

# Welcome!

## Learning Series Session 2

The state of child marriage in  
the world:

Latest trends and data on child  
marriage

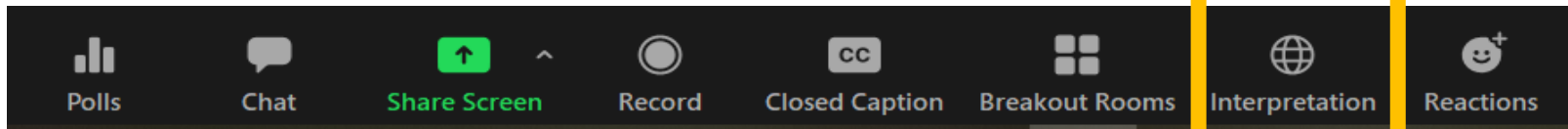


# *Girls Not Brides Learning Series:* The state of child marriage in the world: Latest trends and data on child marriage

This session will have presentations in **English**. To access simultaneous interpretation, please click on the globe icon at the bottom bar of your screen and **select your preferred language (English, Spanish, French, or no interpretation)**.

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# GIRLS NOT BRIDES

The Global Partnership  
to End Child Marriage

**Welcome by Dr. Faith  
Mwangi-Powell, CEO of  
*Girls Not Brides***



# Learning Series

Sharing evidence, learning, new tools and experience to support you work to end child marriage

Monthly webinar  
June-December





**GIRLS NOT BRIDES**

The Global Partnership  
to End Child Marriage

# CHILD MARRIAGE DATA 2022: TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS

**ARWYN FINNIE, GIRLS NOT BRIDES**

# Presentation overview

## **This presentation will cover:**

- Key indicators and methods of data collection
- Overview of current global and regional data
- Trends over time
- Reasons for change and stagnation
- What it will take to reach the SDG target 5.3

## Data sources and indicators

- Child marriage data comes from nationally representative surveys done every 3 or 4 years.
- UNICEF's role is to **validate comparable data**.
- Most reliable indicator is proportion of women aged 20-24 married before 18 (**prevalence**); this is the **SDG 5.3 indicator**.
- **Burden** refers to the absolute number of girls marrying before age 18.

Other sources of data may use different indicators, and capture more about girls' experiences.

# Global overview





## Current prevalence by region

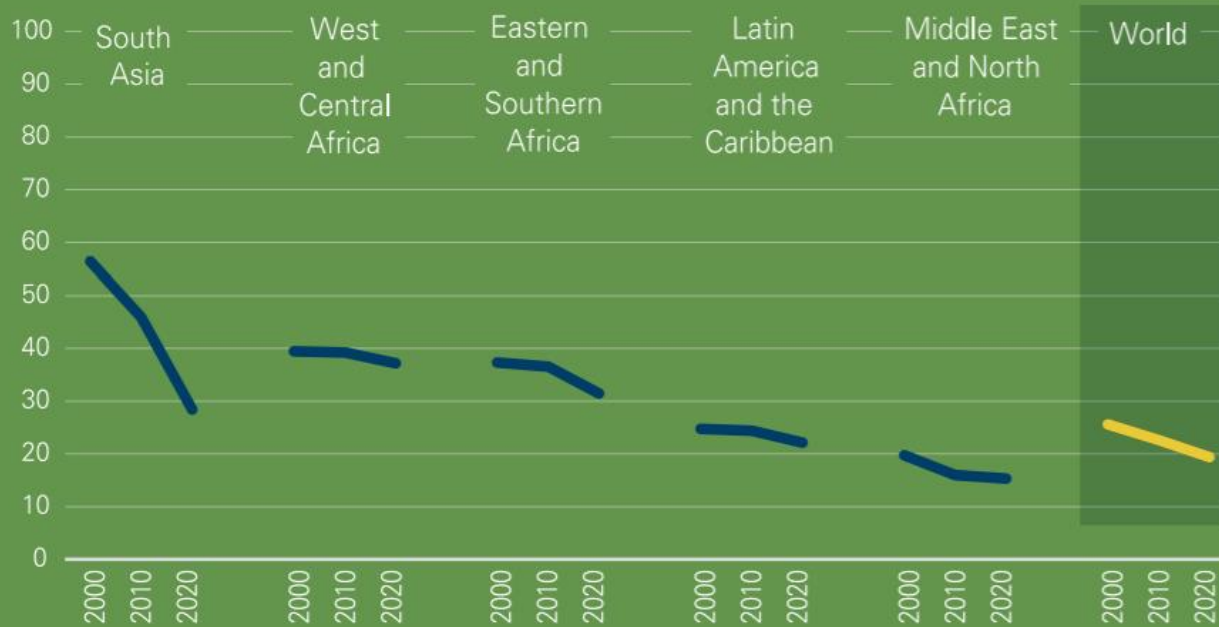
Globally 19% of girls marry before age 18

- **35%** in sub-Saharan Africa
    - 32% in ESA
    - 37% in WACA
  - **28%** in South Asia
  - **37%** in lowest income countries
- **21%** in Latin America and the Caribbean;
  - **15%** in the Middle East and North Africa (as of 2021)

Prevalence in lowest income countries is **double the global average**; within countries, huge disparity between rich and poor

# Regional trends 2000-2020

Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

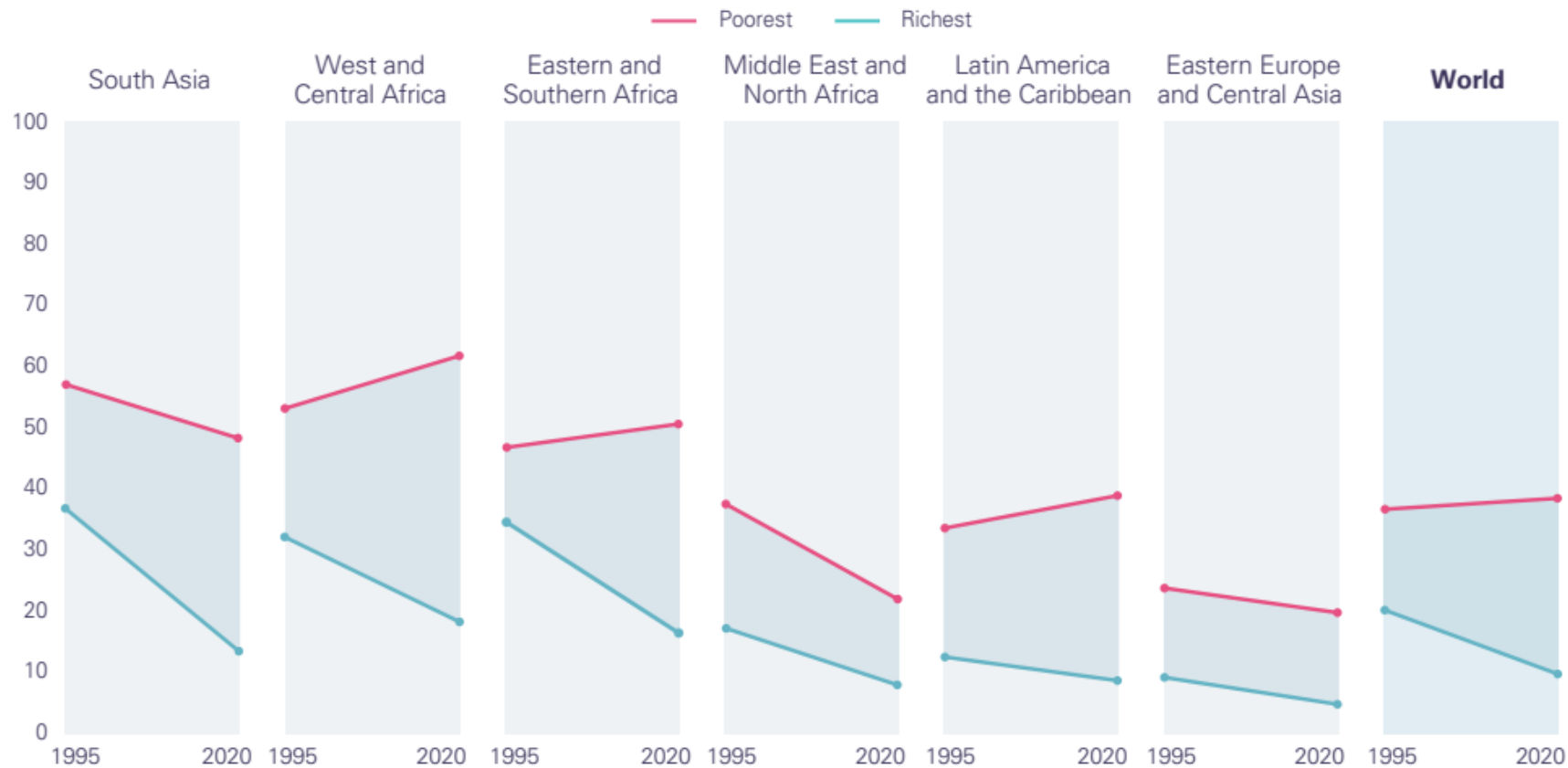


Notes: Estimates are based on a subset of 98 countries covering 79 per cent of the global population of women aged 20 to 24 years. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the regional population. Data coverage was insufficient to calculate regional estimates for East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and North America.

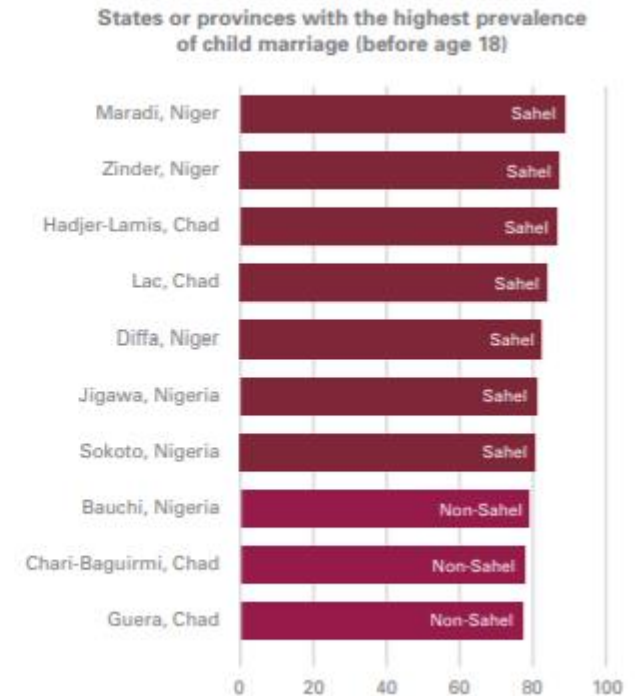
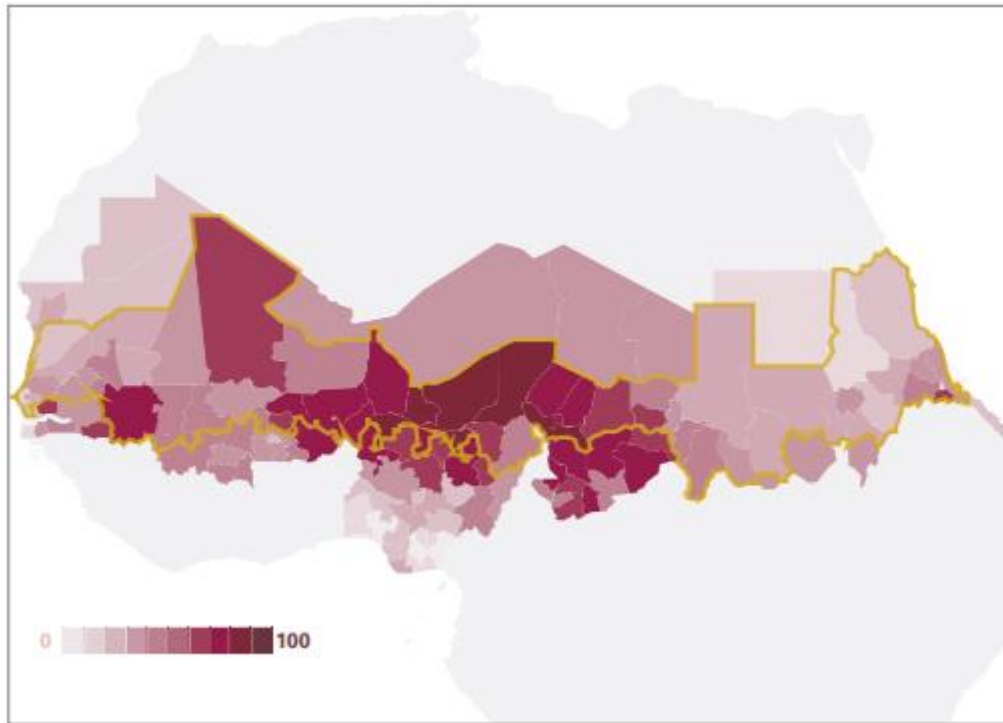
- Decline of 15% globally in the past decade
- Biggest declines seen in South Asia.
- In West and Central Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean, little progress has been made in 20 years.

# The gap between the richest and poorest girls has widened in most of the world

FIGURE 9 | Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18



# Prevalence varies hugely within countries: parts of the Sahel have the highest levels of child marriage in the world



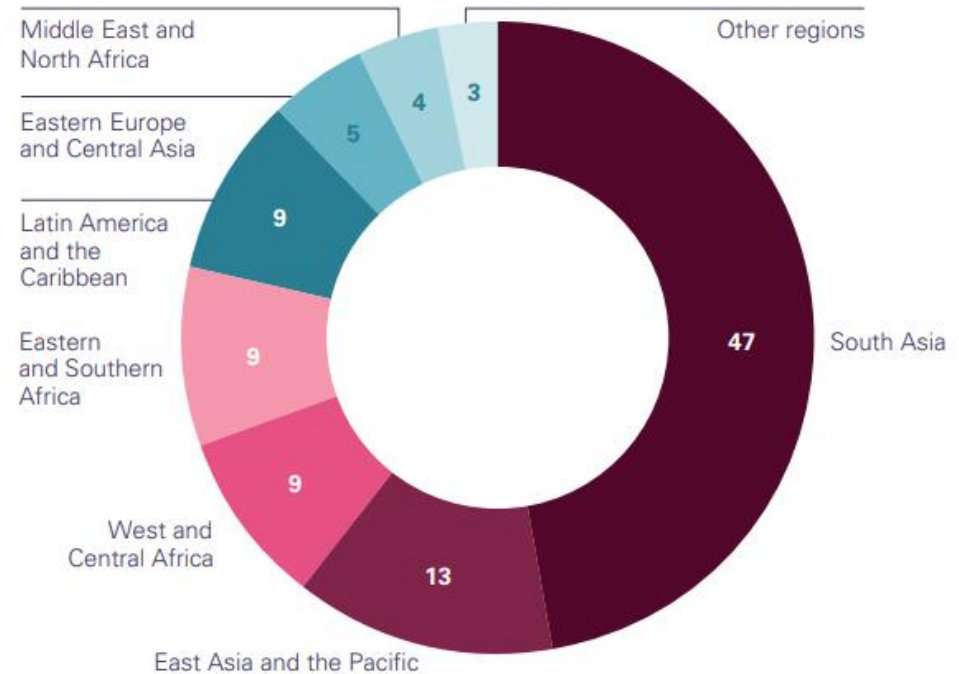
# Absolute numbers (burden)

The global number of child brides is now estimated at **650 million, down from 720 million in 2017.**

**Currently 12 million girls marry every year before 18**

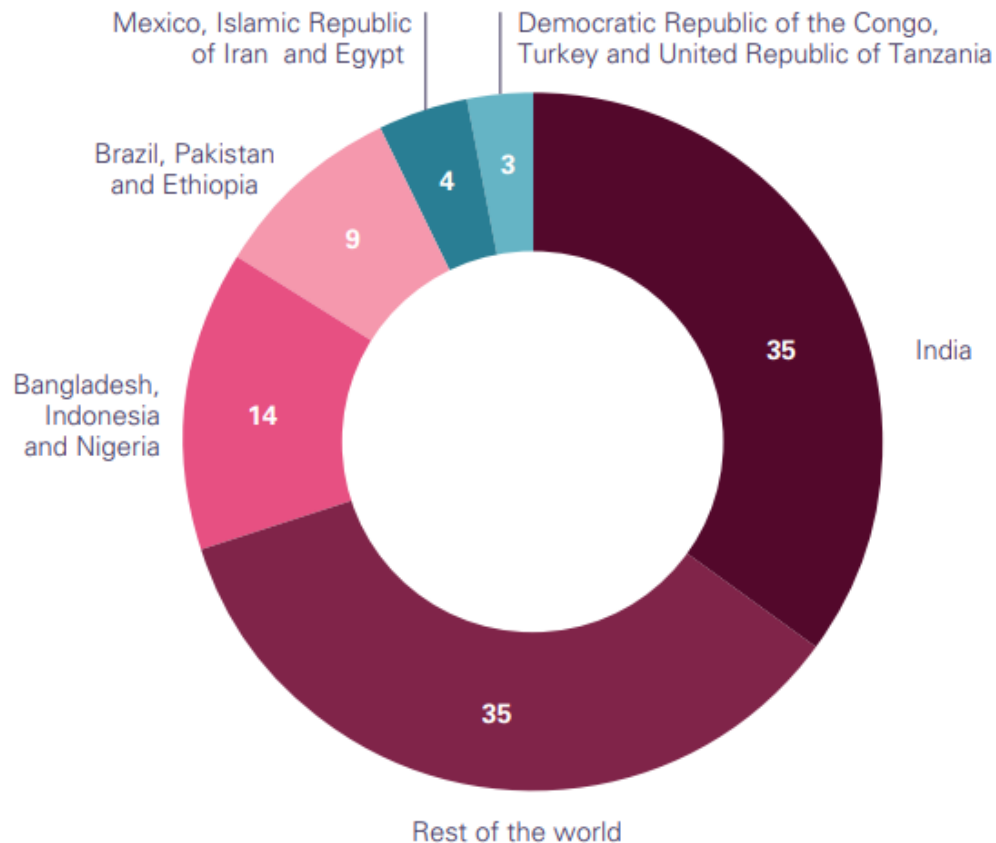
As a result of declines in prevalence over the past decade, **25 million marriages have been averted**

Percentage distribution of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before age 18



# Half the world's child brides live in just 7 countries

Percentage distribution of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before age 18



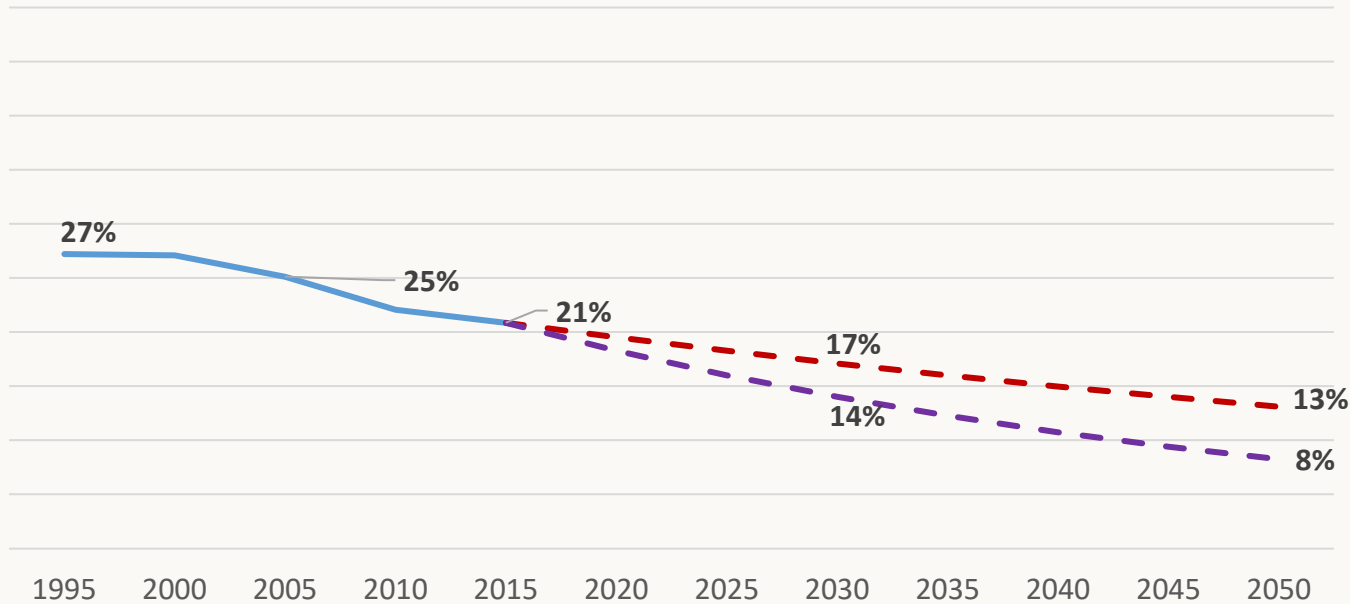
**1 in 3 women**  
who married  
before age 18  
live in India

1 in 4 live in  
another 6  
countries:  
Ethiopia,  
Pakistan, Brazil,  
Bangladesh,  
Indonesia &  
Nigeria

# The world is not on track to meet the SDG 5.3 target

Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and projected

- Observed prevalence
- - Projected prevalence if observed declines continue
- - Projected prevalence if progress is accelerated



Progress **urgently** needs to accelerate:

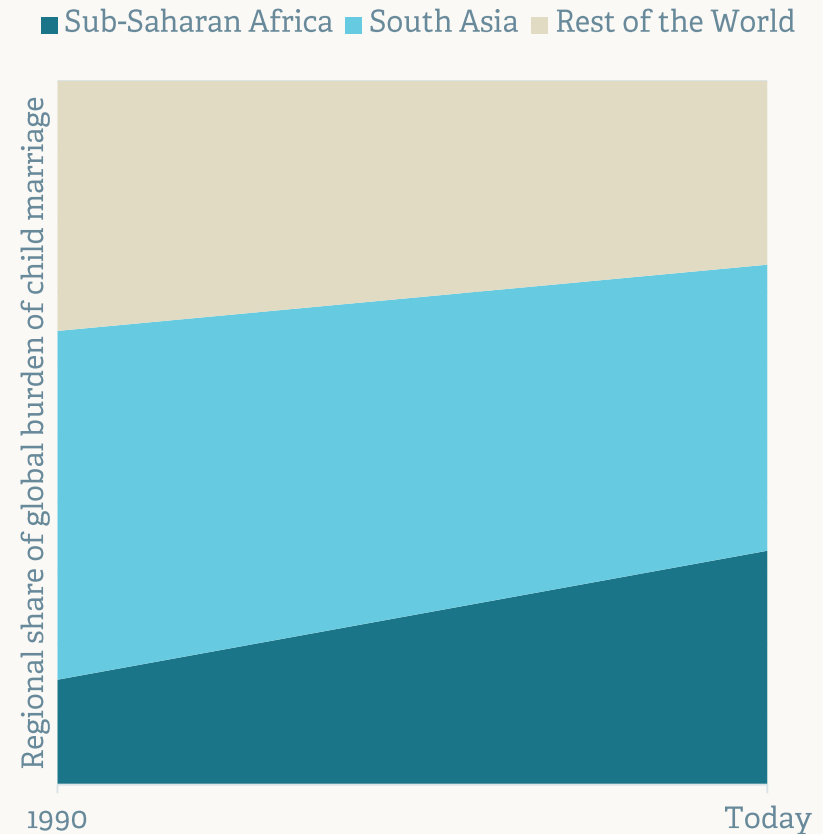
Change needs to be **15 times faster** than it has been in the past decade if we are to meet the SDG 5.3 target of ending child marriage by 2030

# Where progress is stagnant or too slow, the absolute numbers of child brides will increase!

Currently **South Asia has the largest number** women who married before age 18. **Sub-Saharan Africa** is the region with the **highest prevalence**.

Over the past decade **decline in prevalence in sub-Saharan Africa has been slower than in South Asia** -> progress has been stronger in East & Southern Africa than in West & Central Africa.

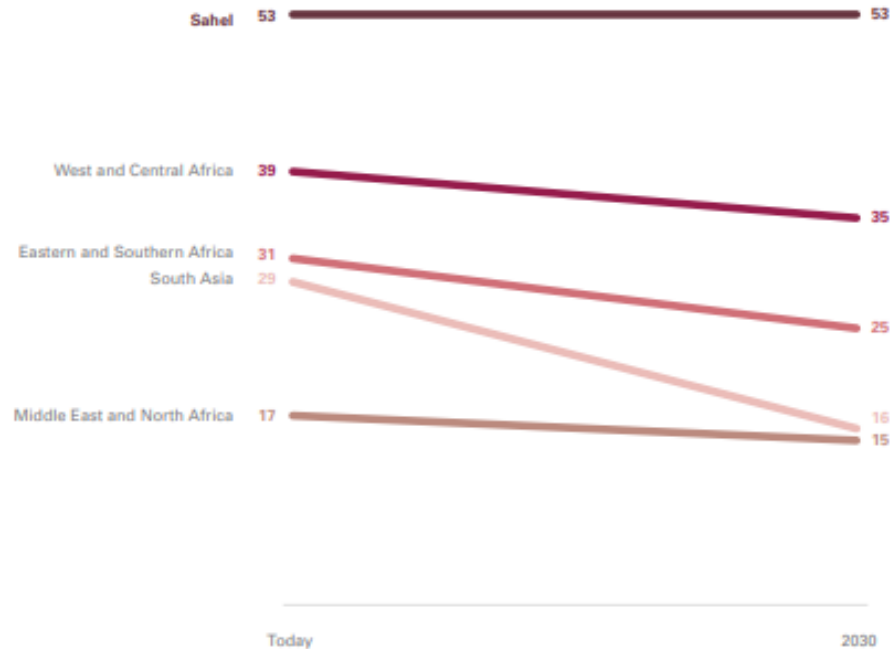
Slow progress + population growth in Africa means that with each passing year, **the number of child brides could grow**. Could become the region with highest burden.





# Based on trends over the past decade, no progress expected in Sahel

FIG. 20 Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, projected

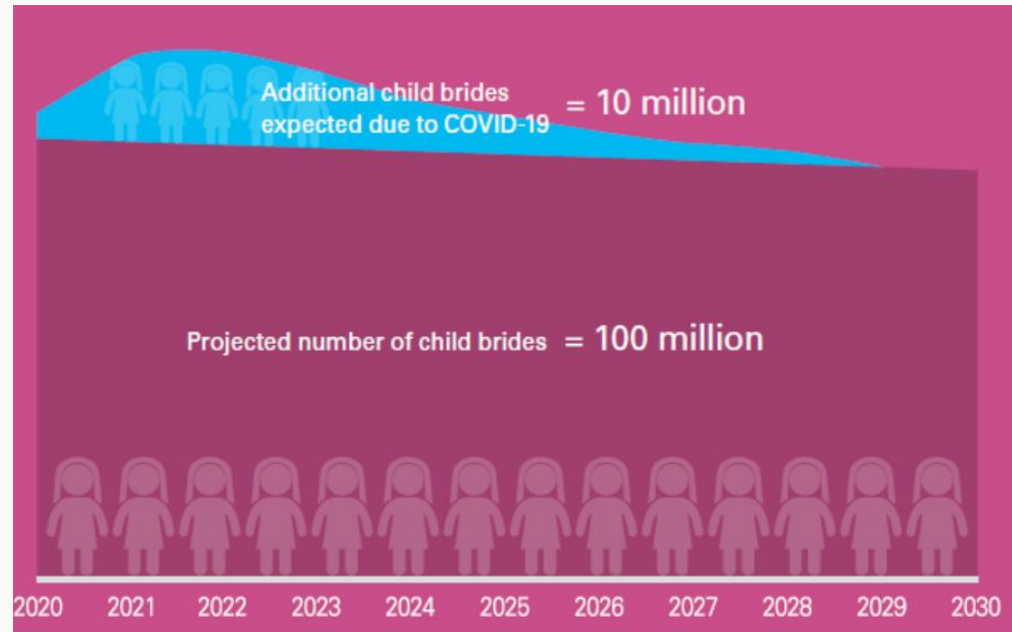


Without significant investment and a change of course, the **Sahel region is likely to fall further behind** other regions of the world in their progress towards ending child marriage

# Projected number of child brides by 2030

Pre covid (early 2020), **100 million girls were projected to marry by 2030**. As a result of the pandemic, **an additional 10 million girls** are expected to marry between now and 2030.

Important to understand that due to population growth, slow or stagnant declines in prevalence could lead to **increases in the actual numbers** of child brides in future.

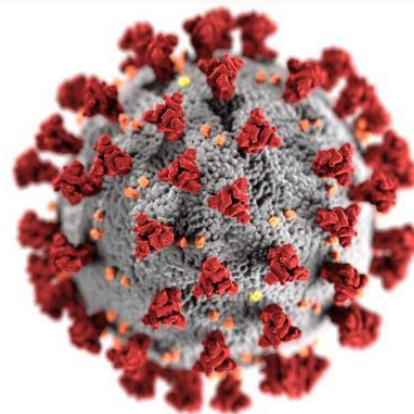


# Projected impact of Covid-19

The projected impact of covid assumes that assume child marriage will increase due to:

- School closures
- Increased rates of adolescent pregnancy
- Disruption access to SRH care and child marriage prevention programming
- Economic shocks
- Death of parents/ guardians

**Too early to see measurable change in prevalence now**



Programming implemented at scale to ensure **access to education and health care, and protect against economic shocks** could offset 5 million marriages between now and 2030

# Key takeaways

- Both prevalence and absolute numbers are going down
- Declines in prevalence have been unequal, and are not fast enough to meet the SDG target
- Population growth and Covid -19 are making the SDG target even further out of reach



# **Explaining progress and stagnation**

# Progress on child marriage is associated with broader socio economic and legal changes

Progress is closely linked to the following factors:

- **Economic development** and poverty reduction
- Increased girls' enrolment in and completion of **education**
- Female **labour force** participation
- Increased **access to SRH health care** and reduced adolescent pregnancy
- Improved **legal protections**

# Economic development and poverty reduction

FIGURE 11.b | GDP per capita (current US\$)



While most regions have made progress in reducing poverty over the past several decades, **per capita GDP has stagnated or declined** in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa

# Increased completion of education

FIGURE 13 | Percentage of girls who successfully completed their education, by level



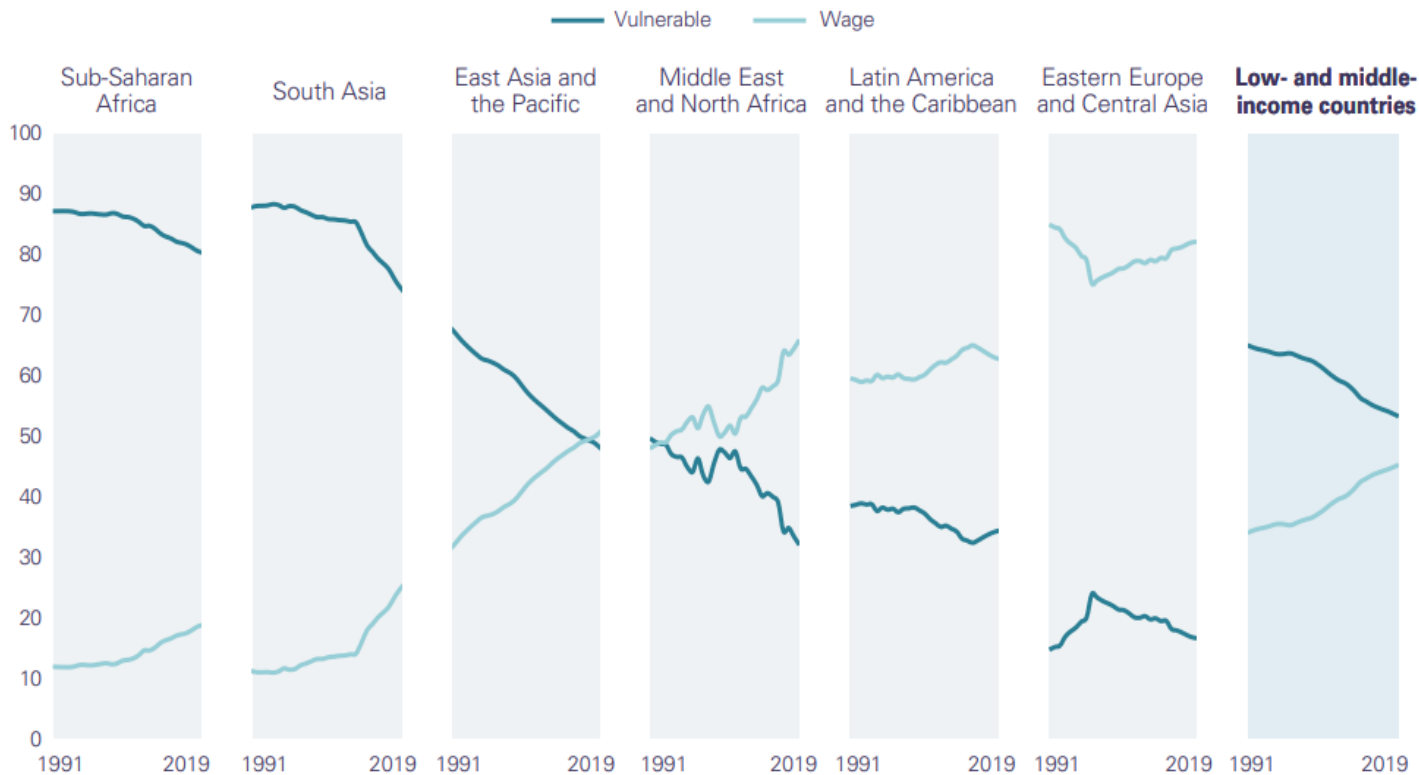
South Asia and sub Saharan Africa have both made strong improvements in increasing girls access to **education**, although South Asia has made stronger progress at the secondary school level.

Note: Trend data are not available for upper-secondary education.  
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020.



# Increased access to more secure employment

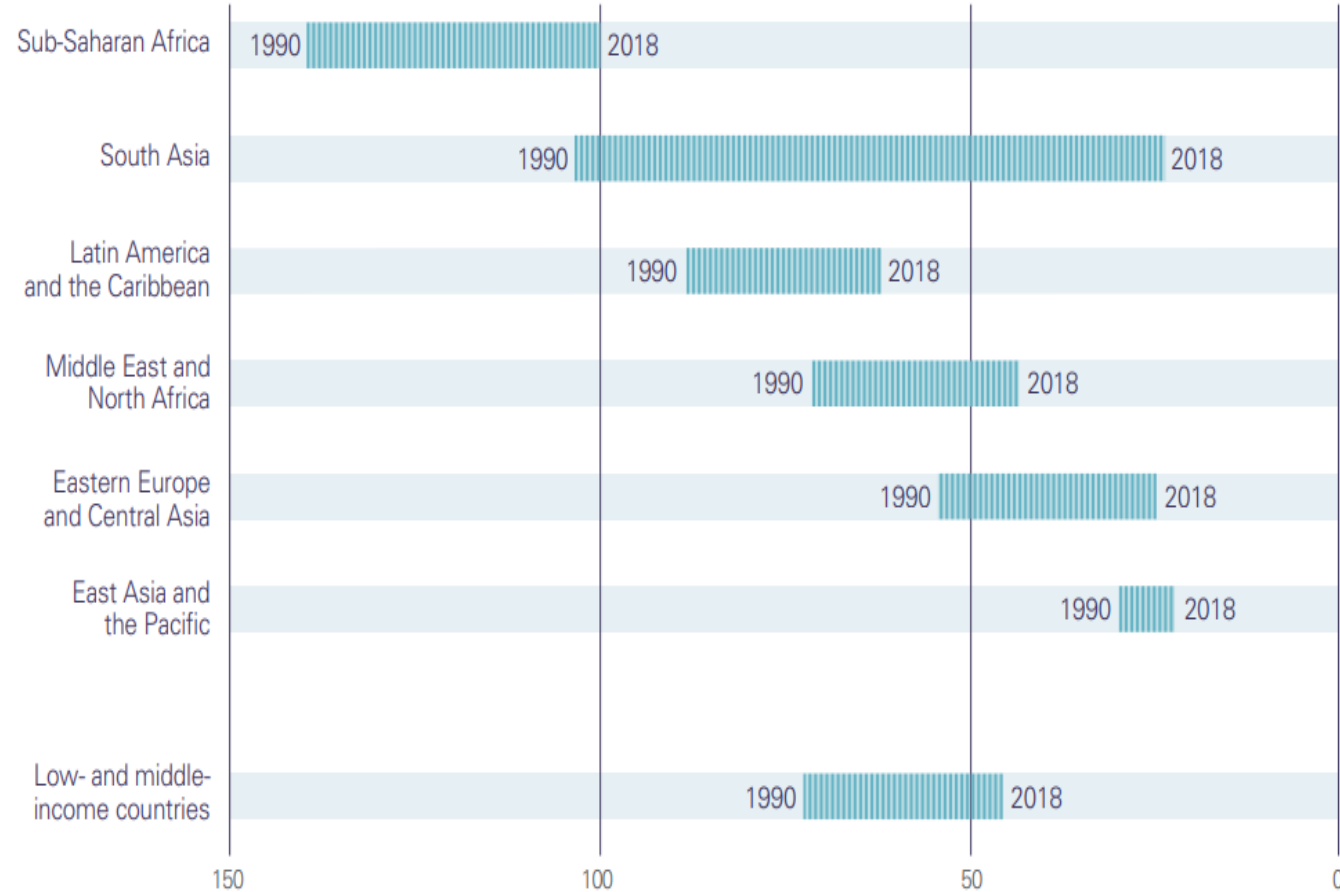
FIGURE 15 | Proportion of vulnerable employment among girls and women aged 15 years and older as a percentage of female employment and proportion of wage and salaried female workers aged 15 years and older as a percentage of female employment



When it comes to female labour force participation (FLFP), **increasing access to quality employment** is most strongly associated with reductions in child marriage. Regions with higher proportion of women in salaried/wage jobs have lower rates of child marriage

# Reduced adolescent pregnancy

FIGURE 16 | Births per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19 years



South Asia, the region that has made the most progress on **reducing adolescent pregnancy** is also the region that has made the most progress on **child marriage**

# Improving legal frameworks

Countries that set the minimum age at marriage, their legal minimum age at marriage with parental consent, and their legal minimum age of sexual consent at 18 or older **have rates of child marriage 40% lower** than countries where these laws contradicted one another.

However, the **decision to marry and the decision to have sex are completely different** and have different impacts on the lives of girls – *Girls Not Brides* **does not** advocate for minimum age of marriage and age of consent to be harmonised.

-> more research is needed to understand the impact of minimum age of marriage laws in isolation.

**Laws are just one of the multiple strategies needed** to address child marriage, and should be implemented alongside the previous strategies discussed.

# So what is needed to accelerate progress?

The associations between child marriage reduction and broader socio economic and legal changes suggest the following are **key to ending child marriage**:

- Ensuring that **economic growth is equitable**, by ensuring that governments invest increased revenue in childhood development and social protection
- Increasing girls' completion of **secondary education**
- Increasing access to **quality, secure employment opportunities for women**
- Ensuring access to **SRH care**
- Setting a **legal** minimum age of marriage, closing loopholes and addressing contradictory laws

# Key takeaways

- Globally, both prevalence and absolute numbers **are going down, but not fast enough to meet the SDG target.**
- The Covid-19 pandemic is making the SDG target more unattainable: **10 million additional marriages expected by 2030 (total projected = 110Mil)**
- South Asia has seen the greatest declines, but also has the largest number of child brides; **child marriage rates are stagnant in Latin America and the Caribbean and in West and Central Africa**
- In order to accelerate progress, countries need to prioritise **equitable economic development and poverty reduction,** alongside increasing girls' access to **secondary school education, secure jobs, and sexual and reproductive health care,** as well as provide **legal protections** to girls under the age of 18.

## Where to find more information

UNICEF child marriage data base  
can be accessed here:  
<https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-marriage/>



# Questions and discussion

# Find out more on our website



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Learning & Resources

Take action

## Learning series on what works to end child marriage

Join the conversation on what works to end child marriage with our new online learning series! Starting on 30 June, we will be holding monthly webinars to share learning, evidence and experiences from across – and beyond – the global Partnership. Each webinar will bring diverse stakeholders together around a different theme, and will include presentations and space for discussion.

### Suggest a learning series topic

We want to hear from you! Our events are built on input from *Girls Not Brides* member organisations, and available and new research and resources.

Make a suggestion

Photo: Girls Not Brides/David Owino

<https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/events/>



**Next Learning Series Session**

**Thursday 22 September**

**'Supporting married girls,  
adolescent mothers and  
girls who are pregnant'**





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# THANK YOU

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 **0044 (0)20 1234 5678**