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# CHILD MARRIAGE AMONG BOYS

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# INTRODUCTION

## + KEY TERMS

### 01.

**Child marriage** is a rights violation which has a negative impact on children.

### 02.

This term is inclusive of formal marriages and informal unions in which a girl or boy lives with a partner as if married before the age of 18.

### 03.

The levels of child marriage among girls – and the impact of the practice on child brides – has been well documented. However, the practice is not limited to girls.

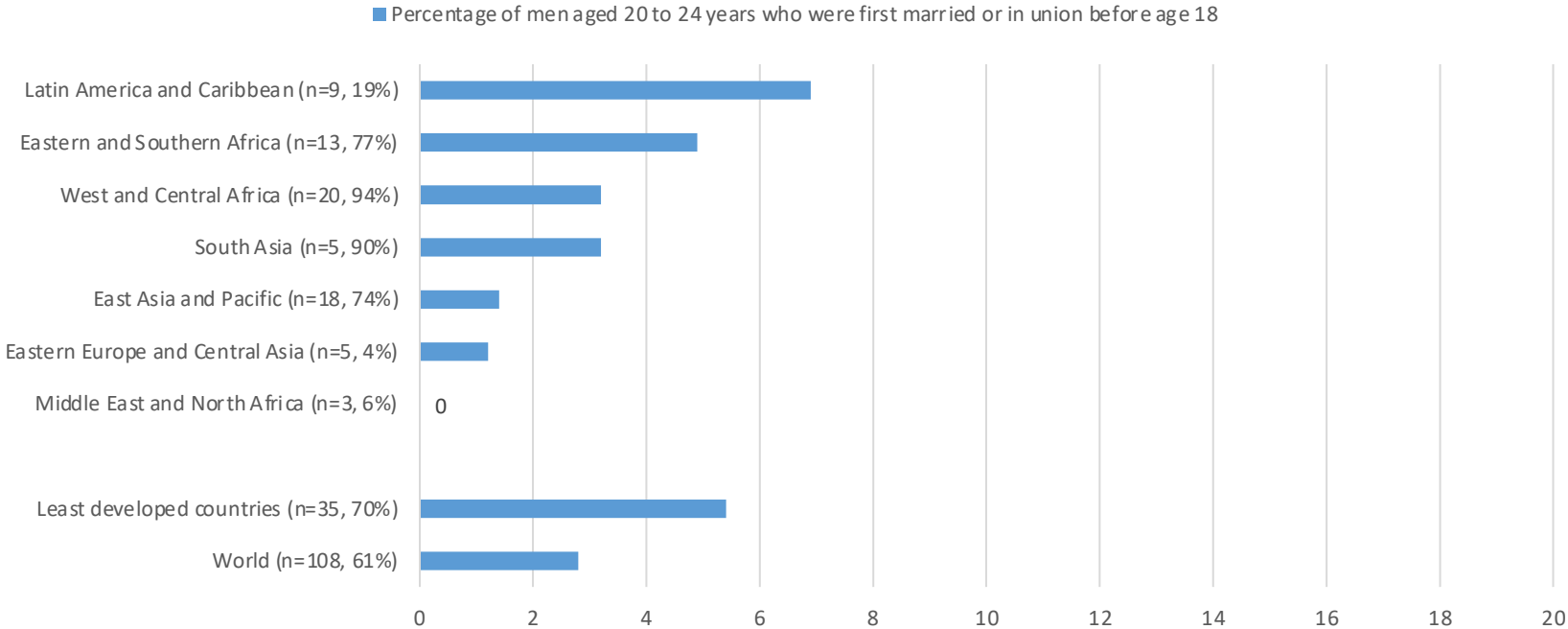
### 04.

**Boys married or in union before age 18** are also experiencing child marriage. Here we refer to these boys as **child grooms**.

### 05.

The standard indicator used throughout to show levels of child marriage is: *Percentage of young men aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union by age 18.*

# Child marriage among boys exists to varying degrees in countries around the world with available data



Note: Aggregate values represent population-weighted averages of available national data using the latest available source per country from 2015-2021; those with population coverage of less than 50% should not be considered representative of the entire region or country grouping. The number of countries included in each aggregate is noted in the first column, next to the name of the country grouping.

Source: UNICEF global databases, 2023, based on Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, and other national sources.

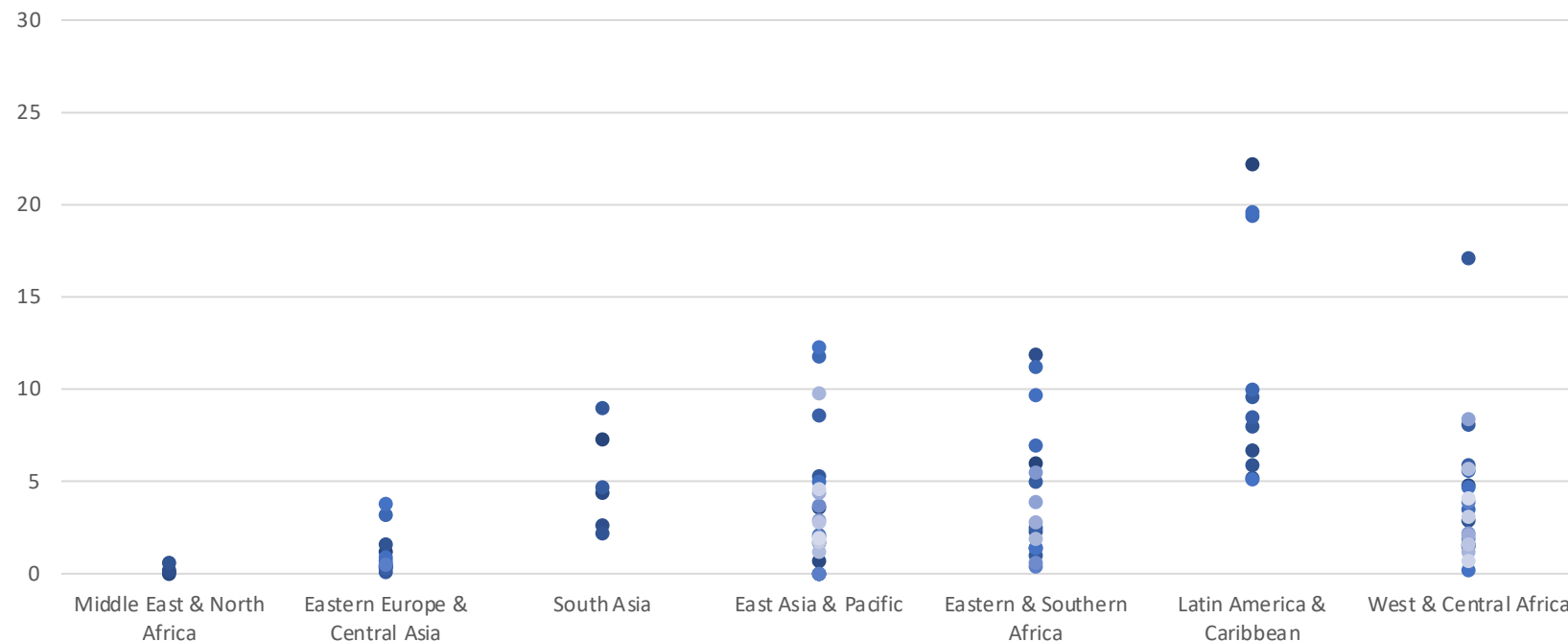


The countries in which child marriage  
among boys is most common are  
**geographically diverse.**

Five of the seven regions include  
countries both  
**below the 20th percentile and  
above the 80th percentile.**

# Most regions show a wide range of countries with both high and low prevalence of child marriage

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



Note: Each dot represents a country in the respective region with available data from 2007-2021.

Source: UNICEF global databases, 2023, based on Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, and other national sources.

The countries in which child marriage for boys is most common appear **disparate from one another** and from the countries where the practice is **most common for girls**.

## Boys

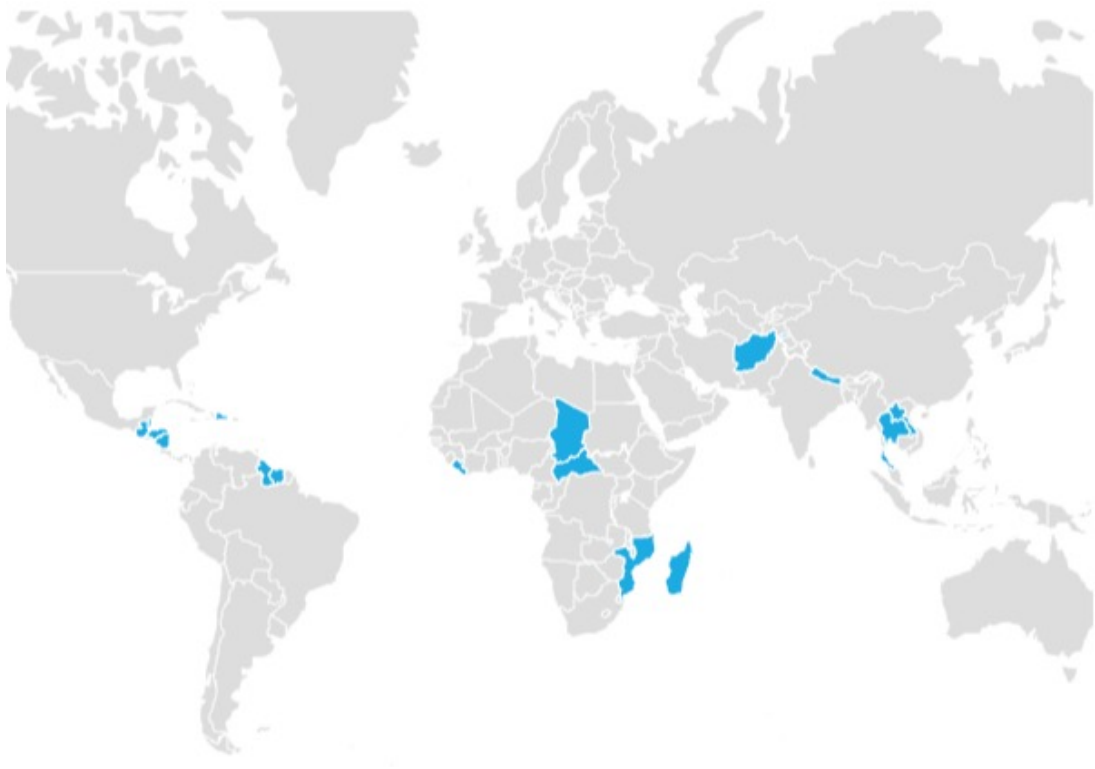
The top ten countries are located across five geographic regions: Central Africa, Latin America, Eastern Africa, East Asia, the Pacific.

## Girls

The top ten countries – and all but three of the top twenty countries – are in sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia.

# The countries in which child marriage among boys is most common are geographically diverse

Top 20 countries with the highest prevalence of child marriage among boys



Child marriage among males aged 20 to 24 years			
Rank	Country	Prevalence	Source
1	Belize	22%	MICS 2015-16
2	Suriname	20%	MICS 2018
3	Nicaragua	19%	ENDESA 2011-12
4	Central African Republic	17%	MICS 2018-19
5	Nauru	12%	DHS 2007
6	Comoros	12%	DHS 2012
7	Marshall Islands	12%	DHS 2007
8	Madagascar	11%	DHS 2021
9	Lao People's Democratic Republic	11%	MICS 2017
10	Honduras	10%	MICS 2019
11	Thailand	10%	MICS 2019
12	Mozambique	10%	AIS 2015
13	Guatemala	10%	DHS 2015
14	Nepal	9%	MICS 2019
15	Kiribati	9%	MICS 2018-19
16	Guyana	9%	MICS 2014
17	Liberia	8%	DHS 2019-20
18	Chad	8%	MICS 2019
19	Dominican Republic	8%	DHS 2013
20	Afghanistan	7%	DHS 2015

Note: Child marriage prevalence is the percentage of men aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18  
Source: UNICEF global databases, 2023, based on Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, and other national sources.



# ADDITIONAL SELECTED FINDINGS

## CHILD GROOMS ARE OFTEN FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS

The prevalence of child marriage among boys appears concentrated among respondents living in the poorest households and in rural areas, and with no education or only primary schooling.

## THE PRACTICE IS DECLINING

Similar to the trend observed among girls, child marriage has become less common among boys compared to earlier generations.

## CHILD GROOMS ARE MOST OFTEN MARRIED TO CHILD BRIDES

In all countries with data, the majority of child grooms married child brides. In most countries, at least 7 in 10 were married to a child bride.

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES OFFER REASON FOR CONCERN

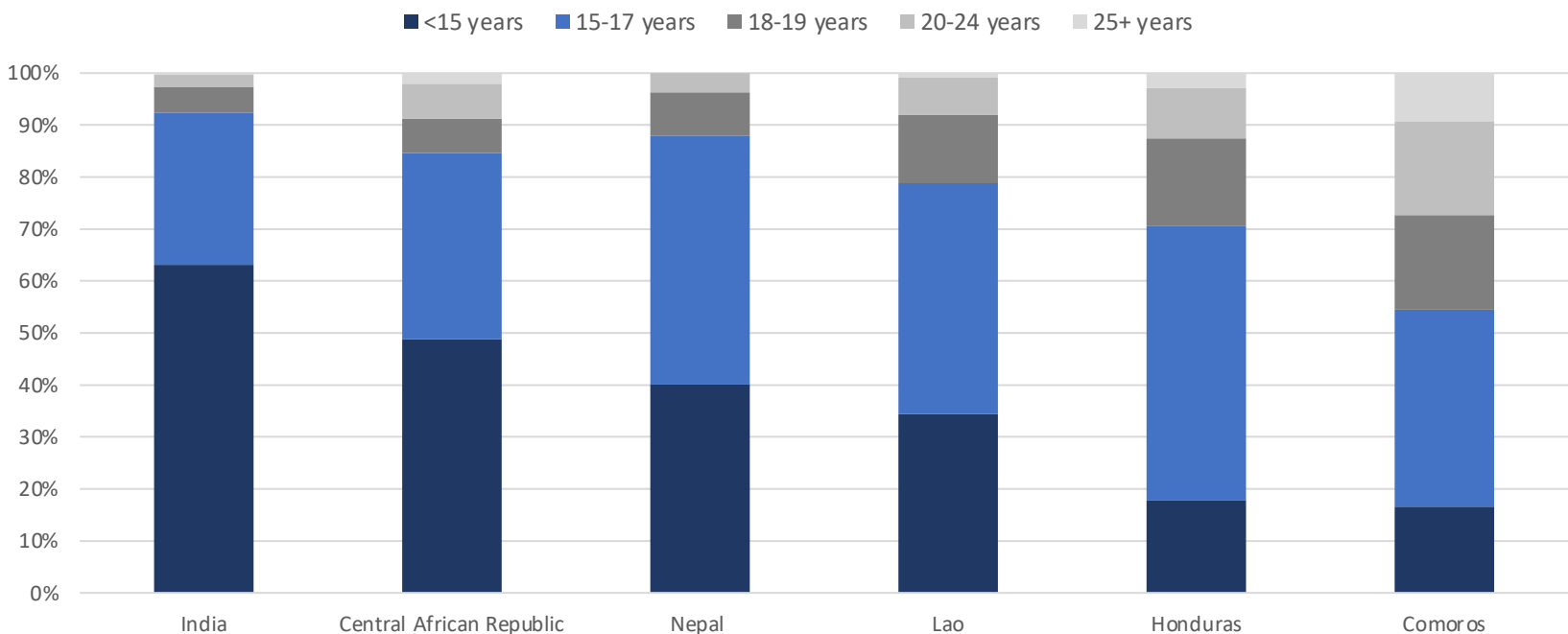
Child grooms are less likely than their peers to have comprehensive knowledge of HIV than their peers.

They also commonly had fathered a larger number of children at young ages, and were more likely to exceed their desired family size.



# The wives of child grooms tend to be very young, often below 15 years old

Distribution of wife's age at marriage among men who were married by age 18



Note: Based on a sub-set of countries with high child marriage prevalence among boys. Excludes unions in which one or both partners have been married more than once.

Source: UNICEF global databases, 2018.

# THANK YOU

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