



## INDICATOR ANALYSIS

PROPORTION OF WOMEN AGED 20-24 YEARS WHO WERE MARRIED OR  
IN A UNION BEFORE AGE 15 AND BEFORE AGE 18

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<p>Overview</p>	<p><i>Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18</i> is the number of women aged 20-24 who were first married or in union</p> <p>a) before age 15 or b) before age 18</p> <p>divided by the total number of women aged 20-24 in the population (1). As such, this represents two possible indicators.</p> <p>Calculation of the indicator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <math>P</math> = the population proportion</li> <li>• <math>x</math> = the number of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 (or before age 18)</li> <li>• <math>n</math> = the total number of women aged 20-24 years in the population</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Indicator Formula: <math>P = x/n</math></i></p> <p>This indicator is part of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as a specific indicator for Target 5.3, which seeks to “eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early, and forced marriage and female genital mutilation” (1). Both this indicator and Target 5.3 fall under the broader scope of SDG 5 “Gender Equality”, whose primary objective is to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” (1).</p>
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<b>GLOBAL TRENDS</b>	
<p>What are the global patterns for this indicator? Trends, geographic patterns etc.</p>	<p>The United Nations estimates that there are currently approximately 650 million women in the world who were married before age 18 (2). Overall, the prevalence of child marriage is decreasing globally. The most positive recent progress can be observed in South Asia, where a girl’s risk of marrying in childhood has dropped from nearly 50% 10 years ago to 30% (2).</p> <p>In addition, across the globe, child marriage is most prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa, where nearly 4 in 10 young women are married before age 18 (2). Lower levels of child marriage are found in Latin America and Caribbean (25%), the Middle East and North Africa (17%), and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (11%) (2). Nonetheless, the current worldwide percentage remains at of 21%.</p>

<b>RELEVANCE TO UNDERSTANDING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG GENDER, HEALTH, FRAGILITY/PEACE</b>	
<p>How could this indicator contribute to our understanding of how gender, health and fragility</p>	<p>According to the United Nations, marriage before the age of 18 years compromises a woman’s mental and physical wellbeing. For example, early marriage often results in youth pregnancy, social isolation, interrupted schooling, limited opportunities for career and vocational advancement, and an increased</p>

<p>and peace influence one another?</p>	<p>risk of domestic violence and maternal mortality (1). In these ways, this indicator is closely tied to issues of women’s health.</p> <p>Fragility is also closely related, as a girl’s level of safety and security within society also contributes to her risk of early marriage (higher poverty levels, for example, are linked to higher rates of early marriage) (3). Furthermore, early marriage is linked to the violation of other basic human rights – such as the right to freedom of expression, the right to protection from all forms of abuse, and the right to be protected from harmful traditional practices, all of which are necessary for peaceful societies (3).</p>
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<b>UTILITY</b>	
<p>What does the indicator measure?</p>	<p>This indicator measures what proportion of women aged 20-24 years were married or in a union before age 15 (or before age 18).</p>
<p>What does it NOT measure - what does it miss?</p>	<p>The indicator does not measure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Whether the union into which the women entered was formal or informal</li> <li>b) Whether the marriage or union is still currently ongoing</li> <li>c) With whom the women entered the marriage or union</li> </ul>

<b>AVAILABILITY</b>	
<p>Sources for indicator (CRVS, DHS etc.);</p>	<p>Household surveys such as UNICEF-supported MICS and DHS have been collecting data on this indicator in low-income and middle-income countries since the late 1980s. In some countries, such data are also collected through national censuses or other national household surveys (1).</p> <p>Indicator data are available from the following source:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. UNICEF's Data Warehouse for marriage or union before the age of 15 (country level 2005-2019):  <a href="https://data.unicef.org/resources/data_explorer/unicef_f/?ag=UNICEF&amp;df=GLOBAL_DATAFLOW&amp;ver=1.0&amp;dq=.PT_F_20-24_MRD_U15..&amp;startPeriod=2015&amp;endPeriod=2018">https://data.unicef.org/resources/data_explorer/unicef_f/?ag=UNICEF&amp;df=GLOBAL_DATAFLOW&amp;ver=1.0&amp;dq=.PT_F_20-24_MRD_U15..&amp;startPeriod=2015&amp;endPeriod=2018</a> </li> <li>2. UNICEF data warehouse for marriage or union before the age of 18 (country level 2002-2019):  <a href="https://data.unicef.org/resources/data_explorer/unicef_f/?ag=UNICEF&amp;df=GLOBAL_DATAFLOW&amp;ver=1.0&amp;dq=.PT_F_20-24_MRD_U18..&amp;startPeriod=2015&amp;endPeriod=2018">https://data.unicef.org/resources/data_explorer/unicef_f/?ag=UNICEF&amp;df=GLOBAL_DATAFLOW&amp;ver=1.0&amp;dq=.PT_F_20-24_MRD_U18..&amp;startPeriod=2015&amp;endPeriod=2018</a> </li> </ol>

Most recent data available;	The most recent data is available for 2019.
Availability across geographic areas;	The availability of data for this indicator across geographic areas depends on the country and the frequency of household surveys. However, in low-income or fragile states, surveys may be more difficult to conduct. Furthermore, within countries, remote geographic areas may be too difficult to reach.
Availability in conflict affected settings;	Data is available for 2015 and 2017 in Yemen, South Sudan, Libya, Somalia, the DRC and Afghanistan.

<b>GRANULARITY</b>	
<i>Disaggregation at national level</i>	
Data disaggregated by sex;	No.
Data disaggregated by age;	No.
Data disaggregated by identity group (race, ethnicity);	No.
Data disaggregated by income	No.
<i>Disaggregation at sub-national level</i>	
Data disaggregated by geographic region;	No.
Data disaggregated by identity group (race, ethnicity);	No.
Data disaggregated by income.	No.

<b>SOURCES OF BIAS</b>
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<p>What bias can exist with this data?</p>	<p><i>Selection bias:</i> the selected respondents may not be an accurate representation of the entire population; thus, the women surveyed may not accurately reflect the true prevalence of marriage before the age of 15 and before the age of 18.</p> <p><i>Recall bias:</i> surveys ask respondents about a marriage or union that could have occurred up to 9 years in the past, and therefore there is a possibility that some respondents may not accurately remember exactly when the marriage or union occurred.</p> <p><i>Social desirability bias:</i> sometimes, respondents seek to gain the approval of the person/institution conducting the survey. For this reason, women surveyed may provide an answer that does not accurately reflect their experiences.</p> <p><i>Social Desirability bias (continued):</i> this indicator concerns subject matter that may be highly sensitive or stigmatized. Thus, respondents may not answer truthfully, and some individuals may not come forward as respondents at all.</p>
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<b>VALIDITY</b>	
<p>Clear and accepted international standards for indicator;</p>	<p>This SDG indicator has been classified as a tier 1 indicator by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators. A tier 1 indicator is described as being conceptually clear with an internationally established methodology (4).</p>
<p>Validity of measurement of indicator generally accepted;</p>	<p>Issues with bias in survey response may undermine the validity of the measurement in a particular setting.</p>

<b>RELIABILITY</b>	
<p>Reliability of indicator generally accepted;</p>	<p>The indicator is widely utilized across household surveys. UNICEF maintains the global database on child marriage that is used for SDG and other official reporting. Before the inclusion of any data on early marriage in the database, it is reviewed by statistical analysts at UNICEF headquarters in order to ensure consistency and overall data quality (3).</p>

<b>COMPLEXITY</b>	
<p>Enables analysis across time and location.</p>	<p>Depending on the frequency of the data gathered, it can provide an opportunity for comparisons across time and location.</p>

<b>OTHER REFLECTIONS</b>	
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<p>Are indicator values imputed/modelled?</p>	<p>For both the under 15 and under 18 estimates:</p> <p>When data for a country are entirely missing, UNICEF does not publish any country-level estimate (1,5).</p> <p>The “regional average” is applied to those countries within the region with missing values for the purposes of calculating regional aggregates only, but are not published as country-level estimates (1,5). Regional and global aggregates are not currently available on the UNICEF data warehouse. <i>If made available, uncertainty bounds of regional estimates should be considered during analysis.</i></p>
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Indicator: Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18

## References

1. United Nations Statistics Division. Indicator 5.3.1- Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18 [Internet]. United Nations Statistics Division; 2021. Available from: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-05-02-01.pdf>
2. United Nations Children's Fund. Child Marriage: Latest trends and future prospects. United Nations Children's Fund; 2018.
3. UNICEF. Child marriage [Internet]. UNICEF DATA. 2021 [cited 2021 Sep 28]. Available from: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-marriage/>
4. United Nations Statistics Division. Tier Classification for Global SDG Indicators [Internet]. United Nations Statistics Division; 2020. Available from: [https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/Tier%20Classification%20of%20SDG%20Indicators\\_17%20July%202020\\_web.v2.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/Tier%20Classification%20of%20SDG%20Indicators_17%20July%202020_web.v2.pdf)
5. Indicator Profile: Percentage of women (aged 20-24 years) married or in union before age 15 [Internet]. UNICEF DATA. [cited 2021 Sep 28]. Available from: [https://data.unicef.org/indicator-profile/pt\\_f\\_20-24\\_mrd\\_u15/](https://data.unicef.org/indicator-profile/pt_f_20-24_mrd_u15/)