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| INDICATOR\_NUM | METADATA\_CATEGORY | METADATA\_CATEGORY\_DESC | METADATA\_DESCRIPTION |
| V.4 | 1 | Contact point in international agency | Claudia CappaSenior Adviser, Statistics, Child Protection and DevelopmentUNICEF[ccappa@unicef.org](mailto:ccappa@unicef.org)[data.unicef.org](data.unicef.org) |
| V.4 | 2 | International agreed definition | \*\*Definition\*\*  Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18  \*\*Concepts\*\*  Both formal \(i.e., marriages\) and informal unions are covered under this indicator. Informal unions are generally defined as those in which a couple lives together for some time, intends to have a lasting relationship, but for which there has been no formal civil or religious ceremony \(i.e., cohabitation\). |
| V.4 | 3 | Method of computation | Number of women aged 20-24 who were first married or in union before age 15 \(or before age 18\) divided by the total number of women aged 20-24 in the population multiplied by 100  Global aggregates are weighted averages of all the sub-regions that make up the world. Regional aggregates are weighted averages of all the countries within the region.  The regional average is applied to those countries within the region with missing values for the purposes of calculating regional aggregates only but are not published as country-level estimates. Regional aggregates are only published when at least 50 per cent of the regional population for the relevant age group are covered by the available data. |
| V.4 | 4 | Importance of the indicator in addressing gender issues and its limitation | Marriage before the age of 18 is a fundamental violation of human rights. Child marriage often compromises a girl’s development by resulting in early pregnancy and social isolation, interrupting her schooling, limiting her opportunities for career and vocational advancement and placing her at increased risk of intimate partner violence. In many cultures, girls reaching puberty are expected to assume gender roles associated with womanhood. These include entering a union and becoming a mother.  The practice of early/child marriage is a direct manifestation of gender inequality.  The issue of child marriage is addressed in a number of international conventions and agreements. Although marriage is not mentioned directly in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, child marriage is linked to other rights –such as the right to freedom of expression, the right to protection from all forms of abuse, and the right to be protected from harmful traditional practices.  There are existing tools and mechanisms for data collection that countries have implemented to monitor the situation with regards to this indicator. The modules used to collect information on marital status among women and men of reproductive age \(15-49 years\) in the DHS and MICS have been fully harmonized.  The measure of child marriage is retrospective in nature by design, capturing age at first marriage among a population that has completed the risk period \(i.e., adult women\). While it is also possible to measure the current marital status of girls under age 18, such measures would provide an underestimate of the level of child marriage, as girls who are not currently married may still do so before they turn 18. For more details on interpretation and common pitfalls for this indicator, see: A Generation to Protect: Monitoring violence exploitation and abuse of children within the SDG framework \(UNICEF 2020\). |
| V.4 | 5 | Sources of discrepancies between global and national figures | The estimates compiled and presented at global level come directly from nationally produced data and are not adjusted or recalculated. |
| V.4 | 6 | Process of obtaining data | Household surveys such as UNICEF-supported MICS and DHS have been collecting data on this indicator in low-and middle-income countries since around the late 1980s. In some countries, such data are also collected through national censuses or other national household surveys.  UNICEF undertakes a wide consultative process of compiling and assessing data from national sources for the purposes of updating its global databases on the situation of children. Up until 2017, the mechanism UNICEF used to collaborate with national authorities on ensuring data quality and international comparability on key indicators of relevance to children was known as Country Data Reporting on the Indicators for the Goals \(CRING\).  As of 2018, UNICEF launched a new country consultation process with national authorities on selected child-related global SDG indicators it is custodian or co-custodian to meet emerging standards and guidelines on data flows for global reporting of SDG indicators, which place strong emphasis on technical rigour, country ownership and use of official data and statistics. The consultation process solicited feedback directly from National Statistical Offices, as well as other government agencies responsible for official statistics, on the compilation of the indicators, including the data sources used, and the application of internationally agreed definitions, classification and methodologies to the data from that source. Once reviewed, feedback is made available to countries on whether or not specific data points are accepted, and if not, the reasons why. |
| V.4 | 7 | Treatment of missing values |  |
| V.4 | 8 | Data availability and assessment of countries’ capacity |  |
| V.4 | 9 | Expected time of release | UNICEF will undertake an annual country consultation likely between December and January every year to allow for review and processing of the feedback received in order to meet global SDG reporting deadlines.  Data release calendar: March 2021. |
| V.4 | 10 | Data source | Data and metadata were extracted from Global SDG Indicators Database on 11 May 2021.    For more information, please go to the following:   * [https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/) * [https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-05-03-01.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-05-03-01.pdf) |