



United Nations Population Fund

Adolescents and Youth Report: West and Central Africa



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Foreword

West and Central Africa's (WCA) population is predominantly young. More than 64% are under the age of 24. Young people are a tremendous resource for the region – but their potential will only be realized when the right investments in their education, health, skills and empowerment are made.

In West and Central Africa, the large youth cohort represents a historic opportunity to introduce progress and adopt innovative solutions to ignite change. The SDGs present a blueprint for the ways we can collectively take action to improve the lives of millions of people all around the world. Putting youth at the centre of our engagements and our development priorities is critical. We must put young people first if we are to harness the demographic dividend, build resilience and transform the continent to achieve the SDGs and the Africa We Want.

To achieve these goals, a fundamental shift is needed. To empower young people means giving them the tools to become even more influential, productive actors in their societies. In order to achieve this, countries need to end all forms of discrimination and violence faced by young people, particularly adolescent girls, such as child marriage and sexual violence, which can result in unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions and HIV infections, and risk derailing their future.

Central to these efforts must be the promotion of access to education, health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, and employment. These combined interventions are critical in order to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty, strengthen the resilience of young people, and harness the demographic dividend.

This Adolescents and Youth Report provides a comprehensive overview of the situation of young people in West and Central Africa today. It gives a detailed data and narrative analysis of the sexual and reproductive health, education, employment, social protection, gender issues, and emergency challenges that young people face in this region. The Report is meant to guide policy makers, programme implementers, young people and other key stakeholders to develop multi-sectoral policies and programmes that respond to the needs of young people.

UNFPA urges government partners, UN agencies, youth groups, and CSOs to use the Report's findings and recommendations to take actions to promote young people's development and human rights, and to measure progress across the Sustainable Development Goals that relate to adolescents and youth. UNFPA is committed to ensuring that the full potential of young people can be realized.

Mabingue Ngom
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and Central Africa

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We wish to acknowledge the tireless efforts of governments, regional bodies, parliamentarians and civil society organizations - and, most of all, young people - to invest in and realize the potential of adolescents and youth in West and Central Africa.

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Definition of Terms

Term	Meaning & Interpretation
Adolescents and Youth	Young people in this report are based on the UN definition of 10-24 years; Youth are those aged 15-24 years and adolescents are those in the 10-19-year bracket.
Contraceptive Prevalence	World Health Organisation defines contraceptive prevalence as the percentage of women who are currently using, or whose sexual partner is currently using, at least one method of contraception, regardless of the method used. It is reported for married or in-union women aged 15 to 49 but this report uses the age tranche of 15-24 years for reporting and analysis of this indicator as it pertains to adolescents and youth. ¹
Dependency Ratio	<p>The dependency ratio refers to the number of children aged 0 to 14 years plus the number of persons aged 65 years or over per 100 persons aged 15 to 64 years:</p> $\text{Dependency Ratio} = 100 \times (\text{Population (0-14)} + \text{Population (65+)}) / \text{Population (15-64)}.$
Emigrant	A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. From the perspective of the country of departure the person will be an emigrant. ²
Female Genital Mutilation	Female Genital Mutilation comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. (WHO)
Fertility Rate	Fertility Rate is the average number of live births a woman would have by age 50 if she were subject, throughout her life, to the age-specific fertility rates observed in a given year. Its calculation assumes that there is no mortality. In this report, it is presented as the number of births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 24 years (UN Definition).

Gender Parity Index	Measures of gender parity in education help to explain how participation in and opportunities for schooling compare for females and males. With the emphasis of Education for All on gender equality in education, gender parity indices (GPIs) are frequently used in examining progress towards the goals established by this initiative. GPIs help with this comparison by showing the ratio of female to male values for a given indicator. An index of value less than 1 indicates that indicator values are higher for males than for females; an index value of greater than 1 indicates that indicator values are higher for females than for males.
Gross Enrolment Ratio	A statistical measure used in the education sector and by the UN in its Education Index to determine the number of students enrolled in school at several different grade levels (like elementary, middle school and high school), and use it to show the ratio of the number of students who live in that country to those who qualify for the particular grade level.
Gross National Income	The total domestic and foreign output claimed by residents of a country, consisting of gross domestic product, plus factor incomes earned by foreign residents, minus income earned in the domestic economy by non-residents (Todaro & Mith 2011:44).
HIV Prevalence	The report uses the United Nations definition of HIV prevalence rate as the percentage of people tested in each group who were found to be infected with HIV.
Immigrant	A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. From the perspective of the country of arrival the person will be an immigrant. ³
Labour Force Participation Rate	The participation rate is a measure of the active portion of an economy's labor force. It refers to the number of people who are either employed or are actively looking for work.
Maternal Mortality Ratio	The annual number of female deaths from any cause related to or aggravated by pregnancy or its management (excluding accidental or incidental causes) during pregnancy and childbirth or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, expressed per 100 000 live births, for a specified time period. (WHO)

NEET Indicator	The NEET indicator (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) measures the percentage of youth—typically ages 15 to 24—who are not in the education system, not working, and not in work training. They are missing out on chances to develop their potential in adulthood.
Net Enrolment Rate	Total number of students in the theoretical age group for a given level of education enrolled in that level, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group. (UNESCO)
Population Displacement	The report uses the UNESCO definition of population displacement as the forced movement of people from their locality or environment and occupational activities. It is a form of social change caused by a number of factors, the most common being armed conflict. Natural disasters, famine, development and economic changes may also be a cause of displacement.
Refugees	The report uses the UNHCR definition of refugees as people who have been forced to flee their country because of persecution, war, or violence.
Sexual Violence	World Health Organization (WHO) defines this term as: any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.
Vulnerable Employment	Own-account workers and contributing family workers have a lower likelihood of having formal work arrangements, and are therefore more likely to lack elements associated with decent employment, such as adequate social security and a voice at work. Therefore, the two statuses are summed to create a classification of 'vulnerable employment', while wage and salaried workers together with employers constitute 'non-vulnerable employment. (ILO definition)

¹ WHO 2017: Sexual and Reproductive Health/ accessed at; http://who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/family_planning/contraceptive_prevalence/en/ accessed November 2017.

² United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division: Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1. United Nations, New York, 1998. Accessed November 2017.

³ Ibid.

Acronyms

Abbreviation	Full Name
ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
ACERWC	Africa Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of Children
AFDB	African Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ARV	Antiretroviral
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRPs	Demobilization and Reintegration Programs
EGM	Expert Group Meeting
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GNI	Gross National Income
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
ILO	International Labour Organization

IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
LCB	Lake Chad Basin
LIC	Low Income Country
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MIC	Middle Income Country
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MNJTF	Multi-National Joint Task Force
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSAA	Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	The United States Agency for International Development
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WCAR	West and Central African Region
WCA	West and Central Africa
WHO	World Health Organization



1

Introduction

The demographic dividend signifies rapid economic growth in a country as a consequence of demographic transition from high fertility and mortality to low fertility and mortality, increase in the size of working population and reduction of the dependency ratio among other factors. With a fast transformation in the age structure and a decline in dependency ratios, there is a potential for economic growth spurred by the increased labour income and increased savings.

Some of the benefits associated with achieving a demographic dividend include: (i) lower fertility associated with delayed age of first birth and longer spaces between births, both of which improve maternal and child health; (ii) a lower youth dependency ratio allowing for larger investments per child; and (iii) lower fertility which increases the potential for female employment and hence empowerment.⁴ However, the demographic dividend is an opportunity and does not occur automatically; thus, requiring various investments in family planning, education, health, economic reforms and job creation as well as in governance and accountability to achieve this transition.⁵

⁴ African Union Commission: AU Roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend Through Investments in Youth; In response to AU Assembly Decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.601 (XXVI)) on the 2017 theme of the year; African Union Commission, 2017.

⁵ Abdelylah Lakssir; Investing in Youth to Harness the Demographic Dividend in Africa: The 1st General Assembly Meeting of the Reproductive Health Suppliers Coalition; Partners in Population and Development Africa Regional Office (PPD ARO), 2014.

The Adolescents and Youth Demographic

Young people are central to the demographic dividend and remain players in and advocates of social transformation and development in many spheres. The enormous benefits young people can contribute to can only be realized when their rights are protected and investments are made in their education, employment, health, empowerment and effective civil participation. Several initiatives on youth education and employment have been undertaken in Africa, but these need to be deepened in order to achieve the full potential of young people in contributing to poverty reduction and sustainable development.

The health and well-being of the planet's largest generation of adolescents will shape both the future of the world's health and the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to health, nutrition, education, gender equality, and food security. With the SDGs comes a renewed and expanded focus on adolescent health and well-being.⁶

The SDGs are integrated, indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable, and therefore all of them apply to youth.⁷ Although there is no stand-alone Goal on youth, the language used in a majority of the Goals encompasses all social groups, including youth (Goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 16), while Goal 3, "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages", is the only one that specifically addresses age. Of the 232 indicators listed in the revised list of global Sustainable Development Goal indicators, 68 provide information relevant to youth development of which 53 directly contribute information about the sociodemographic situation of young people, while 15 provide information about the enabling environment that is conducive to youth development.⁸ In addition, nine indicators measure youth-specific issues such as adolescent births; youth not in employment, education or training; child marriage; and youth having experienced sexual violence during childhood while another fifteen indicators provide information about the enabling environment that is conducive to youth development.⁹

Africa is the world's youngest continent as the proportion of youth among the region's total population is higher than in any other continent. Young people aged 10-24 years constitute 32 percent of the population in West and Central Africa as well as the East and Southern African region which is above the world average of 24 percent.¹⁰ At the same time, the WCA region has the highest dependency ratio at 87.2 percent, significantly

⁶ Lauren Hashiguchi: Positioning adolescent health as a cornerstone of the SDGs. Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation; University of Washington, 2018.

⁷ Report of the Secretary General: Youth Development Links to Sustainable Development. United Nations General Assembly-Seventy Second Session, July 2017.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ UNFPA State of the World Population, 2017.

above the world average of 52.5 percent.¹¹ The socioeconomic conditions of young Africans have improved in recent years, but not considerably. For instance; there has been an increase in school enrolment over the past 20 years with primary school enrolment reaching 77 percent and 68 percent for boys and girls respectively though still the lowest in the world. The gender gap in education has narrowed especially at primary level (0.89) and is higher compared to that at secondary level (0.83).¹²

However, young Africans continue to face major challenges in higher education, employment, health, and participation in decision-making processes. Notably, secondary school enrolment is quite low with only 38 percent males and 31 percent females enrolled.¹³ Rural youth also have fewer opportunities than those in the urban settings and are left behind in most of the progress made as rural poverty remains deep and widespread.¹⁴

In order to respond to the challenges of the young population, access to sexual and reproductive health services, quality education and decent jobs have to be facilitated alongside the fulfilment of their rights.

A brief overview of the situation in the WCA region with respect to the key pillars essential for a demographic transition is given in the next section.

Child Marriage and Adolescent Pregnancy

Child marriage and adolescent pregnancies are major factors contributing to the high maternal and child mortality rates in the region. Goal 5 of the SDGs recognises the need to eliminate harmful practices including child, early and forced marriage.¹⁵ Girls in West and Central Africa face the highest risk of marrying in childhood; about 4 in 10 young women in the region were married before the age of 18 and among all child brides, 1 in 3 was married before age 15.¹⁶ The rate of child marriage is higher in West and Central Africa than in any other part of the world: six of the ten countries with the highest rates of child marriage are located in the region.¹⁷

West and Central Africa has the highest percentage of girls who are sexually active, at 36 per cent, with the vast majority in the context of a marriage or a union (29 per cent) and only 7 per cent who are unmarried and sexually active.

¹¹ UNFPA State of the World's Population. 2017.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ IFAD: Empowering Rural Youth in West and Central Africa/accessed at: <https://www.ifad.org/web/latest/story/asset/39017536>/accessed September, 2018

¹⁵ United Nations: Sustainable Development Goals. Accessed at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>accessed September, 2018

¹⁶ UNICEF Data and Analytics Section: Achieving a Future Without Child Marriage; Focus on West and Central Africa; UNICEF, New York, 2017.

¹⁷ Ibid.

The use of sexual and reproductive health services is generally low in the region, and even lower among adolescents, married or unmarried. This explains the high adolescent birth rate of 129 live births per 1,000 adolescents compared to the global average of 52 live births per 1,000 adolescents. The Central African Republic has the highest rate in the world at 229. Niger and Chad have rates higher than 200.¹⁸ Notably, while the unmet need has declined in several countries across the world; it has increased in six countries in WCA.¹⁹ Where data is available for unmet need among young unmarried women, it shows that unmet need is higher than amongst young married women and is highest in Senegal where it stands at 69.5 percent.

High adolescent birth rates are also influenced by child marriage, low education level among girls, poor access to quality sexual and reproductive health services, socio-cultural and economic factors.²⁰ However, declines in child marriage by 10 per cent or more between two MICS or DHS surveys have occurred in a handful of countries: in Ghana, Liberia, Mauritania and Sierra Leone; in urban areas of Togo, Benin and Cameroon; and in the rural areas of Congo. Adolescent pregnancy rates are also trending downward in parts of the region, including in Ghana, Senegal and Liberia.²¹

Poor Sexual and Reproductive Health

As growing numbers of young people enter their reproductive years, they will need significantly expanded sexual and reproductive health services. In recognition of this need, target 3.7 of Goal 5 in the SDGs focuses on universal access to sexual and reproductive health including family planning, information and education and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.²² Adolescents in West and Central Africa region have particular sexual and reproductive health vulnerabilities such as high adolescent birth rates mentioned above which contributes to over 50 percent of the global proportion of births taking place in adolescence according to UNFPA 2017 statistics. This poses serious consequences to the health and development of young girls.²³ The risk of maternal death and disability is higher for adolescents than for women in their 20s. The region's maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is more than three times the world's MMR and can be closely linked to low skilled birth attendance at 48 percent (which is the lowest in the world) and the low contraceptive prevalence rate in the region. Pregnancy-related complications, including unsafe abortions, remain the leading cause of death

¹⁸ UNFPA. Universal Access to Reproductive Health. Progress and Challenges. January 2016

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ ICRWC and UNICEF: Child marriage, Adolescent pregnancy and Family formation in West and Central Africa- Patterns, Trends and Drivers of Change; UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office, Dakar, Senegal, 2015.

²² Ibid: United Nations: Sustainable Development Goals. Accessed at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/> accessed September, 2018

²³ Ibid.

among young women in Africa. WCA is currently considered the riskiest region in the world for girls and women to get pregnant and/or give birth in. Pregnancy-related complications have for example been known to cause 20.4 percent of deaths among girls and young women in Nigeria.²⁴

Early and unintended pregnancies, HIV infections and school violence are critical issues which hinder access to education and the academic success of students in the region while limiting their livelihood opportunities. At the same time, while there is high risk to HIV infection, only 27 per cent of men and 25 per cent of women aged 15-24 years have comprehensive knowledge about HIV prevention.²⁵

HIV/AIDS

Adolescence is a period when many young people begin to explore their sexuality; as a result, access to sexual and reproductive health information and services becomes increasingly important. However, their age and their social and economic status limit adolescents' access to information and services in many settings.

In WCA, due to various factors including child marriage, young women are, on average, more likely to have an earlier sexual debut than young men with the median age of sexual debut for girls in region being 17 years or below.²⁶ At the same time, condom use among young people who have multiple sexual partners in WCA is generally low, particularly among young women. It is below 50 percent in at least ten countries²⁷ and is the lowest in Sierra Leone at 7.0 percent.

In 2015, 64 percent of new HIV infections in West and Central Africa among 15 to 24-year-olds were among young women. In 2016, UNAIDS named Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Nigeria as fast track countries where HIV responses for young women should be prioritised.²⁸ The reasons why young women are disproportionately affected by HIV in the region include high levels of gender inequality and gender-based violence, both of which increase HIV vulnerability. For example, in Cameroon in 2014, more than 35 percent of women aged 15 to 24 had experienced spousal physical or sexual violence by

24 Izugbara, C.O., Wekesah, F.M., Amo-Adjei, J., Kabiru, C.W., Tsala Dimbuene, Z.T., & Emina, J. (2017). *Young People in West and Central Africa: Health, Demographic, Education, and Socioeconomic Indicators*. African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), Nairobi, Kenya. November, 2017.

25 Xavier Hospital, Christiana Kallon.; *Strengthening Education in West and Central Africa by Improving Learners Sexual and Reproductive Health*. UNESCO, Education 2030 Briefing, November 2016, Volume 3.

26 Priscilla Idele, PhD, Amaya Gillespie, PhD, Tyler Porth, MSPH, Chiho Suzuki, PhD, Mary Mahy, ScD, Susan Kasedde, Dr PH, and Chew Luo, PhD. *Epidemiology of HIV and AIDS Among Adolescents: Current Status, Inequities, and Data Gaps*; Volume 66, Supplementary 2, July, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins 2014.

27 Countries where condom use among young women aged 15-24 years who had multiple partners is below 50 percent include Benin, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Congo Republic-Brazzaville, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo.

28 UNAIDS 2016-2021 Strategy: On the fast-track to end AIDS.



UNMISS/Isaac Billy

their current or most recent partner in the past 12 months.

The power imbalance between genders means that many young women are not able to make decisions about their own lives. For example, more than 80 percent of married women aged 15 to 19 in Senegal, Niger, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon do not have the final say on their own healthcare, according to recent Demographic and Health Surveys.

Lack of Educational Opportunities

Education is a critical tool for reducing inequality and poverty. It lays the foundation for sustained socio-economic development and equips young people with the skills for employment, innovation and to contribute meaningfully to societal progress. Goal 4 of the SDGs targets equitable and quality primary and secondary education for both boys and girls as well as in providing access to affordable and quality technical, vocational and



World Bank/Arne Hoel

tertiary education for all women and men.²⁹ However, there are large numbers of out-of-school children, low primary school enrolment, high student-teacher ratios, and critical gender gaps in school enrolment and progression in West and Central Africa which has a strong negative impact on educational attainment among young people.³⁰

UNICEF Regional Report for West and Central Africa³¹, based on household surveys from 21 countries in the region, reports that there are nearly 32 million children of official school age who are not attending either primary or lower secondary school. A further 17 million school children who are at risk of dropping out could be added to this figure. Enrolment and completion rates continue to be very low in this region with figures in Nigeria showing 10.5 million children out of school.³² The gender gap in the region is also high with the gender parity index being 0.9. It is not surprising that the countries in the region where girls are most disadvantaged in terms of educational attainment are Chad and Niger which also have very high levels of child marriage and adolescent pregnancy.

For girls, the barriers to education are multiple and include poverty, adverse gender and social norms, behaviours and traditions that limit their opportunities, gender-based violence in schools, female genital mutilation, child marriage, distance to school, safety concerns and lack of private sanitary toilets among others.³³ School-related gender based violence is one of the worst manifestations of gender discrimination and holds back education attainment. Likewise, child marriages remain a persistent barrier to girls' education. Adolescent pregnancy remains a barrier to girls' education as well and has been identified as a key driver of dropout and exclusion among female secondary school students in the region. Other barriers to education attainment for all children include health problems, disability and a lack of confidence in the quality of education provided in the region's schools.³⁴

Unemployment and under-employment

By 2050, one third of the world's youth population will live in Africa, an increase from about one fifth in 2012. However, this growth will be uneven across the African continent. In general, Southern and North African countries will be characterised by low or even negative youth population growth over the next 35 years, while West, Central and

²⁹ Ibid:United Nations: Sustainable Development Goals. Accessed at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/> accessed September, 2018

³⁰ Izugbara, C.O., Wekesah, F.M., Amo-Adjei, J., Kabiru, C.W., Tsala Dimbuene, Z.T., & Emina, J. (2017). Young People in West and Central Africa: Health, Demographic, Education, and Socioeconomic Indicators. African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), Nairobi, Kenya. November, 2017. Page 7.

³¹ UNESCO, UNICEF: Regional Report for West and Central Africa: All Children in School by 2015-Global Initiative on Out of School Children. UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office, March 2014.

³² UNICEF Nigeria: Quality Basic Education/accessed at <https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/education.html> on September 2018.

³³ UNICEF: All in School; Tolulope Owajoba, January, 2015: Gender Discrimination. WAAW Foundation/accessed at <http://waawfoundation.org/2015/01/29/595/> accessed on September, 2018.

³⁴ Ibid.

East African countries will experience large youth population increases. Whether these young people will be able to successfully join the labour market will impact both their individual wellbeing and the larger development of their countries and the continent.³⁵ Unemployed and underemployed youth are more exposed to conflicts and illegal activities, many of them falling prey to armed and rebel groups.³⁶

Young people constitute a very small proportion of the workforce in their countries. Youth unemployment, particularly underemployment, is high in WCA, while most young people who work are in the informal sector. In some WCA countries, such as Mauritania and Gabon, more than a third of all young people are unemployed. In Burkina Faso, work histories between 1980 and 2000 show increasing unemployment and ‘informalization’ of youth employment in urban parts of the country. Young women faced increased employment instability during the same period. Employment-to-population ratios among 15-24-year-olds are generally low in WCA and only about one third of females and two-thirds of males in this age group are employed in the sub-region.³⁷

Young People in Armed Conflict

Adolescents and youth in West and Central Africa remain vulnerable to conflict. In the Central African Republic and the Lake Chad basin, widespread violence and armed conflict characterized by grave human rights violations have led to mass displacement both internally and across borders. More than 6 million people in the region remain displaced due to conflict: 874,000 people in the Central African Republic, 2.6 million people in the Lake Chad basin and more than 172,000 people due to the conflict in Mali.³⁸

The Lake Chad Basin (LCB) faces numerous environmental, socio-economic and security challenges. Beside the climatic changes (constant drought) and the resulting repercussions on poverty, this part of Africa suffers violent extremism from the acts of terror perpetrated by Boko Haram, which since 2002, continues to spearhead regular attacks against border communities. The prevailing situation across Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger and Chad, has led to the spread of international terrorism and the growing vulnerability of local communities in the region as a whole.³⁹ Some of the identified causes of these cri-

³⁵ African Development Report 2015; Growth, Poverty and Inequality Nexus: Overcoming Barriers to Sustainable Development. African Development Bank, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 2016.

³⁶ Julie E. Larsen: Young People in West and Central Africa- Trends, Priorities, Investments & Partners. UNICEF West and Central African Regional Office, July 2009.

³⁷ Izugbara, C.O., Wekesah, F.M., Amo-Adjei, J., Kabiru, C.W., Tsala Dimbuene, Z.T., & Emina, J. (2017). Young People in West and Central Africa: Health, Demographic, Education, and Socioeconomic Indicators. African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), Nairobi, Kenya. November, 2017, page 17.

³⁸ UNICEF: Humanitarian Action for Children- West and Central Africa; UNICEF, 2017.

³⁹ UNFPA: Demographic Dynamics and the Crisis of Countries around Lake Chad. United Nations Population Fund West and Central Africa Regional Office, 2017.

ses include youth unemployment, widespread social inequalities, poor governance as well as the demographic factor.⁴⁰ In most cases, these conflicts occur in a social context with very slow demographic transition, which itself results from relatively high mortality and fertility levels, and from population age structures that predominantly have a large proportion of young people below 30 years of age. In many cases, poor living conditions and the lack of employment opportunities put the youth at all forms of risks including human trafficking and manipulation and false promises of extremists. Some of the youth choose to venture abroad in search of better economic conditions, often with unforeseeable consequences.⁴¹

In emergency and transition situations, young people between the ages of 10 and 24 play essential roles in the survival and recovery of their communities even while facing unique threats on a daily basis. Adolescents and young people are often targets of violence. They often bear enormous responsibilities during and after emergencies. In a study carried out by ILO in collaboration with UNICEF in four countries among them Congo Brazzaville⁴², 60 per cent of recruited children interviewed were less than 15 years and 10 per cent less than 12 years at the time of recruitment into an armed group.⁴³ The UN peacekeeping mission noted that despite awareness campaigns and attempts to pacify armed groups, recruitment of children remains endemic in West Africa. Children who were victims of recruitment within the ranks of these armed groups were also victims and witnesses of other grave child rights violations, such as rape, abduction, killing and maiming.

In summary, the above challenges highlight the need for both state and non-state actors to act quickly in order for the region to gain from a demographic dividend. High fertility rates accompanied by poor reproductive health will continue to contribute to an increasingly youthful population. There is need for the right policies and legal measures to end child marriage thereby increasing the chances for adolescent girls and young women to have education and employment opportunities. Investments in education, including comprehensive sexuality education, are critical to enhance quality of education and allow for the enrolment of all young people of school-going age.

Rationale and Methodology for the Adolescent & Youth Research

UNFPA has produced this report in order to understand the status of adolescents and youth in West and Central Africa with reference to indicators related to population

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Other Countries include DRC, Rwanda and Burundi.

⁴³ International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour: Wounded Childhood- The Use of Children in Armed Conflict in Central Africa. International Labour Office, April, 2003.

dynamics, sexual and reproductive health, education, employment, gender and social protection.

The methodology used for this research was through a desk-based literature review using existing sources of information on the thematic areas highlighted above and data primarily from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and MICS (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey) as well as other reliable sources for triangulation purposes. Where data was not available for the relevant indicators, the research relied on sources with extensive data or information on the same thematic areas.

There are some limitations in this approach such as UNESCO Institute of Statistics for some of the education data and ILO Statistics for the employment data. Although the DHS and MICS offer comprehensive information on youth and adolescents, there is a wide variance on the year of publication in each country. The time range of the surveys used in this report are between 2005-2015/2016 for DHS reports and 2010-2016/17 for MICS reports. DHS and/or MICS that fall outside of this range have not been considered in this report. The oldest reports used include DHS- Cape Verde (2005) and Sao Tome Principe (2008-09). For Cape Verde it is the only report available while for Sao Tome, it was only used where data was not available in the latest MICS 2014 report. For some countries only one report was available i.e: Guinea-Bissau only had MICS 2014 report while Cape Verde and Gabon only had DHS 2005 and 2012 reports respectively. Some graphs and tables do not include data for all countries because some indicators were not measured in the reports or the reports did not provide age-disaggregated data. Footnotes are provided under each table and graph with further explanations.

The wide variance in the years of reports (DHS/ MICS) publication in each country poses a challenge in comparing data between countries hence highlighting the urgency of having reliable and regular data collection, analysis, dissemination and use of policy development and programming. As such comparisons between countries need to be made with caution. In addition, though the surveys are largely implemented in a uniform manner and have large sample sizes that offer statistically reliable data, there is lack of data on some of the indicators for some countries. Most countries had both sources of data which made it easy to collate/compare data on most of the indicators for this report; however, in some countries, only one report was available. This means that information on some indicators especially those related to gender and social protection and which is mainly found in the DHS report for example was not available for countries like Guinea Bissau⁴⁴ and Mauritania⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ No DHS done.

⁴⁵ Last DHS for Mauritania was done in 2003-04 so it falls outside the range of recent DHS/MICS used for this report.

The two sources of data lack information on indicators related to employment and on youth in emergencies. The reports do not also give proportions of out of school children but rather provide data on an indicator related to those who had attended school but were not attending by the time of the survey and thus does not cater for those excluded from the entire education process. Thus, other sources of data were used to provide a status on these indicators mainly through UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) , the International Labour Organization, and the World Bank.



Benedicte Kurzen/NOOR



WCA Regional Analysis on Adolescents and Youth

2.1. POPULATION

West and Central Africa is one of the youngest regions of the world and is estimated to be home to approximately 77 million of the population aged 15 to 24 years.⁴⁶ It is projected that the continent's share of the world's youth population will grow from one-fifth, as it was in 2012, to as high as one-third by the year 2050. Current trends suggest that much of the bulge will be accounted for by countries in West, Central and East Africa. This may be mainly attributed to high fertility rates and decreased mortality rates. This high proportion of young people presents an opportunity for harnessing the demographic dividend through the right investments in this population.

Young people in the WCA region account for an estimated 32 percent of the population based on World Population Prospects 2017 data. Within this youth segment, at least 12 percent are between 10-14 years of age, 11 percent are 15-19 years while the 20-24 age group constitutes the lowest proportion of young people in the population at 9 percent. This shows that the adolescents, particularly young adolescents, make up the largest proportion of young people in the region (see table 1). This means that the time has never been more urgent to invest in young people in Africa.

⁴⁶ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division: World Population Prospects, The 2017 Revision- Key Findings and Advance Tables. United Nations, New York, 2017.

Currently, the average world demographic dependency ratio⁴⁷ stands at 54 percent; West and Central Africa have the highest dependency ratios in the world at 88.7 per cent and 83.2 per cent respectively. The high dependency ratio is influenced by high fertility rates, low contraceptive use and high child marriage rates indicating the need for interventions that will lead to a reduction in the prevalence of these indicators.⁴⁸

Beyond the simple increment in the number and share of working-age population, the development and implementation of sound policies in education, health, including family planning and the creation of an enabling macroeconomic environment that facilitates job creation and access to decent employment would ensure increases in the productive workforce and lead to higher growth.



UNFPA

47 The population's dependency ratio is based on the population's age structure and is the ratio between the number of individuals who supposedly "depend" on others for their day-to-day life-young and old people- and the number of people capable of taking on this load. The key demographic dependency ratio uses the ratio of the number of individuals under 15 and older than 65 and compares it against the population aged 15-64.

48 Olivier Girard, UNFPA; Regional Demographic Profiles Compared: West and Central Africa's Position. UNFPA Burkina Faso, 2016.

Table 1: Percentage of young people in West and Central Africa by age cohorts (%)

Sources of data: World Population Prospects: 2017 Revision, <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/> being the latest information available.

	10-14	15-19	20-24
Benin	12	11	9
Burkina Faso	13	11	9
Cape Verde	10	11	11
Cameroon	12	11	10
Central African Republic	12	11	10
Chad	13	11	9
Congo - Brazzaville	12	10	9
Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)	13	11	9
Equatorial Guinea	11	10	10
Gabon	10	9	9
Gambia	13	11	9
Ghana	11	10	9
Guinea	12	11	9
Guinea-Bissau	12	10	9
Liberia	13	10	9
Mali	13	10	9
Mauritania	12	10	9
Niger	13	10	8
Nigeria	12	10	9
Sao Tome & Principe	13	11	9
Senegal	13	11	9
Sierra Leone	13	11	9
Togo	12	10	9

The United Nations defines young people as 10-24 years, adolescents as 10-19 years, and youth as individuals between the ages of 15-24. It is important to design interventions for adolescents and youth based on age segmentation. However, as different countries use different age range definitions at national level, this can be challenging. In addition, the African Youth Charter defines youth as 15-35 years.

Table 2: Youth definitions according to national policies

Age range of youth	Countries in West and Central Africa ¹
12-35	Benin
15-24	Togo
15-30	Gambia
15-34	Liberia
15-35	Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Gabon, Niger
18-35	Nigeria, Senegal
Unknown or unspecified	Central African Republic, Congo Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Mauritania, Sao Tome and Principe, Mali, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau
15-35	African Youth Charter
No youth Policies/not available or in drafting stage	Sao Tome & Principe, Mali, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Congo Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea

Both risks and opportunities can result from the large cohort of young people growing up in WCA. The demographic dividend, provided the fertility rate decreases compared to previous years, is a strong policy argument for greater investment in young people. Other regions that have seen such an important demographic transition (such as East Asia and Latin America) have had mixed records dealing with it. East Asia, which put the right policies and institutions in place, was able to reap the demographic dividend from a large work force with fewer dependents. In Latin America, similar demographic dynamics did not yield better development outcomes. High rates of informal and insecure employment among the young people translated to low enrolment levels into tertiary education thus constraining their ability to seek more formal job opportunities. Employment in Latin America is largely characterised by low wage labour and self-employment posing limited opportunities for the competitive labour pool which leaves many people without work and an opportunity to study.

Africa's youth cohort today faces new challenges, such as protracted crises, migration and global competition in the labour market. In addition, the current education system is often inadequate in preparing young people for the job market.⁴⁹

2.2. SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Adolescent Pregnancy

Adolescent pregnancy often has adverse impacts on a girl's education, development and future employment. Many girls who become pregnant are pressured or forced to drop out of school. Girls not in school are also more likely to become pregnant. Notably, girls account for more than half of out of school children in the region.

An educated girl is less likely to be in a child marriage. She is also better able to delay childbearing, and is more likely to have a healthy pregnancy, with better outcomes for her future and children.

The magnitude of the issue of adolescent pregnancy can be better understood by looking at evidence from household surveys such as the DHS and MICS on the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 who had a live birth by age 15 or 18. Globally, almost one in five women aged 20 to 24 (19 per cent) had a live birth by their 18th birthday. An equivalent value of 3 per cent was observed for those who had the live birth by age 15. West and Central Africa has the highest proportion of adolescents giving birth before the age of 18 at 33 per cent and 3.5 per cent for adolescents giving birth before the age of 15 (figure 1 and figure 2). Seven out of the ten countries with the highest percentages of adolescent pregnancy are from the WCA region and include Niger whose proportion reaches 51 per cent and is the highest in the world.

⁴⁹ Marito Garcia and Jean Fares: Youth in Africa's Labour Market. The World Bank, Washington D.C, 2008.

Figure 1: Adolescents with a Live Birth Before 18 Years

Source: based on extracted data from DHS 2005-2016 and MICS 2010-2016/2017

Data not available based on the recent recommended DHS/MICS sources analysed for this report. Equatorial Guinea- data from DHS 2011 only available as follows (15 years=10.9%; 16 years= 23.5% ; 17 years= 31%; 18 years= 47.9%; 19 years= 62.4%

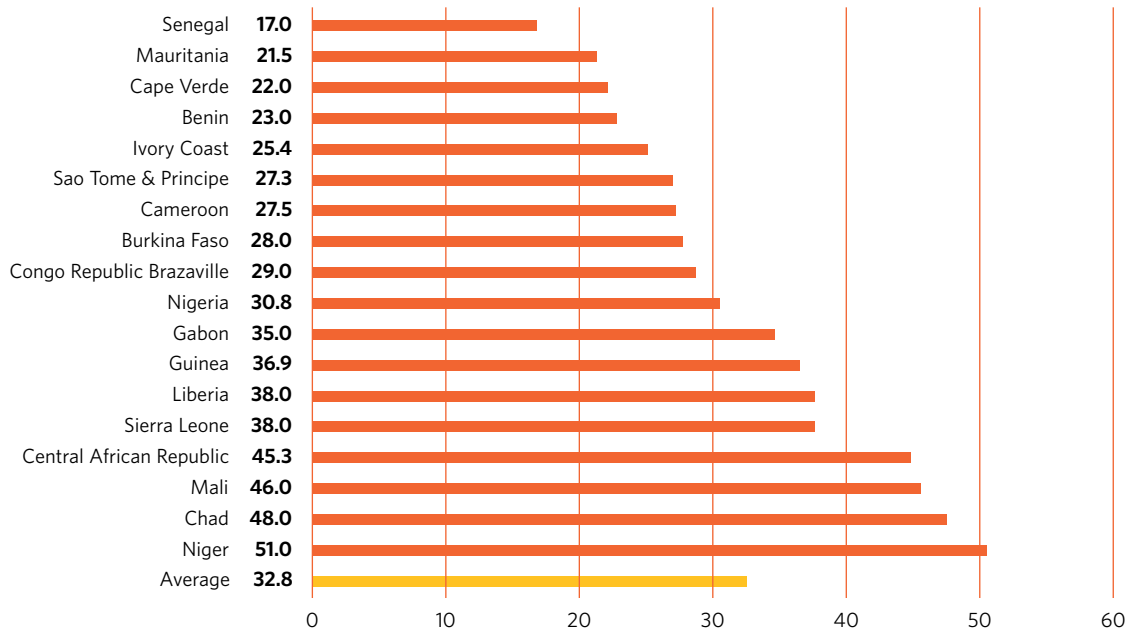
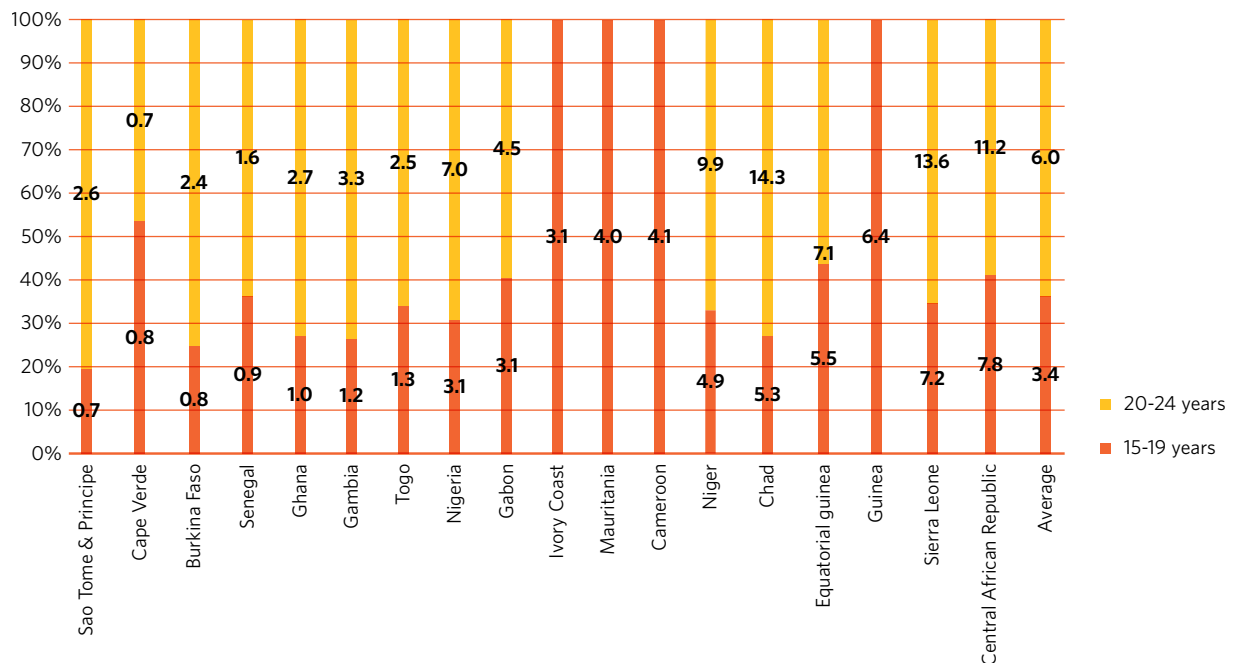


Figure 2: Adolescents with a Live Birth Before 15 Years

(Source of data: ICF Macro, DHS 2005-2016 and UNICEF MICS 2010-2016)

Note: No data available for this indicator for Liberia, Benin, Mali, Guinea-Bissau and Congo Brazzaville in the DHS/MICS sources used for this report



Childbearing is Highest in the Region

The adolescent birth rate measures the annual number of births to women 15 to 19 years of age per 1,000 women in that age group. It is also referred to as the age-specific fertility rate for women aged 15-19.⁵⁰ The global adolescent fertility rate (ages 15 to 19) is 50 births per 1,000 women. In WCA (see figure 3 below), countries such as Central African Republic, Niger and Chad top the list of countries with highest adolescent birth rate (above 200). Use of reproductive health services is generally low in the region and even lower among adolescents, married or unmarried.⁵¹ However, in recent times the situation seems to be changing. The average adolescent birth rate across the WCA region declined from 144 births per 1 000 from 1995 - 1999 period to 121 births per 1 000 women over the period 2010 - 2014. The declining trend is expected to continue and reach average adolescent birth rates of 81 between the years of 2030 and 2034.⁵² However, due to projections of growing population in the region, this still means that the total number of adolescents giving birth below the age of 18 years will continue to increase.

As with marriage, the majority of adolescent childbearing takes place between the ages of 15 and 18 – in Niger, for example, the percentage having a birth by 15 years is 9 percent and by 18 years is 51 percent⁵³, indicating that adolescents are giving birth very early and are likely to have more than one birth during their adolescence. The countries with the highest rate of child marriage also have the highest rates of adolescent childbearing: Niger, Chad, Mali and the Central African Republic. With the notable exception of Gabon (and to a lesser extent Liberia), the percentage of those having a birth before age 18 was lower than the percentage married, indicating that for the most part childbearing takes place within marriage in the region. By contrast, in Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, the percentage of those having a birth by 18 years is higher (28 percent for Gabon and 42 percent for Equatorial Guinea) than the proportion married by the same age (22 percent for Gabon and 30 percent for Equatorial Guinea). This may be explained by several factors including early sexual debut and high levels of sexual violence.

⁵⁰ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division/accessed at: <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/dataset/fertility/adolescent-rate.shtml>/accessed March 2018.

⁵¹ ICRWC and UNICEF: Child marriage, Adolescent pregnancy and Family formation in West and Central Africa- Patterns, Trends and Drivers of Change; UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office, Dakar, Senegal, 2015.

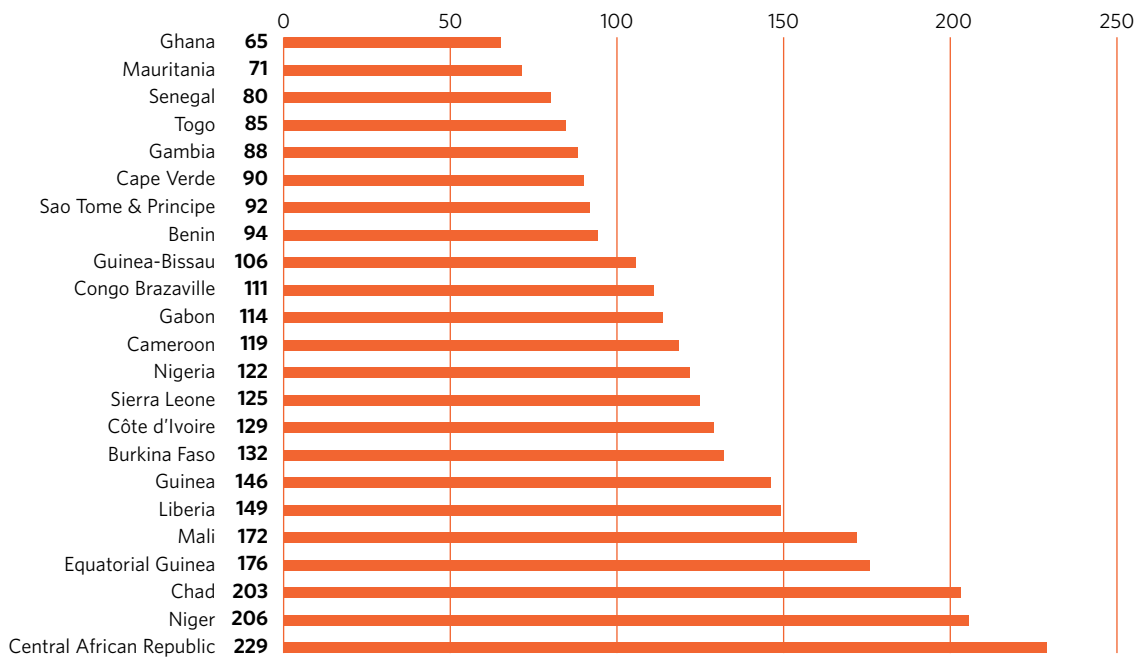
⁵² UNFPA: Sub Saharan Africa-Adolescent and Young People Dash Board, 2015/accessed at: http://dashboard.unfpaopendata.org/ay_africa/accessed March 2018.

⁵³ UNFPA; Adolescent Pregnancy: A Review of the Evidence, UNFPA New York, 2013.

The percentage of adolescent girls who have already begun their reproductive life decreases significantly when the level of education increases. DHS reports show that levels of fertility closely correlate to education, economic status and location. If we consider the results by location, we find that across all ages, young women in rural areas have a much higher fertility than those in the urban environment.

Figure 3: Adolescent Fertility Rate

Source is UNFPA SWOP Data 2006-2015



Sexual Activity during Adolescence

Age at First Sex

Age at first sex is the indicator that determines the average age at which young people become sexually active. This is a useful indicator to help determine what sexual and reproductive health services are needed and which age groups need to be targeted. If early sexual debut is coupled with low rates of condom and contraceptive use, that could also point to higher risks related to adolescent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS. In most countries in West and Central Africa (where data is available), the median age of sexual debut for young women and men is between ages 16 and 20 for young women and between 17 years and 19 years for young men.⁵⁴

Proportion of women 15-19 years who are sexually active

The incidence of young women who are sexually active is high in some of WCA countries which can be partly explained by the high child marriage rates in the region. This incidence is particularly high in Central African Republic where 62 percent of young women aged 15-19 years are sexually active and the adolescent fertility rate (15-19 years) is the highest in the region and the world at 229 births per 1000 women.

While the percentage of 20-24-year olds reporting sex by 15 and 18 years is uniformly higher than the percentage reporting marriage, the difference between the two indicators/variables varies significantly between countries. In Central African Republic 29 percent report marrying by age 18 and 26 percent having sex by the same age, a difference of 3 percentage points, which implies that the first sexual experience for these girls are in the context of a marriage. In contrast, the same figures for Liberia are 35.9 (marrying by 18 years) and 84.3 percent reporting having had sex by 18 years, a difference of almost 50 percentage points and thus implying that the first sexual experience happens outside marriage. It is extremely difficult to obtain accurate data regarding the sexual lives of adolescents under the age of 15 years, as most research and data collection focuses on SRH among individuals 15 years and older.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ ICRWC and UNICEF: Child marriage, Adolescent pregnancy and Family formation in West and Central Africa- Patterns, Trends and Drivers of Change; UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office, Dakar, Senegal, 2015.

⁵⁵ Erin Papworth, Nicolle Nelson-Avery Franklin Consulting; Review of: Adolescent and Youth Policies, Strategies and Laws in Selected Countries in West Africa. UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office.

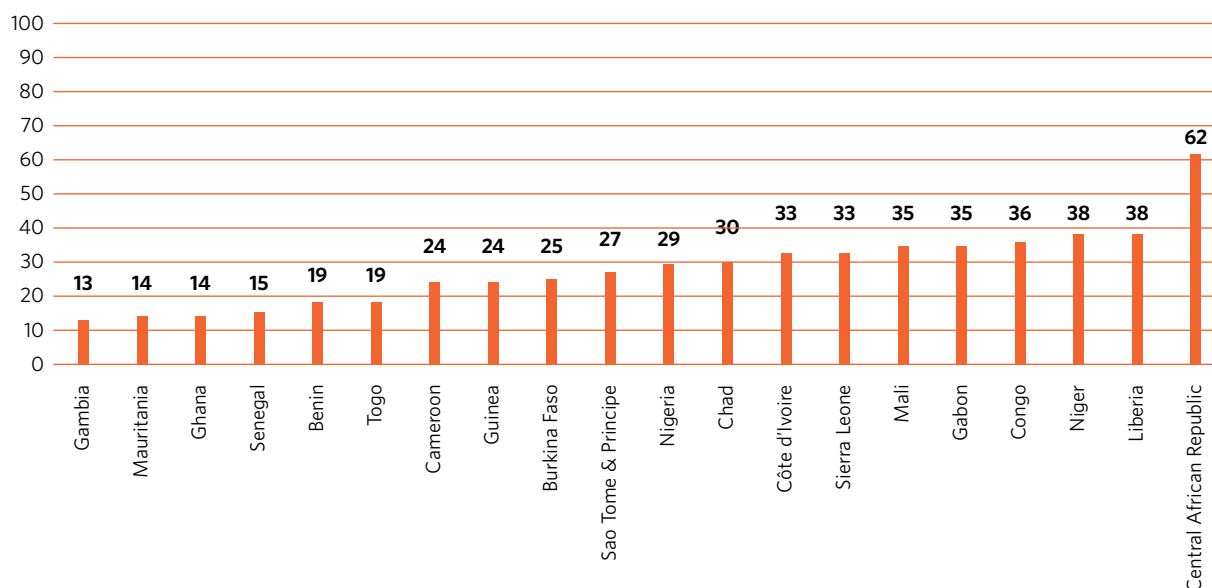
Table 3: Median age at first sex by gender*ICF Macro DHS 2005-2014/2015*

Country	Men 20-24	Female 20-24	Source
Chad	19	17	DHS 2014-15
Burkina Faso	-	18	DHS 2010
Gabon	16	17	DHS 2012
Gambia	-	19.8	DHS 2013
Ghana	19	18	DHS 2014
Liberia	18	16	DHS 2013
Niger	-	16.2	DHS 2012
Sierra Leone	18	17	DHS 2013
Togo	19	18	DHS 2013-14
Chad	19	17	DHS 2014-2015
Equatorial Guinea	17	16	DHS 2011
Cape Verde	17	16	DHS 2005
Average	18	17	

Note: No data available for Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal based on recent MICS/DHS sources

Figure 4: Proportion of Women aged 15-19 years who are sexually active

Source: UNFPA Youth and Adolescents Sub-Saharan DHS 2005-2014/2015



A study on family formation by ICRW and UNICEF in the region suggests that there are two family formation typologies that can be used to explore the link between sexual activity and child marriage. In the first set of countries⁵⁶, the marriage of young girls and first sexual activity are closely linked, with the median ages for each being within 13 months of each other, indicating that first sexual activity likely occurred in the context of a child marriage. In the second⁵⁷ they are not, with sexual activity taking place over a year before marriage. Though girls experience sexual intercourse for the first time around the same age across the continent, on average, girls in the first set of countries marry almost two years earlier and give birth more than six months earlier than their counterparts in the second set of countries. In countries where average age of sexual debut and average age of marriage are close, it is likely that efforts to raise girls' age at marriage will also increase the average age of sexual debut among girls.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Countries in the first typology include Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, CAR and Chad.

⁵⁷ Countries in the second typology include Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville and Sao Tome & Principe.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Sex Before Age 15

At least 16 percent of young women and 12 percent of young men aged 15-24 years have started sexual activity before the age of 15 years (see figure 5 below). This has major implications on adolescent girls' development including their education and health. In many cases, the adolescent girl may not have had any choice over her sexual activity whether it is in the context of child marriage or forced sex.

Age of sexual debut varies widely within the WCA region. Countries like Chad, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon have high proportions of young men who are sexually active before the age of 15. Equatorial Guinea also has the highest proportion of young women who have had their first sexual encounter before the age of 15.

Figure 5: Proportion of Young People who have had Sex Before Age 15



However, it is important to note that there may be very different factors driving early sexual debut (before age 15), especially for girls, in different country contexts. For example, in Equatorial Guinea, the high rates of early sexual debut among girls may not necessarily be in the context of a child marriage as prevalence of child marriage below 15 years is low at 9 percent. However, it may be partially explained by high rates of gender based violence, including sexual violence, as the DHS survey 2011 indicates that 65 percent of women between 15 and 49 years old have experienced some type of domestic violence, including sexual violence. The country has high adolescent fertility rates (176 births per 1000 women) which are also perpetuated by low contraceptive use.

On the other hand, Chad has a relatively high adolescent fertility rate at 203 births per 1000 women perpetuated by one of the lowest contraceptive use in the region (2.9 percent) and the highest rate of very early child marriage (3 percent married before 15 years) which indicates that early sexual debut and adolescent child-bearing are likely to occur in a marriage.



UN Photo/Marco Dormino

Table 4: Sex By Age 15 Analysed By Age and Gender

Source of Data: ICF Macro, Demographic and Health Surveys 2005-2016; MICS 2010-2016

	Men 15-19 Years	Men 20-24 Years	Women 15-19 Years	Women 20-24 Years	Data Source
Burkina Faso	2.0	2.0	8.0	11.0	DHS 2010
Cape Verde	32.0	23.0	11.0	13.0	DHS 2005
Côte d'Ivoire	10.2	11.8	18.6	19.2	MICS 2016
Gambia	6.0	3.0	6.0	10.0	DHS 2013
Ghana	9.3	7.8	11.8	9.7	DHS 2014
Guinea	-	-	21.3	26.8	MICS 2016
Guinea-Bissau	16.0	13.0	19.0	18.0	MICS 2014
Liberia	9.0	9.0	23.0	23.0	DHS 2013
Niger	1.0	1.0	23.0	26.0	DHS 2012
Nigeria	3.3	5.3	12.5	18.1	MICS 2016-17
Senegal	4.0	4.5	2.1	3.6	MICS 2015-16
Sierra Leone	10.0	19.0	11.0	20.0	DHS 2013
Togo	9.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	DHS 2013-14
Cameroon	9.2	9.4	14.2	17.9	MICS 2014
Central African Republic	25.0	-	-	26.0	MICS 2010
Chad	3.3	4.4	17.8	28.5	DHS 2014-15
Equatorial Guinea	34.0	19.0	29.0	20.0	DHS 2011
Gabon	35.0	30.0	17.0	16.0	DHS 2012

Benin data from MICS 2014 only available for 15-24 age group (Male=15% and Females= 16%).
Same applies to Congo Brazzaville (Males=16.8%, Females=13.7%)

Mali data from MICS 2015 available as Males 15-24 years=6.0% and Females 15-24 years=13.8%

Data for Senegal only available in MICS 2015-16

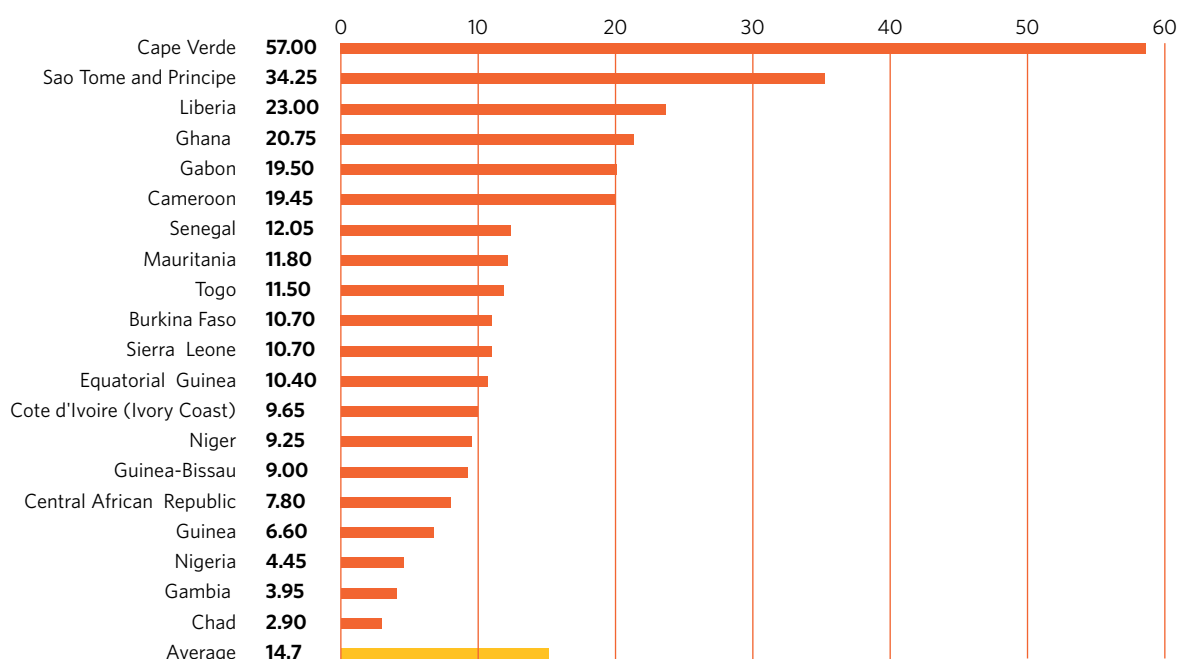
No data for Mauritania, Sao Tome & Principe

Contraceptive Use Remains Very Low Among Young Women

In 2015, 64 per cent of married or in-union women of reproductive age worldwide were using some form of contraception with modern methods constituting 90 per cent of contraceptive users.⁵⁹ However, contraceptive use was much lower in the least developed countries (40 per cent) and was particularly low in Africa (33 per cent).

Table 5: Modern Contraceptive Prevalence Rate among Young Women 15-24 years

Source of Data: ICF Macro, Demographic and Health Surveys 2005-2016 and UNICEF Multiple Cluster Indicator Surveys 2010-2016



Note: Data not available for Benin, Congo Brazzaville, Mali based on latest MICS/DHS sources

⁵⁹ United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs, Population Division: Trends in Contraceptive Use Worldwide. United Nations, New York, 2015.

In the WCA region, only 14.7 percent of young women married or in union aged 15 to 24 are currently using, or whose sexual partner is using, at least one method of contraception. In all countries in the region, the utilization rate is below 50 percent except for Cape Verde (57 per cent). Contraceptive use is extremely low in certain countries like Chad, Gambia and Nigeria recording below 5 per cent usage. The low contraceptive use is despite a high unmet need averaging 29.3 percent among young married women in the region. Notably, while the unmet need has declined in several countries across the world; it has increased in six countries in WCA.⁶⁰ While data for contraceptive use among young unmarried women is not available for all countries, for countries where the data is available it shows that the unmet need is higher among unmarried young women than amongst young married women.

Without access to contraception, poor women, particularly those who are less educated and live in rural areas, are at heightened risk of unintended pregnancy. This may result in health risks and lifelong economic repercussions. The lack of power to decide whether, when or how often to become pregnant can limit education, delay entry into the paid labour force and reduce earnings.

In most countries across the WCA region, satisfaction of demand for contraceptives is low falling below 50 percent among young women (both married and unmarried) between the ages of 15 to 24. Cape Verde is the only country where this demand is satisfied for more than 50 percent of young women (married and unmarried) of the same age range.

Based on data from DHS and MICS on contraceptive use among married and sexually active unmarried women in selected countries in the region⁶¹, an average depicting the region's usage of each contraceptive method was calculated. Based on the calculated average, the use of male condoms among sexually active unmarried women is high at 24.4 percent compared to their married counterparts at 3.6 percent. There is low usage of other contraceptives most falling below 5 percent. Traditional methods (8.9 percent), rhythm method (6 percent), the pill (5.5 percent) and injectables were also used more among sexually active unmarried women.

⁶⁰ Ibid- ICRWC and UNICEF: Child marriage, Adolescent pregnancy and Family formation in West and Central Africa- Patterns, Trends and Drivers of Change; UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office, Dakar, Senegal, 2015.

⁶¹ Countries whose data was used to calculate the mean include Ghana, Liberia, Gambia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, Senegal, CAR, Congo Brazzaville and Gabon.

Figure 6: Proportion of Married and Unmarried women whose contraceptive demand is satisfied

Source: Sub Saharan Africa-Adolescent and Young People Dash Board (2015)

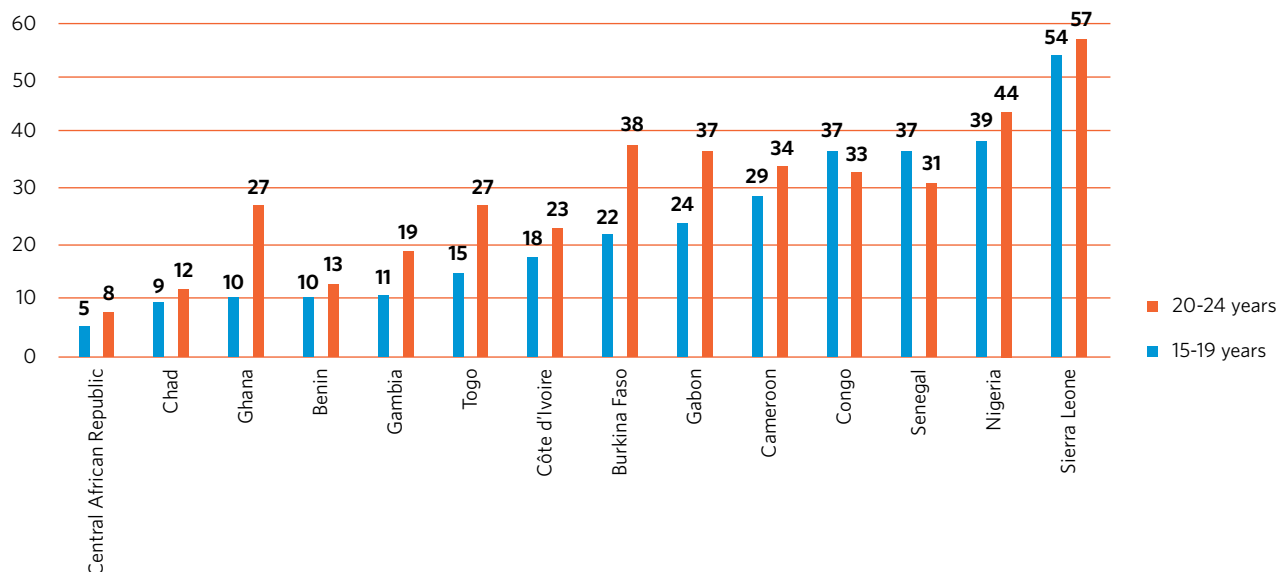


Figure 7: Proportion of currently married women whose contraceptive demand is satisfied

Source: Sub Saharan Africa-Adolescent and Young People Dash Board (2015)

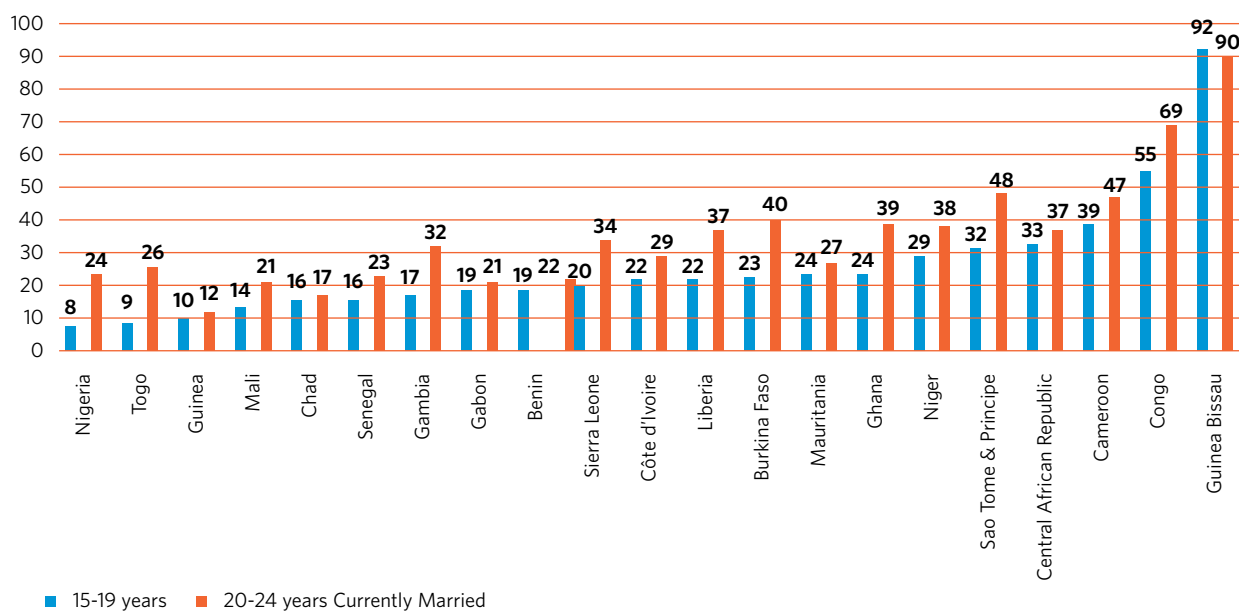


Table 6: Contraceptive Use By Type Among Married and Sexually Active Unmarried Women*Source of Data: ICF Macro, DHS 2005-2014/2015 and UNICEF MICS 2010-2016/2017*

Birth Control Method	Pill	IUD	Injectables	Implants	Male Condom	Female Condom	Diaphragm	Foam/Jelly	LAM	Any traditional method	Rhythm	Withdrawal
Currently Married	2.5	0.13	3.19	1.2	3.6	0.01	0.06	0.02	1.7	3.2	1.8	0.9
Sexually Active Unmarried	5.5	0.3	5.2	2.3	24.4	0.2	0	0.1	0.01	8.9	6	1.6

Young People are at Risk of HIV Infection and AIDS Related Deaths

Adolescents and young people represent a growing share of people living with HIV worldwide. In 2016 alone, 610,000 young people between the ages of 15 to 24 were newly infected with HIV, of whom 260,000 were adolescents between the ages of 15 and 19.⁶² In the WCA region, at least 70 percent of new HIV infections were among young girls aged 15-19 years and 30 percent among boys the same age.⁶³ Additionally, AIDS-related deaths among adolescents have increased over the past decade while decreasing among all other age groups.

The WCA region is experiencing a rise in AIDS-related deaths among adolescents aged 15-19 yet continues to lag behind on most measures of HIV prevention, treatment and care for children and adolescents.⁶⁴ The annual number of AIDS-related deaths among adolescents aged 15-19 years has increased by 35 per cent between 2010 and 2016. This is the only age group in which the number of AIDS-related deaths increased during the period.⁶⁵

HIV prevalence among young people aged 15-24 years in the WCA region is at an average of 1.1 percent and is noted to be significantly higher for young women than young men in most countries. In 2015, 64 percent of new infections among young people (15-24 years)

⁶² UNICEF: Turning the Tide Against AIDS Will Require More Concentrated Focus on Adolescents and Young People/accessed at: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/hiv/aids/adolescents-young-people/Updated January 2018>.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ UNAIDS & UNICEF: Step Up the Pace: Towards an AIDS-free generation in West and Central Africa. United Nations Children's Fund, December 2017.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Table 7: HIV Prevalence among youth 15-24 years

Source of data: ICF Macro, DHS 2005-2016

	Men 15-19 Years	Men 20-24 Years	Women 15-19 Years	Women 20-24 Years
Benin	0.6	0.5	0.1	1.2
Burkina Faso	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.4
Cameroon	0.4	0.6	2	3.4
Central African Republic	0.2	1.2	2.5	5.8
Chad	0.4	1.2	1.2	1.8
Congo Republic - Brazzaville	0.8	0.6	1.9	2.9
Côte d'Ivoire	0.1	0.5	0.8	3.6
Equatorial Guinea	0	2.3	2.3	7.9
Gabon	0.4	0.5	1.5	3.5
Gambia	0.3	0	0.4	0.3
Ghana	0.2	0	0.5	1.9
Guinea	0.1	1.8	1.5	1.1
Liberia	1	0.5	0.2	2.9
Mali	0.3	0.2	0.8	1.5
Niger	-	-	-	0.2
Sao Tome & Principe	0.1	0.5	0.4	1.3
Senegal	-	0.1	0.2	0.5
Sierra Leone	0.7	0.9	1.5	1.2
Togo	0.1	0.5	0.4	1.3
Average Prevalence per age group (1.1 overall region average)	0.4	0.7	1.1	2.3

UNFPA Sub Saharan Dashboard provides the prevalence for some countries whose data is missing from DHS/MICS: For Guinea Bissau 20-24 years (Male 9% female 2%); Mauritania 15-24 years (Male 0.4% Female 0.2%); Nigeria 15-24 years (Male 1.1 Female 2.9). According to the Country profile ICPD indicator for Liberia Demographics 2017 HIV prevalence is 0.6 Males and 1.2 Females aged 15-24 years

in the region occurred among young women.⁶⁶ The difference between young women and men is especially striking in Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea where adolescent girls aged 15–19 are three to five times more likely to be infected with HIV than boys of the same age.

UNAIDS has designated Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Nigeria as countries where HIV responses for young women should be prioritized. Age-disparate sexual relationships between young women and older men are commonplace in WCA as is child marriage and adolescent pregnancy.⁶⁷ This gender power imbalance means less control for many young women especially over their sexual and reproductive health. For example, more than 80 percent of married 15–19 year old women in Senegal, Niger, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon do not have the final say on their own healthcare, according to recent Demographic and Health Surveys. Studies also indicate that the majority of women are generally unable to negotiate consistent male or female condom use which is largely dependent on male partner's co-operation which increases their risk to HIV infection. Inconsistency or lack of testing, counselling and testing and treatment are also key drivers to HIV infection.⁶⁸

Low Condom Use, Low HIV testing and Lack of Comprehensive Knowledge on HIV Are Barriers to the Fight Against HIV/AIDS

Condoms, when used correctly and consistently, are highly effective in preventing HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Condom use among young people who have multiple sexual partners in WCA is generally low particularly among young women at an average of 43 percent compared to usage by males in the same age group at 56 percent. In some countries like Burkina Faso, the use of condoms amongst young females is higher than the region's average for females and males at 85 percent. However, the scenario in Sierra Leone paints a worrying picture with only 7 percent usage among young women which is the lowest in the region and much lower compared to males whose usage is at 18 percent though also lowest in the region.

⁶⁶ UNAIDS: Prevention Gap Report, 2016.

⁶⁷ UNAIDS 2016–2021 Strategy: On the fast-track to end AIDS.

⁶⁸ ICF Macro: Demographic and Health Surveys, 2005–2014/2015.

Table 8: Condom Use at Last High-Risk Sex among 15-24 year olds

Source of Data: ICF Macro, Demographic and Health Surveys 2005-2016 and UNICEF Multiple Cluster Indicator Surveys 2010-2016

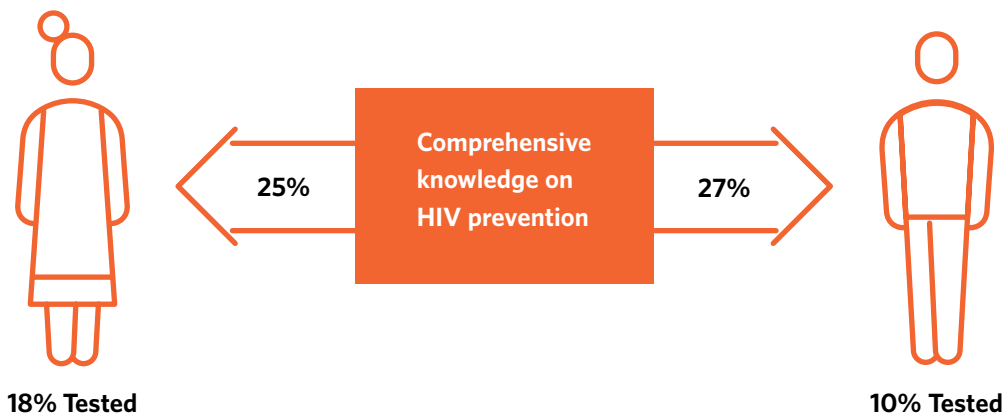
	Men 15-24 Years	Women 15-24 Years	Data Source
Benin	43.7	34.1	MICS 2014
Burkina Faso	75.0	85.0	DHS 2010
Cameroon	73.1	53.0	MICS 2014
Central African Republic	32.9	34.0	MICS 2010
Chad	50.0	41.0	DHS 2014-15
Congo Republic - Brazzaville	61.0	47.1	MICS 2015
Cote d'Ivoire	63.4	33.3	MICS 2016
Gabon	77.0	56.0	DHS 2012
Guinea	-	32.8	MICS 2016
Liberia	45.0	22.0	DHS 2013
Mali	38.1	20.4	MICS 2015
Niger	57.0	29.0	DHS 2012
Nigeria	59.7	45.9	MICS 2016-17
Sierra Leone	18.0	7.0	DHS 2013
Togo	63.0	49.0	DHS 2013-14
Cape Verde	79.0	56.0	DHS 2005
Guinea Bissau	53.0	69.0	MICS 2014
Sao Tome Principe	64.0	54.0	DHS 2008-09
Region's Average	56	43	

No Data: Gambia, Ghana, Mauritania , Senegal, Equatorial Guinea

HIV testing among young people is at 13.8 percent, on average for the region. Higher proportions of young women (18 percent) have had an HIV test compared to their male counterparts (10 percent). The higher rates for women may also be due to testing during prenatal visits in health facilities. Finally, knowledge about HIV among young people in the region is alarmingly low with only 27 per cent of men and 25 per cent of women aged 15-24 years having comprehensive knowledge about HIV prevention.⁶⁹

Figure 8: HIV Testing and Comprehensive Correct Knowledge on HIV Prevention Among Young People aged 15-24 Years

Source of Data: ICF Macro Demographic and Health Surveys 2005-2016 and UNICEF Multiple Cluster Indicator Surveys 2010-2016



⁶⁹ Xavier Hospital, Christiana Kallon.; Strengthening Education in West and Central Africa by Improving Learners Sexual and Reproductive Health. UNESCO, Education 2030 Briefing, November 2016, Volume 3.

2.3. GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Child Marriage Derails Women's Empowerment

Child marriage remains one of the gravest human rights violations which impacts young girls' lives, health and future prospects. It contravenes international laws such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

In developing countries, one in every four girls is married before reaching age 18. One in nine is married under age 15.⁷⁰ If nothing changes, developing countries will witness an increase in child marriage: 142 million child marriages by 2020 and 151 million in the subsequent decade.⁷¹ The WCA region has the highest prevalence of child marriage below the age of 18 years, as well as below 15 years. At least 13 percent of women aged 20-24 years were married by the age of 15 in WCA. There are, however, differences in prevalence across the region ranging from 30 percent in Chad (highest in the world) to 3 percent in Cape Verde (see figure 9).

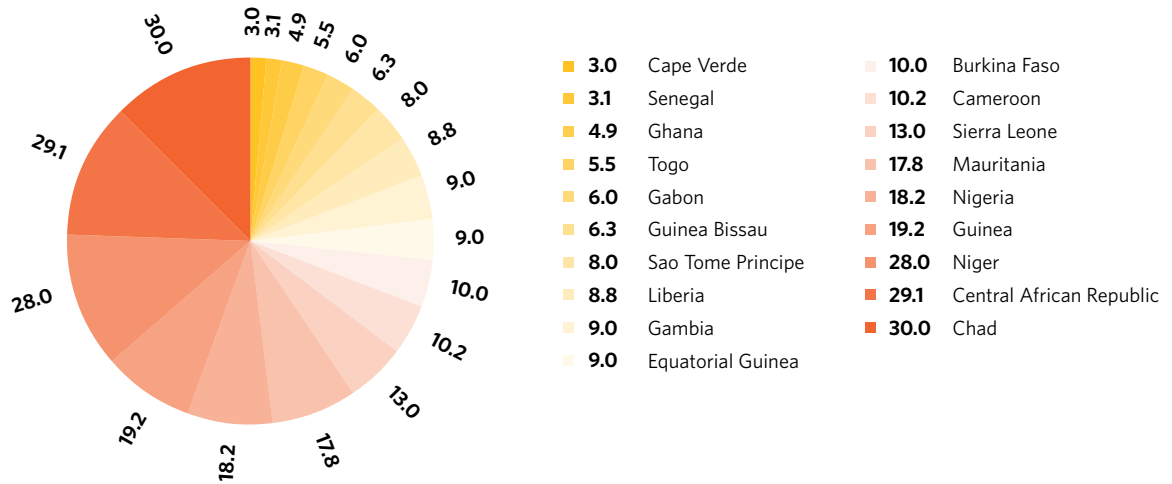
By the age of 18, more than a third (37 percent) of girls in WCA are married limiting their education and employment opportunities and often having long-term adverse impacts on their health. Of the 41 countries worldwide where child marriage is 30 percent or more (married or in union by 18 years as reported by women aged 20-24), 18 of the countries are from the WCA region with Niger presenting the highest rates (76 percent - see figure 10).

⁷⁰ Child Marriage, accessed at; <https://www.unfpa.org/child-marriage/> accessed May 2018

⁷¹ Loaiza, Wong: *Marrying Too Young-End Child Marriage*, UNFPA Population Development Branch and Sexual and Reproductive Health Branch, Technical Division, New York, 2012.

Figure 9: Marriage by Age 15 among 20-24-year olds

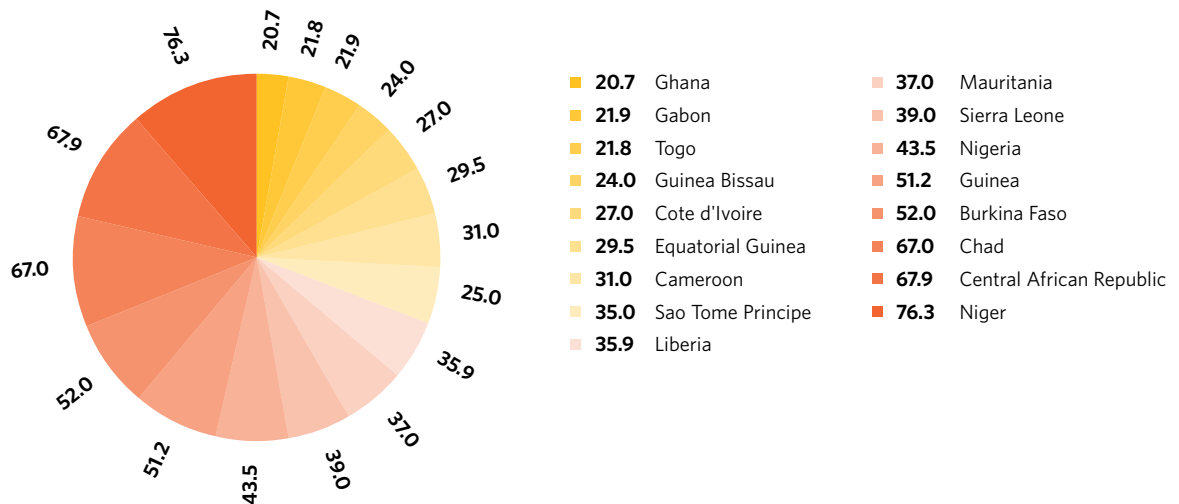
Source of Data: ICF Macro, Demographic and Health Surveys 2005-2015 and UNICEF Multiple Cluster Indicator Surveys 2010-2016



Note: Based on recent DHS/MICS sources- data for Benin is only available for 15-49 age bracket at 8.8 percent as well as Congo Brazzaville (6.7 percent), Mali (16.1 percent)

Figure 10: Marriage by Age 18 among 20-24-year olds

Source of Data: ICF Macro, Demographic and Health Surveys 2005-2015 and UNICEF Multiple Cluster Indicator Surveys 2010-2016



Note: Data from latest DHS/MICS sources- Data only available for 20-49 age bracket for Benin (31.7 percent); Congo Brazzaville (26.9 percent) and Mali (48.9 percent), No data for Gambia

Weak Policies, Poverty and Lack of Education Contribute to Child Marriage Among Young Women

Recent data indicate a slow decline in child marriage prevalence in some countries and regions in West and Central Africa. Declines in child marriage by 10 per cent or more between two MICS or DHS surveys have occurred in a handful of countries: Ghana, Liberia, Mauritania and Sierra Leone; in urban areas of Togo, Benin and Cameroon; and in the rural areas of Congo (UNFPA 2012a; Walker 2012). Adolescent pregnancy rates are also trending downwards in parts of the region, including in Ghana, Senegal and Liberia. However, due to rapidly growing populations, this means that the total numbers of girl brides and adolescents who become pregnant will continue to grow despite the decreasing prevalence rates in some countries in the region.

In a number of countries in the WCA region, a significant proportion of women marry at very young ages either because their laws allow child marriage (in some cases, with parental consent) or because enforcement of the minimum legal age at marriage is lax.

In Niger, the law allows marriages from the age of 15 years. Chad had a similar law till 2016 when this was revised to set the age of marriage at 18 years though implementation continues to be weak. The results are telling with 76 percent of girls in Niger, and over 60 percent of girls in Chad getting married before they turn 18.⁷²

The median first age of marriage in women increases with the level of economic well-being. Across all regions, girls who live in rural areas are more likely to become child brides than their urban counterparts. Women in rural areas enter marriage 2.6 years earlier than those in urban areas. Moreover, the more educated women are, the later they enter marriage. (see table below) Keeping girls in school and supporting them in making healthy decisions about their own lives, including their sexual and reproductive lives, have been found to be the most important determinants of age at marriage.

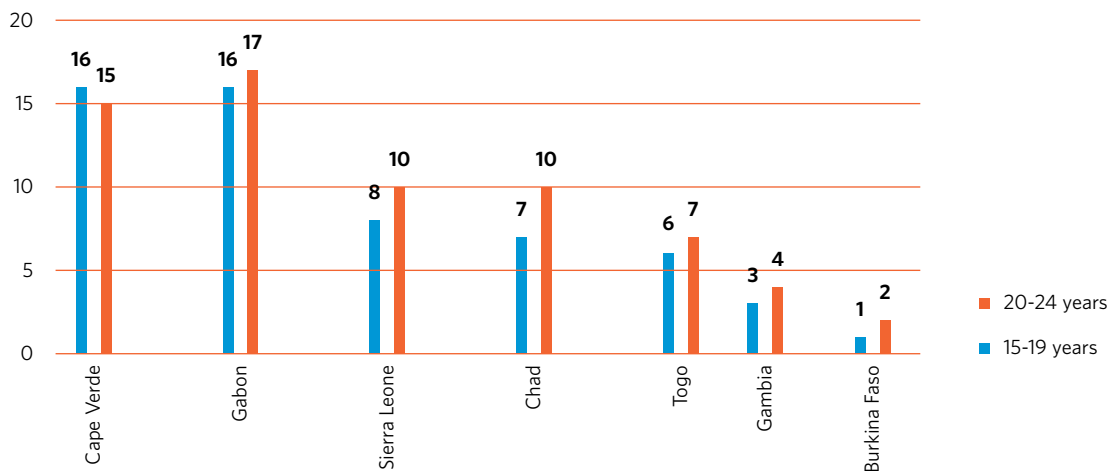
72 UNICEF: Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects. UNICEF, New York, 2014.

Sexual Violence against Women Persists

Sexual violence is any sexual act, or attempt to initiate a sexual act using coercion, force, threat or surprise⁷³. It is a human rights violation that contravenes the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Geneva Conventions and the Maputo Protocol. Nevertheless, evidence suggests high levels of sexual violence, especially against young girls, in West and Central Africa regions. Across all 7 countries where data was available from DHS/MICS⁷⁴, 8 percent of 15 to 19 year olds have experienced sexual violence while 9 percent of 20-24-year olds experienced sexual violence. The proportion of women 15-19 years who have experienced sexual violence at any time in their lives in the WCA region is highest in Cape Verde and Gabon with 16 percent having experienced sexual violence.

Figure 11: Women aged 15-24 who have experienced sexual violence

Source of Data: ICF Macro Demographic and Health Surveys 2010-2015



No data for Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Cameroon, Sao Tome & Principe, Congo Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic, Senegal, Niger, Mauritania, Liberia, Guinea, Benin is not available using the latest MICS/DHS data sources

⁷³ World Health Organisation: World Report on Violence and Health. WHO, 2002.

⁷⁴ The 7 countries where data on sexual violence was available are Cape Verde, Gabon, Sierra Leone, Chad, Togo, Gambia and Burkina Faso.



UNFPA/Vincent Tremeau

Correlates of Sexual Violence

An analysis from DHS data reveals that the level of sexual violence experienced can be said to be related to marital status, education level, location and household economic status. Sexual violence has been associated with conflict situations where rape has been used as a strategy in many conflicts. In Monrovia, women under 25 years were more likely than their older counterparts to report experiencing attempted rape and sexual coercion during conflict (18 percent compared to 4 percent). Women forced to cook for warring factions are also at a significantly higher risk of sexual violence.^{75 76 77}

Child marriage exposes girls to intimate partner violence, including sexual, physical, psychological and emotional violence.⁷⁸ Due to the age difference and the power dynamics, young girls often struggle to assert their wishes to their husbands or negotiate safe and consensual sex.

Studies in WCA show that there are high levels of school-related GBV which is defined as acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in and around schools. Boys are more likely to experience frequent and severe physical violence, while girls are at greater risk of sexual violence, harassment and exploitation, including student and teacher sexual assault, sexual harassment, and rape.⁷⁹ Sexual abuse happens in schools (toilets, classrooms, staffrooms), on the way to/from school and in teachers' houses. All available studies in the region confirm that sexual abuse is perpetrated mostly by men, be they teachers or school staff, other men from the community (young men, soldiers at check points, bus drivers, sugar daddies), or male students. Victims are mostly girls and there is no common set of perpetrators across the region. In Ghana, a study reveals that the main perpetrators of sexual abuse are classmates. In the Central African Republic, teachers are identified as the primary perpetrators of sexual abuse against primary school girls.⁸⁰

75 WHO: World Report on Sexual Violence and Health, Chapter 6 – Sexual Violence Page 156. World Health Organisation, Geneva, 2002.

76 UNFPA: Dimensions-violence-against-women-and-girls-and-how-to-end-it, March 2013; accessed at/ <https://www.unfpa.org/news/> accessed March 2018.

77 Sida: Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence: Expressions and Strategies. Sida, 2015

78 Girls Not Brides, October 2014. Why is Child Marriage a Form of Violence Against Women and Girls? /accessed from <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/why-is-child-marriage-a-form-of-violence-against-women-and-girls/> accessed September 2018.

79 UNESCO. Strengthening Education in West and Central Africa by Improving Learners' Sexual and Reproductive Health Outcomes. Education 2030 Briefing. November 2016.

80 Laetitia Antonowicz, Education for Change Ltd: Too Often in Silence- A report on School-Based Violence in West and Central Africa; UNICEF, Save the Children Sweden, Plan West Africa, ActionAid; 2010.

FGM is widespread in Many Countries in WCA

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) of any type is a harmful practice, a violation of human rights of girls and women (notably the right to the highest attainable standard of health, to bodily integrity, to protection and in the most extreme cases, the right to life) and a form of violence. It is an extreme manifestation of discrimination based on sex and gender inequality, deeply rooted in social, economic and political structure.⁸¹ In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the first-ever resolution against FGM (67/146), calling for intensified global efforts to eliminate it. A number of countries where FGM is commonly practiced have laws specifically prohibiting it but their effective implementation remains a significant challenge.

FGM is usually part of a traditional ceremony or rite of passage into adolescence and by extension an entry to child marriage. In communities that practice FGM, there are strong social norms that support the practice as it is seen as a method of controlling the sexuality of girls and women.

A 2015 UNFPA study on demographic perspectives on FGM highlighted that 22 out of 30 FGM affected countries, are least developed countries and most have large proportions of young adolescents.⁸² In high-prevalence countries, projections indicate that 15 million girls are at risk of experiencing FGM by 2020. In West and Central Africa, the 18 countries where the practice is carried out and for which data is available can be separated in three groups as follows:

Countries like Guinea and Mali⁸³ where the average prevalence rate is above 80 percent and nearly all women have undergone genital mutilation or cutting.

Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania where the FGM prevalence rates range from 25 percent to 79 percent and where only certain ethnic groups within the country practise FGM, at varying intensity.

Cameroon, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria and Togo where national prevalence rates are lower, between 1 percent and 24 percent and where only some ethnic groups within the country practise FGM.⁸⁴

However, in the last decade evidence shows that prevalence rates have declined in some countries, such as in Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Mali and Nigeria. Moreover, some countries such as, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Nigeria and, to a lesser extent, in Sierra Leone show evidence of a generational trend towards ending the practice.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² UNFPA: Demographic Perspective on Female Genital Mutilation. 2015. UNFPA, New York.

⁸³ Please note that on FGM prevalence for Mali the age range covered is 15-49 while for all the other countries the age range covered is 15-19 years

⁸⁴ UNICEF: West and Central Africa Overview-Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, accessed at: https://www.unicef.org/wcaro/overview_4571.html/accessed on October 2017

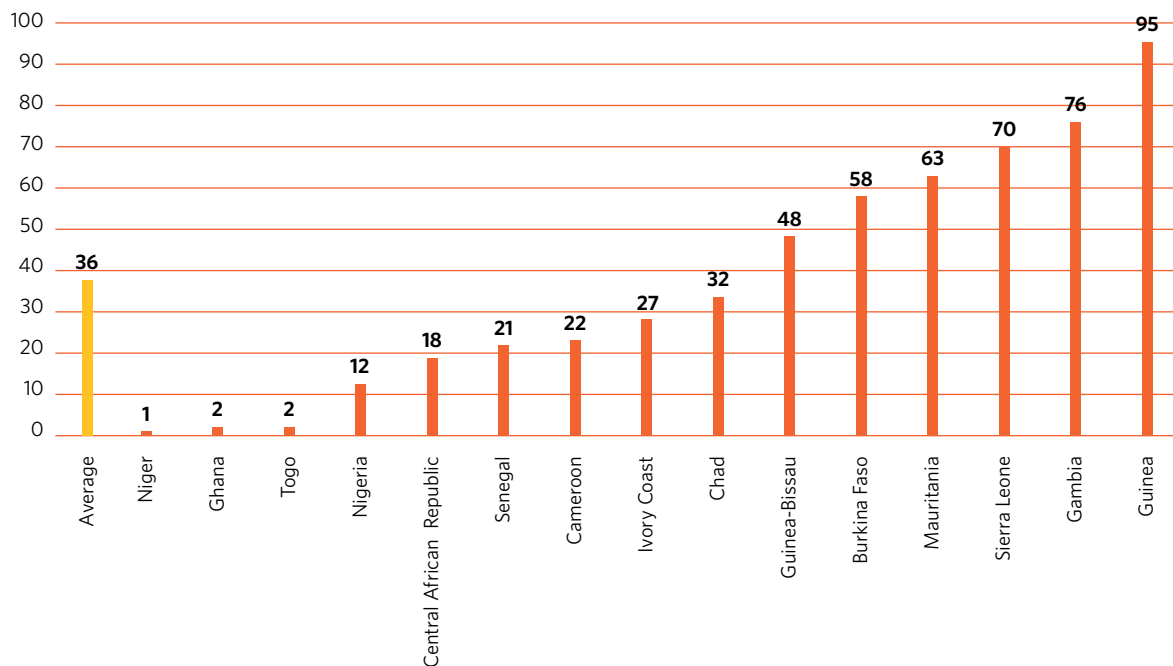
⁸⁵ Ibid.

FGM is also more prevalent in rural areas with Nigeria as an exception, where there are higher rates among urban residents.⁸⁶ By 2050, the percentage of people in urban areas in FGM affected countries is estimated to increase by almost 60 percent. Some changes from rural to urban migration could include increased prevalence in urban areas due to the movements of ethnic groups who practice FGM, as has been noted in Senegal.⁸⁷

The link between FGM and child marriage is seen in data for Guinea and Nigeria, that shows that daughters of mothers who were married before 18 are more at risk of FGM.⁸⁸ The same holds true for daughters of women who have received no education or those who tend to justify violence such as can be seen in Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone.⁸⁹

Figure 12: FGM Prevalence among Young Women 15-19 Years as Self-Reported

Source of data: ICF Macro Demographic and Health Surveys 2010-2016; UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys 2010-2016



Data only available for 15-49 year olds for Benin (9.2% MICS 2014) and Mali (82.7% MICS 2015)
Data not available from the range of DHS/MICS sources analysed for this report

⁸⁶ UNFPA Technical Division: Demographics Perspectives on Female Genital Mutilation, page 21; UNFPA New York.

⁸⁷ Ibid, page 21.

⁸⁸ Ibid, page 22.

⁸⁹ Ibid, page 22.

2.4. EDUCATION

Education is a fundamental right of all children and plays a central role in supporting effective transitions to adulthood. The education sector has a critical role to play in preparing children and young people to face sexual and reproductive health challenges through effective implementation of quality CSE (comprehensive sexuality education) programmes and to ensure that they all have access to safe, inclusive, health-promoting learning environments.⁹⁰ The growing population of young people in the region requires that ministries of education authorities in WCA countries improve and scale up CSE, which is a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. CSE aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to: realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and, understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.⁹¹ There is clear evidence that CSE has a positive impact on SRH, notably contributing to a reduction in sexually transmitted infections, HIV and unintended pregnancy. CSE improves knowledge and self-esteem, changes attitudes and gender social norms, and builds self-efficacy.⁹²

Low educational attainment may also be both a driver of child marriage, through limiting girl's employment and life options, as well as an outcome of child marriage. Getting girls to school and keeping them there for as long as possible is one of the best strategies to delay child marriage because educated girls are able to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to make decisions about their choices in life. The longer a girl stays in school, the less likely she is to be married before the age of 18 and have children during her adolescence.⁹³

Young people who drop out of school to work tend to have limited formal schooling and risk entering the labour market unprepared, are more vulnerable to shocks and more likely to get stuck in low-quality jobs, with few opportunities to develop their skills and move to better employment.

⁹⁰ UNESCO; UNESCO's Strategy on Education for Better Health and Well-Being: Contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals, November 2016.

⁹¹ UNESCO, UNFPA et al. International Technical Guidance on sexuality education. Revised edition. January 2018.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ UNICEF: Achieving a future without child marriage: Focus on West and Central Africa. UNICEF, New York, 2017.

Progression to Secondary Education Still a Challenge

Many countries have committed themselves to more than the achievement of universal primary education and now include several years of secondary school in their national targets. Globally, 84 per cent of lower secondary-school-age children are in either primary or secondary school, dropping to less than 70 per cent in low-income countries.⁹⁴ In WCA, the proportion of out-of-school adolescents of secondary school age declined from 46 per cent to 40 per cent over the last 15 years but increased in absolute numbers from 11 to 12.5 million, the only region in the world to show such a trend.

Wide gender disparities exist⁹⁵ in some countries indicating that gender inequalities in terms of access to education still exist and can seriously impede progress for young women in the region. In at least nine countries including Chad and Equatorial Guinea, the transition rate for boys is above 90 percent whereas only six countries show a transition rate higher than 90 percent for girls. At the same time, low transition rates in Gabon, Nigeria and Mauritania are a cause for concern with only 41 percent of girls transiting to secondary school in Gabon, 56 percent in Mauritania and 61 percent in Nigeria.



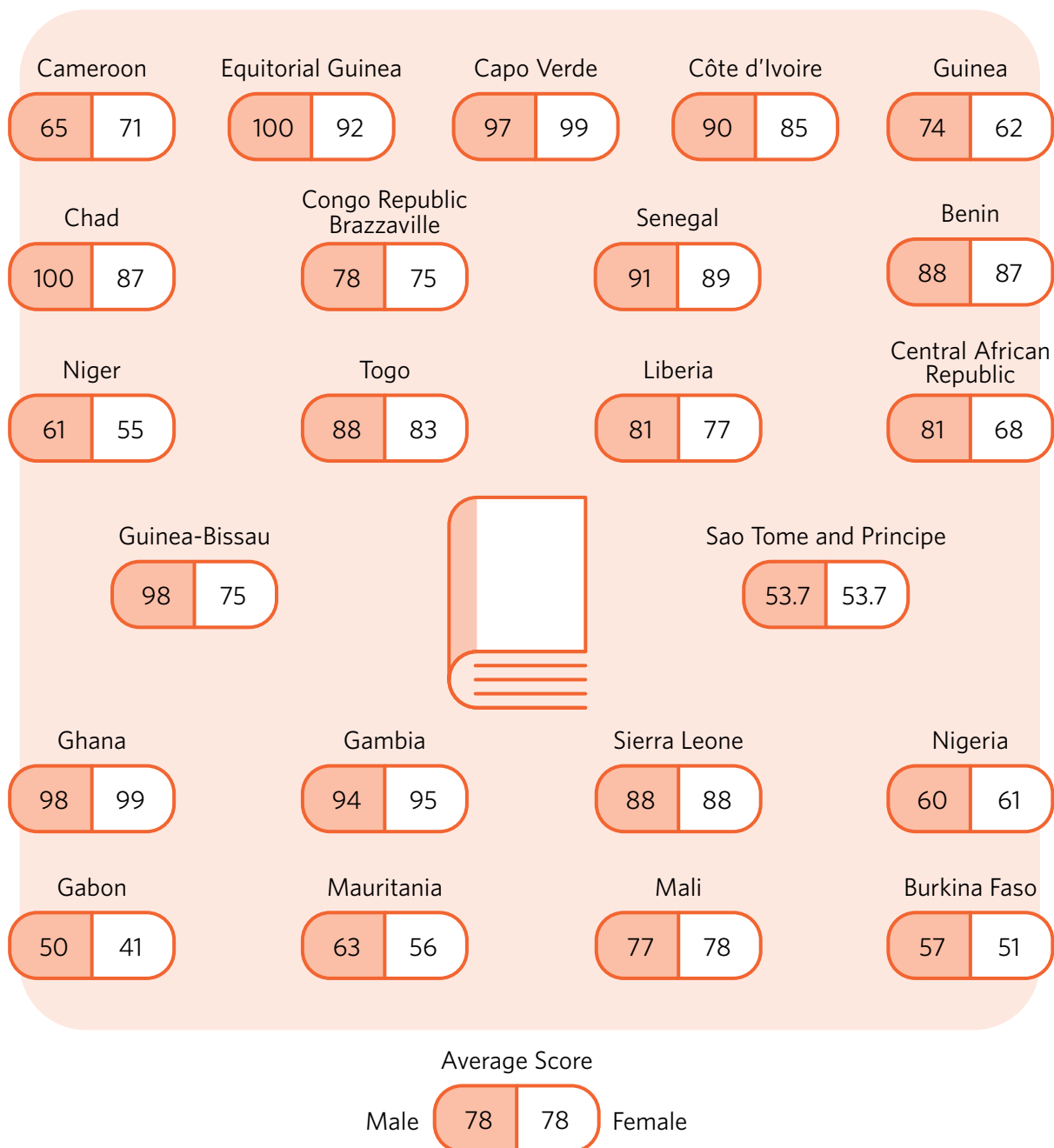
UNFPA/Luca Zordan

⁹⁴ Unicef Data: Monitoring the Situation of Women and Children-Secondary Education, July, 2018. Accessed at: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/secondary-education/> accessed September 2018.

⁹⁵ UIS data has been used for this indicator because the information in DHS reports was for only 10 countries while the UNICEF report based on UIS data gave 21 countries. There are also huge variations in the data as in a country like Ghana where data is available from both sources (76% transition for boys based on DHS and 98% based on UIS).

Figure 13: Progression to Secondary School- UIS

Source: UIS Statistics-Education/accessed at http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=edulit_ds/accessed March 2018



The barriers to school attendance at the secondary level include cost of secondary schooling which is often higher and more difficult for families to afford; secondary schools also tend to be farther from home, often requiring transportation; girls who get married and/or pregnant tend to drop out of school; and, the pressure to earn an income may lead some adolescents to drop out of school to search for work. As a result, secondary education is still reserved for a privileged fraction of the population in many countries.

Although the net enrolment rate (NER) of children in school in the region has increased at an average annual rate of 0.8 per cent since 1980, less than 60 per cent of school age children attend school today. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) in the region is high compared to a low net enrolment rate, indicating a large number of over-aged children in school⁹⁶. The high frequency of repetition, also explains the high gross enrolment rate and the number of over-aged children. High drop-out rates and low transition rates from the first to the fifth grade are other challenges the region faces. In Chad, for instance, only 1 child in 10 reaches the 5th year of school without repeating a grade.⁹⁷

Some governments in the region are also hard hit by poverty, giving them limited ability and capacity to ensure that there are enough schools, sufficient and qualified teachers and appropriate learning materials. Existing schools become overcrowded and their capacity is put at risk as they are no longer able to provide an appropriate standard of quality education. The lack of a good school infrastructure and unequal distribution of schools, can also mean that many children have to travel long distances to get to their school. Parents sometimes do not want to take the risk of sending younger children and girls to school if they have to walk long distances. The region also has a generally poor quality of education due to a shortage of teachers, low teacher salaries and limited training and development opportunities for teachers.

An analysis of the DHS data shows that in West and Central Africa, the wealthiest youth have significant educational advantage over their most economically impoverished peers. For instance, Burkina Faso's high-income households have 43 percent of youth joining secondary school against 4 percent from poorer households. This underscores the importance of programmes that eliminate or significantly reduce school fees.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ When the NER is compared with the GER, the difference between the two highlights the incidence of under-aged and over-aged enrolment. If the NER is below 100%, then the complement, i.e. the difference with 100%, provides a measure of the proportion of children not enrolled at the specified level of education.

⁹⁷ Unicef WCARO: Achieving Universal Primary Education and Eliminating Gender Disparity in Education/accessed at https://www.unicef.org/wcaro/overview_4545.html/accessed March, 2018.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Gender Disparities Persist

In West and Central Africa, girls account for 55 percent of all out-of-school children (at primary and secondary levels and of all ages) and 52 percent of all out-of-school adolescents.

The region is likely to fail to reach the goal of gender parity in primary education: the average gross parity index (girls vs boys) in primary school for the region currently stands at 0.93 (0.75 in CAR to 1.10 in Congo); with important disparities not only between countries, but also within countries. Gender, wealth and geographic disparities intersect to leave girls from the poorest households living in rural areas with only a 30 percent probability of completing primary school. Gender disparities worsen beyond primary school, with the gender parity index decreasing to 0.82 at lower secondary level, and further down to 0.73 at upper secondary level.⁹⁹

The particular situation of girls in the West & Central African region requires urgent action as their chances of realizing the manifold benefits of education are far less than the girls of any other region in the world. In the region only 90 girls are enrolled in secondary school for every 100 boys and there are high variances between countries depicting a clear advantage for boys over girls. While in some countries, gender parity has been achieved, others display very low gender indices; for example, Chad where the gender index stands at 0.59. This ultimately means that boys have higher participation rates in secondary education with only 5 countries (Sao Tome and Principe, Congo Brazzaville, Gabon, Ghana and Nigeria) having a gender disparity in favour of girls. In addition, it should be emphasized that the gap in the level of education between young men and women keeps on growing as the level of education increases.

This underscores the importance of programmes to empower girls in terms of access to education.¹⁰⁰ There are several barriers to education for girls leading to low participation, performance and completion rates for girls. Unequal gender norms, child marriage and adolescent pregnancy in the region severely reduce the likelihood of girls staying in school. Early and unintended pregnancies are often linked to child marriage, poor sexual and reproductive health (SRH) including HIV infection, and school-related gender-based violence (GBV) and have a marked impact on the education and future prospects of young people.¹⁰¹

99 UNESCO Institute of Statistics, UNICEF: Regional Report West and Central Africa- All Children in School; Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children. UNESCO, 2015.

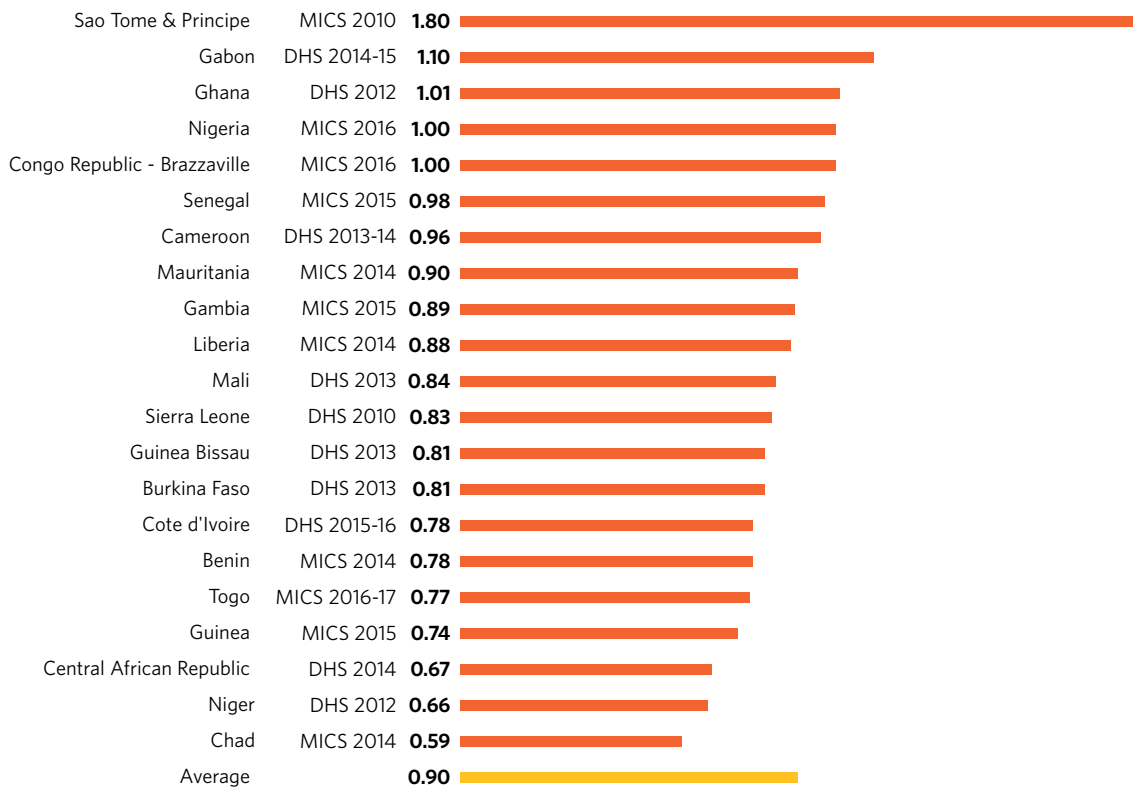
100 UNICEF WCARO; Achieving Universal Primary Education and Eliminating Gender Disparity in Education/accessed at; https://www.unicef.org/wcaro/overview_4545.html/accessed March 2018.

101 UNESCO; UNESCO's Strategy on Education for Better Health and Well-Being: contributing to the sustainable development goals, November 2016.

Financial barriers are also shown to be a key obstacle to girls accessing education. With the high cost of schooling given as the main reason for their children not attending school this disproportionately affects girls as social norms leading may prioritize of boys' education.¹⁰²

Figure 14: Gender Parity Index, Secondary Education

Source of Data: ICF Macro Demographic and Health Surveys 2010-2016 and UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys 2010-2016



Note: Data not available for Equatorial Guinea and Cape Verde in the DHS/MICS sources analysed for this report.

¹⁰² Eline Versluys: 28 Million Girls Without Access to Education. Global Partnerships for Education, October 23rd 2017/ accessed at http://www.unesco.org/new/en/dakar/about-this-office/single-view/news/sdg4_education_2030_west_and_central_africa_regional_coordi/ accessed March 2018.

School Exclusion a Major Barrier to Youth Empowerment, Health and Wellbeing

Despite significant progress in the attainment of universal primary education across the world, the WCA region has the most out-of-school children in the world accounting for 36 percent of the world's proportion in 2010. This is an increase compared to 1999 when it accounted for 22 percent of the world's out-of-school children. Nigeria, for example, has 8.7 million primary-school-aged children who do not attend school.

The region exhibits high variability with the proportion of out-of-lower-secondary school children ranging from 6 percent in Gabon to 70 percent in Niger. Notably, a large number of the children of lower secondary school age are reported to be in primary school.¹⁰³ In countries such as Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea Bissau and Senegal, more than half of the children currently old enough to be in lower secondary school are excluded from any educational facility. The UNESCO and UNICEF report for WCA (2015) indicates that 38 percent (3,042,500) of children in the region attending lower secondary school are at risk of future exclusion (dropping out before completion) with some of the highest at risk identified in Niger and Burkina Faso.

It should be noted that countries in this region have the highest population growth rates and the highest poverty incidences which are contributing factors to the high – and increasing – numbers of out of school adolescents. Factors such as income, location, gender norms, child labour and children's family circumstances as well as the direct and indirect costs of education, lack of schools, teachers and equipment among others contribute to the large numbers of out-of-school adolescents (UNESCO, 2014b). Political tensions, conflict and insecurity, and natural disasters also partly explain the out-of-school phenomena.

Adolescent pregnancy also contributes to school exclusion especially for girls. Notably, Niger which has then second highest adolescent fertility rates and the highest child marriage rates in the region also has the highest proportion of out of school adolescents (73 percent) which shows the linkages between child marriage and adolescent pregnancy with adolescent girls being out of school.¹⁰⁴

The education sector has a key role to play in contributing to the reduction of health risks related to early and unintended pregnancy. It needs to work closely with the health sector to ensure support for pregnant girls and adolescent mothers to continue their schooling. The health and education sector should coordinate their efforts to provide comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in and out-of-schools and to strengthen links between CSE and sexual and reproductive health services for young people. Bridging the gap between adolescent needs and

¹⁰³ Ubid.

¹⁰⁴ ICRW, UNICEF: Child Marriage, Adolescent Pregnancy and Family Formation in West and Central Africa- Patterns, Trends and Drivers of Change. UNICEF, 2015.

available services is crucially important for children and adolescents, whose health literacy and autonomy in knowing when and where to seek advice is often limited. School health services – with their unique position at the intersection of the health and education sector – are well placed to ensure a continuum of health promotion, prevention and referral.¹⁰⁵

The WCA region is particularly prone to crises and armed conflict. Between 1999 and 2008, 8 countries were officially affected by armed conflict¹⁰⁶ explaining in part the reasons for the increase in out-of-school children stated earlier. The region has been disproportionately affected by conflicts and emergencies and the damage done to education systems by war is incalculable. Conflicts have led to the deaths of teachers and pupils and the physical destruction of schools and have led to many education systems remaining dysfunctional for long periods. Even where physical destruction is not an issue, political instability has jeopardized national education systems and the opportunities for children to benefit from quality education.

Table 10: Out of Lower Secondary School Adolescents

Source of data: UNESCO Institute for Statistics and UNICEF: *Out of School; All Children in School by 2015- Global Initiative on Out-Of-School Children: - Regional Report for West and Central Africa.*

Country	%	Country	%
Gabon	6 UIS and UNICEF 2015	Equatorial Guinea	30.6 UIS 2001
Congo Republic	12 UIS and UNICEF 2015	Gambia	22.25 UIS 2000
Sao Tome & Principe	12.56 UIS 2015	Guinea	51.54 UIS 2004
Ghana	6.85 UIS 2015	Central African Republic	55.4 UIS 2012
Cameroon	37.45 UIS 2014	Côte d'Ivoire	43 UIS and UNICEF 2013
Benin	36.5 UIS 2013	Senegal	57.47 UIS 2006
Togo	39.47 UIS 2007	Guinea-Bissau	53.49 UIS 2000
Liberia	26 UIS and UNICEF 2015	Mali	46.57 UIS 2014
Nigeria	26 UIS and UNICEF 2015	Burkina Faso	46.9 UIS 2013
Sierra Leone	30.9 UIS 2014	Niger	70.35 UIS 2014
Mauritania	41.5 UIS 2014	Cape Verde	8.95 UIS 2014
Chad	57 UIS 2003	WCA average	34

¹⁰⁵ UNESCO: Developing an Education Sector Response To Early And Unintended Pregnancy- Discussion Document for a Global Consultation. UNESCO, November, 2014.

¹⁰⁶ Countries affected by armed conflict include Central African Republic, Chad, DRC, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Mali as of 2012.

2.5. EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment Rates Among Young People on the Rise in WCA

Generally, the labour market outcomes for youth in Africa vary dramatically. There are distinct differences between labour markets in LICs (Low Income Countries) and MICs (Middle Income Countries) in Africa. The World Bank on July 1st 2016 defined low-income economies as those with a GNI per capita, of \$1,025 or less in 2015; lower middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$1,026 and \$4,035 and upper middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$4,036 and \$12,475¹⁰⁷. These classifications are calculated by the World Bank using their Atlas method.

In WCA, the LICs are Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, CAR, Chad and Congo Republic-Brazzaville. The lower MICs comprises of Côte D'Ivoire, Mauritania, Nigeria, Cameroon Ghana and Sao Tome e Principe while the Upper MICs are Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.¹⁰⁸

LICs tend to be characterized by low official unemployment which may be attributed to a large share of agricultural employment which is seasonable in nature.¹⁰⁹ Low employment rates go hand-in-hand with highly vulnerable employment rates especially among own-account workers. MICs tend to report higher unemployment (often among the educated as well), lower labour market participation and more formal sector employment. In addition, rural-urban, gender and education differences continue to be important determinants of labour markets for youth.

According to a 2010 UNECA report, two of the principal reasons for Africa's high unemployment rates are: 1) a mismatch between educational systems and the skills needed in the labour market, and 2) the saturated public services and small private sector businesses that are unable to employ large numbers of people. Other relevant reasons include labour demand barriers, such as observed discrimination by employers towards young people on the grounds of lack of experience; information gaps between job seekers and potential employers; and barriers to the creation and development of business opportunities, particularly in gaining access to financial, physical and social capital.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ The World Bank: New Country Classifications by Income Level, 2017/accessed at; <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/new-country-classifications/> accessed October, 2017.

¹⁰⁸ The World Bank: World Development Indicators/accessed at; <https://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators/> accessed November 2017.

¹⁰⁹ Own-account workers and contributing family workers have a lower likelihood of having formal work arrangements, and are therefore more likely to lack elements associated with decent employment, such as adequate social security and a voice at work. Therefore, the two statuses are summed to create a classification of 'vulnerable employment', while wage and salaried workers together with employers constitute 'non-vulnerable employment'. (ILO definition).

¹¹⁰ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and United Nations Programme on Youth: Regional Overview-Youth in Africa. United Nations Programme on Youth Fact Sheet, 2010-2011.

In terms of labour force participation in the WCA, 43 percent of young people aged 15-24 years participate in the labour market based on 2017 data from ILO. Unemployment rates among young people (15-24 years) are below 30 percent in most countries which is partly explained due to high numbers of young people in the informal sector.

Gabon had one of the lowest labour participation rates among young people in WCA averaging at 17 percent in 2017 and one of the highest unemployment rates in the region at 36.5 percent.

The data on youth unemployment and under-employment has been generated through the ILO Stat database available at <https://www.ilo.org/ilostat>. As per the ILO definition, unemployment refers to the share of the labor force that is without work but available for and seeking employment. The unemployed comprise all persons of working age who were: a) without work during the reference period, i.e. where not in paid employment or self-employment; b) currently available for work, i.e. were available for paid employment or self-employment during the reference period; and c) seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in a specified recent period to seek paid employment or self-employment. The reference period varies slightly from country to country; you can see the exact definition per country on the ILO website. The unemployment rate is the number of persons who are unemployed as a percent of the total number of employed and unemployed persons (i.e., the labour force). The calculation formula is $\text{Persons employed} / \text{labour force (persons employed + persons unemployed)} * 100$.

Persons in employment are defined as all those of working age who, during a short reference period, were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit. They comprise employed persons “at work”, i.e. who worked in a job for at least one hour; and employed persons “not at work” due to temporary absence from a job, or to working-time arrangements (such as shift work, flexitime and compensatory leave for overtime).

It is important to note that there may be disparities between nationally reported figures and the ILO data. This is because country level data are usually directly derived from, for example, national labour market surveys. ILO, in contrast, models its estimates and standardizes data reported at country-level to fill in years for which country data are unavailable and obtain a harmonized data set that is comparable across countries. The definitions, data source, scope of coverage, methodology, can be very different between countries. This report uses the ILO definitions and data as ILO uses a standardized methodology which allows comparisons between countries.

Table 11: Overall Labour Force Participation Rates for youth 15-24 years

Source: ILO Modelled Estimates July, 2017; Accessed 17th May 2018 from ILOSTAT. ILO uses the National Labour Force Surveys conducted in the countries to calculate the labour force participation rate; calculation formula=Labour Force (persons employed + persons unemployed) / working age population * 100)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Benin	43.50	43.20	42.90	42.60	42.30
Burkina Faso	54.40	52.60	52.30	52.00	51.70
Cameroon	57.00	56.70	56.30	56.00	55.80
Cape Verde	37.50	36.50	35.60	34.70	34.50
Central African Republic	53.50	53.80	54.00	53.50	53.70
Chad	57.10	56.60	55.90	55.50	55.40
Congo	44.40	44.40	44.40	44.30	44.40
Côte d'Ivoire	37.70	36.90	36.10	35.30	35.20
Equatorial Guinea	30.40	30.30	30.10	29.70	29.30
Gabon	17.80	17.60	17.30	17.40	17.10
Gambia	41.70	41.30	40.90	40.60	40.60
Ghana	54.70	54.30	53.90	53.60	53.70
Guinea	45.00	44.60	44.10	43.70	43.60
Guinea-Bissau	50.80	50.50	50.20	50.10	49.80
Liberia	30.90	30.40	29.80	29.30	29.30
Mali	59.70	60.30	60.20	60.00	60.40
Mauritania	33.00	32.60	32.20	32.00	31.70
Niger	71.10	71.10	71.10	71.20	71.50
Nigeria	23.70	23.70	23.60	23.50	23.20
Sao Tome and Principe	37.70	37.10	36.50	35.90	35.70
Senegal	41.70	41.60	41.50	41.30	41.30
Sierra Leone	31.00	29.70	29.20	28.70	28.50
Togo	64.30	64.00	63.50	63.10	63.00
Average Per Year	44.30	43.90	43.50	43.20	43.10

Table 12: Overall Unemployment Rates for Youth 15-24 years

Source: ILO Modelled Estimates July, 2017; Accessed 17th May 2018 from ILOSTAT. ILO uses the National Labour Force Surveys conducted in the countries to calculate the unemployment rate; calculation formula= Persons employed/ labour force (persons employed + persons unemployed) * 100)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Benin	5.40	5.40	5.40	5.30	5.20
Burkina Faso	8.00	8.60	8.60	8.60	8.60
Cameroon	9.60	9.10	9.10	8.90	8.90
Cape Verde	17.80	17.80	17.80	18.00	17.80
Central African Republic	11.30	11.40	11.50	11.00	10.60
Chad	10.20	10.20	10.10	10.10	10.10
Congo	20.70	20.80	20.70	21.50	22.50
Côte d'Ivoire	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.70
Equatorial Guinea	11.30	11.30	11.20	12.70	14.20
Gabon	36.20	36.20	36.20	36.30	36.50
Gambia	12.90	12.80	12.90	12.90	12.90
Ghana	4.60	4.50	4.50	4.70	4.90
Guinea	5.60	5.60	5.50	5.50	5.50
Guinea-Bissau	11.50	11.40	11.50	11.50	11.60
Liberia	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.30	3.30
Mali	11.10	8.10	18.20	18.10	18.00
Mauritania	17.00	17.00	17.00	17.80	18.60
Niger	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Nigeria	9.80	8.50	8.10	13.10	13.40
Sao Tome and Principe	26.20	26.20	26.20	26.70	27.10
Senegal	9.00	7.30	5.30	5.40	5.50
Sierra Leone	9.30	9.50	9.40	9.30	9.00
Togo	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80
Average Per Year	11.22	10.96	11.28	11.64	11.79

Gender Inequality in the Labour Market Still a Concern for Young People (15-24yrs) in the Region

Educational attainment shapes employment opportunities. In addition to the high levels of unemployment among the youth (15-24yrs) in WCA, high rates of gender disparity in employment are also a major problem. Given that the region has the lowest gender parity in primary education in the world (0.93)¹¹¹, girls have a fragile foundation on which to build specialized skills. This directly affects their ability to find decent employment in the already saturated public services and small private sector businesses. This is a major factor contributing to the high unemployment rates among young women averaging to 13.01 percent.^{112 113}



UNFPA/Ollivier Girard

¹¹¹ UNESCO, UNICEF: All Children in School by 2015- Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children; Regional Report for West and Central Africa. UNESCO 2015.

¹¹² Unemployment Definition-(modeled ILO estimate): Unemployment refers to the share of the labor force that is without work but available for and seeking employment.

¹¹³ The standard definition of unemployed persons is those individuals without work, seeking work in a recent past period, and currently available for work, including people who have lost their jobs or who have voluntarily left work. Persons who did not look for work but have an arrangement for a future job are also counted as unemployed. Some unemployment is unavoidable. At any time some workers are temporarily unemployed between jobs.

Table 13: Unemployment Rate for Female Youth 15-24 years

Source: ILO Modelled Estimates July, 2017; Accessed 17th May 2018 from ILOSTAT. ILO uses the National Labour Force Surveys conducted in the countries to calculate the unemployment rate; calculation formula= Persons (female) employed/ labour force (persons-female employed + persons-female unemployed) * 100)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Benin	5.80	5.80	5.70	5.70	5.60
Burkina Faso	11.80	12.90	12.90	12.80	12.80
Cameroon	11.30	10.70	10.70	10.60	10.50
Cape Verde	20.30	20.30	20.30	20.60	20.50
Central African Republic	11.70	12.00	12.10	11.70	11.30
Chad	11.00	11.00	10.90	10.90	11.10
Congo	20.30	20.50	20.20	21.00	22.00
Côte d'Ivoire	5.40	5.30	5.10	5.00	4.90
Equatorial Guinea	11.90	12.00	11.70	13.10	14.40
Gabon	43.00	42.90	42.90	42.80	42.90
Gambia	17.30	17.20	17.30	17.30	17.40
Ghana	5.00	4.90	4.90	5.10	5.30
Guinea	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.60
Guinea-Bissau	12.10	12.00	12.10	12.20	12.30
Liberia	4.10	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Mali	12.50	7.10	19.60	19.50	19.40
Mauritania	19.60	19.60	19.40	20.40	21.30
Niger	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
Nigeria	11.20	9.70	9.20	14.90	15.30
Sao Tome and Principe	29.20	29.20	29.20	30.00	30.60
Senegal	12.60	9.10	5.50	5.70	5.90
Sierra Leone	6.00	6.00	5.80	5.90	5.70
Togo	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20
Average Per Year	12.57	12.14	12.46	12.88	13.05

Table 14: Unemployment Rates for Male Youth 15-24 years

Source: ILO Modelled Estimates July, 2017; Accessed 17th May 2018 from ILOSTAT. ILO uses the National Labour Force Surveys conducted in the countries to calculate the unemployment rate; calculation formula= Persons-male employed/ labour force (persons-male employed + persons-male unemployed) * 100)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Benin	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.80	4.70
Burkina Faso	5.20	5.40	5.40	5.40	5.50
Cameroon	8.10	7.60	7.60	7.50	7.50
Cape Verde	16.30	16.30	16.30	16.30	16.10
Central African Republic	10.90	10.90	10.90	10.40	10.00
Chad	9.30	9.30	9.30	9.40	9.20
Congo	21.20	21.20	21.20	22.10	23.00
Côte d'Ivoire	3.00	2.90	2.80	2.80	2.80
Equatorial Guinea	10.90	10.90	10.90	12.50	14.00
Gabon	31.40	31.40	31.40	31.60	31.80
Gambia	9.20	9.20	9.20	9.20	9.20
Ghana	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.40	4.50
Guinea	6.70	6.70	6.70	6.70	6.70
Guinea-Bissau	10.90	10.90	10.90	10.90	10.90
Liberia	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.60	2.60
Mali	10.10	8.80	17.10	17.00	16.80
Mauritania	15.70	15.70	15.70	16.50	17.20
Niger	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.80
Nigeria	8.70	7.60	7.20	11.60	11.90
Sao Tome and Principe	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.40	25.50
Senegal	6.90	6.10	5.20	5.20	5.20
Sierra Leone	13.90	14.50	14.50	14.40	13.90
Togo	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40
Average Per Year	10.40	10.27	10.57	10.90	11.01

Underemployment

Many people in WCA are too poor to be able to afford not to work. So, they may find work but it is often temporary, insecure and in the informal sector. Thus, measures of underemployment do a better job of capturing labour market imbalances. They aim to quantify the number of people who are forced to work fewer hours or take a less skilled job in a less productive economic unit to avoid unemployment and who therefore earn less than they could normally earn.

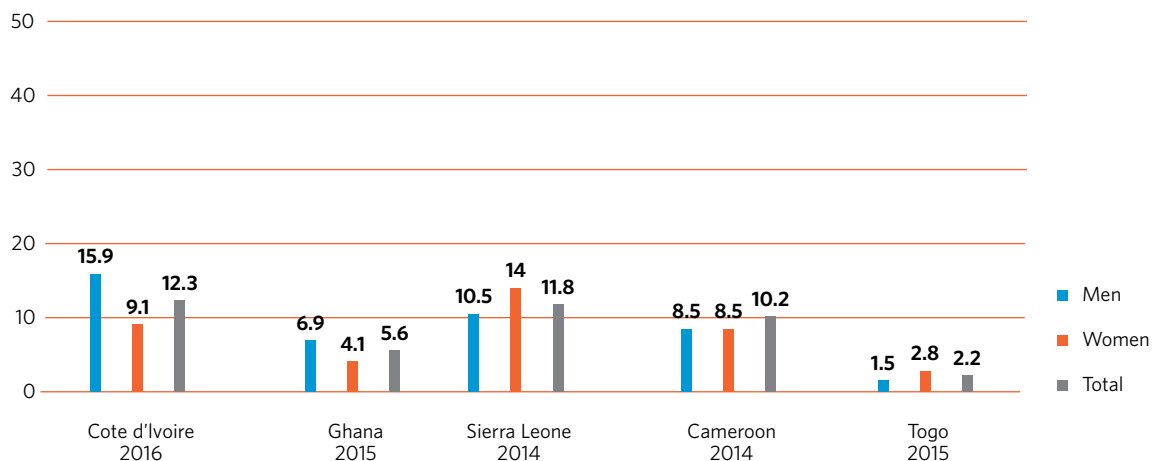
Underemployment is more prevalent among women more than men, youth more than adults, and is more prevalent in rural rather than urban areas. Cameroon displays the highest disparity in underemployment between young men and women with 42.7 percent of young women compared to 26.3 percent of young men underemployed.

Data in figures 15 show disparities in underemployment between young men and women where in Cameroon, 42.7 percent of young women compared to 26.3 percent of young men are underemployed. In Mauritania, more than half of the young people are underemployed with very slight differences in gender (men & women), age (youth & adults) and location (rural & urban).

Figure 15: Underemployment Among Young Men and Women (15-24 years) (%)

Source: International Labour Organisation; ILOSTAT (Underemployment rate refers to total under employed expressed as a proportion of total employed. A person is classified as underemployed if the total number of hours worked during the week is less than 30. The specific age range for this data is 15-24)

Accessed at: https://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/ilostat-home/metadata?_adf.ctrl-state=16kaeftj36_182&_afzLoop=2409208783287565#, accessed on 12th November 2018)



The World Bank: Africa Development Indicators- Youth & Employment in Africa; The Potential, The Problem, The Promise. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 2009. International Labour Organisation; ILOSTAT



UN Photo/Hien Macline

Tracking how many youth participate in the informal sector is difficult for a number of reasons and limited data currently exists. The informal sector represents the dominant share of many sectors across the continent, especially in manufacturing, commerce, finance and mining. Trade-related activities, including street vending, is the most common form of activity in Africa's informal sector.¹¹⁴ African labour markets remain marked by large disparities in incomes between a small number of formal public and private employees, and the vast informal sector. These informal sector workers have no job security, minimal benefits, very low pay, and often face hazardous working conditions. The challenge therefore is to create decent jobs, as well as more jobs. Impediments to both labour demand and supply account for Africa's lagging performance in creating formal sector jobs:

- 1 Lack of demand for labour arising from the product market;
- 2 Human capital deficiencies due to inadequate education, training and health services.¹¹⁵

On the labour demand side, firms emphasize lack of infrastructure, corruption and pervasive red tape as the most significant barriers to investment. On the supply side, schooling and training programs often fail to provide the skills that employers seek. While enrolments in secondary and higher education have risen, vocational training has lagged behind. The educational system also fails to foster entrepreneurship skills among young people.¹¹⁶

114 Donald L. Sparks et al: The Informal Sector in Sub Saharan Africa-Out of the Shadows to Foster Sustainable Employment and Equity; International Business and Economic Research Journal-May 2010, Volume 9, Number 5.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid.

Are Youth Engaged in Productive Activities?

The Youth NEET ('Not in Employment, Education or Training') rate denotes the share of youth not in education, employment or training. It serves as a broader measure of potential youth labour market entrants than youth unemployment.

Middle-income countries, especially the lower middle-income countries, have the highest NEET rates and the largest gender disparities. Many low-income countries do not have data on NEET, but when they do, the rates are generally low since many youth are engaged in informal agricultural or urban livelihood activities. Given rapidly growing youth populations in low-income countries, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, NEET rates are likely to rise unless investments are made in more educational and job opportunities for youth.¹¹⁷

Except for most high-income countries, NEET rates generally are much higher for young women than young men. Young women often have less access to jobs, education, and training, and are more likely to be fully engaged in non-labour market activities, such as caregiving and household work.

Youth NEET rate in WCA is generally lower compared to other regions where country data is available. Gambia (2012 data) had the highest Youth NEET rates at 34 percent, on the other hand, Togo had the lowest NEET rates in the region at 10 percent (2012 data).

¹¹⁸ However, when consideration is given to the aspect of job quality and when the wider definition of unemployment to include those who have given up on searching for a job is applied as reported in ILO's Global Employment Trends For Youth Report (2013)¹¹⁹; 54.3 per cent of Togolese youth are engaged in low-productive, irregular employment. If the irregularly employed, unemployed and inactive non-students are put together, the labour underutilization rate¹²⁰ of Togolese youth is very high at 71.9 percent.

117 Population Reference Bureau; World Population Data- Focus on Youth/accessed at <http://www.worldpopdata.org/> accessed on 19th March 2018.

118 The World Bank Data, Share of youth not in education, employment or training, total (% of youth population); International Labour Organization, Key Indicators of the Labour Market database; <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.UEM.NEET.ZS/> accessed March 2018

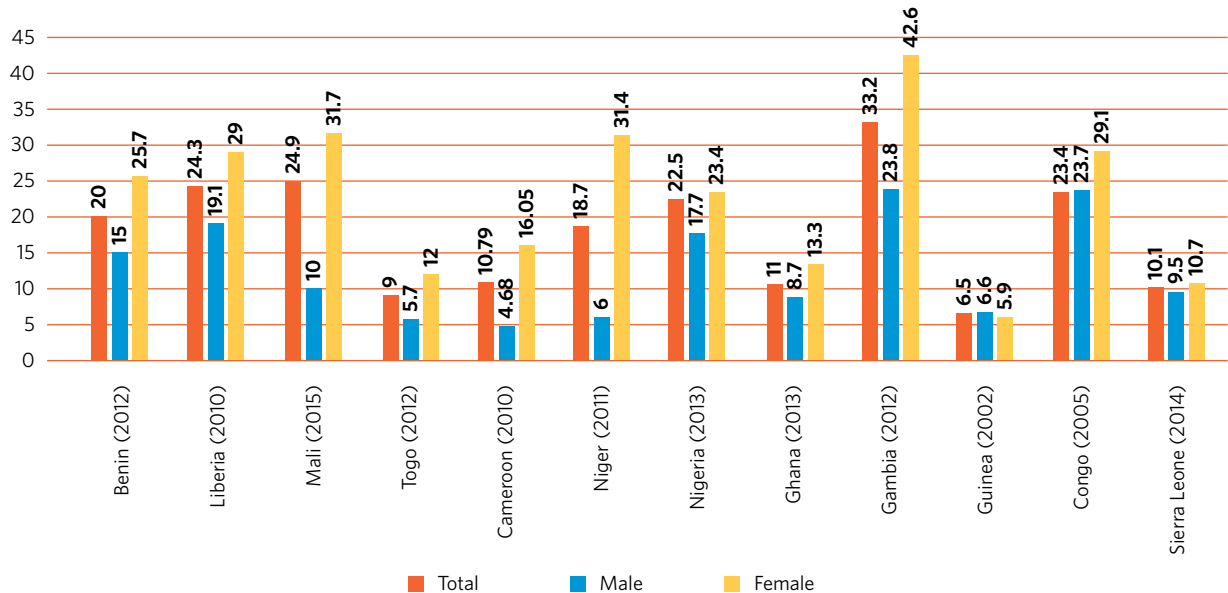
119 ILO: Global Employment Trends For Youth: A Generation at Risk. International Labour Office, Geneva, 2013.

120 According to ILO, there are three main measures of labour underutilization recognised in the international statistical standards: Time related underemployment, unemployment and potential labour force (Source: International Labour Organization: Unemployment and Labour Underutilization Statistics/accessed at: http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/statistics-overview-and-topics/WCMS_470306/lang--en/index.htm accessed March 2018

Figure 16: Youth NEET Rates; Selected WCA Countries

Source of data; The World Bank Data, International Labour Organisation, ILOSTAT Database; Data Source for Mali is the UNFPA Sub-Saharan Dashboard. Data unavailable for missing countries.

ILO Database: http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/oracle/webcenter/portalapp/pagehierarchy/Page3.jspx?MBL_ID=20&_



Challenges Persist in Measuring TVET Participation

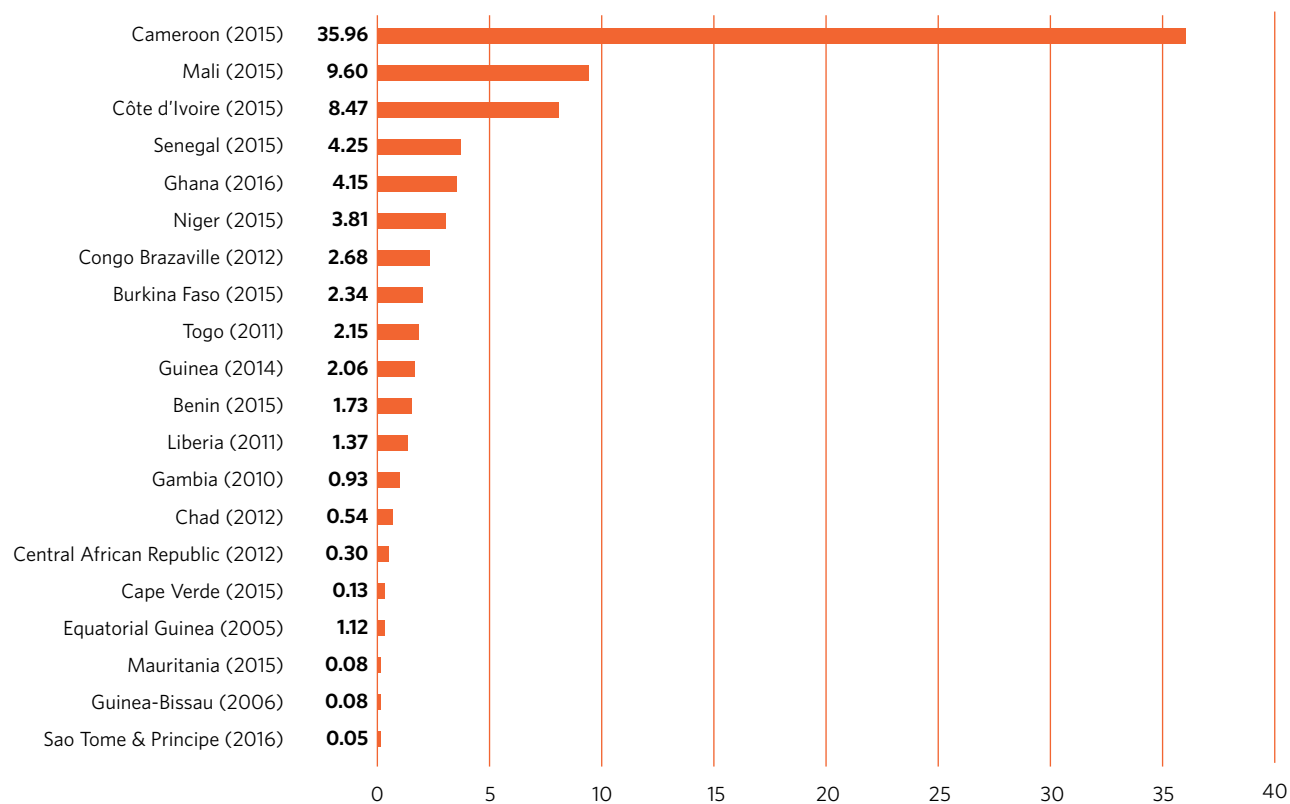
Technical and Vocational Education and Training, or TVET, is an expression that refers to an entire range of relevant learning experiences for the world of work. TVET is meant to provide young people with practical and applicable skills, and thus the opportunity to engage in income-generating livelihoods.

Technical and vocational education and training has not been a top priority for many African countries. In 2012, technical and vocational programs accounted for only 6 per cent of total secondary enrolment in the region, a slight drop from 7 percent in 1999.¹²¹ TVET programs markedly declined in the 1980s due to budgetary shortfalls in the education sector of many African countries and have never fully recovered. On average, only about 2 to 6 percent of educational budgets are devoted to technical and vocation skills development. In addition, there are challenges with obtaining quality TVET data for West African countries (even compared with Central Africa) in more recent years.

¹²¹ State of Education in Africa Report- A Report Card on the Progress, Opportunities and Challenges Confronting the African Education Sector. The Africa- America Institute, 2015.

Figure 17: Vocational Participation (Lower and Upper Secondary)

Source of data: The World Bank Data, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (updated 2017)



2.6 ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH IN EMERGENCIES

Young People in Emergencies

Adolescents and youth in West and Central Africa are vulnerable to conflict. In the Central African Republic and the Lake Chad basin, widespread violence and armed conflict characterized by grave human rights violations have led to mass displacement both internally and across borders. More than 6 million people in the region remain displaced due to conflict: 874,000 people¹²² in the Central African Republic; 2.6 million people¹²³ in the Lake Chad basin¹²⁴; and more than 172,000 people¹²⁵ due to the conflict in Mali.

The region is also disproportionately affected by conflict-induced or forced migration. An average of 57 percent of the total refugees from the WCA region seeking asylum in other countries (based on countries where data is available¹²⁶) are under the age of 18 (see table 15 below). Ghana has the largest percentage of young people (64 percent) among refugees in the country but Central African Republic has the highest number of youth refugees under the age of 18. There is a paucity of data on young people in emergencies which highlights the need to improve data collection, estimation and use on of data on this issue in the region.



UN Photo/Albert Gonzalez Farran

¹²² UNICEF: Humanitarian Action for Children- West and Central Africa; UNICEF, 2017.

¹²³ UNFPA: Demographic Dynamics and the Crisis of Countries around Lake Chad. United Nations Population Fund West and Central Africa Regional Office, 2017.

¹²⁴ Countries in the Lake Chad Basin are Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon.

¹²⁵ Ibid- UNICEF: Humanitarian Action for Children- West and Central Africa; UNICEF, 2017.

¹²⁶ Countries where data is available on migrants and refugees are Togo, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Central African Republic, Mauritania and Ghana.

Table 15: Proportion of Youth Below 18 Years Who are Refugees by Country of OriginSource: UNICEF Global Databases: Child Migrants & Refugees; <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-migration-and-displacement/migration/> accessed March 2018

Country	Total Number of Refugees based on the country as the origin as per Unicef Data 31 st August 2016	Share of under 18 years among total refugees	Number of under 18 among total refugees (derived from the 2 nd and 3 rd column)
Ghana	23,000	64%	14,720
Central African Republic	471,000	58%	273,180
Mali	154,000	58%	89,320
Mauritania	35,000	58%	20,300
Chad	15,000	54%	8,100
Côte d'Ivoire	71,000	52%	36,920
Liberia	10,000	35%	3,500
Togo	9,000	34%	3,060
Total	788,000		449,100 (57%)

West and Central Africa has a long history of population mobility, both regionally and internationally. According to OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), 86 percent of migration in West Africa is intra-regional while the remaining 14 percent is dispersed between North America and Europe. Forced migration is noted to contribute to higher immigrant populations; Chad for example is a major country of asylum hosting an estimated 224,000 refugees.¹²⁷

There were an estimated 2 million adolescents and youth migrants in the WCA region according to 2013 data, which showed the worrying trend that almost a third were very young (10-14 years). Countries in the region have a wide variation of their share of migrants in the region with Cape Verde representing the highest proportion for all age groups (at 21, 28 and 35 percent for the 10-14, 15-19 and 20-24 age groups respectively.)

¹²⁷ Julie E. Larsen: Young People in West and Central Africa- Trends, Priorities, Investments & Partners (page 19). UNICEF West and Central African Regional Office, July 2009.

Table 16: Proportion of WCA Young People Who Were Migrants in 2013

Source: United Nations, Population Division Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2013 Revision.

Country	10-14	15-19	20-24
Cameroon	4	4	4
Central African Republic	2	2	2
Chad	7	7	6
Congo	5	4	5
Equatorial Guinea	0	0	0
Gabon	4	5	5
Sao Tome & Principe	0	0	0
Benin	8	3	3
Cape Verde	0	0	0
Côte d'Ivoire	21	28	35
Gambia	2	2	2
Ghana	6	6	5
Guinea	8	6	5
Guinea-Bissau	0	0	0
Liberia	3	4	2
Mali	5	4	3
Mauritania	1	1	1
Niger	2	2	2
Nigeria	19	15	13
Senegal	3	3	3
Sierra Leone	1	1	1
Togo	3	3	8
Total	30%	34%	36%

Some of the identified causes of armed conflict that lead to adolescent and youth migration and displacement in West and Central Africa include¹²⁸; state fragility and governance failures, border issues in West and Central Africa, small arms proliferation and environmental issues.

The best way to prevent forced migration and displacement is to prevent conflicts while putting in place strong rights-based international and regional policies for addressing migration and peace and security issues as well as policies for policies and internally displaced persons. However, challenges such as lack of coordination, capacity and resources have hindered implementation.¹²⁹

Recruitment of children and young people during armed conflict

The recruitment and use of children by armed groups is one of the ‘six grave violations’ against children identified by the United Nations Security Council. Nigeria, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone and CAR are listed as some of the African countries where children were used in armed conflict.¹³⁰ Child soldiers¹³¹ are often forcibly conscripted through coercion, abduction and threat while others enlist voluntarily. There is, however, limited data on the number of child soldiers due to difficulty accessing territories under the control of armed groups as well as due to the difficulty in ascertaining age of children without birth certificates.¹³²

In contrast to children, who are covered under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the ‘in-between’ status of youth has been largely excluded from the agenda of international peace and development efforts. Most conflict-related data simply omit them, making analysis and targeted programming extremely difficult.

The UN Security council, in December 2015, adopted a historic resolution on youth, peace and security, which for the first time in its history focuses on the role of young men and women in peacebuilding and countering violent extremism (Resolution 2250). The resolution represents an unprecedented acknowledgment of the urgent need to engage young peacebuilders in promoting peace and countering extremism. The resolution also

128 ACCORD, OSAA, AU, IOM: High Level Expert Group Meeting: Conflict Induced Migration in Africa: Maximising New Opportunities to Address its Peace, Security and Inclusive Development Dimensions; held in November 2015, Durban, South Africa.

129 Ibid.

130 Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary General (A/70/836-S/2016/360). UN General Assembly Security Council, 20th April, 2016.

131 According to the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Conflict- A child soldier is “any person below 18 years of age who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes.”

132 Shirley de Villiers: How Many Child Soldiers are there in Africa? Africa Check, 2015/view original piece on their website; <https://africacheck.org/factsheets/factsheet-how-many-child-soldiers-are-there-in-africa/> accessed March 2018.

positions youth and youth-led organizations as important partners in the global efforts to counter violent extremism and promote lasting peace.¹³³

In Central African Republic, more than 10,000 children were used by armed groups involved in the latest conflict, according to Child Soldiers International.¹³⁴ Armed groups in the mainly Muslim Séléka coalition and predominantly Christian militias called Anti-Balaka both used children as young as eight. The children were used as combatants, guards, human shields, porters, messengers, spies, cooks and/or for sexual purposes. About 7,000 children were released from armed groups in Sierra Leone in 2002 comprising a tenth of all the ex-combatants following the Lome Peace Accord.¹³⁵ In Liberia, the UN estimates that some 20,000 children served as combatants in Liberia's war making up to 70 percent of the various factions' fighting forces.¹³⁶

In addition, reports as recent as August 2017 indicate the cruel and calculated use of children, especially girls, as 'human bombs' in North East Nigeria. Since January 2017, 83 children have been used as time bombs (55 were girls under 15 years and 27 were boys, one was a baby strapped to a girl).¹³⁷ The abduction of more than 200 boarding school girls in North Eastern Nigeria by the Boko Haram terrorist group in 2014 showed how terrorist groups deliberately target young people particularly young girls.

The Lake Chad Basin (LCB) region faces numerous environmental, socio-economic and security challenges. It suffers violent extremism from the acts of terror perpetrated by Boko Haram, which since 2002, continues to spearhead regular attacks against border communities. The prevailing situation across Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger and Chad, has increased the vulnerability of local communities in the region as a whole.¹³⁸

133 UN Security Council Adopts Historic Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security. Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth, December, 2015.

134 Reliefweb February, 2017: 10 countries where child soldiers are still recruited and armed. <http://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic> accessed March 2018

135 Yvonne Kempe: Youth in War-to- Peace Transitions. Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2005.

136 P.W. Singer: Child Soldiers- The New Faces of War. Brookings Institution, 2015.

137 Use of Children as 'human bombs' rising in North East Nigeria; UNICEF Press Centre, 22nd August 2017.

138 UNFPA: Demographic Dynamics and the Crisis of Countries around Lake Chad. UNPFA West and Central African Regional Office, 2017.

3

Investing in Young People Today and Tomorrow

Young people are central to the demographic dividend; therefore, it is essential to fulfil and protect their rights for education, employment and health including access to sexual and reproductive health services and comprehensive sexuality education.

West and Central Africa remains one of the youngest parts of the world estimated to be home to approximately 96 million of the population aged 15 to 24 years and projected to have the highest population of young people aged 15-24 in Africa by 2050. The region has a high dependency ratio influenced by high fertility rates, low contraceptive use and high child marriage rates.

An analysis of the region has also shown that despite having such a large and young population, various challenges exist that limit their full participation in the different sectors of the countries' economies. There are high rates of adolescent fertility and childbearing in WCA where birth rates among adolescents can reach over 178 births per 1000 girls aged 15-19 which is way above the global fertility rate of 50 births per 1,000 girls. There is low contraceptive use at 14.7 per cent among young women aged 15-24 years in the region. At the same time, HIV infection is high among young women in the region accounting for 64 per cent of new HIV infections in West and Central Africa among 15 to 24-year-old and HIV testing among young people in the region remains very low at 12 per cent.

Child marriage, including very early child marriage (below age of 15 years) is one of the main challenges to development in WCA with at least 13 per cent of women aged 20-24 indicating that they were married by the age of 15. Keeping girls in school and supporting them in making healthy decisions about their own lives have been found to be the most important determinants of child marriage. While almost all countries have established some legal minimum age at marriage, the laws often remain unenforced.

Human rights violations continue to be committed against young people in the region. Sexual violence against women in the region still persists and is a threat to the well-being of women. In Cape Verde, 16 per cent of women aged 15-24 have experienced sexual violence. Sexual violence has been associated with poverty, marginalized communities and conflicts and displacements. In addition, FGM is still widely practiced in WCA with 36 per cent of women aged 15-19 years have experienced FGM.

Progression to secondary school is low at 78 per cent compared to the global rate of 83 per cent and with some countries like Gabon recording as low as 46 per cent transition rates. This leaves out a large number of young people from gainful economic, social and political activities. In addition, school exclusion is high with the region accounting for 36 per cent of out-of-school children in the world. The gross enrolment ratio in the region is high compared to a low net enrolment rate, indicating a large number of over-aged children in school. Low internal efficiency, particularly the high frequency of repetition, also explains the high gross enrolment rate and the number of over-aged children.

Gender inequalities exist both in the attainment of education as well as in labour participation. In West and Central Africa, girls account for 55 per cent of all out-of-school children (at primary and secondary levels and of all ages) and 52 per cent of all out-of-school adolescents. The particular situation of girls in the West & Central African region requires urgent action as their chances of being educated are far less than the girls of any other region in the world.

In terms of labour force participation in the WCA, slightly more than half (52 per cent) of the young people aged 15-24 years in the WCA region participate in the labour market based on 2016 data from ILO. Unemployment rates among young people (15-24 yrs) have been on the rise over the last five years (2012-2016). The high labour participation rates are contrasted by the high unemployment and under-employment rates thus showing majority of the youth (15-24yrs) are able to work but are not engaged in productive work. At the same time enrolment in vocational training is very low at 4.4 per cent and is mainly attributed to low budgetary allocation by governments. This seriously limits opportunities for youth to participate in gainful employment.

WCA is a volatile region and has experienced a wide range of conflicts and crises. Young people are at the centre of these conflicts and crises and form at least 12.5 per cent of the refugees according to available data. Based on United Nations Population Division 2013 data, there were an estimated 2 million adolescents and youth migrants in the WCA region with the highest proportion between the ages of 20-24. The more worrying trend is that almost a third were of a very young age (10-14 years). Armed conflict severely impacts young people in different ways. As child soldiers, they carry out different duties for the armed groups/forces which include fighting, as sex slaves, for spying etc while they are also the victims of killing, maiming, sexual abuse among other atrocities. Since there is

no legal framework for young people in armed conflict, like there is one for children, demobilization and reintegration programs (DRPs) have largely neglected them in practice.

The following actions are recommended in order to harness the potential of adolescents and youth in the West and Central Africa region. These actions are aligned with the African Union Roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth. These actions will contribute towards Africa's Agenda 2063 and to the global SDGs.

Sexual and Reproductive Health

This report clearly outlines the multiple barriers young people face in the region in terms of their sexual and reproductive health. Key interventions to address this includes scaling up and improving the quality of adolescent and youth friendly health services, including sexual and reproductive health services and contraceptives, for young people.

Governments should develop or revise policies and enact legislation that protects young people's rights to the highest attainable standard of health. SRH services should be aligned with international standards for youth- and adolescent-friendly services. Policies and legislation should allow adolescents' access to SRH and HIV services, including contraceptive services and HIV counselling and testing.¹³⁹

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) programmes in- and out-of-school need to be implemented and scaled up across the region, and linked to SRH services for young people. CSE programmes have been proven to encourage safer sexual behaviours among young people and improve gender norms that lead to long-term impact on their health and well-being.

HIV counselling and testing for young people need to also be strengthened particularly given the data that shows that new HIV infections among adolescents are on the rise in the region. This further underscores the importance on integrated SRH and HIV services for young people, as well as the need to increase their knowledge and skills through CSE programmes so that young people are able to protect their sexual and reproductive health.

Education

Similar to the investments that were earlier made to increase enrolment and educational attainment at primary levels, there is need to increase investments to ensure transition from primary to secondary school and to support adolescents to complete secondary schooling. Education policies should cover both primary and secondary education, with

¹³⁹ UNFPA. Review of Adolescent and Youth Policies, Strategies and Laws. UNFPA West and Central African Regional Office, 2017.

a special focus on girls' education, and remove barriers to education through removal of school fees, subsidizing school uniforms and textbooks and provision of school meals if possible.¹⁴⁰ They should also include provisions for the inclusion of comprehensive sexuality education programmes in schools.

Government policies should focus on compulsory secondary education with a reduction or elimination of school fees. Young people who require additional skills for the labour market should be given opportunities to enrol in TVET. It is noted that lack of schools in the WCA region is a barrier to education and thus investments must be made to rebuild and equip schools as well as provide skills to teachers. In addition, factors like quality of education at primary level should be given attention in order to increase progression to secondary schools and reduce the proportion of those repeating classes.

Employment

Countries should develop policies and implement programmes pertaining to youth employment that include concrete measures to equip young people with education, skills and training for the marketplace; reduce youth unemployment and underemployment; and, improve quality of jobs for youth. There is a need to ensure that young people have access to the formal labour market as well as entrepreneurship opportunities and are given the skills and training for this purpose. There should also be deliberate policies on gender equality in the labour market to ensure women are not discriminated and that the market is gender sensitive.

Gender Equality and Social Protection

Using an empowerment approach can lead to positive outcomes for girls and their families by supporting girls to become agents of change and challenging harmful social norms that support child marriage and FGM. Successful interventions using this approach to address child marriage include life skills training and provision of safe spaces for girls to develop support networks and access health, education and protection services.¹⁴¹ These interventions should include girls at risk at child marriage as well as those who are already married.

Child marriage policies and strategies should include a comprehensive set of policy approaches to accelerate actions to end child marriage. Laws must be aligned with international standards as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. This means that the minimum

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ UNFPA. Why addressing child marriage and adolescent pregnancy is essential to achieving the demographic dividend in West and Central Africa. UNFPA West and Central African Regional Office, 2017.

age of marriage is set at 18 years for both sexes and does not include any exceptions with parental or guardian consent.

FGM should be banned in all countries which highlights the need for legislation on FGM in countries where this law is not present (Mali and Sierra Leone) and also need for harmonisation in countries like Nigeria where the law is present in some states¹⁴² but there is no federal law.¹⁴³ Where these laws exist, there is need for enforcement. Programmes should address attitudes and beliefs of communities with regard to the practice otherwise they will risk failing to end FGM. In Burkina Faso, public support for the law enabled legislation and has resulted in reduction of FGM prevalence.^{144 145}

Adolescents and Youth in Emergencies

This report shows that adolescents and youth are often victims of emergencies and armed conflicts, but can also play a critical role as agents of change and peace in these contexts. The report also highlights the paucity of data on adolescents and youth in emergencies and armed conflicts and the necessity to fill these data gaps to enable effective programming for these young people.

Gender and age disaggregated data on migrants, displaced youth and child soldiers would be a powerful tool in advocacy efforts for the protection of children and youth in armed conflict situations and in holding governments and responsible groups to account. Peace, security, stability and the development of countries in the region depends on building the resilience of young people as well engaging them to find long-term solutions to political tensions, conflict and recurrent humanitarian crises in the region.

142 UNFPA: Analysis of Legal Frameworks on Female Genital Mutilation in Selected Countries in West Africa. January 2018.

143 No Peace Without Justice- Status of African Legislations on FGM. Accessed at:<http://www.npwj.org/FGM/Status-african-legislations-FGM.html>.

144 Ibid.

145 UNFPA. Analysis of Legal Frameworks on Female Genital Mutilation in Selected Countries in West Africa. Annemarie Middelburg. January 2018.



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Report Indicators

Defining the Indicators

The analysis in this report focuses on indicators used in similar reports (for example the Status Report on Youth and Adolescents in Sub-Saharan Africa by UNFPA and the Population Reference Bureau) as well as emerging themes affecting youth and adolescents in the region and continent. The indicators discussed in this report are:

Population

Proportion of young people in Population (Percentage of total population aged 10-14 years; 15 to 19 years, 20 to 24 years (*Sources of data will include World Population Prospects: 2017 Revision, being the latest information available.*))

Education

Progression to Secondary School: Proportion of students that transition from primary to secondary, general programmes (%) (*Source of data: UIS Statistics-Education/accessed at http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=edulit_ds/accessed March 2018*);

Gender Index, Secondary Education: Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education (%) (*Source of data: ICF Macro, DHS-2010-2015/2016; and UNICEF MICS-2010-2016/2017*)

Out-of-School Adolescents: Proportion of out-of- school adolescents of lower-secondary-school age (*Source of data: UNESCO Institute for Statistics and UNICEF: Out of School; All Children in School by 2015- Global Initiative on Out-Of-School Children: - Regional Report for West and Central Africa*)

Employment

Labour Force Participation: Proportion of a country's working age population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working or looking for work. It provides an indication of the relative size of the supply of labour available to engage in the production of goods and services (%). (Source of data: *The World Bank: Labour Force Participation Rate, Total (% of total population ages 15+)* Modeled ILO Estimate; *International Labour Organisation, ILOSTAT Database*)

Rates of unemployment and underemployment: Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (Modeled ILO estimate)-Source of data; *The World Bank Data, International Labour Organisation, ILOSTAT Database*

Youth NEET Rate- Denotes the share of youth not in education, employment or training. (Source of Data; *The World Bank Data, Share of youth not in education, employment or training, total (% of youth population)*; *International Labour Organization, Key Indicators of the Labour Market database*;

Vocational Enrolment in Lower and Upper Secondary – Number of young people enrolled in vocational education and training. Source *Unesco Institute of Statistics*

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Age at First Sex: The age by which one-half of young people aged 15 to 24 have had penetrative sex (median age). (Source of data: *ICF Macro, DHS-2005-2014/2015*)

Sex Before Age 15: Proportion of young people aged 15 to 19, 20 to 24 and 15 to 24 who have had sex before the age of 15. (Source of Data- *ICF Macro, DHS 2005-2014/2015 and MICS 2010-2016/2017*)

Adolescent Fertility Rate: The number of births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19. (Source of data: *ICF Macro, DHS 2005-2014/2015 and MICS 2010-2016/2017*)

Contraceptive Prevalence Rate, Modern: Contraceptive Prevalence Rate, Modern: Proportion of women married or in union aged 15 to 49 who are currently using, or whose sexual partner is using, at least one method of contraception, regardless of the method used (%). (Source of Data- *ICF Macro, DHS 2005-2014/2015 and UNICEF MICS 2010-2016*)

HIV/AIDS

HIV Prevalence: Proportion of young people aged 15 to 24 who are HIV infected. (Source of data: ICF Macro, Demographic and Health Surveys 2005-2016)

Condom Use at Last High-Risk Sex: Proportion of the general population who say they used a condom the last time they had sex with a nonmarital, non-cohabiting partner, of those who have had sex with such a partner in the last 12 months. (Source of Data- ICF Macro, DHS 2008/2009-2014/2015 and UNICEF MICS 2010-2016)

Gender Equality and Social Protection

Married by Age 15: Proportion of women aged 20 to 24 married by age 15. (Source of Data - ICF Macro, DHS 2005-2014/2015 and UNICEF MICS 2010-2016/2017)

Married by Age 18: Proportion of women aged 20 to 24 married by age 18. (Source of Data - ICF Macro, DHS 2010-2014/2015 and UNICEF MICS 2010-2016/2017)

Sexual Violence: Proportion of women and men aged 15 to 49 who have ever experienced sexual violence by anyone. (Source of Data - ICF Macro, DHS 2010-2014/2015)

Female Genital Mutilation: Percentage of women aged 15 to 19 who have experienced FGM. (DHS 2010-2016 and MICS 2010-2016)

Adolescents and Youth in Emergencies

Migration and displacement among young people in armed conflicts, (Source: Unicef Global Databases: Child Migrants & Refugees; <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-migration-and-displacement/migration/>)

Implication of young people in violent emergencies as being child soldiers or radicalised; (Source; Institute for Security Studies)* Note that information may lack in actual numbers but the write up will try to show that children and youth have been participating in armed conflict and terrorist activities in countries which are in conflict or are in post conflict situations.



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