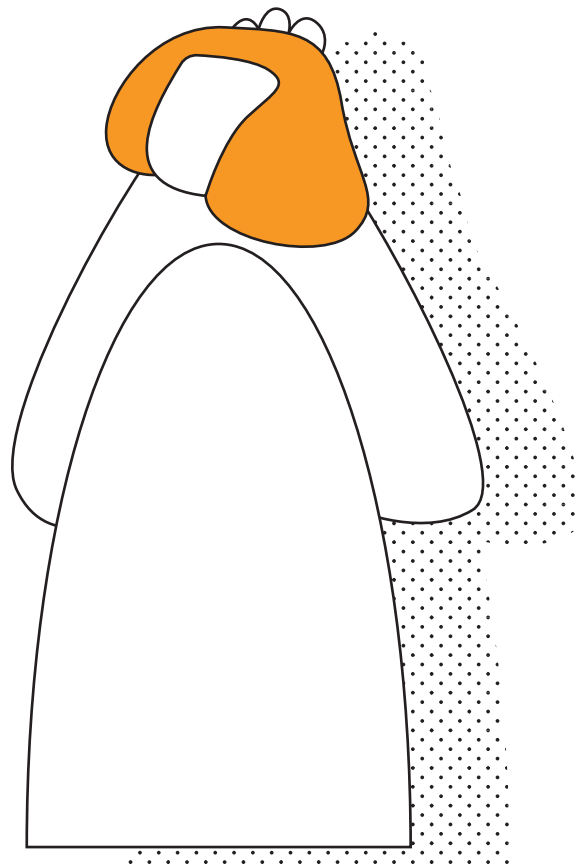


CHILD MARRIAGE IN GEORGIA

Overview



The following document provides information about Early/Child marriage in Georgia and offers recommendations aimed at preventing and ending the issue.

The document is prepared with the support of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Georgia Country Office, in the framework of UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality, funded by the Government of Sweden.

The opinions expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNFPA, and the Government of Sweden.

Author: Joanna Pares Hoare

Translated into Georgian by: Tamar Nepharidze

The following document is based on the statistical data from the Georgia 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 2018), and an extensive qualitative study on Early Marriage undertaken in 2017.

Visual Concept: UNFPA/ForSet

CHILD MARRIAGE IN GEORGIA

(OVERVIEW)

Around the world, girls are challenging gender stereotypes and breaking free from the traditional roles that society has dictated for generations. More and more are saying no to child marriage and pushing for an end to the practice. They are advocating for their right to stay in school and to live free from violence and harm.

– **UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem**



CHILD MARRIAGES

If I could, I would have changed everything except giving birth to my first child. I would have given more time to my career. I would have given more time to myself.

— Child spouse, Tbilisi

Early or child marriage is the union, whether official or not, of two persons, at least one of whom is under 18 years of age.¹ By virtue of being children, child spouses are considered to be incapable of giving full consent, meaning that child marriages are treated as de facto forced marriages, and should be considered a violation of human rights and the rights of the child. Child marriages remain one of the most prevalent forms of gender-based violence in Georgia.² The practice is linked to gender inequality and poverty, although the factors that trigger a child marriage are not homogenous and vary according to different social, economic, geographical, and cultural conditions.

Child marriage is a gendered phenomenon that affects girls and boys in different ways. Overall, the number of boys in child marriages around the world is significantly lower than that of girls; this is also the case in Georgia. Girl child spouses are also vulnerable to domestic violence and sexual abuse within relationships that are unequal, and are often very isolated, enjoying little contact with friends and family. If they become pregnant, mar-

ried adolescents often experience complications during pregnancy and childbirth, as their bodies are not ready for childbearing. Upon marrying, both boys and girls often have to leave education to enter the workforce and/or take up domestic responsibilities at home.

Various international treaties, conventions, and programmes for action address child marriage. These include: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); the Istanbul Convention (2011)³, International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD PoA), and Nairobi Statement on ICPD 25: Accelerating the Promise⁴.

These international instruments cover the abolishment of harmful customs and traditions, violence against the girl child, marriage consent, marriageable age, registration of marriage, and the freedom to choose a spouse. The inclusion of a target on child marriage in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁵ recognises that eliminating this harmful practice is key to realising gender equality and sustainable and equitable development for all.

This fact sheet provides information about child marriage in Georgia and offers recommendations aimed at addressing the issue. It includes a review of national legislation and the country's ratifica-

tion of the various international standards relevant to child marriage, analysis of current practices and attitudes towards child marriage, and statistical information about the prevalence of the practice. The factsheet updates an earlier study published by UNFPA in 2014, which was based on a review of the legal framework and literature related to child marriage in Georgia, and interviews and focus groups with child spouses, community members, and experts.⁶ Updates made in 2019 draw on statistical data from the Georgia 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 2018), and an extensive qualitative study undertaken in 2017.⁷



RECOMMENDATIONS

POLICY

- Following changes to the Georgian Civil Code that raised the minimum age of marriage to 18 with no exceptions, raise public awareness of the legal age of marriage, and of the penalties for breaking the law.⁸
- Strengthen the enforcement of existing laws by training relevant officials, such as judges, civil registrars, police officers, teachers, social workers, etc..

- Ensure the provision of high quality, inclusive services for young people, especially adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, and address health professionals' stigmatising attitudes and practices.
- Ensure that the younger generation is equipped with evidence-based information on SRH and reproductive rights, gender equality and healthy lifestyle principles through formal and/or informal education channels.
- Strengthen work at the local/municipal level to create opportunities for adolescents' and young people's development in order to enhance young people's agency over their aspirations and opportunities, particularly among the most vulnerable adolescents and youth.
- Allocate adequate financial resources for adolescent and youth programmes in state and municipal budgets.
- Support the participation of women and young people in local self-government.
- Under the guidance of the Inter-agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, develop a multi-sectoral approach for implementing a "Communication for Behavioural Impact" (COMBI) strategy targeted at eliminating the harmful practice of early/child marriage, pursuant to the nationalised SDGs.

PROGRAMME

- Engage key actors in adolescent girls' social networks to change attitudes towards gender equality and women's empowerment: men and boys, in their roles as fathers, brothers, husbands, peers, and sons; parents; religious leaders; health providers.
- Identify, promote and endorse positive deviants, such as family members, girls themselves, men who encourage girls' aspirations and delaying marriage, and educators who advocate for girls to stay in school.
- Prioritise inclusion of information on reproductive health and rights in school and non-school settings in ways that are meaningful and non-stigmatising to girls.
- Improve vocational opportunities for girls and boys in order to support their competitiveness and employability on local labour market.
- Strengthen outreach work with married adolescents, for instance to enable them to continue education and to access public childcare services.
- Provide safe spaces such as dedicated youth and adolescent centres where young people – and especially young women and girls – can meet to socialise, engage in informal education, and ensure that these are designed with sensitivity to gender, ethnicity, language, and income levels.

- Use communication campaigns to challenge social norms that reinforce typical gender roles at home and/or in society at large.

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

- Continue to prioritise qualitative, ground-up research.
- Explore the impact of early/child marriage on adult intimate partner violence (IPV) and the links between early/child marriage and IPV.
- Integrate indicators on early/child marriage into annual national household surveys.
- Strengthen links between research and evidence-based policy and programming.



LEGAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT

Georgia ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1994, and the Istanbul Convention in 2017. Moreover, based on International Conference on Population and Development Pro-

gramme of Action (ICPD PoA), the country adopted a forward-looking vision to advance reproductive health and rights, as well as women's empowerment and gender equality, as cornerstones of population and development programmes. On the other hand, "Nairobi Statement on ICPD 25: Accelerating the Promise" reinforced government's commitment to invest in full and accelerated implementation, and support concrete actions, inter alia, to eliminate Gender-based Violence and Harmful Practices against women and girls. Georgia has also signed up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, i.e. the SDGs, and the government has integrated specific goals, activities, and indicators linked to the SDGs into national legislation and policy. This includes a commitment to eliminating harmful practices, including child marriage, under the Gender Equality chapter of the National Action Plan on Human Rights 2018-2020. In theory, these initiatives, along with national legislation – namely, the Civil Code, Criminal Code, and the Law on Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection, and Assistance of Domestic Violence Victims (2006) – should ensure the protection of children's rights. In practice, as the interviews carried out for the original study and for the qualitative research in 2017 revealed, the lack of implementation mechanisms, strategies, and monitoring mean that these instruments do not function effectively.

Georgia has ratified the CRC. This makes the government responsible. Even if the national legislation was not adequate, the CRC is more important, and we should refer to it. (Expert)⁹

In the five years since the original 2014 study was published, there has been significant progress in establishing child marriage as a priority in state policy. The Gender Equality Department of the Office of the Public Defender produced a report on child marriage in 2016, framing the issue within a gender equality framework and helping to raise awareness at government and societal level.¹⁰ The Ministries of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport; of Health, Social Affairs and Labour; and of Internal Affairs have also taken steps to address child marriage. For instance, since 2015, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport has instructed schools to collect data on the reasons for school dropout, including relating to marriage.¹¹ The Ministry is also working with UNFPA to revise the National Curriculum and School Subject Standards to integrate topics such as harmful practices, puberty, reproductive health and rights, HIV/AIDs, and STIs, gender equality, etc.. So far, curricula for Biology and Civic Education have been revised for grades I-IX, and textbooks for grades I-VII have been revised.¹² The National Youth Policy mentions child marriage, in the context of the need to improve access to information about sexual and reproductive health and rights.¹³ These developments, combined with advocacy and awareness raising on the part of UNFPA and other international actors, have improved understanding of child marriage in Georgia. That said, few other government departments or civil society organisations – including women's rights and child rights organisations – have prioritised eliminating child marriage so far.¹⁴

In the children's welfare strategy, this problem is not even ... mentioned. Nobody talks about this problem. They talk about children's poverty, street children, etc., but from the age of 16, if a girl is married, she is not considered to be a child. (Expert)

Amendments to Article 1108 of the Georgian Civil Code that came into force at the beginning of 2017 mean that the minimum legal age for marriage is now 18, with no exceptions.¹⁵ Prior to this, the Civil Code had allowed adolescents aged 16 or 17 to marry legally with parental permission (until 2015) or with permission from the court. Article 140 of the Criminal Code stipulates that cohabitation with a child under the age of consent (i.e. 16) shall be punished by deprivation of liberty for up to three years.¹⁶ 2014 saw amendments to the Criminal Code to criminalise forced marriage, including unregistered marriages.¹⁷

According to the Constitutional Treaty between the Georgian state and the Georgian Orthodox Church, the state should recognise marriages performed by the Orthodox Church. However, in reality only civil marriages registered in the office of the Civil Registry of Georgia are legally recognised. As in many other national contexts, many couples in Georgia solemnise their marriage in a religious ceremony, but then do not officially register the marriage until later (for instance, when the first child is born), by which point the adolescent spouse has turned 18.¹⁸

The problem is that the government may not know

about early marriages, because the marriages are unregistered, especially in villages. If a woman is called 'married', that's enough for society, and nobody bothers to deal with the government. That's why the government hardly knows whether this type of early union occurs. (Expert)

Research analysing the impact of minimum age for marriage laws in low- and middle-income countries between 1989 and 2007 found that countries whose laws set the minimum age for marriage strictly at 18 were the most effective at reducing rates of adolescent fertility (which can be taken in many contexts – including Georgia – as a proxy for rates of child marriage).¹⁹ It is hoped that the new legal framework in Georgia will have a similar effect. At present, however, public awareness of the changes made to the Civil and Criminal Codes appears to be low, and in some cases, police continue to turn a blind eye to child marriages.²⁰ Confusion between civil, religious, and customary laws governing when marriages can and should take place mean that many people are unsure as to when young people can legally marry. Or, as one young participant in the 2017 qualitative research stated, 'Even if there is a law written, nobody cares. Sanctions are not as severe as they should be' (Focus group with unmarried boys aged 14-15 years in Tbilisi).²¹ This confusion extends to religious leaders who officiate at religious marriages. While many religious leaders interviewed for the 2017 qualitative research were firm that they would not conduct ceremonies involving underage girls, some were a little unclear as to what that actually meant.²²



FAMILY PLANNING AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In Georgia, the Law on Health Protection and the Law on the Rights of the Patient guarantee the right of all citizens to access medical services.²³ Article 41 (2) of the Law on the Rights of the Patient states that ‘health services shall be provided to a minor under 16 only [with the] consent of his/her parents or legal representative’.²⁴ However, Article 40 (2) provides some exceptions for adolescents aged 14 to 18, who can consult healthcare providers for ‘the treatment of sexually transmitted disease[s] or drug abuse or for counselling about nonsurgical methods of contraception or for abortion’.²⁵ In this case a patient has an important right of informed consent and is allowed to obtain reproductive health services confidentially. In Georgia obstetricians, gynaecologists, and ‘reproductiveologists’ (trained physicians) can provide services and counselling for family planning. However, the qualitative research conducted in 2017 found that as a rule, only married girls access sexual and reproductive health services, because of stigma associated with premarital sex and fear that family members would find out.²⁶

Their family will find out and she doesn’t know what will happen. What if a big argument, or a ‘war’ starts? So, parents also will break up the relationship, and when a girl realizes all this, she prefers

not to visit a doctor. (17-year-old female in Shida Kartli)²⁷

The qualitative research from 2017 found that girls belonging to ethnic minorities face additional barriers to accessing medical facilities, including sexual and reproductive health facilities, most notably language barriers. Girls living in rural areas also have fewer opportunities to access sexual and reproductive health services than those living in urban areas, due to poor provision.

Girls [from ethnic minority groups] can’t go alone to the doctor because they don’t know Russian, they don’t speak Georgian, [or know] how should they communicate with the doctor. The elders know a little Russian and a little Georgian. (Child spouse, member of an ethnic minority)

The law permits termination of pregnancy within the first 12 weeks.²⁸ It should be performed by a doctor in a licensed medical facility with the written consent of the woman. The law imposes additional legal requirements for an abortion after 12 weeks. Echoing findings from the earlier Reproductive Health Survey (RHS 2010), data from the MICS 2018 indicate that the abortion rate is much higher among Azerbaijani women than women from other ethnic groups – 499 abortions in the last five years among Azerbaijani women aged 15-49 compared to 106 among Georgian women and 141 among Armenian women per 1000 women.²⁹ Women living in rural areas, with low levels of edu-

cation, and from the poorest wealth quintiles also appear to be more likely to have had an abortion than women living in urban areas, better educated women and wealthier women.³⁰

The MICS 2018 found that married women participating in the survey had high levels of awareness of modern methods of contraception, although these were lowest (at 91.3 per cent) among married girls aged 15-19.³¹ The MICS 2018 also found that just 13.8 per cent of married women aged 15 to 19 years were using a modern method of contraception, compared to 33.8 per cent of married women aged 20-24. Usage of modern methods of contraception overall was highest among Georgian women (34.2 per cent) and lowest among Azerbaijani women (19.5 per cent).³² 37.2 per cent of married women aged 15-19 reported an unmet need for modern contraception, the highest rate among all married women aged 15-49.³³ Significantly, the MICS also collected information on informed decision making in relation to reproductive health care, and capacity to refuse sexual intercourse: married women aged 15-19 were the least likely of any age group to say that they: a) made their own, informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and health care (66 per cent); and b) could say 'no' to their husband or partner if they did not want to have sexual intercourse (71 per cent).³⁴ It is likely that these factors are closely linked to the significant social pressure to get pregnant as soon as possible after marriage.³⁵ Child spouses who participated in the original study revealed that they became pregnant immediately or soon after getting married, and that there was no question of using contraception until they had given birth.

If the girl does not conceive a baby immediately after marriage, it is considered a problem, and the in-laws start searching for doctors to treat their daughter-in-law. That she should conceive immediately after the marriage is not even a question. (Expert)

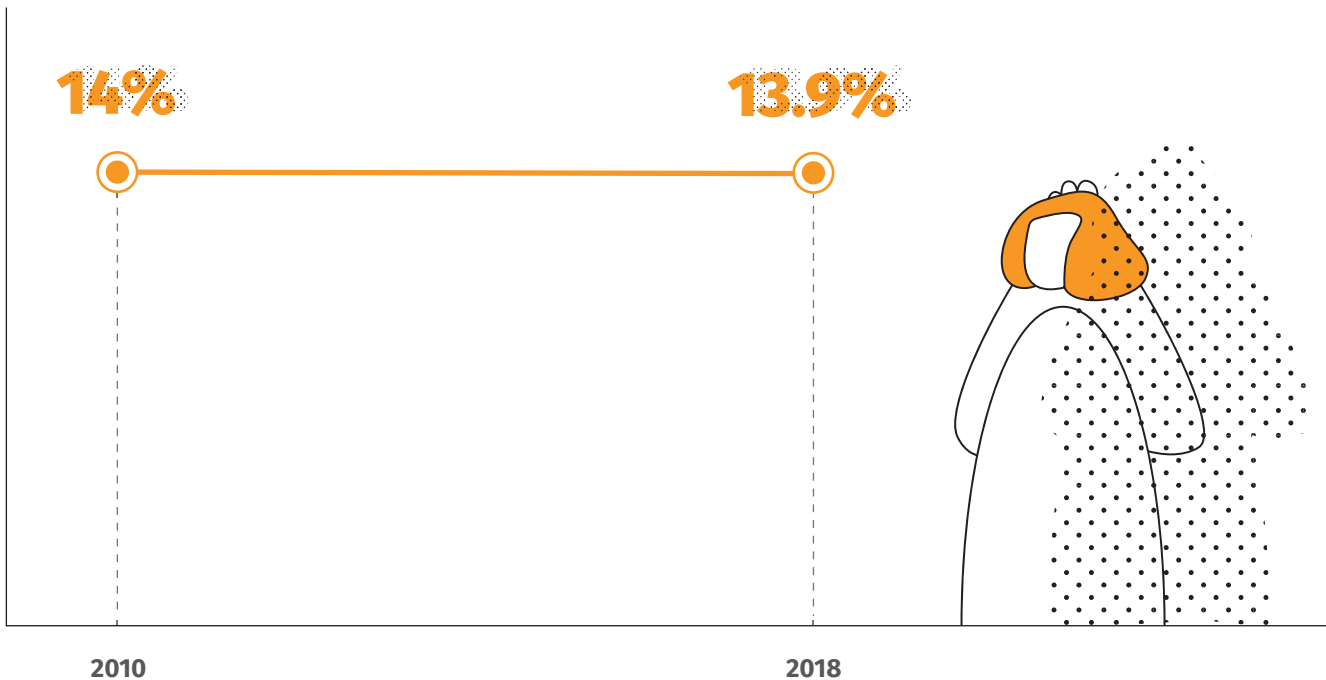
In Georgia, sexual and reproductive health issues are in the process of being integrated into the school curriculum. As noted above, the Ministry of Education is working with UNFPA to revise the school curricula for Civic Education and Biology to integrate teaching on reproductive rights and health.

The 2017 qualitative study found that many teachers hold the same, stigmatising attitudes towards premarital sex as the wider society.³⁶ Very few of the child spouses who were interviewed for the original study knew anything about reproductive health and family planning when they married.

The prevalence of Early Marriage throughout the country has not changed

since 2010.

The percentage of women aged 20-24 who were married before age 18 was **14 percent in 2010**. This number was **13.9 in 2018**.





CHILD MARRIAGES IN GEORGIA

Completion of the 2017 qualitative research and of the MICS 2018 – which included specific questions on child marriage – has significantly enriched the available data on child marriage in Georgia, including in regard to the scale, motives, and consequences of child marriage in this specific context. Prior to this, lack of data contributed to (and was a consequence of) lack of visibility on the issue, as well as to the perception that child marriage was primarily a ‘minority’ issue in Georgia.

The MICS 2018 collected data on all marriages and unions, not just registered marriages, providing an up-to-date and reliable estimate of the percentage of girls (and boys) currently married or in union, as well as the percentage of adults who were married as children. More than anything else, the MICS provides evidence that child marriage in Georgia is a strongly gendered phenomenon: 11.2 per cent of girls aged 15-19 included in the survey were married or living in union, compared to just 0.1 per cent of boys. Among women aged 20-24, 13.9 per cent reported that they had married before the age of 18, and 0.3 per cent before the age of 15. In comparison, 0.5 per cent of men aged 20-24 had married before the age of 18.³⁷ Therefore, unfortunately, it seems that the prevalence rate of early/child marriages in Georgia still remains unchanged if compared with 2010 RHS data. The current MICS data also confirms that Georgia continues to have

one of the highest rates of child marriage affecting girls and women among European countries, along with Moldova (12 per cent) and Turkey (15 per cent).³⁸

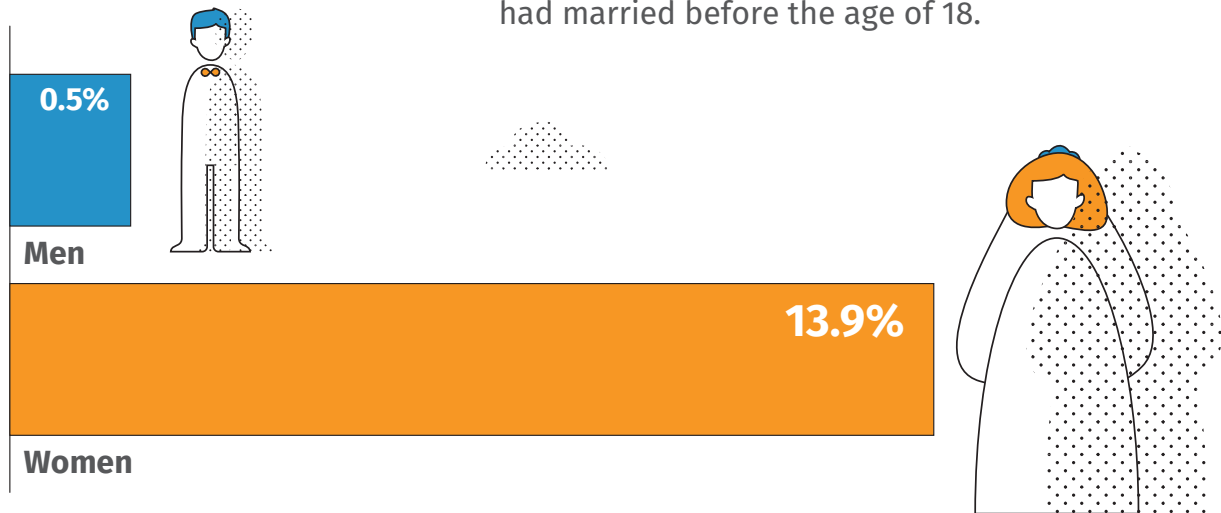
It is clear from the MICS data as well as the findings of the 2017 qualitative research that the situation with regard to child marriage in Georgia is not homogenous. The MICS data indicate that child marriages occur more frequently in rural areas – where 25 per cent of women aged 20-24 had married before age 18 – than in urban areas (8 per cent). Girls belonging to the two lowest wealth quintiles are also most likely to be affected, indicating a link between child marriage and poverty: 24.9 per cent of girls aged 15-19 from the lowest wealth quintile reported that they were married or living in union, compared to 0.5 per cent of girls in the same age group from the richest wealth quintile. Level of education also appears to be an important factor: 46.5 per cent of women aged 20-24 married by age 18 had only completed primary or lower secondary school, while just 3.1 per cent of this group were in or had graduated from higher education.³⁹

Of the three main ethnic groups, Azerbaijani (37.6 per cent of women aged 20-24 married by age 18) and Georgian (12.4 per cent) girls appear to be at greater risk of child marriage than Armenian girls (4.5 per cent married by age 18). It is important to note, however, that the findings for Azerbaijani and Armenian women aged 20-24 who were married before age 18 are based on 25-49 unweighted cases, meaning that these figures may not be conclusive. Rates of child marriage also vary by region, with the highest rates in Kakheti (34.5 per cent of women aged 20-24 married by age 18), Kvemo Kar-

Child marriage in Georgia is a strongly gendered phenomenon.

Among women aged 20-24, **13.9 percent** reported to be married before the age of 18.

In comparison, **0.5 percent** of men aged 20-24 had married before the age of 18.



tli (23.1 per cent) and Shida Kartli (21.3 per cent). The four regions with the lowest prevalence rates were Tbilisi (4.9 per cent), Adjara AR (13.9 per cent), Mtkheta-Mtianeti (14.2 per cent) and Samtskhe-Javakheti (14.3 per cent).⁴⁰

In Georgia, pregnancy and birth outside of marriage are highly stigmatised, meaning that most adolescent pregnancies and births are to married girls. This means that data on adolescent fertility from the MICS 2018 also help to inform our under-

standing of child marriage in Georgia. More women aged 20-24 living in rural areas reported that they had given birth before the age of 18 than did women in the same age group living in urban areas: 10.8 per cent vs. 3.6 per cent. Women aged 20-24 who had only completed primary or lower secondary schooling were much more likely to have given birth before the age of 18, as were women in this age group living in Kakheti (22.5 per cent) and Shida Kartli (16.1 per cent). Azerbaijani women (16.3

Child marriages occur more frequently in rural areas.

Percent of women aged 20-24 who had married before age 18:



Rural - 25%



Urban - 8%



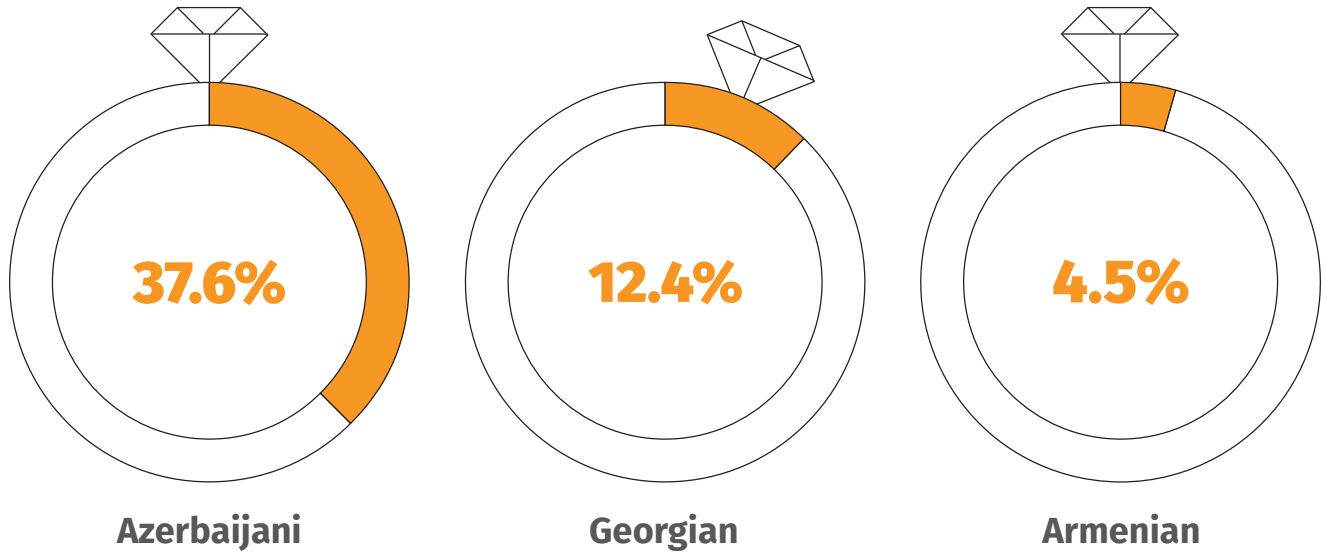
per cent) and Georgian women (5.4 per cent) were more likely to have given birth before age 18 than Armenian women (1.9 per cent).⁴¹

Overall, this data challenges earlier perceptions that child marriage is solely a 'minority issue' in Georgia. For instance, the belief that girls belonging to religious (Muslim) minorities are particularly at risk is not borne out by the statistics, and while rates are highest among Azerbaijani girls, a signifi-

cant number of girls of Georgian ethnicity are also affected. As the 2017 qualitative research study noted, 'rather than being specific to certain ethnic minorities and traditions, [child marriage] is driven by inequitable gender norms and discriminatory gender relations that are prevalent across all ethnic groups across urban as well as rural sites'.⁴²

Early/Child marriage is common and frequent across the country.

Risk of child marriage for girls by ethnic group:



SCHOOL DROPOUT

As detailed above, the MICS data provide evidence of a strong link between low levels of education and child marriage. It is important to note that rates of school dropout at upper secondary level are higher among boys than girls: according to MICS 2018, 13.6 per cent of boys aged 15-17 were out of school, compared to 8.2 per cent of girls aged 15-17.⁴³ That said, the 2017 qualitative research found that poverty often intersects with strong beliefs grounded in gender inequality to create significant barriers for girls who want to complete higher secondary or tertiary level education. In many families, parents believe that education for boys should be prioritised, because girls' primary function in life is to marry and have children, while boys will need to provide for their future families.⁴⁴ This acts as a driver for child marriage, as some girls leave school specifically in order to marry. The MICS 2018 found much higher rates of school dropout among Azerbaijani male and female adolescents than among adolescents from other ethnic groups, and higher numbers of girls and boys not attending school from the lowest wealth quintile.⁴⁵

When a girl is born, she is always told that she will get married, she should learn how to cook, how to clean and wash; nobody tells her that she should read or write. (Child spouse, ethnic minority)

Interviews with experts, child spouses, and community members carried out for the original study and the 2017 qualitative study support the argument that there is a strong link between school

dropout and early marriage. Especially in socially disadvantaged families, girls may drop out of school for financial reasons, but once they have dropped out, the only option left for them is marriage. Alternatively, they may drop out when they become engaged, but before they actually marry; only if the future husband 'allows' it can a girl who is engaged continue her education.

Married girls face significant barriers to continuing or returning to education. Whether they are able to do so may be dependent on 'permission' from their husband, but also on whether the school allows them to continue. A teacher noted that school administrators and the parents of other students often refuse to allow a married girl to continue at school, on the grounds that she would 'spoil' other girls, because it would be assumed that she is sexually active.⁴⁶

When young people marry, boys promise girls that they will let them continue studying at school, they will support her to study, that boys will take them to school and so on. But in reality, it happens that a boy marries a school age girl and then he forgets about his promise and as a result the girl leaves school. (17-year-old male, Kakheti).⁴⁷

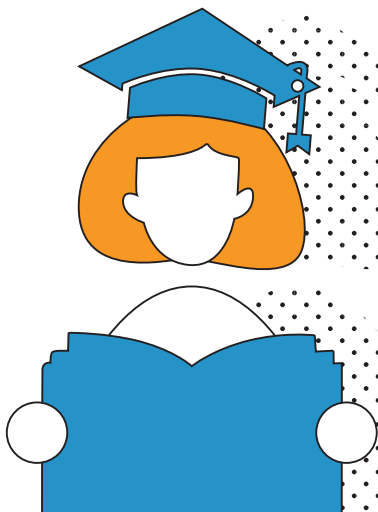
Parents failing to send their children to school face administrative penalties. Article 172 of the Georgian Code of Administrative Offences states that parents guilty of 'non-fulfilment of the obligation of upbringing and educating children' should receive a warning or be required to pay an administrative fine.⁴⁸

Child marriage is strongly linked to education level

46.5% of women aged 20-24 married by age 18 had **only completed primary or lower secondary school**, while just **3.1%** of this group **were enrolled or had graduated higher education.**

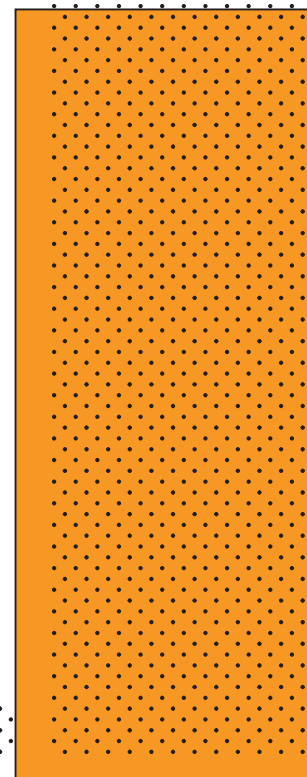
46.5%

Primary or lower secondary education



3.1%

Higher Education



However, there is little information available regarding enforcement of these penalties. Some parents feel that outside authorities have no right to interfere in the family even in cases of violation of the law. As one respondent noted in 2014: ‘Parents say that “she is my daughter and I will do whatever I want, nobody can interfere”’. Societal support for views such as this has serious implications for girls, because it takes for granted and reinforces inequalities and injustice within the household. The 2017 qualitative research also found that poor record keeping of attendance and poor coordination between schools and the social services agency and Ministry of Internal Affairs mean that schools are failing in their duty to refer cases of child marriage to social services.⁴⁹

The 2017 qualitative research found that teachers often share negative views of adolescent relationships and premarital sex, and may encourage students who they know are in a relationship to marry.⁵⁰ That is why the constructive actions to be taken by the Ministry of Education are important to prevent students from dropping out of school.

In one of the articles, the Ministry of Education states that ‘if parents make their children leave school, we cannot do anything’. The convention [CRC] states that parents may violate a child’s rights, but the government should defend his or her rights. The problem arises when the government’s representative speaker says they cannot do anything about this problem. (Expert)

POVERTY

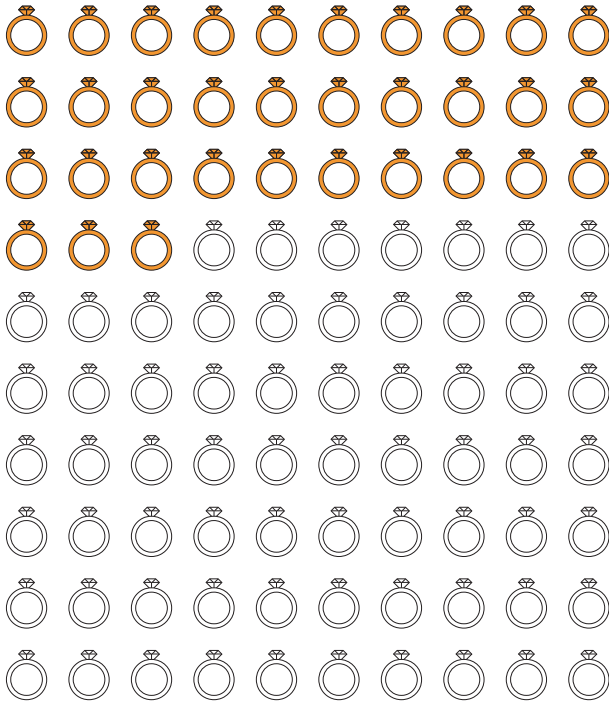
The 2017 qualitative research and the MICS 2018 support the finding that throughout Georgia, poverty drives child marriage. Early marriage for daughters is a desirable solution for families in economic hardship. In addition, tensions and difficulties at home may mean that girls see early marriage as a way out of a precarious situation.

The marriage is actually a big responsibility and ‘burden’, which is very difficult to carry. At that time I did not realise this. Actually, I did not know at all what’s happening with me. Now I also link this with the tense environment in my family of origin. I think I ran away from their problems. I closed myself off in my new family and did not want even to go out. (Child spouse)

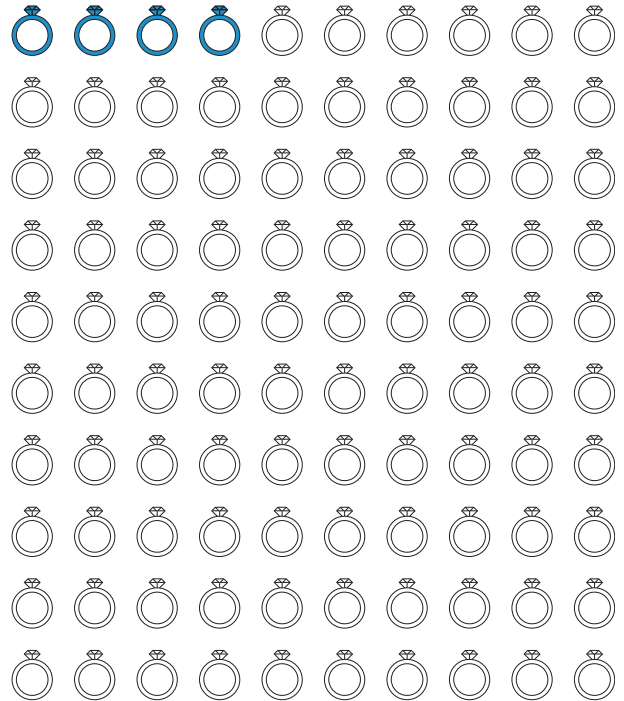
Respondents who participated in the 2017 qualitative research gave many examples of cases where families arranged an early marriage for a daughter in order to have ‘one less mouth to feed’, or where adolescents had chosen or agreed to marry to escape poverty at home, including in order to get access to ‘better nutrition’, as one civil society representative noted. Mothers who participated in the research stated that securing their daughter’s financial security was an important consideration in arranging an early marriage, while high rates of unemployment and the feeling of having few other options prompt some young people to drop out of education. Once out of school marriage is seen as the ‘only option’, especially for girls.⁵¹

Poverty is one of the main drivers of child marriage.

In the poorest quintile, 33% of women aged 20-24 were married before age of 18



In the richest quintile, only 4% of women aged 20-24 were married before age of 18



I think the main reason of early marriage is financial problems. Adolescents at this age feel disappointment, do not expect anything from studying. In fact, most of them do not want to study at all. If parents see that a child has no interest in studying, they make a decision to get him or her married and the thinking behind this decision is to protect them from immoral lifestyle they might have. So, they consider marriage the only appropriate way-out from such situation. (Interview with teachers, Samtskhe-Javakheti)⁵²

It is important to note, however, that arranging an early marriage can also be a way for better-off families to cement ties between two families and secure their economic stability.⁵³

UNWRITTEN TRADITIONS AND NORMS

Child marriages are also driven by unwritten traditions and norms that support the practice. The 2017 qualitative research found that while few girls are forced to marry now in Georgia, the contexts in which they are choosing or agreeing to marry are highly constrained by social norms condemning premarital relationships (discussed below) and condoning girls marrying early to avoid being ‘left behind’. Participants in the research reported that 22 was considered ‘late’ for a woman to marry, and by 26 she is considered to be a ‘spinster’. Such views are reinforced by assumptions about younger women’s fertility and by preference for younger

wives among men and among their mothers, who desire daughters-in-law who are under the age of 18 on the grounds that they will be easier to ‘train’. At the same time, girls and young women seek out male partners who are older (usually by two to three years) on the grounds that a man should be ‘established’ and able to provide for his family before he marries, acting as a brake on male child marriage.⁵⁴ Again, these norms are closely linked to gender inequality and the pervading view that marriage and children should be a woman’s primary focus.

Patriarchal norms within some families mean that while a daughter may be consulted, it will be her parents – and ultimately her father – who decides when she will marry. This can function as a driver of child marriage, but also as a barrier to the practice, when fathers refuse to give their approval to a young couple to marry.⁵⁵ In Azerbaijani communities, arranged marriages remain the norm, in some cases agreed without the consent of the girl.⁵⁶

In the years since bride kidnapping (abduction for forced marriage) became regulated by criminal law, cases of abduction have decreased tremendously and now rarely occur. That said, the 2017 qualitative research did record some cases of bride kidnapping; a 23-year-old woman in Tbilisi who participated in the research reported that she had been kidnapped and married as a child, while respondents in some regions noted that fear of kidnapping sometimes prompted parents to keep daughters out of school.⁵⁷

The law may change something in this situation.

For instance, when I asked, ‘Why don’t you want your children to marry at an early age?’ they replied that nowadays they are not afraid that their girls will be kidnapped. ... Kidnapping is a punishable illegal action regulated by the criminal code. If someone wants to kidnap a bride, now he knows he will be punished by the law. ... Because they were afraid of the law, the practice of bride kidnapping has almost stopped. (Expert)

SOCIAL MARGINALISATION

Poor integration of some ethnic and religious minorities into the wider society may also be a factor driving child marriage. Many girls and young women from these communities don’t speak Georgian, which makes their isolation more profound and does not provide them with many options in terms of a career. Language barriers and poor infrastructure in the areas where they live also mean that girls wishing to resist marriage face difficulties in accessing health, education, law enforcement, and other services that could provide support, and may be unaware of the laws in place to protect them. It is difficult for married girls experiencing domestic violence to access support services for the same reasons.⁵⁸ This social marginalisation reinforces gender inequality and triggers early marriage as the only alternative and ‘unavoidable destiny’ for girls.

I think the Ministry of Education must intervene in this issue. Education is needed, and awareness

must be raised. This should not be aggressive but entertaining and interesting for the local population. There is no other way. I asked what the girls liked and what hobbies they had. It was very difficult to get answers from them. They don’t know because they just watch TV shows at night and don’t visit friends. There are no events to go to. Above all, they don’t speak Georgian, and there is no interaction with the state. ... They don’t feel that they are your co-citizens. They are a very isolated and closed community. (Expert)

The MICS data also point to a clear link between living in rural areas and child marriage, with rates of child marriage over three times higher in rural areas than in urban areas (25 per cent vs. 8 per cent).⁵⁹ The 2017 qualitative research noted that in general, populations living in rural areas do not have access to the same range of services as those living in urban areas. For girls living in rural areas, accessing upper secondary and higher education can be practically very difficult (due to poor provision or needing to travel long distances), making it more likely that they will drop out of education. Employment options are also very limited. Access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, is also difficult. Additionally, respondents reported that customs and traditions – including relating to gender roles and marriage practices, such as dowry – were stronger in rural areas.⁶⁰ All of these factors may help to explain why rates of child marriage are so much higher in rural, marginalised areas.

CONTROLLING ADOLESCENT SEXUALITY

One of the significant findings of the 2017 qualitative research was that many respondents – adolescents as well as adults – felt that child marriages in Georgia happen primarily because adolescents fall in love and choose to marry. However, such choices are being made in a social context that stigmatises adolescent relationships and premarital sex, as well as pregnancy outside of marriage. Adolescents who took part in the research spoke of not being allowed to date freely, of girls not being allowed to socialise in public spaces, and of boys and girls relying on social media and new technologies to maintain relationships, meaning that when they do meet, they ‘think that they are in love’.⁶¹ To put it simply, adolescents are ‘choosing’ to marry because that is the only way that they can be together and have a sexual relationship.

I think by limiting those who are in love, parents also encourage them to marry. (17 year-old girl in Kvemo Kartli)⁶²

Early marriage thus appears to be related to control of adolescent sexuality, and in particular, control of girls’ sexuality, closely linked to the importance placed on virginity before marriage. Accordingly, tradition implicitly triggers early marriages by leaving no alternative relationship, other than marriage. Girls may ‘choose’ to marry, but this results from their desire to conform, or fear of social stigma.

We know that there is high value on virginity in the Caucasus, this is not only in Georgia or Azerbaijan, this is in all the Caucasus: our tradition, and sexual life happens, as we know, in terms of marriage (Female family member, Tbilisi).⁶³

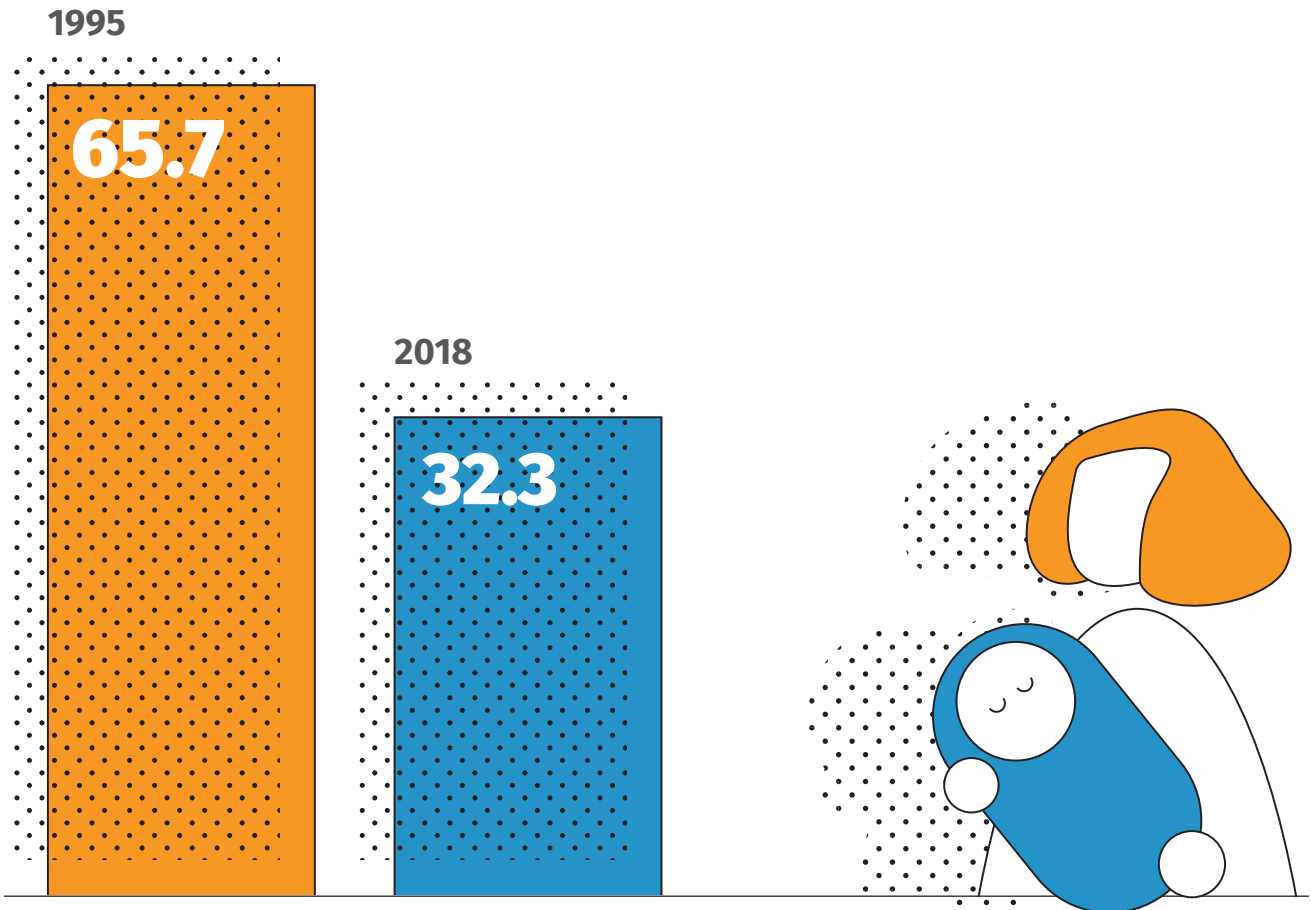
ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY

Of course, some adolescents do have sex before marriage, and lack of information about sexuality, reproduction, and sexual and reproductive health leads to a higher probability of sexually active girls becoming pregnant. In such cases, adolescent pregnancy is a driver of child marriage, as pregnant adolescents marry to ‘legitimise’ their pregnancies and avoid social disapproval. As discussed above, stigma – including that perpetuated by healthcare providers – makes it very difficult for unmarried girls to access sexual and reproductive health services, and teaching on sex, reproduction, and relationships that adolescents receive in schools is currently inadequate.

In 2018, babies born to adolescent mothers aged 15-19 accounted for 6.1 per cent of all births in Georgia.⁶⁴ Global evidence points to the negative health impacts of pregnancy on bodies that are not physically mature; pregnancy-related complications are a leading cause of deaths among girls aged 15-19 globally.⁶⁵ Children born to adolescent mothers are also at greater risk of birth complications: the MICS 2018 found a higher rate of stillbirth for babies born to girls aged 15-19 than for any other age group.⁶⁶

In Georgia, the number of births among women aged 15-19 has been declining rapidly since 1995.

It dropped from **65.7 per 1,000 women in 1995** to **32.3 in 2018**. Still the rate is much higher than in other European countries.



EXPERIENCES OF CHILD MARRIAGE

Early marriage [disrupted] my personal development. I was a very good student at school, but after the marriage I could not attend school. After a few years I enrolled in college, but after graduation my husband did not allow me to work. We had no financial need. It made me very dependent on my husband; I was very vulnerable. (Child spouse, Tbilisi)

Child spouses interviewed for the original study expressed regret that they married before the age of 18. They felt special remorse over their inability to continue their studies, and that marrying early had reduced their educational and career prospects. The only advantage child spouses highlighted in regard to early marriage was their children. For some respondents, it was only their children who gave meaning to their lives.

I was 16 years old when I got married. I did not agree, but my parents wanted me to get married. I did not love him and I did not think about marriage. I thought that the marriage was the end of my life. I wanted to study, but I could not study because of my parents. They thought I should marry and there is no necessity for me to study. (Child spouse, member of an ethnic minority)

Child spouses often live with their parents-in-law at the beginning of their marriage. Some experience a great deal of stress and pressure from the

mother-in-law. Respondents in the 2017 qualitative research spoke of the psychological distress experienced by married girls who were unprepared for family life and the high burden of domestic work expected of them. They also spoke of married girls being blocked by husbands and in-laws from meeting friends, family members or of having their use of mobile phones and other technology limited, or of facing restrictions on what clothes they could wear, and other forms of controlling behaviour. Married girls may also have limited decision-making capacity within their in-laws' households, with fathers-in-law making financial decisions on behalf of the whole family, and in-laws deciding whether or not a married girl will continue with her education. Respondents in the 2017 qualitative study also spoke of married girls experiencing physical and verbal abuse from husbands and mothers-in-law, often due to perceived 'failures' to fulfil their domestic responsibilities.⁶⁷ Divorce is common in Georgia but remains stigmatised, even in cases of domestic violence; many women hold great store by the 'sanctity of marriage', and fear shame and stigma if they leave an abusive husband. The expectation that a girl will live with her husband's family after marriage and that sons will inherit property means that it is often not possible for a girl to return to her parents' home in the event of divorce. Lack of work and financial independence is also a barrier to women and girls leaving abusive relationships.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, respondents in the 2017 qualitative research believed that child marriages were more likely to end in divorce than other marriages, because adolescents were unprepared for marriage

and lacked maturity, and due to conflicts between child spouses and in-laws, particularly mothers-in-law.⁶⁹

UNFPA also supported elaboration of a resource package on domestic violence and harmful practices against women and girls for religious clerics to be used in their communications with believers.



UNFPA'S WORK WITH FAITH-BASED COMMUNITIES

UNFPA's cooperation with the Inter-Religious Council and Muslim religious leaders has enabled work to prevent harmful practices from another important angle. UNFPA continues its advocacy and support to inter-religious dialogue and included the issues of violence against women and domestic violence in the dialogue agenda. Five informative sessions with Muslim religious leaders from all municipalities of Kvemo Kartli region (where there is a large Muslim Azeri ethnic minority population) provided a forum to discuss violence against women and child marriage, as well as to provide information on the legislative framework and available services. These sessions resulted in unprecedented support from religious leaders for prevention of child marriage and encouraging communities to change attitudes towards this harmful practice. As a result, the Administration of Muslims of All Georgia adopted a powerful official statement that urges Muslim leaders to support the elimination of Early/Child Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting which harm girls, their families, communities and society at large, and hinder the sustainable development of the country.



KEY POINTS

Under the amended Civil Code, the minimum age for marriage is 18 years, with no exceptions. However, many people are unaware of the changes to the law, and many marriages are not registered until after the younger spouse has turned 18.

Legislation relating to child marriage and forced marriage is not properly applied.

Reproductive health and rights education is not currently part of the school curriculum. As a result adolescents lack appropriate information on this subject. Due to this lack of knowledge of reproductive health issues and the social expectations pressuring girls to become pregnant immediately after marriage, child marriages result in early motherhood in Georgia.

Early marriage is a nationwide social problem, but the reasons that trigger child marriage are not homogenous and vary according to different social, economic, geographical, and cultural conditions. Norms and traditions intersect with poverty and entrenched gender inequality to drive child marriages, particularly in rural areas.

The state has begun to take action on child mar-



QUOTES

Since the State has emphasized the importance of regulating early marriage, it became the problem and we refuse to wed under-age couples. (Religious leader, Kakheti)⁷⁰

National legislation is in accordance with international legislation. The only problem is that of implementation. The parental care regulatory authority is not active enough. (Legal expert)

That [a married girl] should conceive immediately after the marriage is not even a question. (Expert)

I would say that on the contrary, boys marry at an older age. Girls who are late, people in the village call them 'latecomers'. (Journalist, Tbilisi)⁷¹

The society does not consider early marriage as a

riage, and up-to-date quantitative and qualitative data is leading to better understanding of the practice. Nevertheless, child marriage is not recognised as a problem in the wider society.

Child marriage is one of the main reasons leading girls to curtail their education. After getting married or engaged (in the case of some ethnic minorities in some parts of the country), girls drop out of school.

problem. However, if you show them the real aspects of it and explain, then they start seeing it as a problem... First, we should recognise that it's a problem and then we can think about a solution. (Expert)

In 12th grade there are 25 boys and only five or six girls. In the 1st grade the number of boys and girls is equal, but after 9th grade girls drop out of school, because of their family or other life circumstances. (Teacher, member of an ethnic minority)



DATA OVERVIEW

Total population (2019):	3,723,500⁷²
Life expectancy at birth as of 2017:	69.0 (males),⁷³ 77.8 (females)⁷⁴
Population under age 15 (2018):	19.8%⁷⁵
Unemployment rate (2018):	12.7%⁷⁶
Youth literacy rate (2017):	99.5% (females), 99.8% (males)⁷⁷
Health expenditure per capita per year (2014):	USD 628⁷⁸
Main ethnic groups:	Georgians, Azeris, Armenians, Russians, Ossetians, Yezidis, Ukrainians, Kists, Greeks, Assyrians⁷⁹
Main religions:	Orthodox Church (official), Islam, Armenian Apostolic⁸⁰
Main languages:	Georgian (official), Azeri, Armenian⁸¹
Number of registered marriages in 2018:	23,202⁸²
Average age at first marriage, registered marriages (2018):	30.4 (males); 27.7 (females)⁸³
Adolescent fertility rate:	GEOSTAT (2018): 32.3 births per 1000 women aged under 20⁸⁴
Total fertility rate for women aged 15-49 (2018):	2.1⁸⁵

Table 1. Marriages and unions by age and gender (2018)^{86,87}

	Percentage aged 20-24 married before age 15	Percentage aged 20-24 married before age 18	Percentage currently married or in union
Women	0.3	13.9	11.2
Men	0.5	0.5	0.1

Table 2. Percentage of women and men aged 20-24 married by age 18 and percentage of girls and boys aged 15-19 married or in union, by residence (2018)^{88, 89}

Place of residence	Females		Males	
	% aged 20-24 married by age 18	% aged 15-19 married or in union	% aged 20-24 married by age 18	% aged 15-19 married or in union
Rural	25.0	18.8	1.3	0.4
Urban	8.0	7.0	0.0	0.0

Table 3. Percentage of women and men aged 20-24 married by age 18 and percentage of girls and boys aged 15-19 married or in union, by level of education (2018)^{90, 91}

Level of education	Females		Males	
	% aged 20-24 married by age 18	% aged 15-19 married or in union	% aged 20-24 married by age 18	% aged 15-19 married or in union
Kindergarten or none	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*
Primary or Lower Secondary	46.5	51.1	3.4	0**
Upper secondary	24.6	6.8**	0.0	0.2
Vocational	11.3	19.1	0.0	N/A*
Higher	3.1	9.3	0.0	N/A*

* Figures available are based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases.

** Figures based on 25-49 unweighted cases.

Table 4. Percentage of women and men aged 20-24 married by age 18 and percentage of girls and boys aged 15-19 married or in union, by wealth quintile (2018)^{92, 93}

Wealth quintile	Females		Males	
	% aged 20-24 married by age 18	% aged 15-19 married or in union	% aged 20-24 married by age 18	% aged 15-19 married or in union
Poorest	33.2	24.9	0.0	0.8
Second	19.7	11.7	2.6	0.0
Middle	12.5	16.6	0.0	0.0
Fourth	7.2	6.8	0.0	0.1
Richest	4.4	0.5	0.0	0.0

Table 5. Percentage of women and men aged 20-24 married by age 18 and percentage of girls and boys aged 15-19 married or in union, by ethnicity (2018)^{94, 95}

Ethnicity	Females		Males	
	% aged 20-24 married by age 18	% aged 15-19 married or in union	% aged 20-24 married by age 18	% aged 15-19 married or in union
Georgian	12.4	9.0	0.6	0.0
Azerbaijani	37.6**	39.8**	N/A*	N/A*
Armenian	4.5**	10.0**	N/A*	N/A*
Other	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*

* Figures available are based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases.

** Figures based on 25-49 unweighted cases.

Table 6. Adolescent Fertility Rate (2018)⁹⁶

	Mother's age (years)
Total number of live births	Under 20
50,468	47.1

The total induced abortion rate for the years 2013-2018 was 5 per 1000 women aged 15-19.⁹⁷



KEY MESSAGES

WHEN A GIRL DELAYS MARRIAGE, EVERYONE BENEFITS, BUT MOST OF ALL THE GIRL HERSELF.

Choosing school over marriage means a better future and the chance of finding a decent job. It means better physical and mental health, and having time to maintain friendships. It means staying within the law, which bans marriage under 18.

Marrying later, once school is finished, means entering into marriage with the emotional maturity to handle the responsibilities of family life. It means being physically ready for pregnancy and birth, resulting in healthier pregnancies and healthier children. It means having the skills and knowledge to be a good mother and caregiver. And it is what most girls in Georgia are already doing.

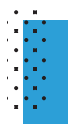
For the girls in Georgia who are still at risk of marrying before the age of 18, there is a huge cost to inaction on child marriage. It is time for policy-makers, parliamentarians, communities, families, and young people to address this issue head on.

LET'S DELIVER A WORLD WHERE EVERY PREGNANCY IS WANTED, EVERY BIRTH IS SAFE, AND EVERY YOUNG PERSON'S POTENTIAL IS FULFILLED. LET GIRLS BE GIRLS.

UNFPA is working to end child marriage by partnering with governments and civil society to enact and enforce laws against child marriage; to deliver comprehensive programmes addressing the social support and health needs of vulnerable and married girls, including their sexual and reproductive health needs; and to support the development of girls' educational and economic opportunities. Within communities, UNFPA supports programmes that enable elders, parents, and other influential leaders to identify the dangers of child marriage to girls, promote girls' rights, and find community-owned solutions to collectively discourage and eventually end this harmful practice.

When laws against child marriage are enforced and girls who are already married are supported, everyone benefits. [Girls who are protected from the ill effects of child marriage are more likely to stay in school lon-](#)

ger, delay childbearing, have healthier children, develop life skills, and earn a higher income, contributing not only to her own well-being, but that of her family and community.



INVEST IN ADOLESCENT GIRLS

PROMOTE INVESTMENTS THAT BUILD UP ADOLESCENT GIRLS' CAPABILITIES AND SKILLS, ESPECIALLY EDUCATION.

Girls' education, particularly post-primary and secondary, is the single most important factor associated with age at marriage.

Girls especially need social support and access to programmes that provide life skills, literacy, livelihoods, and reproductive health information and services, such as family planning and life-saving maternal health services.

Investments should provide platforms for vulnerable girls to develop life skills and critical health knowledge, obtain access to social services including reproductive health and HIV prevention, gain vocational and employable skills for work, and have access to friends and mentors.

Married girls need special targeted strategies that provide access to education, life skills, and health including SRH and HIV prevention, and opportunities to participate fully in society. Maternal health programmes need to be reoriented with dedicated outreach for the youngest, first-time mothers, to enable them to use antenatal, essential and emergency obstetric care, and post-delivery services.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹ A child is 'every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority

is attained earlier'. Article 1, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx> (accessed 3 December 2019).

² The European Union for Georgia, GEOSTAT, and UN Women (2018) National Study on Violence Against Women in Georgia 2017, Tbilisi: UN Women, p.12.

³ Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Istanbul, 11.V.2011. Council of Europe Treaty Series - No. 210. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/fr/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e> (accessed 18 November 2019).

⁴ Nairobi Statement on ICPD 25: Accelerating the Promise. Available at: <https://www.nairobisummiticpd.org/content/icpd25-commitments>

⁵ SDG 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

⁶ Barkaia, Maia (2014), Child Marriage in Georgia (Overview), Istanbul: UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

⁷ Gupta, T. P., A. Taylor, G. Lauro, L. Shengelia, and L. Sturua (2018). Exploring Harmful Practices of Early/Child Marriage and FGM/C in Georgia: Final Report, Tbilisi and Washington, DC; National Center for Disease Control and Public Health, Pro-mundo US, UNFPA and UNICEF.

⁸ Recommendations are adapted from Gupta et al, op cit., pp.64-68.

⁹ Unless stated otherwise, all quotations are from interviews conducted as part of the original study (Barkaia, op cit.).

¹⁰ Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia (2016), Special Report: Early Age Marriages: Challenges and Solutions, Tbilisi: Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia

¹¹ Ibid., p.4.

¹² Information provided by UNFPA.

¹³ Government of Georgia (2014), 'National Youth Policy Document of Georgia', Approved by the Resolution #553 dated 2nd April, 2014 of the Government of Georgia.

¹⁴ Gupta et al., op cit., pp.19-20.

¹⁵ Georgian Civil Code. Article 1108.

¹⁶ Georgian Criminal Code. Article 140.

¹⁷ Georgian Criminal Code. Article 150.

¹⁸ Gupta et al., op cit., p.62.

¹⁹ Kim, M., Boyle E.H., Longhofer W., and Brehm, H.N. (2013) 'When do laws matter? National minimum-age-of-marriage laws, child rights, and adolescent fertility, 1989-2007', Law and Society Review, 47(3), pp.589-619.

²⁰ Gupta et al., op cit., p.42.

²¹ Ibid., p.53.

²² Ibid., p.57.

²³ The Law on Health Protection. Article 6. The Law on the Rights of the Patient. Article 5.

²⁴ The Law on the Rights of the Patient. Article 41 (2).

²⁵ The Law on the Rights of the Patient, Chapter VIII, Article 40.

²⁶ Gupta et al., op cit., p.44.

- ²⁷ Ibid., p.46.
- ²⁸ The Law on Health Protection. Article 140. Georgian Criminal Code. Article 133.
- ²⁹ GEOSTAT and UNICEF (2019), MICS Georgia 2018, 'Statistical snapshot: Interrupted Pregnancy', Tbilisi: GEOSTAT and UNICEF.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ GEOSTAT and UNICEF (2019), MICS Georgia 2018, Tbilisi: GEOSTAT and UNICEF, table TM.13.1CS: Contraception awareness (women).
- ³² Ibid., table TM.3.1: Use of contraception (currently married / in union).
- ³³ Ibid., table TM.3.3: Need and demand for family planning (currently married / in union).
- ³⁴ GEOSTAT and UNICEF (2019), MICS Georgia 2018, 'Statistical snapshot: Family planning and informed decision', Tbilisi: GEOSTAT and UNICEF.
- ³⁵ The European Union for Georgia et al, op cit., p.94.
- ³⁶ Gupta et al., op cit., p.56.
- ³⁷ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit., table PR.4.1W: Child marriage (women).
- ³⁸ UNICEF (2018) The State of the World's Children 2017: Children in a Digital World, New York: UNICEF, Table 8: Child protection. Child marriage rate is defined as the percentage of women aged 20-24 married before the age of 18.
- ³⁹ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit., table PR.4.1W: Child marriage (women).
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit., table TM.2.2W: Early childbearing (young women).
- ⁴² Gupta et al., op cit., p.30.
- ⁴³ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit., table LN.2.6: Upper secondary attendance and out
- of school youth.
- ⁴⁴ Gupta et al., op cit., pp.39-44.
- ⁴⁵ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit., table LN.2.6: Upper secondary attendance and out of school youth.
- ⁴⁶ Gupta et al, op cit., p.41.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., p.43.
- ⁴⁸ Georgian Code of Administrative Offences. Article 172.
- ⁴⁹ Gupta et al, op cit., pp.55-56.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., pp.62-63.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., pp.36-37
- ⁵² Ibid., pp.36-37.
- ⁵³ Ibid., pp.36-37
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., p.37.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., p.32.
- ⁵⁶ The European Union for Georgia et al, op cit., p.94.
- ⁵⁷ Gupta et al, op cit., pp.30, 41.
- ⁵⁸ Gupta et al, op cit., pp.10, 63; The European Union for Georgia et al, op cit., p.95.
- ⁵⁹ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit., table PR.4.1W: Child marriage (women).
- ⁶⁰ Gupta et al, op cit., pp.57-58.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., p.36.
- ⁶² Ibid., p.35.
- ⁶³ Ibid., p.35.
- ⁶⁴ GEOSTAT (n.d.), 'Gender statistics – Live births by age of mother', <http://gender.geostat.ge/gender/index.php?action=Demography> (accessed 13 November 2019).
- ⁶⁵ World Health Organization (2011), WHO Guidelines on Preventing Early Pregnancy and Poor Reproductive Outcomes Among Adolescents in Developing Countries, Geneva: WHO, p.2.

⁶⁶ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit., table TM.15.1CS: Total induced abortion rate (TIAR), stillbirth and miscarriage rate.

⁶⁷ Gupta et al, op cit., pp.44, 47-51.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp.50-52; The European Union for Georgia et al, op cit., pp.87-88. The research by the European Union for Georgia et al found that far more women participating in this research in 2017 cited the 'sanctity of marriage' as their primary reason for not leaving an abusive relationship than had been the case in a similar study in 2009. The authors conclude that this may be due to the 're-emergence of conservatism around gender roles and a woman's responsibility to her family' in Georgia (p.90). The study also found, however, that women were now far more likely to seek help from the police, and fewer stayed in abusive relationships because they believed the violence to be 'normal'.

⁶⁹ Gupta et al, op cit., pp.51-52.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.56.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.31.

⁷² GEOSTAT (n.d.), 'Population and Demography', <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/316/population-and-demography> (accessed 13 November 2019).

⁷³ The World Bank – Data (n.d.), 'Life expectancy at birth, male (years) – Georgia', <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.MA.IN?end=2017&locations=GE&start=1960&view=chart> (accessed 13 November 2019).

⁷⁴ The World Bank – Data (n.d.), 'Life expectancy at birth, female (years) – Georgia', <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.FE.IN?end=2017&locations=GE&start=1960&view=chart>

(accessed 13 November 2019).

⁷⁵ The World Bank – Data (n.d.), 'Population ages 0-14 (% of total population) – Georgia', <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO.ZS?locations=GE&view=chart> (accessed 13 November 2019).

⁷⁶ GEOSTAT (n.d.), 'Employment and unemployment', <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/38/employment-and-unemployment> (accessed 13 November 2019).

⁷⁷ UNCESCO (n.d.), 'UIS Database – Education, Literacy', <http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=121> (accessed 18 November 2019).

⁷⁸ World Health Organization (WHO) (n.d.), 'Georgia: Statistics', <https://www.who.int/countries/geo/en/> (accessed 13 November 2019).

⁷⁹ GEOSTAT (2014), '2014 General Population Census: Demographic and social characteristics, total population by regions and ethnicity', http://census.ge/files/results/english/17_Total%20population%20by%20regions%20and%20ethnicity.xls (accessed 13 November 2019).

⁸⁰ GEOSTAT (2014), '2014 General Population Census: Demographic and social characteristics, Population by regions and religion', http://census.ge/files/results/english/22_Population%20by%20regions%20and%20religion.xls (accessed 13 November 2019).

⁸¹ GEOSTAT (2014), '2014 General Population Census: Demographic and social characteristics, population by region, by native languages and fluently speak Georgian language', http://census.ge/files/results/english/20_Population%20by%20region%2C%20by%20native%20languages%20

and%20fluently%20speak%20Georgian%20language.xls (accessed 13 November 2019).

⁸² GEOSTAT, 'Population and Demography', op cit.

⁸³ GEOSTAT (n.d.), 'Gender statistics – Mean age of married people by order of marriage (years)', <http://gender.geostat.ge/gender/index.php?action=Demography> (accessed 13 November 2019).

⁸⁴ GEOSTAT (n.d.), 'Gender statistics – Live births per thousand women of relevant age (persons)', <http://gender.geostat.ge/gender/index.php?action=Demography> (accessed 13 November 2019).

⁸⁵ GEOSTAT (n.d.), 'Gender statistics – Total fertility rate', <http://gender.geostat.ge/gender/index.php?action=Demography> (accessed 13 November 2019).

⁸⁶ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit., table PR.4.1W: Child marriage (women).

⁸⁷ GEOSTAT and UNICEF (2019), MICS Georgia 2018, Tbilisi: GEOSTAT and UNICEF, table PR.4.1M: Child marriage (men).

⁸⁸ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit., table PR.4.1W: Child marriage (women).

⁸⁹ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit., table PR.4.1M: Child marriage (men).

⁹⁰ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit., table PR.4.1W: Child marriage (women).

⁹¹ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit., table PR.4.1M: Child marriage (men).

⁹² GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit., table PR.4.1W: Child marriage (women).

⁹³ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit., table PR.4.1M: Child marriage (men).

⁹⁴ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit., table PR.4.1W: Child marriage (women).

⁹⁵ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, MICS Georgia 2018, op cit.,

table PR.4.1M: Child marriage (men).

⁹⁶ National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health. Statistical Yearbook 2018 <https://www.ncdc.ge/Pages/User/News.aspx?ID=-bec659c0-56a2-4190-9c0c-e47a63bcc4f> (accessed January 1, 2020)

⁹⁷ GEOSTAT and UNICEF, 'Statistical snapshot: Interrupted Pregnancy', op cit.

