

CHILD MARRIAGE AROUND THE WORLD

Child marriage is a global problem that cuts across countries, cultures, religions, and ethnicities. Child brides can be found in every region in the world, from the Middle East to Latin America, South Asia to Europe and the United States/

- In the developing world, one in three girls is married by age 18 and one in nine is married by 15.
- Over 700 million women today were married as children.
- The number of women married as children will reach 1.2 billion by 2050 at current rates.

CHILD MARRIAGE BY REGION: SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

- Over 125 million African women were married as children.
- Nearly 40% of girls in sub-Saharan Africa are married before the age of 18.
- Niger, the Central African Republic, Chad, and Mali have the highest rates of child marriage in the world, with rates ranging from 55-76%.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

- One in five girls throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region are married before the age of 18.
- The prevalence varies greatly, with rates ranging from 3% in Algeria to 32% in Yemen.
- Conflict has increased child marriage rates in the region. Parents often marry their daughters to cope with their own economic hardships or to protect daughters from sexual violence.
- Nearly 30% of marriages in Syrian refugee communities in Jordan involved a girl under 18.

EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

- Over 15% of girls across East Asia and the Pacific are married before the age of 18.
- Rates range from 11% in Vietnam to 21% in Vanuatu.
- Data gaps are common in the Pacific Islands where child marriage happens in rural areas.

SOUTH ASIA

- South Asia has the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world, with 1 in 2 girls being married before 18.
- Child marriage rates are 37% in Nepal, 47% in India, and 52% in Bangladesh.
- An estimated 130 million girls in the region will be married between 2010 and 2030.

EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

- About 11% of girls in Eastern Europe and Central Asia are married before 18.
- The scope of the problem is not well-known due to limited and outdated data.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- One in four girls in Latin America will be married before the age of 18.
- Child marriage rates are highest in Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and Brazil, with rates ranging from 36-41%.
- Girls in poor rural areas are at the greatest risk for child marriage.
- Social stigma around early pregnancy and single motherhood pushes many young girls into marriage.

NORTH AMERICA

- There is no regional data on the prevalence of child marriage in North America.
- In the United States, nearly 250,000 underage girls were married between 2000 and 2010.
- Almost every state in the US and Canada sets the legal minimum marriage age to 18, but every state allows exemptions with parental or judicial consent.
- There is no minimum age for these exemptions in 27 U.S. states.