

Levels & Trends in
**Child
Mortality**

Report 2025

Key facts and
findings



In 2024, millions of children, adolescents and youth died before age 25, a sobering reminder of the continuing burden of preventable deaths.



7.0 million

children, adolescents and youth died before age 25
13 deaths/minute

4 million male
 3 million female



4.9 million

children younger than 5
9 deaths/minute



2.1 million

older children, adolescents and youth
4 deaths/minute

Millions of children's lives are being tragically cut short.

| | Both sexes | Boys | Girls | |
|-------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Every | 9 minutes | 5 minutes | 4 minutes | |
| Day | 13,000 | 7,000 | 6,000 | die before their fifth birthday |
| Month | 405,000 | 221,000 | 184,000 | |
| Year | 4.9 million | 2.7 million | 2.2 million | |



One boy

One girl

2

Deaths due to preventable or treatable causes remain concerningly high.



Newborns

2.3 million

deaths in 2024



Children aged 1-59 months

2.6 million

deaths in 2024



Older children, adolescents and youth aged 5-24 years

2.1 million

deaths in 2024

Die due to



1 in 3
prematurity
36%



1 in 5
birth asphyxia/
trauma
21%



1 in 9
lower respiratory
infections
(pneumonia)
11%



1 in 6
malaria
17%



1 in 6
lower respiratory
infections
(pneumonia)
16%



1 in 8
diarrhoea
12%



1 in 12
road traffic injuries
8%



1 in 14
malaria
7%



1 in 16
neoplasms/cancer
6%



Most deaths that occur before age 25 are linked to causes that could be prevented or treated.

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The global burden of child, adolescent and youth deaths is shifting heavily to sub-Saharan Africa.

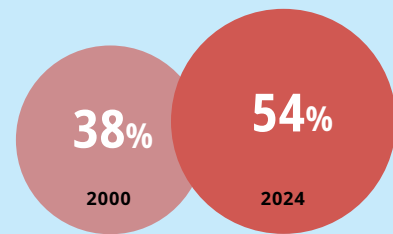
Nearly **8 in 10** global deaths among those aged 0–24 years take place in sub-Saharan Africa or Southern Asia.



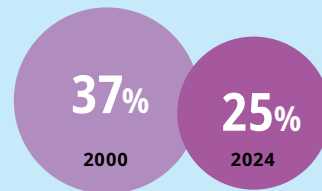
Population growth is driving sub-Saharan Africa's increasing burden, alongside slower mortality reductions and the continued prevalence of preventable causes of death.

Share of death among children, adolescents and youth in two regions (2000–2024)

Sub-Saharan Africa



Southern Asia



Snapshot

Levels, trends and causes of death among children younger than 5

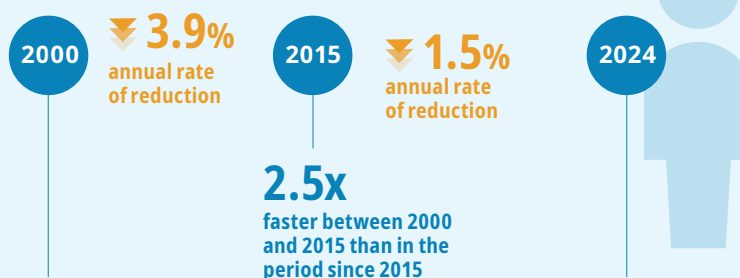
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Progress in reducing under-five mortality has slowed.

At the global level, child survival has made remarkable gains, declining 60% since 1990 – but

most progress occurred before 2015.

Pace of improvement shows sharp decline



This slowdown is particularly concerning given the large number of deaths due to preventable causes.

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Since 2000, the number of children who have not reached their fifth birthday is alarmingly high.



Between 2000 and 2024
174 million
under-five deaths took place.

76 million
of them in the first month of life.^a



The total number of under-five deaths since 2000 approaches the entire population of Bangladesh.



More newborns have died since 2000 than there are people in Thailand today.

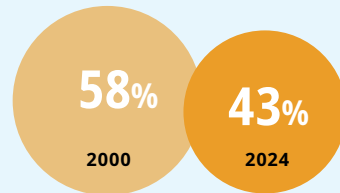
^a Calculation based on unrounded numbers. Unrounded rates are available at <<https://childmortality.org>>.

Infectious diseases remain a major cause of under-five deaths, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

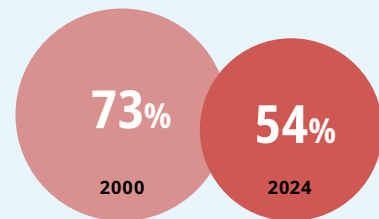
Share of under-five deaths caused by the nine leading infectious diseases^b



Global



Sub-Saharan Africa



The decline was most pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa – but the region still carries a disproportionate burden:

Sub-Saharan Africa

54%

of under-five deaths due to infectious diseases



vs.

Europe and Northern America

9%

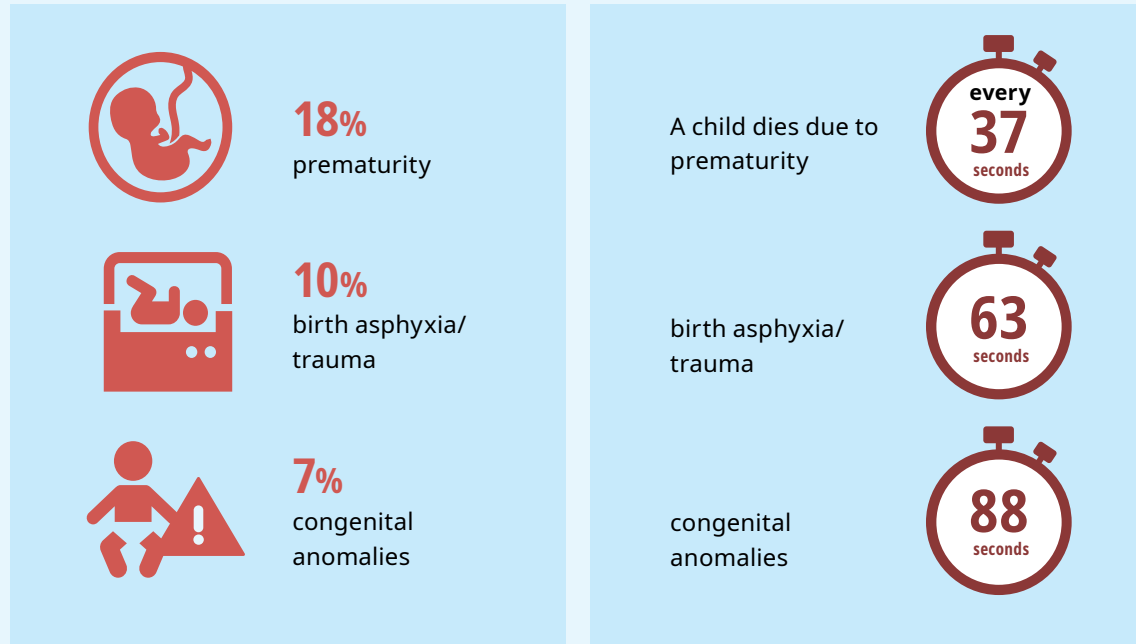
Australia and New Zealand

6%

^b Lower respiratory infections (pneumonia), malaria, diarrhoea, sepsis, meningitis/encephalitis, tuberculosis, measles, HIV/AIDS and tetanus.

Neonatal conditions account for a disproportionate share of under-five deaths.

More than **1 in 3** (35%) global under-five deaths caused by:



Cause-specific under-five mortality rates since 2000 show uneven progress.

% decline in mortality rates since 2000 by top three causes in various age groups

Newborns



▼ **30%**
Prematurity



▼ **49%**
Birth asphyxia/
trauma



▼ **47%**
Lower respiratory
infections
(pneumonia)

Children aged 1-59 months



▼ **41%**
Malaria



▼ **63%**
Lower respiratory
infections
(pneumonia)



▼ **75%**
Diarrhoea

Under-fives



▼ **32%**
Prematurity



▼ **58%**
Lower respiratory
infections
(pneumonia)



▼ **49%**
Birth
asphyxia/
trauma



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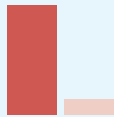
A child's chance of survival is strongly determined by where they are born.

Under-five mortality is:



19x

higher in the region with the highest rate (sub-Saharan Africa) compared to the lowest (Australia and New Zealand).



57x

higher in the country with the highest rate compared to the lowest.



58%

of global under-five deaths in 2024 occurred in sub-Saharan Africa.

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Fragility and conflict amplify under-five mortality risk.

In countries classified as 'fragile- and conflict-affected situations' (FCS):^c



25%

of the world's babies are born.



50%

of global under-five deaths occur.



3x

higher risk of dying before age 5 compared to non-FCS countries.

^c World Bank Group, 'Classification of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations', World Bank Group, Washington, D.C., 08 July 2025, <www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/classification-of-fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations>, accessed 6 March 2026.

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Many countries are off track to reach SDG targets, reflecting the persistent impact of preventable deaths.

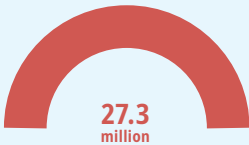
60 countries risk missing the **under-five mortality target**, home to 42 per cent of children younger than 5



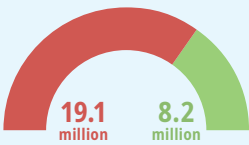
66 countries risk missing the **neonatal mortality target**, representing 62 per cent of children younger than 5 and 65 per cent of newborns

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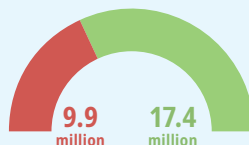
Millions more children are projected to die before 2030 unless action is taken to accelerate progress.



If current trends continue



If all countries achieve the SDG target



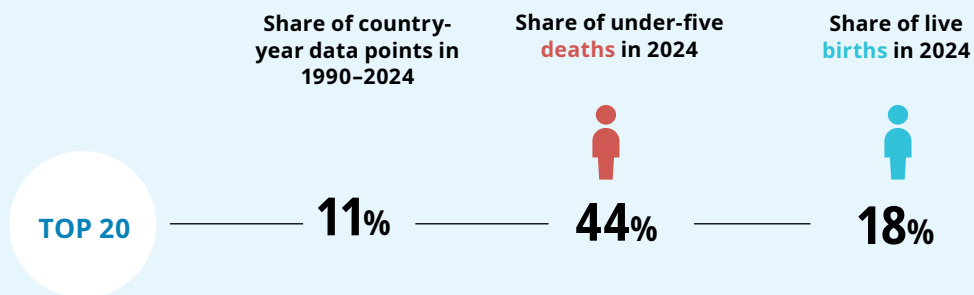
If all countries reach the average mortality levels in high-income settings

■ Under-five deaths ■ Lives saved

Data gaps persist where mortality and preventable causes are most concentrated.

| | Share of country-year data points in 1990-2024 | Share of under-five deaths in 2024 | Share of live births in 2024 |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| High-income countries | 22% | 1% | 10% |
| Low-income countries | 14% | 31% | 17% |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 28% | 58% | 31% |
| Southern Asia | 7% | 25% | 28% |
| Europe and Northern America | 15% | 1% | 8% |

Top 20 countries with an under-five mortality rate higher than 60 in 2024



These data gaps limit the ability to identify cause-specific mortality patterns and prioritize interventions for preventable deaths among children younger than 5.

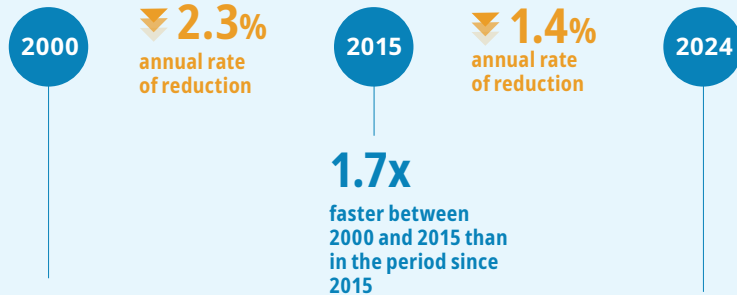
Snapshot

Levels, trends and causes of death among children, adolescents and youth ages 5–24

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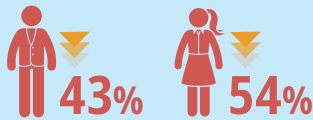
Progress in reducing mortality among 5–24-year-olds has been uneven and slowed – several low-mortality regions have even recorded increases.

Mortality among older children, adolescents and youth declined globally by 47% since 1990, with **most gains occurring before 2015**.



Gender disparities persist: Mortality among males is declining more slowly than among females, especially among youth.

Female survival declined more than male



Widest gender gap in mortality decline at ages 20–24



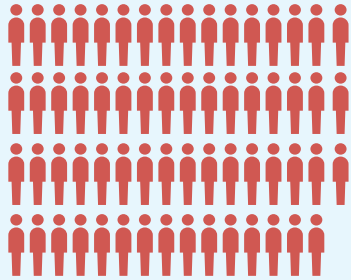
Males aged 20–24 years face nearly **2X** the risk of dying compared to females.

Reductions in mortality rates by sex, 1990–2024

These patterns are closely linked to shifting causes of death across ages and regions.

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Millions of older children, adolescents and youth continue to die from preventable or treatable causes.



Between 2000 and 2024

63.1 million

5-24-year-olds died.

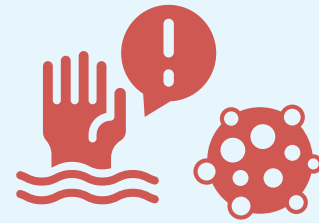


That's roughly the entire population of South Africa.

In 2024 drowning and neoplasms/cancers together accounted for about

1 in 8

of the 1.4 million deaths among those aged 5-19 years.



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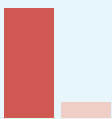
Older children, adolescents and youth face drastically different chances of survival depending on where and how they grow up.

Mortality among 5-24-year-olds is:



8x

higher in the region with the highest rate (sub-Saharan Africa) compared to the lowest (Australia and New Zealand).



46x

higher in the country with the highest rate compared to the lowest.



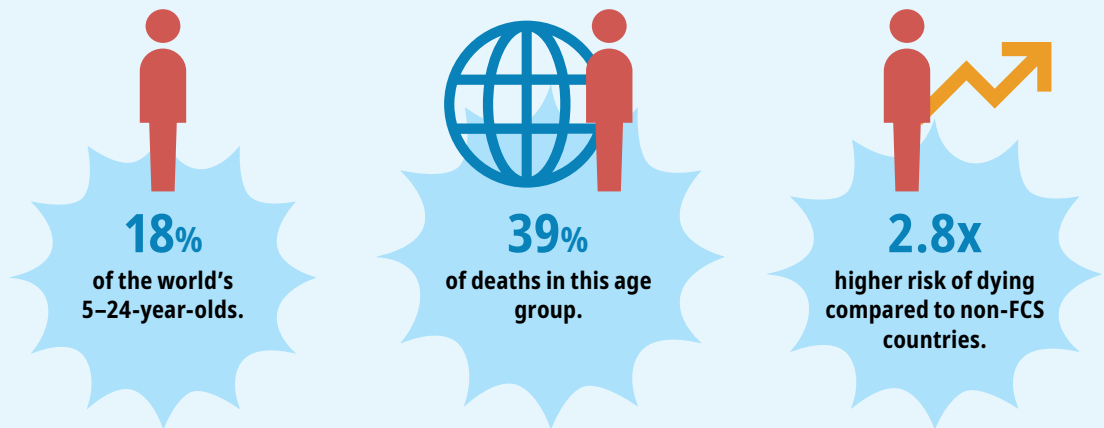
44%

of global deaths among 5-24-year-olds in 2024 occurred in sub-Saharan Africa.

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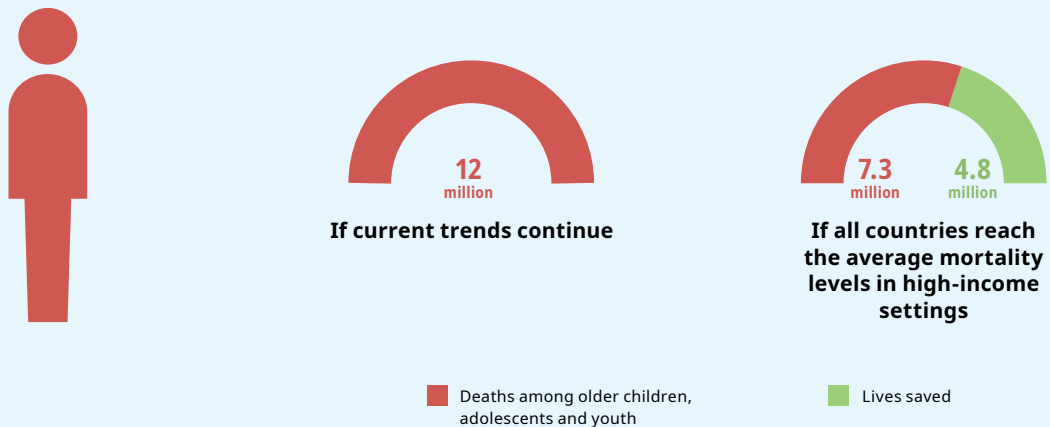
Fragility and conflict are closely linked to higher mortality risks among older children, adolescents and youth.

Countries classified as 'fragile- and conflict-affected situations' (FCS) account for:



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Under current trends, millions of older children, adolescents and youth are likely to die before 2030.



Millions of young lives can still be saved. Safeguarding every child's future is possible with sustained and strategic action.

Renewed efforts are urgently needed to end preventable deaths and deliver proven interventions for newborns, children, adolescents and youth.





The United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) was formed in 2004 to share data on child mortality, improve methods for child mortality estimation, report on progress towards child survival goals and enhance country capacity to produce timely and properly assessed estimates of child mortality. The UN IGME is led by the United Nations Children’s Fund and includes the World Health Organization, the World Bank Group and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, as full members.

The UN IGME’s independent Technical Advisory Group, comprising leading academic scholars and independent experts in demography and biostatistics, provides technical guidance on estimation methods, technical issues and strategies for data analysis and data quality assessment.

The UN IGME updates its child mortality estimates annually after reviewing newly available data and assessing data quality. This publication contains the latest UN IGME estimates of child mortality at country, regional and global levels.

Suggested citation: United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME), *Levels & Trends in Child Mortality: Report 2025 – Key facts and findings*, United Nations Children’s Fund, New York, 2026.

Access the [full report](https://childmortality.org), country-specific estimates and the data used to derive them at <https://childmortality.org>.