AFGHANISTAN
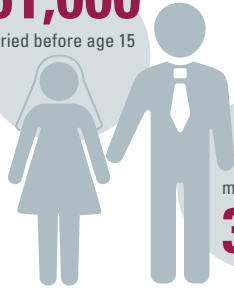
Minimum legal age of marriage for girls: 16 | with exceptions: 15

Current levels of child marriage

761,000

married before age 15

married before age 18

3.9 million

Burden of child marriage

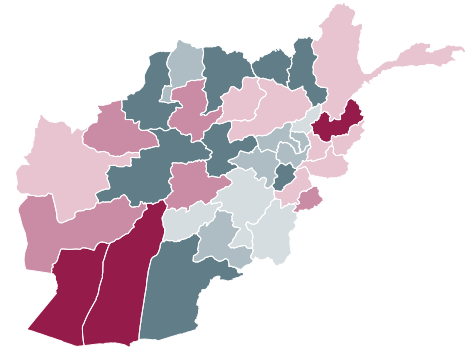Figure 1. Number of girls and women of all ages who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Afghanistan is home to nearly 4 million child brides; 3 in 10 young women were married in childhood

Prevalence of child marriage

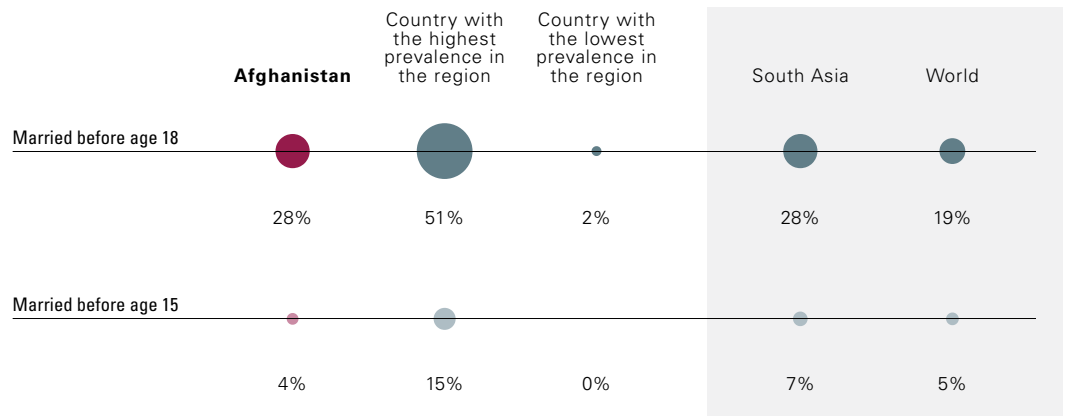Figure 2. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

- 0 to 10
- 11 to 20
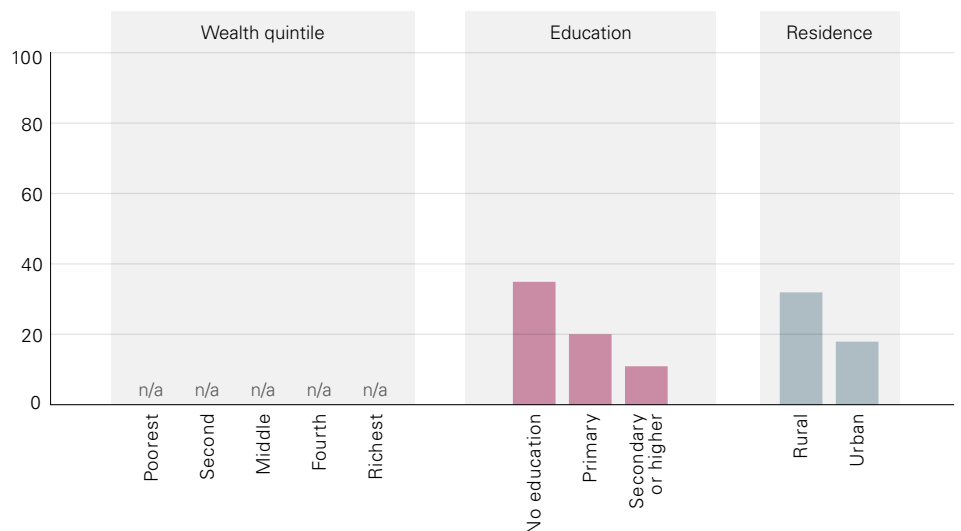- 21 to 30
- 31 to 40
- 41 to 50
- 51 to 70
- 71 or higher

Regional and global comparisons

Figure 3. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

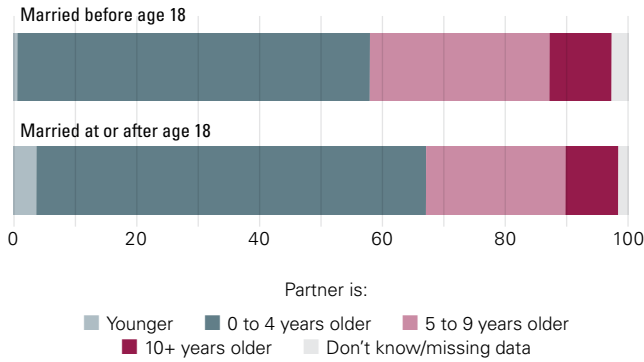|	Afghanistan	Country with the highest prevalence in the region	Country with the lowest prevalence in the region	South Asia	World
Married before age 18	28%	51%	2%	28%	19%
Married before age 15	4%	15%	0%	7%	5%

Vulnerable populations

Figure 4. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18

Wealth quintile
- Poorest: n/a
- Second: n/a
- Middle: n/a
- Fourth: n/a
- Richest: n/a

Education
- No education: 35
- Primary: 20
- Secondary or higher: 11

Residence
- Rural: 32
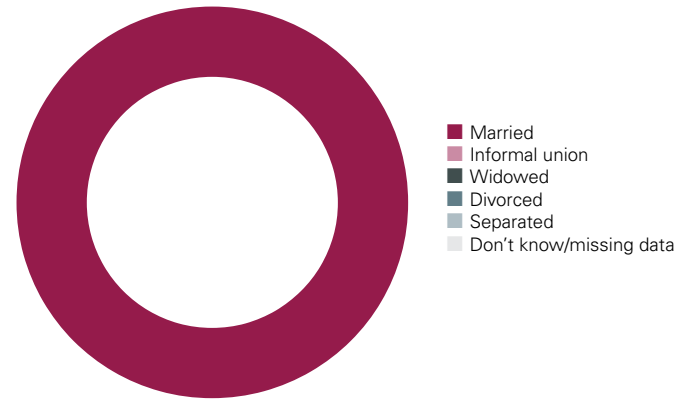- Urban: 18

Characteristics of unions

Spousal age gap

Figure 5. Percentage distribution of currently married women aged 20 to 24 years by the age gap between the women and their partners

Married before age 18
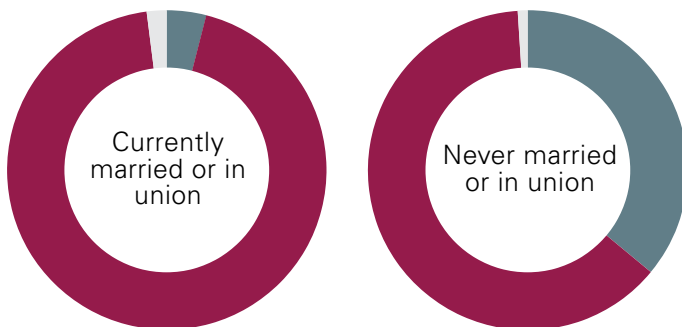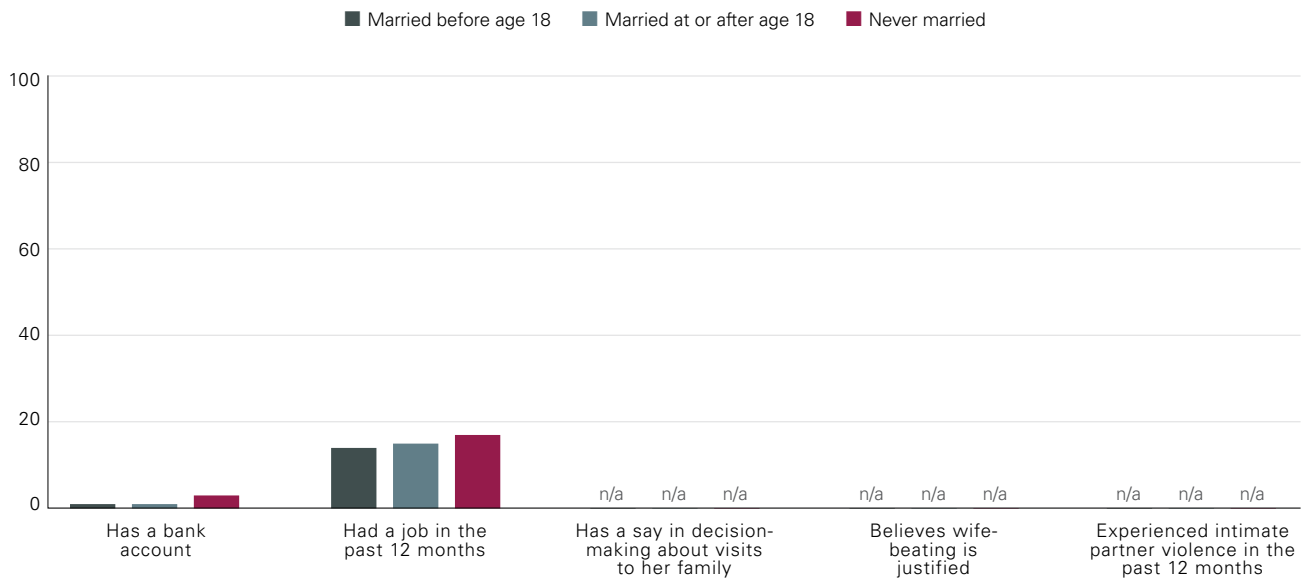
Married at or after age 18

Partner is:
- Younger
- 0 to 4 years older
- 5 to 9 years older
- 10+ years older
- Don't know/missing data

Types of unions

Figure 6. Percentage distribution of ever-married girls aged 15 to 17 years by current marital status

- Married
- Informal union
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
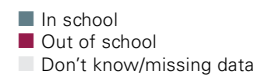- Don't know/missing data

Lives of child brides

Autonomy, empowerment and violence

Figure 7. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who have an account at a bank or other financial institution, who have had a job in the past 12 months, who usually decide (alone or with their spouses) about visits to the women's families, who believe wife-beating is justified, and who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months

- Married before age 18
- Married at or after age 18
- Never married

| Has a bank account | Had a job in the past 12 months | Has a say in decision-making about visits to her family | Believes wife-beating is justified | Experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months |

Currently married or in union

Never married or in union

Education

Figure 8. Percentage distribution of girls aged 15 to 17 years by schooling status

- In school
- Out of school
- Don't know/missing data

Statistical profile on child marriage: Afghanistan

Early childbearing

Figure 9. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20
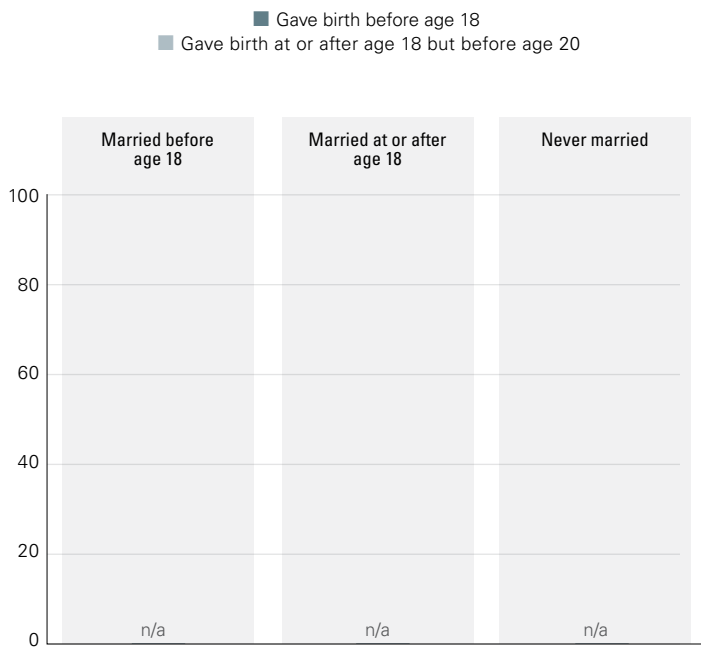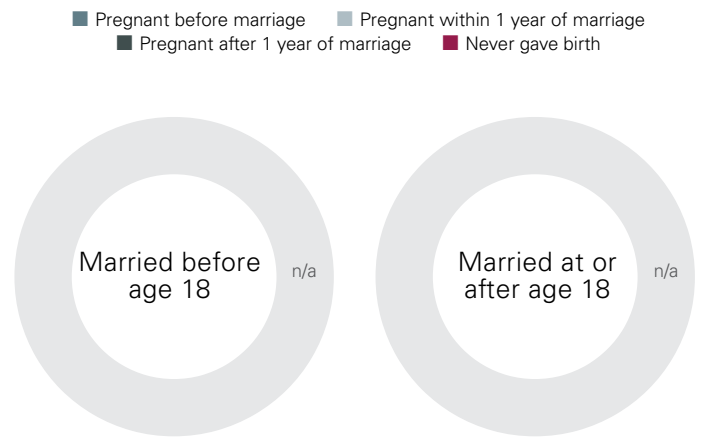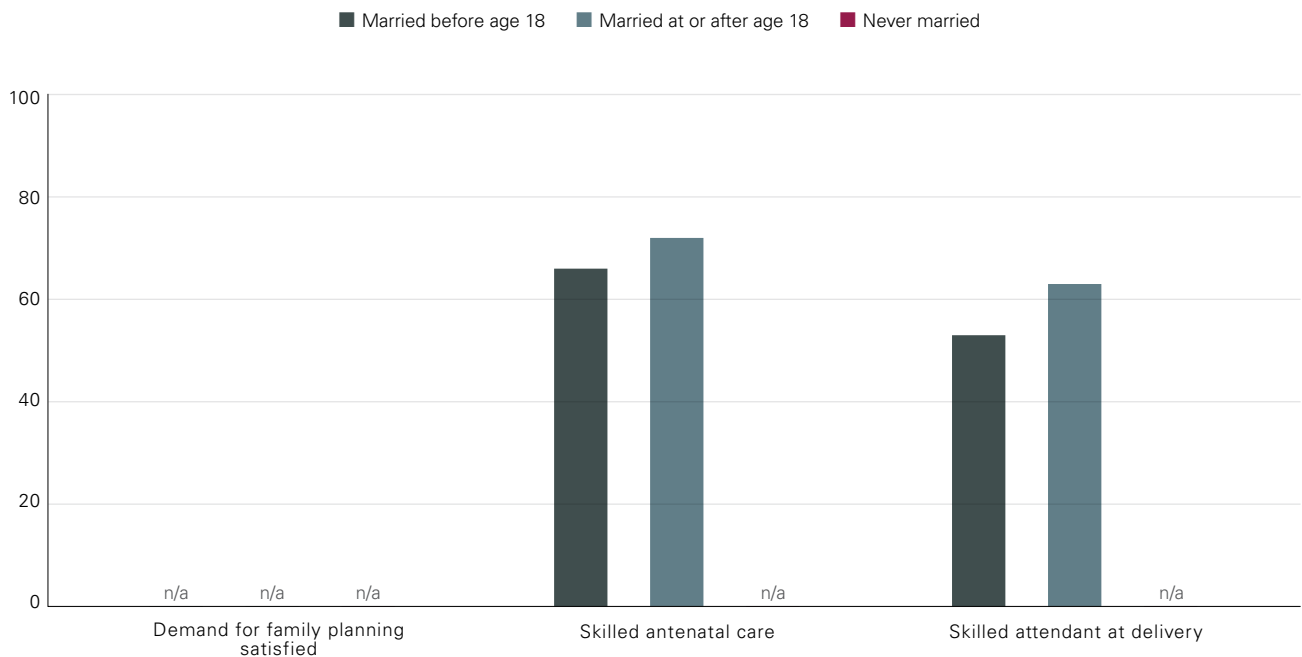
■ Gave birth before age 18
■ Gave birth at or after age 18 but before age 20

Figure 10. Percentage distribution of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years by timing of pregnancy and marriage

■ Pregnant before marriage   ■ Pregnant within 1 year of marriage
■ Pregnant after 1 year of marriage   ■ Never gave birth

Reproductive health

Figure 11. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years whose demand for family planning is satisfied by a modern method, who received antenatal care from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy, and who had a skilled attendant during their last live birth
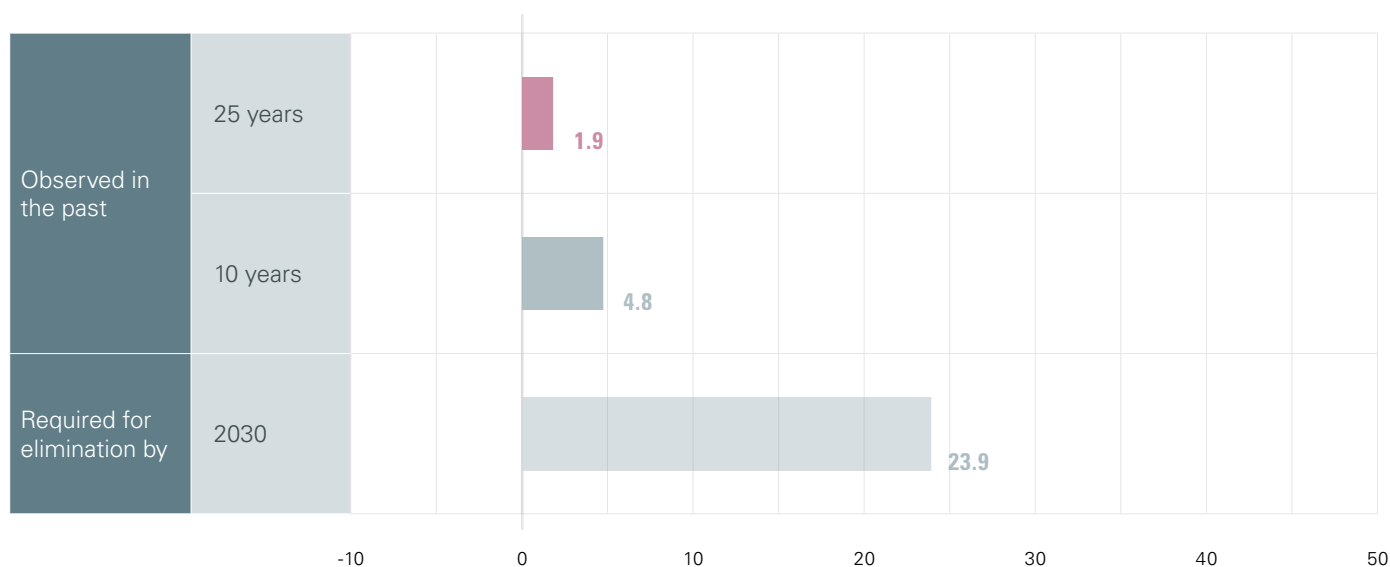
■ Married before age 18   ■ Married at or after age 18   ■ Never married

Generational trends

Figure 12. Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

— Married before age 18   — Married before age 15

Looking ahead to ending child marriage

Observed and required rates of progress

Figure 13. Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination

Observed in the past	25 years	1.9
	10 years	4.8
Required for elimination by	2030	23.9

NOTES:
Data are sourced from the Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey 2016-17 unless otherwise noted. Data on the legal age at marriage are sourced from the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, 2018 dataset. Demographic data are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, World Population Prospects 2019, Online edition, 2019. Maps do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Confidence intervals are not shown in this profile; therefore caution is warranted in interpreting the results since apparent differences may not be significant. All references to 'marriage' or 'child brides' include both formal marriage and informal unions in which women started living together with a partner as if married. Global estimates are based on a subset of 101 countries with comparable available data from 2015 to 2021, covering 77 per cent of the global female population. Regional estimates represent data covering at least 50 per cent of the female population. For statistical purposes, 'elimination' is defined here as a child marriage prevalence of less than 1 per cent. Values presented here are based on at least 25 unweighted cases. Data for some indicators are population groups are suppressed due to insufficient numbers of cases to perform the analysis. Indicators marked as "n/a" indicate either the value was suppressed or data were not collected. Numbers expressed in thousands and/or millions have been rounded. The burden of child marriage refers to the population in 2020.

Statistical profile on child marriage: Afghanistan