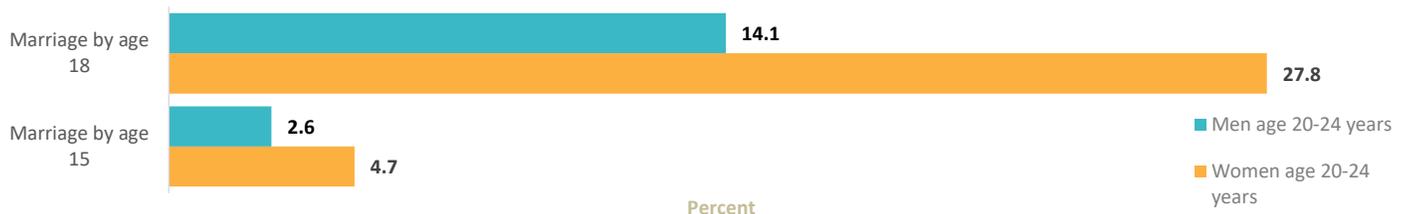


### Child Marriage among women and men

#### Marriage before Age 15 & Age 18 among women (SDG 5.3.1\*) and men

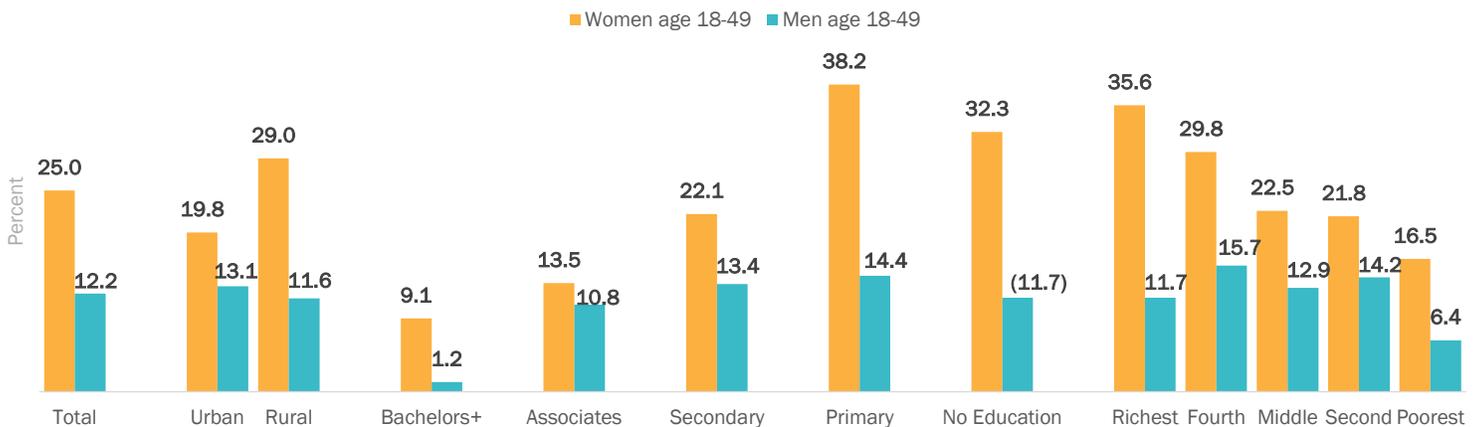


Percentage of women and men age 20-24 years who were first married or in union before age 15 and before age 18

The above chart refers to women and men aged 20 to 24 years, as this youngest cohort most recently completed exposure to the risk of marrying in childhood, thus giving a closer approximation of the current prevalence of child marriage. The following charts, which show disaggregation by background characteristics, refer to the full cohort of women and men aged 20 to 49 years.

\* SDG indicator 5.3.1 refers only to child marriage prevalence among girls: “Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18”

#### Disaggregates in Marriage before Age 18



Percentage of women and men age 18-49 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by residence, education and household wealth quintile

\* Values in parentheses indicate findings based on 25-49 unweighted cases

### Key Messages

- Among young adults aged 20–24, 28% of women and 14% of men were married before age 18, and 4.7% of women and 2.6% of men before age 15.
- Among adults aged 18–49, 25% of women and 12.2% of men were married before age 18.
- Child marriage among women is higher in rural areas (29%) than urban areas (19.8%).
- Women with primary education have the highest prevalence (38.2%) compared to 22.1% for secondary education.
- Women in the poorest quintile show 35.6% prevalence versus 16.5% in the richest quintile.
- Regional disparities are stark: Toledo leads with 42.1% of women married before 18, while Belize South is lowest at 15%.
- Among men, prevalence ranges from 14.8% in Corozal to 4.3% in Orange Walk.
- Child marriage remains significant among younger cohorts, with 27.8% of women aged 20–24 married before 18.

## Regional Data on Child Marriage

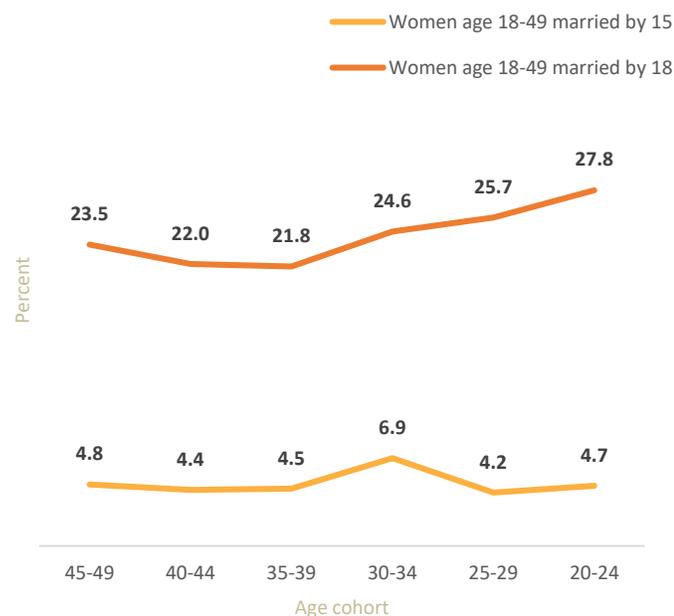
Region	Women 18-49 married by age 18	Men 18-49 married by age 18
National	25	12.2
Corozal	28.8	14.8
Orange Walk	19.9	4.3
Belize North	21.7	14.4
Belize South	15.0	12.6
Cayo	27.0	14.0
Stann Creek	27.6	13.6
Toledo	42.1	10.9

Percentage of women and men aged 20 to 49 years who were first married or in union before age 18, by region

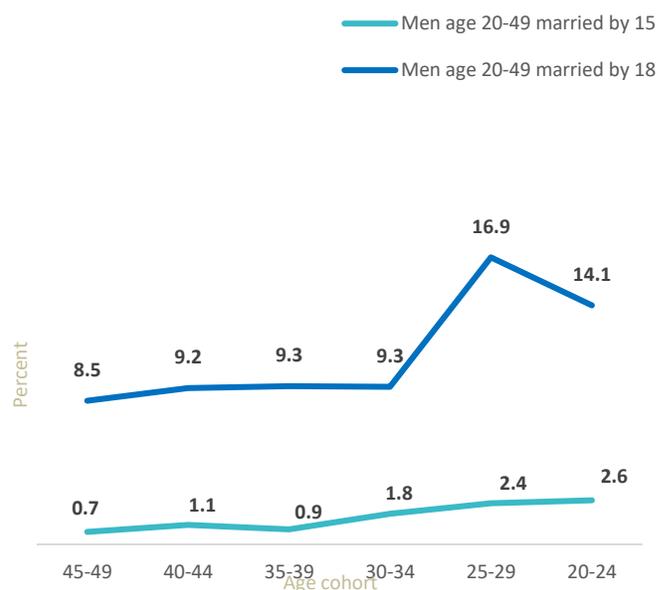
Marriage before the age of 18 is a reality for many young girls. In many parts of the world parents encourage the marriage of their daughters while they are still children in hopes that the marriage will benefit them both financially and socially, while also relieving financial burdens on the family. In actual fact, child marriage is a violation of human rights, compromising the development of girls and often resulting in early pregnancy and social isolation, with little education and poor vocational training reinforcing the gendered nature of poverty. The right to 'free and full' consent to a marriage is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - with the recognition that consent cannot be 'free and full' when one of the parties involved is not sufficiently mature to make an informed decision about a life partner.

## Trends in Child Marriage

### Women



### Men



Percentage of women (left) and men (right) age 18-49 years who were first married or in union before age 15 and before age 18, by age cohort

The Belize Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) was carried out in 2024 by the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) as part of the global MICS programme. Technical support was provided by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). UNICEF and Government of Belize provided financial support.

The objective of this snapshot is to disseminate selected findings from the Belize MICS7, 2024 related to Child Marriage. Data from this snapshot can be found in table PR.4.1W and PR.4.1M in the Survey Findings Report.

Further statistical snapshots and the Survey Findings Report for this and other surveys are available on [mics.unicef.org/surveys](https://mics.unicef.org/surveys).