

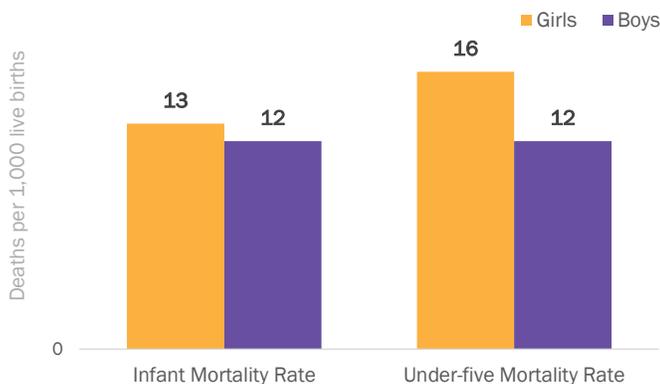


Gender equality means that girls and boys, women and men, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. Investments in gender equality contribute to lifelong positive outcomes for children and their communities and have considerable inter-generational payoffs because children's rights and well-being often depend on women's rights and well-being. This snapshot shows key dimensions of gender equality during the lifecycle. It is organized around: 1) the first decade of life (0-9 years of age) when gender disparities are often small, particularly in early childhood; 2) the second decade of childhood (10-19 years of age) when gender disparities become more pronounced with the onset of puberty and the consolidation of gender norms; and 3) adulthood, when gender disparities impacts both the wellbeing of women and girls and boys.

### Every Girl & Boy Survives & Thrives: The First Decade of Life

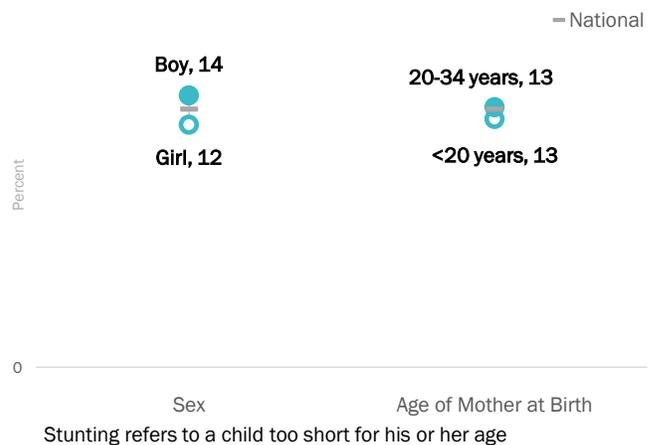
Nutrition and a supportive environment in early childhood are among the key determinants of the health and survival of children and their physical and cognitive development. Generally, girls tend to have better biological endowments than boys for survival to age five, and thus higher survival chances under natural circumstances. However, gender discrimination against girls can affect survival, resulting in higher than expected female mortality. Similarly, stunting rates are typically lower among girls than boys, potentially due to the higher risk for preterm birth among boys, which is inextricably linked with lower birth weight. However, children with mothers who gave birth at a young age or who have no education may be more likely to be malnourished. Children with restricted cognitive development during early life are at risk for later neuropsychological problems, poor school achievement, early school drop-out, low-skilled employment, and poor care of their own children. Stimulation and interaction with parents and caregivers can jumpstart brain development and promote well-being in early childhood. This is also the period of development when gender socialization, or the process of learning cultural roles according to one's sex, manifests. Caregivers, particularly fathers, may respond to, and interact with, sons and daughters differently.

#### Mortality Rates among Children Under-5, SDG 3.2.1 Sex Disaggregate



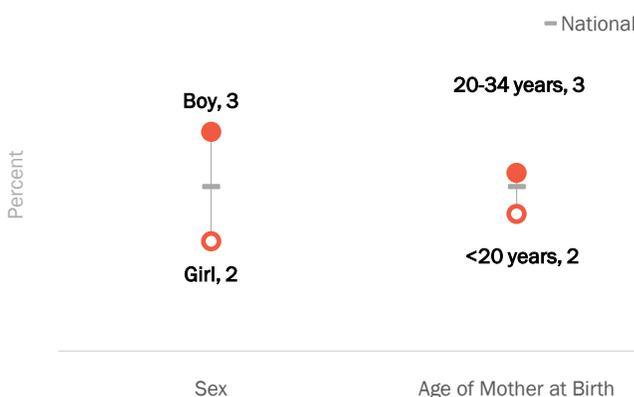
Infant mortality: probability of dying between birth and the first birthday  
Under-five mortality: the probability of dying between birth and the fifth birthday

#### Malnutrition: Stunting (Moderate & Severe) among Children Under-5, SDG 2.2.1



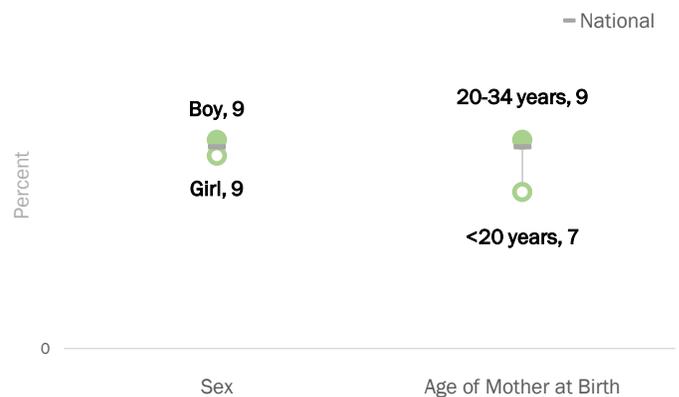
Stunting refers to a child too short for his or her age

#### Malnutrition: Wasting (Moderate & Severe) among Children Under-5, SDG 2.2.2



Wasting refers to a child who is too thin for his or her height

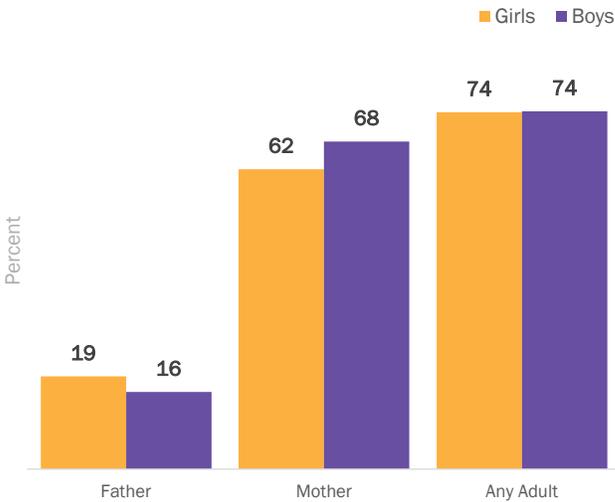
#### Malnutrition: Overweight (Moderate & Severe) among Children Under-5, SDG 2.2.2



Overweight refers to a child who is too heavy for his or her height

# Every Girl & Boy Survives & Thrives: The First Decade of Life

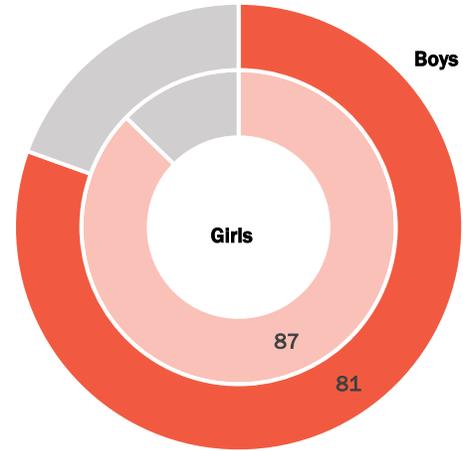
## Early Stimulation & Responsive Care by Adults



Percentage of children age 2-4 years with whom adult household members engaged in activities that promote learning and school readiness during the last three days, by person interacting with child and sex of child.

Note: Activities include: reading books to the child; telling stories to the child; singing songs to the child; taking the child outside the home; playing with the child; and naming, counting or drawing things with the child

## Early Childhood Development Index, SDG 4.2.1

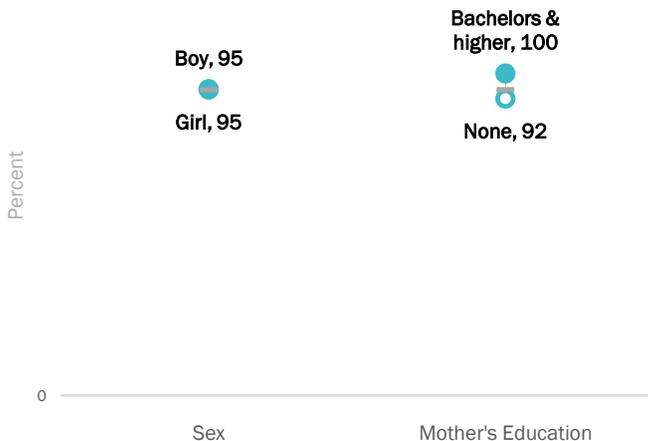


Percentage of children age 3-4 years who are developmentally on track in at least 3 of the following 4 domains: literacy-numeracy, physical, social-emotional, and learning domains, by sex

# Every Girl & Boy Is Protected From Violence & Exploitation: The First Decade of Life

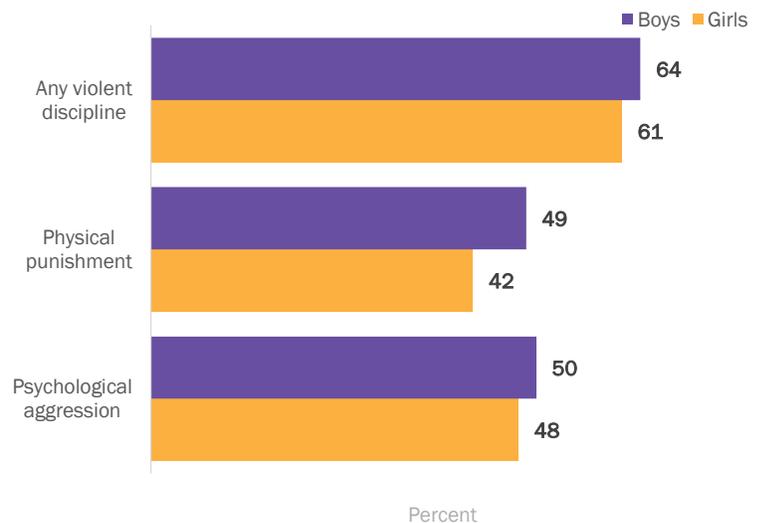
Registering children at birth is the first step in securing their recognition before the law, safeguarding their rights, and ensuring that any violation of these rights does not go unnoticed. While vitally important for both girls and boys, the implications of low birth registration rates for girls are significant, rendering them more vulnerable to certain forms of exploitation they are at greater risk of, including child marriage and international trafficking. Although average birth registration rates are similar for girls and boys, children with mothers who have no education may be less likely to have their births registered. While girls and boys face similar risks of experiencing violent discipline - which includes physical punishment and psychological aggression - by caregivers in the home, gender inequality and domestic violence are among the factors associated with an elevated risk of violence against both girls and boys.

## Birth Registration, SDG 16.9.1 Sex Disaggregate



Percentage of children under age 5 whose births are registered, by sex and maternal education level

## Violent Discipline, SDG 16.2.1 Sex Disaggregate



Percentage of children age 1-14 years who experienced violent discipline in the past month, by sex

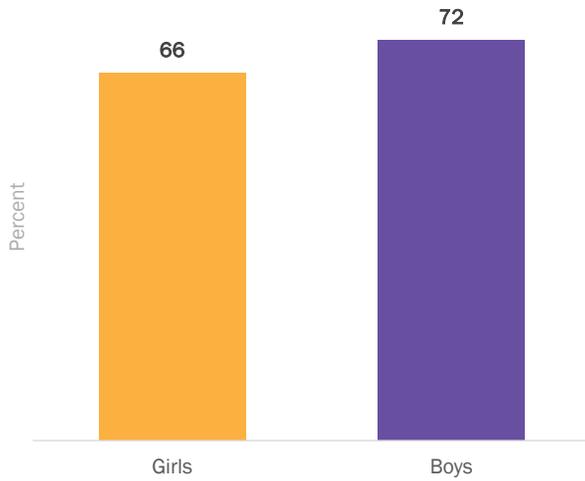
Note: The age group 1-14 spans the first and second decades of life.

# Every Girl & Boy Learns: The First Decade of Life

Investment in good quality early childhood education services prior to entering school improves learning outcomes for children. It also enhances the efficiency of the school system by reducing repetition and drop-out and improving achievement, especially among girls and marginalized groups. Primary education provides the foundation for a lifetime of learning. Considerable progress has been made in achieving universal education and closing the gender gap but gender disparities to the disadvantage of girls still exist in some countries. Further, girls still comprise the majority of the world's out-of-school population.

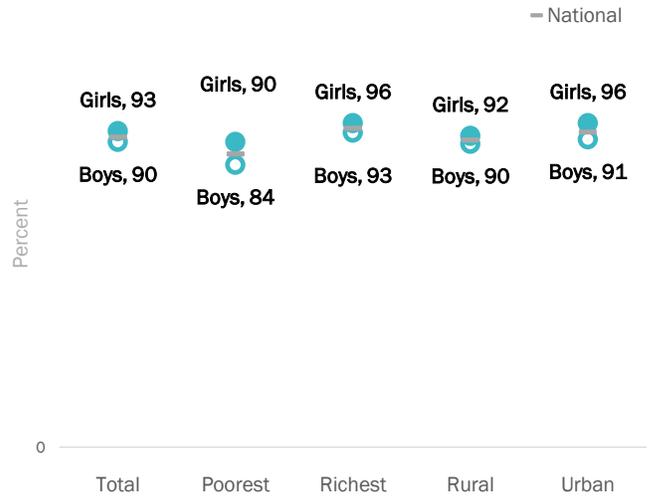
**Note:** Because children of primary school age range from 6-14 years, these indicators include some children in their second decade of life.

## Participation Rate in Organized Learning, SDG 4.2.2



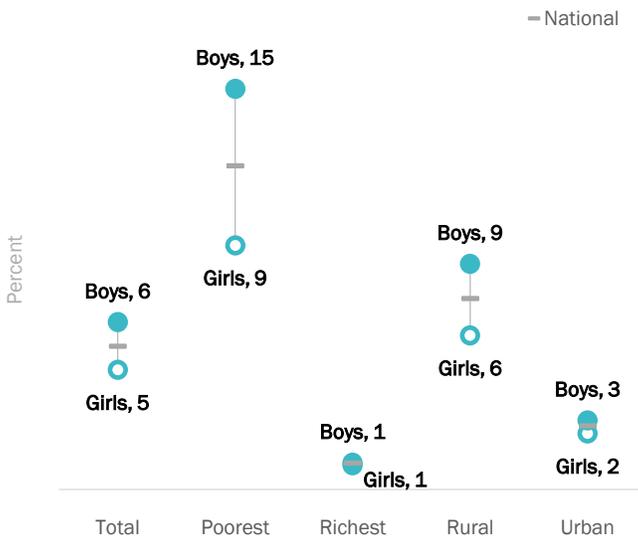
Percentage of children age one year younger than the official primary school entry age at the beginning of the school year who are attending an early childhood education programme or primary school (adjusted net attendance rate), by sex

## Primary School Attendance



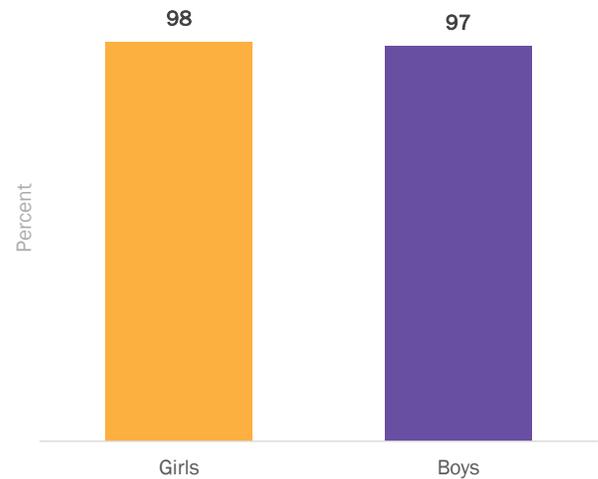
Percentage of children of primary school age attending primary, lower or upper secondary school (adjusted net attendance rate), by wealth quintile and urban/rural residence

## Children of Primary School Age Out of School



Percentage of children of primary school age who are not attending any level of education, by wealth quintile and area

## Primary Completion, SDG 4.1.2



Percentage of children age 3 to 5 years above the intended age for the last grade of primary school who have completed primary education, by sex

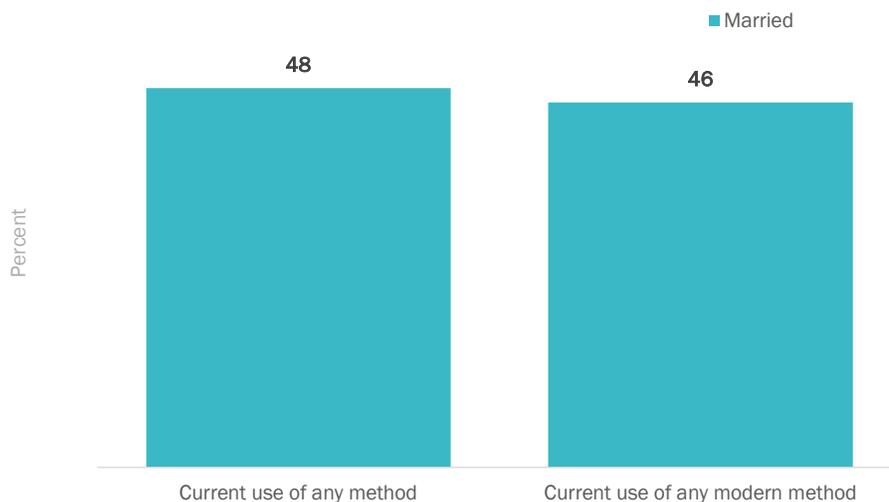
## Key Messages

- Infant Mortality Rate: 13 per 1,000 live births for girls vs. 12 for boys.
- Under-5 Mortality Rate: 16 per 1,000 for girls vs. 12 for boys.
- Stunting is higher among boys (13.2%) than girls (12.4%).
- Overweight is higher among boys (13.9%) than girls (12.4%).
- Wasting is slightly higher in boys (9.2%) than girls (8.5%).
- Developmental Milestones: 87.3% of girls vs. 80.5% of boys are on track in key domains.
- Mothers engage more with boys (67.5%) than girls (61.8%), compared to Fathers engage more with girls (19.1%) than boys (15.9%).
- Birth Registration: 95% for both sexes; lower among children of mothers with no education.
- Primary School Attendance: Girls (98.3%) slightly higher than boys (97.3%).
- Primary Completion: Boys (71.6%) outperform girls (65.7%).
- Out-of-School Children: Higher among poorest (12.2%) and rural areas (7.2%).

## Every Adolescent Girl & Boy Survives & Thrives: The Second Decade of Life

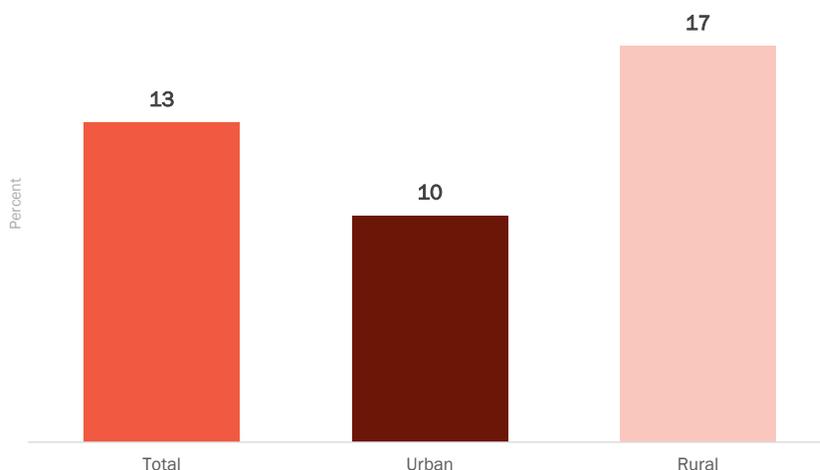
While adolescence carries new health risks for both girls and boys, girls often face gender-specific vulnerabilities, with lifelong consequences. Complications related to pregnancy and childbirth are among the leading causes of death worldwide for adolescent girls age 15 to 19. Preventing adolescent pregnancy not only improves the health of adolescent girls, but also provides them with opportunities to continue their education, preparing them for jobs and livelihoods, increasing their self-esteem and giving them more say in decisions that affect their lives. Yet, too often, adolescent girls lack access to appropriate sexual and reproductive health services, including modern methods of contraception. Additionally, despite having a higher risk of contracting HIV due to both greater physiological vulnerabilities and gender inequalities, adolescent girls are often less knowledgeable than adolescent boys about how HIV is transmitted. However, gender norms adversely impact adolescent boys as well. For example, norms around masculinity that encourage risk taking may heighten adolescent boys' use of alcohol and tobacco, increasing their likelihood of developing noncommunicable diseases later in life.

### Contraceptive Use & Demand Satisfied



Contraceptive use and demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods among adolescent girls age 15-19, by marital status

### Early Childbearing - by Age 18

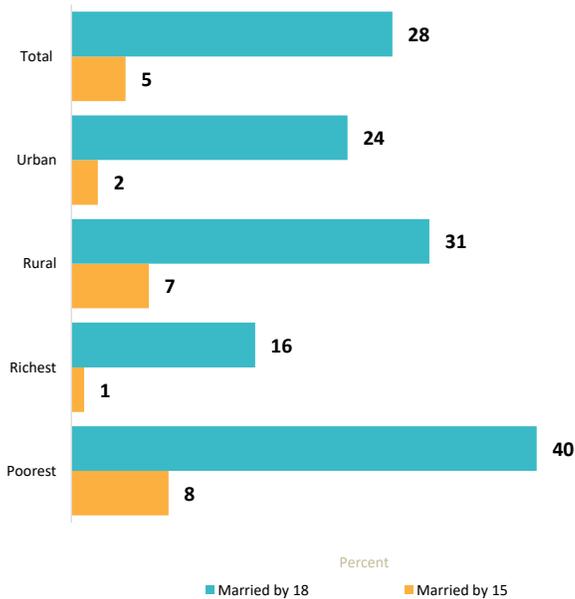


Percentage of women age 20-24 years who had a live birth by age 18, by urban/rural residence

# Every Adolescent Girl & Boy is Protected from Violence & Exploitation: The Second Decade of Life

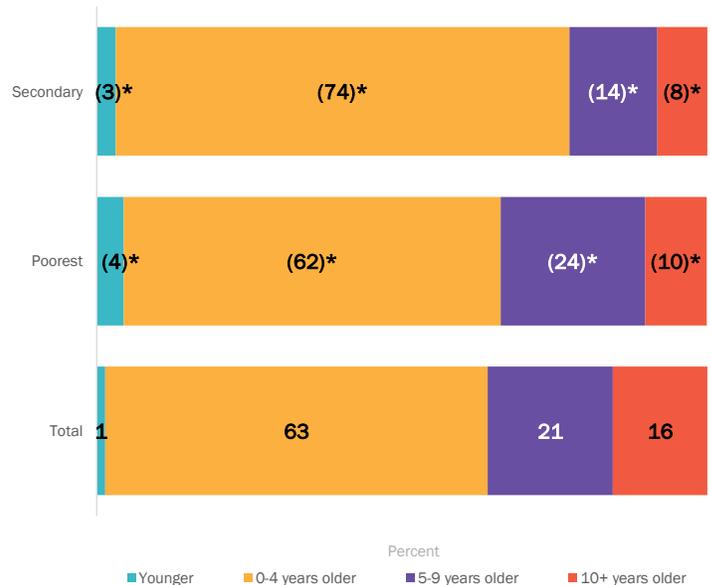
Adolescence presents unique vulnerabilities to violence and exploitation for girls. In many countries, marriage before the age of 18 is a reality for girls due to the interaction of several factors that place a girl at risk, including poverty, social norms, customary or religious laws that condone the practice, an inadequate legislative framework and the state of a country's civil registration system. Child marriage often compromises a girl's development by resulting in early pregnancy and social isolation, interrupting her schooling, and limiting her opportunities for career and vocational advancement. It also often involves a substantial age difference between the girl and her partner, thus further disempowering her and putting her at greater risk of partner violence, sexually transmitted diseases and lack of agency. Attitudes about wife beating serve as a marker for the social acceptability of intimate partner violence. Acceptance of wife beating among adolescent girls and boys suggests that it can be difficult for married girls who experience violence to seek assistance and for unmarried girls to identify and negotiate healthy and equitable relationships. Female genital mutilation is a human rights issue that also affects girls and women. Adolescence, in particular, is a vulnerable period for girls who have undergone FGM because they may experience heightened consequences of the procedure as they become sexually active and begin childbearing. Gender-based discrimination may be one of the most ubiquitous forms of discrimination adolescent girls face, and it has long-lasting and far-reaching effects on their personal trajectories as well as on all aspects of social and economic development. While in most regions, girls and boys are equally likely to be involved in child labour, gender is a determinant of the types of activities boys and girls engage in, with girls more likely to be involved in domestic work.

## Child Marriage, SDG 5.3.1



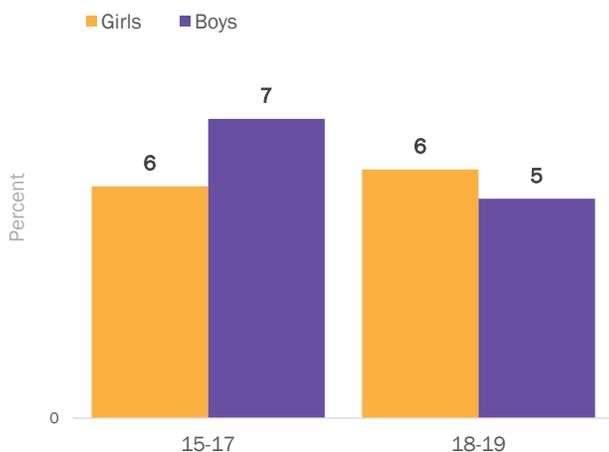
Percentage of women aged 20-24 years who were first married or in union before age 15 and before age 18\*, by residence and wealth quintile

## Spousal Age Difference



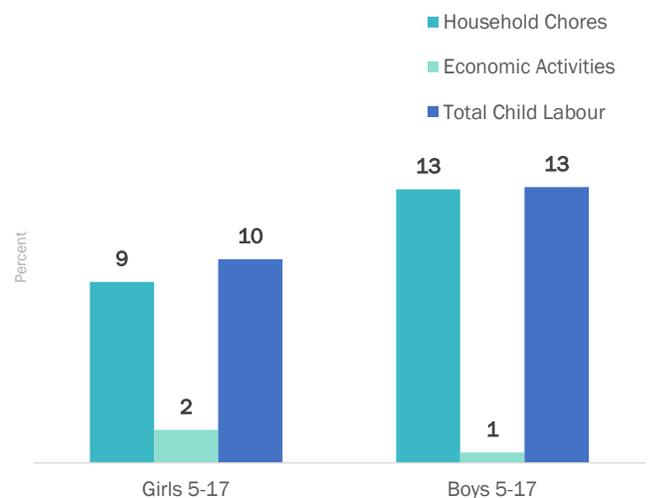
Percent distribution of adolescent girls age 15-19 currently married or in union by age of their partner, by education level and wealth quintile.  
\* Values in parentheses indicate findings based on 25-49 unweighted cases  
\*\* Values for Richest and No Education are not shown as they are based on less than 25 unweighted cases

## Attitudes toward Domestic Violence



Percentage of adolescents age 15-19 years who justify wife beating for any of the following reasons: she goes out without telling him; she neglects the children; she argues with him; she refuses sex with him; she burns the food, by sex and age group

## Child Labour, SDG 8.7.1



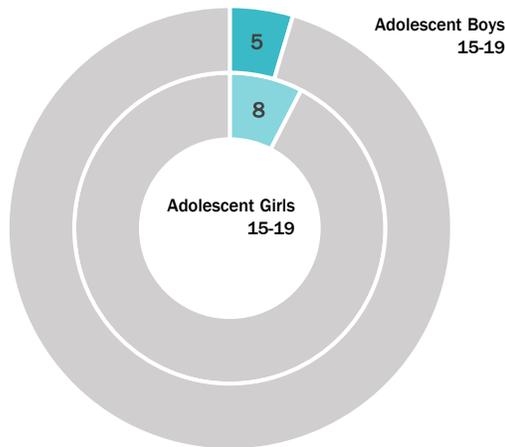
Percentage of children age 5 to 17 years engaged in child labour, by sex, age group and type of activity

\* Note: Indicator includes children in the first & second decade of life

# Every Adolescent Girl & Boy has an Equitable Chance in Life: The Second Decade of Life

To become empowered, adolescent girls and boys need to be engaged as civic participants in the decisions affecting their lives and communities. People's sense of security and freedom from the fear of crime influences how they move about those communities, access services and economic opportunities and participate in public life. Adolescent girls and boys are likely to have different perceptions of personal safety due to different gender-based vulnerabilities to sexual violence and other crimes. Life satisfaction measures an individual's perceived level of well-being or how an individual feels about their life as a whole. Measuring adolescent girls' and boy's satisfaction with their lives can provide important insights into their mental health during a stage of life when gender norms consolidate and girls and boys experience different risk factors for mental health disorders.

## Discrimination & Harassment

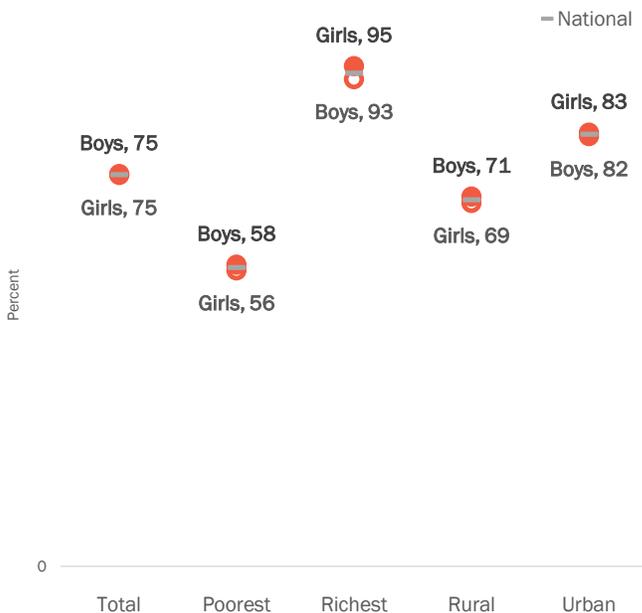


Percentage of adolescent girls and boys age 15-19 years who have ever felt discriminated or harassed based on their gender

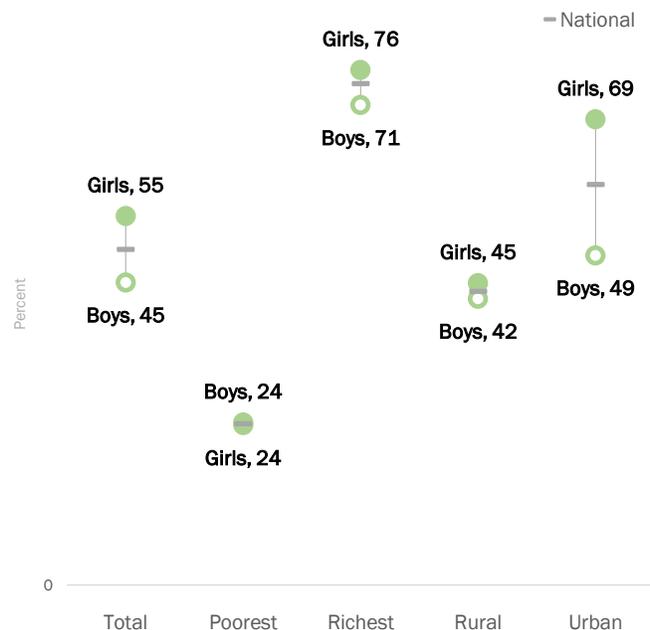
# Every Adolescent Girl & Boy Learns: The Second Decade of Life

Globally, participation in secondary education is expanding, progress lags behind primary education. Gender disparities disadvantaging girls are also wider and occur in more countries at the secondary level than at the primary level. Yet, advancing girls' secondary education is one of the most transformative development strategies countries can invest in. Completion of secondary education brings significant positive benefits to girls and societies – from increased lifetime earnings and national growth rates, to reductions in child marriage, stunting, and child and maternal mortality.

## Lower Secondary Attendance Net Attendance Rate



## Upper Secondary Attendance Net Attendance Rate

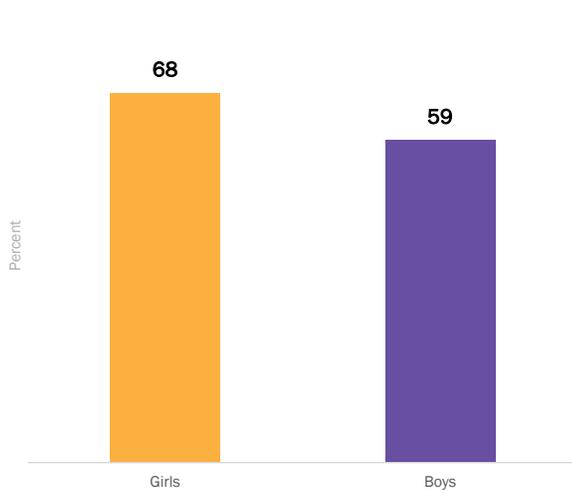


Percentage of children of lower secondary school age attending lower secondary school or higher (adjusted net attendance rate), by sex, wealth quintile and area

Percentage of children of upper secondary school age attending upper secondary school or higher (adjusted net attendance rate), by sex, wealth quintile and area

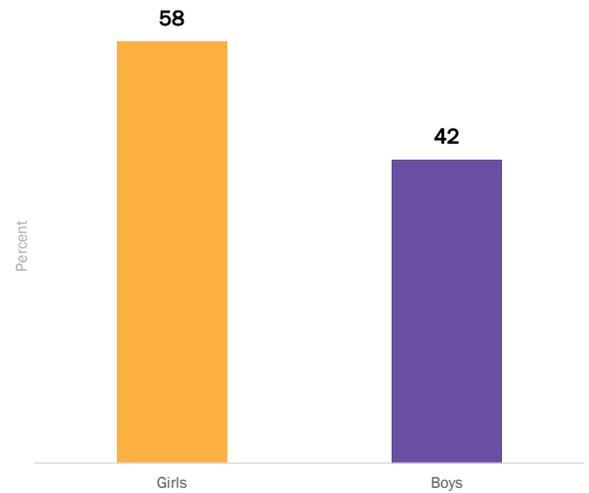
# Every Adolescent Girl & Boy Learns: The Second Decade of Life

## Lower Secondary Completion, SDG 4.1.2



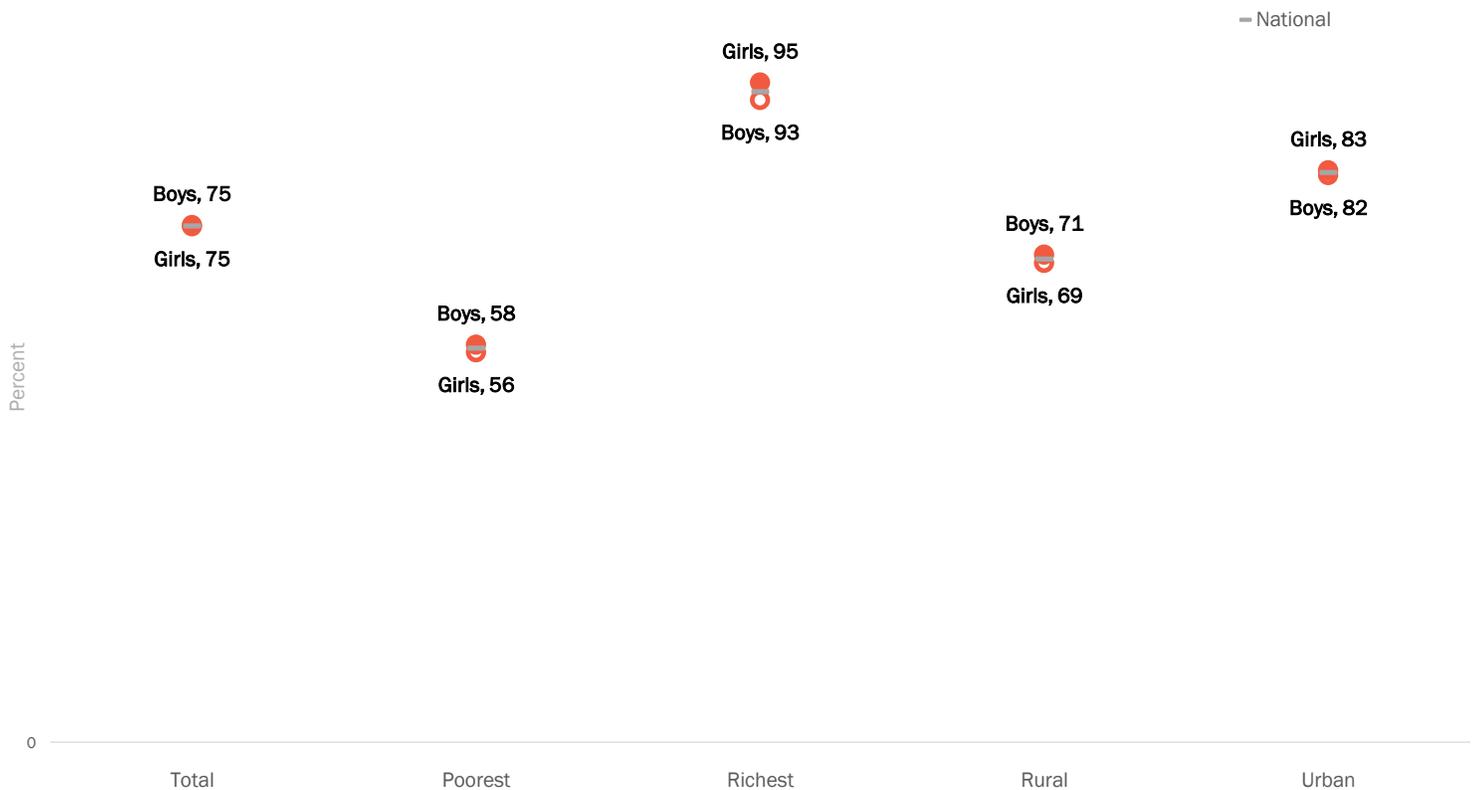
Percentage of children who age 3 to 5 years above the intended age for the last grade of lower secondary school who have completed lower secondary education, by sex

## Upper Secondary Completion, SDG 4.1.2



Percentage of children or youth who age 3 to 5 years above the intended age for the last grade of upper secondary school who have completed upper secondary education, by sex

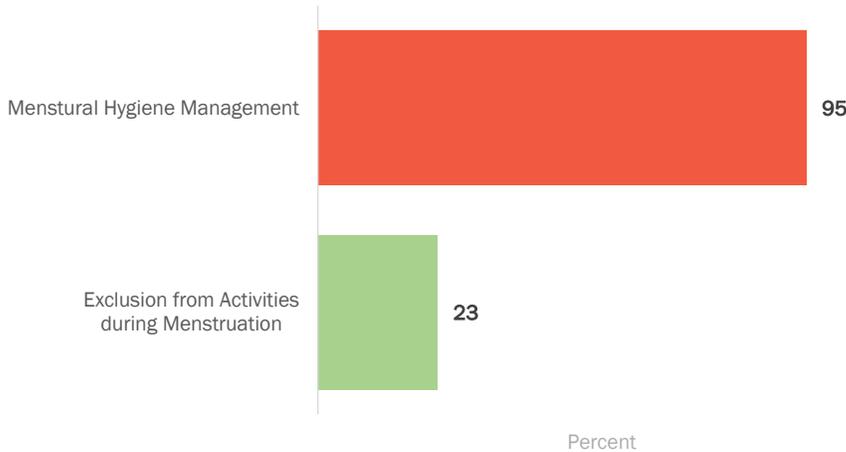
## Children of Lower Secondary School Age Out of School



Percentage of children of lower secondary school age who are not attending any level of education, by wealth quintile and area

# Every Adolescent Girl & Boy Lives in a Safe & Clean Environment: The Second Decade of Life

## Menstrual Hygiene Management



The ability of adolescent girls to safely manage their monthly menstrual cycle in privacy and with dignity is fundamental to their health, psychosocial well-being and mobility. Girls in low-resource and emergency contexts without access to adequate menstrual hygiene management facilities and supplies experience stigma and social exclusion while also forgoing important educational, social and economic opportunities.

**Menstrual Hygiene Management:** Among adolescent girls age 15-19 who reported menstruating in the last 12 months, percentage using appropriate menstrual hygiene materials with a private place to wash and change while at home

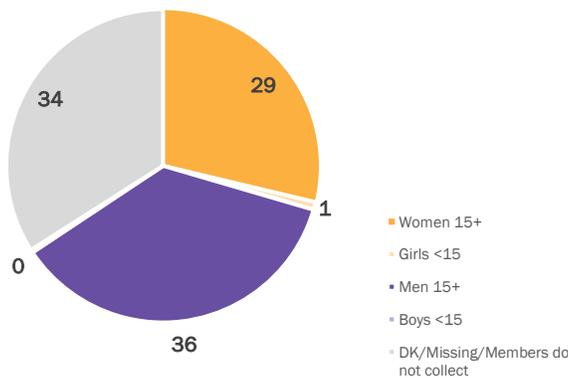
**Exclusion from Activities during Menstruation:** Among adolescent girls age 15-19 who reported menstruating in the last 12 months, percentage of women who did not participate in social activities, school or work due to their last menstruation in the last 12 months

## Gender Equality in Adulthood

To survive and thrive, all children require care and support from women and men. Care and support can be substantively improved by fostering gender equality, an important goal in its own right, and by reducing the gender-related barriers. Gender-related barriers include women's and girls' disproportionate lack of information, knowledge and technology, resources, and safety and mobility, as well as the gender division of labour and gender norms. For example, a mother's lack of mobility, due to prohibitive norms or lack of transportation, may impede birth registration, nutrition, and other child outcomes. The internalization of gender norms around masculine and feminine expectations and behaviours may influence women's and men's attitudes toward intimate partner violence and physical punishment of children as well as self-perceptions of well-being, including life satisfaction and expectations for the future.

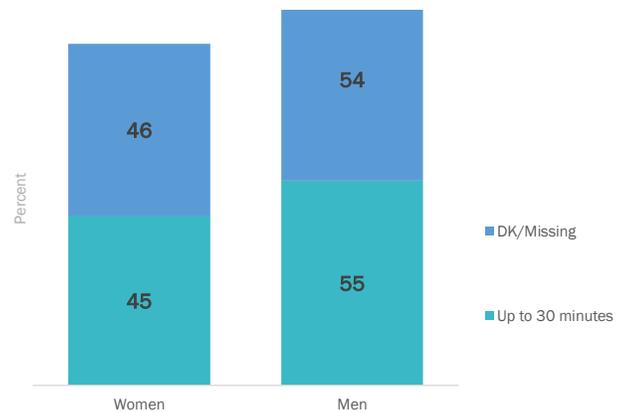
## Time on Household Chores: Water Collection

### Who collects water?



Percent distribution of household members without drinking water on premises by person usually collecting drinking water used in the household

### Time spent on water collection

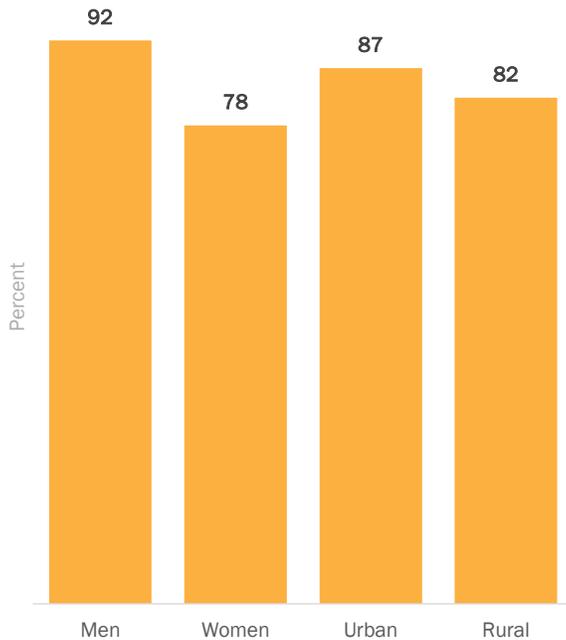


Percent distribution of average amount of time spent collecting water per day by sex of person primarily responsible for water collection in households without drinking water on premises

\*\* Values for "31 mins to 1 hour, Over 1 hour to 3 hours, and Over 3 hours" are not shown as they are based on less than 25 unweighted cases

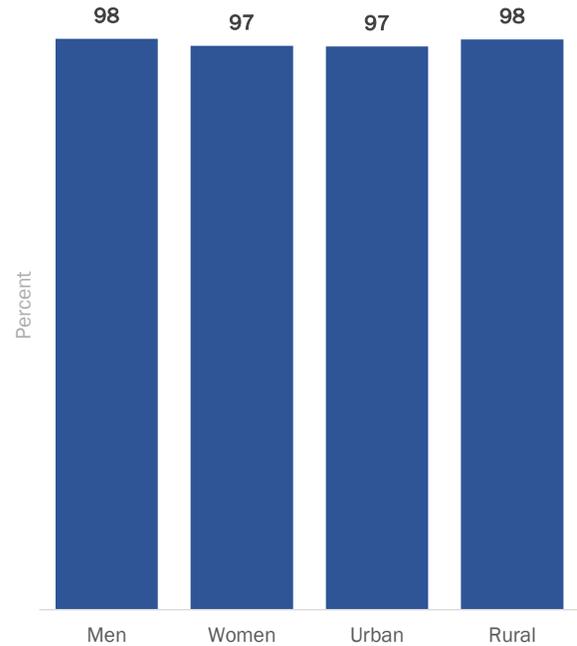
## Safety & Security

### Feeling safe while walking alone, SDG 16.1.4 sex disaggregate



Percentage of adults who feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark, by sex and area

### Feeling safety while being at home alone

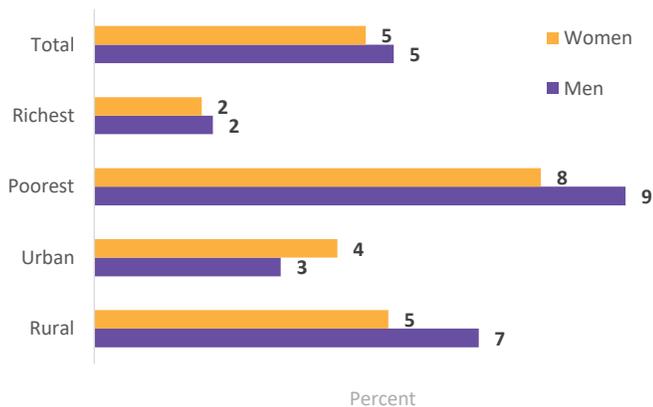


Percentage of adults (age 15-49) who feel safe being home alone after dark, by sex and area

## Gender Equality in Adulthood

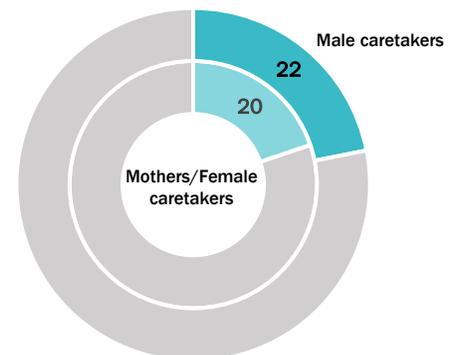
### Feminine & masculine attitudes & expectations

#### Attitudes toward domestic violence



Percentage of adults age 15-49 who justify wife beating for any of the following reasons: she goes out without telling him; she neglects the children; she argues with him; she refuses sex with him; she burns the food, by sex, wealth quintile and area

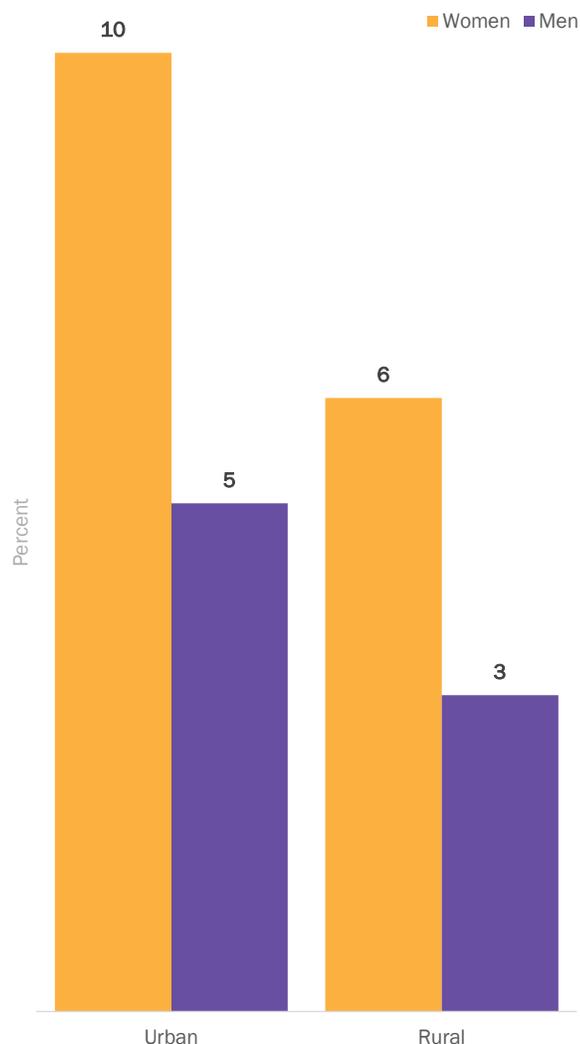
#### Attitudes toward physical punishment



Percentage of mothers/caretakers who believe that physical punishment is needed to bring up, raise, or educate a child properly, by sex of caretaker

# Gender Equality in Adulthood

## Discrimination & harassment



Percentage of adults age 15-49 who have ever personally felt discriminated or harassed based on their gender, by sex and area

## Key Messages

- Early Childbearing: 13.4% of women aged 20–24 had a child by age 18; higher in rural areas (16.6%).
- Contraceptive Use (Married Adolescents): 47.7% use any method; 45.9% use modern methods.
- Child Marriage: 27.8% married by age 18; 4.7% by age 15.
- Spousal Age Gap: 62.7% of adolescent girls married to partners 0–4 years older.
- Justification of Wife Beating: 5.3% of men and 4.8% of women justify it.
- Child Labour: Boys (13.4%) more affected than girls (9.9%); girls more involved in household chores.
- Lower Secondary Attendance: National rate 74.7%; lower in poorest quintile (57%).
- Upper Secondary Attendance: National rate 49.6%; poorest quintile only 23.8%
- Menstrual Hygiene Management: 94.7% of girls have access to appropriate materials and privacy.
- Exclusion from Activities: 23.2% of girls missed school or social activities due to menstruation.
- 28.7% of women and 0.8% of girls are primary collectors compared to 36.1% of men and 0.3% of boys also contribute.
- Feeling Safe Walking Alone at Night. Both men and women closely feel safe walking alone at night (Men: 98.4%; Women: 97.2%.)
- Feeling Safe at Home Alone. Men: 91.7% of men feel safe at home compared to Women at 77.9%.

The Belize Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) was carried out in 2023 - 2024 by Statistical Institute of Belize as part of the global MICS programme. Technical support was provided by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). UNICEF, the Government of Belize and the Statistical Institute of Belize provided financial support.

The objective of this snapshot is to disseminate selected findings from the Belize MICS7 2024 related to Gender Equality. Data from this snapshot can be found in tables CS.3, TC.8.1, TC.10.1, TC.11.1, PR.1.1, PR.2.1, LN.1.2, LN.2.3, LN.2.4, LN.2.6, LN.2.7, TM.3.1, TM.3.2, TM.3.3, TM.3.4, TM.2.3W, TM.11.1W, TM.11.1M, PR.2.2, PR.3.3, EQ.3.1W, EQ.3.1M, PR.7.1W, PR.7.1M, PR.6.1,

EQ.3.1W, EQ.3.1M, WS.4.1, WS.4.2, WS 1.3 and WS.1.4 in the Survey Findings Report.

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