Child Marriage in West and Central Africa

A statistical overview and reflections on ending the practice
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West and Central Africa has the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world and is home to nearly 60 million child brides. Four in 10 girls in the region are married before they turn 18. Their rights to a childhood have been trampled on: They have not been allowed to be children.

Child marriage impacts both girls and boys, but girls are disproportionately affected; gender inequality is one of the main drivers of the practice. For girls, being married as a child almost always means not attending school, early motherhood, and devastating impacts for socioemotional well-being. It affects their mental and physical health, and increases their vulnerability to violence and abuse.

Seven out of 10 countries with the highest levels of child marriage worldwide are in West and Central Africa. Many of the countries with the highest prevalence are also facing worsening humanitarian situations, whether provoked by climate change, food insecurity or growing situations of conflict. The Sahel is a region of particularly high risk; in the central Sahel, for instance, the level of child marriage reaches as high as 7 in 10 young women who were married before age 18. Overall, across the entire region, the highest levels of child marriage are seen in the poorest households, among those with little or no education and in rural areas.

Ending child marriage is a key priority for the African Union. The UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office has also prioritized it as one of our eight Key Results for Children. Our strategic approach to ending the practice is multisectoral, multipronged and contextualized. Experience has shown that key interventions include investments in girls’ access to quality education at scale, and social and behaviour change in favour of girls’ and women’s full and active participation in social and economic life.

With the support of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage and the Spotlight Initiative, UNICEF – in collaboration with governments, local authorities, religious and traditional leaders, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, girls and young women, and communities – is working to end child marriage in West and Central Africa. These efforts support Goal 17 of the African Union Agenda 2063 for full gender equality in all spheres of life and Sustainable Development Goal target 5.3 on ending harmful practices by 2030.

While progress in West and Central Africa has been slow compared to other regions, there have been promising developments over the past decade. The leadership and prioritization of a growing number of governments in this region is evident through national development strategies and budgets in favour of investments at scale for girls and their families. Political commitment is also being spearheaded by economic and political regional organizations, notably the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, which have prioritized ending child marriage as a means to strengthen development and to uphold the rights of children and women.

In our mission to end child marriage, failure is not an option. If progress is not accelerated, an additional 25 million girls in West and Central Africa will become child brides in the next decade. Our hope is that the data findings presented in this report provide an important contribution to inform current and future regional initiatives. We need to learn from countries that have made strong progress and increase efforts in those that are still struggling. Together, we must act with urgency to guarantee every child’s right to a childhood.

Marie-Pierre Poirier
UNICEF Regional Director for West and Central Africa
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Child marriage in West and Central 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. Nearly 60 million of them reside in West and Central 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

West and Central Africa is home to the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world: 37 per cent of young women married before age 18, and 12 per cent married before age 15

Figure 1. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

NOTES: Regional values are based on the latest available data per country, within the years 2015 to 2021. If data from prior to 2015 were also considered, the value for West and Central Africa would rise to 39 per cent. Data coverage was insufficient to calculate regional estimates for the Middle East and North Africa, North America and Western Europe.
SOURCE: UNICEF global databases, 2022, based on Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and other nationally representative sources, 2015–2021.

The region is home to nearly 60 million child brides, with the largest share in Nigeria

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

Although SDG indicator 5.3.1 measures child marriage among girls, the practice occurs among boys as well. West and Central Africa is also home to 1 of the 5 countries with the highest levels in the world for the practice among boys, the Central African Republic.

Across West and Central Africa, 1 in 25 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, 7 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

While levels of child marriage vary widely in the region, 7 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

In the Sahel, levels of child marriage are even higher than in the rest of West and Central Africa

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

**Figure 7.** Median age at first marriage or union among women aged 20 to 24 years

**NOTES:** This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The yellow border encloses the states and provinces included in the operational definition of the Sahel, which includes portions of Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, the Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan and Eritrea. For more details, see United Nations Children’s Fund, Child Marriage in the Sahel, UNICEF, New York, 2020.

**SOURCE:** UNICEF global databases, 2022, based on MICS, DHS and other nationally representative sources, 2010–2021.

**Girls and women in the Sahel marry nearly two years earlier than those outside the region**

**Figure 7.** Median age at first marriage or union among women aged 20 to 24 years

**NOTES:** This chart includes the countries in West and Central Africa that have states or provinces in the Sahel. For more details, see United Nations Children’s Fund, Child Marriage in the Sahel, UNICEF, New York, 2020. Data for Mauritania have been excluded as the latest data source indicates that fewer than 50 per cent of women aged 20 to 24 years in the Non-Sahel regions of the country were married and thus a median could not be produced.

**SOURCE:** UNICEF global databases, 2022, based on MICS, DHS and other nationally representative sources, 2012–2021.
In West and Central Africa, the pace of progress has been slow overall and varies across countries

Figure 8. 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, 25 million more girls in the region will marry in childhood in the next decade

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

NOTES: Trend analysis is based on the latest available data at the time of publication, with new revisions superseding previously published results. Therefore, it is not advisable to compare results across publications to draw conclusions about trends in the practice.

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 factors such as humanitarian crises, conflict, climate change or 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
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 West and Central Africa with available data. 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 subpopulations in which child marriage is more common across household wealth, level of education and place of residence.

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1 Profiles for Cabo Verde and Equatorial Guinea are not included in this publication as the datasets required for this analysis were unavailable for these countries.
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 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.
Benin

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

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

Figure 10. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 11. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

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

Regional and global comparisons

Figure 12. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Vulnerable populations

Figure 13. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence

Benin is home to over 1 million child brides; 1 in 3 young women were married in childhood
Characteristics of unions

Spousal age gap

Figure 14. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner is:</th>
<th>Younger</th>
<th>0 to 4 years older</th>
<th>5 to 9 years older</th>
<th>10+ years older</th>
<th>Don't know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after age 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of unions

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Informal union</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Separated</th>
<th>Don't know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 16. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or age 18</th>
<th>Never married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a bank account</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a job in the past 12 months</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a say in decision-making about visits to her family</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believes wife-beating is justified</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>In school</th>
<th>Out of school</th>
<th>Don't know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently married or in union</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married or in union</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

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

![Graph showing percentage distribution of women by age at marriage and timing of pregnancy.]

Figure 19. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

![Graph showing percentage distribution of women by age at marriage and timing of pregnancy.]

Reproductive health

Figure 20. 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

![Graph showing percentage of women by age at marriage and reproductive health indicators.]
Generational trends

Figure 21. 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 22. 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 2017–2018 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 2015 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. 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Burkina Faso

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls with parental permission: 17
without parental permission: 20 | with judicial authorization: 15

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

Figure 23. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Prevalence of child marriage

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

Burkina Faso is home to nearly 3 million child brides; 1 in 2 young women were married in childhood

Regional and global comparisons

Figure 25. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Vulnerable populations

Figure 26. 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 27. 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 28. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status.

Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 29. 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 30. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status.
**Lives of child brides** (continued)

### Early childbearing

**Figure 31.** Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
<th>Never married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Gave birth before age 18
- Gave birth at or after age 18 but before age 20

**Figure 32.** Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

- Married before age 18
- Married at or after age 18
- Never married

### Reproductive health

**Figure 33.** 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>80</td>
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<td></td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Demand for family planning satisfied
- Skilled antenatal care
- Skilled attendant at delivery
Generational trends

Figure 34. 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 35. 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 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 2015 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Cameroon

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 21 | with exceptions: 15

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage
Figure 36. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Prevalence of child marriage
Figure 37. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

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

Regional and global comparisons
Figure 38. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Vulnerable populations
Figure 39. 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 40.** Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Gap</th>
<th>Younger</th>
<th>0 to 4 years older</th>
<th>5 to 9 years older</th>
<th>10+ years older</th>
<th>Don’t know/missing data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td>Married at or after age 18</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Partner is: Younger 0 to 4 years older 5 to 9 years older 10+ years older Don’t know/missing data

Types of unions

**Figure 41.** 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

Living of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

**Figure 42.** 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

- Married before age 18
- Married at or after age 18
- Never married

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
<th>Never married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a bank account</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a job in the past 12 months</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a say in decision-making about visits to her family</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believes wife-beating is justified</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education

**Figure 43.** Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

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

- Currently married or in union
- Never married or in union

COUNTRY PROFILES: CAMEROON
Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

**Figure 44.** Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
<th>Never married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gave birth before age 18

Gave birth at or after age 18 but before age 20

**Figure 45.** Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

- Married before age 18
- Married at or after age 18
- Pregnant before marriage
- Pregnant within 1 year of marriage
- Pregnant after 1 year of marriage
- Never gave birth

Reproductive health

**Figure 46.** 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

- Married before age 18
- Married at or after age 18
- Never married

Demand for family planning satisfied

Skilled antenatal care

Skilled attendant at delivery
Generational trends

**Figure 47.** 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 48.** 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 2015 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. 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Central African Republic

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

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

Figure 49. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Married before age 15</th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>358,300</td>
<td>747,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Central African Republic is home to over 747,000 child brides; 3 in 5 young women were married in childhood

Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 50. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

Regional and global comparisons

Figure 51. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vulnerable populations

Figure 52. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence

Wealth quintile

- Poorest: 68
- Second: 64
- Middle: 68
- Fourth: 60
- Richest: 47

Education

- No education: 69
- Primary: 54
- Secondary or higher: 49

Residence

- Rural: 66
- Urban: 53
Characteristics of unions

Spousal age gap

Figure 53. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age gap</th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 4 years older</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9 years older</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+ years older</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/missing data</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of unions

Figure 54. 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 55. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
<th>Never married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a bank account</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a job in the past 12 months</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a say in decision-making about visits to her family</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believes wife-beating is justified</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education

Figure 56. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

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

COUNTRY PROFILES: CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
**Lives of child brides** *(continued)*

**Early childbearing**

Figure 57. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

Figure 58. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

**Reproductive health**

Figure 59. 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 60. 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 61. 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 2018–2019 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 2015 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. 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Chad

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

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

Figure 62. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 63. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

Chad is home to over 2 million child brides; 3 in 5 young women were married in childhood

Regional and global comparisons

Figure 64. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Vulnerable populations

Figure 65. 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 66. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Gap</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after age 18</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Partner is: Younger, 0 to 4 years older, 5 to 9 years older, 10+ years older, Don't know/missing data

Types of unions

Figure 67. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal union</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/missing data</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 68. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a bank account</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a job in the past 12 months</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a say in decision-making about visits to her family</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believes wife-beating is justified</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after age 18</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 69. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently married or in union</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married or in union</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of school</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/missing data</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Early childbearing

Figure 70. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

Figure 71. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

Reproductive health

Figure 72. 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 73. 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 74. 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 2015 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. 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Congo
Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 18 | with exceptions: n/a

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

Figure 75. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

The Congo is home to over 421,000 child brides; 1 in 4 young women were married in childhood

Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 76. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

Regional and global comparisons

Figure 77. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Vulnerable populations

Figure 78. 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 79. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Gap</th>
<th>Younger</th>
<th>0 to 4 years older</th>
<th>5 to 9 years older</th>
<th>10+ years older</th>
<th>Don’t know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after age 18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of unions

Figure 80. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal union</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/missing data</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 81. 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 82. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

![Bar chart showing percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20.]

- Married before age 18: 30%
- Married at or after age 18: 60%
- Never married: 10%

Figure 83. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

![Pie chart showing percentage of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage.]

- Married before age 18: 35%
- Married at or after age 18: 32%
- Never married: 63%

Reproductive health

Figure 84. 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

![Bar chart showing percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning, antenatal care, and skilled attendant are satisfied.]

- Married before age 18: 88%
- Married at or after age 18: 95%
- Never married: 94%
- Demand for family planning satisfied: 36%
- Skilled antenatal care: 51%
- Skilled attendant at delivery: 90%
Generational trends

Figure 85. 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 86. 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 2014–2015 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 2015 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. 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Côte d’Ivoire

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

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

Figure 87. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 88. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

Côte d’Ivoire is home to over 2 million child brides; 1 in 4 young women were married in childhood

Regional and global comparisons

Figure 89. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Vulnerable populations

Figure 90. 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 91. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner is:</th>
<th>Younger</th>
<th>0 to 4 years older</th>
<th>5 to 9 years older</th>
<th>10+ years older</th>
<th>Don’t know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after age 18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of unions

Figure 92. 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 93. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Has a bank account</th>
<th>Had a job in the past 12 months</th>
<th>Has a say in decision-making about visits to her family</th>
<th>Believes wife-beating is justified</th>
<th>Experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after age 18</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 94. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

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

Currently married or in union

- 95

Never married or in union

- 45
- 55

COUNTRY PROFILES: CÔTE D’IVOIRE
Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 95. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

Figure 96. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

Reproductive health

Figure 97. 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 98. 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 99. 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 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 2015 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. 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Democratic Republic of the Congo

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

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage
Figure 100. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Prevalence of child marriage
Figure 101. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is home to over 7 million child brides; 3 in 10 young women were married in childhood

Regional and global comparisons
Figure 102. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Vulnerable populations
Figure 103. 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 104. 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 105. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status

Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 106. 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

Figure 107. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status
Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 108. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

Figure 109. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

Reproductive health

Figure 110. 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 111. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married before age 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Looking ahead to ending child marriage**

**Observed and required rates of progress**

Figure 112. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Rate of Reduction (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observed in the past 25 years</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed in the past 10 years</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required for elimination by 2030</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:**

Data are sourced from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017–2018 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 2015 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. 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Gabon

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 21 | with exceptions: 15

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

Figure 113. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

![Married before age 15 and 18](image)

53,400

176,000

Gabon is home to around 176,000 child brides; 1 in 5 young women were married in childhood

Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 114. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

Regional and global comparisons

Figure 115. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Vulnerable populations

Figure 116. 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 117. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spousal age gap</th>
<th>0-4 years older</th>
<th>5-9 years older</th>
<th>10+ years older</th>
<th>Don't know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after age 18</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Partner is: 
- Younger
- 0 to 4 years older
- 5 to 9 years older
- 10+ years older
- Don’t know/missing data

Types of unions

Figure 118. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of unions</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Informal union</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Separated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of girls</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 119. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
<th>Never married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a bank account</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a job in the past 12 months</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a say in decision-making about visits to her family</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believes wife-beating is justified</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 120. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schooling status</th>
<th>Currently married or in union</th>
<th>Never married or in union</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In school</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of school</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/missing data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COUNTRY PROFILES: GABON
Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 121. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

Figure 122. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

Reproductive health

Figure 123. 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 124.** Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married before age 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking ahead to ending child marriage

**Observed and required rates of progress**

**Figure 125.** 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Observed in the past</th>
<th>Required for elimination by 2030</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 years</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 2015 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. 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Gambia

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

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

Figure 126. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 127. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

Regional and global comparisons

Figure 128. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Vulnerable populations

Figure 129. 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 Gambia is home to over 224,000 child brides; 1 in 4 young women were married in childhood

Married before age 18

Married before age 15

Gambia

Country with the highest prevalence in the region

Country with the lowest prevalence in the region

West and Central Africa

World

Wealth quintile

Education

Residence

0 to 10
11 to 20
21 to 30
31 to 40
41 to 50
51 to 70
71 or higher

Poorest
Second
Middle
Fourth
Richest
No education
Primary
Secondary or higher
Rural
Urban

Married before age 18

Married before age 15

62,200
224,200

23
76
8

37
19

6
28
2

12
5

23
76
8

37
19

6
28
2

12
5

46
31
27
15
10

49
44
9

43
17
Characteristics of unions

**Spousal age gap**

Figure 130. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners.

- Married before age 18:
  - Partner is: Younger
  - 0 to 4 years older
  - 5 to 9 years older
  - 10+ years older
  - Don’t know/missing data
  - Distribution: 8%, 29%, 64%

- Married at or after age 18:
  - Partner is: Younger
  - 0 to 4 years older
  - 5 to 9 years older
  - 10+ years older
  - Don’t know/missing data
  - Distribution: 15%, 37%, 47%

**Types of unions**

Figure 131. 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 132. 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.

- Married before age 18
- Married at or after age 18
- Never married

- Has a bank account
- Had a job in the past 12 months
- Has a say in decision-making about visits to her family
- Believes wife-beating is justified
- Experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months

**Figure 133.** Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status.

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

- Currently married or in union
- Never married or in union
Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 134. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

![Graph showing percentage distribution of ever-married women by timing of pregnancy and marriage](image)

Figure 135. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

![Graph showing percentage distribution of ever-married women by timing of pregnancy and marriage](image)

Reproductive health

Figure 136. 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

![Graph showing reproductive health outcomes](image)
**Generational trends**

*Figure 137.* Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married before age 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Looking ahead to ending child marriage**

**Observed and required rates of progress**

*Figure 138.* 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observed in the past 25 years</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed in the past 10 years</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required for elimination by 2030</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 2015 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. 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 are population groups and 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Ghana

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

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage
Figure 139. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Prevalence of child marriage
Figure 140. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

Ghana is home to over 2 million child brides; 1 in 5 young women were married in childhood

Regional and global comparisons
Figure 141. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Vulnerable populations
Figure 142. 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 143.** Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Gap</th>
<th>Younger</th>
<th>0 to 4 years older</th>
<th>5 to 9 years older</th>
<th>10+ years older</th>
<th>Don’t know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after age 18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Partner is: [Younger](#), [0 to 4 years older](#), [5 to 9 years older](#), [10+ years older](#), [Don’t know/missing data](#)

**Types of unions**

**Figure 144.** 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 145.** 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Has a bank account</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Had a job in the past 12 months</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a say in decision-making about visits to her family</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believes wife-beating is justified</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 146.** Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

- [In school](#)
- [Out of school](#)
- [Don’t know/missing data](#)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currently married or in union</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never married or in union</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COUNTRY PROFILES: GHANA
Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 147. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

Figure 148. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

Reproductive health

Figure 149. 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 150. 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 151. 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 2017–2018 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 2015 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Guinea

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

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

Figure 152. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 153. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

Guinea is home to nearly 2 million child brides; 1 in 2 young women were married in childhood

Regional and global comparisons

Figure 154. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Vulnerable populations

Figure 155. 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 156. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner is:</th>
<th>Younger</th>
<th>0 to 4 years older</th>
<th>5 to 9 years older</th>
<th>10+ years older</th>
<th>Don't know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after age 18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of unions

Figure 157. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Informal union</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Separated</th>
<th>Don’t know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls ever-married by current status in 15 to 17 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 158. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Has a bank account</th>
<th>Had a job in the past 12 months</th>
<th>Has a say in decision-making about visits to her family</th>
<th>Believes wife-beating is justified</th>
<th>Experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after age 18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 159. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schooling status</th>
<th>Currently married or in union</th>
<th>Never married or in union</th>
<th>Don’t know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In school</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of school</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/missing data</td>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 160. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
<th>Never married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- ■ Gave birth before age 18
- ■ Gave birth at or after age 18 but before age 20

Figure 161. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

- Married before age 18
- Married at or after age 18
- Never married

Reproductive health

Figure 162. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
<th>Never married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demand for family planning satisfied</td>
<td>Skilled antenatal care</td>
<td>Skilled attendant at delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Generational trends

Figure 163. 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 164. 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 2015 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. 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Guinea-Bissau

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

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage
Figure 165. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Guinea-Bissau is home to over 160,000 child brides; 1 in 4 young women were married in childhood

Prevalence of child marriage
Figure 166. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

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

Vulnerable populations
Figure 168. 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 169.* Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner is</th>
<th>Younger</th>
<th>0 to 4 years older</th>
<th>5 to 9 years older</th>
<th>10+ years older</th>
<th>Don’t know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after age 18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of unions

*Figure 170.* Percentage distribution of currently married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Informal union</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Separated</th>
<th>Don’t know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lives of child brides

**Autonomy, empowerment and violence**

*Figure 171.* 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
<th>Never married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a bank account</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a job in the past 12 months</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a say in decision-making about visits to her family</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believes wife-beating is justified</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 172.** Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>In school</th>
<th>Out of school</th>
<th>Don’t know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently married or in union</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married or in union</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 173. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

Figure 174. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

Reproductive health

Figure 175. 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 176. 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 177. 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 2018–2019 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 2015 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. 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Liberia

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

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

Figure 178. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 179. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

Liberia is home to nearly 426,000 child brides; 1 in 4 young women were married in childhood

Regional and global comparisons

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

Vulnerable populations

Figure 181. 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 182. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Gap</th>
<th>Younger</th>
<th>0 to 4 years older</th>
<th>5 to 9 years older</th>
<th>10+ years older</th>
<th>Don't know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before 18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after 18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Partner is: ■ Younger □ 0 to 4 years older □ 5 to 9 years older □ 10+ years older □ Don't know/missing data

Types of unions

Figure 183. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal union</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/missing data</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 184. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before 18</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after 18</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a bank account</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a job in the past 12 months</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a say in decision-making about visits to her family</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believes wife-beating is justified</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 185. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schooling Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In school</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of school</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/missing data</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lives of child brides (continued)

**Early childbearing**

**Figure 186.** Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

**Figure 187.** Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

**Reproductive health**

**Figure 188.** 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 189. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married before age 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 190. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Observed in the past</th>
<th>Required for elimination by 2030</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 years</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 2015 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Malí

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 16 | with exceptions: 15

**Current levels of child marriage**

**Burden of child marriage**

Figure 191. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

- Married before age 15: 1.0 million
- Married before age 18: 2.8 million

Malí is home to nearly 3 million child brides; 1 in 2 young women were married in childhood

**Prevalence of child marriage**

Figure 192. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

**Regional and global comparisons**

Figure 193. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

**Vulnerable populations**

Figure 194. 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 195. 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 196. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status

Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 197. 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

Figure 198. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

COUNTRY PROFILES: MALI

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Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 199. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

Figure 200. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married before age 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Observed in the past

- 25 years: 0.3
- 10 years: 0.4

Required for elimination by 2030: 33.2

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 2015 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Mauritania
Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 1 with exceptions: 0

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

Mauritania is home to nearly 534,000 child brides; 4 in 10 young women were married 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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
<th>Never married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gave birth before age 18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave birth at or after age 18 but before age 20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
<th>Never married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant before marriage</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant within 1 year of marriage</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant after 1 year of marriage</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never gave birth</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
<th>Never married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demand for family planning satisfied</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled antenatal care</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled attendant at delivery</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**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 2019-2021 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 2015 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. 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Niger

Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 21 | with exceptions: 15

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Married before age 15</th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.0 million</td>
<td>4.8 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Niger is home to nearly 5 million child brides; 3 in 4 young women were married 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

The Niger is home to nearly 5 million child brides; 3 in 4 young women were married in childhood.
**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner:</th>
<th>Younger</th>
<th>0 to 4 years older</th>
<th>5 to 9 years older</th>
<th>10+ years older</th>
<th>Don’t know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after age 18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Types of unions**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type:</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Informal union</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Separated</th>
<th>Don’t know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category:</th>
<th>Has a bank account</th>
<th>Had a job in the past 12 months</th>
<th>Has a say in decision-making about visits to her family</th>
<th>Believes wife-beating is justified</th>
<th>Experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after age 18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status:</th>
<th>Currently married or in union</th>
<th>Never married or in union</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In school</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of school</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/missing data</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 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 2015 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Nigeria
Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 21 | with exceptions: 18

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

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

Nigeria is home to over 23 million child brides; 2 in 5 young women were married in childhood

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

10.3 million
23.6 million

Married before age 15
Married before age 18

Nigeria
Country with the highest prevalence in the region
Country with the lowest prevalence in the region

West and Central Africa
World

Married before age 18
43
76
8
37
19

Married before age 15
16
28
2
12
5

Wealth quintile
Education
Residence

Poorest
Second
Middle
Fourth
Richest
No education
Primary
Secondary or higher
Rural
Urban

76
65
46
23
10
81
63
19
58
23

71 or higher

Poorest
Second
Middle
Fourth
Richest
No education
Primary
Secondary or higher
Rural
Urban
**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.

**Figure 237.** Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status.
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 2015 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Sao Tome and Principe

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

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

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

Sao Tome and Principe is home to over 18,000 child brides; 3 in 10 young women were married in childhood

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

COUNTRY PROFILES: SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

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

![Graph showing percentage distribution of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20.]

- Married before age 18: 35%
- Married at or after age 18: 62%
- Never married: 10%

Legend:
- Gave birth before age 18
- Gave birth at or after age 18 but before age 20

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

![Graph showing percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage.]

- Married before age 18: 22%
- Married at or after age 18: 38%
- Never married: 41%

Legend:
- Married before age 18
- Married at or after age 18
- Never married

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

![Graph showing percentage distribution of women aged 20 to 24 years who satisfied demand for family planning and received antenatal care and skilled attendance.]

- Married before age 18:
  - Demand for family planning satisfied: 69%
  - Skilled antenatal care: 97%
  - Skilled attendant at delivery: 96%
- Married at or after age 18:
  - Demand for family planning satisfied: 60%
  - Skilled antenatal care: 97%
  - Skilled attendant at delivery: 100%
- Never married:
  - Demand for family planning satisfied: 58%
  - Skilled antenatal care: 100%
  - Skilled attendant at delivery: 100%
Generational trends

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Married before age 18 (%)</th>
<th>Married before age 15 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Required for elimination by 2030</th>
<th>Observed in the past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 years</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 2015 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. 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Senegal

Minimum legal age of marriage with parental permission: 16 | without parental permission: 18

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage

Figure 256. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

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

Prevalence of child marriage

Figure 257. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

Regional and global comparisons

Figure 258. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Vulnerable populations

Figure 259. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by wealth quintile, education and residence

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

Married before age 15

Married before age 18

Burden of child marriage

Senegal

Prevalence of child marriage

Regional and global comparisons

Vulnerable populations
**Characteristics of unions**

**Spousal age gap**

**Figure 260.** Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner is:</th>
<th>Younger</th>
<th>0 to 4 years older</th>
<th>5 to 9 years older</th>
<th>10+ years older</th>
<th>Don’t know/missing data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married before age 18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married at or after age 18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Types of unions**

**Figure 261.** 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 262.** 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

- Married before age 18
- Married at or after age 18
- Never married

**Figure 263.** Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

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

**Country Profiles: Senegal**

- COUNTRY PROFILES: SENEGAL

- 98

- 64

- 93

- 12

- 10

- n/a

- n/a
Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 264. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

Figure 265. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

Reproductive health

Figure 266. 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 267. 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 268. 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 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 2015 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Sierra Leone

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

Current levels of child marriage

Burden of child marriage
Figure 269. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Prevalence of child marriage
Figure 270. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

Sierra Leone is home to over 776,000 child brides; 3 in 10 young women were married in childhood

Regional and global comparisons
Figure 271. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Vulnerable populations
Figure 272. 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 273. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4 years older</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 years older</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+ years older</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Partner is: Younger 0 to 4 years older 5 to 9 years older 10+ years older Don’t know/missing data

Types of unions
Figure 274. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status

Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence
Figure 275. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
<th>Never married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a bank account</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a job in the past 12 months</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a say in decision-making</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about visits to her family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believes wife-beating is justified</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced intimate partner violence</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 276. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Currently married or in union</th>
<th>Never married or in union</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In school</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of school</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/missing data</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 277. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

Figure 278. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

Reproductive health

Figure 279. 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 280. 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 281. 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 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. 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 2015 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
**Togo**

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

## Current levels of child marriage

**Burden of child marriage**

Figure 282. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

- Married before age 15: 148,200
- Married before age 18: 603,900

Togo is home to nearly 604,000 child brides; 1 in 4 young women were married in childhood

**Prevalence of child marriage**

Figure 283. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Married before age 15</th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West and Central Africa</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Regional and global comparisons

Figure 284. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wealth quintile</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Residence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poorest</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richest</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No education</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary or higher</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Vulnerable populations

Figure 285. 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 286. 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 287. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status

Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 288. 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

Figure 289. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status
Lives of child brides (continued)

Early childbearing

Figure 290. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
<th>Never married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Gave birth before age 18
- Gave birth at or after age 18 but before age 20

Figure 291. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

Reproductive health

Figure 292. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
<th>Never married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Demand for family planning satisfied
- Skilled antenatal care
- Skilled attendant at delivery

- Married before age 18
- Married at or after age 18
- Never married
Generational trends

Figure 293. 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 294. 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 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 2015 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. 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. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020. Figures in stacked bar and donut charts may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Child marriage remains far too common for girls in West and Central Africa. These girls face the highest risk in the world of marrying or entering into union before age 18. The lasting effects of COVID-19 – including interrupted education and economic shocks – have yet to be seen. These potential impacts, along with conflict and instability, may exacerbate the risk of child marriage for West and Central Africa’s most vulnerable girls.

To end the practice by 2030, its drivers must be addressed. This means a focus on reducing poverty while also ensuring girls’ education and learning in West and Central Africa, given the higher prevalence of child marriage in the poorest households, among those with little or no education and in rural areas.

In this regard, the UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office, through the ‘Ending Child Marriage’ Key Result for Children, is driving a comprehensive and multisectoral programme approach involving the following strategies:

**Create an enabling environment to address structural drivers.**
Political commitment to strengthening national legal and policy frameworks is critical. Governments need to develop and implement costed action plans and strategies to reduce and end child marriage, through interventions that reach adolescent girls, families and communities. Multisectoral coordination and collaboration and dedicated budget allocations across ministries are needed, which can be directed towards high-impact preventative programming. These activities will vary by setting and context – rural and urban, development and humanitarian. Robust investments are also needed in child protection systems, such as the social service workforce, and in interoperability between sectors, such as social protection and education.

**Address the economic drivers.**
Poverty, which is already widespread in the region, is worsening due to climate change, COVID-19 and humanitarian crises. To end child marriage at scale, social protection programmes that increase families’ resilience to economic shocks, reduce financial pressures on families and improve girls’ educational opportunities should be prioritized. Expanded coverage of national social protection programmes is essential, along with social protection, poverty reduction, and economic empowerment programmes and services that are adolescent-friendly and accessible to the poorest girls and their families. The social costs of poverty that place girls at greater risk of marriage – including low levels of schooling, limited decision-making and inadequate access to knowledge- and skills-building (e.g., sexual and reproductive health and rights) – must also be addressed.

**Support girls’ education, learning and resilience-building.**
Keeping girls in school is a crucial protection mechanism and strategy to prevent and end child marriage. Access to quality education expands girls’ skills and knowledge,
exposes them to new opportunities and relationships, and ultimately delays the timing of marriage. Leveraging the education system, including policies, budgets and curricula that focus on keeping girls learning, supports prevention. Out-of-school adolescent girls require access to literacy and life skills education, economic empowerment programmes, and services and information that can strengthen their relationships, decision-making and resilience.

Education acts as an important conduit to gender equality, offering the opportunity to challenge discriminatory social and gender norms and drive meaningful changes in the way girls and others see their growing capabilities.

**Enhance the evidence base.**

Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) are important instruments to understand trends and develop projections. These data, along with those from other sources such as qualitative research, need to be leveraged to strengthen and adjust programming as situations evolve and to inform advocacy. A strategic approach is needed that focuses on consolidating and augmenting existing knowledge, identifying and filling evidence gaps, and assessing the effectiveness of interventions to end child marriage. Evidence should be shared across contexts to inspire collective thinking around what is and is not successfully tackling child marriage.

**Use social and behaviour change approaches for social and gender norms change.**

Because gender inequality is a key driver of child marriage, promoting positive social and gender norms plays a crucial role in prevention. Social and behaviour change programming must be evidence-based and attuned to the specificities of the local context to bring about meaningful, lasting change. Community-led interventions require a systematic approach focused on norms change rather than awareness-raising. In tandem, efforts to change discriminatory norms within families and communities should be supported by interventions that reduce poverty and improve access to quality education and other services.

**Bolster access to services.**

Children, in particular adolescent girls, need access to quality basic services, including health, education, legal, social welfare, and child and social protection. Cross-sectoral interoperability in the delivery of these services is important. Furthermore, the structural barriers that girls and their families face in accessing services must be addressed. Tailored approaches, including referral services, need to meet the specific needs of girls and boys of different ages across settings and circumstances who are vulnerable to marriage.

**Differentiate between girls under age 15 and those between the ages of 15 and 18.**

More investments are needed to understand the ways in which situations and experiences differ between younger and older girls who are married or at risk of marriage. Although the drivers of child marriage are generally the same across both cohorts, the way the practice is experienced and its consequences differ between the two age groups. Policymakers and service providers need to better understand the needs of girls in different age groups to most effectively meet these needs.

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 West and Central Africa: Burkina Faso, Ghana, the Niger and Sierra Leone.

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: (1) increasing girls’ agency and resources, (2) enhancing legal and policy frameworks, (3) using robust data and evidence, (4) improving systems and services that meet the needs of adolescents at risk and affected and (5) expanding investments in girls and shifting social expectations of girls and boys.

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**END CHILD MARRIAGE IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA**

**A voice. A chance. A future.**
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.

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 West and Central Africa

- West and Central Africa is home to the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world: 37 per cent of young women were married before age 18, and 12 per cent were married before age 15.

- The region is home to nearly 60 million child brides, with the largest share, over 23 million, in Nigeria.

- While levels of child marriage vary widely in the region, 7 of the 10 countries with the highest levels in the world are found here: the Niger, the Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Nigeria.

- In the Sahel, levels of child marriage are even higher than in the rest of West and Central Africa; girls and women in the Sahel marry nearly two years earlier than those outside the region.

- Child marriage also occurs among boys: Across West and Central Africa, 1 in 25 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 the Central African Republic, the Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Liberia and Sao Tome and Principe, informal unions are the predominant type, whereas in other countries nearly all are formal marriages.

- 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.

- In some countries, child marriage has become less common, but others have not made progress and the region remains off track for reaching the SDG target of eliminating child marriage by 2030.

- The least progress has been observed in the Central African Republic, Chad and Nigeria.

- The Gambia and Sierra Leone have made the greatest progress in reducing levels of child marriage in the past decade; 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 25 million girls in West and Central Africa will become child brides in the next decade.