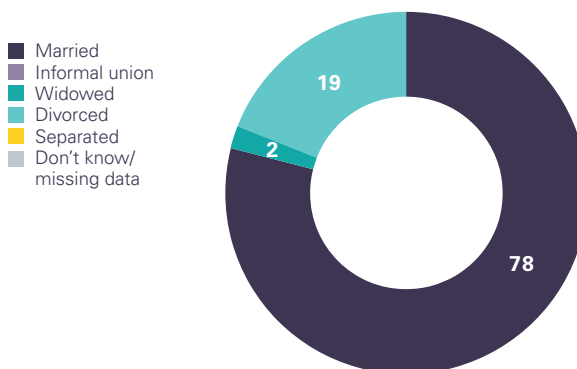
Spousal age gap

Figure 173. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Types of unions

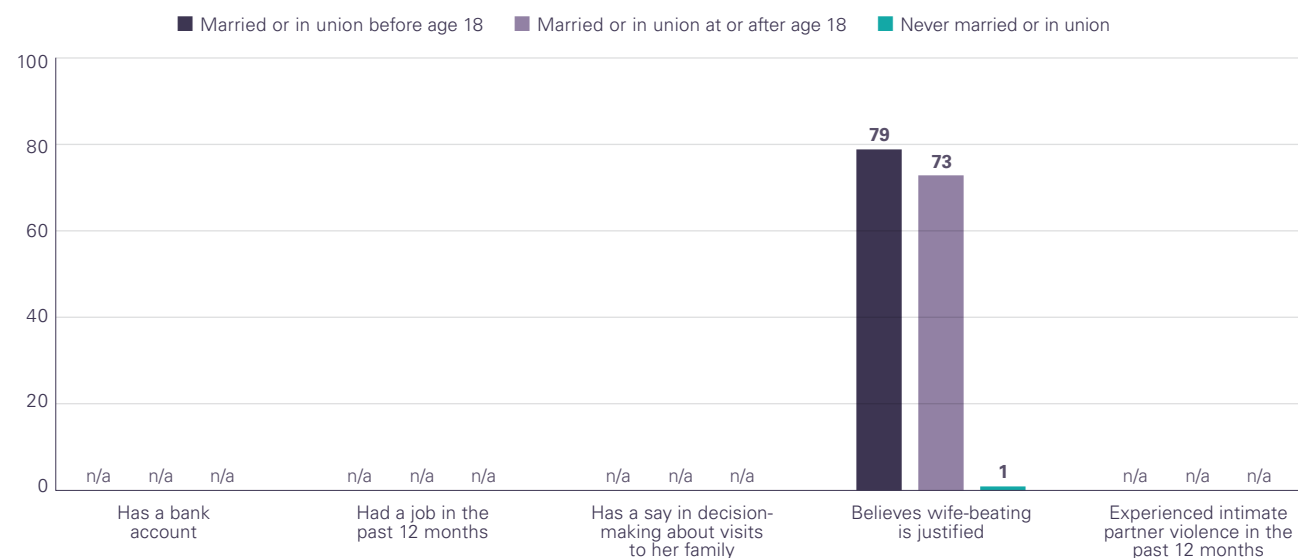
Figure 174. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status



Lives of child brides

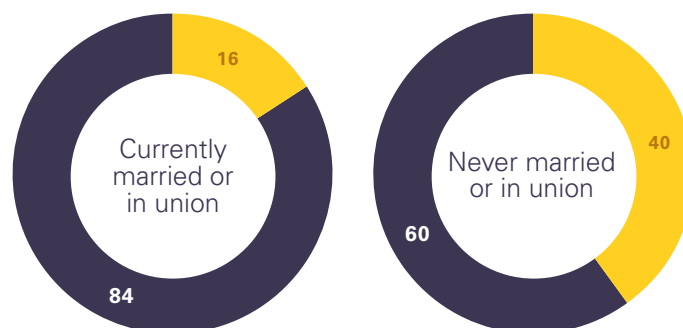
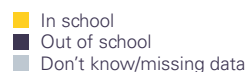
Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 175. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Education

Figure 176. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status



Lives of child brides *(continued)*

Early childbearing

Figure 177. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

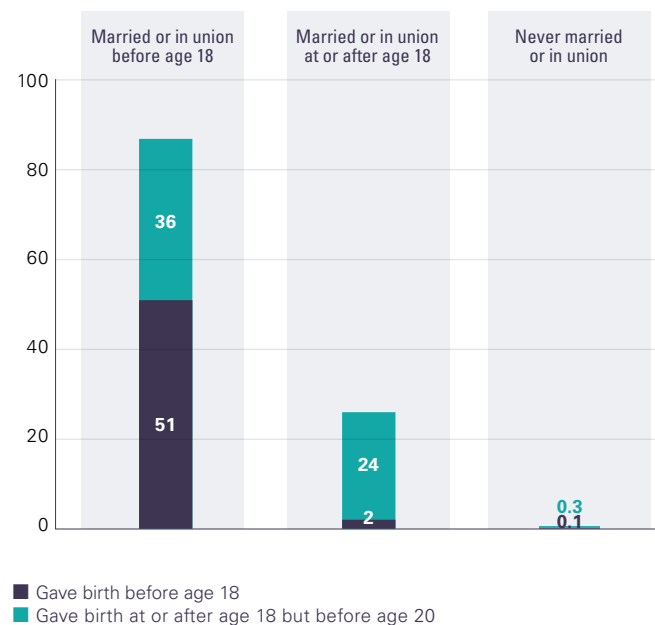
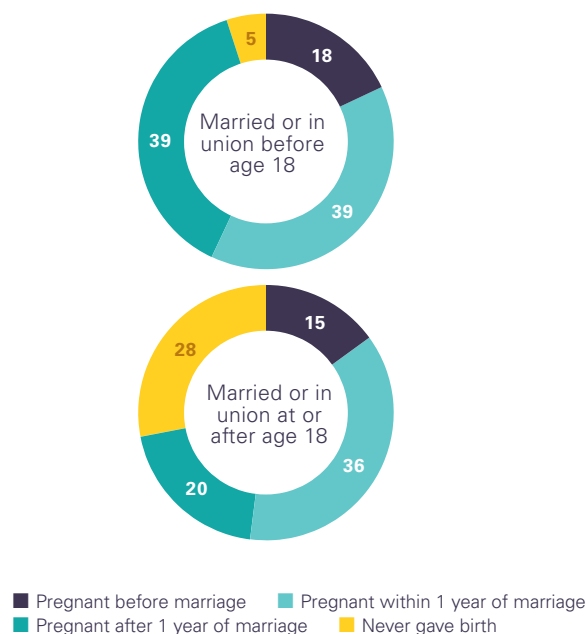
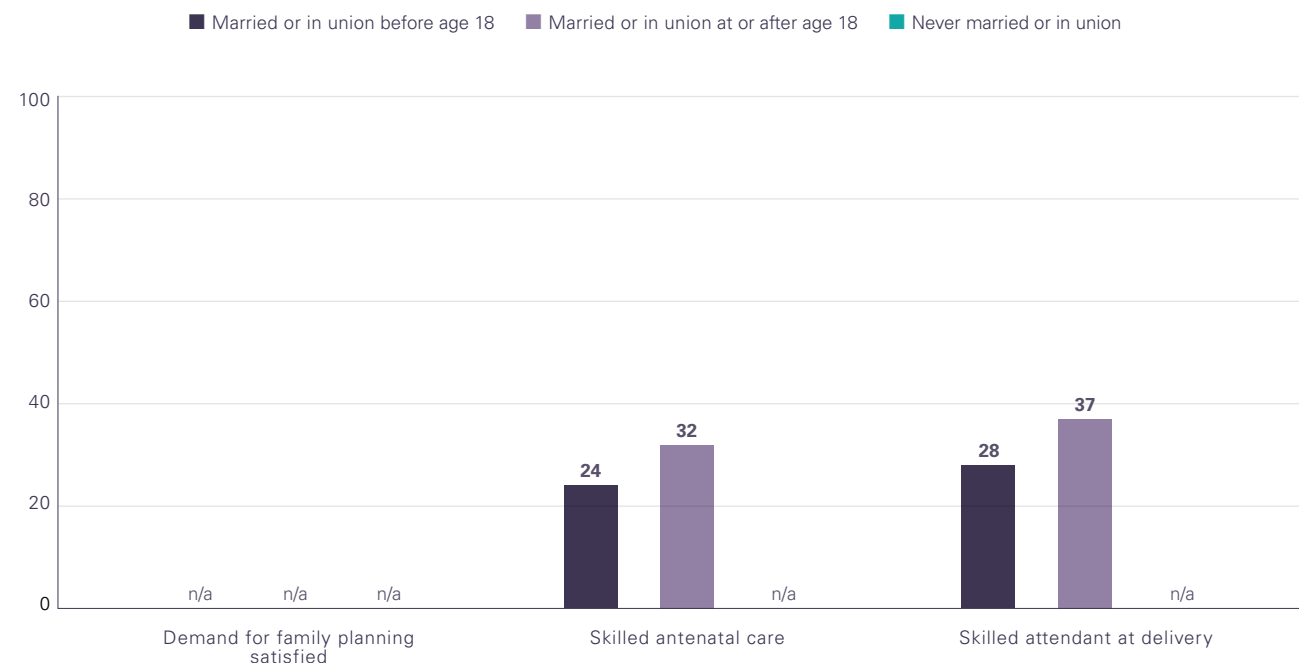


Figure 178. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



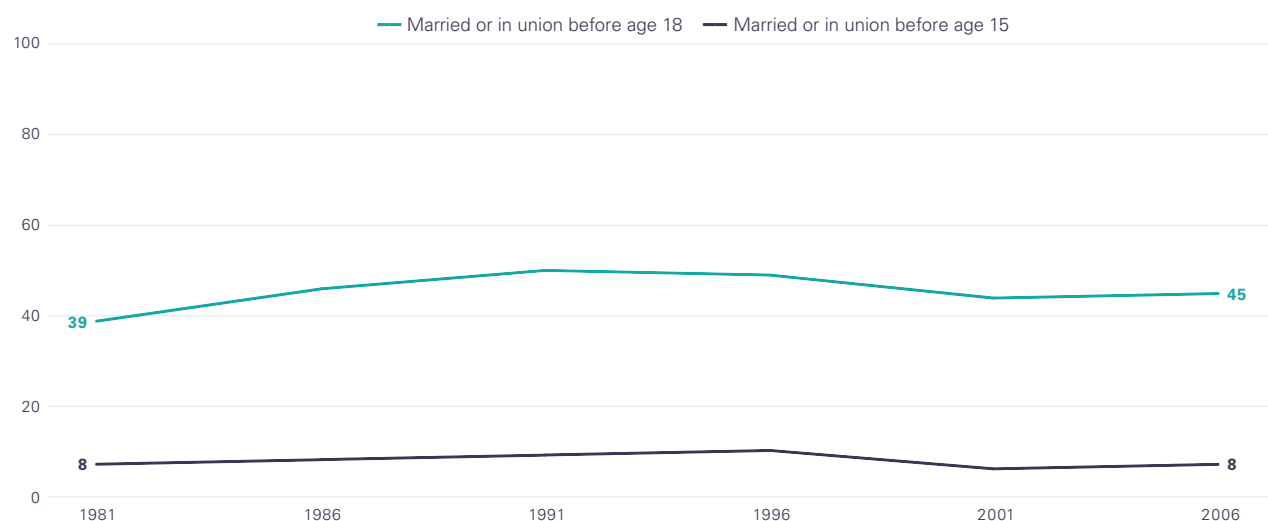
Reproductive health

Figure 179. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

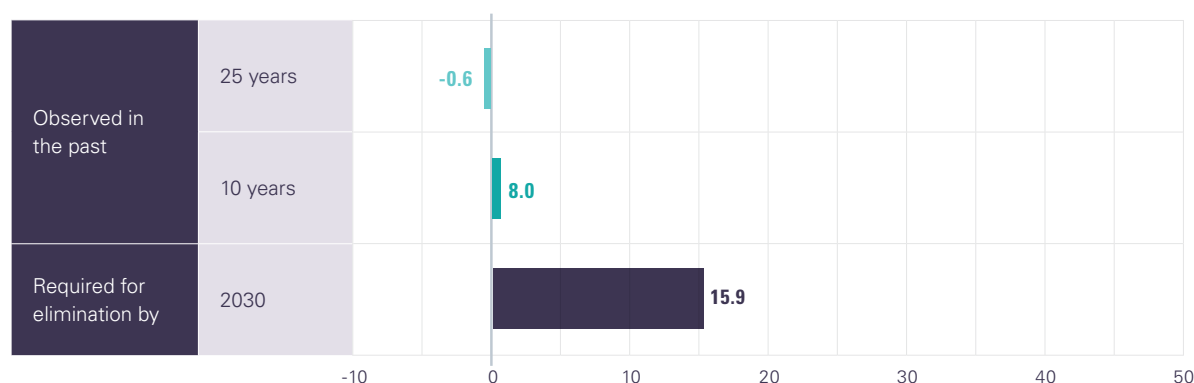
Figure 180. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 181. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data on the national prevalence and burden of child marriage, as displayed in Figure 169 and Figure 171, are sourced from the Somali Health and Demographic Survey 2020. The datasets for this survey were not available for the analysis required for the remaining figures in this profile, so all other figures use data sourced from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as 'n/a' indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

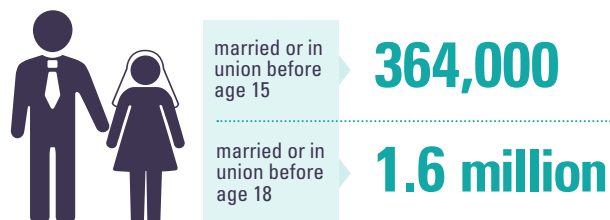
South Africa

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 18 | with exceptions: 15

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

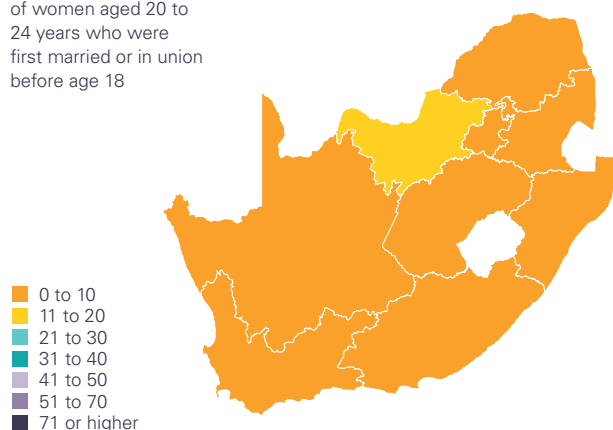
Figure 182. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



South Africa is home to over 1 million child brides; 1 in 28 young women were married or in union in childhood

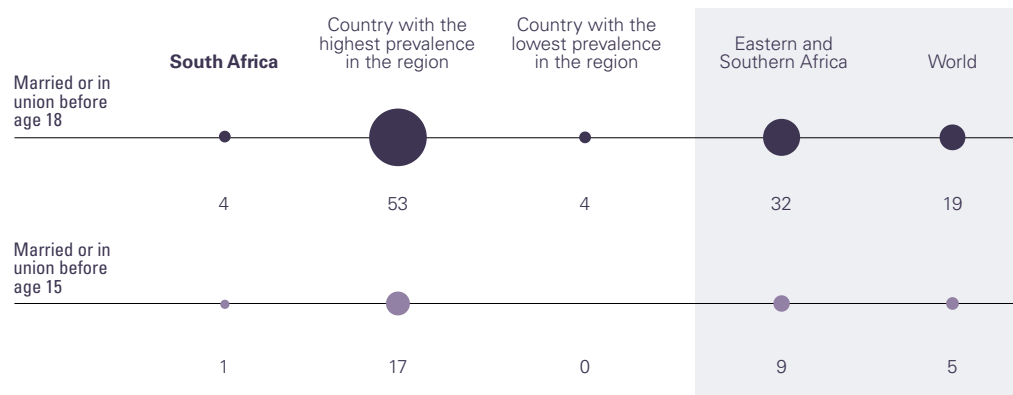
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 183. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



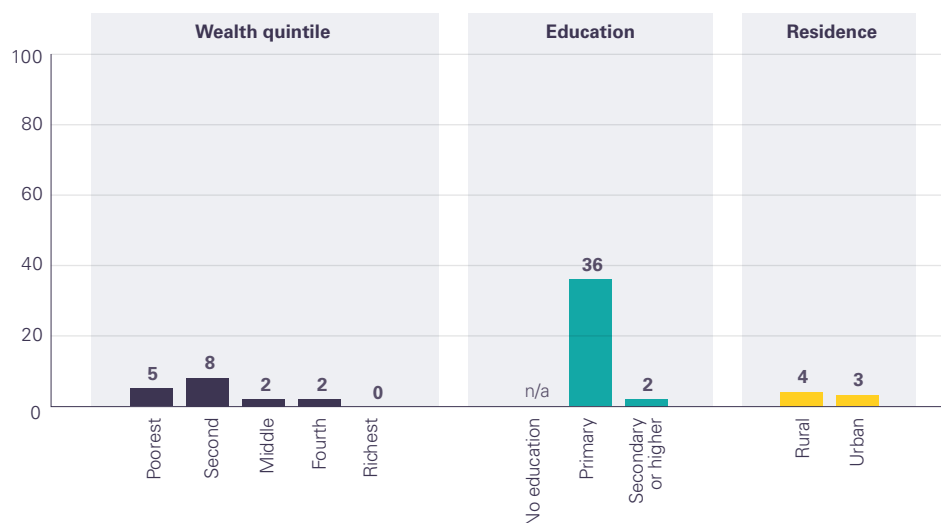
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 184. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

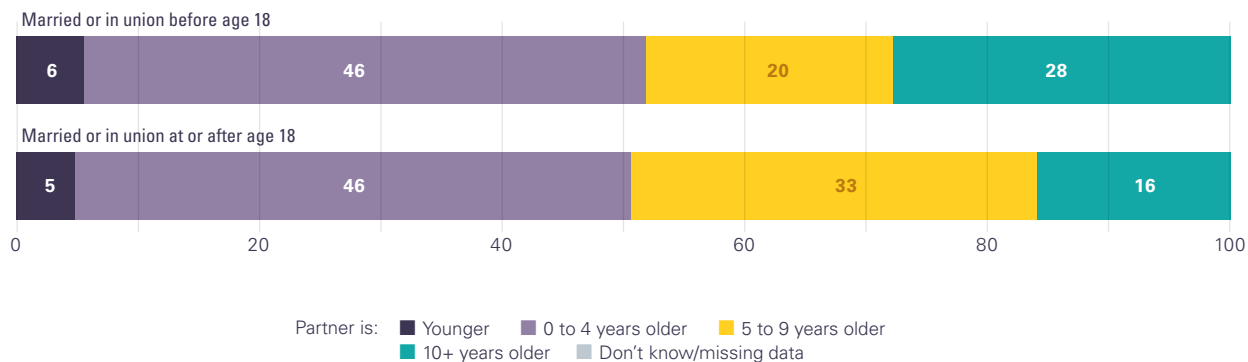
Figure 185. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

Spousal age gap

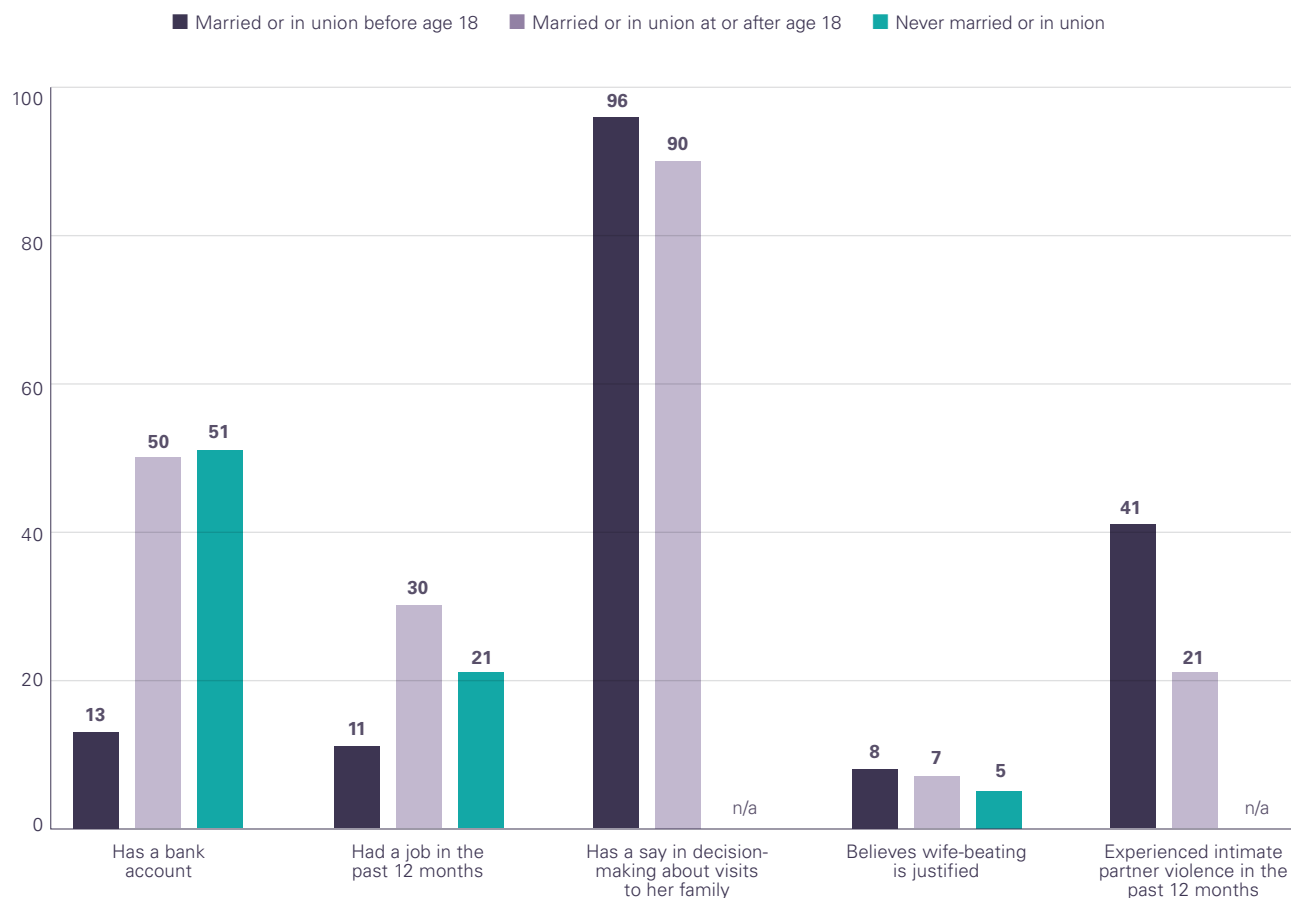
Figure 186. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 187. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Lives of child brides *(continued)*

Early childbearing

Figure 188. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

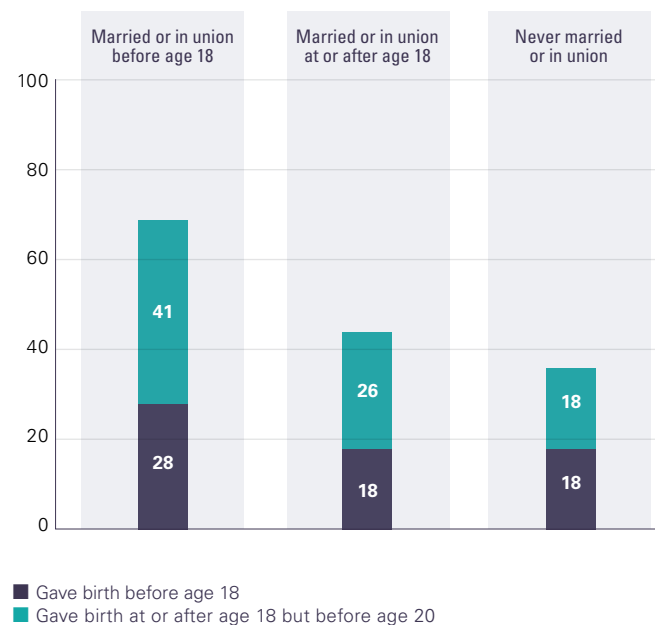
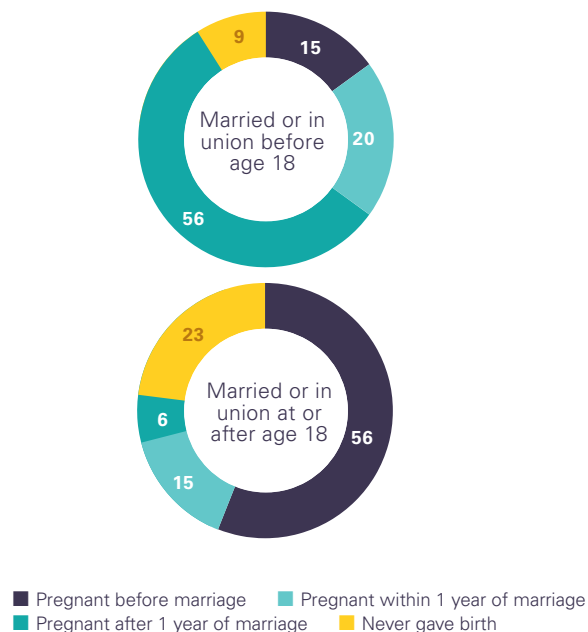
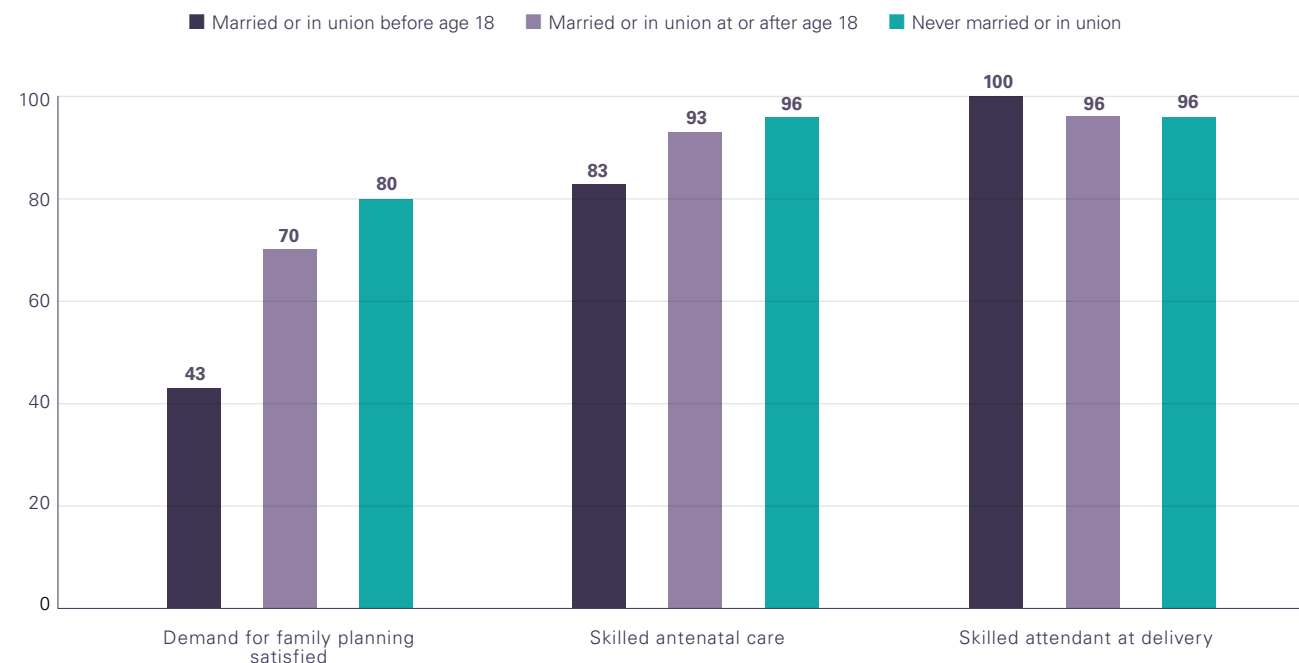


Figure 189. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



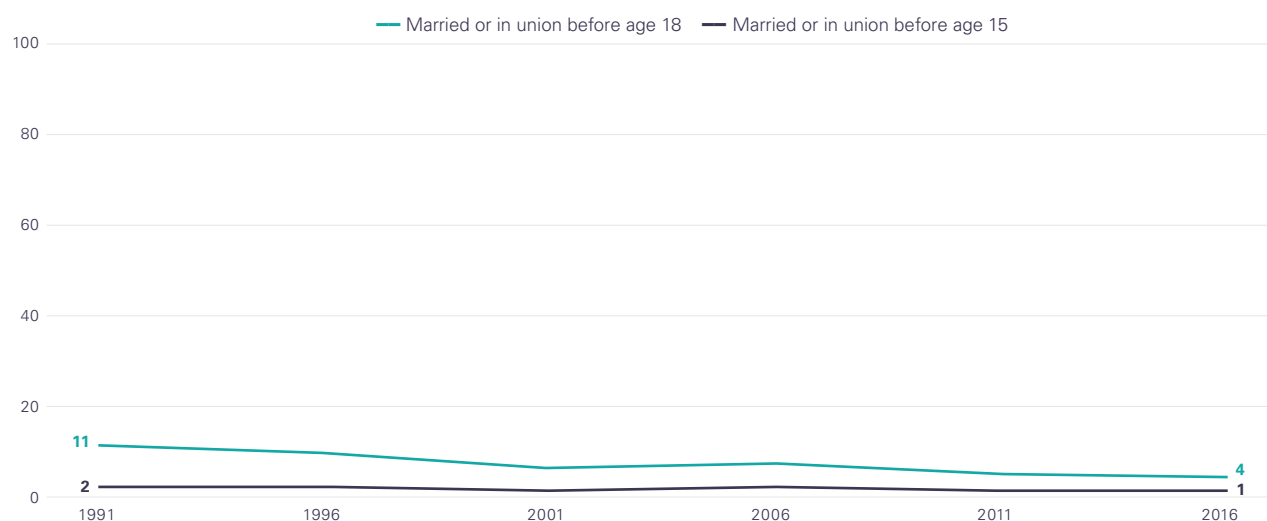
Reproductive health

Figure 190. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

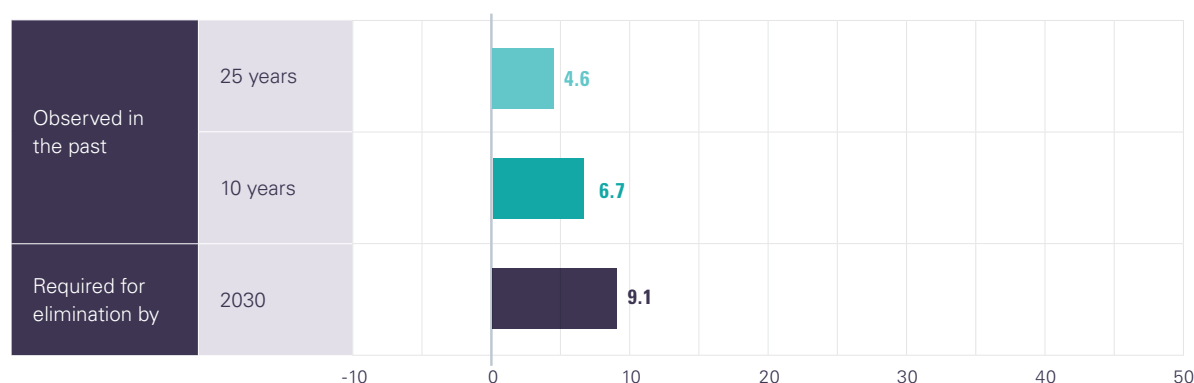
Figure 191. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 192. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Demographic and Health Survey 2016 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as 'n/a' indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

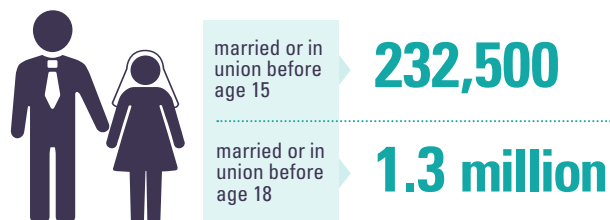
South Sudan

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 18 | with exceptions: n/a

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

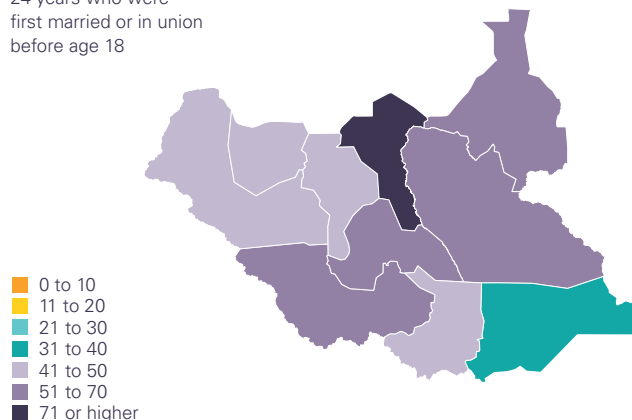
Figure 193. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



South Sudan is home to over 1 million child brides; 1 in 2 young women were married or in union in childhood

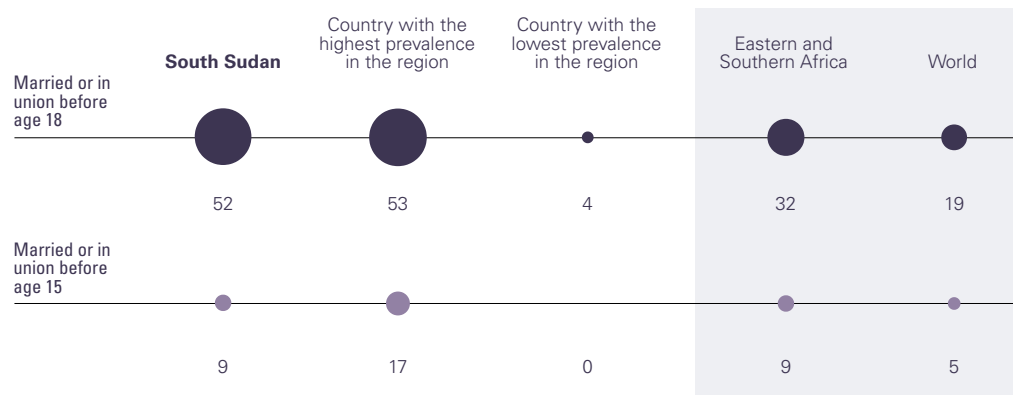
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 194. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



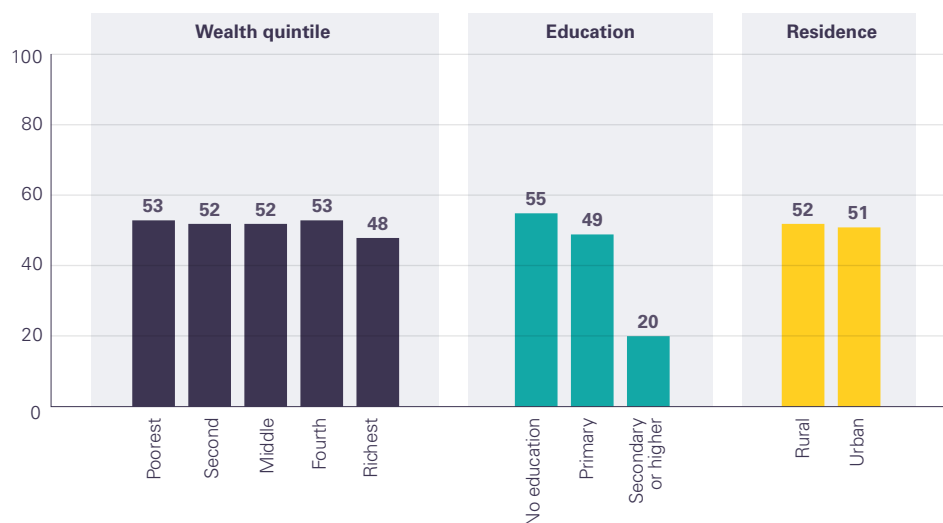
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 195. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

Figure 196. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence

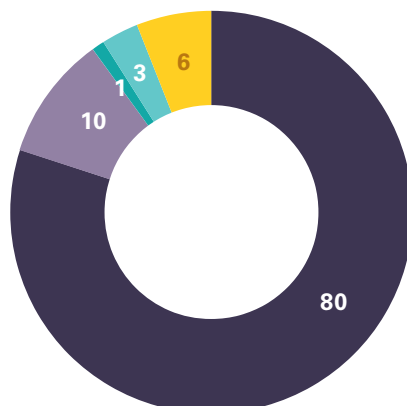


Characteristics of unions

Types of unions

Figure 197. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status

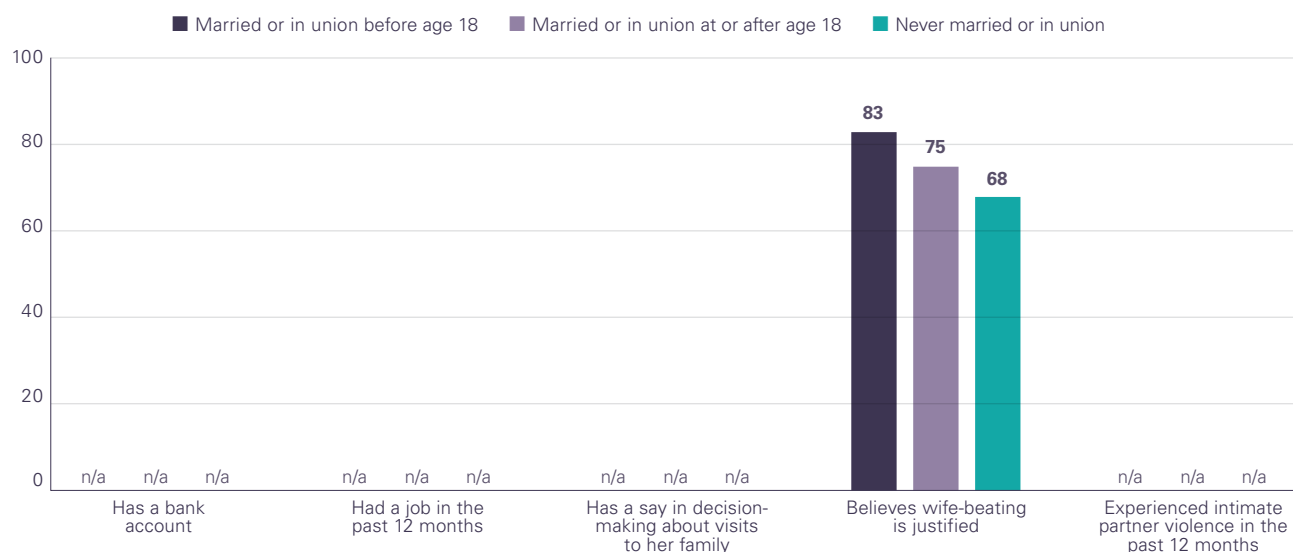
- Married
- Informal union
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- Don't know/missing data



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

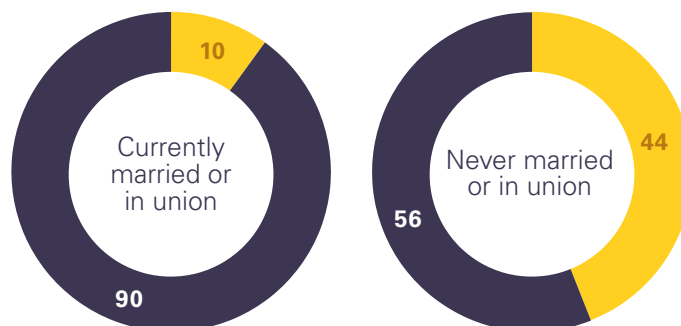
Figure 198. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Education

Figure 199. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

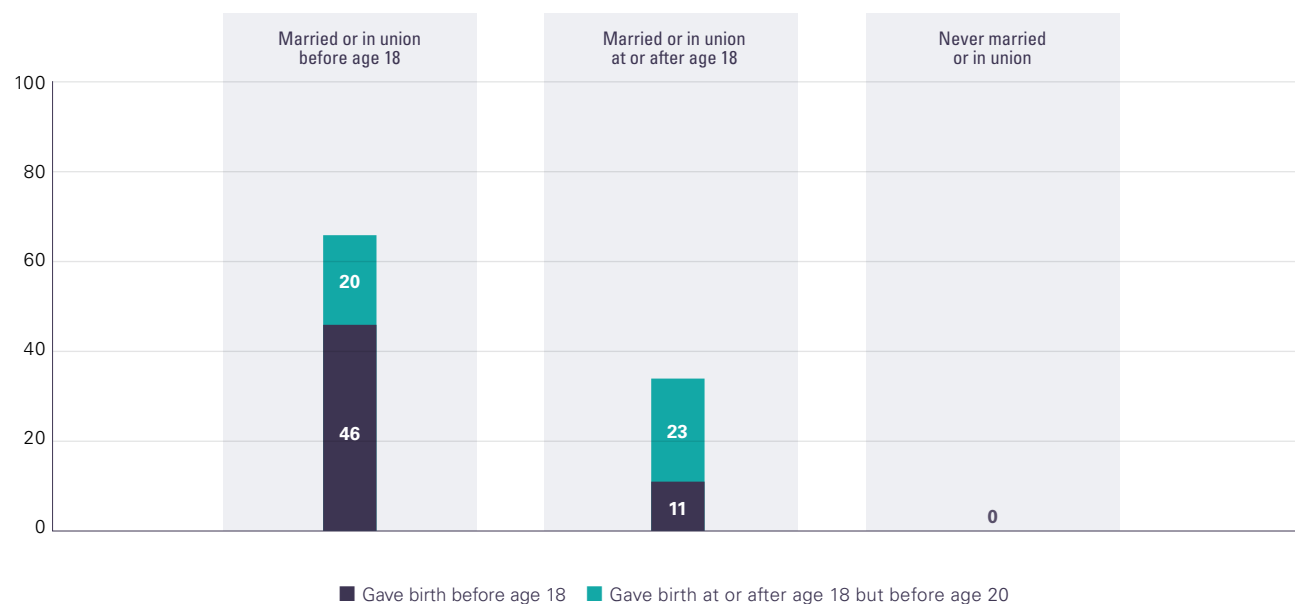
- In school
- Out of school
- Don't know/missing data



Lives of child brides *(continued)*

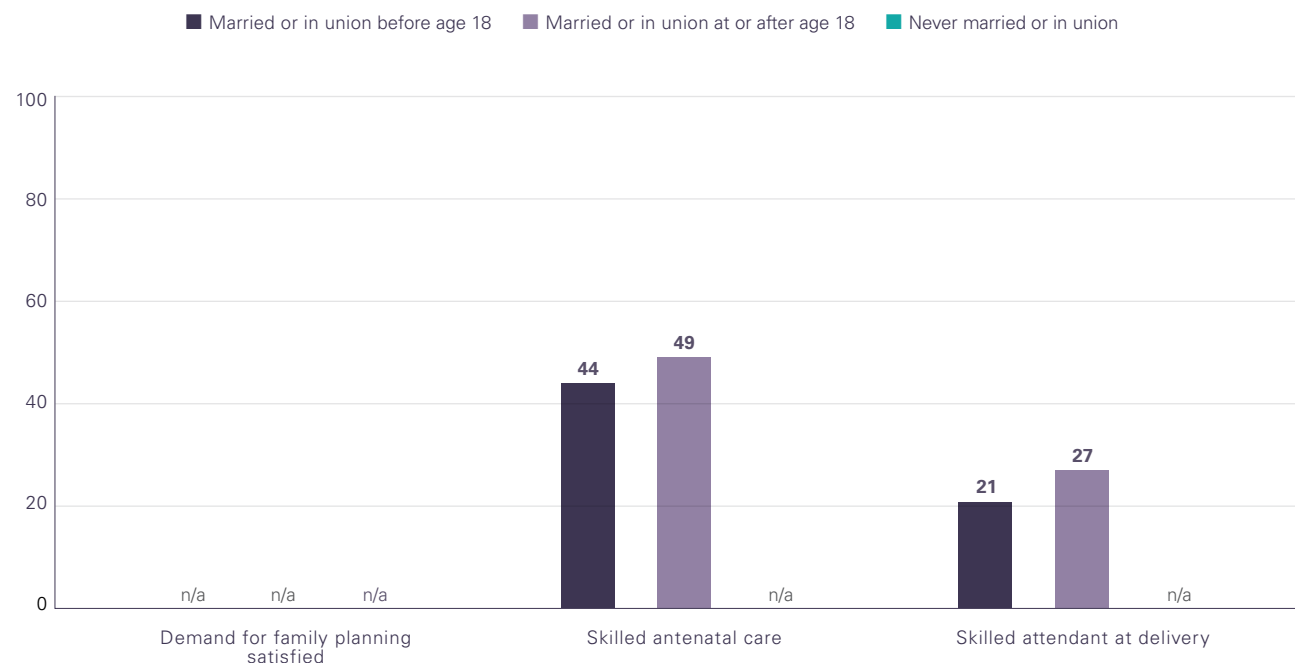
Early childbearing

Figure 200. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20



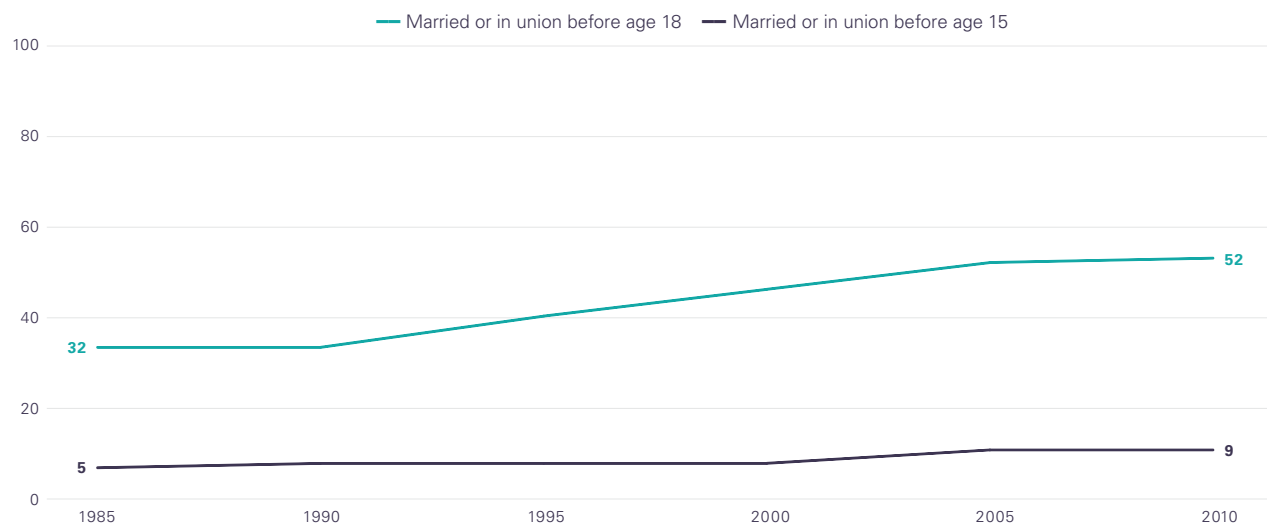
Reproductive health

Figure 201. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

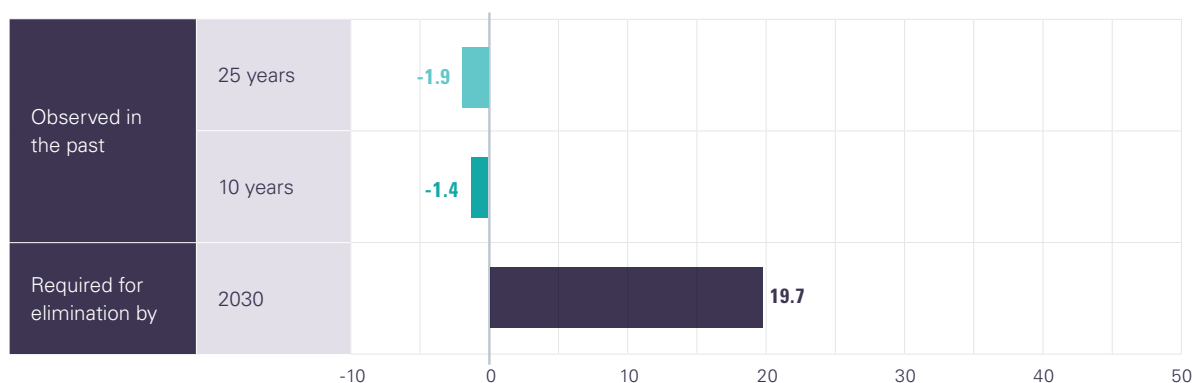
Figure 202. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 203. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2010 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as 'n/a' indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

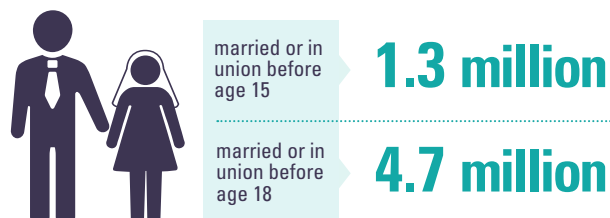
Uganda

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 21 | with exceptions: 18

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

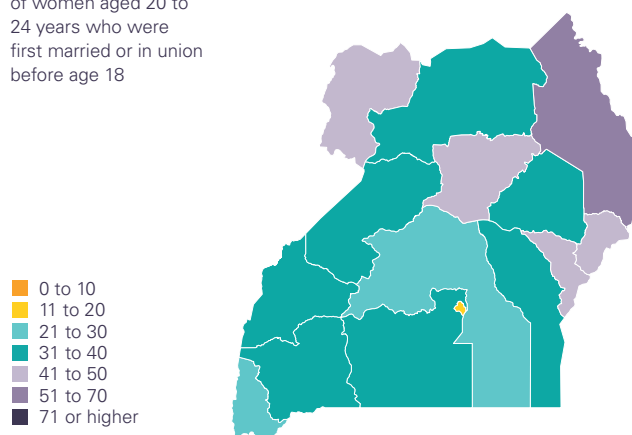
Figure 204. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Uganda is home to nearly 5 million child brides; 1 in 3 young women were married or in union in childhood

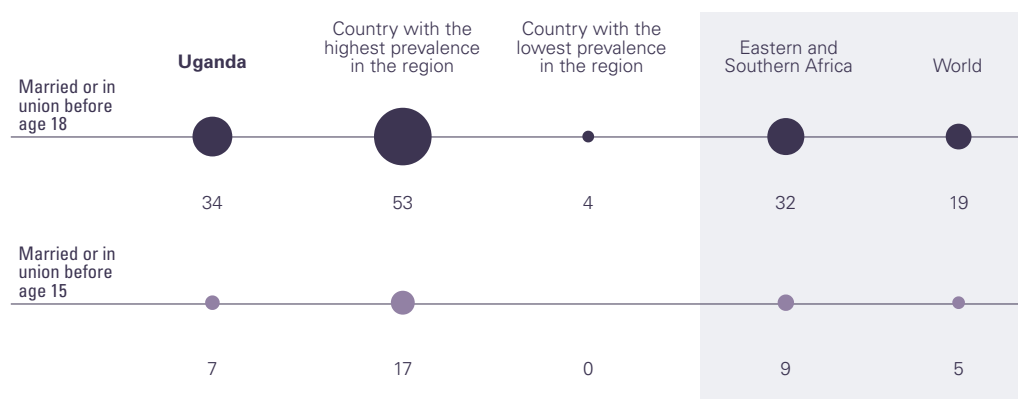
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 205. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



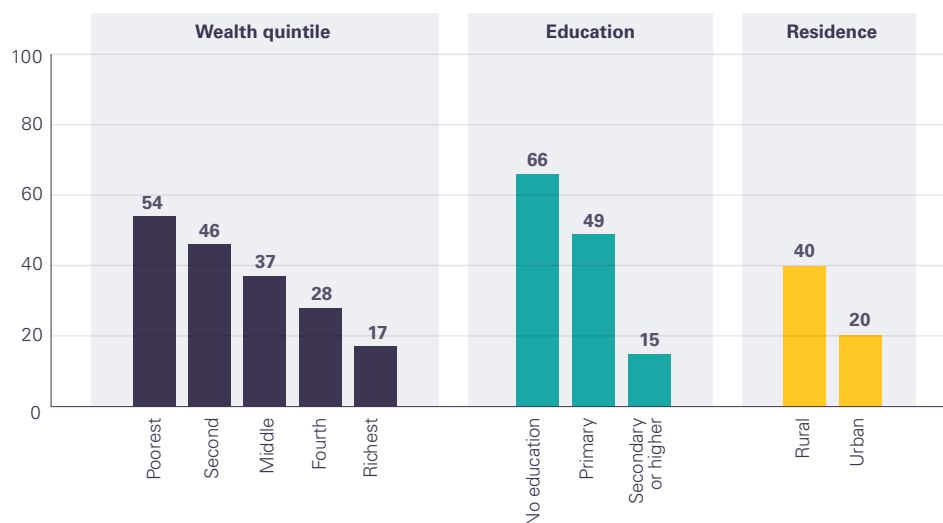
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 206. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

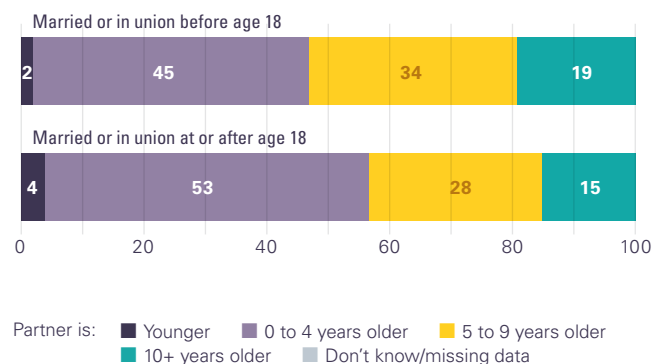
Figure 207. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

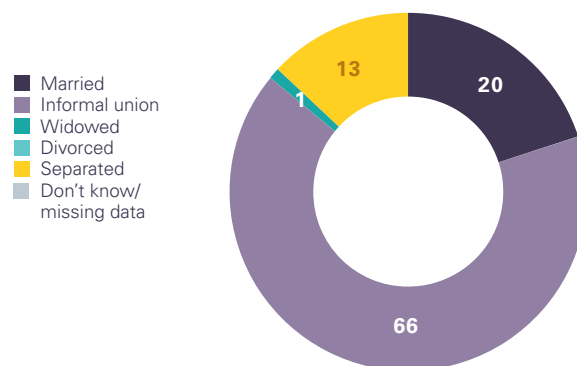
Spousal age gap

Figure 208. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Types of unions

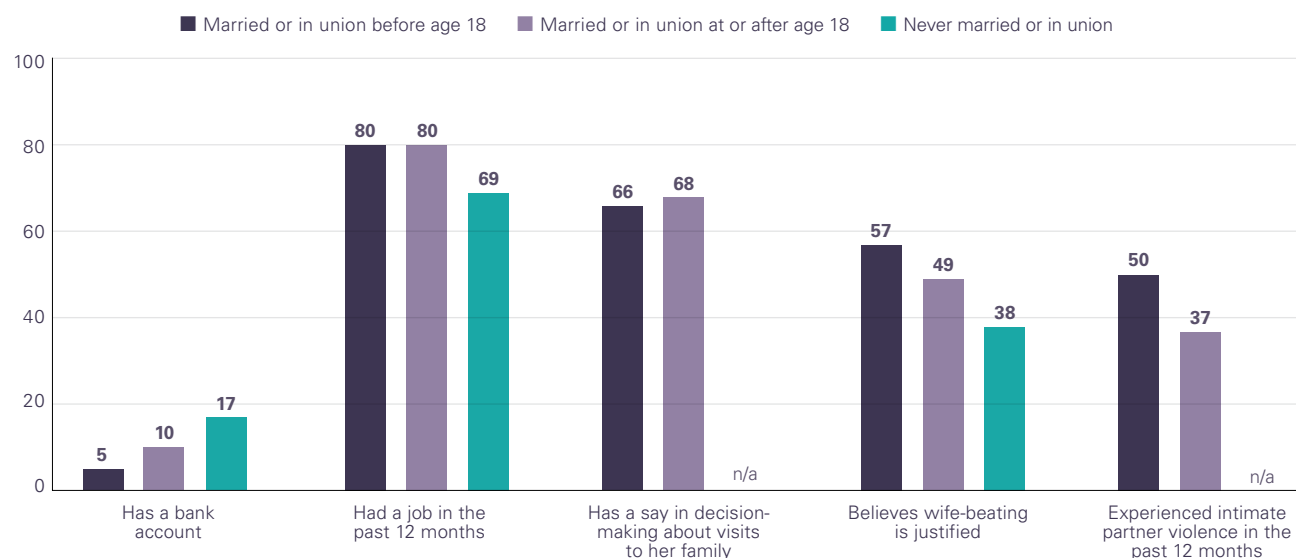
Figure 209. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

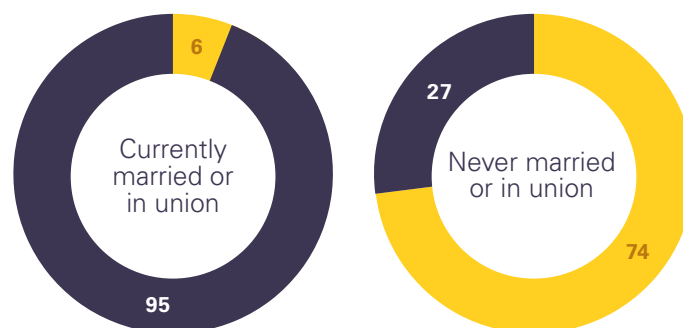
Figure 210. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Education

Figure 211. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

■ In school
■ Out of school
■ Don't know/missing data



Lives of child brides *(continued)*

Early childbearing

Figure 212. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

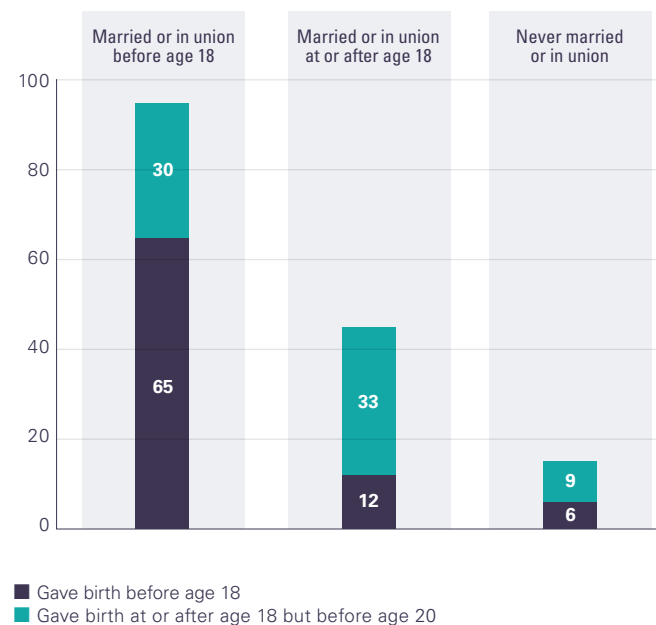
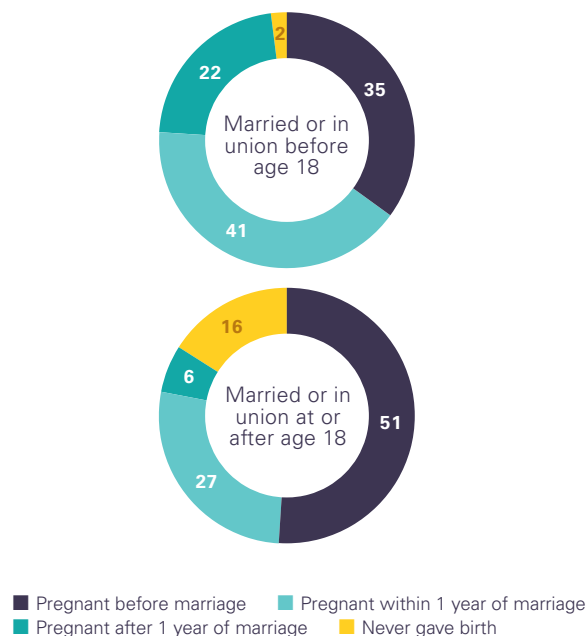
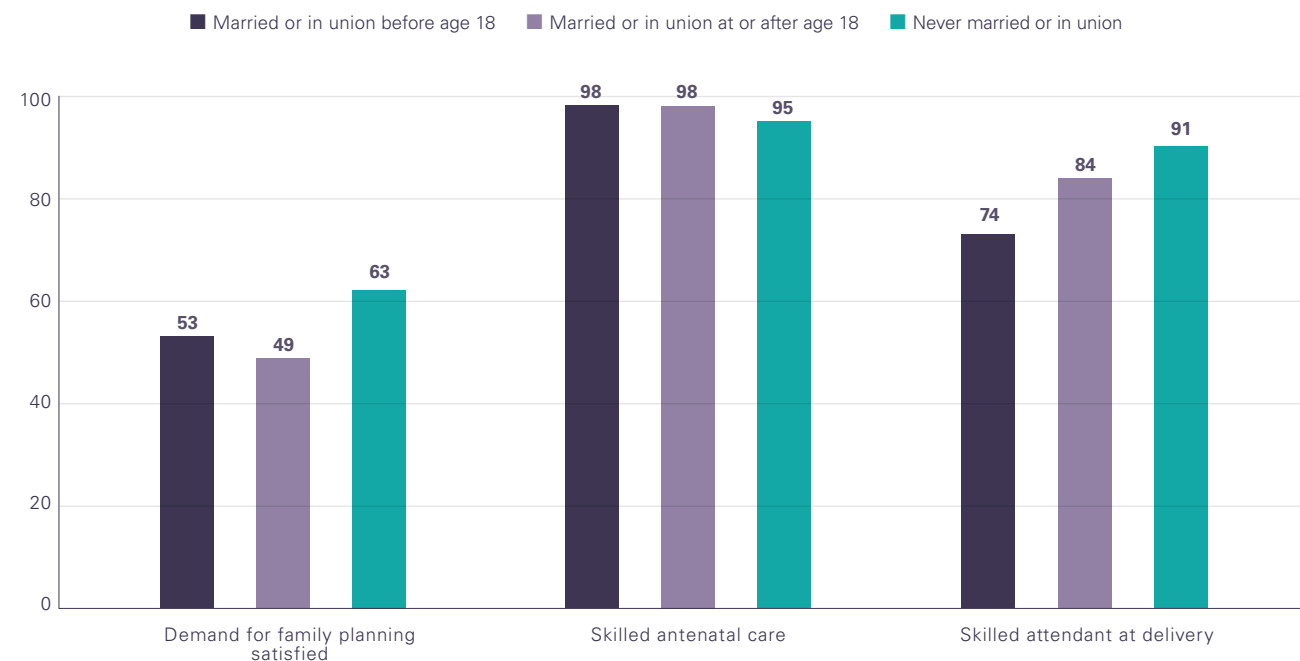


Figure 213. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



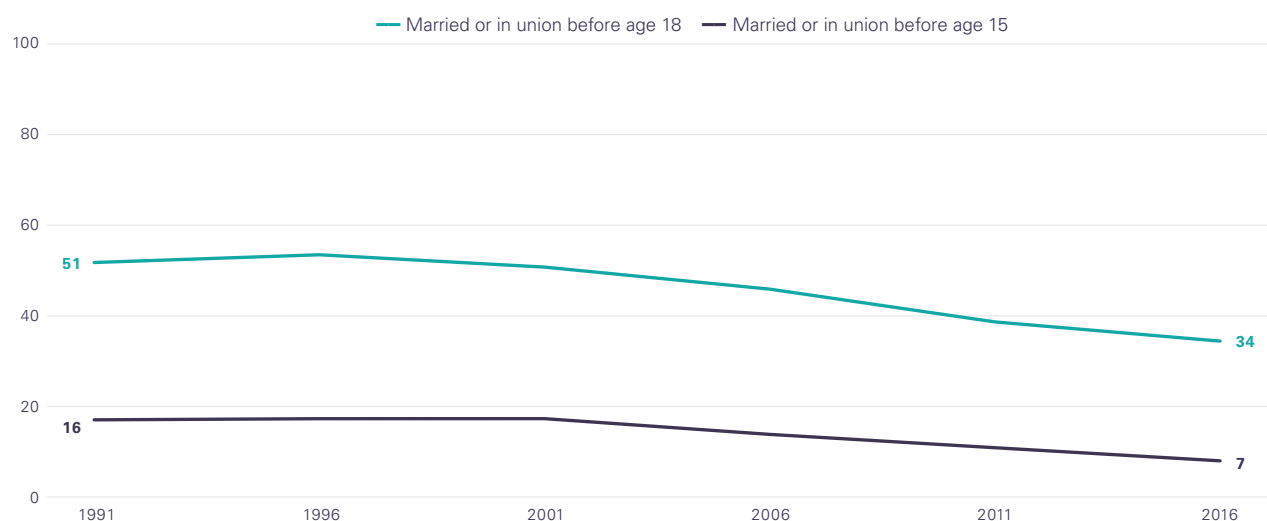
Reproductive health

Figure 214. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

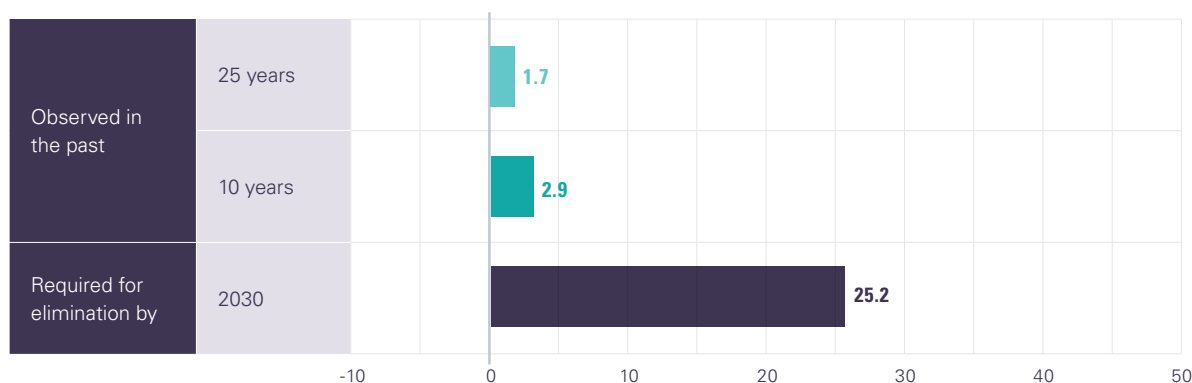
Figure 215. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 216. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Demographic and Health Survey 2016 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as 'n/a' indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

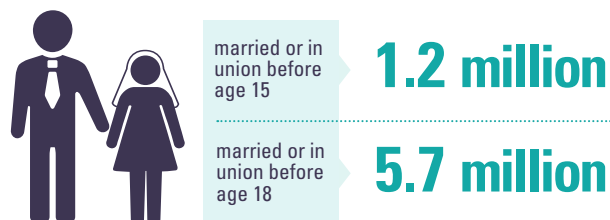
United Republic of Tanzania

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 18 | with exceptions: 14

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

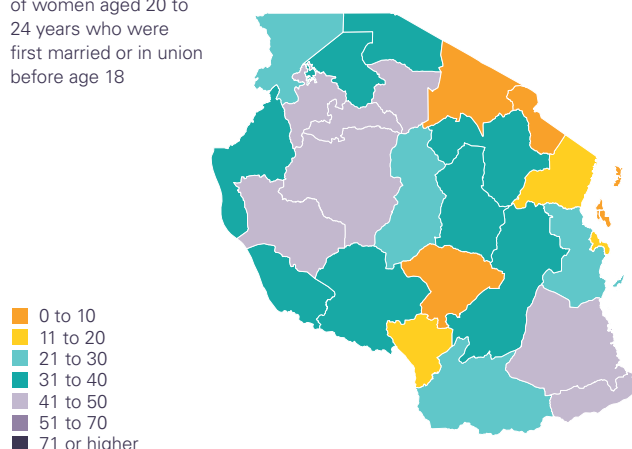
Figure 217. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



The United Republic of Tanzania is home to nearly 6 million child brides; 3 in 10 young women were married or in union in childhood

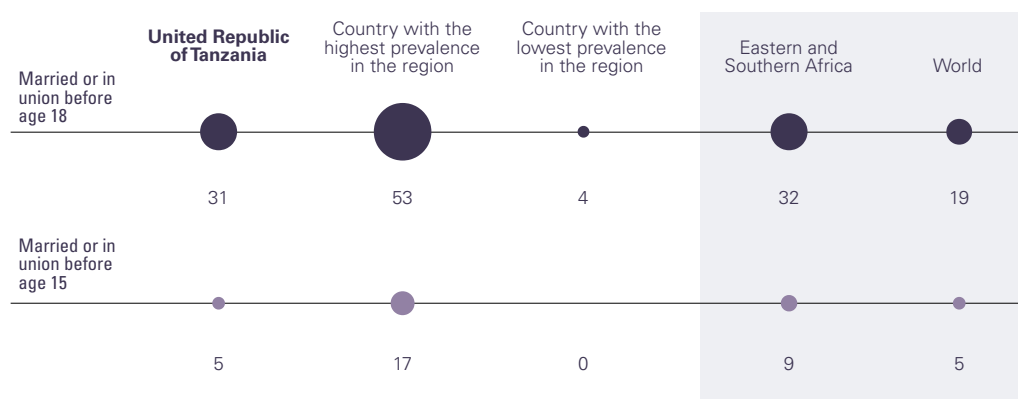
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 218. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



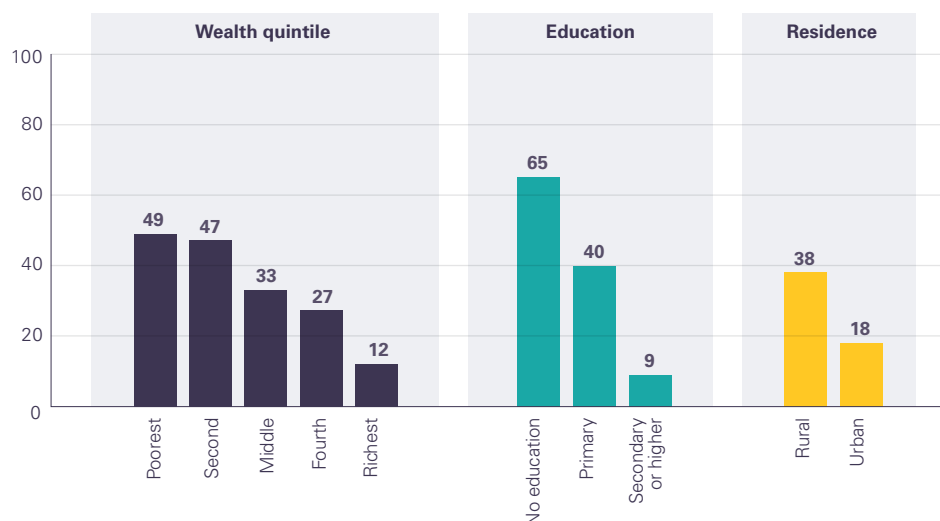
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 219. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

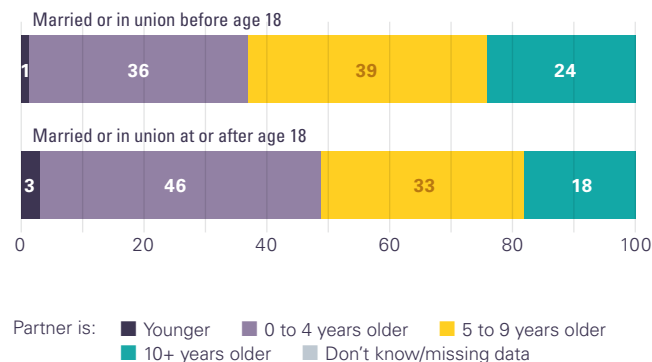
Figure 220. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

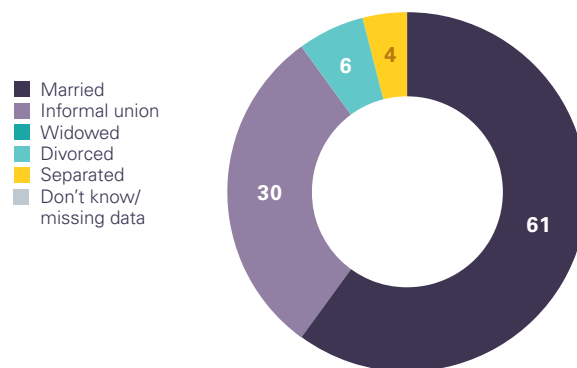
Spousal age gap

Figure 221. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Types of unions

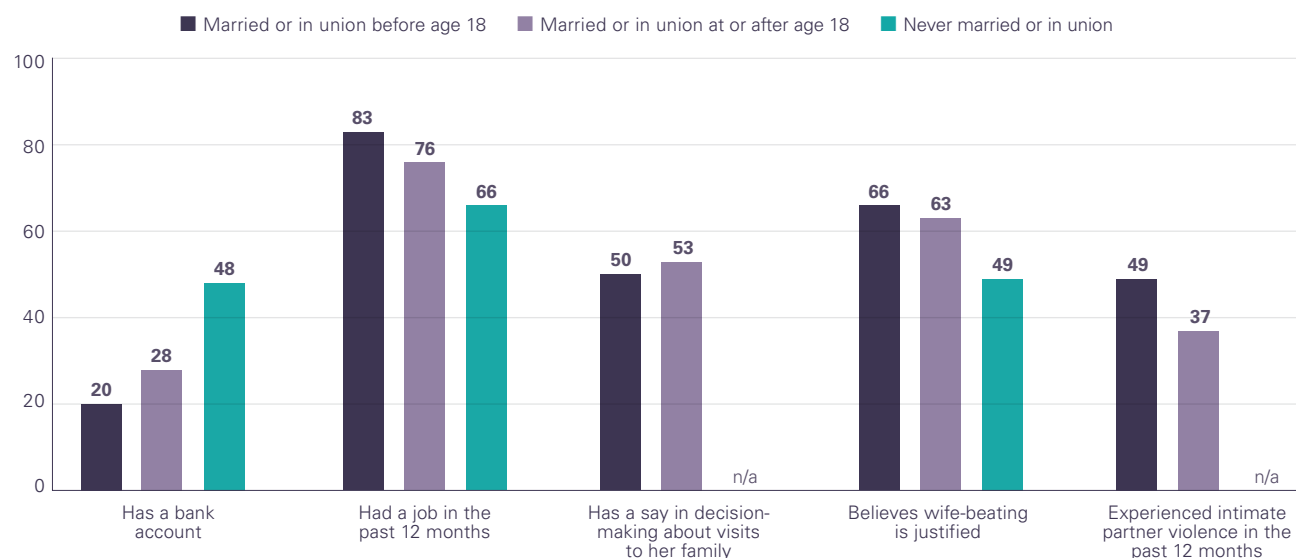
Figure 222. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

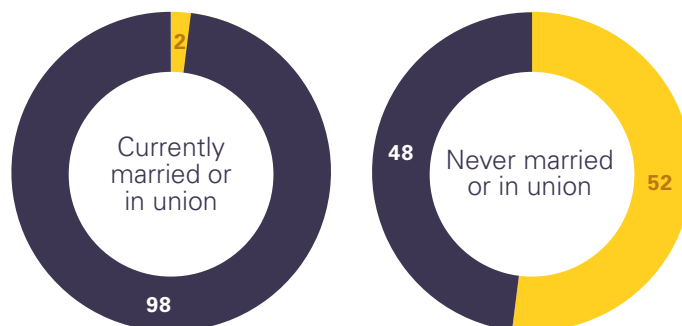
Figure 223. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Education

Figure 224. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

■ In school
■ Out of school
■ Don't know/missing data



Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 225. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

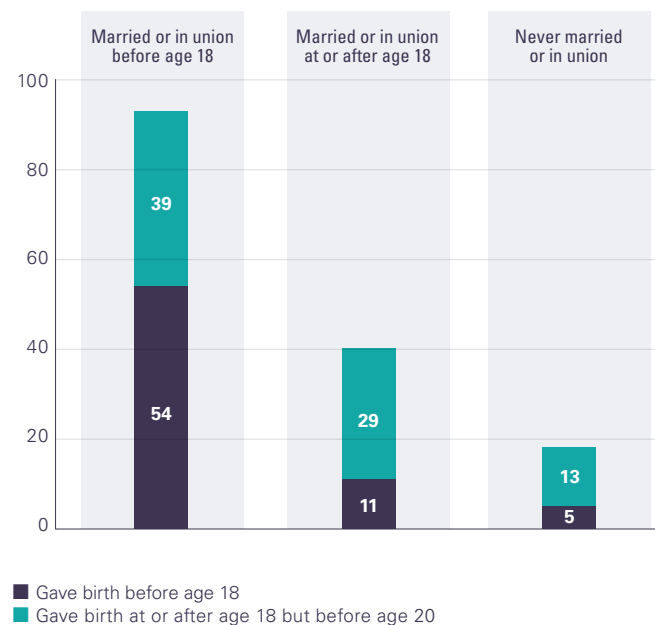
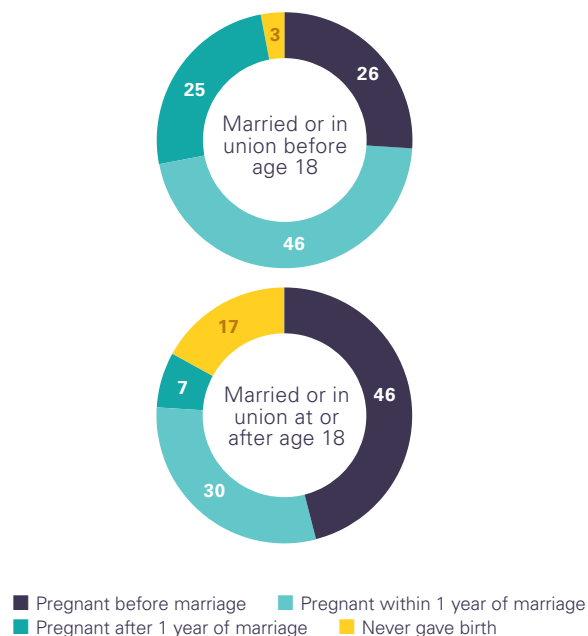
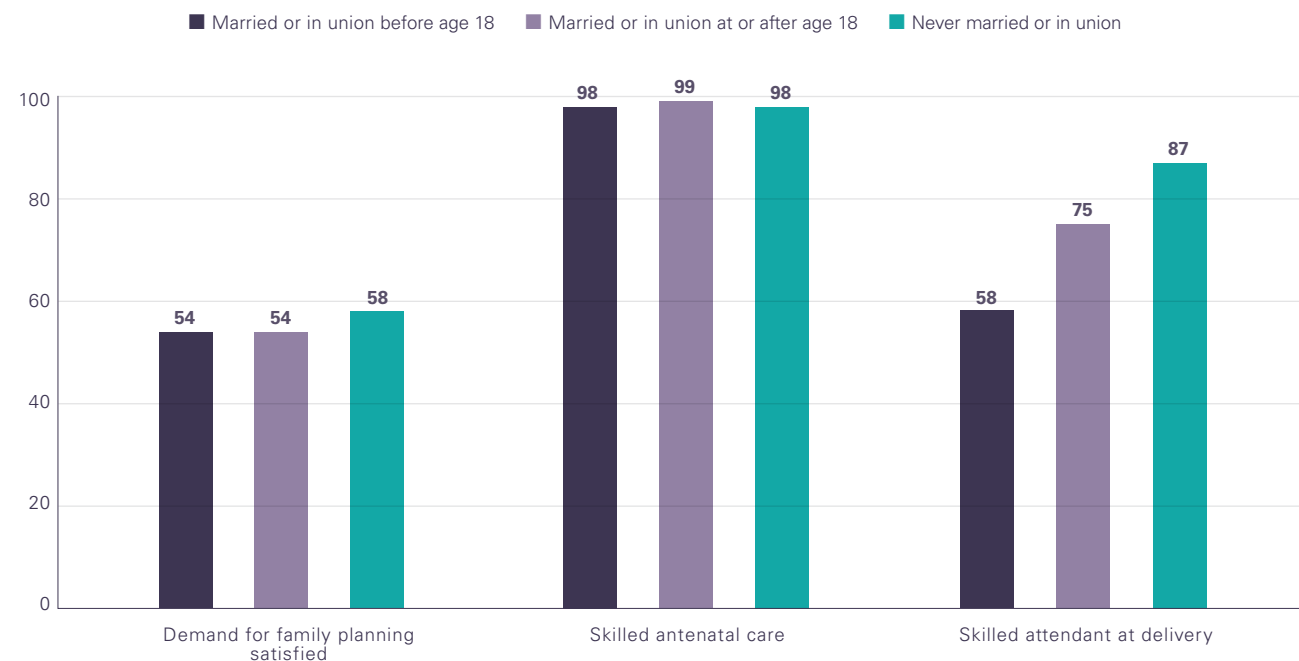


Figure 226. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



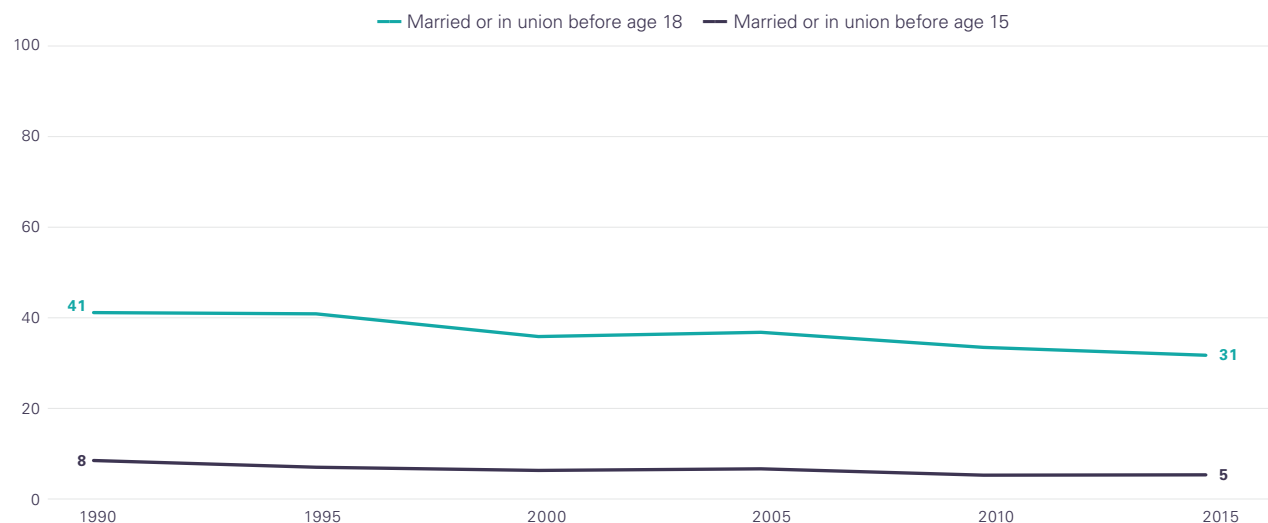
Reproductive health

Figure 227. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

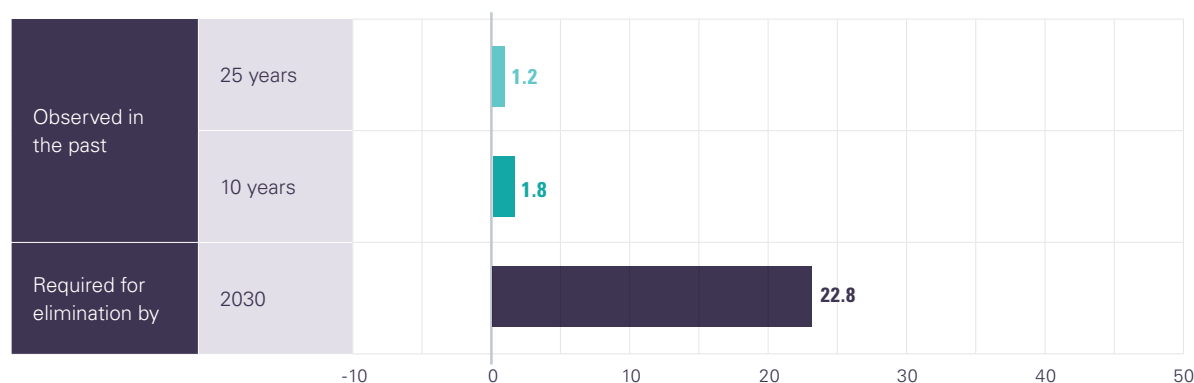
Figure 228. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 229. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Demographic and Health Survey 2015–2016 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to ‘marriage’ or ‘child brides’ include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, ‘elimination’ is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as ‘n/a’ indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

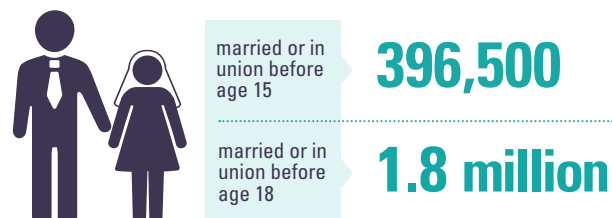
Zambia

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 21 | with exceptions: 16

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

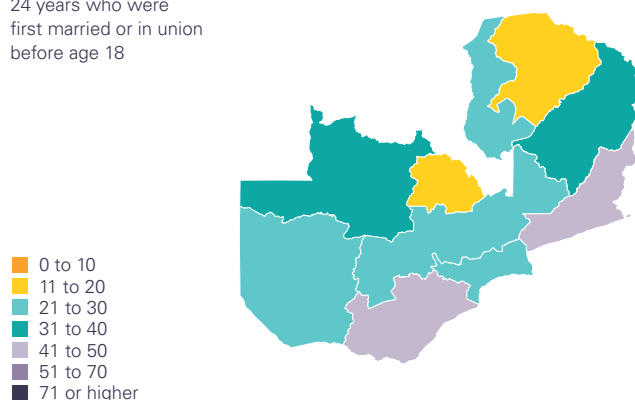
Figure 230. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Zambia is home to nearly 2 million child brides; 3 in 10 young women were married or in union in childhood

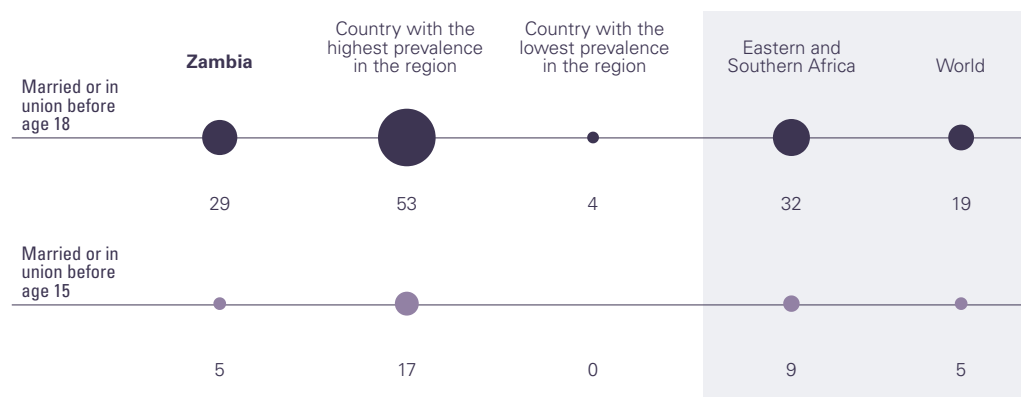
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 231. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



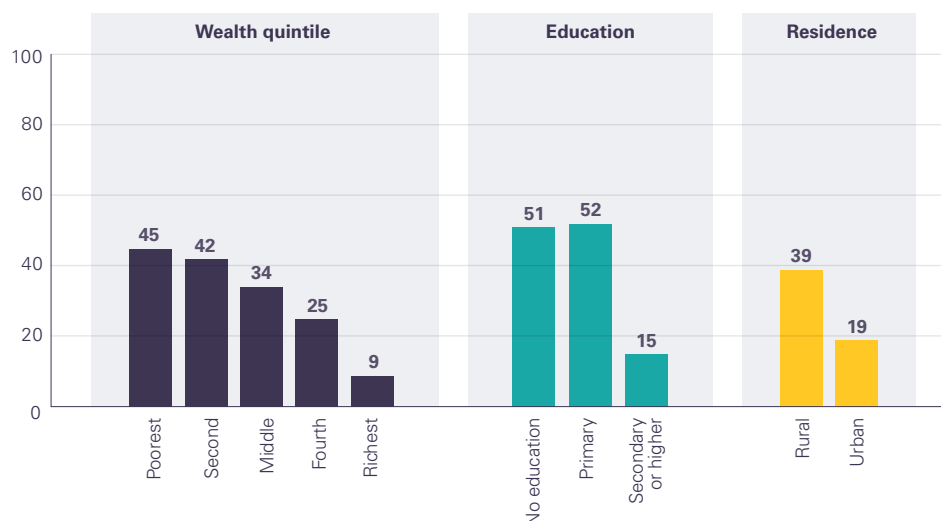
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 232. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

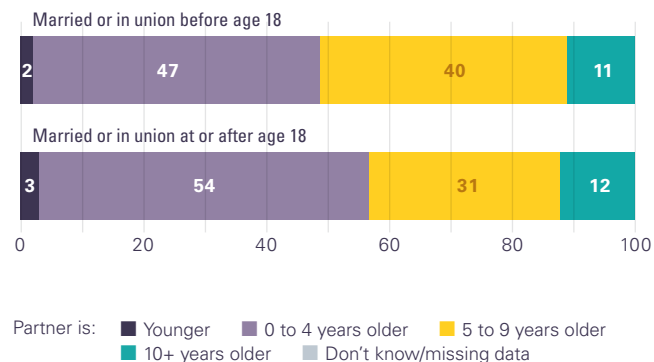
Figure 233. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

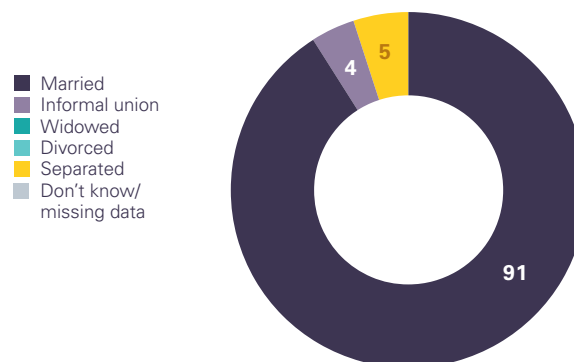
Spousal age gap

Figure 234. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Types of unions

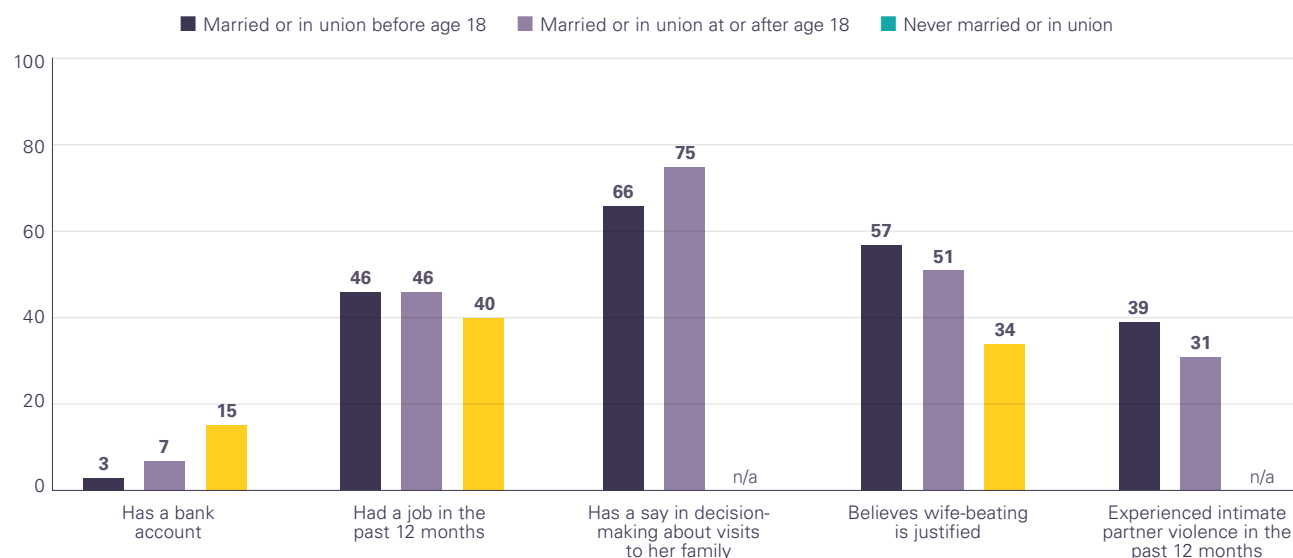
Figure 235. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

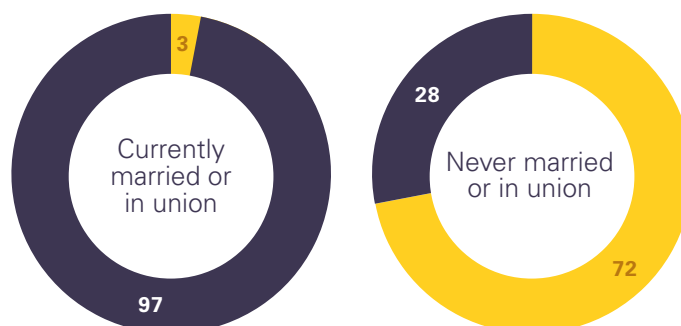
Figure 236. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Education

Figure 237. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

In school
 Out of school
 Don't know/missing data



Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 238. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

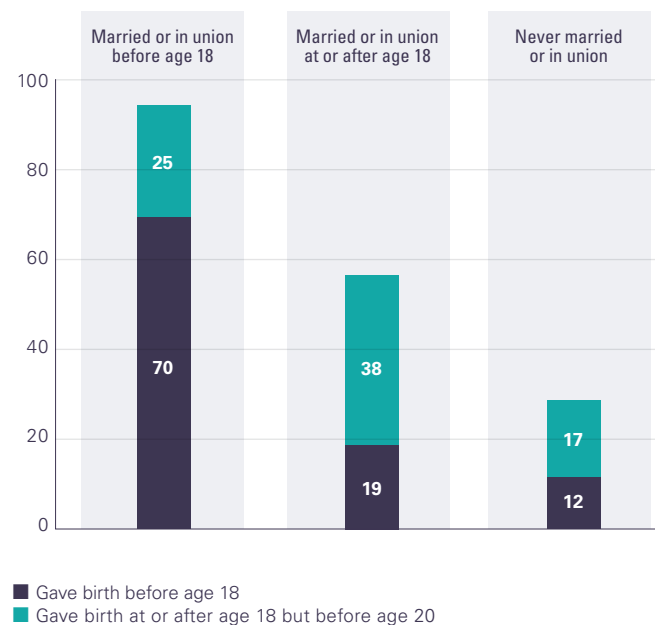
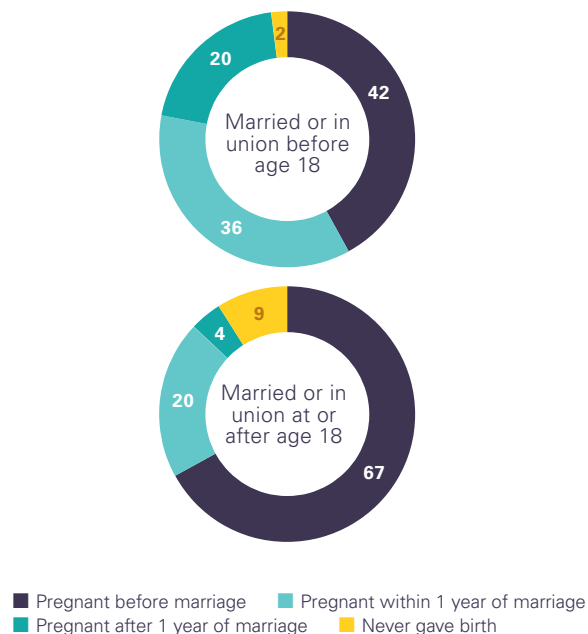
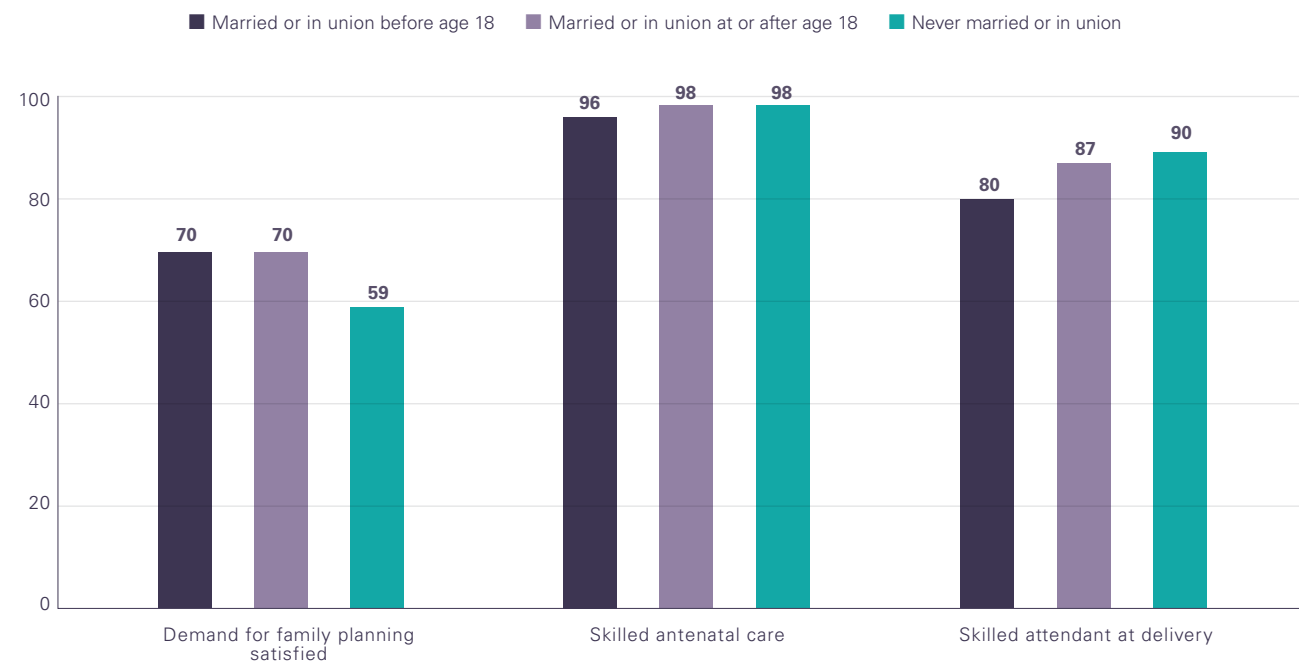


Figure 239. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



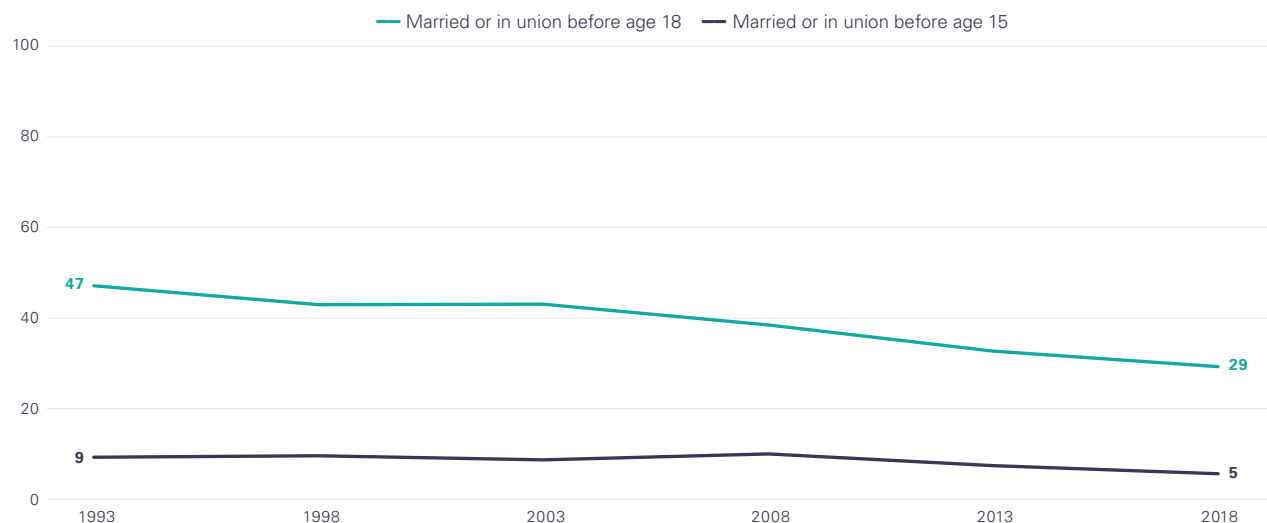
Reproductive health

Figure 240. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

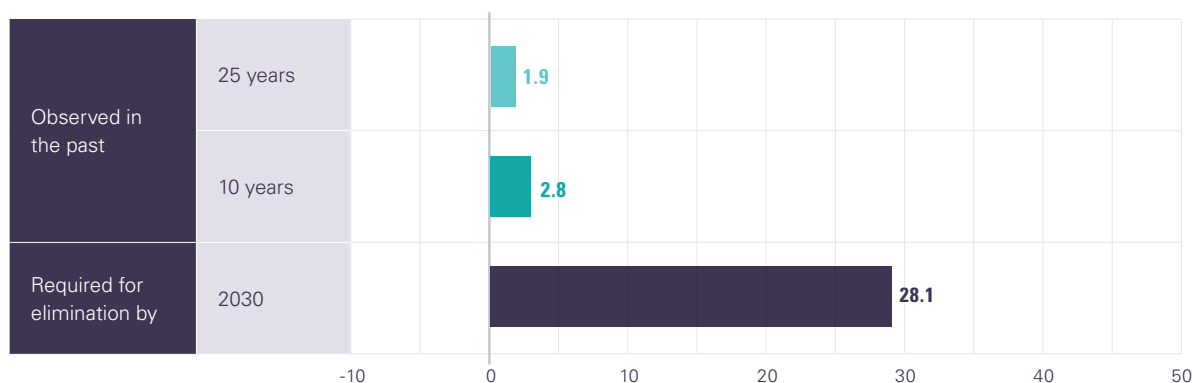
Figure 241. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 242. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Demographic and Health Survey 2018 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as 'n/a' indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.

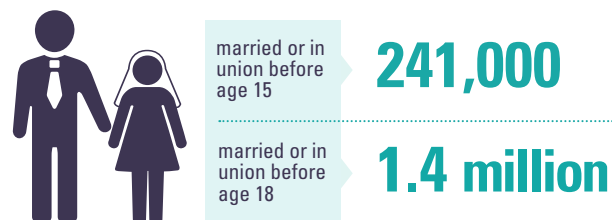
Zimbabwe

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 18 | with exceptions: n/a

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

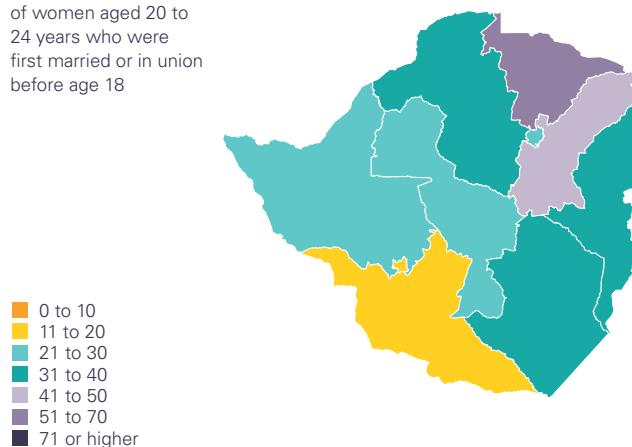
Figure 243. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Zimbabwe is home to over 1 million child brides; 1 in 3 young women were married or in union in childhood

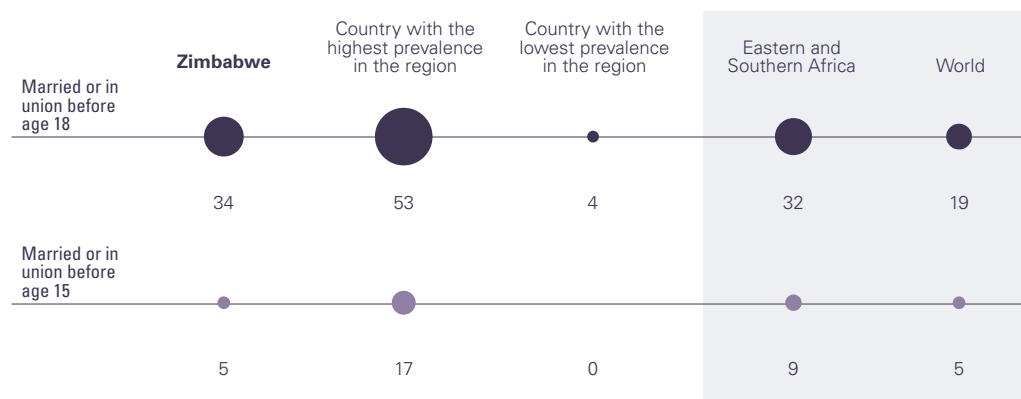
Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 244. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



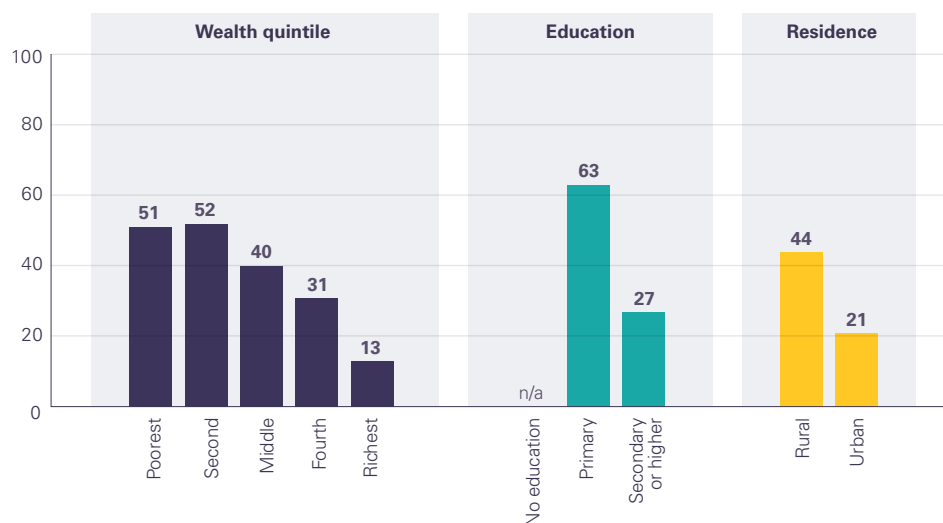
Regional and global comparisons

Figure 245. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Vulnerable populations

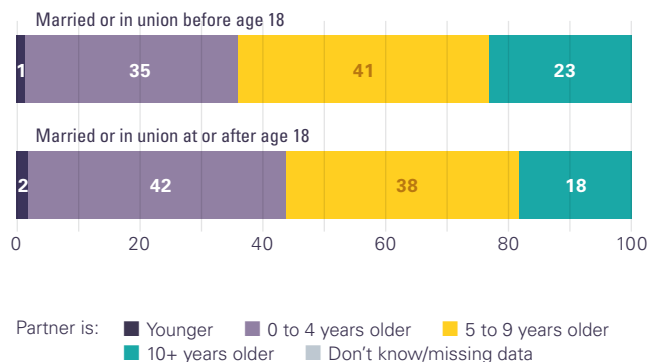
Figure 246. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence



Characteristics of unions

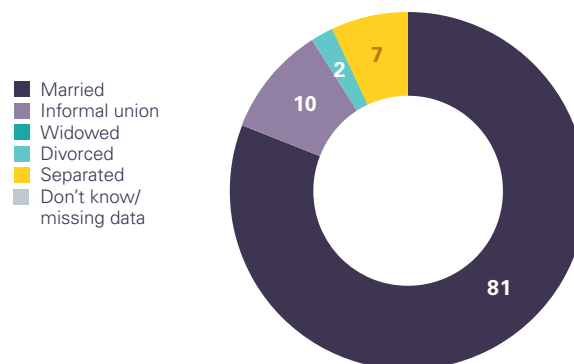
Spousal age gap

Figure 247. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners



Types of unions

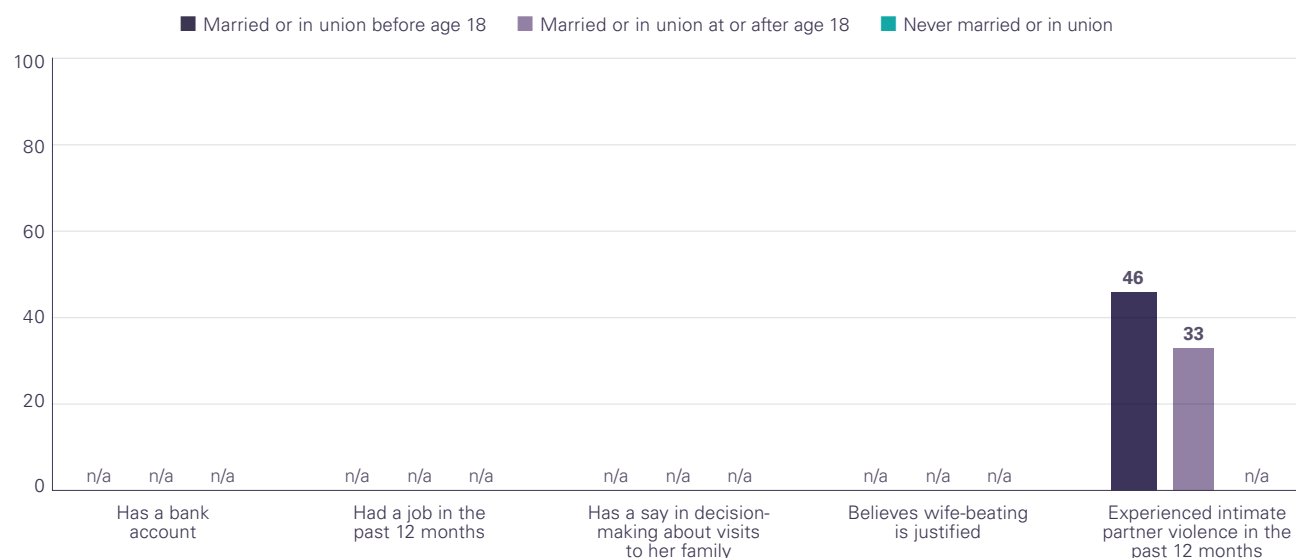
Figure 248. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status



Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

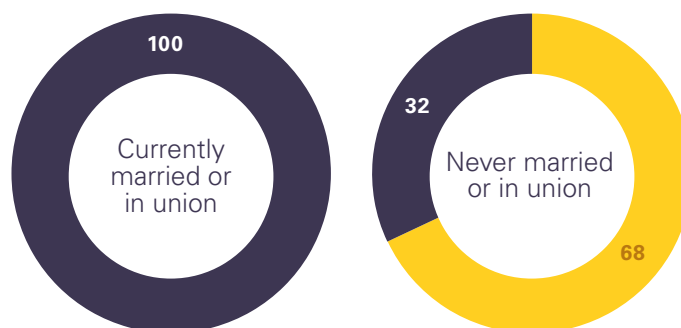
Figure 249. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months



Education

Figure 250. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

■ In school
■ Out of school
■ Don't know/missing data



Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 251. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

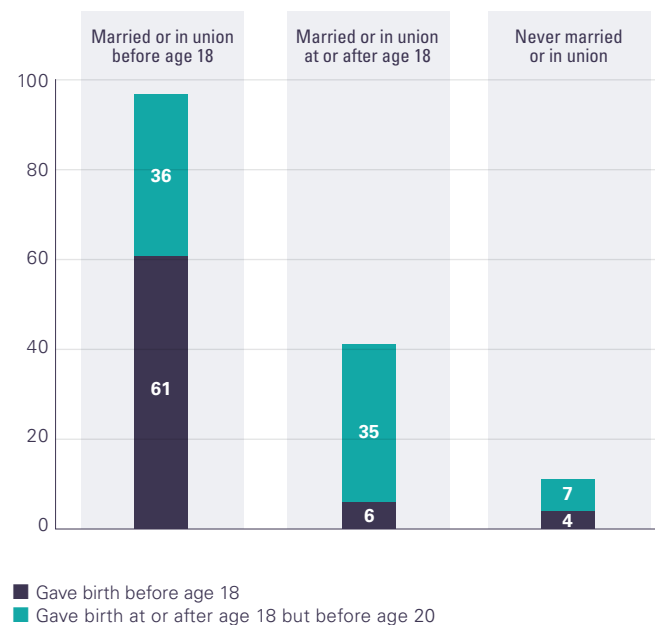
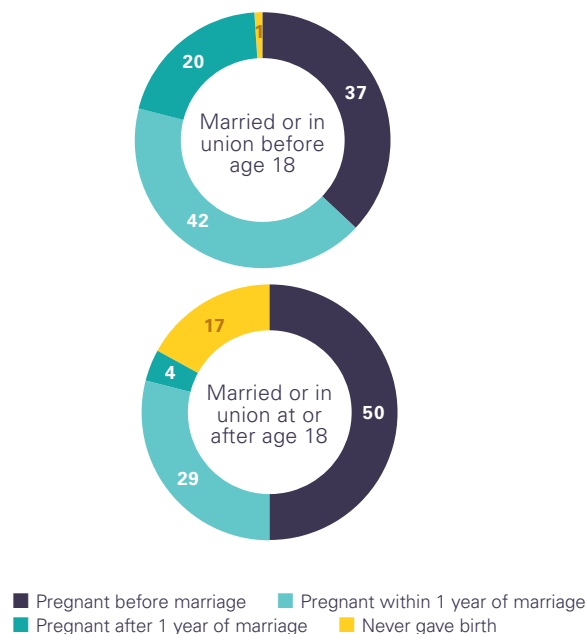
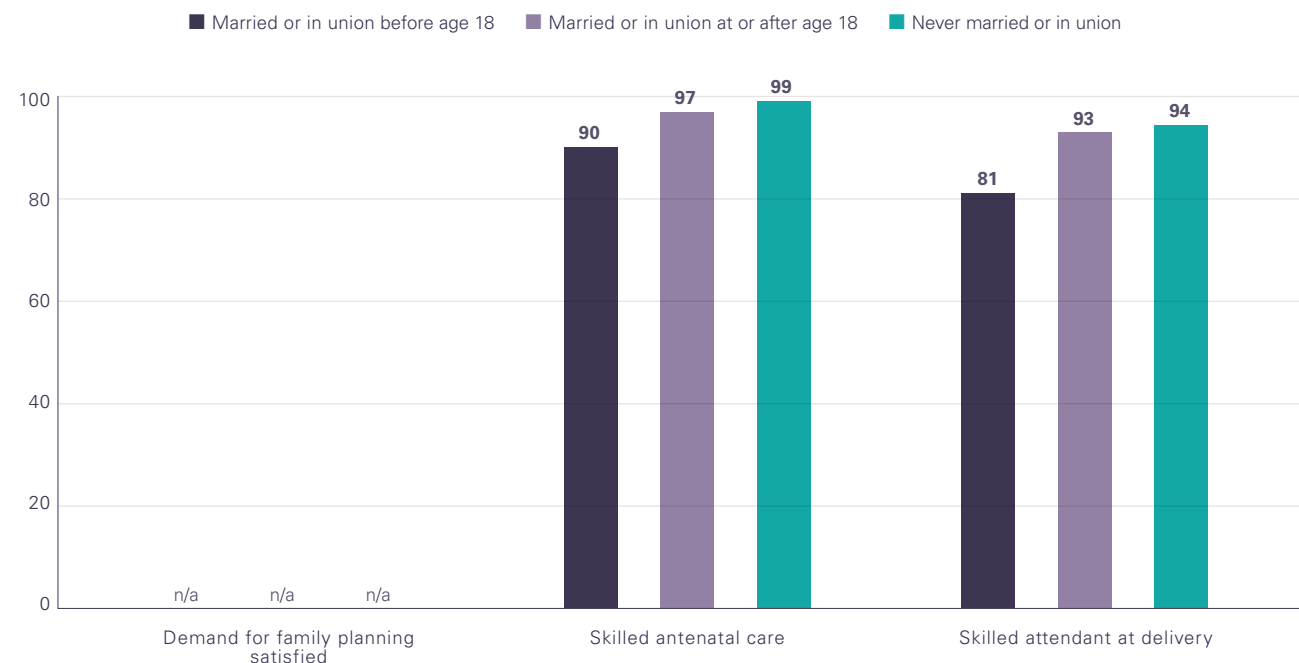


Figure 252. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage



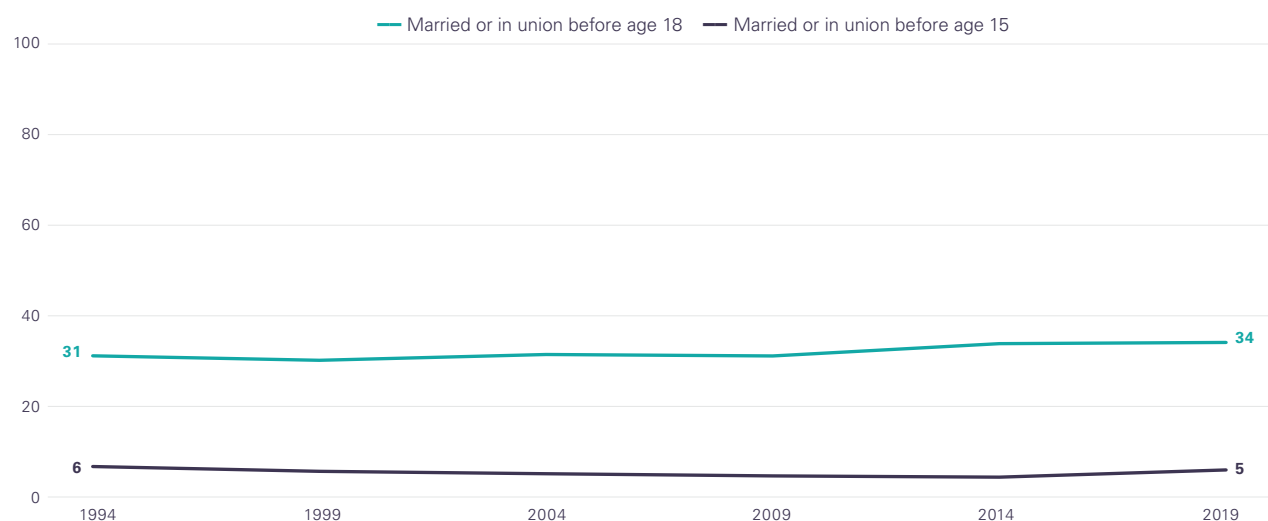
Reproductive health

Figure 253. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth



Generational trends

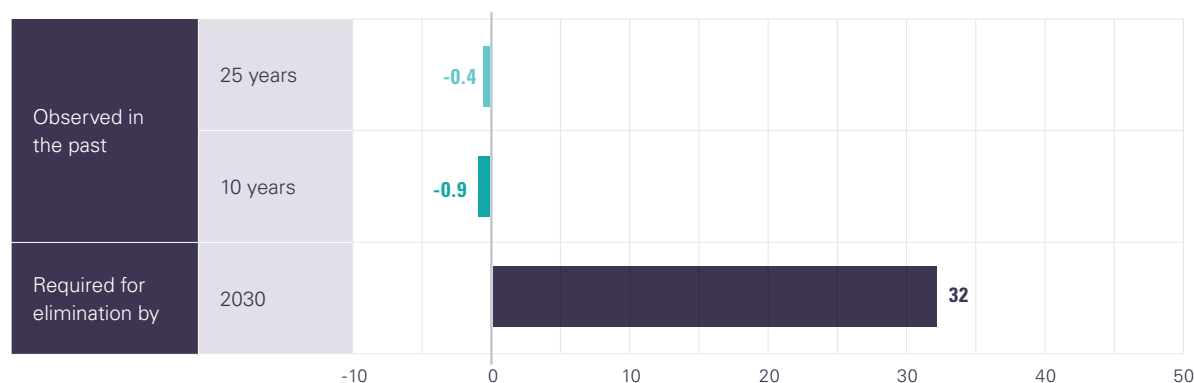
Figure 254. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18



Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 255. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination



NOTES:

Data are sourced from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2005 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. Trends in the prevalence of child marriage were calculated taking into account data from all available surveys. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators and population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as 'n/a' indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. Figures in donut charts may not add up to totals due to rounding.



Ending child marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa

As the data presented in this report attest, child marriage remains widespread in Eastern and Southern Africa. Currently, nearly one third (32 per cent) of the region's young women reported that they were married or in union before age 18. While some countries have been able to reduce the prevalence of child marriage over time, progress has been slow and unable to catch up with population growth. This means that millions of girls are expected to be married over the next decade.

To end child marriage by 2030, the region needs to further concentrate and accelerate efforts. This involves a focus on the root causes of the practice, including social norms, patriarchal structures and age-based discrimination. Because of the large – and growing – population of children in the region, there is an urgent need to scale up effective interventions. Furthermore, governments require support to implement and finance gender-responsive or gender-transformative laws, policies and systems.

A comprehensive and holistic programme approach is necessary to address child marriage in the region, and the goal is to take the following strategies to scale:

Adopt a system-wide approach to prevention.

A strong policy framework to underpin efforts to turn the tide towards eliminating child marriage is essential. Efforts should be made to conduct multisectoral interventions at all levels – from a strong national policy environment to actions that effectively reach individuals and communities.

Synergy among programmes at national, community and individual levels should also be encouraged.

Addressing child marriage requires adequate resources to operate programmes effectively across line ministries in the social sector. All of the four countries in the region implementing the UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme (see panel, p. 97) have costed national plans of action to end the practice. Budget briefs that capture allocations for government and development partner interventions that contribute to ending child marriage must also be developed, which can be used to advocate for increased funding. Undertaking such actions will encourage governments to invest in families and communities through interventions that combine gender-responsive social protection with improved access to quality education, provision of adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, and protection measures that prevent and respond to violence against children, especially girls.

Focus on girls' education and empowerment.

A girl's education is among the strongest predictors of early marriage. Therefore, as a prevention strategy, efforts to keep girls in school should be enhanced. Collaboration between the education sector and partners working on child marriage needs to be promoted. In addition to their participation in formal education, girls can be reached through initiatives that offer life skills, legal literacy and information and services related to sexual and reproductive

health, including menstrual hygiene. Such initiatives equip girls with the knowledge and skills they need to access services and to negotiate and influence decisions in their households and communities.

Promote positive social norms, gender norm change and attitudes and behaviours that encourage gender equality among adolescents, families and communities.

Men and boys should not be left out of child marriage programming, and their engagement – particularly to change attitudes and beliefs on early marriage – should be adopted as a primary objective in all child marriage prevention programmes.

Provide services to support adolescents in normal and emergency settings.

Child brides are disadvantaged compared to their peers who marry later in terms of education, reproductive health, employment and even exposure to violence. Quality social services for adolescents need to be available and accessible, including those that address sexual and reproductive health. Adolescent pregnancy outside of marriage, or the fear that adolescent girls will get pregnant, also helps fuel child marriage. Limited access to reproductive health information and services for both unmarried and married adolescents contributes to this situation.

Girls and boys have a right to information about their bodies, pregnancy, family planning and healthy relationships. In Africa, adolescent sexuality is often a taboo topic; however, equipping young people with information and access to services is essential for tackling child marriage and gender-based violence. Lessons from COVID-19 containment measures, such as lockdowns and restrictions of mobility, point to the need to classify such services for adolescents as critical and essential in national disaster preparedness plans in order to ensure their continuity.

Address the economic drivers of child marriage.

Poverty is a key driver of child marriage. Therefore, interventions that improve the socioeconomic status of families may be helpful in curtailing the practice and need to be considered in efforts to end it. Providing economic support and incentives for girls to remain unmarried and in school is just one aspect of these efforts. Additionally, there is a need to invest in adolescent girl-focused social protection schemes that help build alternative life trajectories for girls.

Strengthen data and evidence.

Quality data and evidence are needed to improve policies and programmes to end child marriage. Efforts to maximize the use of available data should be encouraged, including analysis of these data and the production of data-driven materials tailored to their audience and purpose.

In 2016, UNICEF, together with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), launched the Global Programme to End Child Marriage in 12 countries with a high prevalence and/or high burden of child marriage. These 12 countries include 4 in Eastern and Southern Africa: Ethiopia, Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia. The programme works to address the complex sociocultural and structural factors that underpin the practice, with the goal of ending child marriage by 2030.

Five approaches are being used to encourage reductions in the practice: (1) increasing the agency of and resources for adolescents – especially girls – at risk of or affected by child marriage, (2) enhancing legal and development policy frameworks to protect the rights of adolescent girls and boys, (3) using robust evidence for advocacy, programming, learning and tracking of progress, (4) improving systems and services that respond to the needs of adolescents at risk of or affected by child marriage and (5) expanding investment in girls and shifting social expectations of girls and boys (including through the engagement of women and men).

**end
child
marriage**
A voice. A chance. A future.

Technical notes

To assess the prevalence of child marriage, this analysis used SDG indicator 5.3.1: Proportion of women aged 20 to 24 years who were married or in union before age 18. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriages and informal unions in which women started living with a partner before age 18 as if married.

The number of child brides is defined as the number of girls under 18 who have already married plus the number of adult women who were married before age 18. This is calculated using the estimated prevalence of child marriage among each age cohort, applied to the female population in the respective cohort. This method relies on both household survey data for prevalence and demographic data for the size of the population. These total numbers refer to the population in 2020.

The percentage of currently married adolescent girls aged 15 to 17 years should not be interpreted as indicative of the risk of being married in childhood. Any prevalence measure among girls under age 18 will be an underestimate of the full extent of the practice, since girls who are unmarried at the time of data collection may still marry before their 18th birthday.

Confidence intervals are not shown in this publication. Caution is therefore warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences among groups may

not be significant. Key messages were developed taking confidence intervals into account; in cases where the title indicates a difference among various population groups or countries, it has been confirmed as statistically significant.

In this publication, data for the region of Eastern and Southern Africa reflect the set of countries outlined by the mandate of UNICEF's Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, thus aggregate values may differ from those included in other UNICEF publications that are based on a geographical classification of countries.

Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable data from 2015–2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the regional population.

This analysis draws on data from Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and other nationally representative household surveys that use comparable methodology. For detailed source information by country, see <data.unicef.org>. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019*, online edition, 2019.





Key facts on child marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa

- Eastern and Southern Africa stands among the regions with the highest prevalence of child marriage
- The region is home to over 50 million child brides, with the largest share in Ethiopia
- While levels of child marriage vary widely in the region, 2 of the 10 countries with the highest levels in the world are found here
- Child marriage also occurs among boys: In 3 countries in the region, at least 1 in 10 young men were first married in childhood
- The risk of child marriage varies substantially across population groups, with the highest levels seen in the poorest households, among those with little or no education and in rural areas
- Child marriage takes different forms across countries: In some countries, such as Angola and Uganda, informal unions are the predominant type, whereas in other countries nearly all are formal marriages
- Across countries, the majority of married adolescent girls do not attend school
- Child marriage is closely linked to early childbearing: In nearly all the countries profiled, the majority of child brides also gave birth before age 18
- Child marriage has become less common, but the region remains off track for reaching the SDG target of eliminating child marriage by 2030
- Among high-prevalence countries, Ethiopia and Zambia have made the greatest progress in reducing levels of child marriage in the past 25 years; still, like all other countries in the region, they need a substantial acceleration of progress to eliminate the practice
- If progress is not accelerated, an additional 20 million girls in Eastern and Southern Africa will become child brides in the next decade

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