PROGRESS FOR CHILDREN

A Report Card on
Child Protection

Number 8, September 2009

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FOREWORD

Around the world, far too many children are subject to violence, exploitation and abuse. Some are forced to work under harmful conditions. Others face violence or abuse in their homes, their schools, their communities or in institutional care. In some places children are targets for illegal recruitment by armed groups and armed forces or are forced to flee their homes due to conflict or natural disaster. And millions, especially girls, are subject to sexual violence and abuse as well as harmful traditional practices.

This edition of *Progress for Children*, the eighth in the series that monitors progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), is a compendium of data that serves as a report card on global and national efforts to protect the rights of children.

Data on many child protection issues are more readily available today than ever before. However on some issues – notably sexual exploitation and abuse of children, trafficking and migration – data remain difficult to obtain. More must be done to fill these gaps, and with more available data the prospects for concrete results for children will improve.

But the data reveal some progress. For example, in some countries where child marriage has been commonplace, girls are now getting married at a later age. Data also show that female genital mutilation/cutting has declined in recent decades. While progress is being made on these issues, the challenge is to accelerate the pace.

Effective child protection systems help ensure that vulnerable children and families have access to school, health care, social welfare, social protection, justice and other essential services. These systems can contribute to breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty and exploitation, thus contributing to achieving the MDGs.

The collective aim must be to create protective environments in which girls and boys are safe from all forms of violence and exploitation. There must be a concerted effort to protect the rights of children and to expand the opportunities they have to reach their full potential.

It is now two decades since the landmark Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted. As we mark its 20th anniversary this year, this edition of *Progress for Children* provides key information on child protection. While progress has been made, each child still suffering must inspire us to greater urgency until the Convention's protections extend to every child, everywhere.

Ann M. Veneman

Ann M. Veneman
Executive Director, UNICEF

INTRODUCTION

Children worldwide experience violence, exploitation and abuse. They are forced to fight in wars or labour in intolerable conditions; they are sexually abused or subjected to violence as a punishment; they are forced into child marriage or trafficked into exploitative conditions of work; they are needlessly placed in prisons, detention facilities and institutions.

Children in circumstances such as these are seeing their human rights infringed in the most fundamental ways – and suffering both physical and psychological harm that has wide-reaching and sometimes irreparable effects. The elements of a healthy childhood as specified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child are being denied because the world is failing to provide children the protection to which they are entitled.

The Millennium Declaration of 2000 explicitly addresses the need to protect children from conflict, violence, abuse and exploitation. All countries adopting the declaration resolved to:

- Strive for the full protection and promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all.
- Combat all forms of violence against women and implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- Ensure that children and all civilian populations who disproportionately suffer the consequences of natural disaster, genocide, armed conflict and other humanitarian emergencies are given every assistance and protection so they can resume normal life as quickly as possible.
- Encourage the ratification and full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

Child protection intersects with every one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – from poverty reduction to getting children into school, from eliminating gender inequality to reducing child mortality.

To review a few examples, child labour prevents, delays and curtails access to education (MDG 2), while education of poor quality contributes to children leaving school and entering the labour force. Girls are more likely to be pulled out of school to do domestic work (MDG 3), and girls who survive sexual exploitation are more likely to contract diseases that will threaten their lives or their maternal health (MDGs 5 and 6). Child marriage leads to the removal of girls from school and prevents gender equality (MDGs 2 and 3); it also leads to early pregnancy, which carries considerable health risks for girls (MDG 5) and their babies (MDG 4).

A protective environment that embraces all areas of social life – where laws, services, behaviours and practices minimize children's susceptibility to risk as well as strengthen their own resilience – can prevent many forms of violence, exploitation and abuse from occurring.

In 2008, UNICEF adopted a new Child Protection Strategy that describes in detail the necessary components of a protective environment. It calls for systemic approaches and for efforts to change the societal attitudes, customs and practices that allow children's rights to be violated.

The strategy builds on the extensive international framework for child protection and on relevant recommendations of the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children. It emphasizes the accountability of governments for putting in place the best possible systems for protecting children, regardless of age, disability, ethnicity or religion.

The strategy sets forth five main approaches for building a comprehensive protective environment for children:

1. Improving child protection systems

Since the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, legal reforms for the most part have addressed child protection concerns on an issue-by-issue basis, rather than adopting a comprehensive approach. In addition to thoroughly reviewing legislative frameworks – and reforming and amending them as necessary – governments need to adopt national budgets, policies, practices and monitoring mechanisms through a human rights-based approach. Governments also need to encourage public discussion of child protection issues, because legislation alone will not have sufficient impact unless awareness is raised and attitudes are changed.

Basic health and education services must be available to all children – including those who are hardest to reach. In addition, social welfare services must be made available within schools, clinics and specialized facilities for children particularly at risk of or affected by violence, exploitation or abuse. The manner in which such services are delivered is also important, and the overall capacity of teachers, doctors, police, social workers and others to respond to child protection concerns needs to be improved, through specific training where necessary.

2. Promoting social change

Many forms of violence against children are tacitly or explicitly condoned by society – these include child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, corporal punishment and domestic violence. Effective child protection depends to a large extent on changing the mindsets of families and communities so that attitudes, beliefs and practices that harm children will no longer be tolerated. The most effective child protection is reinforced by positive social consensus. Attempts to impose change from outside often lead to resistance. Initiatives to improve child protection are more effective when they are based on partnerships and coalitions, and when open discussion of the issues can take place. Change that is effective and sustained will be rooted in shared social norms and effective, accessible systems.

3. Enhancing child protection in emergencies

Conflicts and natural disasters – such as droughts, floods and earthquakes – create new protection risks and heighten existing ones. In response, strategies must be grounded in international human rights law, while local actions must be aligned with UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies. The core commitments state that children in emergencies have the same needs and rights as children in stable communities. The response, as well, must emphasize preventing violence, exploitation and abuse.

Even amid conflict or following natural disasters there should be a focus on building national child protection systems. Many systems are weakened in the context of emergencies, yet they have a vital role in addressing the child protection issues that arise. The social welfare, law enforcement and justice sectors may, for example, require support in addressing such issues as family tracing and reunification, temporary placement of children who have lost their parents due to an emergency, or children in contact with the law.

4. Partnering for greater impact

Child protection can be promoted by maximizing partnerships between United Nations agencies, national governments, civil society, the private sector, and bilateral and multilateral organizations. The development of common approaches to programmes and advocacy should be promoted, and corporate social responsibility for child protection goals should be encouraged. Partnerships with international financial institutions can generate greater investment in sectors that are responsible for child protection. Adolescents – particularly those who face protection challenges – can be effective advocates on such topics as violence against children and the impact of armed conflict, and in breaking the silence on subjects considered to be sensitive.

5. Building evidence

Strengthening the evidence base on child protection is vital, not least to ensure that data are used to improve laws, policies and practices. Monitoring and evaluation are necessary to assess the scale of child protection violations, to identify vulnerable groups and factors of vulnerability, to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention efforts and to inform policy and programming on the basis of evidence at all levels. The data gathering process also identifies children who are being missed under existing child protection systems, so that new ways of reaching them can be devised in line with an approach that furthers the realization of human rights.

Collecting reliable data on issues related to child protection is notoriously difficult. Violence, exploitation and abuse thrive in conditions of illegality, secrecy and lack of transparency, making it impossible for official government statistics to reflect the true scale and extent of the problems. Furthermore, a lack of official acknowledgement of abuses is likely to go hand in hand with a reluctance to establish data gathering mechanisms. Those data collection systems that do exist at national and local levels are often weak and reflect a lack of technical capacity. Robust evaluation and research methodologies are also in short supply, especially for evaluating the impact of preventive interventions.

Nonetheless, important progress has been made. Household surveys can be a useful tool for eliciting detailed information about at least some of the major areas of child protection, and global data are compiled by UNICEF on several issues (which are detailed in the following section).

GLOBAL OVERVIEW

The concept of a protective environment has evolved simultaneously with the child rights movement that achieved the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 and its nearly universal ratification to date. The term 'children in especially difficult circumstances' – used during the mid to late 1980s and 1990s – drew on programme experiences with children living and working on the streets of Latin America and elsewhere, and it soon expanded to include children in armed conflict and child victims of abuse and neglect. In almost every area, it was clear that data were inadequate to quantify and qualify the nature and extent of the violations of child rights.

The difficulty of estimating the numbers of children affected by particular circumstances – including child labour, armed conflict and other forms of violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, the loss of family, and deficient laws and judicial processes – reflects not only the public and political sensitivities around these issues but also deficiencies in the understanding of which data are needed and how best to collect them. These critical gaps in data have hindered the accurate and effective analysis of the situation of children.

Despite recommendations made in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, general comments by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and recommendations of the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children, there remain challenges in relation to research on child protection: a lack of an agreed-upon definition of child protection, a dearth of indicators, a lack of mandatory reporting and the frequent 'invisibility' of the phenomena.

Much has been accomplished towards closing some of these gaps through Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) since the mid-1980s, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) since 1995 and other national household surveys. These instruments provide quantitative data on a wide range of topics, including birth registration, child marriage, FGM/C and child labour, and, more recently, attitudes towards domestic violence, child discipline and children with disabilities. DHS, MICS and other national household surveys are the sources for much of the data presented in this report card. A substantial amount of data is contained in these pages, much of it new and being reported for the first time.

Household survey data have been compiled by UNICEF and partners over a period of years to produce global and regional estimates and to allow for trend analysis. Data on birth registration, child marriage and child labour are collected for most countries, while data on FGM/C are available for the 29 countries in which it is widely practised. UNICEF has reported on these topics annually in *The State of the World's Children* for several years; the organization began reporting on attitudes towards domestic violence, child discipline and children with disabilities in 2007.

Data on such topics as sexual exploitation and abuse of children, trafficking, migration, children in institutional care and children in justice centres are difficult to collect through household surveys, and, for reasons described throughout this report, there is often a lack of quantifiable data on these topics. In these areas, this report card relies on external analysis and best estimate measurements at the time of publication.

While qualitative data cannot substitute for statistics, they are nonetheless an important supplement to quantitative information and essential for programming that is truly in the best interests of the child.

Birth registration

Birth registration provides an official record of a child's existence and nationality, and is considered a fundamental human right under article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Birth registration should be free and universal. Yet the births of around 51 million children in 2007 were not registered, almost half of them in South Asia. One in four developing countries with available data has a birth registration rate that is below 50 per cent.
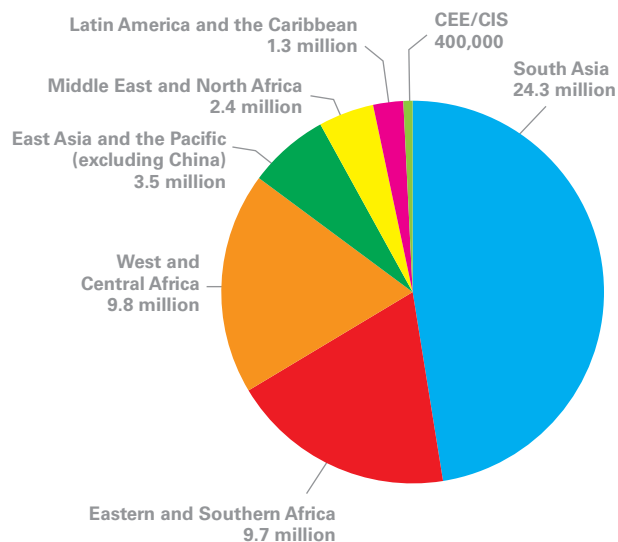
Nearly two out of three children in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia were not registered in 2007. In eight countries – six in sub-Saharan Africa and two in South Asia – 10 per cent or fewer of children under 5 years old are registered. Children from the poorest households are twice as likely to be unregistered as children from the richest households.

The lack of trend data on birth registration in many countries makes it difficult to analyse progress at global and regional levels. At the country level, however, data indicate that birth registration has increased in several countries, including the Gambia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam.

Children and adults whose births have not been registered are effectively invisible in the eyes of the State. That often puts them beyond the reach of the protection and services to which they have a right, such as health care and education. It may also prevent them from exercising their rights as citizens later in life; they may, for example, be unable to travel using a passport, to marry, to vote, to open a bank account or to inherit property.

Around 51 million children born in 2007 have not been registered; nearly half of them live in South Asia

Number of unregistered annual births, by region (2007)

- Latin America and the Caribbean 1.3 million
- CEE/CIS 400,000
- South Asia 24.3 million
- Middle East and North Africa 2.4 million
- East Asia and the Pacific (excluding China) 3.5 million
- West and Central Africa 9.8 million
- Eastern and Southern Africa 9.7 million

Note: Estimates are based on 98 countries representing 68% of the world population. The estimates were calculated using 2007 figures for the number of births. They do not include China and its population because data on birth registration in China are not available in UNICEF databases.

Source: MICS, DHS, other national surveys and vital registration data, 2000–2008.

The lowest levels of birth registration are found in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia

Percentage of children under 5 years old who are registered
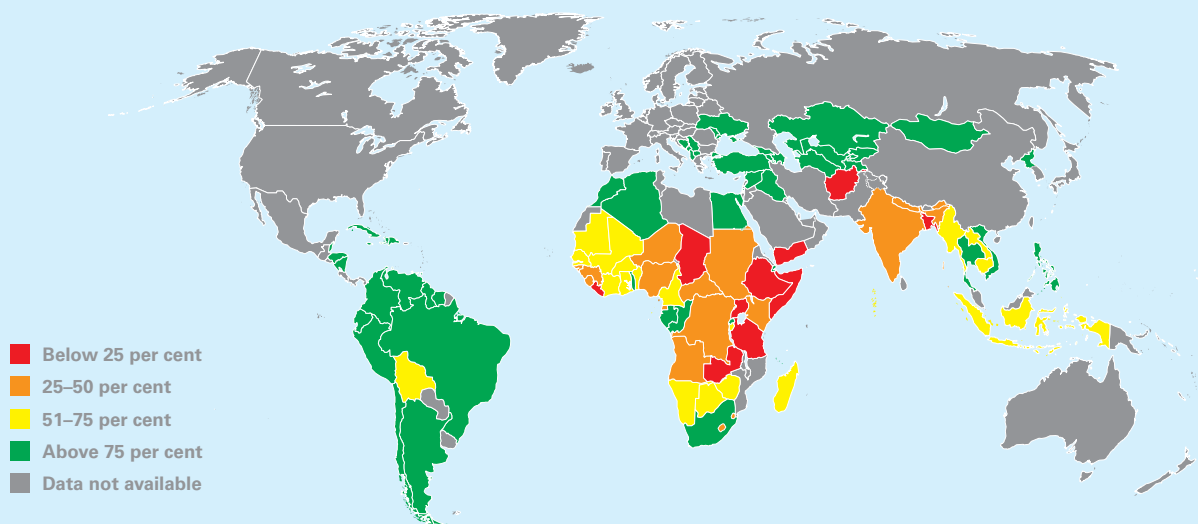
- Below 25 per cent
- 25–50 per cent
- 51–75 per cent
- Above 75 per cent
- Data not available

Note: This map is stylized and not to scale. It does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

Source: MICS, DHS, other national surveys and vital registration data, 2000–2008.

Nearly two out of three children in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are not registered

Percentage of children under 5 years old who are not registered, by region
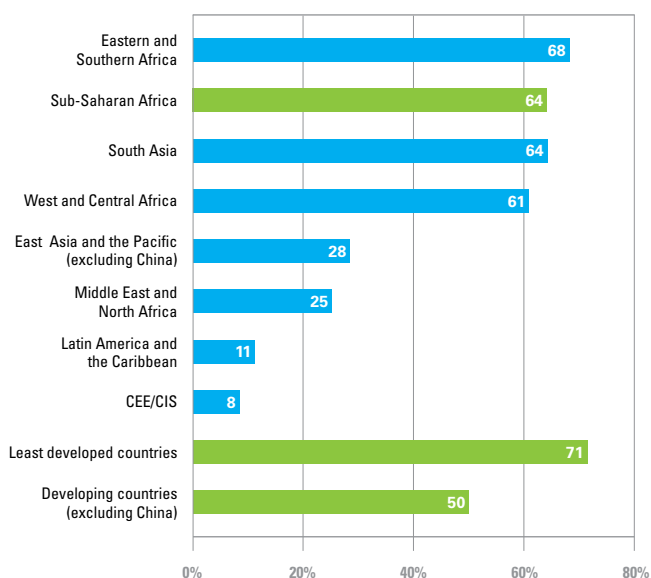
Source: MICS, DHS, other national surveys and vital registration data, 2000–2008.

Children from the poorest households are twice as likely as children from the richest households to be unregistered; boys and girls are equally likely to be unregistered

Percentage of children under 5 years old who are not registered, by wealth quintile and gender

Note: Estimates by wealth quintile are based on a subset of 81 countries, and estimates by gender are based on a subset of 81 countries. Therefore, they cannot be compared with total estimates presented elsewhere in this report.

Source: MICS, DHS, other national surveys and vital registration data, 2000–2008.

10 per cent or less of children under 5 are registered in six sub-Saharan African and two South Asian countries

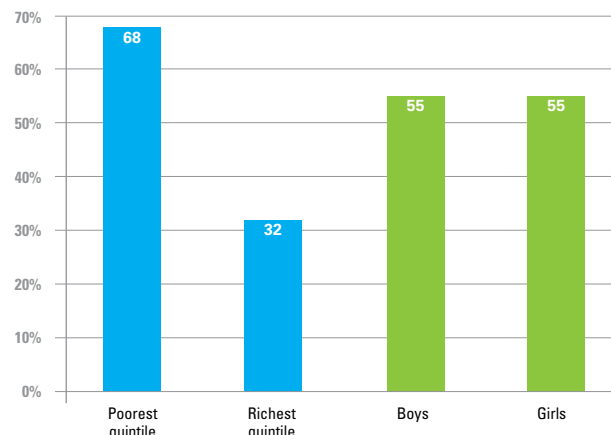Percentage of children under 5 years old who are registered, in countries with registration levels of 10 per cent or below
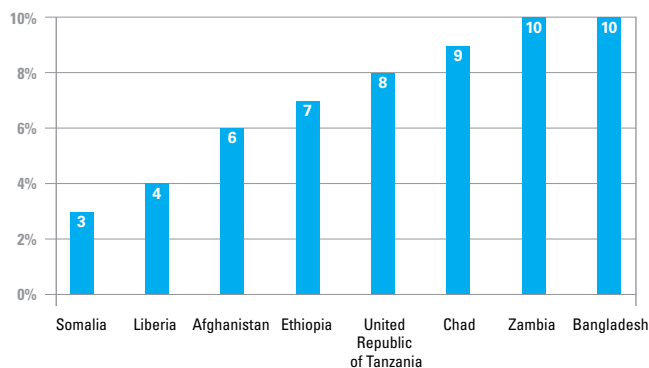
Note: Data for Liberia and the United Republic of Tanzania differ from the standard definition.

Source: MICS and DHS, 2000–2007.

Registering a child's birth is a vital step towards his or her protection. Any enforcement of minimum-age legislation depends on an official record of a child's age, whether it is to protect the child from illegal recruitment by armed forces or armed groups, from premature marriage or from hazardous forms of work. Children in conflict with the law need an official record of their age if they are to avoid being treated as adults by the criminal justice system. Children with a birth certificate are less vulnerable to sexual exploitation and trafficking, and those caught up in complex emergencies are more likely to be reunited with their families. In addition, a birth record is an acknowledgement of parentage that can often guard against illegal adoption.

Integrating birth registration into social services, including health services and early child development programmes, can increase registration rates. Effective awareness campaigns can increase people's understanding of the value of birth registration and stimulate collective support for it.

Violence against children

The true extent of violence against children is impossible to measure because so much of it happens in secret and is not reported. Probably the broadest assessment of this statement is the data on physical violence compiled by the Innocenti Research Centre for the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children (2006), which led to an estimate of between 500 million and 1.5 billion children experiencing violence annually.[1]

Although some violence is unexpected and isolated, most violence against children is carried out by people children know and should be able to trust, such as parents, step-parents or parents' partners, schoolmates, teachers and employers. Certain groups of children are particularly vulnerable, including children with disabilities, children belonging to minority groups, children living on the streets, adolescents in conflict with the law, and refugee and displaced children. Often children who face violence or witness it remain silent out of fear and stigma, and many children accept violence as an inevitable part of life.

Although the family should be the natural environment for protection of children, the home can also be a place where children experience violence in the form of discipline. Data from 37 countries that carried out an optional module on child discipline during the third round of Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (2005–2006) show that 86 per cent of children 2–14 years old experience physical punishment and/or psychological aggression. Two out of three children are subject to physical punishment.

Physical punishment is a widespread practice even where it is not approved by mothers or caregivers. In 35 countries with available data, the percentage of mothers or caregivers who think physical punishment is necessary to raise a child is consistently lower than the percentage of children 2–14 years old who are actually subjected to such discipline.

The MICS module on child discipline was developed in response to the lack of empirical evidence and analysis on which to develop policies, programmes and interventions for preventing violence against children and supporting children who experience violence. But more evidence is clearly needed.

Available data also indicate widespread acceptance of wife-beating, a form of domestic violence. Data from 68 countries indicate that more than 50 per cent of girls and women 15–49 years old think that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

Neglecting the children was the most commonly cited reason for justifying wife-beating across almost all regions. Women with more education, however, are less likely to believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife under certain circumstances than women with less education.

The UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children recommended the improvement of national data collection and information systems; the adoption of indicators based on internationally agreed standards; and the use of disaggregated data to enable the monitoring of progress over time and the identification of subgroups of children who are especially vulnerable. Among other recommendations, the study also called for development of national research agendas on violence against children across all settings where it occurs – in the family and home, at school, in care and justice institutions, at work and in the community.

The consequences of violence are manifold. Many victims experience physical and mental health problems later in life, which can lead to death and disability. Society pays the price in terms of direct medical costs, lost earnings and unrealized tax revenues, as well as the costs of protective and welfare services.

Is wife-beating acceptable? More than half of women in developing countries with data think so

Percentage of girls and women 15–49 years old who think that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances
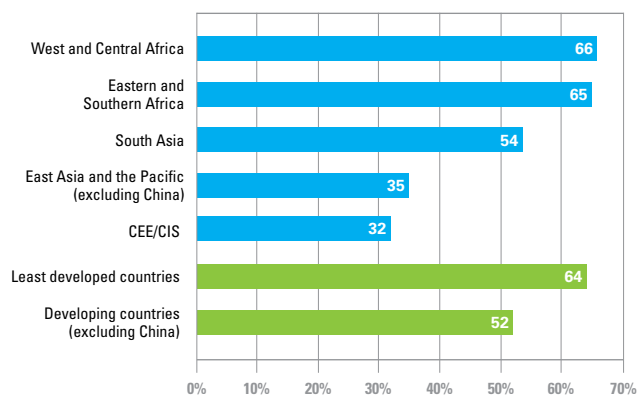
Note: Estimates are based on data for 68 countries representing 39% of the world population. Regional estimates for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and North Africa could not be calculated due to insufficient data.

Source: DHS, MICS and other national surveys, 2001–2007.

High proportions of children experience both physical punishment and psychological aggression

Percentage of children 2–14 years old who experienced physical punishment only, psychological aggression only, and both physical punishment and psychological aggression

Country	Both physical punishment and psychological aggression	Psychological aggression only	Physical punishment only
Occupied Palestinian Territory	70	23	2
Viet Nam	58	32	4
Yemen	81	10	2
Egypt	68	22	2
Cameroon	69	16	7
Sierra Leone	69	13	9
Togo	67	16	8
Côte d'Ivoire	69	18	3
Ghana	64	20	6
Central African Republic	69	12	7
Jamaica	61	14	12
Syrian Arab Republic	70	12	5
Algeria	69	14	4
Gambia	62	13	10
Suriname	52	27	5
Dominican Republic	45	27	12
Iraq	65	15	4
Burkina Faso	53	26	4
Belarus	45	33	5
Guinea-Bissau	57	9	14
Mongolia	37	42	1
Azerbaijan	44	29	2
Trinidad and Tobago	42	23	9
Tajikistan	50	19	5
Guyana	47	15	11
Serbia	41	21	11
Lao People's Democratic Republic	35	27	9
Ukraine	32	33	5
Djibouti	46	8	16
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	42	15	12
Belize	38	13	17
Georgia	40	18	8
Montenegro	35	19	7
Kazakhstan	19	29	4
Kyrgyzstan	25	16	11
Albania	10	2	37
Bosnia and Herzegovina	13	14	9

Legend:
- Both physical punishment and psychological aggression
- Psychological aggression only
- Physical punishment only

Source: MICS, DHS and other national surveys, 2005–2007.

Younger women are about as likely to justify wife-beating as older women

Percentage of girls and women 15–49 years old who think that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances, by age group

Age group	Percentage
15–19 years old	53
20–24 years old	52
25–29 years old	52
30–34 years old	52
35–39 years old	52
40–44 years old	51
45–49 years old	51

(0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%)
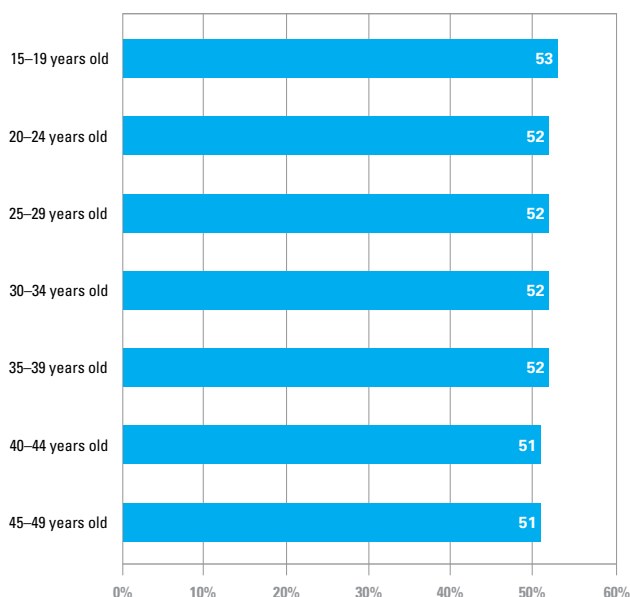
Note: Percentages reflect a weighted average for 66 countries with available data.

Source: MICS, DHS and other national surveys, 2001–2007.

In most regions, neglecting the children is the most commonly cited justification for wife-beating

Percentage of girls and women 15–49 years old who think that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances, by circumstance
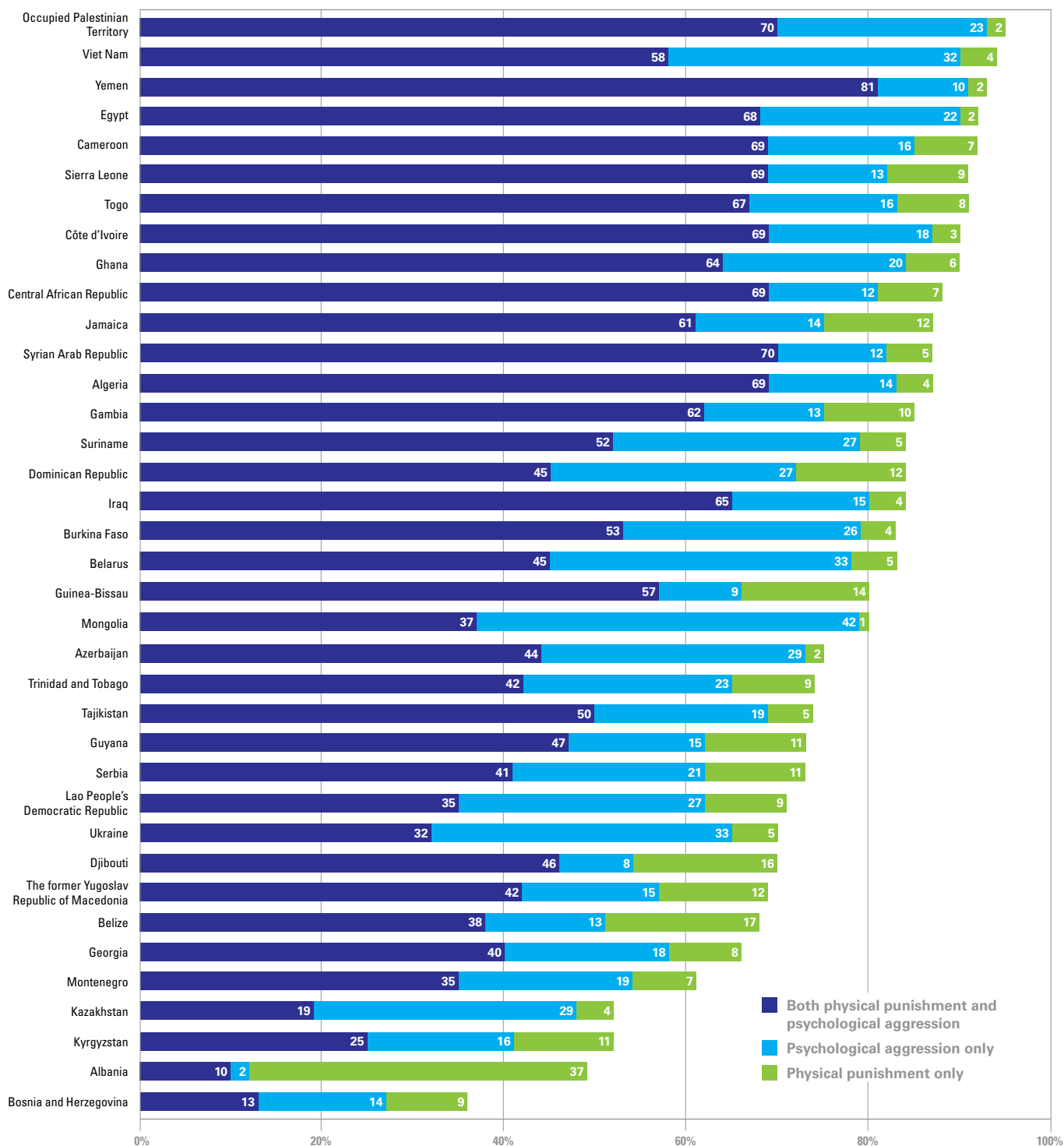
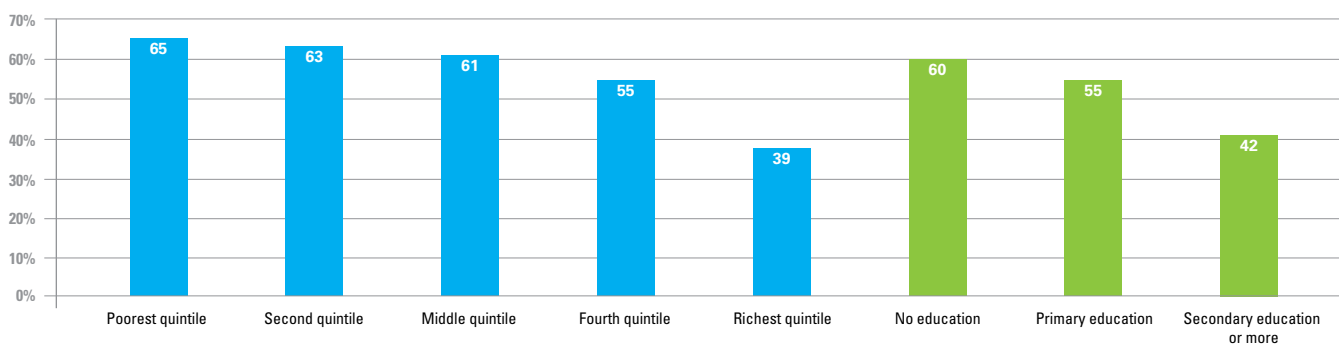|	If she neglects the children	If she goes out without telling him	If she argues with him	If she refuses sex with him	If she burns the food
Latin America and the Caribbean	12	9	4	4	5
CEE/CIS	23	20	22	11	8
East Asia and the Pacific (excluding China)	29	22	13	13	7
South Asia	34	29	30	14	20
Middle East and North Africa	44	45	35	36	20
West and Central Africa	50	50	43	37	28
Eastern and Southern Africa	51	45	42	32	31

Note: Values for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and North Africa are not representative of the overall population of these regions, but are weighted averages based on a limited number of countries with data.

Source: DHS, MICS and other national surveys, 2001–2007.

Women from the poorest households and women with no formal education are more likely to justify wife-beating

Percentage of girls and women 15–49 years old who think that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances, by household wealth quintile and level of education

Category	Percentage
Poorest quintile	65
Second quintile	63
Middle quintile	61
Fourth quintile	55
Richest quintile	39
No education	60
Primary education	55
Secondary education or more	42

Note: Estimates by household wealth quintile are based on data for 53 countries representing 29% of the world population. Estimates by education are based on 64 countries representing 38% of the world population.

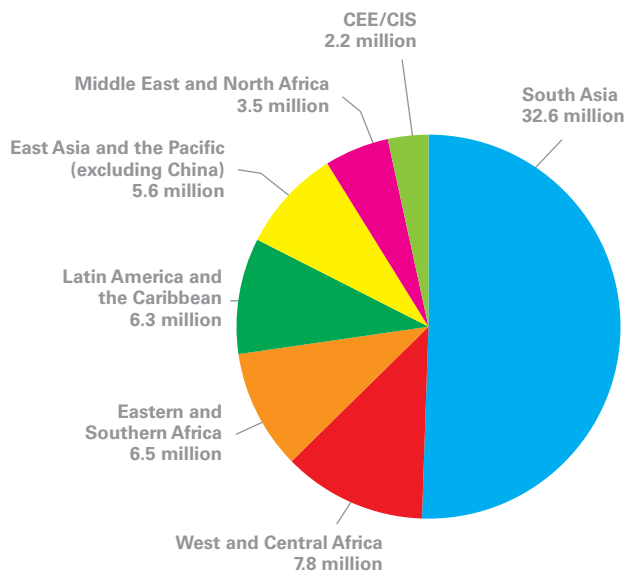**Source:** DHS, MICS and other national surveys, 2001–2007.

Child marriage

More than one third of young women 20–24 years old in developing countries have reported that they were married or in union by age 18. The proportions are highest in South Asia (46 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (39 per cent).

In the six countries where child marriage is most prevalent, more than 60 per cent of women 20–24 years old married as children. Girls from poorer households are more likely to be married as children than girls from richer households.

Globally, more than 64 million young women 20–24 years old have reported that they were married before age 18; half of them live in South Asia

Number of women 20–24 years old who were married or in union before age 18

CEE/CIS
2.2 million

Middle East and North Africa
3.5 million

East Asia and the Pacific (excluding China)
5.6 million

Latin America and the Caribbean
6.3 million

Eastern and Southern Africa
6.5 million

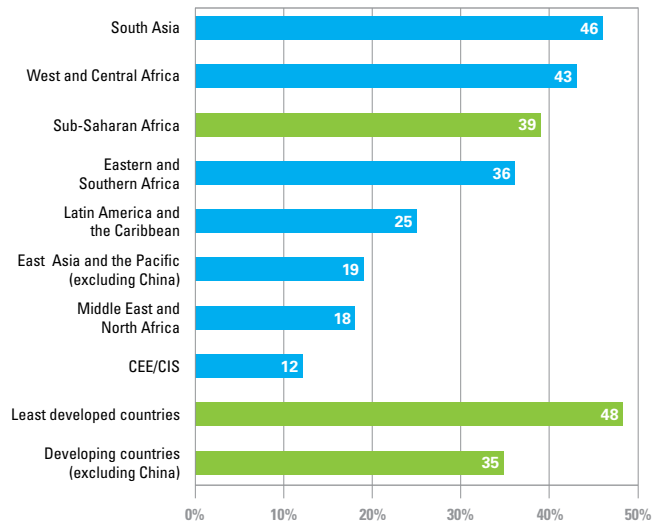West and Central Africa
7.8 million

South Asia
32.6 million

Note: Estimates are based on 96 countries representing 61% of the world population. The estimates were calculated using 2007 figures for the number of women 20–24 years old and 2000–2007 figures for the prevalence of child marriage. They do not include China and its population because data on child marriage for China are not available in UNICEF databases.

Source: MICS, DHS and other national surveys, 2000–2007.

More than one third of women 20–24 years old in the developing world were married as children

Percentage of women 20–24 years old who were married or in union before age 18, by region

Region	Percentage
South Asia	46
West and Central Africa	43
Sub-Saharan Africa	39
Eastern and Southern Africa	36
Latin America and the Caribbean	25
East Asia and the Pacific (excluding China)	19
Middle East and North Africa	18
CEE/CIS	12
Least developed countries	48
Developing countries (excluding China)	35

Source: MICS, DHS and other national surveys, 2000–2007.

In the six countries where child marriage is most prevalent, more than 60 per cent of women 20–24 years old married as children

Percentage of women 20–24 years old who were married or in union before age 15 and before age 18, in the six countries where child marriage is most prevalent

■ Married or in union before age 18
■ Married or in union before age 15

Country	Before age 18	Before age 15
Central African Republic	40	21
Guinea	43	20
Bangladesh	36	28
Mali	46	25
Chad	37	35
Niger	39	36
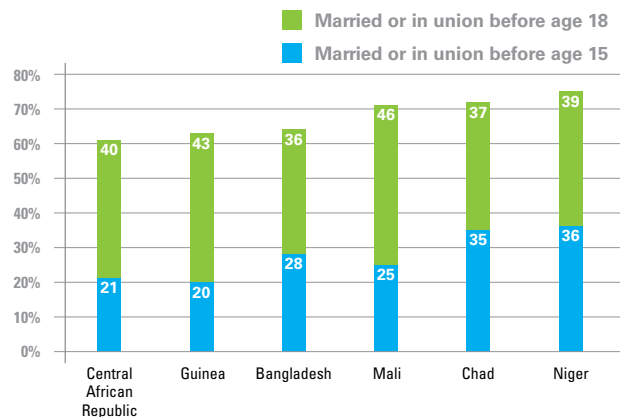
Source: DHS and MICS, 2004–2006.

Although boys are also married underage in some countries, the vast majority of children subjected to marriage are girls. Their development is compromised, and their formal education is likely to be abandoned. They can be extremely isolated – often removed to their husband's family and community, and denied contact with their peers and their own relatives. Adolescent pregnancy and motherhood are a probable consequence of child marriage, and these entail significant risks both for the mother and her baby.

Married girls are usually required to perform the bulk of domestic work in their households. Their relative youth and powerlessness make them more vulnerable to both domestic violence and sexual abuse, including non-consensual sex with their husbands. They are unlikely to be protected by a condom and are therefore increasingly at risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.[2] Child marriage can also result in bonded labour or sexual exploitation, and, in some cases, girls or boys are trafficked into a forced marriage.

Data for 47 countries show that, overall, the median age at first marriage is gradually increasing. But the pace of change is slow in many countries. In Bangladesh, Guinea and Nepal, for example, the median age at first marriage has increased but remains below 18 *(see page 12)*.

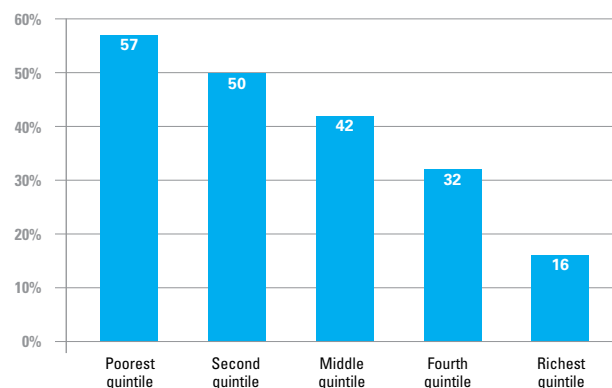### Girls from poorer households are more likely to be married as children than girls from richer households

Percentage of women 20–24 years old who were married or in union before age 18, by household wealth quintile

Note: Estimates by household wealth quintile are based on 75 countries representing 51% of the world population.

Source: MICS, DHS and other national surveys, 1996–2007.

Boys are also at risk for child marriage, although to a lesser extent than girls

Percentage of men 20–24 years old who were married or in union before age 18, in seven countries where prevalence is 10 per cent or above
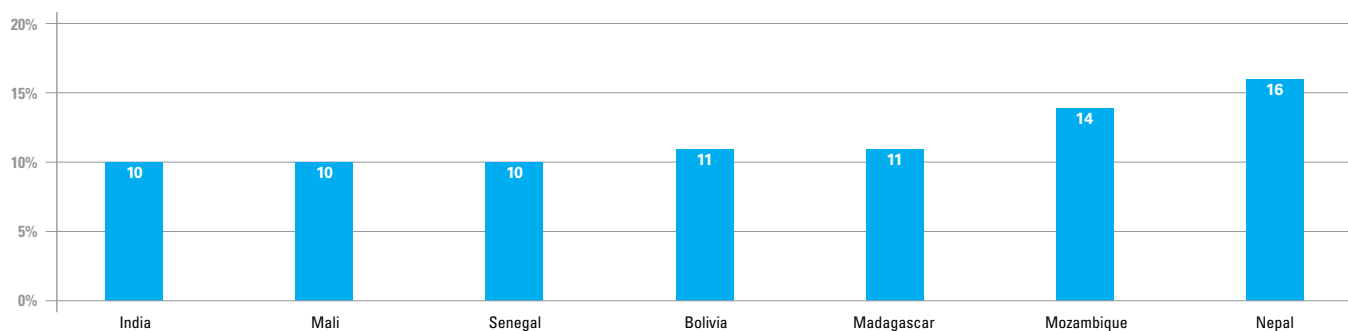
Source: DHS and other national surveys, 2003–2006.

The median age at first marriage is rising in Bangladesh, Guinea and Nepal, but it remains below 18

Median age at first marriage for women 20–49 years old, by age group, in a subset of high-prevalence countries where data are available

Legend: Malawi, Mozambique, Mali, Nepal, Guinea, Chad, Niger, Bangladesh
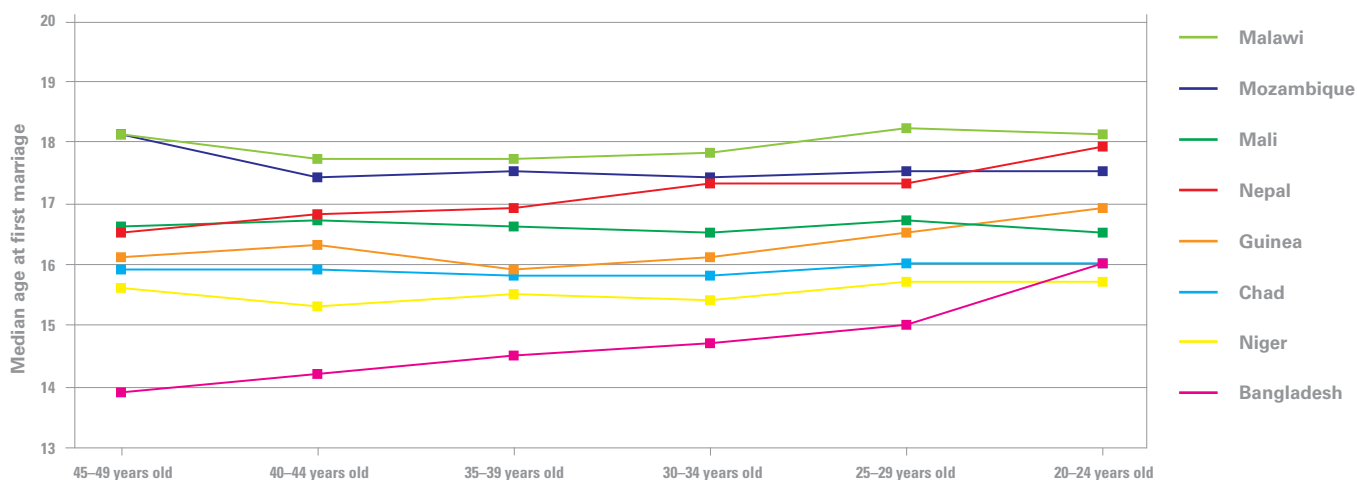
Note: Median age at first marriage refers to the age by which 50% or more of women had married for the first time or begun living in a consensual union.

Source: DHS, 2003–2006.

Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)

Female genital mutilation/cutting is a form of violence against girls and women. It violates their physical and psychological integrity and thus their human rights. FGM/C is practised in the belief that it will ensure a girl's or woman's marriageability, chastity, beauty or family honour. It is upheld by a social norm that is so powerful that even when families are aware of the harm it can do, they are willing to have their daughters cut. From their perspective, not conforming to this obligation would bring greater harm to the girl and the entire family because of shame and social exclusion.

UNICEF estimates that more than 70 million girls and women 15–49 years old have undergone FGM/C in 28 countries in Africa, plus Yemen. The figure is likely to be much higher when counting girls and women of all ages throughout the world.

Some 60 per cent of girls and women who have been cut live in sub-Saharan Africa, while 40 per cent live in the Middle East and North Africa. There are 29 countries in which the prevalence of FGM/C is 1 per cent or more, according to data from nationally representative household surveys; of these countries, only Yemen is outside the African continent.

FGM/C is also known to be practised in other countries, including in immigrant communities in Europe, North America and Australia, but is not believed to be widespread. Prevalence varies more by ethnicity than by any other variable. Hence, within a country with low national prevalence there may be some ethnic communities with very high prevalence while the majority of other communities do not practise it at all.

Overall, the prevalence of FGM/C has declined slowly during the past decades. Data show that girls and younger women are less likely to have undergone any form of FGM/C than older women, and fewer daughters are cut compared to mothers. The pace of reduction varies widely, however, and millions of girls remain exposed to the risk of genital cutting in the future.

Even in countries where prevalence is high, not all women support FGM/C, and the data indicate that increasing numbers of women are opposed to the practice. But changes in individual attitudes are not sufficient for producing behaviour change.

FGM/C is prevalent in 28 countries of Africa and in Yemen

Percentage of girls and women 15–49 years old who have been cut, in 29 countries where FGM/C prevalence is at least 1 per cent

- ■ More than 70 per cent
- ■ 41–70 per cent
- ■ 10–40 per cent
- ■ Below 10 per cent
- ■ Data not available or FGM/C not widely practised
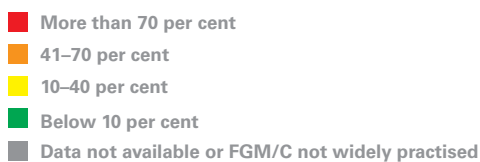
Note: In the case of Egypt and Yemen, the sample of respondents includes only women aged 15–49 who are or have been married.

Source: MICS, DHS and other national surveys, 1997–2007.

Prevalence of FGM/C varies more by ethnicity than by any other social or demographic variable

Percentage of girls and women 15–49 years old who have been cut, by ethnicity, in 16 countries where data are available

	National prevalence	Prevalence of the ethnic group with the highest prevalence in the country	Prevalence of the ethnic group with the lowest prevalence in the country
Benin	13	74	0
Burkina Faso	73	86	29
Cameroon	1	12	0
Central African Republic	26	59	1
Chad	45	95	0
Côte d'Ivoire	36	77	4
Gambia	78	97	12
Ghana	4	19	0
Guinea	96	99	68
Guinea-Bissau	45	95	6
Kenya	32	97	1
Mali	85	98	28
Niger	2	66	0
Nigeria	19	61	0
Senegal	28	78	2
Togo	6	35	0

Source: MICS and DHS, 2003–2006.

Younger women are less likely to have undergone any form of FGM/C

Percentage of girls and women 15–49 years old who have been cut, by age group

Age group	Percentage
45–49 years old	52
40–44 years old	50
35–39 years old	49
30–34 years old	47
25–29 years old	45
20–24 years old	42
15–19 years old	38
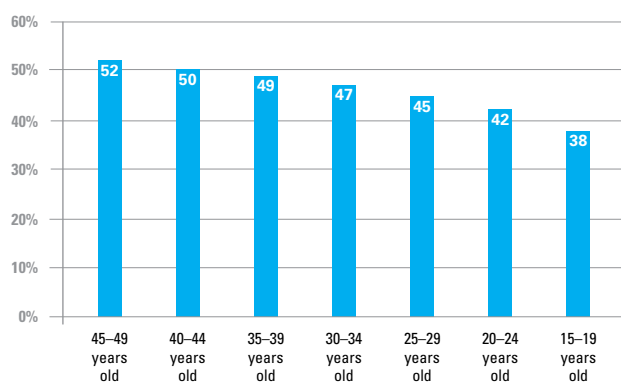
Note: Estimates are based on data for 28 countries.

Source: MICS, DHS and other national surveys, 1997–2007.

BETTER DATA INFORMING THE DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL CHANGE: THE ABANDONMENT OF FGM/C

Since the 1990s, the availability of detailed data on female genital mutilation/cutting has been vital for informing policies and programmes aimed at promoting the abandonment of this and other social practices that are harmful to girls and women.

FGM/C first received attention by the international community during the late 1970s, notably at the World Health Organization's Seminar on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, held in Khartoum in 1979. Early data on the extent of FGM/C were very limited in scope and questionable in reliability, with prevalence estimates often dependent on anecdotal evidence.

The first Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) to include questions specifically related to FGM/C took place in Northern Sudan in 1989–1990. By the end of the 1990s, DHS incorporating FGM/C had become more frequent in the countries where the practice is prevalent, and the survey questions had been standardized. Information routinely sought includes whether the woman responding and one of her daughters have been cut, the nature of the cutting and who performed it, and the respondent's attitudes towards the practice.

The first Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) to ask about FGM/C were carried out in 2000, and the latest round of MICS (2005–2006) provides data for 13 countries.

Both DHS and MICS data have been routinely collected on the basis of region, urban-rural residence, age, household wealth and level of education, and increasingly collected on the basis of ethnicity. These data show that progress towards abandonment of FGM/C is more rapid in countries where it is practised only by certain social groups. This is consistent with social convention theory. If almost every girl and woman is genitally cut within one's community, then there is no basis for even conceiving of being uncut as an alternative.
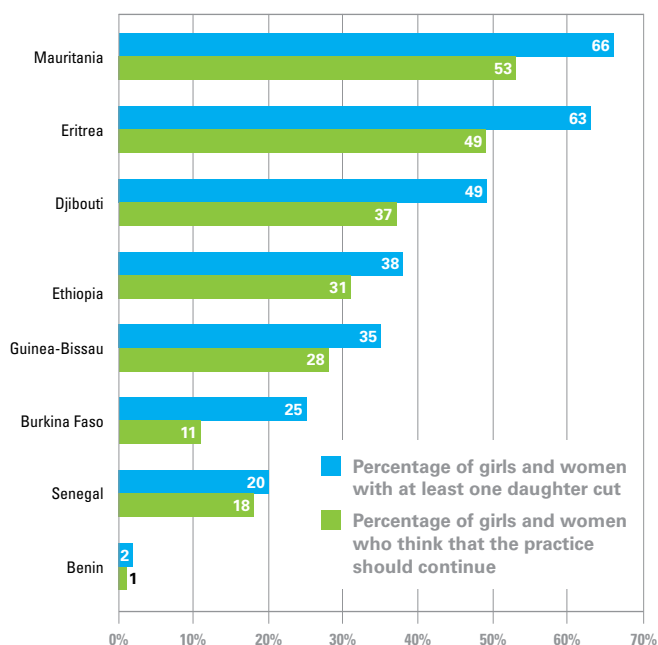
The data confirm a close link between ethnicity and the practice of FGM/C – closer than for any other social or demographic variable. They further indicate that prevalence tends to be very high within the ethnic groups that practise FGM/C. It is rare that only part of the ethnic group practises it; where this is the case, a process of social change may be under way. Because of this, national efforts for abandonment of FGM/C should be complemented by community-led efforts in parts of the country where it is practised, and strategies should take into account the fact that ethnic groups are not confined by national boundaries.

Comparisons of data on attitudes towards FGM/C and its actual prevalence show that, in some countries, many women do not support the practice but still perform it. This is consistent with the theory that large-scale abandonment requires that members of practising communities not only change their individual attitudes about the practice – which is insufficient for behavioural change – but also explicitly and collectively agree to abandon it. Changes over time provide an indirect measure of readiness for large-scale abandonment, and the strategies needed in particular contexts will change over time if a process of social change is under way.

In eight countries, the percentage of women whose daughters have been cut is higher than the percentage of women who support the practice. Recent studies provide theoretical and practical evidence that abandonment can be achieved on a large scale by bringing awareness to practising communities that, in other communities, girls grow up to marry although none of them has undergone FGM/C.[3]

Changes of individual attitude do not always bring about changes in practice

Percentage of girls and women 15–49 years old with at least one daughter cut and percentage of girls and women 15–49 years old who think that the practice of FGM/C should continue, in countries where the level of support is lower than the level of prevalence among daughters

Legend:
- ■ Percentage of girls and women with at least one daughter cut
- ■ Percentage of girls and women who think that the practice should continue

Country	With at least one daughter cut	Think practice should continue
Mauritania	66	53
Eritrea	63	49
Djibouti	49	37
Ethiopia	38	31
Guinea-Bissau	35	28
Burkina Faso	25	11
Senegal	20	18
Benin	2	1

Source: MICS, DHS and other national surveys, 2002–2007.

Child labour

UNICEF estimates that 150 million children 5–14 years old worldwide are engaged in child labour. This estimate is based on data from 102 countries. Child labour is most common in sub-Saharan Africa, where more than a third of children work.
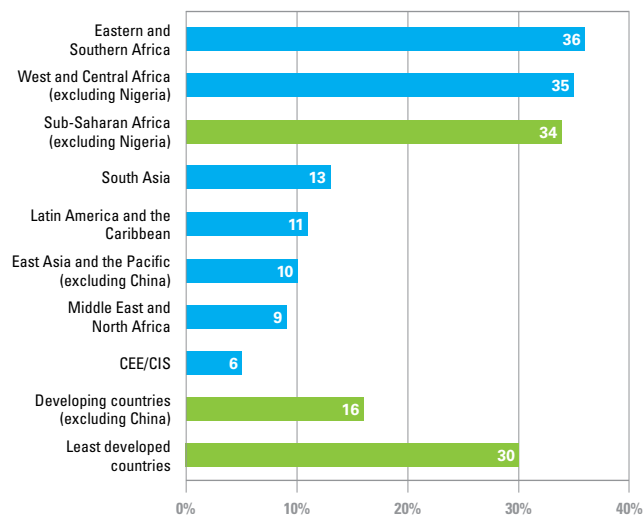
Understanding Children's Work, an inter-agency project of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank and UNICEF, has reviewed the data from several countries for which comparable data exist on child labour. It observed a reduction in children's engagement in economic activity in most countries, including large ones such as Brazil, India and Mexico. But in several countries, the trend is stable or child labour has even increased.[4]

ILO estimates that more than two thirds of all child labour is in the agricultural sector. It has found that children in rural areas – and girls in particular – begin agricultural labour as young as 5–7 years old.[5]

Child labour is both a cause and a consequence of poverty, and it perpetuates impoverishment by severely compromising children's education. With early entry into the labour force, most children delay entry to school, fail to complete a basic

More than one third of children in sub-Saharan Africa work

Percentage of children 5–14 years old engaged in labour

Eastern and Southern Africa	36
West and Central Africa (excluding Nigeria)	35
Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding Nigeria)	34
South Asia	13
Latin America and the Caribbean	11
East Asia and the Pacific (excluding China)	10
Middle East and North Africa	9
CEE/CIS	6
Developing countries (excluding China)	16
Least developed countries	30

Source: MICS, DHS and other surveys, 1999–2007.

Child labour is most common in sub-Saharan Africa, but is also prevalent in parts of Asia

Percentage of children 5–14 years old engaged in child labour
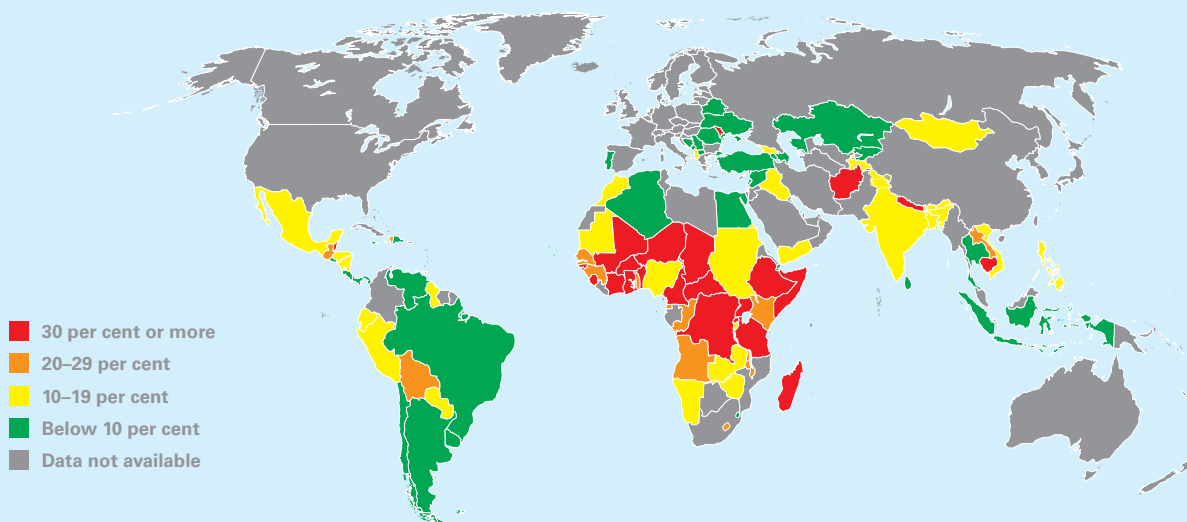
- ■ 30 per cent or more
- ■ 20–29 per cent
- ■ 10–19 per cent
- ■ Below 10 per cent
- ■ Data not available

Note: This map is stylized and not to scale. It does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Data for Jammu and Kashmir are from the National Family Health Survey (India), 2005–2006.

Source: MICS, DHS and other national surveys, 1999–2007.

Countries with high percentages of children who work tend to have low rates of children in school

Percentage of children 7–14 years old who work and school attendance rates
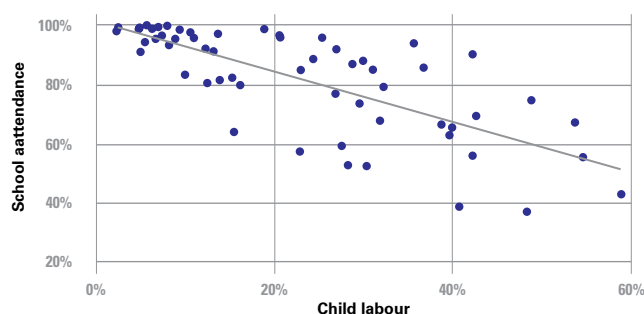
Note: The scattering of countries along the regression line in this chart indicates the association between child labour and school attendance. High percentages of labour among children 7–14 years old are associated with low rates of school attendance. Low percentages of child labour are associated with high rates of school attendance.

Source: MICS, DHS and other surveys, 1999–2007.

education or never attend school at all. Where girls who labour are in school, they carry a 'triple burden' of housework, schoolwork and work outside the home, paid or unpaid, which inevitably reduces their educational attainment and achievement.[6]

Through its Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys since 2000, UNICEF has actively collected data on household chores and other work done by children, and it has developed a definition of child labour that includes children who perform household chores. This definition encompasses:

- Children 5–11 years old in economic activity or in household chores for 28 or more hours per week.
- Children 12–14 years old in economic activity (excluding those in light work for less than 14 hours per week) or in household chores for 28 or more hours per week.
- Children 15–17 years old in the worst forms of child labour, including hazardous work, or in household chores for 43 or more hours per week.

The 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians adopted a resolution concerning child labour statistics in 2008 *(see box, below)*.

CHILD LABOUR: NEW DEFINITION A STEP TOWARDS DATA COMPARABILITY

During the past 10 years, there has been an enormous increase in the statistical information available on child labour. Along with increased awareness of the issue by governments and institutions, this can be attributed to three main factors: the launch in 1998 of the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour by the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour; the inclusion of modules on child labour in MICS; and the collection of data carried out since 2000 by Understanding Children's Work, an inter-agency programme of the ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank.

The challenge now is to make all this information more consistent and comparable. A wide variety of statistical definitions and measures have been employed in child labour literature and agency documentation on child labour, creating confusion and obscuring the precise nature of the problem that needs to be addressed.

In 2008, the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians adopted a new definition of child labour in Resolution II, which concerns statistics on child labour. The framework set by the resolution encompasses both economic activity ("children's employment") and household chores ("unpaid household services"), helping to remove one major source of contention in child labour statistics.

According to the resolution, the term 'child labour' covers:

- The worst forms of child labour, including slavery; prostitution and pornography; illicit activities; and work likely to harm children's health, safety or morals, as defined in ILO Convention No. 182.
- Employment below the minimum age of 15, as established in ILO Convention No. 138.
- Hazardous unpaid household services, including household chores performed for long hours, in an unhealthy environment, in dangerous locations, and involving unsafe equipment or heavy loads.

Previously, statistics on child labour released by the ILO reflected a purely economic definition of 'work' in the UN System of National Accounts. This definition excluded unpaid household services such as providing childcare and caring for sick or elderly household members, as well as more traditional chores that enable other family members to work but reduce children's access to school, particularly for girls.

By establishing first-ever international standards for the statistical measurement of child labour, the resolution marks an important step forward in terms of better estimates, and it should help guide national statistical offices in collecting child labour statistics and measuring child labour for the purposes of local and global reporting.

Although there is in principle an agreed framework, much work still needs to be done at the statistical level to enhance the comparability of estimates across different survey instruments.

Sexual exploitation and abuse of children

Establishing reliable numbers for children and adolescents subjected to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation has proved to be a major challenge. The reason for this lack of data is the clandestine nature of these crimes, making them under-recognized and under-reported.

It is probable, however, that the figures encompass millions, and that girls and boys of all ages and backgrounds and in every region of the world may be victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. Studies show that girls are more often abused and exploited, although boys are also affected.[7] Along with the trauma of sexual exploitation itself, child survivors often miss out on attending school and are exposed to the risk of physical injury, sexually transmitted infections, HIV and unwanted pregnancy, the latter of which is potentially dangerous for adolescent girls.

As of May 2009, 131 countries had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, which criminalizes all forms of sexual exploitation of children and emphasizes support to children who are victims. But challenges remain. The Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call for Action to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents (2008) commits governments to a set of specific, time-bound goals to prevent and stop sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, and to protect exploited children.

Child trafficking

Children are trafficked both within and between countries for the purposes of forced labour, prostitution, forced marriage, domestic work, begging, use by armed groups and many other forms of exploitation. Statistics are hard to gather and often unreliable. Children trafficked into domestic work, for example, are hard to document due to the privacy of the home and because such work may not be regulated. Children who are trafficked for sexual purposes are also difficult to document because of the hidden nature of the crime. Continued misconceptions of the difference between trafficking and prostitution, and between trafficking and illegal migration, also affect data reliability.

The United States Government estimates that 600,000–800,000 people are trafficked each year across international borders. Drawing on its own analysis and that of three other organizations – the International Labour Organization,

the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) – it estimates that one sixth to one half of these people are children. There may be questions about this figure, however, due to methodological weaknesses of analyses, data gaps and numerical discrepancies.[8]

Evidence from UNODC indicates that more than 20 per cent of victims of all trafficking, both within countries and across borders, are children. In parts of West Africa, the Mekong region in East Asia, and some countries in Central and South America, children are the majority of persons being trafficked. Of survivors identified in 61 countries, 13 per cent were girls and 9 per cent were boys.[9]

More than half of 155 countries studied by UNODC had established national plans of action to address trafficking. Some 125 countries included in the study had specific anti-trafficking legislation on the books by November 2008, compared with only 55 countries before 2003. But the study also noted that only 73 of those countries with anti-trafficking legislation had at least one recorded conviction of trafficking in persons as of November 2008.[10]

Migration

The World Bank estimates that around one third of migrants from developing countries are youths between 12 and 24 years old.[11] A number of recent studies highlight the vulnerabilities of children during all stages of migration.[12]

In the source communities, children left behind by migrating parents must cope with the psychological impact of being separated as well as with heightened risks of physical or sexual abuse. One recent study has found that although children of successful migrants tend to benefit in material terms, children separated from their parents due to migration are twice as likely to experience emotional distress.[13]

In the destination communities, migrant children, especially those who are unregistered, may face discrimination and marginalization, including lack of access to education and medical services. Being outside their familiar social safety network also tends to weaken their normal coping mechanisms.

Recent research on children and migration indicates a shift from the traditional view of child migrants as dependent on family to a more complex view of them as agents and decision makers in their own right.[14] Nonetheless, some children make their own decision to migrate in the hope of economic improvement but end up in potentially hazardous circumstances.

Children with disabilities

Reliable statistics on children with disabilities are difficult to obtain. As a first step towards addressing this paucity of information, UNICEF included a disability module, the 'ten questions screen' for child disability, in its latest Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.
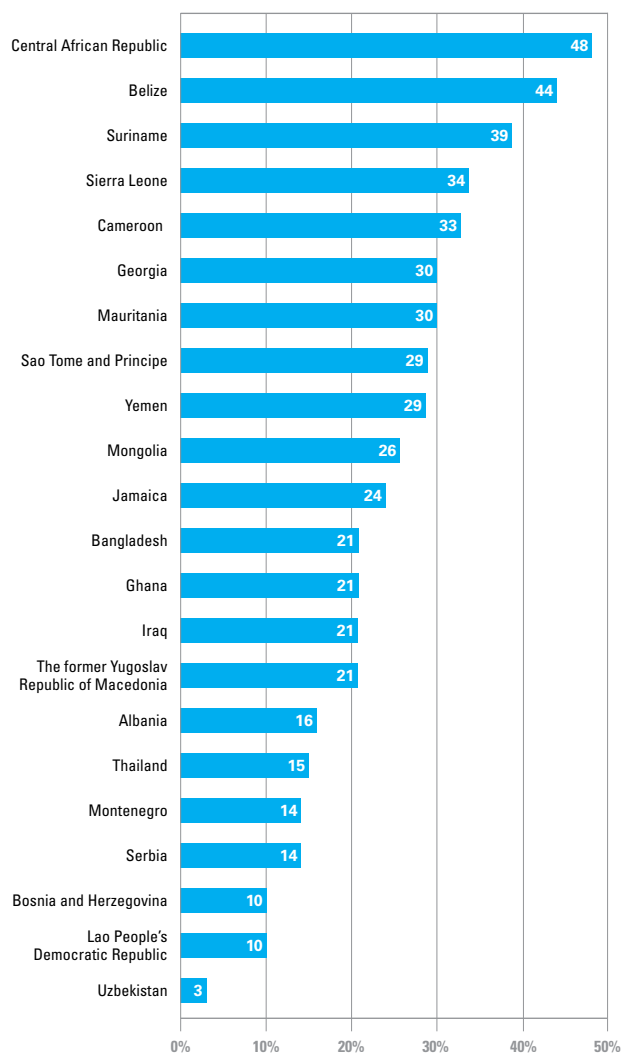
MICS data from 22 countries show that large proportions of children are at an increased risk of disability, and there is an extremely broad variation in the proportion of children screening positive on at least one of the disability questions, ranging from 3 per cent in Uzbekistan to 48 per cent in the Central African Republic.

The issue of children with disabilities is cross-cutting. Children with disabilities are less likely than other children to be in school, and in some countries they have lower transition rates resulting in lower schooling attainment.[15] They may also have trouble using the health services they need, whether because those services are inaccessible, or due to discrimination or exclusion.

Children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to physical violence and sexual, emotional and verbal abuse, and in some instances, the disability is itself caused by maltreatment.[16] Data for 15 countries show that, in 7 of the countries, parents of children who screened positive for disability were significantly more likely to report hitting them either on their face, head or ears, or repeatedly and as hard as possible. In only two of the countries were children who screened positive for disability significantly less likely to be hit. (In six countries, the relationship between disability screening status and likelihood of being hit was statistically insignificant.)

Large proportions of children screened positive on at least one question related to disability

Percentage of children 2–9 years old who screened positive on at least 1 of the 10 questions on disability

Country	Percentage
Central African Republic	48
Belize	44
Suriname	39
Sierra Leone	34
Cameroon	33
Georgia	30
Mauritania	30
Sao Tome and Principe	29
Yemen	29
Mongolia	26
Jamaica	24
Bangladesh	21
Ghana	21
Iraq	21
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	21
Albania	16
Thailand	15
Montenegro	14
Serbia	14
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10
Lao People's Democratic Republic	10
Uzbekistan	3

Note: Household surveys typically rely on parents' responses to survey questions. While parents often do very well at identifying whether their children have difficulty performing specific tasks, their responses alone are not sufficient to diagnose disabilities. These data therefore should not be interpreted as the prevalence of disability in a given country. Rather, they indicate the percentage of children who may have some form of disability, although determining children's actual disability status would require clinical assessment. It should be noted that none of the countries that collected data on disability during the latest round of MICS conducted a follow-up clinical assessment of the children.

Source: MICS, 2005–2007.

Children who screened positive for disability were more likely to experience harsh discipline

Percentage of children 2–9 years old who are hit on the face, head or ears, hit repeatedly or hit hard, by disability status, in 15 countries where these data are available

Legend:
- Children who screen negative for disability
- Children who screen positive for disability

Country	Screen negative	Screen positive
Mongolia	40	47
Central African Republic	28	36
Iraq	31	32
Cameroon	24	30
Sierra Leone	21	24
Georgia	25	17
Ghana	8	15
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	20	12
Albania	8	12
Belize	4	9
Suriname	8	9
Montenegro	6	8
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3	7
Jamaica	6	6
Serbia	8	5
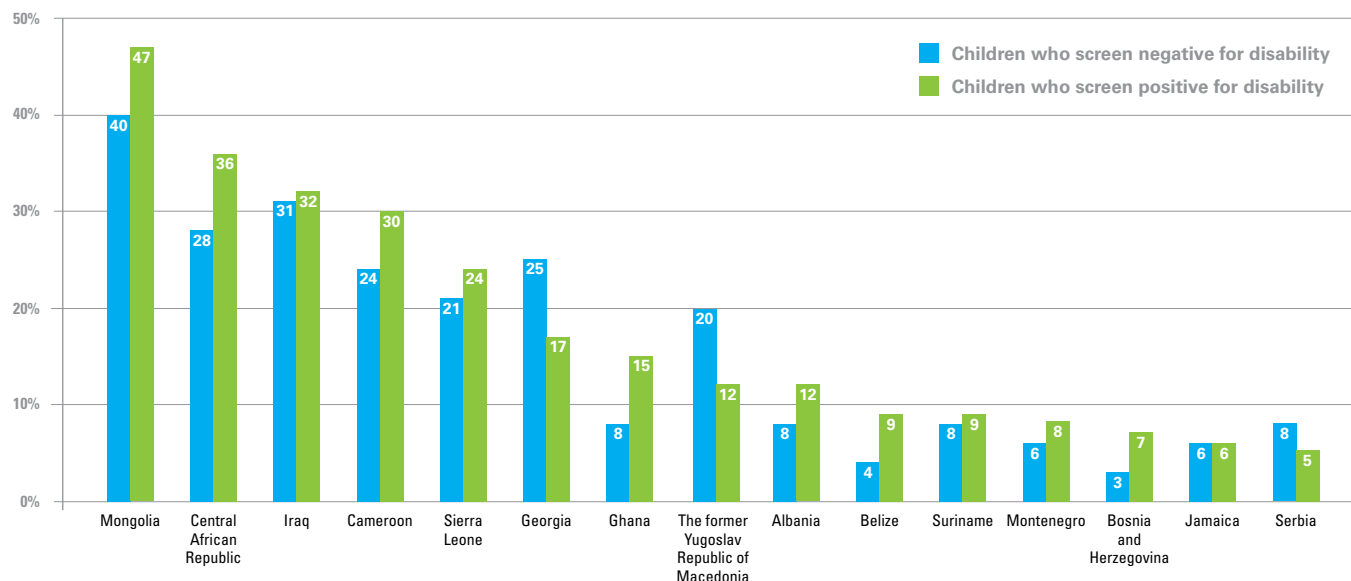
**Source:** MICS, 2005–2007.

Children without parental care

Children without parental care are defined as "all children who are not living with at least one of their parents for whatever reason and under whatever circumstances."[17] AIDS is one of many factors that contribute to loss of parental care, as are abuse, exploitation and neglect. Poverty is increasingly recognized as an underlying cause of overlapping vulnerabilities.[18]

It has been estimated that more than 2 million children are in institutional care around the world, with more than 800,000 of them in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS). But the global figure is likely to be severely underestimated due to under-reporting and a lack of reliable data.[19] Many institutions are unregistered, and many countries do not regularly collect and report data on children in institutional care.

Poverty, rather than lack of family, leads to many placements in institutions, and cash transfers and other forms of social protection can reduce the pressures that may cause some families to separate. The international community must ensure that institutions are used only as a temporary option, in extraordinary circumstances.

Best available data indicate that CEE/CIS has the largest number of children in institutions

Estimated number of children in institutional care, by region
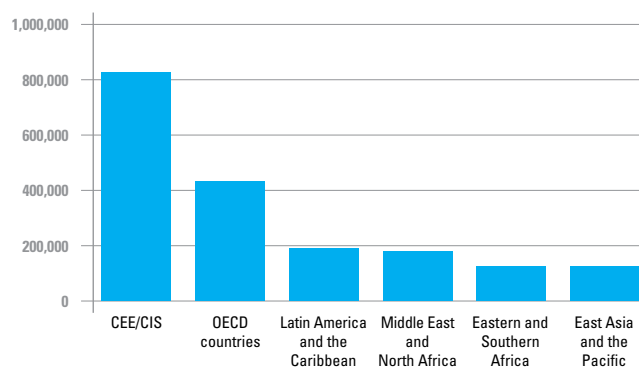
Note: The estimate represents the number of children in institutional care at any moment. Numbers in the Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, and East Asia and the Pacific regions are likely to be highly underestimated due to the lack of registration of institutional care facilities. No estimates were calculated for West and Central Africa and South Asia due to a lack of data for these regions.

Source: Estimates are based on a UNICEF analysis of several main sources, including national estimates, often from governments, provided by UNICEF country offices (2005 and 2006); country reports prepared for the 'Second International Conference on Children and Residential Care: New Strategies for a New Millennium', held in Stockholm in 2003; and the TransMONEE database of CEE/CIS indicators (2003).

Children in justice systems

Deprivation of liberty remains a common form of punishment for juvenile offenders, in violation of the child rights principle that this should be a measure of last resort. UNICEF estimates that more than 1 million children are detained through justice systems worldwide at any one time,[20] although this is likely to be a significant underestimate given the difficulties in obtaining data about the many unreported children in custody. Not only are data collected inconsistently, they often do not include children awaiting trial, young children detained with their parents or children held temporarily by the police.

Among the 44 countries for which data were available, around 59 per cent of children in detention had not been sentenced.[21] Only a minority of these children receive a custodial sentence, suggesting that pretrial detention is regularly used as a sanction, in violation of the right to be considered innocent until proven guilty according to law, as affirmed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.[22]

More than half of children in detention have not been tried and sentenced

Estimated number of children in pre-sentence and post-conviction detention, in four regions where sufficient data are available

- Children in pre-sentence detention
- Children in post-conviction detention
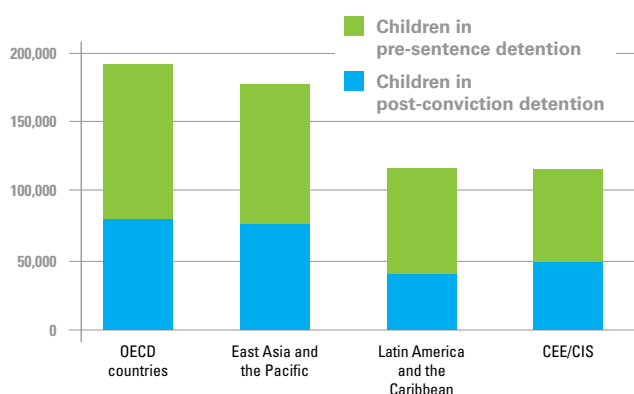
Note: The estimates represent the number of children in detention at any moment.

Source: Estimates are based on a UNICEF analysis of several main sources, including UNICEF regional and country surveys and reports on juvenile justice; country reports prepared for the 'Second International Conference on Children and Residential Care: New Strategies for a New Millennium', held in Stockholm in 2003; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *United Nations Survey on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems* (seventh survey 1998–2000, eighth survey 2001–2002, ninth survey 2003–2004); King's College London, 'World Prison Brief' (various dates); Space I (Annual Penal Statistics of the Council of Europe) – 2005 Enquiry; TransMONEE database of CEE/CIS indicators (2007 edition); Aebi, Marcelo Fernando, et al., European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics (2006); Defence for Children International, *Kids Behind Bars* (2003), and additional data provided for DCI in *Violence against Children in Conflict with the Law: A study on indicators and data collection in Belgium, England and Wales, France and the Netherlands* (2008).

Detention hinders the child's constructive reintegration into society, which should be the objective of any justice intervention in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Yet the vast majority of children in detention have not committed serious offences. Many are only charged with status offences, such as running away from home, violation of child-related curfews, truancy or alcohol use. Children are also detained in the context of immigration, mental health concerns or for 'their own protection'. Children who are victims of crime and children who are witnesses to crime are often 're-victimized' by justice systems that are not adapted to children's rights and needs.

Five countries are known to have applied the death penalty to children since January 2005.[23] The Convention on the Rights of the Child prohibits the death penalty or sentences of life imprisonment without possibility of release for children.

Children in emergencies

UNICEF estimates that just over 1 billion children live in countries or territories affected by armed conflict, and of these, around 300 million are under 5 years old. In 2006, an estimated 18.1 million children were among populations living with the effects of displacement, including 5.8 million who were refugees and 8.8 million who were internally displaced.[24]

Children living in conflict-affected countries are more likely to suffer from poverty, undernutrition, poor health and lack of education. Social systems and networks often fall into disrepair in times of conflict, meaning that they are less able to protect vulnerable children. Although economic disparity and poverty can be major causes of conflict, similar by-products of armed conflict, including poverty and high unemployment, can lead to child recruitment, trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Children are also disproportionately affected by natural disasters, including earthquakes, droughts, monsoons and floods. Such disasters destroy homes and communities, create conditions in which disease can spread, keep children out of school and destroy the social systems that protect vulnerable children. Children may be separated from their families or may lose official documents necessary for them to gain access to humanitarian assistance. Separated and unaccompanied children, especially child-headed households, are inevitably more vulnerable to economic or sexual exploitation and abuse.

Emergencies cause serious threats to the psychological and social well-being of children, their families and communities. Children may experience psychological difficulties because of a number of factors, including death, injury, displacement, the destruction of one's home or school, and the suspension of essential services. Emergencies can also disrupt social institutions, deprive families of their livelihoods, create tension and divisions within communities, and cause the rule of law to collapse.

Conflict and natural disaster increase the vulnerability of children, and women, to all forms of violence and exploitation. Survivors of gender-based violence may be left with sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, and unwanted pregnancies, and they may be ostracized and abandoned by their families and communities.[25] In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, a recent study found that children born as a result of sexual violence are often neglected and discriminated against because they are identified with the perpetrator.[26]

The issue related to children and armed conflict that has received the most attention on the global human rights agenda is that of 'children associated with armed groups and forces'. The term includes not only children who bear arms but also children used as cooks or porters and for sexual purposes or forced marriage.[27] The UN estimates the number of children associated with armed groups or armed forces at more than 250,000.[28]

As of May 2009, 128 countries had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and at least 76 had set the legal minimum age for joining the military at 18.[29] In addition, 78 countries have endorsed the Paris Commitments and Principles to protect children from unlawful recruitment or use by armed forces or armed groups. Despite these developments, there was evidence in 2008 of recruitment or use of children by armed groups or armed forces in 25 countries, including countries that had ratified the Optional Protocol.[30]

UN Security Council Resolution 1539 (2004) called on the Secretary-General to develop a monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM) that focuses on six specific violations of children's rights: killing or maiming; recruiting or using children in armed conflict; attacks against schools or hospitals; rape or other grave sexual violence; abduction; and denial of humanitarian access. In 2005, Resolution 1612 created an MRM that would provide for the systematic gathering of objective, specific and reliable information on grave violations committed against children in situations of armed conflict; such information would be used to ensure compliance with international and local norms to protect children in armed conflict. In 2006, the MRM was piloted in 7 countries – Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nepal, Somalia, Sri Lanka and the Sudan – and has since officially expanded to 14 countries.[31]

Landmines, explosive remnants of war and small arms

Landmines and explosive remnants of war violate nearly all the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: a child's right to life, to a safe environment in which to play, to health, clean water, sanitary conditions and adequate education. Although significant progress has been made in addressing the threat from anti-personnel mines, an estimated 78 countries are still contaminated by mines and 85 are still affected by explosive remnants of war.[32] In 2007, 72 countries recorded new victims of landmines and explosive remnants of war, and children accounted for nearly a third of these casualties.[33]

In many countries, children who survive landmine accidents must end their education prematurely due to the necessary period of recovery and the accompanying financial burden of rehabilitation on families. Support for children experiencing psychological distress is rarely available, and the effects linger for many years.

A significant step forward was taken in 2008, when 96 States signed a new international convention banning cluster munitions.[34] But challenges remain in attempting to universalize and ensure the implementation of any new treaties as well as existing treaties such as the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty.

Even in countries that are not considered to be affected by armed conflict, the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons are equally grave dangers to children. In most countries, however, effective and reliable data collection mechanisms to document the impact of small arms and light weapons on children do not exist, and available statistics on direct death and injury to children from small arms surely mask the enormous impact of small-arms violence on children. Recent research in a dozen countries has noted that the victimization of children and adolescents by small arms persists despite laws to protect them against this form of violence.[35]

WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

Children in West and Central Africa are susceptible to a wide range of hazards from which they have a right to protection, including child labour, sexual exploitation, trafficking, conflict and other emergencies, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and child marriage.

Some 35 per cent of the children of West and Central Africa are estimated to be engaged in child labour. There are, however, wide variations between individual countries in the region. The incidence of child labour in Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe, for example, is very low, at 3 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively. In contrast, six countries have a child labour rate of more than 40 per cent, and more than half the child population of Chad is working. In many countries, the child labour rate in rural areas is at least twice as high as that in urban areas.

UNODC has reported that most of the identified trafficking victims in the region are children, most of them for domestic servitude, or for forced labour on tea, cotton and cacao plantations or in the mines that are of fundamental importance to West African economies.[36]

Some children engaged in child labour are also subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. Statistics on the problem are unavailable, but countries including Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Mali and Togo report an increase in the number of children exploited in the commercial sex trade. Sexual exploitation of children can be hidden behind work as street vendors or domestics, but many children are also part of organized prostitution rings.[37]

West and Central Africa has been plagued by conflict during recent years, and chronic conflict continues in the Central African Republic, Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while the situation remains volatile in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau. Many children in conflict zones have been victims of sexual violence – 50 per cent of survivors of sexual violence in the region are under 18 years old.[38]

In countries across West and Central Africa there are high levels of violence in schools, including bullying, corporal punishment, and sexual abuse of students by teachers, staff and fellow students. A UNICEF review found that violence in education settings leads to high rates of school dropout and low rates of school enrolment in this region, especially among girls.[39] West and Central Africa has the lowest school enrolment ratios in the world.

Birth registration levels have increased in the Gambia

Percentage of children under 5 years old who are registered, in West and Central African countries where comparable trend data are available

Legend: 2000–2001 (green), 2005–2007 (orange)

Country	2000–2001	2005–2007
Gambia	32	55
Democratic Republic of the Congo	34	31
Guinea-Bissau	42	39
Sierra Leone	46	48
Sao Tome and Principe	70	69
Togo	82	78
Benin	70	60
Côte d'Ivoire	72	55
Central African Republic	73	49
Cameroon	79	70

Significant increase | No significant change | Significant decrease
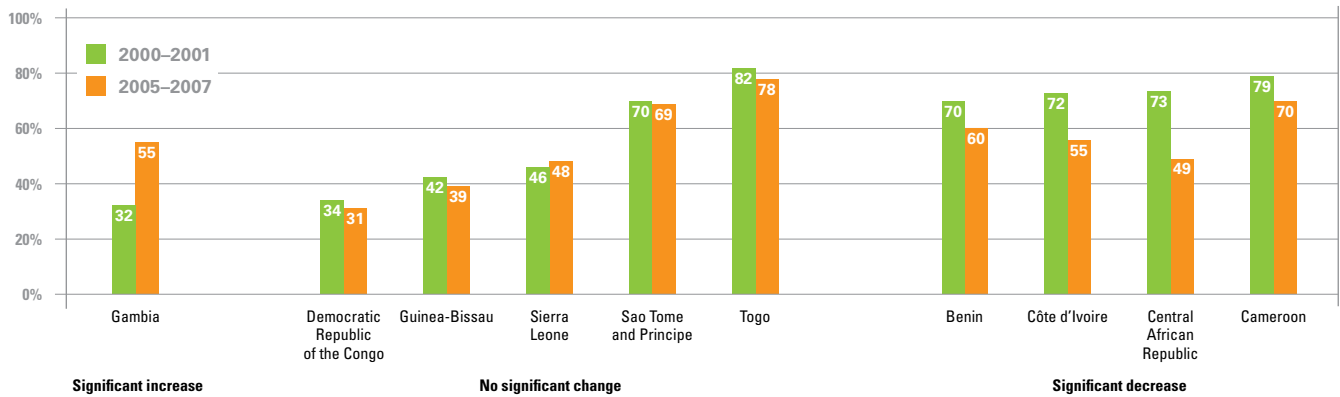
Note: Benin data are for 2001 and 2006; Democratic Republic of the Congo data are for 2000 and 2007; Sierra Leone data are for 2000 and 2005; Gambia data are for 2000 and 2005–2006. All other data are for 2000 and 2006.

Source: MICS and DHS, 2000–2007.

There has been little progress in the region in fulfilling children's right to birth registration. In many countries surveyed, registration levels are stagnant, while in four – Benin, Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Côte d'Ivoire – there has been a significant decline since 2000. Of all the countries with trend data available, only the Gambia has shown a substantial increase in birth registration rates.

At 43 per cent, the prevalence of child marriage in West and Central Africa is second only to that of South Asia. Among countries with available data, the four reporting the highest rate of child marriage – Niger (75 per cent), Chad (72 per cent), Mali (71 per cent) and Guinea (63 per cent) – also have the highest fertility rates, and at least 44 per cent of women 20–24 years old had given birth before age 18.

FGM/C remains a common practice in many countries of the region; more than 90 per cent of women have been cut in Guinea and Sierra Leone. Nonetheless, in most countries younger women are less likely than older women to be cut. By February 2009, 11 countries had passed laws criminalizing FGM/C, although only in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Senegal and Sierra Leone had such laws resulted in arrests or prosecutions.[40]

The number of children without parental care in the region has increased during recent years, from 19.6 million in 2001 to 22.7 million in 2007.[41]

In almost all countries of West and Central Africa, the practice of FGM/C is declining

Percentage of women 45–49 years old and of girls and women 15–19 years old who have been cut

Legend: Percentage of women 45–49 years old who have been cut (orange); Percentage of girls and women 15–19 years old who have been cut (green)

Country	Women 45–49	Girls/women 15–19
Guinea	100	89
Sierra Leone	97	81
Mali	86	85
Gambia	74	80
Burkina Faso	81	60
Mauritania	78	68
Liberia	79	36
Chad	46	43
Guinea-Bissau	41	44
Côte d'Ivoire	40	28
Senegal	31	25
Central African Republic	32	19
Nigeria	28	13
Benin	16	8
Togo	10	1
Ghana	7	1
Niger	3	2
Cameroon	2	0

Source: MICS and DHS, 2003–2007.

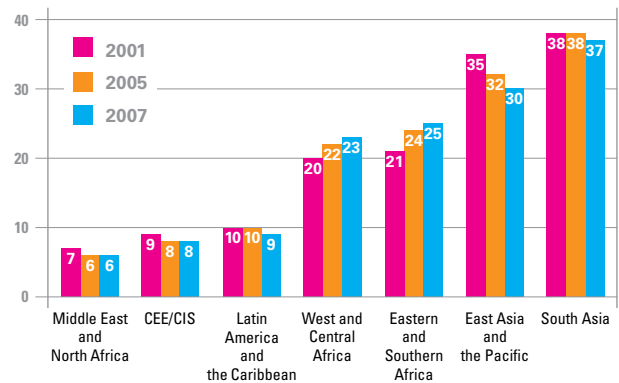# EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Eastern and Southern Africa has increasing numbers of children without parental care, many of whom have lost one or both parents to AIDS. Child marriage, child labour and gender-based violence affect large numbers of children in the region, as does female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in some countries, although the prevalence of this practice is slowly declining.

The estimated number of children under 18 years old who have lost one or both parents due to all causes increased in Eastern and Southern Africa from 21.1 million in 2001 to 24.9 million in 2007, and 8.7 million children have lost one or both parents to AIDS in this region.[42] In four Southern African countries – Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe – more than a quarter of children under 15 years old are living without a parent, and in Namibia the proportion has reached more than one third.[43]

In sub-Saharan Africa, the tradition of informal fostering of children through kinship care has become an essential coping mechanism in the face of increased adult mortality due to AIDS and other causes. Families and communities are being stretched to the limit, however, and orphanages and children's homes are spreading at an alarming rate. Keeping children in families is being promoted through national social protection strategies that target poverty alongside the many other effects of HIV and AIDS. Of the 22 countries in the region, 16 have made progress in developing a national plan of action to address the needs of children without parental care, and these plans target all orphans and vulnerable children including those affected by AIDS.[44]

The number of orphans increased in Eastern and Southern Africa, as well as in West and Central Africa, between 2001 and 2007

Estimated number of children under 18 years old who have lost one or both parents due to all causes, in millions

Region	2001	2005	2007
Middle East and North Africa	7	6	6
CEE/CIS	9	8	8
Latin America and the Caribbean	10	10	9
West and Central Africa	20	22	23
Eastern and Southern Africa	21	24	25
East Asia and the Pacific	35	32	30
South Asia	38	38	37

Source: UNAIDS unpublished estimates, 2008.

Eastern and Southern Africa has the lowest proportion of registered children and the widest range of birth registration levels

Percentage of children under 5 years old who are registered

Country	%
Comoros	83
Rwanda	82
South Africa	78
Madagascar	75
Zimbabwe	74
Namibia	67
Burundi	60
Botswana	58
Kenya	48
Eastern and Southern Africa	**32**
Swaziland	30
Angola	29
Lesotho	26
Uganda	21
Zambia	10
United Republic of Tanzania	8
Ethiopia	7
Somalia	3
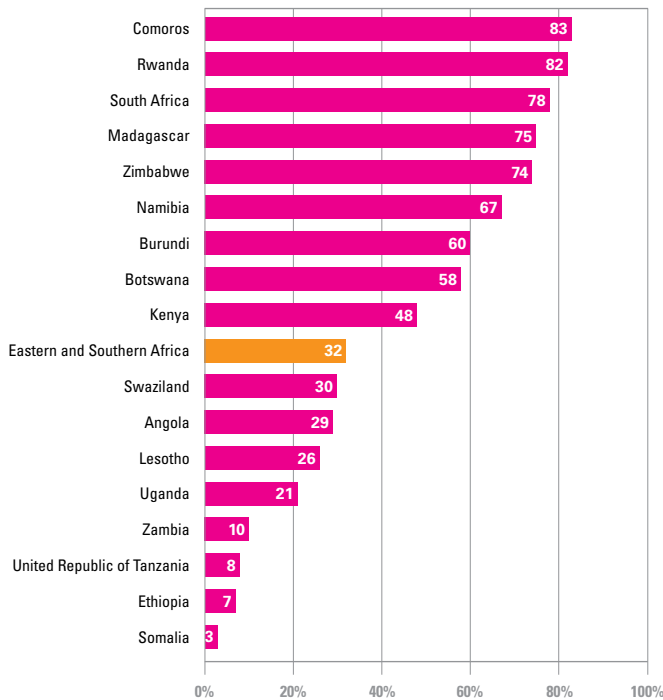
Note: Data for Kenya, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania differ from the standard definition.

Source: MICS, DHS and vital registration data, 2000–2007.

Birth registration is particularly important for vulnerable children, including those affected by AIDS. Children without parental care, for example, may well need to verify their property rights in order to sustain a livelihood. Yet Eastern and Southern Africa has the lowest level of birth registration in the world, at 32 per cent. It also has the widest variation between countries in birth registration levels, ranging from just 3 per cent in Somalia to 83 per cent in the Comoros.

Child marriage is high in this region, with an estimated 36 per cent of women 20–24 years old married or in union before age 18, that is, 6.5 million women in this age group. In Malawi and Mozambique, at least half of women 20–24 years old were married or in union before age 18. A recent study of child marriage in two of the region's countries, Kenya and Zambia, found that married girls have higher rates of HIV than sexually active unmarried girls.[45]
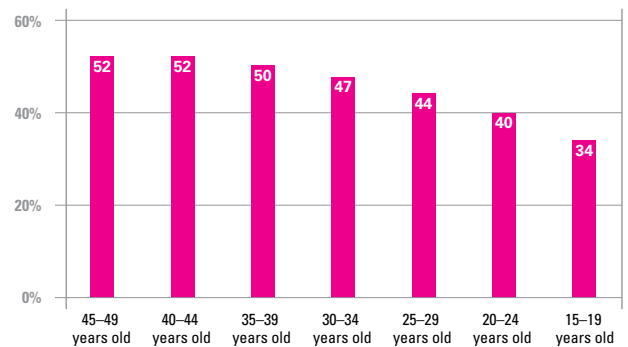
A higher proportion of children 5–14 years old in Eastern and Southern Africa are involved in child labour than in any other region – 36 per cent. The regional average, however, masks a wide variation in national rates of child labour, ranging from 9 per cent in Swaziland to 53 per cent in Ethiopia.

On average, there has been some progress towards the abandonment of FGM/C in the region. Overall, girls and younger women are increasingly less likely than older women to have undergone any form of female genital mutilation or cutting, and daughters are much less likely to have been cut than their mothers. At the end of 2008, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania had enacted laws criminalizing FGM/C, but in none of them had this legislation resulted in an arrest or prosecution.[46]

Eastern and Southern Africa is regularly afflicted by emergencies, including wars and civil conflict, droughts, cyclones, floods and epidemics, often leaving children at greater risk of sexual and physical violence, exploitation and abuse.[47]

FGM/C prevalence in Eastern and Southern Africa has decreased

Percentage of girls and women 15–49 years old who have been cut, by age group

Age group	%
45–49 years old	52
40–44 years old	52
35–39 years old	50
30–34 years old	47
25–29 years old	44
20–24 years old	40
15–19 years old	34

Note: Percentages reflect a weighted average for six of the seven countries in the region where FGM/C is practised by at least 1% of the population.

Source: MICS, DHS and other national surveys, 2002–2006.

SOUTH ASIA

In South Asia, there are more child marriages than in any other region. The region also has the greatest number of unregistered births, with almost half the world's total in 2007. Child labour, trafficking, and sexual exploitation and abuse are major problems in the region.

More than half of all the world's women 20–24 years old who were married or in union by age 18 live in South Asia, and more than one in three women in the world who were married as children are from India. Despite its prohibition by law in most countries of South Asia, child marriage tends to be perpetuated by custom and religious practice; consequently, the prohibitions against it are harder to enforce. Children in India, Nepal and Pakistan may be betrothed or even married well before they are 10 years old.[48] Child marriage is more likely to affect girls, but in India and Nepal, the rate of child marriage involving boys is 10 per cent or higher.

An estimated 47 per cent of the children born in 2007 who were not registered are South Asian. Of these 24 million children, 16 million are from India. Throughout the region, there is a disparity in birth registration levels between rural areas (30 per cent) and urban areas (52 per cent).

Some 13 per cent of all children in South Asia are engaged in child labour – around 44 million. Of these children, 29 million live in India, where the child labour rate is 12 per cent. Within India itself there are vast divergences between states in the incidence of child labour, ranging from 32 per cent in Gujarat to 3 per cent in Goa and Kerala, indicating that the regional targeting of policies aimed at eliminating child labour is essential.

Half the world's child brides live in South Asia; one third live in India

Number of women 20–24 years old who were married or in union before age 18 (2007)
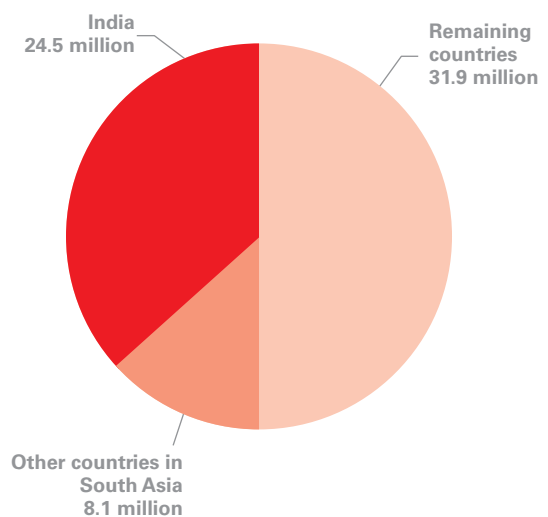
India
24.5 million

Remaining countries
31.9 million

Other countries in South Asia
8.1 million

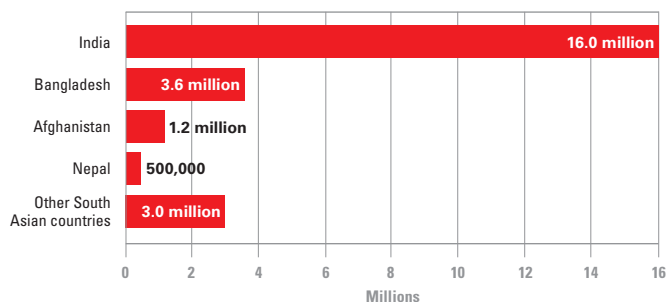**Note:** Estimates are based on 96 countries representing 61% of the world population. The estimates were calculated using 2007 figures for the number of women 20–24 years old and 2000–2007 figures on the prevalence of child marriage. They do not include China and its population because data on child marriage for China are not available in UNICEF databases.

Source: MICS, DHS and other national surveys, 2000–2007.

The births of 24 million children are not registered in South Asia; 16 million in India

Number of unregistered annual births (2007)

	Millions
India	16.0 million
Bangladesh	3.6 million
Afghanistan	1.2 million
Nepal	500,000
Other South Asian countries	3.0 million

Scale: 0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 (Millions)

Source: MICS, DHS, other national surveys and vital registration data, 2000–2007.

Sexual abuse and exploitation of children are a major concern for all the countries of South Asia. Children are more vulnerable to sexual abuse and other forms of violence if they are subjected to discrimination, neglect and disadvantage related to their caste, ethnicity, gender or economic status. And girls are generally at greater risk.[49]

Trafficking of South Asian children into exploitative situations such as hazardous labour, prostitution or domestic servitude is widespread.[50] As in other regions, trafficking occurs both within countries, especially in Bangladesh and India, and from one South Asian country to another, as with Nepalese who end up being exploited in India, or Pakistanis in Afghanistan. South Asian victims of trafficking are found in Europe and the Middle East.[51] Insufficient emphasis has been placed on protecting child victims of trafficking and ensuring that any judicial proceedings brought against them are child sensitive.[52]

The region is subject to both human-made emergencies deriving from insurgency and instability, and natural disasters in the form of floods and earthquakes, which have a grave impact on children. The ongoing conflict in Afghanistan has isolated more than 40 per cent of the country's territory, to which humanitarian workers have little or no access for extended periods, and there are more than 150,000 internally displaced people. In Sri Lanka, conflict-affected districts display levels of acute and chronic undernutrition far higher than the national average, and around 250,000 children have had their education disrupted. In Nepal, many child protection systems have broken down, and children remain vulnerable to violence, abuse and exploitation.[53]

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has expressed its concern that juvenile justice systems in South Asia do not aim sufficiently to ensure the dignity of children and reintegrate them into the community.[54] Juvenile justice systems are not distinct from those applied to adults, and they resort too swiftly to institutionalization.[55]

The 2006 UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children estimated that, every year, between 41 million and 88 million children in the region witness violence at home – the highest regional total in the world.[56]

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Countries in the Middle East and North Africa region are displaying a growing awareness of such child protection issues as violence, abuse and exploitation. Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and corporal punishment remain widespread, however, and children continue to suffer from the grave impact of conflict in the region.

FGM/C remains highly prevalent in some countries of the region, but there have been encouraging signs of attitude change in both countries for which trend data are available (Egypt and Sudan). The data suggest that, in Egypt, mothers of girls born more recently are less likely to state their intention to subject their daughters to cutting. Overall, however, progress is very slow, and a clear majority of girls still undergo FGM/C.

In Egypt, household survey data indicate that FGM/C is increasingly being performed by doctors, nurses or midwives rather than by traditional practitioners. Although this shift towards 'medicalization' may reduce health risks for girls, it overlooks the human rights implications of the practice. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and other instruments promote the right to participate in cultural life, but they do not uphold traditional practices that violate such rights as bodily integrity, and principles of equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex.

Egypt and Djibouti have both enacted laws criminalizing FGM/C, and the former has acted to prosecute some individuals on the basis of this legislation.[57]

Greater progress needs to be made in resisting the corporal punishment or violent disciplining of children. Three in four children in the Middle East and North Africa are subject to physical punishment. One in three children is either hit on the face, head or ears, or is hit hard or repeatedly. As of October 2008, none of the countries in the region had legislation prohibiting corporal punishment in the home, although 12 did prohibit corporal punishment in schools.[58]

FGM/C prevalence levels in the Middle East and North Africa show little change

Percentage of girls and women 15–49 years old who have been cut, by age group
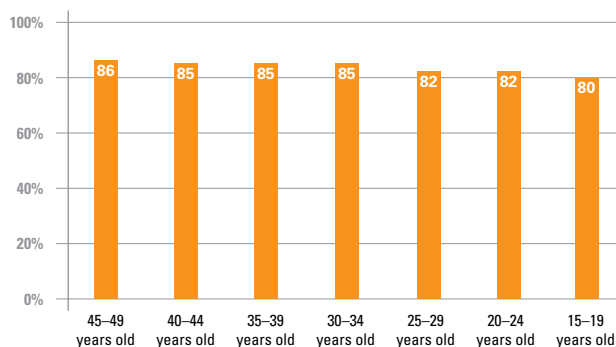
Note: Percentages reflect a weighted average for the four countries of the region where FGM/C is practised by at least 1% of the population.

Source: MICS, DHS and other national surveys, 1997–2007.

## Three out of four children in the Middle East and North Africa are subject to physical punishment

Percentage of children 2–14 years old who experienced any form of physical punishment and percentage of children 2–14 years old who were hit on the face, head or ears, hit repeatedly or hit hard

Any form of physical punishment

Hit on the face, head or ears, hit repeatedly or hit hard
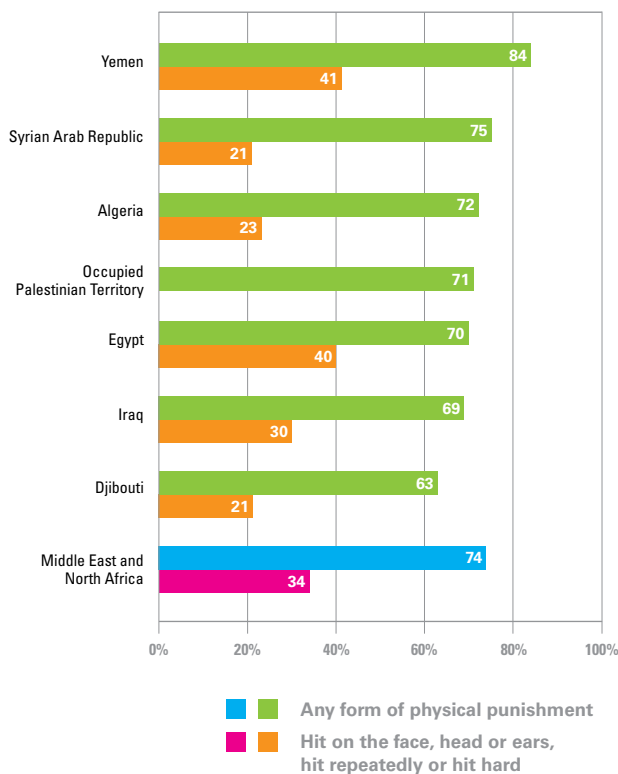
Note: Estimates are based on data for seven countries representing 51% of the population of the Middle East and North Africa region. Data on children who were hit on the face, head or ears, hit repeatedly or hit hard are not available for the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Source: MICS, DHS and other national surveys, 2005–2006.

Available data on attitudes towards wife-beating also indicate a general acceptance of domestic violence. Household surveys in four countries found that an average of 58 per cent of girls and women 15–49 years old thought that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

Levels of child labour, which average 9 per cent and range from 4 per cent in the Syrian Arab Republic to 13 per cent in the Sudan, are lower in the Middle East and North Africa than in any other developing region except for CEE/CIS. In most countries, boys are more likely to work than girls, although in Djibouti, the reverse is true.

The prevalence of child marriage in the Middle East and North Africa – 18 per cent of women 20–24 years old were married or in union by age 18 – is also lower than in any other developing region except CEE/CIS. The Sudan (34 per cent) and Yemen (32 per cent) have the highest prevalence of child marriage.

Armed conflict continues to render meaningful child protection difficult in a number of locations, although Darfur (Sudan), Iraq and the Occupied Palestinian Territory have recognized the necessity of strengthening their child protection systems both during emergencies and in the reconstruction period afterwards.[59]

Human Rights Watch has identified five countries known to have executed children under 18 years old since January 2005, and four are in this region: Iran, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan and Yemen.[60]

In four countries of the region, an average of 58 per cent of women justify wife-beating

Percentage of girls and women 15–49 years old who think that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances, in four countries with available data
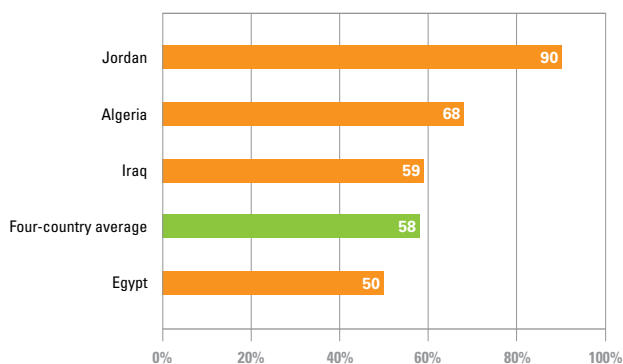
Note: These four countries cover only 37% of the population of the Middle East and North Africa, and therefore these data are not representative of the entire region. Data for Egypt and Jordan refer to girls and women 15–49 years old who were ever married.

Source: MICS and DHS, 2005–2007.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The key child protection issue in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean is violence: on the streets, in juvenile justice systems, in the home, or in the form of sexual abuse and exploitation. Child labour and birth registration are also priorities for the region.

A recent UNICEF study on the impact of small arms in four countries of this region stated that Latin America and the Caribbean has the highest rates of armed violence in the world and accounts for 42 per cent of all homicides globally.[61] The study found that children are more frequently the victims than the perpetrators of these crimes. In Jamaica, for example, boys under 18 years old accounted for 60 per cent of victims of violence-related injury.[62]

This study attributes the acceptability of children handling firearms to a cultural tolerance of violence and a skewed understanding of masculinity. Many children interviewed for the study reported that they became involved in criminal activity as a result of pressure from their families to earn more money. For others, obtaining firearms was not about wealth but about social status.[63]

Violence in the home is also widespread. Data from six of the region's countries show that an average of 83 per cent of children 2–14 years old experienced violent forms of discipline, and 60 per cent experienced physical punishment. By contrast, an average of only 16 per cent of mothers or caregivers felt that physical punishment was necessary in bringing up a child. Among girls and women 15–49 years old who were surveyed in nine countries, 16 per cent said that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

Violence is also common in juvenile justice facilities. There have been reports of torture of children in detention as well as the use of children for espionage by the police. It is, in addition, not difficult for children inside detention facilities to obtain weapons.[64]

Over the whole region, the average incidence of child labour is 11 per cent. Common locations for child labour include quarries, coffee plantations, mines, sugar-cane fields and wholesale markets,[65] and children, mainly girls, are engaged in domestic child labour. Household survey data show that children from poorer households are more likely to be engaged in child labour than children from richer households. In both Bolivia and Nicaragua, for example, children in the poorest quintile are six times as likely to engage in child labour as those in the richest quintile.

In six countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, an average of 83 per cent of children experience violent discipline

Percentage of children 2–14 years old who experienced any form of violent discipline, by type, and percentage of mothers and caregivers who think that children need to be physically punished, in six countries with data

Legend:
- ■ (red) Children who experienced any form of violent discipline
- ■ (orange) Children who experienced psychological aggression
- ■ (blue) Children who experienced physical punishment
- ■ (green) Percentage of mothers and caregivers who think that children need to be physically punished

	Belize	Dominican Republic	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad and Tobago	Six-country average
Any form of violent discipline	68	83	74	87	84	75	83
Psychological aggression	51	71	63	75	79	66	71
Physical punishment	55	57	59	73	57	52	60
Mothers/caregivers think children need to be physically punished	25	9	23	34	16	25	16

Note: These six countries cover only 3% of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean, and therefore these data are not representative of the entire region.
Source: MICS and other household surveys, 2005–2007.

UNODC estimates that 41 per cent of trafficked persons in the United States are from Latin America and the Caribbean. Intra-regional trafficking also takes place, with Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Paraguay among the destinations.[66]

Rates of birth registration in Latin America and the Caribbean are far higher than those in most other developing regions, at 89 per cent, but disparities are significant, and children from indigenous minorities and Afro-descendent families tend to have lower birth registration levels. Belize, Guyana and Suriname, for example, have nearly universal registration levels among the majority of children but lower levels among children of indigenous minorities.

Children of indigenous minorities are less likely than other children to be registered

Percentage of children under 5 years old who are registered, by population subgroup, in countries where these data are available

Belize		
Children of households speaking Garifuna	76
All other children	96

Guyana		
Children of an Amerindian mother	87
All other children	97

Suriname		
Children of households speaking an indigenous language	89
All other children	98
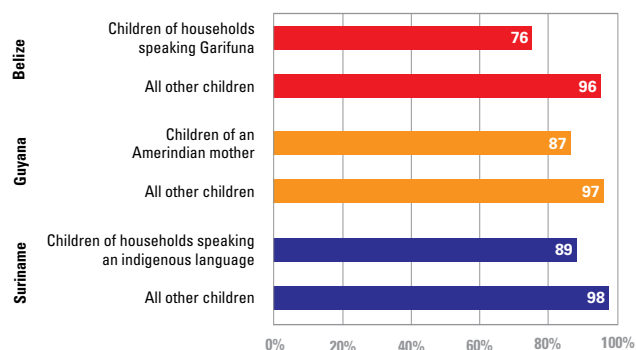
Note: The data for children of households speaking Garifuna in Belize are based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases.
Source: MICS, 2006–2007.

EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Child labour, trafficking, sexual exploitation and children in justice systems are among the most pressing concerns in the region, and many child rights violations are spurred by poverty and inequality. There has been significant progress in improving birth registration levels in some countries.

The average child labour rate in East Asia and the Pacific is 10 per cent – excluding China, for which there are no data. As in other regions, this average hides large differences between individual countries, ranging from 45 per cent in Cambodia to only 4 per cent in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. Boys and girls are equally likely to work.

In most Asian countries, child domestic labour has been identified as part of a trend towards urbanism,[67] and a survey of child domestic workers in Ho Chi Minh City (Viet Nam) noted that child domestic labour has become more evenly distributed among the household classes. The survey also found that most child domestic workers are undocumented, making them especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.[68] Qualitative evidence from Cambodia and Viet Nam indicates that trafficking of child domestic workers may be linked to bonded labour, as children work to pay off debts incurred by their parents.[69]

Boys and girls are equally likely to work

Percentage of children 5–14 years old engaged in labour, by sex

Country	Boys	Girls
Cambodia	45	45
Lao People's Democratic Republic	24	26
Mongolia	19	17
Viet Nam	15	16
Philippines	13	11
Thailand	8	8
Timor-Leste	4	4
Indonesia	5	4
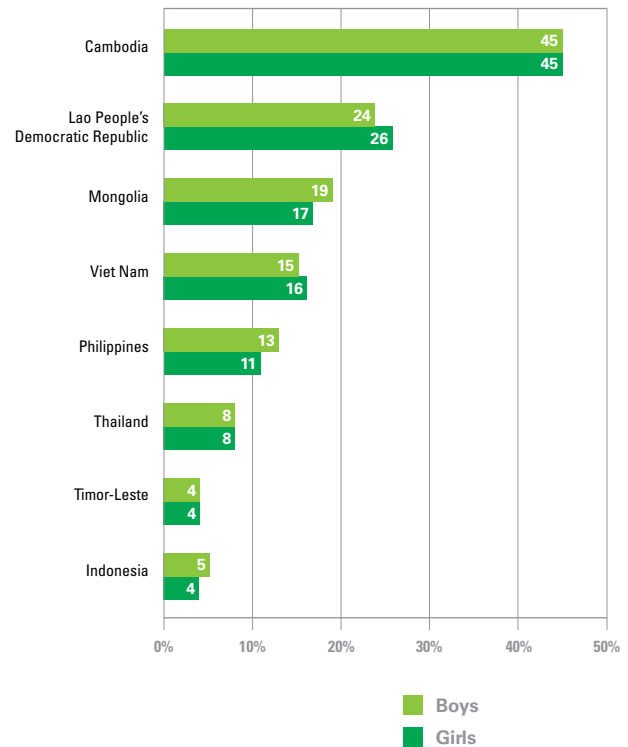
Boys
Girls

Source: MICS, DHS and other surveys, 1999–2006.

Boys are more likely than girls to be physically punished in some East Asian countries

Percentage of children 2–14 years old who experience any form of physical punishment, by sex, in countries with available data

- Boys
- Girls

	Mongolia	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Viet Nam
Boys	42	48	67
Girls	34	41	55
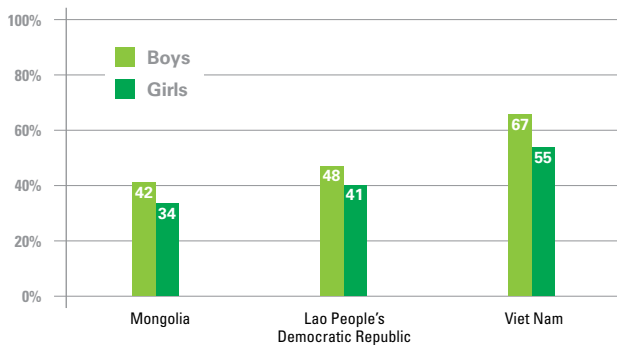
Source: MICS, 2005–2006.

A seven-country assessment by UNICEF found that trafficking occurs in the East Asia and Pacific region mainly within the context of irregular migration. Children may migrate voluntarily but then are trafficked en route or at the destination, and, particularly in rural areas, children left behind after their parents have migrated are at risk of being trafficked. In addition to trafficking for purposes of labour and sexual exploitation, emerging reports of children trafficked for illegal adoption, prostitution of boys and involvement in armed conflict are of concern in this region.[70]

The 2006 UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children estimated that, every year, between 20 million and 61 million children in the region witness violence at home – the second highest regional total in the world.[71] Less than half the countries in the region prohibit corporal punishment in schools, and none prohibits it in the home.[72] In some countries, boys are more likely than girls to experience corporal punishment.

Bullying and other forms of violence against children are only beginning to be dealt with by the countries of the region. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, for example, 98 per cent of girls and 100 per cent of boys said they had witnessed bullying at school, usually of children from ethnic minorities.[73]
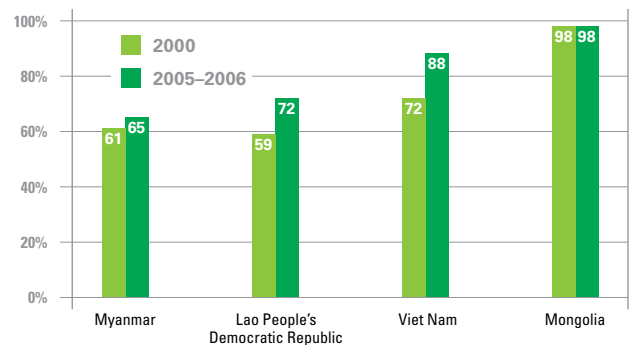
During the past decade, the number of children in conflict with the law has increased in nearly all countries in East Asia and the Pacific. These children often suffer from economic deprivation and social marginalization; most have committed only petty crimes or offences connected with drug abuse, and rates of recidivism among them are low. All of this underlines the importance of enhancing the quality and range of custodial measures for children.[74]

Birth registration is at a regional average level of 72 per cent (excluding China). Substantial increases in levels of registration of children under 5 years old have been achieved in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam. In the East Asia and Pacific region, children who are unregistered are often from poor, marginalized or displaced families or live in countries with weak registration systems.[75]

A UNICEF report on birth registration found that the high levels of birth registration in Thailand (99 per cent) contributed to the tracing and reunification of victims of the December 2004 tsunami.[76] The experience provides lessons for several other countries in situations of emergency and underscores the utility of creating child protection systems and networks that can both prevent and respond to cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation in emergencies.

Some countries have made important progress in increasing birth registration levels

Percentage of children under 5 years old who are registered, in countries where comparable trend data are available

- 2000
- 2005–2006

	Myanmar	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Viet Nam	Mongolia
2000	61	59	72	98
2005–2006	65	72	88	98

Note: Myanmar data are for 2000 and 2003; Mongolia data are for 2000 and 2005; Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam data are for 2000 and 2006.

Source: MICS, DHS, other national surveys and vital registration data, 2000–2006.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (CEE/CIS)

The CEE/CIS region has a strong tradition of state involvement in child protection, inherited from the socialist past. But there is concern that violence against children, sexual exploitation and other abuses remain hidden and that child protection systems are outdated and unequipped to address the new challenges the region is facing. There is cause for concern about the excessive number of children in institutional care, about children's treatment by the justice system and about the trafficking of children.

The proportion of children in institutional care in CEE/CIS is far higher than in any other region, indicating that it remains one of the main coping mechanisms for many families in poverty. It is estimated that there are more than 800,000 children in institutional care in the region and that the rate of children in formal care today is higher than it was at the beginning of the transition from the Soviet period.[77]

A recent UNICEF study found that disabled children are particularly likely to be placed in institutions – in the CEE/CIS region a disabled child is almost 17 times as likely to be institutionalized as one who is not disabled. It is estimated that in Uzbekistan, 82 per cent of children living in institutions are disabled.[78]

Juvenile justice systems in the region do not yet meet international standards, and young offenders may face violence by the police, staff or other inmates while in custody.[79]

On average, the rate of children living in formal care in CEE/CIS is increasing

Rate of children under 18 years old in formal care, per 100,000 children (2000–2006)
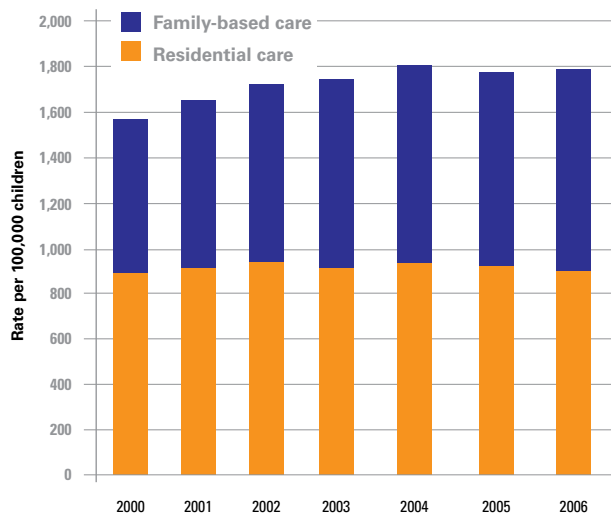
Note: Residential care data are missing for Tajikistan (2000–2002) and Georgia (2004–2006). For Croatia and Montenegro, where residential care data are missing for 2001, 2003 and 2005, averages were calculated for each missing year based on the previous and subsequent years. Family-based care data are missing for Serbia for 2000; 2001 data are used as an estimate. Family-based care data for the whole period are missing for Albania, Montenegro, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and for some years for Bulgaria (2000, 2001), Georgia (2003–2006) and Tajikistan (2000–2004). The calculation of rates adjusts for missing data by excluding the appropriate population data.

Source: TransMONEE 2008 database, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence.

Physical punishment is widespread even where mothers do not approve of it

Percentage of children 2–14 years old who experienced physical punishment, and percentage of mothers and caregivers who think that children need to be physically punished, in 12 countries with data

Country	Children 2–14 years old who experienced physical punishment	Mothers and caregivers who think that children need to be physically punished
Tajikistan	55	15
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	54	7
Serbia	52	6
Belarus	50	15
Georgia	48	13
Albania	47	6
Azerbaijan	47	22
Montenegro	42	5
Ukraine	36	16
Kyrgyzstan	36	8
Kazakhstan	23	7
Bosnia and Herzegovina	22	6
12-country average	40	13

■ Children 2–14 years old who experienced physical punishment

■ Mothers and caregivers who think that children need to be physically punished

Note: These 12 countries cover only 28% of the population of CEE/CIS, and therefore these data are not representative of the entire region.

Source: MICS and DHS, 2005–2006.

Attitudes towards domestic violence vary widely between countries of the region. Whereas only 4 per cent of women in Ukraine think that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances, 74 per cent of women in Tajik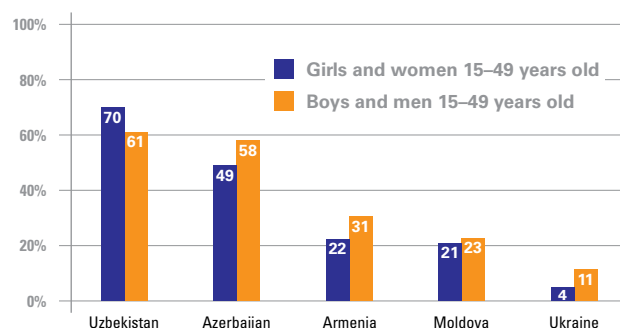istan take that view. Data for 12 CEE/CIS countries indicate that 40 per cent of children 2–14 years old experienced physical punishment, although only 13 per cent of mothers or caregivers considered such discipline to be necessary. Children are most likely to face corporal punishment in Tajikistan (55 per cent) and least likely in Bosnia and Herzegovina (22 per cent).

The region has a lower incidence of child labour, at 6 per cent, than any other developing region. Such statistics, however, fail to reflect current debates over patterns of child labour in CEE/CIS – particularly around child labour during the cotton harvest. Girls and boys are equally likely to be involved in child labour and to work a similar average number of hours when domestic labour is included.

Poverty, domestic violence and parental alcohol addiction are widely reported by children who are trafficked from and within the region as factors that fuelled their desire to leave home. In a UNICEF survey, almost all children subjected to trafficking indicated they lacked access to the information and skills that might have protected them from abuse and prevented them from being trafficked.[80]

A larger proportion of men than women justify wife-beating in some CEE/CIS countries

Percentage of girls and women 15–49 years old and boys and men 15–49 years old who think that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances, in five countries with data

Country	Girls and women 15–49 years old	Boys and men 15–49 years old
Uzbekistan	70	61
Azerbaijan	49	58
Armenia	22	31
Moldova	21	23
Ukraine	4	11

■ Girls and women 15–49 years old
■ Boys and men 15–49 years old

Source: DHS, MICS and other national surveys, 2001–2007.

INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES

Violence, child labour and trafficking are particular concerns in industrialized countries, along with harmful practices in immigrant communities.

A recent review of studies measuring child maltreatment found that at least 4 per cent of children in industrialized countries are physically abused each year, and 1 in 10 is neglected or psychologically abused – by their parents or guardians in at least 80 per cent of these cases. In many industrialized countries, large majorities of parents still consider corporal punishment of children to be acceptable.[81]

It is estimated that throughout the course of their childhood, 5–10 per cent of girls and up to 5 per cent of boys suffer penetrative sexual abuse, and up to three times this percentage experience some type of sexual abuse.[82] Evidence suggests, however, that physical and sexual abuse may be decreasing in some settings.

During recent years, physical and especially sexual abuse of children have been high-profile issues in industrialized countries. But the harm done by neglect and emotional abuse has garnered insufficient attention. Among the risk factors associated with parents who abuse their children are poverty, mental health problems, low education achievement, alcohol and drug misuse – as well as parents' own experience of maltreatment during childhood.[83]

Children of migrants to industrialized countries are vulnerable to exploitation, particularly if their families have migrated illegally and therefore have no access to basic support services. They suffer a higher risk of being trafficked into sexual exploitation, forced labour or domestic servitude. Not all trafficking is across borders, however – in Germany and the Netherlands, for example, around one quarter of victims have been trafficked within the country.[84]

Birth registration is almost universal in industrialized countries, but the children of immigrants or other marginalized groups are least likely to be registered.[85]

Child marriage is less common in industrialized than in developing countries, but at least 10 per cent of adolescents marry before age 18 in Britain, France and the United States.[86] Many teenagers who become pregnant do so outside marriage or other types of formal union.[87]

FGM/C is practised in certain immigrant communities, although scant data are available with respect to its prevalence. As of February 2009, 12 industrialized countries had passed laws criminalizing female genital mutilation or cutting: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.[88]

THE WAY FORWARD

Despite the greater international attention now being given to child protection, there are children being maltreated and harmed in every country of the world. They are labouring in hazardous conditions or recruited by armed forces and groups; they are suffering violent discipline in the home or sexual exploitation on the street; they are being forced into marriage too early or compelled to live without parental care.

The number of children exposed to violence, exploitation and abuse all over the world is profoundly disturbing. The sheer scale of the problem makes it clear that the Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved unless faster and more resolute progress is made to protect children.

Preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse are essential if children's rights as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child are to be guaranteed. Abusive practices against children aggravate poverty, social exclusion and the transmission of HIV, and create an unwelcome legacy for succeeding generations. By contrast, where children are protected, their health, education and well-being are improved as well as their ability to contribute to society as future parents and citizens.

This report card shows that there has been progress in some areas, but that it has been altogether too little and too slow. The multiple factors that contribute to the violation of children's right to protection – including poverty and gender inequality, harmful traditional practices, inadequate legislation and policies, and unresponsive government services – are evidence that child protection cannot be pursued single issue by single issue but must be embraced systematically and holistically.

The lack of good data on many of the topics covered in this report card is acutely problematic, particularly for the purposes of mobilization and action. There is a clear need for standardized measurement instruments and for consistent data that are disaggregated at the sub-national level and by gender and other socio-economic variables. And there is a clear need to better interpret and understand such data and apply them in the context of policymaking and programming. But rather than starting from scratch, this effort should draw on the relevant resources of experience, knowledge and evidence of results.

Today, there is a much greater understanding of the myriad factors that combine to enhance children's protection. The understanding now needs to be translated into urgent action – because every year that passes without that action is another year in which children are subjected to intolerable violence, exploitation and abuse.

BUILDING A PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENT: A CALL TO ACTION

1. Commit governments to ensuring holistic protection for all children. Governments must provide adequate budgetary resources for child protection and build up sectors that have a role in child protection, particularly social welfare and justice. Services need to be responsive and preventive, and need to coordinate with each other. The protection roles of all professionals must be strengthened, from planning and policy right through to codes of conduct, training and management systems. Governments should also secure greater access to social protection for vulnerable families.

2. Pass and enforce laws that comprehensively address child protection concerns. The starting point must be the ratification by governments of international child protection standards and, beyond that, a commitment to meeting them. Legislative frameworks that are in line with international norms and standards need to be effectively enforced and consistently implemented. Accountability and the end of impunity for crimes against children are essential.

3. Provide correct information from credible sources on viable alternatives to existing attitudes, behaviours and practices that violate children's rights. Communities must be enabled to identify and adopt better ways to pursue the well-being of their children and protect them from violence, abuse and exploitation. In addition to activities at the community level, public awareness campaigns, including active and responsible media engagement, can play a role in changing attitudes, beliefs and practices that threaten child protection.

4. Promote open discussion of child protection issues. Where harmful practices are the result of social attitudes and norms, open discussion is essential to reach the coordinated, collective consensus necessary for large-scale abandonment. All forms of violence, abuse and exploitation should be recognized, documented and reported in the media, as should positive changes in attitudes and behaviours, because knowledge about these can contribute to further positive change. Protection failures should be acknowledged, and an enabling environment should be established to allow young people to discuss their concerns at home, at school and with each other. Survivors should not be threatened or ostracized, and non-governmental organizations and media should be able to work with minimal interference.

5. Promote meaningful child participation and empowerment. Engaging children in the issues that affect them is critical for their empowerment as actors in their own protection and that of their peers. This includes child participation through life skills education, peer communication, and activities to prevent stigma and discrimination, as well as participation in legal processes and in finding solutions to issues that concern them.

6. Strengthen the protective role of families and communities. Parents and caregivers can benefit from programmes that address gender stereotypes, increase their understanding of child development and promote non-violent forms of discipline. Governments can foster the protective environment through making social services available, supporting community-based child protection networks and dialogue, and promoting the elimination of all forms of violence against women and children.

7. Improve monitoring and oversight through better data collection, analysis and use. Countries need to improve data collection and information systems in order to identify vulnerable groups, inform policy and track progress. National data collection on child protection must become routine and include disaggregation by sex, age and other vulnerability factors. In alignment with a 'systems approach' to child protection, indicators need to be identified to measure progress and trends on the capacities of child protection systems. Additional support for the capacity of governments, aid organizations and communities to collect data and apply information tools in child protection is essential. Research and diagnosis of child protection challenges, as well as systematic evaluation of child protection initiatives, also need to be strengthened.

8. Ensure a protective environment for children in emergencies. This involves a multi-sectoral approach encompassing social welfare, education, health, law enforcement and justice components. Parties to conflict must ensure that children are protected from death, injury, harm, arbitrary arrest and detention, recruitment by armed groups, gender-based violence, torture, and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. To this end, conflict-affected countries must actively monitor and report grave child rights violations under UN Security Council Resolution 1612, end impunity for such violations and adhere to agreed-upon plans of action.

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CHILD PROTECTION INDICATORS

Countries and territories	Birth registration 2000–2008*			Child discipline 2005–2007*	Attitudes towards domestic violence 2001–2007*	Child marriage 2000–2007*			Female genital mutilation/cutting 1997–2007*		Child labour (5–14 years old) 1999–2007*			Child disability 1999–2007*
									women (15–49 years old)	daughters				
	total	urban	rural	total	total	total	urban	rural	total	total	total	male	female	total
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA														
Angola	29	34	19	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	24	22	25	–
Botswana	58	66	52	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Burundi	60	62	60	–	–	18	14	18	–	–	19	19	19	–
Comoros	83	87	83	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	27	26	28	–
Eritrea	–	–	–	–	–	47	31	60	89	63	–	–	–	–
Ethiopia	7	29	5	–	81	49	27	55	74	38	53	59	46	–
Kenya	48 y	64 y	44 y	–	68	25	19	27	32	21	26	27	25	–
Lesotho	26	39	24	–	–	23	13	26	–	–	23	25	21	–
Madagascar	75	87	72	–	28	39	29	42	–	–	32	36	28	–
Malawi	–	–	–	–	28	50	38	53	–	–	29	28	29	–
Mauritius	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mozambique	–	–	–	–	–	56	41	66	–	–	–	–	–	–
Namibia	67	83	59	–	35	9	6	11	–	–	13 y	15 y	12 y	–
Rwanda	82	79	83	–	48	13	9	14	–	–	35	36	35	2 y
Seychelles	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Somalia	3	6	2	–	76 y	45	35	52	98	46	49	45	54	–
South Africa	78 y	–	–	–	–	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Swaziland	30	38	28	–	38	5	1	6	–	–	9	9	9	–
Uganda	21	24	21	–	70	46	27	52	1	–	36	37	36	11 y
United Republic of Tanzania	8 y	22	4	–	60	41	23	49	15	4	36	37	34	–
Zambia	10	16	6	–	85	42	32	49	1	–	12 y	11 y	12 y	–
Zimbabwe	74	83	71	–	48	34	20	44	–	–	13 y	12 y	14 y	–
WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA														
Benin	60	68	56	–	47	34	19	47	13	2	46	47	45	–
Burkina Faso	64	86	58	83	71	48	29	61	73	25	47 y	46 y	48 y	–
Cameroon	70	86	58	92	56	36	23	57	1	1	31	31	30	33
Cape Verde	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3 y	4 y	3 y	1 y
Central African Republic	49	72	36	88	–	61	57	64	26	7	47	44	49	48
Chad	9	36	3	–	–	72	65	73	45	21	53	54	51	3 y
Congo	81 y	88 y	75 y	–	76	31	24	40	–	–	25	24	25	–
Côte d'Ivoire	55	79	41	90	65	35	27	43	36	9	35	36	34	–
Democratic Republic of the Congo	31	33	30	–	76	39	31	45	–	–	32	29	34	–
Equatorial Guinea	32	43	24	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	28	28	28	–
Gabon	89	90	87	–	–	34	30	49	–	–	–	–	–	–
Gambia	55	57	54	84	74	36	24	45	78	64	25	20	29	–
Ghana	51	69	42	89	47	22	15	28	4	1	34	34	34	21
Guinea	43	78	33	–	86	63	45	75	96	57	25	26	24	–
Guinea-Bissau	39	53	33	80	52	24	14	32	45	35	39	41	37	–
Liberia	4 y	5 y	3 y	–	59	38	25	49	58	–	–	–	–	–
Mali	53	75	45	–	75	71	60	77	85	69	34	35	33	–
Mauritania	56	75	42	–	–	35	27	44	72	66	16	18	15	30
Niger	32	71	25	–	70	75	42	84	2	1	43	43	43	–
Nigeria	30	50	21	–	65	43	27	52	19	10	13 y	–	–	–
Sao Tome and Principe	69	70	67	–	32	33	31	37	–	–	8	8	7	29
Senegal	55	75	44	–	65	39	23	55	28	20	22	24	21	–
Sierra Leone	48	62	44	92	85	56	34	66	94	35	48	49	48	34
Togo	78	93	69	90	53	24	15	36	6	1	29	29	30	–
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA														
Algeria	99	99	99	86	68	2	2	2	–	–	5	6	4	1 y
Bahrain	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	6	3	–
Djibouti	89	90	82	70	–	5	5	13	93	49	8	8	8	–
Egypt	99	99	99	92	50 y	17	9	22	96	28 y	7	8	5	8 y
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Iraq	95	95	96	84	59	17	16	19	–	–	11	12	9	21
Jordan	–	–	–	–	90 y	10	10	7	–	–	–	–	–	–
Kuwait	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lebanon	–	–	–	–	–	11	–	–	–	–	7	8	6	–
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Morocco	85	92	80	–	–	16	12	21	–	–	11 y	13 y	9 y	–
Occupied Palestinian Territory	96 y	97 y	96 y	95	–	19	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Oman	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Qatar	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Saudi Arabia	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Sudan	33	53	22	–	–	34	24	40	89	43 y	13	14	12	–
Syrian Arab Republic	95	96	95	87	–	13	15	12	–	–	4	5	3	–
Tunisia	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
United Arab Emirates	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Yemen	22	38	16	94	–	32	28	35	23	20	11 y	11 y	12 y	29

Countries and territories	Birth registration 2000–2008*			Child discipline 2005–2007*	Attitudes towards domestic violence 2001–2007*	Child marriage 2000–2007*			Female genital mutilation/cutting 1997–2007*		Child labour (5–14 years old) 1999–2007*			Child disability 1999–2007*
									women (15–49 years old)	daughters				
	total	urban	rural	total	total	total	urban	rural	total	total	total	male	female	total
SOUTH ASIA														
Afghanistan	6	12	4	–	–	43	–	–	–	–	30	28	33	–
Bangladesh	10	13	9	–	–	64	58	69	–	–	13	18	8	21
Bhutan	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	19 y	16 y	22 y	–
India	41	59	35	–	54	47	29	56	–	–	12	12	12	–
Maldives	73	–	–	–	70	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Nepal	35	42	34	–	23	51	41	54	–	–	31 y	30 y	33 y	–
Pakistan	–	–	–	–	–	24	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Sri Lanka	–	–	–	–	–	12 y	–	–	–	–	8	9	7	–
EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC														
Brunei Darussalam	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cambodia	66	71	66	–	55	23	18	25	–	–	45 y	45 y	45 y	–
China	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2 y
Cook Islands	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	99	99	99	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Fiji	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Indonesia	55	69	43	–	25	24	15	33	–	–	4 y	5 y	4 y	–
Kiribati	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lao People's Democratic Republic	72	84	68	71	81	–	–	–	–	–	25	24	26	10
Malaysia	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Marshall Islands	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Micronesia (Federated States of)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mongolia	98	98	99	79	20	9	7	12	–	–	18	19	17	26
Myanmar	65 y	88 y	59 y	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Nauru	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Niue	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Palau	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Papua New Guinea	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Philippines	83	87	78	–	24	14	10	22	–	–	12	13	11	–
Samoa	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Singapore	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Solomon Islands	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Thailand	99	100	99	–	–	20	12	23	–	–	8	8	8	15
Timor-Leste	53 y	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	4	4	–
Tonga	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Tuvalu	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Vanuatu	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Viet Nam	88	94	86	93	64	10	3	13	–	–	16	15	16	4 y
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN														
Antigua and Barbuda	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Argentina	91 y	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	7 y	8 y	5 y	–
Bahamas	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Barbados	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Belize	94	92	97	68	12	–	–	–	–	–	40	39	42	44
Bolivia	74	76	72	–	–	26	22	37	–	–	22	22	22	–
Brazil	89 y	–	–	–	–	24 y	–	–	–	–	6 y	7 y	4 y	–
Chile	96 y	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	3	2	–
Colombia	90	97	77	–	–	23	19	38	–	–	5	6	4	3 y
Costa Rica	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5	6	3	–
Cuba	100 y	100 y	100 y	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Dominica	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Dominican Republic	78	82	70	83	9	40	–	–	–	–	10	12	7	5 y
Ecuador	85	85	85	–	–	22	–	–	–	–	12	12	13	–
El Salvador	–	–	–	–	–	27	–	–	–	–	6 y	9 y	4 y	–
Grenada	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Guatemala	–	–	–	–	–	35	–	–	–	–	29	25	32	2 y
Guyana	93	96	92	74	18	20	15	22	–	–	19	21	17	–
Haiti	81	87	78	–	29	30	27	33	–	–	21	22	19	–
Honduras	94	95	93	–	16	39	33	46	–	–	16	16	15	–
Jamaica	89	89	88	87	6	9	7	11	–	–	6	7	5	24
Mexico	–	–	–	–	–	25 y	–	–	–	–	16 y	15 y	16 y	–
Nicaragua	81	90	73	–	17	43	36	55	–	–	15	18	11	–
Panama	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	5	2	–
Paraguay	–	–	–	–	–	18	–	–	–	–	15	17	12	–
Peru	93	95	90	–	–	18	13	31	–	–	19	20	19	–
Saint Kitts and Nevis	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Saint Lucia	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Suriname	97	98	95	84	13	19	14	33	–	–	–	–	–	39
Trinidad and Tobago	96	–	–	75	8	8	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	–
Uruguay	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	8 y	8 y	8 y	–
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	92	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	8	9	6	–

CHILD PROTECTION INDICATORS

Countries and territories	Birth registration 2000–2008*			Child discipline 2005–2007*	Attitudes towards domestic violence 2001–2007*	Child marriage 2000–2007*			Female genital mutilation/cutting 1997–2007*		Child labour (5–14 years old) 1999–2007*			Child disability 1999–2007*
	total	urban	rural	total	total	total	urban	rural	women (15–49 years old) total	daughters total	total	male	female	total
CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (CEE/CIS)														
Albania	98	97	98	49	30	8	7	8	–	–	12	14	9	16
Armenia	96	97	95	–	22	10	7	16	–	–	4 y	–	–	12 y
Azerbaijan	94	96	92	75	49	12	–	–	–	–	7 y	8 y	5 y	–
Belarus	–	–	–	83	–	7	6	10	–	–	5	6	4	–
Bosnia and Herzegovina	100	99	100	36	5	6	2	7	–	–	5	7	4	10
Bulgaria	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Croatia	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Georgia	92	97	87	66	7	17	12	23	–	–	18	20	17	30
Kazakhstan	99	99	99	52	10	7	6	9	–	–	2	2	2	–
Kyrgyzstan	94	96	93	51	38	10	7	14	–	–	4	4	3	–
Montenegro	98	98	99	61	11	5	5	5	–	–	10	12	8	14
Republic of Moldova	98	98	98	–	21	19	16	22	–	–	32	32	33	–
Romania	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	–
Russian Federation	–	–	–	–	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Serbia	99	99	99	73	6	6	4	8	–	–	4	5	4	14
Tajikistan	88	85	90	74	74 y	13	13	13	–	–	10	9	11	–
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	94	95	93	69	21	4	3	4	–	–	6	7	5	21
Turkey	84	87	79	–	39	18	17	22	–	–	5	4	6	–
Turkmenistan	96	96	95	–	38 y	7	9	6	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ukraine	100	100	100	70	4	10	–	–	–	–	7	8	7	–
Uzbekistan	100	100	100	–	70	7	9	7	–	–	–	–	–	3
INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES														
Andorra	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Australia	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Austria	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Belgium	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Canada	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cyprus	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Czech Republic	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Denmark	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Estonia	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Finland	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
France	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Germany	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Greece	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Holy See	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Hungary	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Iceland	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ireland	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Israel	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Italy	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Japan	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Latvia	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Liechtenstein	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lithuania	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Luxembourg	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Malta	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Monaco	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Netherlands	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
New Zealand	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Norway	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Poland	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Portugal	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3 y	4 y	3 y	–
Republic of Korea	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
San Marino	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Slovakia	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Slovenia	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Spain	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Sweden	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Switzerland	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
United Kingdom	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
United States	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Countries and territories	Birth registration 2000–2008*			Child discipline 2005–2007*	Attitudes towards domestic violence 2001–2007*	Child marriage 2000–2007*			Female genital mutilation/cutting 1997–2007*		Child labour (5–14 years old) 1999–2007*			Child disability 1999–2007*
	total	urban	rural	total	total	total	urban	rural	women (15–49 years old) total	daughters total	total	male	female	total
SUMMARY INDICATORS														
Africa[a]	42	58	33	–	64	35	22	45	45	22	30 n	31 n	29 n	–
Sub-Saharan Africa[s]	36	52	28	–	65	39	27	49	34	19	34 n	35 n	33 n	–
Eastern and Southern Africa	32	41	24	–	65	36	26	46	43	28	36	38	33	–
West and Central Africa	39	56	32	–	66	43	28	53	28	14	35 n	34 n	35 n	–
Middle East and North Africa	75	86	67	89	–	18	12	23	–	–	9	10	8	–
Asia	45 **	62 **	38 **	–	48 **	40 **	25 **	51 **	–	–	12 **	13 **	12 **	–
South Asia	36	52	30	–	54	46	33	58	–	–	13	13	12	–
East Asia and the Pacific	72 **	81 **	67 **	–	35 **	19 **	12 **	25 **	–	–	10 **	11 **	10 **	3
Latin America and the Caribbean	89	–	–	–	–	25	–	–	–	–	11	11	10	–
CEE/CIS	92	93	92	–	32	12	–	–	–	–	6	6	6	–
Industrialized countries	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Developing countries	50 **	65 **	39 **	–	52 **	35 **	23 **	47 **	–	–	16 **	17 **	16 **	–
Least developed countries	29	42	25	–	64	48	36	54	–	–	30	31	28	–
World	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

NOTES

a Africa includes sub-Saharan Africa, Algeria, Egypt, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco and Tunisia.

s Sub-Saharan Africa includes Djibouti and Sudan.

– Data not available.

y Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the column heading, differ from the standard definition or refer to only part of a country. Such data are included in the calculation of regional and global averages.

n Excludes Nigeria.

* Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified in the column heading.

** Excludes China.

DEFINITIONS OF THE INDICATORS

Birth registration – Percentage of children less than 5 years old who were registered at the moment of the survey. The numerator of this indicator includes children whose birth certificate was seen by the interviewer or whose mother or caretaker says the birth has been registered.

Child discipline – Percentage of children 2–14 years old who experience any psychological or physical punishment.

Attitudes towards domestic violence – Percentage of women 15–49 years old who consider a husband to be justified in hitting or beating his wife for at least one of the specified reasons. Women were asked whether a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under a series of circumstances, i.e., if his wife burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children or refuses sexual relations.

Child marriage – Percentage of women 20–24 years old who were married or in union before they were 18 years old.

Female genital mutilation/cutting: women – Percentage of women 15–49 years old who have been mutilated/cut.

Female genital mutilation/cutting: daughters – Percentage of women 15–49 years old with at least one mutilated/cut daughter.

Child labour – Percentage of children 5–14 years old involved in child labour at the moment of the survey. A child is considered to be involved in child labour under the following conditions: children 5–11 years old who, during the week preceding the survey, did at least one hour of economic activity or at least 28 hours of household chores, or children 12–14 years old who, during the week preceding the survey, did at least 14 hours of economic activity or at least 28 hours of household chores.

Child disability – Percentage of children 2–9 years old who screen positive to at least one of the questions on disability.

MAIN DATA SOURCES

Birth registration – MICS, DHS, other national surveys and vital registration data.

Child discipline – MICS, DHS and other national surveys.

Attitudes towards domestic violence – MICS, DHS and other national surveys.

Child marriage – MICS, DHS and other national surveys.

Female genital mutilation/cutting – MICS, DHS and other national surveys.

Child labour – MICS, DHS and other national surveys.

Child disability – MICS, DHS and other national surveys.

NOTE ON THE CHILD DISABILITY DATA

In the case of countries participating in the latest round of MICS (2005–2006), a change in the methodology used to calculate the estimates was introduced after June 2008. In the 2008 edition of *The State of the World's Children*, as well as in MICS country reports and other UNICEF publications before June 2008, the estimates were based on 9 of the 10 MICS questions on disability. In the 2009 edition of *The State of the World's Children* and subsequently, the estimates are based on all 10 questions. The numbers in this table reflect these new estimates.

CHANGES IN REGIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Beginning with this issue of *Progress for Children*, UNICEF reports on two additional regions: Africa and Asia. Africa includes all countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa region, all countries in the West and Central Africa region, and the following countries in the Middle East and North Africa region: Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia. Asia includes all countries in the South Asia region and all countries in the East Asia and Pacific region.

In addition, the number of countries in the sub-Saharan Africa region has changed. Sub-Saharan Africa now includes Djibouti and Sudan. Due to the changes noted above, regional estimates for sub-Saharan Africa published in previous issues of *Progress for Children* may not be comparable with those published in this issue.

All other regions remain unchanged.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ISBN 978-92-806-4439-5

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